

A MASTER'S VOCAL RECITAL ANALYZING THE HISTORICAL AND STYLISTIC  
ASPECTS OF WORKS BY GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL, WOLFGANG AMADEUS  
MOZART, FRANZ SCHUBERT, VINCENZO BELLINI, GIUSEPPE VERDI, GAETANO  
DONIZETTI, REYNALDO HAHN, AND MICHAEL HEAD

by

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## Abstract

The songs presented in this report are works I performed in my Master's Recital on March 30, 2014. This report will take an in-depth analysis at the selected composers' life and styles of writing and the works they created. The scores studied in this report include: "Thus saith the Lord: But who may abide" from George Frideric Handel's *Messiah*, "Soave sia il vento" from Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's *Così fan Tutte*, "Liebesbotschaft," "Ihr Bild," and "Das Fischermädchen" from Franz Schubert's *Schwanengesang*, Vincenzo Bellini's "Vaga luna che inargenti," Giuseppe Verdi's "Il Poveretto," Gaetano Donizetti's "Che vuoi di più," Reynaldo Hahn's "Á Chloris," "Si mes vers avaient des ailes," and "L'Heure Exquise" from *Chanson grises*, and "Ships of Arcady," "Beloved," "A Blackbird Singing," and "Nocturne" from Michael Head's *Over the Rim of the Moon*.

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# CHAPTER 1 - Thus saith the Lord: But who may abide from *Messiah*

**George Frideric Handel (1685-1759)**



**Figure 1.1 G. F. Handel**



**Figure 1.2 G. F. Handel's signature**

George Frideric Handel was an accomplished composer throughout his life. He was born in Halle, Germany in 1685. From a young age, his father acknowledged his gift of music, however he did not consider music to be much of an accomplished profession, and as a result, his father wished him to study at the University of Halle to become a lawyer. Handel was noted for sneaking a small keyboard instrument into his attic to practice without his father's knowledge. From a young age, Handel studied music with Friedrich Wilhelm Zachau<sup>1</sup>, organist at Liebfrauenkirche and was primed to become a church organist. Despite a short study of law at the University of Halle, Handel became the church organist at Domkirche. At age 18, Handel was dissatisfied with being a church organist and left Halle to be a concert violinist with the Hamburg Orchestra. He stayed in Hamburg a brief three years, leaving after a dispute with composer Matthesen over the accompaniment of Matthesen's *Cleopatra*. Eventually, they would

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<sup>1</sup> Jacobi, 1982 pg. 13

forgive and forget as Matthesen performed the tenor role in Handel's first opera, *Almira*. From there, Handel left for Italy in 1707.<sup>2</sup>

At this time in Italy, opera was reaching a peak in innovation. Handel studied the techniques and mastered the trends of Italian serious opera. Some of his early opera works include *Rodrigo* and *Aggripina*. He also continued writing sacred choral works such as *Dixit Dominus* in 1707. He returned to Germany and became the Kapellmeister to the Elector of Hanover, who later became King George I of England. In 1711 during a stay in London, Handel composed his opera, *Rinaldo*, which captured the attention of British audiences. He took the opportunity to remain in England. Fortunately for Handel, his former employer, Elector of Hanover, after ascending to the throne as the King of England following the death of Queen Anne forgave Handel for leaving his former position under him.

Some of his most notable classical works include *Water Music*, composed for a barge outing for the king. In addition, he wrote numerous Italian style operas, including *Ottone*, *Serses*, and many other works based on classical stories much like his predecessors in the opera world. At this time, the idea of composing in the country's vernacular became a new tradition. This also allowed for less formal characters and storylines. This new style tarnished Handel's reputation. Handel adapted to this new style and began writing oratorios. The oratorio idea also adhered to the religious formalities of Lent that required patrons and composers alike to cease secular activities such as opera. Oratorios are based on sacred texts and stories and utilized only minor staging if any. Some of his most famous oratorios include, *Joshua*, *Samson*, *Saul*, *Israel in Egypt*, *Judas Maccabaeus*, and of course, *Messiah*. This new style attracted not only Britain's upper class and royalty, but also the middle class. The reason for this extends to its use during Lent. Handel often produced these masterworks in a shorter time, utilizing a much simpler accompaniment compared to his operatic works. For example, Handel composed *Judas Maccabaeus* in only thirty-two days or *Messiah* in only three weeks. The music was still grandiose and included Handel's incredible use of text painting and florid, melodic passages, but it utilized fewer instruments and often recycled melodic themes throughout the entire work.

Throughout the remainder of his life, Handel continued composing numerous works despite suffering several ailments. In 1739, Handel suffered a stroke that paralyzed his right arm

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<sup>2</sup> Jacobi, 1982 pg. 15

and diminished his mental capacities. After he recovered, he wrote some of his greatest works: *Messiah*, in 1741 and *Judas Maccabaeus* in 1746. At a time when his health and finances were in dire straits, Handel was approached by Charles Jennens to compose for his libretto about the Passion of Christ. At the same time, the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, William Cavendish extended an offer to Handel to compose an oratorio for the oratorio season in Dublin. After receiving the libretto on August 22, 1741, he completed the *Messiah* on September 12, 1741. The work is a marvel, the magnitude of which Handel never again achieved to compose despite composing other works for another decade. In his old age, Handel also went blind, but continued to compose. He died on April 14, 1759.<sup>3</sup>

### **Charles Jennens, librettist (1700-1773)**



**Figure 1.3 C. Jennens**

Charles Jennens was born in 1700 in Leicestershire, England and raised on his grandfather's land at Gopsall Hall. Jennens was a protestant Christian and nonjuror. He also supported the Stuart cause, a movement aimed at returning the Stuarts, a Scottish royal family to power. Jennens grew up in a particularly wealthy and politically driven family. Jennens attended Balliol College, a constituent college of Oxford University, but did not graduate. Unlike many of his family members, he did not enter into a governmental position. He instead devoted his life, wealth, and patronage to the arts. He was an active member of Handel's admirers along with James Harris and the fourth Earl of Shaftsbury. Jennens taste in music was considered catholic but decisive. Being a subscriber to Handel's works, Jennens amassed a wide collection of printed works and manuscripts. He acquired part of music library of Cardinal Ottoboni, which he lent to

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.classicalarchives.com/composer/>

Handel on occasion. Jennens also encouraged numerous other contemporary composers, subscribing and collecting their works as well. At the time of his death, Jennens left his music library to his cousin, the third Earl of Aylesford. The bulk of the collection was sold off in 1873 and is maintained in the Manchester Public Library.

The notoriety of Jennens rests solely on his patronage of Handel. Jennens published his librettos anonymously and wrote for no other composer than Handel. Handel considered him to be his best English librettist. He presented his first libretto to Handel in 1735. Jennens libretto for *Messiah* was first conceived in 1739, although not presented to Handel until 1741, and is considered to be his magnum opus. Subsequently, Jennens penned *Saul* and *Belshazzar* and is believed to have written or advised the text of *Israel in Egypt*. Jennens has a remarkable gift for dramatic structure and characterization. Despite Jennens and Handel both being egotistical of their own work, they remained close friends. Jennens commissioned the “Gopsall” portrait of Handel, and Handel bequeathed two paintings to Jennens.

During his life, Jennens was well known for his collections, not only of music, but of sculptures and pictures as well. His collection totaled more than five hundred works showing his religious devotion, support of the royal Stuart family, and love for Italian and English art. At the death of his father, Charles Jennens, Sr. in 1747, Jennens inherited Gopsall, as well as thirty-four other properties in six different counties. His remodeling and transformation of his estate estimated to be over £80,000. In today’s money that would be equivalent to about £8 million or \$13.5 million.

Jennens suffered from depression and was an emotionally sensitive person. Experts believe that the suicide of his younger brother, Robert, when Jennens was only 28 years old caused his depression. Jennens never married and was resented by many for his enormous wealth. Jennens died in November 1773 and was buried in the family vault with monuments listing his many charitable bequests.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Smith, Ruth, 2004 <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/14745>

## Historical Analysis of *Messiah*

The libretto of *Messiah* was written by Charles Jennens who had formerly collaborated with Handel on some of his other oratorios including, *Saul* and *Belshazzar*. The text was taken from the several books in the Bible, including the Gospels, the Epistles of Paul, the poetry of Psalms, and the prophecies of Isaiah.<sup>5</sup> Unlike several of Handel's oratorios, this work was not based on an apocalyptic story like *Joshua*. *Messiah* lacks the intense, dramatic flair most of his other oratorios contain. This stems from the absence of named characters performing roles in *Messiah*, the only source of drama comes from the message told in the music. *Messiah* more closely relates to the work of Bach than previous works by Handel despite the operatic tones usual to Handel's oratorios. The text was written in three parts. The first part revolves around the prophecy of Christ and its fulfillment. The second part goes from the Passion to the triumph of the Resurrection. The final part foretells the role of the Messiah in life after death.

The composition of *Messiah* is made up of recitative, arias, and choruses. The instrumentation lacks markings of interpretation and ornamentation commonly practiced during that time such as dotted notes. This stems from the haste in which Handel wrote *Messiah*. As musicians of that time would've known how to perform such characteristics just as they do in any other oratorio, they would not have been off put by these lack of markings. Thankfully, musicologists have studied Handel intently to understand the practices of his time in order to accurately perform his works to this day. Nonetheless, *Messiah* was redeveloped several times throughout the remainder of Handel's life; to this day we are still unsure which is considered the original of his masterwork. In addition, Handel often made changes to casting of soloists, sometimes utilizing four, occasionally five, or rarely six soloists. The arias also interchange the voice type used. For example, the particular recitative and subsequent aria, "Thus saith the Lord: But who may abide," is traditionally sung by a baritone, however "But who may abide" can also be performed by an alto or soprano. There are also a few potential variations to the performance.

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<sup>5</sup> Jacobi 1982 pg. 66

## Stylistic & Technical Analysis of Thus saith the Lord: But who may abide

Handel's *Messiah* was composed using the standard practices of the Baroque Era. Common to Handel's compositions, he often uses florid, melodic runs in his music. These melismatic runs often utilize text painting, symbolizing the literal text of the work.

For example, in measure 6-7 of the recitative, "Thus saith the Lord," Handel uses a melisma on the word shake to depict the word "shake". He does this again at mm. 10-13.



The image shows a musical score for the recitative "Thus saith the Lord" from Handel's *Messiah*, measures 10-13. The score is written for a vocal line and a keyboard accompaniment. The vocal line features a melisma on the word "shake" (German: "er bebte") in measures 10 and 11. The keyboard accompaniment provides a rhythmic and harmonic support, with a prominent melisma on the word "shake" in measures 10 and 11. The score is in G major and 4/4 time. The lyrics are: "and I will shake, und es er bebte, and I will shake und es er bebte".

Figure 1.4 "Thus saith the Lord" mm. 10-13

In the aria, "But who may abide," he creates the same text painting effect on the words "refiner's fire," creating the effect of a roaring fire. Other times, the melismatic runs create an emotional effect rather than a textual effect. For example, at measure 19, Handel uses a melismatic run on the word "desire" to create anticipation and excitement. The performer's accenting of each big beat of the run helps to build the intensity of the music. In addition to accenting, a slight crescendo through the phrase creates an effect of the text reaching the loudest point of the phrase on "all nations" which symbolizes the calling out to everyone. Additional practices of the recitative include an ascending appoggiatura noted on such words as "covenant" and "delight".

The opening recitative is fast paced at the discretion of the singer's abilities. The recitative is rather like a speech before the aria making the stylistic nature such as inflection and silences at the singer's need. Some composed technical rests written in may not be utilized due to the singer not needing one, thus enhancing the flow of the musical line. As the recitative reaches

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<sup>6</sup> Handel, 1902. pp. 22

a climatic point at the word “shake,” where the melody is highly melismatic, the tempo should be set to make it easier for the accompanist to follow. The melismatic tendencies reoccur throughout the recitative but do not always start on the same note but utilize the same note pattern. As frequently as Handel utilizes this technique, the overall key of the piece changes very little. At times, the piece does modulate from its major presence to that of a minor quality indicating a change of mood and style. For example, at the end of the phrase, “And the desires of all nations shall come,” the cadential chords followed in the accompaniment set the parallel minor. The form of the aria by contrast is an ABAB, starting out *Larghetto* in the A Section but changing to *Prestissimo* in the B Section. The second A Section is much shorter than its original, reminiscent of the original before moving back to the B Section once again with slight variations to the end.

The orchestral interludes present the melodic theme later performed by the singer. It is worth mentioning, a brief one-measure (or shorter) interlude before a section merely foreshadows the singer's lyrical line. It's an alternating pattern between the lyrical line just performed and the lyrical line the singer will perform upon his entrance of the next phrase. The interlude between the A Section and B Section varies from arrangements of the score. Baroque music often utilized a realized score leaving much interpretation to the musicians themselves. As time has passed, publishers of scores have come up with individual realizations to be used by accompanists. In the score from which I based my performance, the accompaniment interlude is merely block chords that help the accompanist transition from the *Larghetto* tempo of the A Section to the *Prestissimo* tempo of the B Section. This also provides the singer more flexibility to speed up or slow the tempo upon his entrance if needed than if the accompanist were playing a melismatic passage as in other arias by Handel.

## **Text of Thus saith the Lord: But who may abide**

### Recitative

#### *Haggai 2: 6, 7*

**6.** Thus saith the Lord of Hosts; Yet once, a little while and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; **7.** And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come

#### *Malachi 3:1*

**1.** The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: Behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts

### Aria

#### *Malachi 3:2*

**2.** But who may abide the day of His coming? And who shall stand when He appeareth? For He is like a refiner's fire

(Text provided by Bruce L. Johnson)<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Johnson, 1998. <http://www.worshipmap.com/lyrics/messiahtext.html>



## CHAPTER 2 - Soave sia il vento from *Così fan Tutte*

### Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)



**Figure 2.1 W. A. Mozart**

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart". The signature is written in dark ink on a light background.

**Figure 2.2 W. A. Mozart signature**

Considering his short life, Mozart is known as one of the most prolific composers ever. He was born in 1756 in Salzburg, Austria. He was the youngest of seven children born in his family, five who did not survive infancy. Only he and his older sister, Maria Anna, nicknamed Nannerl, survived and both, along with his father, were particularly musical. By age three, Mozart was already playing clavichord, a predecessor to the piano. At age four, Mozart began composing short pieces. By age five, Mozart gave his first public performance at Salzburg University. Mozart's musical talents were seemingly endless when at age six he was performing on the harpsichord for the Elector of Bavaria. In addition, it was also noted that at age seven, Mozart picked up a violin without having ever taken a lesson and sight-read the second part of a work with complete accuracy.<sup>8</sup>

For the next few years, Wolfgang, Nannerl, and his father, Leopold, toured London, Paris, and many other parts of Europe. Upon returning to Salzburg in 1767, Mozart had composed his first opera, *Apollo et Hyacinthus*. He was also composing other works such as keyboard concertos by this time. In 1769, at the age of thirteen, Mozart was appointed

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<sup>8</sup> Jahn, 1882. Vol. I pp. 19-24

Konzertmeister in Salzburg by the reigning Archbishop. Having successfully toured Europe for several years already, Mozart made three tours of Italy to study Italian opera. Of his first “Italian” attempts, Mozart composed two successful works, *Mitridate* and *Lucio Silla*.<sup>9</sup> Once he returned to Salzburg, he continued composing various works over the following few years. His focus of compositions included masses, symphonies, operas, and chamber works. During this time, Mozart had a disagreement with the Archbishop and left his position as Konzertmeister in Salzburg to move to Vienna.<sup>10</sup>

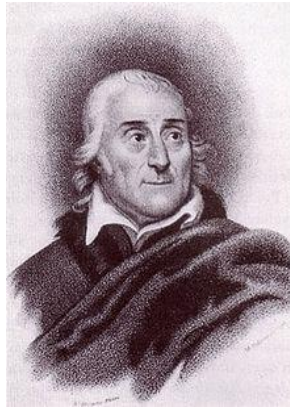
In Vienna, Mozart received many commissions for pieces in addition to a well-paying Court position. In 1782, he married Constanze Weber and travelled back to Salzburg to introduce her to his family. At this time, Mozart composed yet another successful opera, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*. In 1784, Mozart joined the Freemasons having studied their practices and agreeing with their beliefs. Mozart composed numerous works for Masonic lodges. During this time, Mozart focused on composing sonatas and quartets, and often appeared as a soloist in the performances of these works. During the late 1780s (what would be the last few years of his life), Mozart began receiving commissions for operas. In the last five years of his life, Mozart composed four great masterpieces, *Le nozze di Figaro* in 1786, *Don Giovanni* in 1787, *Così fan Tutte* in 1790, and *Die Zauberflöte* in 1791. Throughout this time, Mozart continued travelling all over despite a fragile health. Also during this time, Mozart’s financial status began to decrease. Surviving letters note his begging for money from a fellow Mason, Michael Puchberg. It was also noted that he moved from Austria to the suburb of Alsergrund to save money, but ended up spending the same amount and receiving more space. It is speculated that Mozart composed certain roles for his debtors as payment. A speculated example of this includes Papageno in *Die Zauberflöte* wherein Papageno has more arias than any other main character. He was not showing any signs of serious illness at the time of his death although he developed a fever. Some sources have speculated that he suffered from depression which slowed his output of compositions, an example is the three year gap between *Don Giovanni* and *Così fan Tutte* although Mozart composed other works at this time such as Symphonies 39, 40, and 41, as well as his *Requiem* which was incomplete at the time of his death in December 1791.

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<sup>9</sup> Jahn, 1882. Vol I pg. 173, 178

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.classicalarchives.com/composer/3052.html#tvf=tracks&tv=about>

## Lorenzo Da Ponte, librettist (1749-1838)



**Figure 2.3 L. Da Ponte**

Lorenzo Da Ponte was born on March 10, 1749 in Ceneda, Veneto, Italy to Jewish-Italian parents. Da Ponte was baptized in 1763 and later became a priest. Unfortunately, due to his doubts of religious doctrine and an adulterous relationship, he was expelled from the Venetian state. He moved to Vienna around 1780, taking a position as poet to Emperor Joseph II. As court poet, he wrote numerous librettos for area musicians.

Da Ponte first made acquaintance with Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart in 1783. Da Ponte's collaborations with Mozart came to be known as his finest period in his literary career. In the span of less than five years, Da Ponte and Mozart produced three masterpieces, *Le nozze di Figaro*, *Don Giovanni*, and *Così fan Tutte*. Da Ponte also wrote the libretto for Martin y Soler's opera, *Una cosa rara*. Da Ponte had a particular flair for infusing borrowed themes with new life, interweaving tragedy and comedy into one script. His version of the Don Juan legend, *Don Giovanni*, left a lasting impression on literary history. After the death of Emperor Joseph II, Da Ponte no longer maintained a source of income and set out wandering again. He settled in London from 1792-1805 before immigrating to the United States to escape his creditors. He settled in New York, devoting the remainder of his life to teaching Italian and literature at Columbia College. From 1823-1827, Da Ponte penned a memoir in four volumes, portraying himself as a victim of fate and enemies. "Memoirs of Lorenzo Da Ponte" became valuable insight into life during early 19th century America. Da Ponte passed away in August 1838.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/149348/Lorenzo-Da-Ponte>.

## **Historical Analysis of *Così fan Tutte***

Mozart wasn't known for his innovation of new style like some artists. While Mozart's style and structure of his compositions were traditional, what he wrote, even at a remarkably young age was aesthetically pleasing to the ear and written stylistically for the text and style being used. His serious works were dramatic and his opera buffas and Singspiel were light and humorous. Of course, the styles overlapped as not all serious works were always dramatic and heavy and not all opera buffas were all jokes and laughter. It was his ability to interweave these ideas masterfully in his lyrical phrases throughout his works that made him so successful.

*Così fan Tutte* is an Italian opera buffa written in two acts. This was the second to last opera composed by Mozart before his death. Mozart composed *Così fan Tutte* in 1790. The libretto was written by Lorenzo Da Ponte. The libretto is considered an original by Da Ponte; however, there are many previous works with similarities in the plot such as Ovid's *Metamorphosis*. In addition, Da Ponte used similar themes in another work he scripted around this time, Martin y Soler's *L'abore di Diana*. The plot of *Così fan Tutte* is not believed to be based on any actual events. This was one of the last of his three operas Mozart collaborated with Da Ponte. The other two operas, also opera buffas include *Le nozze di Figaro* and *Don Giovanni*. The rough translation of *Così fan Tutte* is "All women are like that." *Così fan Tutte* revolves around the central theme of "fiancée swapping." This was a common theme at the time and before. This opera was seen as obscure and unperformed for many years after Mozart's death. Around the turn of the 20th century, the opera was revived and has since become revered as one of Mozart's finest compositions. It is believed the opera was commissioned by the current emperor at the time, Joseph II. This was during a financial crisis in Mozart's life and gave him the opportunity to repay debts he had been accruing. The premiere of this work was January 26, 1790 at Burgtheater in Vienna after only five days of rehearsals. The initial run of the show was short-lived due to the death of Emperor Joseph II. After only five runs, all Viennese theaters closed until June.

The story begins with Don Alfonso discussing how fickle women are, and he concocts a plan with two officers to prove this theory. He arrives at the home of sisters, Dorabella and Fiordiligi to convey the news of their soldiers being called to war. Together, the three sing "Soave sia il vento" to wish the soldiers safe travel. Meanwhile, the soldiers return, disguised as

“Albanians” to catch their lovers being unfaithful. While the sister’s lament their loneliness, their maid, Despina, suggests they find new lovers while their soldiers are away. The sister’s resist temptation at first but eventually succumb to the “Albanians” wooing. Don Alfonso wins the wager and calls on the soldiers to forgive their lovers because “women are like that.” The sisters agree to marry the “Albanians” only to have their soldiers return. After showing the marriage contract to the soldiers, they dress up in half soldiers, half Albanian costumes to show the sisters they were duped. In the end, all is forgiven and everyone lives happily ever after.

The substance of the opera has been disputed as immoral and void of a dramatic resolution despite the comedic nature of the opera itself. Despite this, the quality of Mozart’s musical style in this opera buffa makes the show enjoyable to the audience. Interestingly, the opera was set in Naples as homage to the birthplace of opera buffa. Unlike other collaborations between Da Ponte and Mozart, *Così fan tutte* contains an unusually large number of ensembles, especially compared to Don Giovanni and *Le nozze di Figaro*, also completed around this time period. These ensembles are seen as some of Mozart’s finest, such as “Soave sia il vento” as well as the finale to Act One. The lyrical outpouring of these songs with such restrained structure is truly the epitome of Mozart’s compositional style. This opera is also significantly different to other opera buffas in the basic character make up. This work utilizes two sets of lovers, Dorabella and Ferrando, and Fiordiligi and Guillelmo, as well as a pair of philosophers, Don Alfonso and Despina. This work is more comparable to *La Grotta di Trofonio* composed by Antonio Salieri in 1785. The libretto was written by Giovanni Batista Casti. *La Grotta di Trofonio* also utilizes two pairs of lovers who are dramatically changed by the main character, Trofonio, the model for Don Alfonso in Mozart’s *Così fan Tutte*.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Dent, 1947 pp. 190-191

## **Stylistic & Technical Analysis of Soave sia il vento**

“Soave sia il vento” is an ensemble piece sung between Don Alfonso, Dorabella, and Fiordiligi. This song is the tenth number in the opera, taking place in the sixth scene of Act One. A light, brief opening of murmuring sixteenth notes begins the scene and the theme remains as an underlying constant almost throughout the entire piece.<sup>13</sup> This musical expression creates the feeling of the calm seas Guillelmo and Ferrando are about to embark on.

The text of the piece translates to a sweet goodbye to send off the beloved soldiers of Dorabella and Fiordiligi. The sisters’ duet is homophonic in texture through most of the song. Don Alfonso follows the sisters through most of the piece as well. After the text of the piece has been sung through once, the text repeats several times in variation. Each part stays in harmonic unison for most of the piece but each role grabs its own small piece of spotlight for a moment. The tempo is Andante.

While the message of text is seemingly heartfelt and beautiful as the melody suggests; the nature of the piece includes Don Alfonso’s deceit of the sisters to show their fickleness. This can be interpreted through Don Alfonso’s separate, less melodic line that uses more step-wise and sometimes chromatic short phrases. Such examples can be seen at mm. 17-21. That small section shows the deceit he has created. The text of mm. 17-21 translates to “each element responds well to our desires.” This can be seen again when his part is brought out while the sisters sing a long held note at mm. 27-29 where he sings the same words in both phrases. In the second passage however, Don Alfonso’s melodic line is arpeggiated rather than step-wise, but it still includes some chromaticism. He finally joins the sisters at the end with a melisma in measure 30 representing the beautiful sincerity of his send off. Finally, the trio joins together again to end the piece homophonically.

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<sup>13</sup> Jahn, 1882 Vol. III pg. 251

27 *f* *p*  
 S. ni - gno ri - spon da, ai -  
 S. ni - gno ri -  
 B. ni - gno ri -  
 p.o. *f* *p* 14

Figure 2.4 "Soave sia il vento" mm. 27-30

### Text translation of Soave sia il vento

Soave sia il vento	May the wind be gentle,
Tranquilla sia l'onda	May the waves be calm,
Ed ogni elemento	and may every one of the elements
Benigno risponda	respond warmly
Ai nostri desir	to our desire

(Translated by IN THE DARK)<sup>15</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Mozart, 1881 pg. 65

<sup>15</sup> IN THE DARK, 2014. Artlesspoems.com

## CHAPTER 3 - Liebesbotschaft, Ihr Bild, and Das Fischermädchen from *Schwanengesang*

### Franz Peter Schubert (1797-1828)



**Figure 3.1 F. P. Schubert**

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading 'F. P. Schubert'.

**Figure 3.2 F. P. Schubert's signature**

Although it took many years after his unfortunately short life, Franz Peter Schubert is now considered by many to be one of the greatest composers of the 19th century if not in the history of music. Schubert is widely known for his vast mastery of numerous genres. He is most accomplished for the development of the German Lied. His skills of composing art songs are second to none; however, he is also acclaimed for his sonatas, symphonies, a couple of operas, and an oratorio.

Schubert was born on January 31, 1797 in Vienna, Austria. Schubert was the youngest of four sons born of Franz Schubert, Sr. and Elizabeth as well as a sister, and nine other siblings who didn't survive infancy<sup>16</sup>. From the early age of seven Schubert began learning to play the

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<sup>16</sup> Austin, 1979 pg. 11



pianoforte. At age 8, he was fluent on the violin. The choirmaster of his family parish began instructing him in voice and organ in addition to pianoforte. His oldest brother, Ignaz also tried to infuse knowledge into young Franz's mind, but it became clear that none of them could keep up with Schubert's increasing taste and talent for music. Franz Schubert was considered a child prodigy. His first test came in 1808 when he auditioned before the Kapellmeisters of Vienna, Antonio Salieri and Joseph Eybler, for a position in the choir of Chapel Royal<sup>17</sup>. After receiving the spot with Chapel Royal, he began studying at the Konvikt. Like many young boys, he became especially close with four boys, Albert Städler, Josef Spaun, Johann Michael Senn, and Anton Holzapfel. These boys would prove to become life-long friends who heard all his compositions and progresses and provided assistance to him in many ways, not once denying him a helping hand<sup>18</sup>.

Schubert composed his first piece for the pianoforte in 1810 and his first song, "Klagegesang der Hagar," the following year. His musical influence stemmed from his frequents to the theater and opera; his favorite operas were Cherubini's *Medea* and Gluck's *Iphigenia auf Tauris*. Roles in these operas were performed by Pauline Anna Milder and Johann Michael Vogl, who proved to be further inspirations for young Franz and whom also became soloists of his works later on. His compositions really began to gain notoriety at this time. He composed his first symphony, Symphony in D major, in 1813 when he was 16 years old.

Upon completion of his studies at the Konvikt, he joined his father's school and began teaching lower classes. It is unclear why he suddenly changed his course of profession, but was noted for being a severe master<sup>19</sup>. In addition to classes, Schubert also taught private music lessons under the famed, aristocratic Esterházy family. Although he taught at his father's school for the next three years, he still found time to compose. One work, his Mass in F was written to commemorate the centenary festival of the Lichtenthal parish. He also composed numerous minuets, string quartets, and songs such as "Der Erlkönig" and "Gretchen am Spinnrade." The text of these two Lieder was written by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, who is considered to be one of the greatest writers of all time. Goethe wrote many texts for which Schubert set his music. His biggest work composed that year was his first opera, *Des Teufels Lustschloss*. The three-act

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<sup>17</sup> Austin, 1979 pg. 11-12

<sup>18</sup> Austin 1979 pg. 13

<sup>19</sup> Austin, 1979 pg. 16

libretto was written by well-known poet, August von Kotzebue. Unfortunately, this opera would never be performed during Schubert's life; it was premiered on March 1, 1861, some thirty years after his death. The review of this work was less than inspiring to the audience despite glimmers of incredible melodic composition. Today, the work only contains the first and third acts due to carelessness of servants using the pages of Act Two to light fires as ordered by the owner of the work at the time. Schubert was also known to have rewritten the work.<sup>20</sup> In 1820, Schubert set his own oratorio work, *Lazarus*. The poem of the work was written by A. H. Niemeyer, a professor of theology at the royal Pädagogium and latterly chancellor of the University of Vienna. This work was again never to be heard in Schubert's life. The work was not discovered until 1859, by Schubertian-scholar, Herr von Hellborn. The first performance came on March 27, 1863 in Vienna under the auspices of Musikverein<sup>21</sup>.

A hard year for Schubert came in 1822 when well-known Italian opera composer, Gioachino Rossini visited Vienna and opened a season of his Italian Bel-canto operas. The composer of such magnificent works as *Guillaume Tell* and *Il barbiere di Siviglia* left Schubert in a depression for lack of inspiration in his own work. He considered this the death of witnessing performances of his own great operas on the stage. Nonetheless, Schubert showed grace and masculinity, never alluding to his jealousy of a fellow musician and composer. In 1823, Schubert composed a setting of sacred texts, most notably the Twenty-third Psalm. In addition, he also wrote *Fantasia in C* for the pianoforte. He dedicated this work to his friend and great player, Herr Liebenberg von Zittin. This work was met with great success and is largely considered one of his best piano works. Franz Liszt arranged this work for a band further adding to its popularity<sup>22</sup>. Other works, most notably his masterful lieder, composed during this time also include his "Sonata in A minor", the Great Sonata, and "Die Schöne Müllerin."

Further comparisons of his operatic musicianship came about later that year, when Carl Maria von Weber came to Vienna. The eminent composer of acclaimed opera, *Der Frieschütz*, conducted a performance of his newest work, *Euryanthe*. Schubert wrote a rather scathing review of the work, noting, "The *Euryanthe* is totally unmusical: it is overcrowded with harmony, but has little or no melody." This sparked a feud between the two composers, wherein

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<sup>20</sup> Austin, 1979 pp. 17-18

<sup>21</sup> Austin, 1979 pp. 52-53

<sup>22</sup> Austin, 1979 pp. 49-50

Weber professed the shift in dramaticism of musical style and further ridiculed Schubert saying, “Let the dunce learn something himself before he attempts to criticize me!” Finally, Schubert approached Weber personally to settle the score. Schubert went with a score of his own opera, *Alfonso und Estrella*, to show his prowess of opera that enabled his criticism. After examination of *Alfonso und Estrella*, Carl Maria von Weber exclaimed the score was “pretty, but rather crude.”<sup>23</sup>

Over the next several years, Schubert suffered terrible depression. Based on the other well-known composers in and around Vienna during this time, Schubert suffered a serious inferiority complex. On the other hand, one well-known composer admired Schubert and was a close friend, Robert Schumann. He enjoyed Schubert’s “overflowing heart, courageous mind, quick action, and stern impulse.” Schumann’s comparison of Schubert’s character was that of effeminate by the side of Beethoven, yet his compositions of piano-forte far surpassed that of all others, even Beethoven himself.<sup>24</sup> In 1826, Schubert composed “Ständchen,” the first piece (although not the first song) of Lieder in his final cycle *Schwanengesang*. In addition, he also completed his other complete song cycle, *Winterreise*. The texts of *Winterreise* and *Die Schöne Müllerin* were written by poet, Wilhelm Müller. In October of 1828, after a series of trips, Schubert returned home and became suddenly ill. In a matter of a few short weeks, he became bedridden and slept for days on end. With physicians tending to him daily, he eventually succumbed to the illness. Schubert passed away on November 19, 1828.

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<sup>23</sup> Austin, 1979 pp. 80-85

<sup>24</sup> Austin, 1979 pg. 102

### Ludwig Rellstab, poet (1799-1860)



**Figure 3.3 L. Rellstab**

Born on April 13, 1799, Ludwig Rellstab was born into a musically and poetically gifted family. One would ascertain he'd be destined for his career path as a poet. His father, J. C. F. Rellstab, was an accomplished pianist and music publisher. This gave Ludwig connections to the most intimate aspects of Prussian musical life. In addition, his cousin, Wilhelm Häring, was a great poet who wrote under the pseudonym of Willibald Alexis. From a young age, Rellstab studied piano, playing the concertos of Bach and Mozart. Rellstab also had the fortune of studying under two distinguished composers, Bernhard Klein and Ludwig Berger. Berger was the first to set Müller's *Die Schöne Müllerin* texts.

Like many young men, Ludwig volunteered for the Army during the Napoleonic Wars, maintaining a desk job until 1821 teaching mathematics and history. Such versatility in both the arts and sciences led to his career as a journalist and subsequently a critic of music. His reputation made him a celebrity of sorts but his critiques also landed him in some trouble. He was sentenced to three months in jail for libel against Henriette Sontag and six weeks in jail for a campaign against Berlin's Generalmusikdirektor, Gaspare Spontini. Despite his activism, Rellstab is noted for being conservative in his tastes and considered Carl Maria von Weber to be a modern composer. At one time, Rellstab heard Mendelssohn perform for literary great, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe in Weimar. Goethe, being a great poet himself, was not a fan of Rellstab's work and not particularly encouraging. Rellstab's musical upbringing left him sympathetically bemused by works Mendelssohn, holding him with highest regards to the like of Bach, Handel, Gluck, Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven. Other considerable composers included Cherubini,

Meyerbeer, Weber, as well as his two teachers. Some of his regards to composers were biased with his business dealing with them such as Schumann, Chopin, and Liszt.

In addition to his poetic writings, Rellstab also wrote the largely successful historical novel, *1812*. Rellstab's poems that were set by Schubert were written when Rellstab was only 29 years old. These works, like much of his other poems, leave much to be desired in his writings. This lack of finesse can be attributed to his young age or perhaps his previous successes being too great to surpass. No documentation has been found noting Rellstab's commenting of Schubert's setting of his poems, although Rellstab visited his grave in Währinger cemetery in 1841. One supposed admirer of Rellstab is none other than Beethoven, mentioned in Rellstab's posthumously published autobiography during a visit to Vienna in 1825. It is suggested that Rellstab's critique of Beethoven's Piano Sonata Opus 27 Number 2 led to its nickname, "Moonlight Sonata." Throughout the remainder of his life, little is known of Rellstab's work. One can ponder based on his autobiography that he merely relived his earlier glory days since his last chapter cites the meeting with Beethoven in 1825. Rellstab lived some 35 years after this account, passing away at the age of 61 in November of 1860.<sup>25</sup>

### **Heinrich Heine, poet (1797-1856)**



**Figure 3.4 H. Heine**

Heinrich Heine was born December 13, 1797 in Düsseldorf, Germany to two loving Jewish parents. His father was an ineffectual merchant and his mother was a well-educated woman, ambitious for her son. His uncle, Salomon Heine was a powerful, millionaire banker in

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<sup>25</sup> <http://www.hyperion-records.co.uk/c.asp?c=C1082>

Hamburg and played an influential role in young Heinrich's life despite the awkward relationship the two shared due to the lack of common interests. Heine received an education at Düsseldorf Lyceum. He then unsuccessfully attempted to become a businessman in banking and retailing. Finally, his uncle financed his college education. Heine attended Universities of Bonn, Göttingen, Berlin, and Göttingen again, eventually earning a degree in law without receiving any honors. That same year, Heine converted to Protestantism in an attempt at joining the civil service sector not allowed to Jews at the time.

Despite his degree and conversion, Heine never practiced law or serve in the government. Instead, he found his passion in literature and poetry. His early poetic works came forth out of desolation suffered at rejections of his cousins, daughters of his uncle, whom he grew affections for. Nonetheless, neither sister had any interest in sacrificing her wealth for him. These poems were what became published as *Buch der Lieder* in 1827 and established his reputation for writing. *Buch der Lieder* was set by both Robert Schumann and Felix Mendelssohn as compositions. Also at this time, Heine wrote the poems used by Franz Schubert in his *Schwanengesang* cycle. Other works of Heine's that helped him to establish his reputation in literature was his four-volume work, *Reisebilder* which included "Die Harzreise," a semi-fictional work about his trip to the Harz Mountains to escape his studies at the university. Despite the Romantic style of poetry Heine wrote, Heine had little faith in Romanticism; instead he became an influential role in Germany's post-Romantic crisis. Unfortunately for Heine, this movement was overshadowed by the works of Goethe and Schiller.

During the July Revolution in 1830, Heine remained in Germany seeking employment unlike his liberal colleague who rushed to Paris. Alas, he went to Paris in the spring of 1831 and wrote several articles that further established his career. Examples of his works include, "Französische Zustände" in 1832, "Die Romantische Schule" in 1835, and "Zur Geschichte der Religion und Philosophie in Deutschland" in 1835. These were criticisms of Germany's revolutionary potential from the Reformation and Enlightenment. Although written about Germany, these works were written in French, with a French audience in mind.

Heine was particularly poor throughout his life. Heine was disinherited by his uncle and left nothing when he passed away in 1844. Heine fought vigorously to get some of his uncle's inheritance and as a result, he lost much of his memoirs to posterity in the settlement. In addition, Heine was further embarrassed after the French Revolution of 1848 when it was discovered that

Heine had been receiving a secret pension from the French government. The worst was yet to come for Heine when a bout of a venereal disease deteriorated his health and left him paralyzed and confined to his “mattress-grave.” Despite his torturous suffering, Heine was able to complete a third volume of poetry, *Romanzero*, filled with works of lament and despair of the human condition. These have been seen by many as some of his finest works. Heine passed away after battling the disease for eight years in February of 1856.<sup>26</sup>

### **Historical Analysis of *Schwanengesang***

*Schwanengesang* is unlike that of Schubert’s other song cycles, *Die Schöne Müllerin* and *Winterreise*. The main difference is the lack of a storyline throughout the cycle. This stems from *Schwanengesang*’s texts being written by three different poets. The first seven song texts were written by Ludwig Rellstab, the next six song texts were written by Heinrich Heine, and the last song of the cycle was written by Johann Gabriel Seidl. The poems of Ludwig Rellstab were believed to be given to Schubert to set by none other than fellow composer, Ludwig van Beethoven. Notes made on the poems by Beethoven suggest which poems he liked best. At the time Beethoven was presented these poems by Rellstab, Beethoven’s health was considerably deteriorated. Beethoven died in 1827. Rellstab believed his poems to be lost until he found them set in *Schwanengesang* published after Schubert had passed away.<sup>27</sup>

It is believed, the Rellstab poems were set to be a cycle of their own. The same can be said for the Heine poems. In a letter, Schubert wrote to Schott and Probst urging them to publish his *Schwanengesang*, the six Lieder based on Heinrich Heine poems, as well as several other completed works. Heine’s poems are considered epigones of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe’s works. At a reading of these works, the reviews were well received of the boldness of Heine’s cynical style matched with Schubert’s flowing melodic style.<sup>28</sup>

Unfortunately, Schubert died at the young age of 32 leaving many works unfinished. His older brother, Ferdinand, and Schubert’s publisher, Tobias Haslinger, found these songs and combined them into a solitary song cycle, believing it would sell better. Haslinger being a

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<sup>26</sup> <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/259683/Heinrich-Heine>.

<sup>27</sup> Fischer-Dieskau, 1976 pp. 276-277

<sup>28</sup> Fischer-Dieskau, 1976 pp. 279-280

composer himself finished the text of Johann Gabriel Seidl's "Der Taubenpost" as a way to round out the cycle since it was left incomplete. Despite its last minute inclusion in *Schwanengesang*, "Der Taubenpost" is still considered classic Schubert in its compositional style. It is most often viewed in the same compositional style as that of *Die Schöne Müllerin*. This only stands to prove the innovational and transformative effect Heine's language had on Schubert compared to that of Seidl.<sup>29</sup>

## **Stylistic & Technical Analysis of Liebesbotschaft, Ihr Bild, and Das Fischermädchen**

### **I. Liebesbotschaft**

"Liebesbotschaft" translates to Love's Greeting. The text of this song, as well as the other six of the first seven pieces in this cycle, was written by Ludwig Rellstab. Rellstab was only 29 years old when Schubert set these texts in *Schwanengesang*. The text of all Rellstab poems in this cycle are particularly lacking compared to that of Heine's. Schubert's settings of these lack-luster poems are considered an homage to Beethoven rather than the need to set a wonderful text as has been the case in other works by Schubert.

The song's tempo is set at *Ziemlich langsam* or *lento assai*. Both are seemingly slow tempos; however, recordings and modern performances practices pace the tempo slightly faster. Another reason to suggest a faster tempo is the use of the 2/4 meter. The melodic line for the voice isn't difficult for the singer at a faster pace; the piano on the other hand, plays a constant thirty-second note arpeggiated pattern, so a faster tempo makes the accompaniment a daunting task for even the most accomplished pianist. Schubert being the virtuosic pianist that he was makes the reasoning behind his difficult accompaniment composing style all the more clear. The accompaniment is nonetheless outstanding, flowing beautifully to set the scene of the text.

Typical of Classical Era Lieder, nature and love are a common theme in countless works composed during this time. As noted in the text translation, this song is centralized around a brook in which the singer wishes to use to send a message of love and adornment to his beloved.

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<sup>29</sup> Fischer-Dieskau, 1976 pg. 282



The thirty-second note arpeggiated pattern played throughout the entire piece is text painting by Schubert to mimic the flowing of the brook.



**Figure 3.5 "Liebesbotschaft" mm. 1-2**

The form of “Liebesbotschaft” is ABA form. The genius of Schubert’s compositional style, particularly in this form, is his harmonic structure. The piece starts in a straightforward major key. For the B Section, Schubert changes the mood from happiness to despair at the narrators’ lover pining for him. In doing so, Schubert modulates to the minor key of the supertonic from the first verse to the second verse. At the end of the B Section, the lover finds solace in the brook which carries the message of her love’s return to her, and the key modulates to the mediant major. From there Schubert modulates back to the original key for return of the A Section and the third verse and the mood shifts back to elation.

## IX. Ihr Bild

The overall “cycle” of *Schwanengesang* displays various emotions and compositional styles throughout. “Ihr Bild” is dramatically different from “Liebesbotschaft” emotionally and texturally. The text of this piece was written by Heinrich Heine at a particularly early time in the poet’s life. Unlike that of Rellstab, Heine continued to write throughout his life and while these poems are not considered his best, the use of emotion and text are masterful and woven with that of Schubert’s melodic style make the work nothing short of brilliant.

“Ihr Bild” was the second setting of Heine’s poems Schubert produced. The text of the title translates to “Her Portrait.” The text of the piece is depressing and somber. The narrator sings of his lover, whom he’s lost through a break up. He looks at her picture and reminisces at her beauty, describing her beautiful lips and smile. For a moment, he finds happiness only to find

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<sup>30</sup> Schubert, 1928 pg. 1

tears of sadness in her eyes. This brings tears to his eyes as he laments his loss in the last line of the song.

The music conveys the emotion of the text with its slow tempo and minor key. The opening texture is monophonic, where the opening g-minor melody is doubled by the accompaniment. The first chord is performed the upbeat into mm.7. The form of this piece is ternary, reducing Heine's twelve line poem into six pair of melodic line. The melody revolves around g-minor in the beginning of the outer sections and ends in it relative major. This symbolizes the brief moment of happiness as the portrait comes to life for the narrator in the beginning and the loss he suffers in the end. The middle sections modulate to Gb major as he describes her beauty. This modulatory style Schubert uses is mirrored by the insanity seen in the narrator throughout the piece. The narrator does not realize the craziness portrayed to the audience in the song. By this time in Schubert's career as a composer, his style is much more dramatic and typically modulates further away from the tonic than its relative major or a third away. This effect showcases the haunting genius of Schubert in such a simple manner.

Langsam (Lento)

53.

Ich stand in dun-kehn Träu-men und

starrt ihr Bild-nis an, und das ge-lieb-te

*pp*

*cresc.*

31

Figure 3.6 "Ihr Bild" mm. 1-9

<sup>31</sup> Schubert, 1928 pg. 34

## X. Das Fischermädchen

“Das Fischermädchen” is unlike that of any other in the cycle in the sense that it does not burn with passion, moan with agony, or fold itself introspectively. On the other hand, one can hardly call this a happy tune. The song is set in 3 stanzas, each with its own tone. In the first stanza, the narrator calls out to the beautiful fisher maiden, asking her to join him on the shore as they cuddle, hand in hand. The second stanza shows the fisher maiden’s fear of the narrator only to have the narrator assure her that her trust in him will be easy since she trusts the wild sea daily. In the third stanza, the narrator wishes to persuade the fisher maiden to join him, comparing the sea to his own heart with its storms, ebb, and flows but contains many beautiful pearls inside.

Despite the dynamic text set by Heine, Schubert composed this piece in strophic form. The first and third verses are set to the exact same, somewhat cheerful, harmonic structure. The interlude between the second verses serves as a shift from F major to Ab major. The melody of the second verse is the same as the first and third verses; however, Schubert modified the line slightly to keep the singer from singing at an uncomfortably high range compared to the rest of the piece. The second interlude transitions back into F major to repeat the same melodic line as the first stanza. The tempo throughout is moderate and the time signature is 6/8 to mimic the waves of the sea. Despite the vocal leaps at the end of the phrases in each verse, the dynamics of the piece remain at pianissimo. This technique creates the sense of the singer’s voice floating in the water, never getting heavy as not to drown.

*Etwas geschwind (Poco animato)*

32

Figure 3.7 "Das Fischermädchen" mm. 1-5

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<sup>32</sup> Schubert, 1928 pg. 36

## Text Translation of Liebesbotschaft, Ihr Bild, Das Fischermädchen

### I. Liebesbotschaft

Rauschendes Bächlein, so silbern und hell,  
Eilst zur Geliebten so munter und schnell?  
Ach, trautes Bächlein, mein Bote sei du;  
Bringe die Grüße des Fernen ihr zu.

All ihre Blumen, im Garten gepflegt,  
Die sie so lieblich am Busen trägt,  
Und ihre Rosen in purpurner Glut,  
Bächlein, erquicke mit kühlender Flut.

Wenn sie am Ufer, in Träume versenkt,  
Meiner gedenkend das Köpfchen hängt,  
Tröste die Süße mit freundlichem Blick,  
Denn der Geliebte kehrt bald zurück.

Neigt sich die Sonne mit rötlichem Schein,  
Wiege das Liebchen in Schlummer ein.  
Rausche sie murmelnd in süße Ruh,  
Flüstere ihr Träume der Liebe zu.

(Translated by Richard Morris)<sup>33</sup>

Murmuring brooklet, so silvery bright,  
Hurry to my beloved so fast and light,  
Oh friendly brooklet, be my messenger fair,  
Bring my distant greetings to her.

All the flowers she tends in her garden,  
Which she sweetly bears on her bosom,  
And her roses in a purple glow,  
Brooklet, refresh them with cooling flow.

When on the bank, immersed in dreams,  
Remembering me, she hangs her head,  
Comfort my sweetheart with a friendly glance,  
For her beloved will soon come back.

When the sun sets with reddening glow,  
Rock my loved one to slumber,  
Murmur for her sweet sleep,  
And whisper dreams of Love to her.

### IX. Ihr Bild

Ich stand in dunkeln Träumen  
und starrt ihr Bildnis an,  
und das geliebte Antlitz  
Heimlich zu leben begann.

Um ihre Lippen zog sich  
Ein Lächeln wunderbar,  
Und wie von Wehmutstränen  
Erglänzte ihr Augenpaar.

Auch meine Tränen flossen  
Mir von den Wangen hera

I stood in darkened daydreams  
and stared at her portrait long  
as that beloved face was  
secretly coming to life.

Around her lips there blossomed  
a wondrous laughing smile,  
and melancholy teardrops  
they glittered in her fair eyes.

Likewise my teardrops welled up  
and flowed down mournful cheeks

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<sup>33</sup> Morris, 2003. recmusic.org

Und ach, ich kann's nicht glauben,  
Daß ich dich verloren hab!

alas, I can't believe it,  
that I am deprived of you!

(Translated by David Kenneth Smith)<sup>34</sup>

### X. Das Fischermädchen

Du schönes Fischermädchen,  
treibe den Kahn ans Land;  
Komm zu mir und setze dich nieder,  
wir kosen Hand in Hand.

You beautiful fisher maiden,  
Pull your boat toward shore;  
Come to me and sit down,  
We will speak of love, hand in hand.

Leg an mein Herz dein Köpfchen  
Und fürchte dich nicht zu sehr;  
Vertraust du dich doch sorglos  
Täglich dem wilden Meer.

Lay your little head on my heart,  
And do not be too frightened;  
Indeed, you trust yourself fearlessly  
Daily to the wild sea!

Mein Herz gleicht ganz dem Meere,  
Hat Sturm und Ebb' und Flut,  
Und manche schöne Perle  
In seiner Tiefe ruht.

My heart is just like the sea,  
Having storms and ebb and flow,  
And many beautiful pearls  
Rest in its depths.

(Translation by Michael P. Rosewall)<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Smith, 1996. recmusic.org

<sup>35</sup> Rosewall, 2003. recmusic.org

## CHAPTER 4 - *Vaga luna che inargenti, Il poveretto, and Che vuoi di più*

### Vincenzo Bellini (1801-1835)



**Figure 4.1 V. Bellini**

Vincenzo Bellini was born November 2, 1801 in Catania, Sicily. His father, Rosario Bellini, was also a musician, skilled in organ and a maestro di capella and composer in Catania.<sup>36</sup> Bellini was the eldest of eleven children born in the Bellini family. At the age of 2, Bellini began studying music. By age 3, Bellini began playing the piano. At age 6, Bellini composed his first pieces, “Gallus cantavit” and “Tantum ergo.” Around age 7, Bellini began taking musical instruction from his grandfather, also named Vincenzo. In 1810, Bellini composed his first Mass, performed in the church of San Biagio. For such a young age, Bellini’s compositional output was remarkable. He continued writing various works of different genres including, the song “La Farfalletta,” a second Mass, and nine *Versetti*. In 1817, Bellini composed his first major work, *Salve Regina* for chorus and orchestra. At age 18, Bellini was approved to study at the Real Collegio in Naples where he is offered free room for his successful compositions. While at Real Collegio, Bellini studied composition with Giacomo Tritto and Niccolò Antonio Zingarelli.

In 1822, Bellini met Gaetano Donizetti, an upcoming composer like himself. At the time, Donizetti had already written nine operas with marginal success. Also in that year, Bellini met and fell in love with Maddalena Fumaroli. He gave her voice lessons and composed several songs for her. In 1824, Bellini wrote several symphonies as well as his first opera, *Adelson e*

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<sup>36</sup> Willier, 2002. pg. 1

*Salvini*, with libretto by court poet, Andrea Leone Tottola. Tottola was most famous for his collaborations with Donizetti and Gioachino Rossini.

In 1827, Bellini signed a contract with La Scala to compose opera, *Il Pirata*. The libretto was written by Felice Romani. Bellini collaborated with Romani on most of his operas such as, *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* in 1830, *La sonnambula* in March 1831, and *Norma* in December 1831. Bellini also composed other works during this time including, *Composizione di Camera* and *Sei ariette* around 1829.<sup>37</sup> *Sei ariette* translates to “six small arias.” “Vaga luna che inargenti” is one of the six songs Bellini composed at this time, using an anonymously written text. Although not from a larger work, “Vaga luna che inargenti” is styled in the Bel Canto tradition for which Bellini is famous. The biggest composers of the Bel Canto Era are Vincenzo Bellini, Gaetano Donizetti, Gioachino Rossini, and to a lesser extent, Giuseppe Verdi.

In 1828, Bellini met Giuditta Turina to whom he dedicated parts of his opera, *Bianca e Fernando*. Bellini never married in his short life but had affairs with Turina as well as several other women. Despite spending a large amount of time with Turina, taking numerous vacations with her, Bellini was cold and uninterested in her when letters alluding to their affair reached Turina’s husband and he filed for separation.

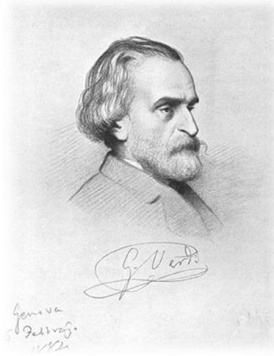
Around 1830, Bellini got seriously ill and was nursed back to health by Madame Pollini. After his recovery, Bellini met famed soprano, Giuditta Pasta who starred in his next opera, *Norma*. In 1833, Bellini had difficulty receiving a libretto from Romani and only received one after Impresario Lanari invoked a law. This created a breach between the two that would not be healed for a year. With this libretto, Bellini composed *Beatrice di Tenda* that met little success. Throughout this time, Bellini travelled all over Italy as well as London to stage his works. His main stays included Venice and Milan. In 1834, Bellini signed a new contract to compose operas with the Théâtre Italien in Paris after *Il Pirata* and *I Capuleti* were produced there. At this time, Bellini also made acquaintances with Gioachino Rossini, Frédéric Chopin, Ferdinand Hiller, and Heinrich Heine. Bellini composed *I Puritani* with a libretto by Carlo Pepoli. Bellini fell ill again but never recovered and died of inflammation of the intestines in September of 1835 at the age of 33.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Kimball, 2005 pg. 427

<sup>38</sup> Orrey, 1969 pp. 145-155

## Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901)



**Figure 4.2 G. Verdi and his signature**

Giuseppe Verdi was born October 9, 1813 in Roncole, Parma, Italy. At age four, Verdi began formal instruction in reading and writing Italian and Latin from Don Pietro Baistrocchi. It is believed Verdi also began learning to play the keyboard. In 1820, his father purchased an old spinet for Verdi to practice on and he began substituting as organist for Baistrocchi at San Michele. At age 10, he was admitted to *ginnasio* in Busseto where he studied Italian grammar with Don Pietro Seletti, and humanities and rhetoric with Carlo Carotti and Don Giacinto Volpini. He began formal studies of music in the fall of 1825 with the maestro di cappella of Busseto, Ferdinando Provesi, at the School of Music of San Bartolomeo. At the age of 15, Verdi composed an overture to Rossini's *Il barbiere di Siviglia* as well as a cantata in eight movements for baritone and orchestra titled, *I deliri di Saul*.

In 1831, Verdi moved into the home of Antonio Barezzi to give voice and piano lessons to Margherita Barezzi, his future wife. Meanwhile, Verdi's father, Carlo, applied for financial assistance with the administrators of the Monte di Pietà e d'Abbondanza of Busseto so Giuseppe could complete his musical studies in Milan. The Monte di Pietà granted Verdi a scholarship of 300 lire annually for four years and payment beginning in November 1833. Verdi moved to Milan at stays with Giuseppe Seletti. After completing his application for admission in the Conservatory, he was examined by the registrar and teachers. Verdi was rejected by the Conservatory, citing that he is four years older than the average student, lived outside the Lombardy-Venetia state, and performed poorly on the pianoforte exam. Therefore, Verdi studied composition privately with Vincenzo Lavigna until 1835.



At a performance of Haydn's *Creation*, Verdi met Pietro Massini, director of the Philharmonic Society. Verdi was invited to write an opera, *Roccester*. The libretto was written by Antonio Piazza. The Monte di Pietà suspended Verdi's pension after a total of 650 lire paid out of the 1200 lire granted. In 1836, Busseto announced a competition for the post of Maestro di Musica and conductor of Philharmonic Society. Following examination in Parma, Verdi was named the winner and new Maestro di Musica of Busseto.

In April of 1836, Verdi was officially engaged to Margherita Barezzi and they wed on May 4. Upon completion of *Roccester* in 1837, he met with the impresario of Parma in hopes of getting the work staged during the carnival season. Unfortunately, Verdi was denied, so he wrote to Massini requesting intercession with the impresario of La Scala to see if his opera can be staged there. At this time, Verdi and his wife have had two children, a daughter, Virginia, and a son, Icilio Romano. After resigning his post in Busseto and moving to Milan, Verdi's opera, *Oberto*, is staged at La Scala. Impresario Merelli offered Verdi a contract to complete three operas at eight month intervals. Verdi began working on his next opera, *Un giorno di regno*, but fell ill and stopped composing briefly. After being denied admission to Conservatory, denial of staging *Roccester*, and the death of his two children, his wife passed away in June of 1840 from encephalitis. Verdi worked through the pain, completing *Un giorno di regno* and directed its premiere at La Scala on September 5. In 1841, Impresario Merelli gave Verdi the libretto of *Nabucco* to be set.<sup>39</sup>

In June of 1842, Verdi visited Bologna to meet with Gioachino Rossini. Verdi spent a great deal of time travelling for the staging of his works going back and forth between Busseto, Milan, and Parma. Over the next few years, Verdi signed contracts with several Theaters throughout Italy as well as Paris. Verdi continued composing various works including several operas, *I lombardi alla prima crociata* in 1843, *Ernani* in 1844, *I due Foscari* in 1844, *Alzira* in 1845, *Giovanna d'Arco* in 1845, *Attila* in 1845, and *Macbeth* in 1846, as well as travelling for the premieres of these works. In addition, Verdi found time to compose several smaller works. "Il poveretto" was composed in 1847 for voice and piano. The text was written by S. Manfredo Maggioni.

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<sup>39</sup> Osborne, 1978 pp. 7-18

Over the next decade, Verdi continued travelling all over Italy as well as the rest of Europe, visiting France, Russia, and Spain to premiere and conduct his various works. Despite all the travelling, Verdi still managed a sensational compositional output of some of his greatest works in his career, such as *Rigoletto* in 1851, *Il trovatore* in 1852, *La traviata* in 1853, *Les Vêpres siciliennes* in 1854, and *Una vendetta in domino* in 1858. *Una vendetta in domino* was not approved by the Venetian government and presented with some alterations required as to censor the work, a common practice and an issue Verdi had dealt with before in other works such as, *Rigoletto*. This section of Verdi's life with such great successes became known as his Middle Period of his compositional style. Verdi's compositional style was bridged in the Bel Canto style but developed into a heavier style of its own throughout his life. Verdi and Richard Wagner are considered the heaviest style of opera music, using thick layers of orchestral accompaniment requiring a special type of vocal ability not afforded to all performers.

Also during this time, Italy was in a series of Wars of Independence with Austria. The former King of Sardinia, Vittorio Emanuele united Italy to become the first King of Italy in 1861. His political campaign enlisted the famous phrase and acronym "Viva VERDI!" This acronym in Italian stands for Vittorio Emanuele Re D'Italia, which translates to "Victor Emanuel King of Italy." After the successful unification of Italy and an end to the Wars of Independence, Verdi was elected to a seat in the first Italian Parliament. At this time Verdi also met Giuseppina Strepponi, an operatic soprano. Verdi went on to court her and marry her in 1859. They remained together until her death in 1897.

Following his Middle Period of compositional style, Verdi revised several of his earlier works such as *Macbeth* and *Don Carlos*. In 1869, Verdi composed a section of a requiem mass compiled from several prominent composers in memory of Rossini. Also during this time, Verdi was commissioned to write what has known as one of his greatest works ever, *Aida*, for the opening of the Suez Canal in Cairo. Verdi's inspiration for the role of Aida was Theresa Stolz. She premiered several of Verdi's later works and went on to become a lifelong friend, most notably after his second wife's death until his own. Verdi went on to compose an entire *Requiem Mass* utilizing his portion of Rossini's *Requiem* as his base. This mass was composed to honor renowned poet, Alessandro Manzoni, who died in 1873.

As Verdi advanced in age, his compositional output slowed down; however, his compositional style remains as sharp as ever as he completes his final operas, *Otello* in 1887 and

*Falstaff* in 1893. His last works were the *Stabat*, *Laudi*, and *Te Deum*, completed in 1898 at the age of 85. Verdi continued to travel throughout Italy until his health deteriorated. He suffered a stroke in January 1901 which proved to be fatal. He passed away a week later.<sup>40</sup>

### **Gaetano Donizetti (1797-1848)**



**Figure 4.3 G. Donizetti and his signature**

Gaetano Donizetti was born in Bergamo, Italy on November 29, 1797. Donizetti was the fifth child, born to a porter in a pawnshop and a weaver. Donizetti grew up in extreme poverty. At age 9, Donizetti enrolled in a free music school conducted by Giovanni Simone Mayr, maestro di capella at Santa Maria Maggiore in Bergamo and attended the school until 1814. While in attendance, Donizetti studied a broad range of music, mostly by composers of the Viennese School. Donizetti also studied voice with Francesco Salari, and other musical subjects from Antonio Gonzales and Giuseppe Antonio Capuzzi. In 1811, Mayr arranged for Donizetti to travel to Bologna to study counterpoint with Padre Mattei. During his time in Bologna, Donizetti unsuccessfully composed two operas, *Il Pigmaliione* and *L'ira d'Achille*, as well as starting a third, *Olimpiade*, which he never completed. Upon his return to Bergamo, Mayr arranged a contract for Donizetti with Impresario Zancla that produced three operas that were nothing remarkable but showed Donizetti's development. Around 1817, Donizetti began composing other smaller works such as cantatas, short sacred works, orchestral sinfonias, and various piano pieces.

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<sup>40</sup> Weaver and Chusid, 1979 pp. 263-323

In 1822, Donizetti composed his first successful opera, *Zoraide di Granata*, leading to another contract and subsequent opera, *La zingara*. Donizetti continued to compose over the next few years, writing several operas per year which did not see much success. In 1828, Donizetti married Virginia Vasselli, daughter of a Roman lawyer. Together they had three children who did not survive infancy. Their marriage lasted less than ten years due to Virginia's death in 1837. Finally, Donizetti premiered his ultimate success of *Anna Bolena* in 1830 defining Donizetti's compositional style. Later, Donizetti met young Italian baritone, Giorgio Ronconi, who had a dramatic voice that allowed Donizetti to exploit this voice type in his works. Donizetti composed *Maria Stuarda*, but could not premiere it due to censorship. After reworking it and renaming the opera *Buondelmonte*, it met little success.

In 1835, Donizetti was invited by Gioachino Rossini to Paris to stage an unsuccessful work at Théâtre-Italien. This experience exposed Donizetti to the French Grand Opera genre. Donizetti returned to Naples to premiere *Lucia di Lammermoor* which further launched his career as a remarkable composer. The following year, Donizetti composed *Belsario*, interpolating attributes of the French Grand Opera. That same year, Donizetti also produced *L'assedio di Calais*, bringing back an outdated tradition of including pants role, a male role written for a female contralto voice. Following a ban of Donizetti's opera, *Poliuto*, Donizetti took this opportunity to leave Naples permanently and pursue a career in Paris. Following successes of his works in four French theaters, Donizetti is poorly reviewed by Hector Berlioz in *Journal des débats*. The works produced include a French revision of *Lucie di Lammermoor* and *Poliuto*, *La fille du régiment*, *Les martyrs*, and *La favorite*.

Despite Donizetti's successes, his poor finances would not allow him to retire as he had hoped. Donizetti composed *Don Pasquale* in 1843 with its premiere at Théâtre-Italien. At this time, Donizetti's mental health began to deteriorate. He was diagnosed with suffering from degeneration of the brain and spine, caused by syphilis. Donizetti is institutionalized at the recommendations of his doctors. He was released from the sanatorium at Ivry in June 1847 to the care of his family. By this time, Donizetti was paralyzed and unable to speak. His family transported him back to Bergamo where he remained under his family's care until his death a year later in April 1848. He was interred in the Pezzoli family vault in Valtesse Cemetery after

an autopsy confirmed his suffering from syphilis. In 1875, his remains, along with those of his mentor, Mayr, were moved to Santa Maria Maggiore in Bergamo.<sup>41</sup>

## **Historical Analysis of the Bel Canto**

Bel Canto translates to “beautiful singing.” The style is deeply rooted in Italian where it derives its name. The style itself spans many different eras and has been connected with a variety of composers and artists; however, the period most significantly tied to Bel Canto is 19th century opera. The biggest composers to evoke the style of Bel Canto include Vincenzo Bellini, Gaetano Donizetti, and Gioachino Rossini, and the early works of Giuseppe Verdi, but the idea behind Bel Canto style can be seen much earlier in the works of Baroque composers such as George Frideric Handel, Alessandro Scarlatti, and Antonio Vivaldi. In order to understand the ways Bel Canto appears in even earlier figures, one must look back even further to the Middle Ages and Renaissance. The Council of Trent and the Counter-Reformation saw the use of music stripped to core. Use of polyphony was strictly forbidden in mass. This brought out the use of Gregorian chant. Finally, Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina wrote polyphonic music that was deemed acceptable to the Catholic Church. Meanwhile, the Protestant churches of Germany and other European countries were maintaining homophonic musical styles such as Bach’s chorales.

As the Renaissance approached, we saw the introduction of opera by Jacopo Peri and Claudio Monteverdi. The introduction of music as an entertainment, brought out a new class of people, the castrati. Boys who were considered especially gifted in music at an early age were removed of their genitals to prevent them from completing puberty and having their voices change. This was especially important at a time when women were not allowed to perform and composers needed female quality voices in their works. As time continued, this practice became undesired and ultimately outlawed. Nonetheless, the quality of singing that was produced for these performances set a new standard, desiring a beautiful tone for flourished melodies. Therefore, Bel Canto places supreme importance on the singer’s voice and the composed melody, unlike the music of Germany, which focuses importance on the richly textured orchestration. For example, in Bellini’s “Vaga luna che inargenti,” the accompaniment mirrors

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<sup>41</sup> Cassaro, 2000 pp. 3-8

the vocal melody and when the singer enters, the accompaniment performs eighth-note arpeggiations of the harmonies. By composing the chordal progression in this manner, the accompaniment is much lighter as not to overpower the singer or demand a heavier vocal quality. On the other hand, Richard Wagner's music displays powerful, heavy orchestration composed of its own motifs written throughout his works that are almost more significant than the melody of the singer and require a much heavier quality of voice.

Moving forward to the 19th century, we see the utilization of this style in the music of Bellini, Donizetti, and Rossini. Although Castrati were on the verge of extinction by this time, the composers wanted beautiful melodic lines with little to stand in its way. Furthermore, the ornamentations that were once disposed of were now an expectation. Singers often added their own flourishes or cadenzas without any assistance or written vocalization. This method is most highly used in Da Capo Arias that date back to the Baroque Era. With the ABA form of the da capo aria, the singer would perform the return of the A section with added embellishments, grace notes, portamentos and melismas where appropriate until the end of the piece. This makes one co-creator of the music utilizing the singer's creativity with that of the composer's work.

## **Stylistic & Technical Analysis of *Vaga luna che inargenti*, *Il poveretto*, and *Che vuoi di più***

### ***Vaga luna che inargenti***

“*Vaga luna che inargenti*” is a delicate song set in the classic Bel Canto style. The title translates to “wandering moon that casts silver.” The text of the song was written anonymously. The text is about how the narrator notices the moon, and requests that it deliver a message of his love to his beloved. The piano accompaniment starts with the melody in the high treble and a simple eighth-note arpeggiated pattern in the bass. Once the singer enters with the same melody played in the piano, the accompaniment puts the eighth-note arpeggiated pattern in the treble with an open octave of the I, IV, V chord progression pattern in the bass. By setting the accompaniment in a basic choral structure, the vocal line can dominate throughout. The song is written in two verses in a strophic form.

Despite the beautiful, simplistic sounding melody, the difficulty of this piece is written in the Bel Canto approach Bellini uses. The phrases are broken into two-bar phrases at the beginning of the verse. The end of the verse creates a never ending repeat of the last line, turning the two-bar phrase into a six-bar phrase. This technique is reminiscent of the operatic cabaletta style. Therefore, a strong breath control is needed. In addition, this song encompasses a range of an octave and a third, and extends the high notes to the singer's passaggio. The tempo of the piece is *Andante cantabile*; however, the melodic line creates an arch effect and leaves room for the singer to utilize *rubato* creating the classic Italian feel. Bellini is ingenious in the setting of the text, creating a melody that accents the correct syllable of the words so that even a singer with novice skill in Italian can create the sense of being a fluent speaker.

The image shows a musical score for the first seven measures of the song "Vaga luna che inargenti". The score is written in 3/4 time and the key signature has two flats (B-flat major). The tempo is marked "Andante cantabile". The piano accompaniment begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic and a "dolce" marking. The vocal line also begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The lyrics are "Va - ga lu - na, che i - nar - gen - ti Que - ste". The score concludes with a page number "42".

Figure 4.4 "Vaga luna che inargenti" mm. 1-7

<sup>42</sup> Bellini, 1935 pg. 1

## Il poveretto

“Il poveretto” is a bridge between the Bel Canto style and the Wagnerian style. The title translates to “the poor man.” The text was written by poet, S. Manfredo Maggioni. The text is a story about the narrator begging for money from people passing by. The narrator explains how he wasn’t always poor; he was a strong, strapping young lad years ago when he served in the military. Unfortunately, his years of service didn’t mean much to the government that he served and have left him in his squalor. The song is in ABCA form as the first verse is reprised at the end. The music is set in the major mode throughout moving diatonically in the second verse, using chromaticism to create inflection of the text and heighten the expressiveness. The accompaniment creates a swaying feel with the triplet line in the treble during the opening and interlude. When the singer enters, the accompaniment shifts to a long-short-short “oomp- pa-pa” pattern of three eighth notes. Then the accompaniment changes to an eighth-note arpeggio. The accompaniment interchanges between these two rhythmic styles throughout the piece. The singer cannot sing in the light lyric style of Bel Canto due to the higher tessitura of the piece and must utilize a fuller, supported sound typical of Verdi works.

Andante piuttosto mosso

*p* *dim.*

con semplicità

*dim.* *p*

Pas - seg - ger, che al dol - ce a - spet - to Par che

*dim.* *p*

Figure 4.5 "Il poveretto" mm. 1-6



## Che vuoi di più

“Che vuoi di più” translates to “what more do you want?” The piece is a duet and can be performed one of two ways, either as two females complaining about a common lover or as a tenor and soprano arguing as a couple. Donizetti dedicated the work to two sisters, thus leading to the performance practice of two sopranos. The text was written by poet, Carlo Guaita. The text is gender neutral as to be sung by either combination of singers. The text tells a story with one singer asking, “What more can be done?” The singer tells the other singer all the faithful ways he has devoted his love to her. She responds that she too has been equally faithful. In mm. 14-16, Donizetti adds a line that does not fit the rhythmic style or rhyme scheme of the piece; this creates a realistic drama as if asking the other singer to be honest.

Che vuoi di piú, che vuoi di piú? D'a -  
piú, che vuoi di piú, ah, che... vuó-i? Che?  
mo - re a te u - na vi - ta io giu - ro, mu - tar - mi in pet - to il  
Par - la... dí... dí, che vuoi di piú?

Figure 4.6 "Che vuoi di più" mm. 11-18

<sup>43</sup> Donizetti, 2004 pg. 119

As the two come together in the third verse, they begin to reminisce and for a moment are happy again only to get into another argument. The third verse is repeated as they reconcile again. At the end the two singers trade off parts gradually getting louder creating another argument and end on a high F at odds. The accompaniment plays a single note in the bass followed by three eighth notes in the treble throughout the piece. Thus, the text and outcome of the argument is left to the performers and can be interpreted in several different ways.

## **Text Translation of Vaga luna che inargenti, Il poveretto, and Che vuoi di più**

### **Vaga luna che inargenti**

Vaga luna, che inargenti queste rive e questi fiori ed ispiri agli elementi il linguaggio dell'amor;	Beautiful moon, dappling with silver These banks and flowers, Evoking from the elements The language of love
testimonio or sei tu sola del mio fervido desir, ed a lei che m'innamora conta i palpiti e i sospir.	Only you are witness To my ardent desire; Go tell her, tell my beloved How much I long for her and sigh.
Dille pur che lontananza il mio duol non può lenire, che se nutro una speranza, ella è sol nell'avvenir.	Tell her that with her so far away, My grief can never be allayed, That the only hope I cherish Is for my future to be spent with her.
Dille pur che giorno e sera conto l'ore del dolor, che una speme lusinghiera mi conforta nell'amor.	Tell her that day and night I count the hours of my yearning, That hope, a sweet hope beckons, And comforts me in my love

(Translated by Antonio Giuliano)<sup>44</sup>

### **Il poveretto**

Passegger, che al dolce aspetto Par che serbi un gentil cor,	Passerby that has a gentle look And seems to have a good heart,
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<sup>44</sup> Giuliano, 2003. recmusic.org

Porgi un soldo al poveretto  
Che da man digiuno è ancor.

Fin da quando era figliuolo  
Sono stato militar  
E pugnando pel mio suolo  
Ho trascorso e terra e mar;

Ma or che il tempo su me pesa,  
Or che forza più non ho,  
Fin la terra che ho difesa,  
La mia patria m'oblìò.

Give this poor man a penny  
Because today he hasn't had a thing to eat.

From my childhood on  
I was a soldier;  
Fighting for my country  
I have crossed land and sea

But now that I'm burdened by years  
Now that my strength is gone  
Even the land that I have defended,  
My homeland, has forgotten me.

(Translation by Fenna Ograjensek)<sup>45</sup>

### **Che vuoi di più**

Che vuoi di più?  
Non splende  
Ne' tuoi begl'occhi il sole?  
Un sospir tuo non rende  
Sgombro di nubi il ciel?

Che vuoi di più?  
D'amore a te una vita io giuro,  
Mutarmi in petto il core  
Pur non potrà l'avel, no.

Ad infiorar la terra  
Com'un beato eliso  
A far d'un suol di guerra  
Di pace un paradiso,  
Mi basta un tuo sorriso.  
No, non vogl'io di più.

What do you want of more?  
Does not shine  
In your beautiful eyes the sun?  
A sigh yours does not render  
Clear of clouds in the sky?

What do you want of more?  
Of love to a life I swear  
To change me in bosom the heart  
Indeed not will be able the grave, no.

To cover with flowers the earth  
Like a blessed Elysium  
To make of a land of war,  
of peace a paradise  
For me is enough your smile  
No, not wish I of more.

(Translation by John Glenn Patton)<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Ograjensek, 2006. recmusic.org

<sup>46</sup> Patton, 2004. pg. 117

## CHAPTER 5 - *Á Chloris, Si mes vers avaient des ailes, and L'Heure Exquise*

### Reynaldo Hahn (1874-1947)



**Figure 5.1 R. Hahn and his signature**

Reynaldo Hahn was born on August 9, 1874 in Caracas, Venezuela. Hahn was the youngest of twelve children. His family was of significant wealth due to his father being an engineer and his mother being a descendant of wealthy Spaniards. An increasingly volatile political atmosphere in Venezuela convinced Hahn's father to leave the country. Hahn was only three years old when his family moved to Paris. From a young age, Hahn's father noticed his attraction to music, noting his interest in native Venezuelan music. Hahn was a child prodigy, first performing at salons, singing while playing the piano. Hahn wrote his first composition when he was eight, and at the age of 10 he was admitted to the Paris Conservatory where he studied under world renowned composer, Jules Massenet, as well as Charles Gounod and Camille Saint-Saëns. Another great composer, Maurice Ravel was a classmate of Hahn. Massenet heavily influenced Hahn's first major composition, a song cycle, *Chanson grises*. This work includes one of Hahn's most famous songs, "L'Heure Exquise." The text was written by Paul Verlaine. Hahn even had the privilege of performing *Chanson grises* in the company of Verlaine. Verlaine wept upon hearing Hahn's songs. The cycle was published in 1893 when Hahn was 19 years old. Hahn's compositional style is conservative and reserved, believing the old school model of harmonic progressions and form were a key to songs lasting. This philosophy was most evident in Hahn's "*Á Chloris*." Although the compositional style is clearly contemporary modern, Hahn draws attributes of Baroque and Renaissance styles in the stately accompaniment and ornamentation throughout the piece. "*Á Chloris*" was published in 1913.

Hahn made acquaintance with Sarah Bernhardt and Marcel Proust early in his musical career. This proved to be significant in Hahn's appreciation of poetry and his setting text. Hahn was mesmerized by the works of Hugo and Verlaine, setting many of their works to music. For example, Hahn set a poem of Hugo's to music, titled "Si mes vers avaient des ailes." Written when he was only 14, this work found great success. Hahn composed various genres of music throughout his life. Works ranged from vocal works, instrumental works, chamber works, piano pieces, concertos, and operas. Hahn's first opera to reach the stage was the three-act *L'île du rêve*, performed in Paris at the Opéra-Comique in 1898. A more serious work, *Le marchand de Venise*, was produced in three acts, based on Shakespeare. The compositional style mirrors the old fashioned style of division between recitatives and musical numbers. Hahn's most successful staged work was *Ciboulette*, composed in 1923. As a conductor and impresario of the Paris Opéra, Hahn favored the works of Mozart. Hahn was so fascinated by Mozart; he composed an opera about Mozart's life, utilizing excerpts of Mozart's music in his work. Hahn was forced to flee Paris during World War II, but returned when the war was over, only to die two years later in 1947.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> <http://www.classicalarchives.com/composer/2664.html#tvf=tracks&tv=about>

## **Théophile de Viau, poet (1590-1626)**



**Figure 5.2 T. de Viau**

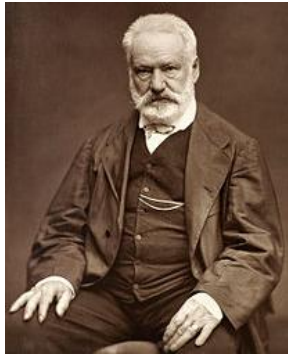
Théophile de Viau was born in 1590 in Clairac, France. He was born to a Huguenot family of minor nobility. Viau went to Paris and gained a reputation as a free thinker, known as a Libertine. In 1623, Viau was house dramatist at the Hôtel de Bourgogne, where he wrote one important tragedy, *Pyrame et Thisbé*. In addition, Viau wrote other smaller works such as odes and poems. His topics varied, marked by his strong feeling for nature, great musicality, a use of original and vivid imagery, and an epicurean outlook that is tempered with apocalyptic visions and the thought of death.

His fame was short-lived when Viau was charged with performing irreligious activities. Viau fled which led to a worse charge of absentia, resulting in a penalty of death that was carried out in effigy. He was arrested upon returning from hiding only to be released in 1625 under a sentence of banishment. Due to substandard living conditions at Conciergerie prison, Viau was in considerably poor health following his release. He lived out the remainder of his life in Chantilly under the protection of the Duke of Montgomery and died in September 1626 at the age of 36.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/627238/Theophile-de-Viau>.

## Victor Hugo, poet (1802-1885)



**Figure 5.3 V. Hugo**

Victor Hugo was born in Besançon, France in 1802. By the age of 13, Hugo had realized his literary calling. Even his early poems won several awards. During the 1820s, Hugo was a leading figure in the French Romantic movement. In 1830, Hugo gained huge successes with his play *Hernani*, which also received criticisms for its lack of Romantic ideas. Verdi took *Hernani* and used it to compose his opera, *Ernani*. Hugo also wrote a novel, *Notre Dame de Paris* which has been adapted for plays and even the Disney movie. Due to a struggling relationship with his wife, Hugo had an affair with Juliette Drouet. Their relationship would last more than fifty years. Theater became the focus of Hugo's writing for much of the 1830s.

In 1841, Hugo was finally elected to the Academie Francaise. After the failure of his play *Les Burgraves*, Hugo turned his attention to political and public issues. He became a Peer of France in 1845. Unfortunately for Hugo, his daughter and son-in-law were killed in a drowning accident in the Seine at Normandy. Hugo was an active monarchist and initially supported Louis Bonaparte, but later realized Bonaparte's lack of morals and ambitions. Following a coup d'etat in December of 1851, Hugo fled to Brussels to avoid arrest for his opposition. Unfortunately for Hugo, Belgium was reluctant to conceal him because of his strong political presence and fear of strained relations, so Hugo moved to Jersey where many opposed the new French regime.

In 1856, Hugo published *Les Contemplations*, a book of poetry. The successes raised from his sales earned him enough money to buy a house at 38 Hauteville, which he decorated in his highly imaginative manner. The house still stands today and is a museum to his life and works. Hugo was legally allowed to return to France but remained at his residency for the next twenty years in defiance. During his residence at the Hauteville House, Hugo wrote some of his most famous works such as, *Les Misérables* in 1862, *William Shakespeare* in 1864, *Les*

*Chansons des rues et des bois* in 1865, *Les Travailleurs de la mer* in 1866, and *La Légende des siècles* in 1877. Following the fall of Louis Bonaparte in 1870, Hugo returned to France a hero and continued his political life during another rough period of French history, the Franco-Prussian War. Hugo was an avid believer of European integration. To show this, he planted an oak tree in the garden at Hauteville House on July 14, 1870. The tree still stands to present day. Hugo envisioned a ‘United States of Europe’ coming together at the maturity of the oak tree. Hugo lived out the remainder of his life, passing away at the age of 83 in 1885. Hugo wished to be buried in a pauper’s coffin, a wish fulfilled; however, France voted to give him a National Funeral by the two government assemblies. His coffin lay in state under the Arc de Triomphe and on June 1, he was buried as a national hero in the Panthéon. It is estimated that more than two million people followed his funeral procession.<sup>49</sup>

### **Paul Verlaine, poet (1844-1896)**



**Figure 5.4 P. Verlaine**

Paul Verlaine was born on March 30, 1844 in Metz, France. His father, Nicolas, was a Captain in the French Army. Captain Verlaine resigned his position in 1851 and moved his family to Paris. Starting in 1853, young Verlaine began his studies at the Institution Landry and subsequently at Lycée Bonaparte until 1862. After his studies, Verlaine picked up a habit of drinking as well as frequenting Parnassian circles. In 1864, Verlaine took a position in civil service at the Hôtel de Ville de Paris. The following year, Verlaine lost his father. Verlaine began writing at this time, and in March 1866, the first number of *Le Parnasse contemporain* was published. Later that year, he wrote *Poèmes saturniens*. In 1869, Verlaine wrote *Fêtes*

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<sup>49</sup> <http://www.victorhugo.gg/victor-hugo/>



*galantes*, which Claude Debussy set to music in 1892. That same year, Verlaine met who would later become his wife, Mathilde Mauté. Verlaine wrote *La Bonne Chanson* in her honor. Gabriel Fauré set *La Bonne Chanson* to music in 1894.

Mathilde and Verlaine married in 1870 and had a son, George, a year later. After only a year of marriage, their relationship started to deteriorate. One cause of this quick fallout was Verlaine's heavy drinking as well as the volatile relationship with his friend, Arthur Rimbaud. Verlaine's maid noted his violent behavior when he was intoxicated. Mathilde filed for legal separation in 1872, and they officially divorced in 1885. Verlaine also served in the 160th Battalion of the National Guard following the proclamation of The Third Republic. Verlaine managed to escape the deadly battle known as Bloody Week by going into hiding. Around this time, Verlaine wrote *La luna blanche* which was later set as *L'Heure Exquise* by Reynaldo Hahn. Following a drunken quarrel with Rimbaud in 1873, Verlaine fired two shots at him and was arrested. Verlaine served two years of penal servitude. Following his servitude, Verlaine took a teaching position at Stickney. Verlaine was again sentenced to a year in prison and a fine of five hundred Francs for threatening to kill his mother in a drunken rage, but served only six weeks. In 1886, Verlaine was hospitalized and never fully recovered. This began a series of hospitalizations throughout the remainder of his life. His hard life of drugs and alcoholism, coupled with his bad temper took a toll on his body and left him frail in his final years. Despite poor health, Verlaine continued to write works such as *Bonheur* in 1891. Verlaine was voted Prince of Poets by his peers in 1894. Verlaine wrote his last poem, *Mort*, a month before he passed away in January 1896 at the age of 52.<sup>50</sup>

## **Historical Analysis of *À Chloris*, *Si mes vers avaient des ailes*, and *L'Heure Exquise***

### ***À Chloris***

“*À Chloris*” was composed by Reynaldo Hahn around 1916. By this time in his life, Hahn was known for his simple, old-fashioned style of composition. His belief was that it was those very harmonic structures of the Renaissance and Baroque Eras that allowed the music to

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<sup>50</sup> Carter, 1971 pp. 9-12

last so long. From the opening accompaniment, one is immediately transported back to the Baroque Era. The bass is very stately while the treble is elegant with beautiful ornamentation added. Even the text is reminiscent of the Baroque style; the title translates to “To Chloris,” a common name of nymphs and shepherdesses, a regular topic of music during that time. The text was written by Théophile de Viau, a 17<sup>th</sup>-century poet. Nonetheless, Hahn manages to maintain a modern style despite its Baroque feeling. The whole accompaniment acts as two separate parts. When the voice comes in, acting as the middle part it creates this trio of beautiful harmony.

### **Si mes vers avaient des ailes**

“Si mes vers avaient des ailes” was composed in 1888 when Hahn was only 14. At this time, Hahn was studying at the Paris Conservatory. Despite being his first composition, it remains one of his most frequently performed songs. Hahn’s skill in setting a vocal line for the singer stems from his own talent as a singer. His style stemmed from his teacher, Jules Massenet. The text was written by famed poet, Victor Hugo, a personal inspiration of Hahn’s.

### **L’Heure Exquise**

“L’Heure Exquise” was the fifth song of Hahn’s cycle, *Chanson grises*. This work was also one of Hahn’s earliest compositions, written between 1887 and 1890. The texts for all of the songs in the cycle were written by Paul Verlaine, a great poet despite his troubled life. Hahn wrote this cycle when he was still at the Paris Conservatory under the tutelage of Jules Massenet as well as several other famed composers and artists. The cycle is made up of seven songs: “Chanson D’Automne,” “Tous Deux,” “L’Allée Est Sans,” “En Sourdine,” “L’Heure Exquise,” “Paysage triste,” and “La Bonne Chanson.” “L’Heure Exquise” is the most famous and frequently performed title of the entire cycle. The text was also set by Gabriel Fauré around the same time. Although Fauré is more famous for his compositional works, Hahn’s delicate style and setting is more frequently performed.

# Stylistic & Technical Analysis of *Á Chloris*, *Si mes vers avaient des ailes*, and *L'Heure Exquise*

## *Á Chloris*

“*Á Chloris*” is an elegant, modern French chanson, evoking the Baroque Era style. The opening accompaniment is very evident of the Baroque style using a chaconne-like chord progression in the bass while the treble is elegant and flowing, using subtle ornamentation of repeated trills and turns. (Refer to figure 5.5) The text of the song is centralized around courtly love, a common theme of the Baroque Era. The text was even written by a Baroque poet, Théophile de Viau. The entire work pays homage to the composers that preceded Hahn whom he admired greatly. The text describes the pure elation from the love the singer has for Chloris. The singer knows how well she loves him and believes that even kings could never know as much happiness. In the middle of the piece, the mood changes to that of melancholy, describing how unwelcome death would be at this time to change his fortunes with the joy of heaven. During this middle section of the piece, the accompaniment changes to reflect the mood combining the bass and treble in to one flowing line of eighth notes. The end returns to a happier outlook saying the fantasy of one’s imagination cannot compare to the favor of her eyes.



Figure 5.5 "A Chloris" m. 1

## *Si mes vers avaient des ailes*

“*Si mes vers avaient des ailes*” is considered Hahn’s first composition, published in 1888. The title translates to “If my song had wings.” The text was written by Victor Hugo. The work is

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<sup>51</sup> Kimball, 2001 pg. 186

an excellent example of Hahn's skill for exploiting the beauty of the voice. A sweeping accompaniment plays arpeggiated sixteenth notes throughout the majority of the piece. The melodic line in the voice is delicate. When coupled with the flowing accompaniment, it displays the effect of carrying the song as if on wings. The text is about the narrator wanting his song to fly to his love's garden as if it had wings like a bird. The song would be as pure and faithful as he is. The tempo is *Andante moderato*, but the accompaniment creates a soaring feel as if flying through the sky. The melody is an ascending- descending arch for each of the three verses. This also helps the singer with phrasing of the line and dynamics. Hahn does add his own dynamic style such as the *p* used in the third verse on the highest note in the phrase calling for the singer to have absolute control and tonal purity. The end utilizes a small coda-like phrase.

Ils ac - cou - raient nuit et jour, *p*  
 Si mes vers a - vaient des ai - les, Si mes vers a-vaient des  
 ai - les Com - me l'a - mour. *ppp* *lento*  
*pp* *pppp* *lento*

*très retenu* *encore plus lent* *long*  
*suivez*

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Figure 5.6 "Si mes vers avaient des ailes" mm. 20-28

<sup>52</sup> Hahn, 1902 pg. 3

## L'Heure Exquise

“L'Heure Exquise” is the fifth song in Hahn’s cycle, *Chanson grises*, which translates to “Songs in Gray.” “L'Heure Exquise” translates to “The Exquisite Hour.” The text was written by Paul Verlaine. It is believed that the poem was inspired by a painting by Renaissance painter, Jean-Antione Watteau, from whom Verlaine often drew inspiration. The text tells a story of secret lovers who meet in the forest on a bright moonlit night. The narrator describes the scene of their meeting place such as the ponds reflection like a deep mirror and the silhouette of a black willow where the wind moans. Serenity descends upon them in this, the exquisite hour.

The tempo is ‘Infiniment doux et calme,’ creating a serene, hypnotic quality. The accompaniment is an arpeggiated pattern of eighth notes that continues throughout the piece across the bass and treble clefs. The key signature is in B major, a bright key to symbolize the moonlight. The piece is varied strophic and has subtle changes to the rhythm in each verse. The first two verses begin with the same melodic line but end differently and the third verse is similar in quality but not melodically. The rhythm of the piece is more syncopated but does not affect the peacefulness due to the legato texture. The dynamics range from *p* to *ppp*, symbolizing the secrecy of the lovers’ meeting. The melodic line is static throughout the phrase, but ends with an octave interval leap on “O bien aimée!” This is seen as the excited moment of the lovers reaching each other finally. Hahn repeats this idea at the very end of the piece of the piece’s title, “C’est l’heure exquise,” making a leap of a seventh. The time signature is 6/8 which creates the swaying feeling of a lullaby. The melodic line also has a lullaby quality reminiscent of Brahms’ Cradle Song, “Guten Abend, gute nacht.”

The image displays a musical score for the song "L'Heure Exquise". It consists of two systems of music. The first system features a vocal line in the upper staff and piano accompaniment in the lower staff. The vocal line begins with the instruction "allongement" and the dynamic marking "p". The lyrics "O bien - ai - mé -" are written below the vocal line. The piano accompaniment consists of an arpeggiated pattern of eighth notes. The second system also shows a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line is marked "discret" and includes the lyrics "e! l'ang re - fib - to, Profond mi." The piano accompaniment continues with the same arpeggiated pattern. The page number "53" is located at the bottom right of the score.

Figure 5.7 "L'Heure Exquise" mm. 14-21

<sup>53</sup> Hahn, 1902 pg. 2

**Text Translation of *À Chloris, Si mes vers avaient des ailes, and L'Heure Exquise***

**À Chloris**

S'il est vrai, Chloris, que tu m'aimes, If it be true, Chloris, that thou lovest me,  
Mais j'entends, que tu m'aimes bien, And I understand that thou dost love me  
well,

Je ne crois point que les rois mêmes I do not believe that even kings  
Aient un bonheur pareil au mien. Could know such happiness as mine.

Que la mort serait importune How unwelcome death would be,  
De venir changer ma fortune If it came to exchange my fortune  
A la félicité des cieux! With the joy of heaven!

Tout ce qu'on dit de l'ambrosie All that they say of ambrosia  
Ne touche point ma fantaisie Does not fire my fantasy  
Au prix des grâces de tes yeux. Like the favour of thine eyes.

(Translation by Richard Stokes)<sup>54</sup>

**Si mes vers avaient des ailes**

Mes vers fuiraient, doux et frêles, My verses would flee, sweet and frail,  
Vers votre jardin si beau, To your garden so fair,  
Si mes vers avaient des ailes, If my verses had wings,  
Des ailes comme l'oiseau. Like a bird.

Ils voleraient, étincelles, They would fly, like sparks,  
Vers votre foyer qui rit, To your smiling hearth,  
Si mes vers avaient des ailes, If my verses had wings,  
Des ailes comme l'esprit. Like the mind.

Près de vous, purs et fidèles, Pure and faithful, to your side  
Ils accourraient, nuit et jour, They'd hasten night and day,  
Si mes vers avaient des ailes, If my verses had wings,  
Comme l'amour! Like love!

(Translation by Richard Stokes)<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Stokes, 2003. Recmusic.org

<sup>55</sup> Stokes, 2003. Recmusic.org

### L'Heure Exquise

La lune blanche luit dans les bois; De chaque branche part une voix Sous la ramée Ô bien aimée.	The white moon shines in the woods From each branch springs a voice beneath the arbor. Oh my beloved!
L'étang reflète, profond miroir, La silhouette du saule noir Où le vent pleure, Rêvons, c'est l'heure.	Like a deep mirror the pond reflects The silhouette of the black willow Where the wind weeps Let us dream! It is the hour
Un vaste et tender apaisement Semble descendre Du firmament Que l'astre irise. C'est l'heure exquise.	A vast and tender calm Seems to descend From a sky Made iridescent by the moon. It is the exquisite hour!

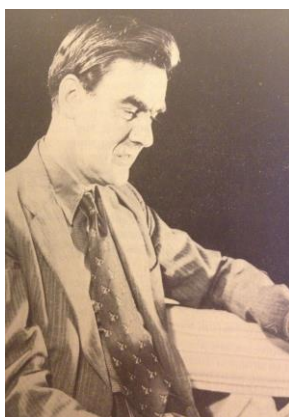
(Translation by Grant A. Lewis)<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Lewis, 2003. Recmusic.org

## CHAPTER 6 - Ships of Arcady, Beloved, A Blackbird Singing, and Nocturne from *Over the Rim of the Moon*

### Michael Dewar Head (1900-1976)



**Figure 6.1 M. Head**

Michael Dewar Head was born January 28, 1900 in Eastbourne, England. His father, Frederick, was an amateur cricketer and took residency in Eastbourne with the assurance his eventual son could play for Sussex. Unfortunately for his father, Head never showed interest or skill at sports. Nonetheless, his father never showed disappointment nor did he urge his son to participate. In 1907, Head got a sister despite his initial resentment. Nancy and Head grew close over the years, outgrowing his indifference to having a sibling. Head's mother, Nina, was devout in Christian Science and as a result, Head and his sister were sent to Sunday school, for which neither cared for. When anyone in the family became ill, they attended a Christian Science practitioner rather than a doctor. Head's parents showed great encouragement in his musical talents. Even after Head grew up; his mother in her old age, often accompanied his performances.

At the age of 7, Michael was sent off to Junior House of Monkton Combe School near Bath. During his studies, Head's talent for music was quickly recognized. He studied piano with Mrs. Jean Adair, a pupil of Clara Schumann. In addition, after puberty he studied voice with Fritz Marston, a pupil of Charles Lunn, an English tenor, who studied the exposition of the Italian school of singing associated with Manuel Garcia. Some of Head's greatest skill came with his ability to sing while he played the piano. He was transferred to Home School, Highgate



which utilized a modern approach to education. Unusual for the era, this school was co-ed. The diet of meals served was vegetarian and no uniforms were required. In addition to his musical prowess, Head showed great interest in engineering of all kinds. He built model railways operating on a system of weights and pulleys. Head also built a home theater with sets of scenery, workable electric lighting, and cardboard puppets. The plays were written and narrated by Head as well as the overture played on the piano.<sup>57</sup>

During World War I, Head and his family moved to King's Langley in Hertfordshire. This would be the first of several moves the Head family would make during his youth. Head began composing works such as his song cycle, *Over the Rim of the Moon* in 1917. *Over the Rim of the Moon* was composed based on text by Francis Ledwidge. His compositional style changed throughout the cycle. The first piece utilizes simple melodic lines in "Ships of Arcady," and progresses to more chromatic tonal centers and dramatic style by the fourth piece, "Nocturne."

In 1918, Head left his studies to join the Royal Air Force. He was rejected, much to his disappointment but directed to a munition factory in Acton. Head worked to drive German prisoners to Lorries. He still found time to practice music, becoming friendly with the Debenham family, who often invited him to sing and play at their country home after work. At the end of the war, Head attended the Royal Academy of Music in London. He received numerous scholarships and awards for his compositions during his academic career. Head continued to study with Marston. Head admired the works of Michael Tippett and Benjamin Britten. In 1924, he was elected Associate at the Royal Academy of Music and appointed as a Professor of Piano later. In 1945, Head was elected Fellow, a position he held until his retirement from RAM in 1975. At first, Head remained distant from RAM going only to teach, but eventually began engaging in social settings and performing for events. One of his pupils, Judith Newberry recalled the informal setting of her lessons with Head. In January 1930, Head presented a recital along with Maurice Cole, singing and playing works of John Dowland, Henry Purcell, Alessandro Scarlatti, Robert Schumann, Franz Schubert, Richard Strauss, as well as his own compositions. Leading up to World War II, around 1938, Head had composed about fifty songs,

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<sup>57</sup> Bush, 1982 pp. 7-12

all published through Boosey & Hawkes. Being a singer himself, he was particularly skilled at writing for the voice.<sup>58</sup>

During the 1940s and the beginning of World War II, Head acted as a raid warden. At this time in England's history, he participated in advocacy of giving financial support to the arts. The Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts launched a national campaign to assist war efforts. This campaign boosted morale and life of people at such a dismal time in history. Concerts were organized for mostly civilian audiences all throughout England. Head actively participated in tours of England, performing in numerous venues. Following the end of World War II, he suffered depression in addition to being in poor health from the strenuous demands of his advocacy work. As German, Italian, and French works were a frequent part of Head's repertoire in his recitals, he began studying French Diction with Madame Marguerite Narik in 1950. Madame Narik was a musical connoisseur, having studied at the Paris Conservatoire, hoping to make a career as a soloist when she was younger. Throughout his tenure as an educator, Michael attended numerous music festivals on an annual basis, travelling all over the world as an adjudicator.<sup>59</sup>

At this time in his life, Head continued writing songs, but expanded to other genres. He wrote several operas for RAM in workshops such as, *The Bachelor Mouse*, *Through Train*, *Key Money*, *Day Return*, and *After the Wedding*. In addition, Head composed a cantata, *Daphne and Apollo*, a choral piece, *New Town*, and another song cycle, *Three Songs of Venice*. Unfortunately, he would not live to hear the premiere performance of *Three Songs of Venice* in 1977. The soloist was Dame Janet Baker at a Festival Hall concert for aid of the Save Venice Fund. Head passed away in August 1976 after a sudden onset of a serious illness while touring Rhodesia and South Africa. His funeral was held in Cape Town where he was visiting at the time of his death. Many were shocked by his unexpected death despite his fairly old age of 76. Memorials for him back in London included recitals of his works, and he was remembered fondly by many family and friends.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Bush, 1982 pp. 17-30

<sup>59</sup> Bush, 1982 pp. 32, 43-44

<sup>60</sup> Bush, 1982 pg. 55,64

## Francis Ledwidge, poet (1887-1917)



**Figure 6.2 F. Ledwidge**

Francis ‘Frank’ Ledwidge was born August 19, 1887 in Boyne Valley, Ireland. He was the eighth of nine children. From an early age, Ledwidge suffered terrible hardships, such as losing his father. As a result, his mother worked in assisting farmers in the area at a meager wage of eight schillings a week. Despite these hardships, Ledwidge’s literary talents were evident at his young age. His schoolmaster, Mr. Thomas Madden, described his as an “erratic genius.” Ledwidge joined a literary society, reading works such as *The Arabian Nights*, *Don Quixote*, and the poems of William Shakespeare, John Keats, and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

Upon completion of his studies, Ledwidge began training as a house boy under the cook at Slane Castle, seat of the Marquis of Conyngham. The Marquis set her menus daily for the cook to prepare. Ledwidge was fired after changing the menu to pig's feet, cabbage, and spuds as a practical joke. Ledwidge worked numerous other jobs in the area, including groom, farmhand, roadworker, and miner. Throughout this time, he wrote many poems that were often published in the local newspaper. At this time, Ledwidge fell in love with his friend’s younger sister, Ellie Vaughey. Unfortunately, Ledwidge never got a chance to marry Ellie; she married a local man, John O’Neill, only to die a year later during childbirth. Ledwidge wrote a poem in her memory titled, “To One Dead,” later set by Michael Head as “A Blackbird Singing,” the third song in his cycle, *Over the Rim of the Moon*. Not going unnoticed for his works, Ledwidge found patronage in Lord Dunsany, a local aristocrat. Dunsany ensured his works reached a wider audience by publishing them in the literary magazine, *Saturday Review*. In addition, Dunsany introduced Ledwidge to a literary circle of other established poets and writers.

Ledwidge was also a political activist, organizing a strike for the workers of the copper mine in order to get better working conditions. Ledwidge and his brother, Joe, founded the Slane corps of the Irish Volunteers in response to the establishment of the Ulster Volunteers to resist Home Rule. During this time, the political landscape changed vastly as England declared war on Germany in August 1914. Ledwidge enlisted in the army to assist in the fighting the war. While deployed out, Ledwidge received word of the 1916 Easter Rebellion in Dublin, resulting in the execution of his good friend and fellow poet, Thomas MacDonagh. Ledwidge wrote one of his greatest works, *Lament for Thomas MacDonagh* after this incident. The Rising changed Ledwidge's views and he wanted to leave military service. During a visit to Slane, his friends noted his apathetic personality. He was called back to be deployed to Belgium for the Battle of Ypres. In July 1917, after the battle, the First Battalion of the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, Ledwidge's troop, was repairing a road near Boezinghe when a shell exploded near them, killing an officer and five soldiers. Ledwidge was among the soldiers slain; he was 29 years old. The men were buried where they fell at Carrefour de Rose and reinterred later in nearby Artillery Wood Military Cemetery. A monument was erected in his hometown of Slane. The monument is an exact replica of the monument erected at his actual grave.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> <http://www.francisledwidge.com/francis-ledwidge-biography.php>

## **Historical Analysis of Over the Rim of the Moon**

*Over the Rim of the Moon* was composed when Michael Head was only 18 years old. The text was written by Francis Ledwidge when he was in his early 20s. Both were alive in the early 20th century; however, Ledwidge was killed during World War I in 1917, a year before Head set the text to music. Head composed these works during his own war service in the munitions factory. The cycle was set in four movements titled, “Ships of Arcady,” “Beloved,” “A Blackbird Singing,” and “Nocturne.” “Ships of Arcady” was published as a separate work one year before the cycle was published in 1920. The title of the cycle, *Over the Rim of the Moon* is derived from the opening line of “Nocturne.” Head dedicated *Over the Rim of the Moon* to his first piano teacher and friend, Jean Adair. The premiere of *Over the Rim of the Moon* was in 1919 at Royal Albert Hall, sung by Astra Desmond.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> <http://www.hyperion-records.co.uk/tw.asp?w=W13892>

## Stylistic & Technical Analysis of Ships of Arcady, Beloved, A Blackbird Singing, and Nocturne

### Ships of Arcady

“Ships of Arcady” is a simple, melodic piece. The opening accompaniment is a sequence of chords creating a serene atmosphere such as a ship on the peaceful sea. The tempo for the piece is listed as Moderato with instructions by Head not to play too slow.

Moderato. (*Not too slow*)

VOICE

PIANO

*p*

*con Ped.*

*p sostenuto.*

Thro' the faint-est fi - li - gree

*L.H.*

*(simile)*

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Figure 6.3 "Ships of Arcady" mm. 1-8

The form of the piece is ABACA. The second verse is very similar to the first harmonically but changes at the end of the verse to distinguish itself. The first verse reprises itself as the last verse of the piece. The melodic structure remains the same throughout the piece, briefly modulating to a relative minor in the fourth verse. In the final verse, Head changes the accompaniment from block chords to flowing eighth-notes pattern of the chords. After the final line of the song is sung, the piano repeats the melody in echo dying off in the distance as the ship sails away.

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<sup>63</sup> Head, 1930 pg. 1

## Beloved

“Beloved” is a passionate, faster tempo love song. The ardent accompaniment is a chordal progression of the melody, repeating itself with some variation throughout. The melody is straight forward at the beginning and shows some contemporary moments at the end of the second verse. This song is strophic in two verses. Despite the sweet message of the text and the beautiful melody, the piano accompaniment creates an exciting, eager quality. The piece slows down gradually with a “ritardando” written in measure 11 through the remainder of the verse, going back to “a tempo” for the interlude. The end of the second verse ends on the highest note in the score at its loudest point. This only reassures the excitement that has built up throughout the piece dynamically.

The image shows a musical score for the song "Beloved" from measures 22 to 29. It consists of two systems of music. The first system includes a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line starts with the lyrics "find me waiting here, My own Be - lov - ed! You will find me waiting here," and features dynamic markings of *sf*, *rit.*, and *a tempo.* The piano accompaniment includes dynamic markings of *f*, *sfz*, and *p*. The second system continues the vocal line with the lyrics "My own Be - lov - ed!" and features dynamic markings of *ff*, *ff*, and *fff*. The piano accompaniment in the second system includes dynamic markings of *sf*, *ff*, and *fff*. The score is written in a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 2/4 time signature. The piano part features a prominent chordal accompaniment pattern.

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Figure 6.4 "Beloved" mm. 22-29

<sup>64</sup> Head, 1930 pg. 8

## A Blackbird Singing

“A Blackbird Singing” is the most difficult piece of the cycle vocally. Head uses octave leaps throughout the piece that extend through the singer’s passaggio. To make it more difficult, Head wrote the dynamics to be soft throughout the entire piece. It opens at *mp* and gets softer throughout the piece aside from one part where the dynamic increases to *mf*. The opening line, “A blackbird singing” is repeated two more times in the piece and is the last line of the song. On the final line, Head marks the dynamics at *pp*, a particularly difficult task to sing that softly on the highest written note in the piece, an E4. All three verses are the same melodically utilizing that octave leap. He employs the same technique on the line “Bluebells swinging.” It is also worth noting that the words, “singing” and “swinging” rhyme. The piano accompaniment plays the melodic line in its chordal structure throughout the piece. The accompaniment played throughout the piece portrays Head’s own sympathetic nature, making the more contemporary melodic line easier for the vocalist to sing. Although the key of the piece is major, the text of the piece is somber. The text was written by Francis Ledwidge, just as the other texts in the cycle were, but Ledwidge composed this poem after the death of Ellie Vaughey, whom he loved dearly but never formally courted. The tempo suggests a happier tone, marked as “Allegretto.” The time signature is 6/8 giving a swinging feel to the song. This is particularly useful when the singer sings “Bluebell swinging.” The form of this song is strophic in two verses with only slight variations in the second verse.

The image shows a musical score for the song "A Blackbird Singing". It consists of two staves: a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 6/8. The tempo is marked "Allegretto." and the dynamic is "mp". The vocal line starts with a rest, followed by a note on G4, then a note on E5, and finally a note on G5. The piano accompaniment starts with a rest, followed by a chord on G4, then a chord on E5, and finally a chord on G5. The piano accompaniment is marked "mf sostenuto." and "mp". The text "A black-bird" is written below the piano staff. The score is marked "con 'ced." at the bottom left.

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<sup>65</sup> Head, 1930 pg. 9



## Figure 6.5 "A Blackbird Singing" mm. 1-5

### Nocturne

"Nocturne" is the last piece in the cycle. The opening line of the song derived the title of the cycle. The melodic line of the piece is particularly dramatic compared to the other songs in the cycle. This song can be described as a *scena*, or small opera-like scene. The opening section of the piece is listed as a recitative with the "aria" of the piece starting at measure six. The accompaniment follows similar structure to that of the previous three songs, placing the melody of the vocal line in the accompaniment for parts of the piece; however, the chordal structure is more chromatic, making the melodic line more difficult to hear. The mood of the piece changes several times throughout the work. For example, at the start of the aria portion, the melodic line is legato with stepwise motion. At measure eighteen, the tempo is slightly faster with an erratic rhythmic structure. The melodic line uses more chromatic intervals. At measure thirty-one, the slower tempo returns, creating a calming mood with a legato line, but the chordal structure is chromatic and the rhythm is syncopated. The time signature changes from 4/4 to 3/4 in the short interlude. The accompaniment's rhythmic syncopation of the off-beat creates a challenge for the singer. The last line of the song is marked "Lento" and begins with a fermata, giving the singer interpretive license to phrase the vocal line. The last note ends on an octave leap to D4, at a *ppp* dynamic creating the need for the utmost control of support, breath, and pitch accuracy.

The image shows a musical score for a piece titled "Nocturne" (mm. 11-21). It consists of three systems of music, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The first system includes the lyrics: "- roon? Can you hear my moan Where you rest, A - roon?". The second system includes: "When the". The third system includes: "wild tree bore The deep blue cherry. In night's deep pall Our love kissed". The score is marked with various performance instructions such as *rit.*, *pp*, *ritard.*, *accel.*, *mp*, *mf*, *rit pp*, *Piu mosso. Con moto*, *a tempo*, *f*, *piu f*, and *ten.*

Figure 6.6 "Nocturne" mm. 11-21

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<sup>66</sup> Head, 1930 pg. 13

## **Text of Ships of Arcady, Beloved, A Blackbird Singing, and Nocturne**

### **I. Ships of Arcady**

Thro' the faintest filigree,  
Over the dim waters go,  
Little ships of Arcady,  
When the morning moon is low

I can hear the sailors' song  
From the blue edge of the sea,  
Passing like the lights a-long  
Thro' the dusky filigree

Then where moon and waters meet  
Sail by sail they pass away,  
With little friendly winds replete  
Blowing from the breaking day

And when the little ships have flown,  
Dreaming still of Arcady  
I look across the waves, alone  
In the misty filigree.

Thro' the faintest filigree,  
Over the dim waters go,  
Little ships of Arcady  
When the morning moon is low

### **II. Beloved**

Nothing but sweet music wakes  
My Beloved, My Beloved,  
Sleeping by the blue lakes,  
My own Beloved!

Song of lark and song of thrush,  
My Beloved! My Beloved!  
Sing in morning's rosy blush,  
My own Beloved!

When your eyes dawn blue and clear,  
My Beloved! My Beloved!  
You will find me waiting here,  
My own Beloved!

### III. A Blackbird Singing

A blackbird singing  
On a moss upholster'd stone,  
Bluebells swinging,  
Shadows wildly blown,

A song in the wood,  
A ship on the sea,  
The song was for you  
And the ship was for me;

A blackbird singing,  
I hear in my troubled mind,  
Bluebells swinging  
I see in a distant wind,

But sorrow and silence  
Are the wood's threnody,  
The silence for you,  
And the sorrow for me,

A blackbird singing

### IV. Nocturne

The rim of the moon  
is over the corn.  
The beetle's drone  
is above the thorn.

Grey days come soon  
and I am alone;  
Can you hear my moan  
where you rest, Aroon?

When the wild tree bore  
the deep blue cherry,  
In night's deep pall  
our love kissed merry.  
But you come no more  
where its woodlands call,  
and the grey days fall  
on my grief, Asthore!

The rim of the moon  
is over the corn.  
The beetle's drone  
is above the thorn.  
Grey days come soon  
and I am alone;  
Can you hear my moan  
where you rest, Aroon?  
(Text by Francis Ledwidge)

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