

SACRED SONGS OF DVOŘÁK, MENOTTI, RAVEL AND WOLF

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Abstract

This report examines the sacred works of four composers that were intended for performance in a secular environment, rather than for any portion of a liturgical service. It will discuss the theoretical, stylistic and performance considerations of each work, as well as biographical information about each composer, their compositional style, and how the work was initially developed. These works include the *Biblické písně*, *Op. 99* of Antonín Dvořák, selections from the *Möricke Lieder* and *Spanisches Liederbuch* of Hugo Wolf, Maurice Ravel's *Deux mélodies hébraïques*, "Oh, Sweet Jesus" from Gian Carlo Menotti's *Saint of Bleeker Street* and the quartet from his *Amahl and the Night Visitors*.

Table of Contents

List of Figures	vi
CHAPTER 1 - Biblické písně by Antonín Dvořák.....	1
Biographical Information on the Composer	1
Stylistic and Technical Considerations.....	4
Biblické Písně, Op. 99	8
Theoretical Analysis	10
CHAPTER 2 - Wolf's sacred music	31
Biographical Information on the Composer	31
Stylistic and Technical Considerations.....	34
Theoretical Analysis	36
Möricke Lieder.....	36
Schlafendes Jesuskind (Sleeping Infant Jesus).....	37
Gebet (Prayer).....	39
Spanisches Liederbuch.....	41
Die ihr schwebet (You who hover).....	42
Ach, des Knaben Augen (Ah, the Child's Eyes)	43
CHAPTER 3 - Maurice Ravel: Deux mélodies hébraïque	45
Biographical Information on the Composer	45
Stylistic and Technical Considerations.....	48
Deux mélodies hébraïque.....	50
Theoretical Analysis	51
CHAPTER 4 - Excerpts from the Operas of Menotti	57
Biographical Information on the Composer	57
Stylistic and technical considerations	58
The Saint of Bleecker Street	60
Plot considerations	61
Theoretical analysis	65
Amahl and the Night Visitors	69

Plot considerations	71
Theoretical Analysis	72
CHAPTER 5 - Performance and Pedagogical Considerations	76
Bibliography	80
Appendix A - Program and Concert Information	82
Appendix B - Text and Translations	84

List of Figures

Figure 1.1 Dates of <i>Biblické Písně</i> movement completion.....	8
Figure 1.2 Opening of “Oblak a mrákota jest vůkol něho”	11
Figure 1.3 Song one, m. 21	11
Figure 1.4 Accompaniment texture in middle section	12
Figure 1.5 Measure 144	12
Figure 1.6 Block structure/high tessitura	13
Figure 1.7 Texture change in codetta.....	13
Figure 1.8 Ending of “Skrýše má . . .”--modified codetta	13
Figure 1.9 Tonal ambiguity of “Slyš o Bože! . . .” opening, m. 1-10.....	14
Figure 1.10 Dove theme foreshadow, m. 18-21.....	14
Figure 1.11 Dove theme, beginning m. 42.....	15
Figure 1.12 Text painting of “violent winds” and “tempest,” m. 58	16
Figure 1.13 Opening recitative of “Hospodin jest můj pastýř,” m. 1-5	16
Figure 1.14 First statement of the main theme, m. 6-10.....	17
Figure 1.15 Final verse and hymn-like ending, m. 27-32.....	18
Figure 1.16 Accompaniment introductory theme, m. 1-4; Vocal theme, m. 5-10.....	19
Figure 1.17 I7-IV Resolution.....	19
Figure 1.18 Cadential repetition, verse 2 ending, m. 19-20.....	20
Figure 1.19 Thematic change in B section, m. 37-40.....	20
Figure 1.20 Enter Your Description After the Figure Number.....	21
Figure 1.21 Enter Your Description After the Figure Number.....	22
Figure 1.22 Harp figure.....	22
Figure 1.23 Introductory and rhythmic figure	23
Figure 1.24 Babylonian theme, m. 29-34	23
Figure 1.25 Retransition to original key, m. 41-44.....	24
Figure 1.26 German augmented sixth chord, m. 50.....	24
Figure 1.27 Main melodic theme, in both voice and accompaniment	25

Figure 1.28 Liturgical color, m. 15-16.....	25
Figure 1.29 Neapolitan chord, m. 25	25
Figure 1.30 Shift to parallel major, m. 33.....	26
Figure 1.31 “Pozdvihuji oči . . .” opening recitative, m. 1-5	26
Figure 1.32 Harp-like section, m. 15-20.....	27
Figure 1.33 Transitional section	27
Figure 1.34 Opening piano motive of “Zpívejte Hospodina . . .” m. 1-8	28
Figure 1.35 Trumpet motive and use of relative minor, m. 14-18.....	29
Figure 1.36 Final harp motive, m. 55-63	29
Figure 2.1 Opening accompaniment	38
Figure 2.2 Secundal figure with open fifths, m. 7-9	38
Figure 2.3 Quartal-quintal chords and suspensions	38
Figure 2.4 Unresolved vocal line and shifting accents	39
Figure 2.5 Chromatic passing tones, m. 1-5	40
Figure 2.6 Choral passage, m. 10-15	40
Figure 2.7 Dance-like bass, m. 22-25	40
Figure 2.8 Final cadence, m. 29-34.....	41
Figure 2.9 Wind theme	42
Figure 2.10 Textural changes representing Mary’s distress, m. 13-16.....	42
Figure 2.11 B section texture changes, m. 34-37.....	43
Figure 2.12 Third relations	44
Figure 2.13 Tertian harmonies	44
Figure 3.1 Emphasis of the dominant	51
Figure 3.2 Transition to B section, m. 22-24	52
Figure 3.3 Section C texture change, m. 46-48.....	53
Figure 3.4 “Tra la la” section, m. 13-15	55
Figure 3.5 B section, m. 25-30.....	55
Figure 4.1 Annina’s Opening Theme— <i>The Saint of Bleecker Street</i> Prelude.....	63
Figure 4.2 Suor Anglica’s Theme— <i>Suor Angelica</i> , Puccini	63
Figure 4.3 Michele’s theme	64
Figure 4.4 Annina’s version of Michele’s theme.....	64

Figure 4.5 First statement of Annina's Theme in <i>Oh, Sweet Jesus</i>	67
Figure 4.6 Trumpet and soldier theme, m. 37.....	67
Figure 4.7 Walking theme, m. 38	68
Figure 4.8 Women's theme #1, m. 62.....	68
Figure 4.9 Women's Theme #2, m. 69	68
Figure 4.10 Polymetric section with shifting meters, m. 90-94.....	69
Figure 4.11 Melchior's opening theme, m. 412.....	73
Figure 4.12 The Mother's retransition to C minor, m. 427.....	73
Figure 4.13 Imitative King section, m. 433	74
Figure 4.14 Dramatic Climax, m. 460	75

CHAPTER 1 - Biblické písně by Antonín Dvořák

Biographical Information on the Composer

Antonín Dvořák was born in Nelahozeves, Czech Republic (approximately 16 miles north of Prague) on September 8, 1842 and died on May 1, 1904 in Prague.¹ Dvořák was raised in an unsophisticated country home, surrounded by the folk songs and dances of the Bohemian people, and deeply rooted in the Catholic religion.² Unlike many well-known composers, Dvořák received no formal music training before entering public school at the age of seven.³ Music was integral element of the education of Czech children, as many teachers were also local church musicians. Nelahozeves' schoolteacher expanded on Dvořák's natural abilities in both voice and violin, yet failed to properly instruct Dvořák in German, which was vital to Bohemian life at the time.⁴ Dvořák played in various instrumental ensembles, learning wedding songs, mazurkas and polkas, and also sang in the church choir.⁵ Dvořák's father sent him to Zlonice to be a butcher's apprentice for two years after his primary education was complete, but upon his arrival to begin a business there he discovered his son's German deficiency. His father then sent him to live with friends in the Sudeten village of Česká Kamenice, approximately twenty miles north of Prague

¹ Klaus Döge, "Dvořák, Antonín" in *Grove Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/51222>.

² Ibid., 9.

³ Neil Butterworth, *Dvořák: His Life and Times* (Bath: The Pitman Press, 1980), 22-23.

⁴ Gervase Hughes, *Dvorak, His Life and Music* (London: The Camelot Press, Ltd., 1967), 25-26.

⁵ Butterworth, 9-10.

near Saxony, which spoke no Czech. This forced Dvořák to learn the Germanic language, allowing for the success of his early compositions in a time when the Czech culture was significantly repressed.⁶ Dvořák's uncle paid for his musical education at Prague's Institute for Church Music (Organ School) beginning in 1857 after the family butchery began to decline.⁷ Dvořák did not enroll in the Prague Conservatory because its emphasis lay in producing singers and virtuosic instrumentalists rather than in overall musicianship.⁸ Dvořák was exposed to a wide variety of music and musical experiences while at the Organ School. He played the viola for the Cecilia Society, which was conservative and Catholic in nature, and gave regular concerts of music including works by Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Schumann, and Wagner. Dvořák was also able to hear Liszt conducting his own works in March 1858, and to attend a concert given by Clara Schumann in March 1859.⁹ Dvořák graduated from the organ school in the summer of 1859 and immediately became a working musician in Prague.¹⁰

Dvořák quickly secured a steady job as a viola player in a small professional orchestra conducted by Karel Komzák, playing mostly dance music and famous opera tunes at beer gardens and dance halls.¹¹ In 1862, the Provisional Theater, the first Czech theater, was constructed in Prague after a lull in the strict Austrian policy limiting Bohemian nationalism.¹² Komzák's band became the nucleus of the theater orchestra, with Dvořák as principal violinist, a

⁶ Döge.

⁷ Butterworth, 13-14.

⁸ Hughes, 39.

⁹ Döge.

¹⁰ Hughes, 31.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Döge.

post he maintained until the summer of 1871.¹³ Dvorak played a concert of compositions by Wagner under the composer's direction on February 8, 1863, greatly influencing his immediate works, which included the First Symphony—*The Bells of Zlonice*—in 1865.¹⁴ In 1866 Bedřich Smetana, the leader of Czech musical life, was appointed conductor of the Theater after he conducted a performance of his opera *The Brandenburgers in Bohemia*. Smetana's appointment initiated an increase in performances of Czech and Slavic compositions, including works by Smetana himself and Glinka.¹⁵ The influence of Wagner and Smetana and his musical exposure while attending the Organ School are seen throughout Dvořák's compositional output, particularly the nationalistic components of Liszt and Wagner and the Czech folk elements of Smetana.

Dvořák left the theater in 1871 to work as organist at St. Adalbert's Church, which allowed him to dedicate more of his time to composing.¹⁶ The performance of his patriotic cantata *Hymnus: Dědicové bílé hory* (Hymn: the Heirs of the White Mountain) in March 1873 established Dvořák's musical prominence in Prague and helped convince the management of the Theater to produce his opera *The King and the Charcoal Burner*. Unfortunately, the opera's difficulty and technical shortcomings resulted in its cancellation before it saw its premiere.¹⁷ This event led Dvořák to reassess his compositional style, and caused him to turn away from the Wagnerian and contemporary Germanic style of writing. He instead favored a more neoclassic

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Butterworth, 16.

¹⁵ Döge.

¹⁶ Hughes, 52.

¹⁷ Ibid.

style, which he mixed with Czech folk tunes and folklore.¹⁸ His next break occurred when Johannes Brahms was sent Dvořák's second set of *Moravian Duets*. Brahms was enthusiastic about this song set, which led to a lasting friendship and the publication of the *Duets* in German, making Dvořák's name known outside of the Prague community.¹⁹

Dvořák's international recognition blossomed, culminating in an invitation to travel to England to conduct his *Stabat Mater* in 1884, which would prove to be integral to his career. The hostile political climate of central Europe was unkind to Dvořák at this time, but England welcomed both Dvořák and his compositions in a grand manner.²⁰ At the end of 1890, Dvořák was offered a teaching position as professor of composition and instrumentation at Prague Conservatory, which he accepted. Dvořák also spent three years in America at the behest of Jeanette Thurber to act as the director of the National Conservatory of Music in New York, composing such works as *The Biblical Songs* and *Symphony No. 9 in E minor* ("From the New World"). He soon began to miss the land of his heritage and his family, and returned home to Bohemia.²¹ There Dvořák enjoyed the fruits of his labor, continuing to teach and compose nationalistic Czech masterpieces, including his final two operas *Rusalka* and *Armide*.

Stylistic and Technical Considerations

Dvořák is considered to be the father of Czech art song. He was the first composer to write songs with Czech texts on a consistent and ongoing basis, despite the small contribution of

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Butterworth, 32-33.

²⁰ Ibid., 52.

²¹ Butterworth, 91.

vocal songs to his overall compositional output.²² Dvořák composed over seventy songs in his lifetime, though he is thought of mainly as a composer of symphonies.²³ It is important to note the political influence of the nationalistic movement in both Moravia and Bohemia on Dvořák's music and its performance success. Much of Dvořák's work is published in several languages, including Czech, German and English. This increased the dissemination and popularity of his works beyond the Czech borders, particularly in German speaking countries. Historically, Czech lands were a central European seat of power, particularly when Prague was the capital of the Holy Roman Empire. From 1620 onward, these lands were under Austrian rule and subject to strict enforcement of Austro-Hungarian dominion, particularly in laws requiring the use of the German language instead of Czech.²⁴ These statutes were still firmly in place, though a gradual resurgence of the Czech language was building. The beginning of the 19th century saw the printing of the first book of Czech grammar and the first German-Czech dictionary, though Czech opera and song would not be widely performed until the works of Smetana and Dvořák and the establishment of the Provisional Theater in 1862. Dvořák contributed to this cultural resurgence not only through his dual usage of Czech and German, but by incorporating Bohemian folk song tunes and texts into his works. Though Dvořák is considered to be a nationalistic composer, he would not live to see the establishment of an independent Czech Republic, which was formed in 1918 after the conclusion of the First World War.²⁵

²² David Adams, *The Song and Duet Texts of Antonín Dvořák* (New York: Leyerle Publications, 2003), 1.

²³ Carol Kimball, *Song: A Guide to Art Song Style and Literature* (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard, 2005), 532.

²⁴ Adams, 1.

²⁵ Ibid.

Dvořák's first stylistic period dates from approximately 1860 to 1865. The opus numbers of these early pieces are not necessarily indicative of the date of the piece's composition, for though Dvořák intended to meticulously catalog his works, he was extremely particular about works that the public might see. This led to him often casting aside pieces with no opus number at all, or even discarding a piece as unlikely to be performed, reusing the number, then revising and keeping the first piece.²⁶ Therefore, when many of these works were combined to be printed, the publisher took it upon himself to issue opus numbers. This early style was marked by Dvořák's lack of theoretical knowledge and was mainly his attempt to imitate the formal style of Haydn, Beethoven's middle period and Mendelssohn.²⁷ The most easily identifiable features of this are Dvořák's development of theme and variations form and an awareness of the structure of a cyclic work.²⁸ Dvořák himself said, ". . . [it was] not that I was unable to produce music, but I had not technique enough to express all that was in me. I had ideas but I could not utter them perfectly."²⁹

Dvořák's second phase is referred to as his "New German," or Wagnerian, Phase and lasted from approximately 1865 to 1872. Dvořák became enamored with the German theatrical examples of Weber and Wagner, and secretly attempted to compose an opera in a similar style. Both of his attempts, *Alfred der grosse* and *King and Collier* were failures, though the "Tragic Overture" from *Alfred* received public performance.³⁰ This period is characterized almost by the

²⁶ Hughes, 33.

²⁷ Ibid., 34.

²⁸ Döge.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Hughes, 44-46.

opposite characteristics of the first. Dvořák moved away from balanced compositions, favoring irregular phrase lengths, short, changing thematic phrases, and ambiguous harmonies.³¹ Dvořák then returned to the classical form and also began composing songs in Czech, reaching the height of his Slovak-phase in the late 1870s. The folk elements of this phase include the lack of an upbeat in the melody, which was common in the Czech language, pentatonic phrasing, and dance-like syncopations.³² From 1881 to 1886, Dvořák's work lost some of its outwardly Slovak nature, turning to a more dramatic style with an occasional coloring of a folk-tune or other element. The *Slavonic Dances* of 1886 saw a return to Dvořák's earlier use of folk color, beginning his Second Slovak Phase, which would last until 1892. Dvořák's final phase has no title, but is characterized by being highly poetic, and even often rhapsodic in nature. He continued to incorporate folk elements into his compositions, but synthesized both text and music in more cohesive manner.

Dvořák represents a significant contribution to both the Czech musical community and that of Western Music. David Adams states that, "In addition to being the first significant composer of Czech art song, Dvořák did much to define the folk song setting as a significant component of the art song genre."³³ Dvořák, like Hugo Wolf, composed song sets unified by poetry, unlike his compatriot Johannes Brahms. Dvořák above all was a craftsman, dedicated to striving forward with each new piece and creating pieces that would leave a lasting impression upon the world.³⁴ He often had to work very hard to accomplish his compositional goals,

³¹ Döge.

³² Ibid.

³³ Adams, 4.

³⁴ Döge.

subjecting his pieces to a rigorous editing process, though they always emerged seeming spontaneous and with a sense of Bohemian freedom. Dvořák himself said, “To have a fine idea is nothing special. The idea comes of itself, and if it is fine and great, then that is not because of the person who has it. But to develop the idea well and make something great of it, that is the hardest part – that is art!”³⁵

Biblické Písně, Op. 99

Dvořák’s *Biblical Songs* were composed in New York during March and April of 1894, a month before his return to his homeland. They are his best known songs apart from the *Gipsy Songs* of 1880.³⁶ Dvořák traveled to the United States at the invitation of Jeannette Thurber to teach and direct at the new American Conservatory.³⁷ One of the goals of Mrs. Thurber was for Dvořák to help American composers to find an “American sound,” which he met by incorporating African spirituals, Native American music and using structures reminiscent of wide open spaces. It is ironic that his vocal music composed in America would reflect almost none of these American idioms, but instead hearken back to his native land.³⁸ The *Biblical Songs* are a set of ten songs based on his personal selections from the Psalms found in the Bible of Kralice, the first Czech translation of the Bible. The exact reason why Dvořák wrote the *Biblical Songs* is unknown, though most scholars believe that it was influenced by the deaths of

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Hughes, 172-173.

³⁷ Adams, 146.

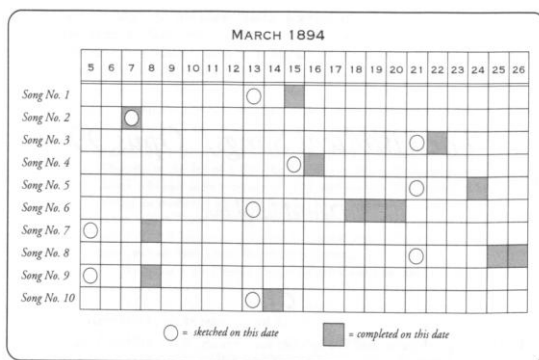
³⁸ Ibid.

Tchaikovsky and Gounod, and his news of his father's failing health.³⁹ Gervase Hughes postulates that Dvořák maintained a certain professional detachment from his works, as did Verdi, in that its quality was in no manner effected by the circumstances in which they found themselves at the time of the work's creation. He states that,

. . . I maintain that Dvořák achieved the same detachment not only in his operas...but also (except very occasionally) in his 'absolute' music . . . While it is proper to point out that his music, taken as a whole, derived much of its spontaneity from a normally uninhibited attitude towards psychological and philosophical problems (he was a spiritual descendent of Haydn), it would be inappropriate, in nine cases out of ten, to relate individual works to his humor of the moment, let alone discuss them in the high-flown phraseology to which some commentators have recourse when attempting to convey in words the emotional ebb and flow of masterpieces conceived or contrived by composers with a more complex personality.⁴⁰

Despite debate over Dvořák's personal connection to the piece, it is clear that the cycle represents a simple, strong individual struggling to understand his life and fate.⁴¹ Dvořák composed the entire song cycle within 26 days, though not in order. Figure 1.1 shows a diagram of when the sketch and movement itself was completed.⁴²

Figure 1.1 Dates of sketches and movement completion



³⁹ Michael Beckerman, *New Worlds of Dvořák: Searching in America for the Composer's Inner Life* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2003), 157.

⁴⁰ Hughes, 3.

⁴¹ Beckerman, 158.

⁴² David Horowitz, *Dvořák in America: In Search of the New World* (Chicago: Cricket Books, 2003), 256.

This short period of composition in no way belittles the depth of the work, which reflects Dvořák's devotion to his Catholic faith. The accompaniment in these pieces is often simple, allowing the text to shine, causing the voice to be the main vehicle of expression. Adams states that, "There is also less of the typical Dvořákian melodic sweep, also likely due to the nature of the texts. A sensitive performance . . . certainly demonstrates how moving these songs can be."⁴³ Text painting is a common occurrence in the work, along with the use of dramatic recitative. Dvořák orchestrated only the first five of the *Biblical Songs* upon his return to Bohemia, though others have completed his work. The work was originally published in German, Czech and English, though with considerable changes in the rhythm of the text.

Theoretical Analysis

Dvořák's *Biblical Songs* follow the example of his other cyclical works by being linked poetically. As the work cycles through themes of awe and fear of God's power, plaintive prayer, trust, praise, anguish, penitence, praiseful, and rejoicing, the key centers fall in a wave-like pattern around B-flat major, the key of the final two movements. Negative themes are represented by keys below B-flat major and positive themes, such as rejoicing or praise, are in keys above B-flat.⁴⁴

Song one, "Oblak a mrákota jest vůkol něho (Clouds and darkness are around him)," opens in the key of B major and is based on text from Psalm 97, verses two through six. It is in 3/8 time and marked *Adagio*, as are the majority of the movements in this work. This song is through-composed and marked by large recitative sections with a brief accompanied arioso in the

⁴³ Adams, 146.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 256-257.

middle of the piece, which also shifts harmonically to center around the dominant. The tonal center is often ambiguous throughout the piece, beginning with a half-diminished V chord in the accompaniment, with the vocal line outlining the same chord when it enters in measure four (fig. 1. 2).

Figure 1.2 Opening of “Oblak a mrákota jest vůkol něho”

ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK
(1841–1904)

Andantino

CANTO
O - blak a
Wól - ána and
Dark - ness and

PIANO

mrá - ko - ta jest vů - kol Ně - ho,
Fín - stér - náš ábí - jen Sín - An - líže,
thun - der - clouds are round a - bout Him.

This theme is used in the accompaniment throughout the piece, most commonly with the dominant half-diminished seventh chord. There is a pervasive use of diminished seventh harmonies in this song, for example in measure 21 (figure 1.3).

Figure 1.3 Song one, m. 21

20

Joj a za - pa - lu - je vů - kol ne - přá - te - le
Náše, síž il - ber - all Ver - derb Heer - schu - ren der
send, His en - em - ies de - stroy - eth in - light - ning and

cresc.

The brief middle section, which begins at the *poco più mosso*, has a thicker texture in the accompaniment, using tremolo in the right hand and often outlining the original theme in the left (figure 1.4).

Figure 1.4 Accompaniment texture in middle section

The image shows a musical score for a vocal and piano piece. The top staff is the vocal line, and the bottom two staves are the piano accompaniment. The tempo is marked "Foco più mosso". The lyrics are in Latin and Czech. The piano accompaniment features a complex texture with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes, creating a shimmering effect. The vocal line is recitative-like, with a chromatic build.

Je - ho. Za - svě - cu - jít se po o - krš - ku svě - ta
Fein - de. Sieh, Sei - ner Blut - ze Flam - men - mee - re zuh - ken
thun - der. And through the world his stor - my light - ning fla - shed,

A return to the recitative feel with an unaccompanied vocal line follows, which begins the chromatic build to the end of the piece. The climax of the song occurs on the vocal fermata in measure 42 on a dominant seventh chord, which then resolves to the tonic in the following measure. It is interesting that Dvořák includes one more instance of the major theme in measure 45 before once again resolving to the tonic in the last two measures of the piece, almost creating the feeling of a Picardy third (figure 1.5).

Figure 1.5 Measure 44.

The image shows a musical score for measure 44. The top staff is the vocal line, and the bottom two staves are the piano accompaniment. The tempo is marked "Più mosso". The lyrics are in Latin. The piano accompaniment features a complex texture with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes, creating a shimmering effect. The vocal line is recitative-like, with a chromatic build.

do - vé. do - vé.
Eh - re. Eh - re.
glo - ry. glo - ry.

The second movement, “Skrýše má a pavezá má ty jsi (You are my hiding place and my shield),” is a brief modified-strophic piece also marked *Andante* with texts taken from Psalm 119, verses 114, 115, 117 and 120. It opens in C major with a simple and prayer-like tone, established with the block chord structure and high tessitura of the opening accompaniment (figure 1.6).

Figure 1.6 Block structure/high tessitura

Andante

Skrý - še má a pa - ve - za má Ty jsi, na slo - vo Tvé
Zu - flucht Du, Du bist mir ein Schirm, und Schild, ich fol - ge stets
Lord my shield, my re - fuge and hope art Thou And in Thy word

pp

The transparency of the accompaniment allows the text to become the focal point of this opening section, with the harmonic structure following a simplistic progression of I-vi-IV-I, in stark contrast with the chromatic nature of the previous piece. Changes to the harmonic structure accompany the change in textual theme, which switches to the relative minor key of A minor at a short B section beginning in measure 7. The texture of the accompaniment changes the most dramatically during these sections, significantly lowering the tessitura, and adding sextuplets in the left hand before quickening the harmonic rhythm for the vocal climax (fig. 1.7).

Figure 1.7 Texture change in codetta

poco accel.

o - čeká - vám. Od - stup - tež o - de mne,
Drei - nen Wör - ten. Wei - chel von ihm - nen, ihr
put I my trust. A - vault from me ye who

mf

poco accel.

pp

This pattern repeats, though instead of exploring an alternate tonal center and then returning to the home key like the last piece, the second movement ends in the relative minor with a slower version of the ominous sextuplet bass rhythmic figure (fig. 1.8).

Figure 1.8 Ending of “Skrýše má...”-modified codetta

pp

bo - jím se ná - ram - ně.
o Gott, den Rich - ter - spruch.
Lord, I fear ex - ceed - ing - ly.

pp

ppp

perdendosi

The third movement, “Slyš o Bože! Slyš modlitbu mou (Hear oh God! Hear my prayer)” is again marked *Andante* and is based on Psalm 55, verses 1, 2, and 4-8. It is another through-composed piece, though it reuses thematic material in the accompaniment whereas the vocal line exhibits almost no repetition. It opens in the key of E-flat major, but not with a chord found in that key. It begins with a dark and ominous tone with a chromatic ascent to tonic, which is repeated an octave down in the following phrase. The tonic is not clearly established until measure five with the eight-note figure. However, when the voice enters a measure later, it is centered on the third scale degree, creating a sense of unease in the vocal line (fig. 1.9).

Figure 1.9 Tonal ambiguity of “Slyš o Bože! . . .” opening, m. 1-10

The musical score for the opening of "Slyš o Bože! . . ." (measures 1-10) is presented in E-flat major, 3/4 time, marked *Andante*. The score includes a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The piano part begins with a chromatic ascent in the right hand, while the left hand plays a steady eighth-note accompaniment. The vocal line enters in measure 6 with the lyrics: "Slyš, ó Bo - že! slyš modlit - bu mou, / Gott, o AB - ze! slyš modlit - bu mou, / Hear, oh hear - my prayer, Lord my God".

The left hand of the accompaniment continues consistently playing the tonic chord with a high and soaring bird-like melody in the right hand. This foreshadows the text “Would I have wings like a dove, that I would fly and be at rest” beginning in measure 42 (fig. 1.10).

Figure 1.10 Dove theme foreshadow, m. 18-21

The musical score for the Dove theme foreshadow (measures 18-21) is presented in E-flat major, 3/4 time, marked *pp*. The score shows the piano accompaniment, featuring a high, soaring bird-like melody in the right hand and a steady eighth-note accompaniment in the left hand.

A brief modulation to E major occurs at the beat before measure 24, followed by a retransition to E-flat major using the dominant seventh chord. This chromatic change reflects the grieving and suffering expressed in the text, which leads into the dove passage. This section, beginning in measure 42, exhibits text painting of both the doves mentioned in the text, as well as the ascendance of the individual into the presence of God. This is represented by high tessitura, the staccato and triplet rhythmic figures which are much like bird calls, and the generally ascending melodic pattern (fig. 1.11).

Figure 1.11 Dove theme, beginning m. 42

The musical score for the Dove theme, beginning at measure 42, is presented in two systems. The first system shows measures 42-45. The tempo is marked 'Meno' and 'Un poco più mosso'. The vocal line has lyrics in German and Latin. The piano accompaniment features staccato and triplet figures. The second system shows measures 46-49. The piano accompaniment continues with staccato and triplet figures. The lyrics are in German and Latin.

Meno *p* *40* *Un poco più mosso*

I f - kl jsem: Ó,
 Ich sprach zu mir: Oh,
 And thus I spake: Oh,

bych mël kri - dla ja - ko ho - lu - bi - cel
 wenn ich Fll - gel wie die Tau - be hüt - te,
 had I wings like a sil - ver dove,

A return to the tumultuous and chromatic writing occurs with the text “I would hasten from the violent winds and tempest.” There are three specific instances of text painting in this section, in the tremolo in the bass which creates ominous winds, a quick tempo indicates both fear and the swift approaching tempest, and the tempest itself which is then represented by the descending chromatic scale in sextuplets in measure 58 (fig. 1.12).

Figure 1.12 Text painting of “violent winds” and “tempest,” m. 58

string. cresc.
 Po - spi - šil bych u - ji - ti vš - tru prud - ké - mu a
 Mit schnel - lem Flug wü - r - de ich flie - hen vor dem Sturm und
 I would es - cape far from the storm - winds, Tem - pest or the
string.
cresc.
f rit.

in tempo
 vi - chri - ci.
 Un - wet - ter.
 fear of death.
in tempo
poco a poco ritard.
ff
fp
p
pp
pp
dim.
pp

Movement four, “Hospodin jest můj pastýř (The Lord is my shepherd),” based on Psalm 23, verses 1-4, is in E major with an almost rondo-like modified strophic form. This sincere and hymn-like piece has five ‘verse’ sections, with some thematic material being as short as two measures before a return to the main theme. The opening section is a recitative supported only by a single suspended dominant on B₄, moving up one octave during the vocal fermata in measure three (figure 1.13).

Figure 1.13 Opening recitative of “Hospodin jest můj pastýř,” m. 1-5

Andante
mp quasi recit.
 Hos - podin jest můj pa - stýř, ne - bu - du mi - ti ne - do - stat - ku.
 Gott der Herr ist Hir - te mir, ich wer - de nie - mals Man - gel lei - den.
 Oh, my shep - herd is the Lord, I shall not want, shall want for noth - ing.
fp
recit.
pp
lunga corona
lunga corona
fp
lunga corona

This leads into the first verse, or first statement of the main theme, which avoids a solid fixation on the tonic in the vocal line, instead utilizing more of the third and fifth (figure 1.14).

Figure 1.14 First statement of the main theme, m. 6-10

Na pa - stvách ze - le - ných pa - se mne, k vo - dům ti - chým
Auf der Flur, so da grünt, stärkt Er mich und Er führt mich
In the soft pas - tures green, and be - side wa - ters clear He
mne při - vo - di. Du - ši mou ob - čer - stuje;
zu stil - len Seen. Und Er labt See - le und Geist
lead - eth me. He re - stor - eth mysoul,

After a measure of instrumental interlude, a brief two measure verse occurs. Verse three is melodically identical to the first theme, but with an expansion of the final two measures. This which reflects the majestic nature of the text “glorify His name.” The fourth verse, which begins in measure 19, follows a repetition of the interlude, and is the most tonally complex of the piece. It utilizes a harmonic progression mostly consisting of minor vi and iii chords, though it never feels as though it fully modulates. This ambiguity is assisted by the lack of tonic in the vocal line in previous verses. The text in the phrase translates to “even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me.” Throughout the *Biblical Songs*, whenever themes of fear, death, evil or suffering appear in the text, tonal ambiguity, higher tessitura, chromaticism, complex rhythmic figures and an increased speed in the harmonic rhythm are usually present. The fifth verse returns again to the original theme, with another slight change in the second half, reaching a final cadence on the dominant. This is followed by the piano interlude and a brief codetta, reminiscent of the end of a hymn, utilizing an open fifth and fourth in the bass (figure 1.15).

Figure 1.15 Final verse and hymn-like ending, m. 27-32

ne - bo Ty semnou jsi; a prut Tvůj a hůl Tvá, tof mne
 denn auch Du bist bei mir. Und Dein Stab und Dein Schutz schenken
 for Thou art with me now. And Thy rod and Thy staff, they shall

po - tě - šu - je.
 Trost und Ru he.
 com - fort me.

“Bože! Bože! píseň novou spívati (Lord! Lord! I will sing a new song)” is the first song of the cycle to be performed at a tempo other than *andante*. This piece is slower than the previous four works, marked at *risoluto maestoso*, although its text is the most joyous thus far, based on the texts of Psalm 144, verse nine, and Psalm 145, verses 2, 3, 5 and 9, singing the praises of God. It is in a modified ternary form with the initial A section comprised of three separate strophes, each modifying slightly, though solidly based on the original theme, which is pictured in figure 1.16.

Figure 1.16 Accompaniment introductory theme, m.1-4; Vocal theme, m. 5-10

The musical score for Figure 1.16 is divided into three systems. The first system shows the piano accompaniment for measures 1-4, marked 'Risoluto, maestoso'. The second system shows the vocal line for measures 5-10, marked 'rit.' and 'in tempo mezza voce', with lyrics in German and English. The third system shows the piano accompaniment for measures 11-14, marked 'poco rit.' and 'in tempo', with lyrics in German and English. The piano accompaniment features dynamic markings such as *f*, *ff*, *p*, and *pp*.

The entirety of the A section remains solidly in the key of C major, but Dvořák adds color by frequently using a major-minor I^7 resolving to IV (figure 1.17).

Figure 1.17 I^7 -IV Resolution

The musical score for Figure 1.17 shows the piano accompaniment for measures 1-4, marked 'Risoluto, maestoso'. Two red boxes highlight specific harmonic resolutions: the first box highlights the resolution of a major-minor I^7 chord to the IV chord in measure 2, and the second box highlights the resolution of a major-minor I^7 chord to the IV chord in measure 4. The piano accompaniment features dynamic markings such as *f* and *ff*.

The end of each verse has a *poco ritardando* and a cadential sequence of IV-V-I. The vocal melodic line also repeats at the cadential point, using A_4 - B_4 - D_5 - C_5 with alternate rhythms for textual purposes (figure 1.18).

Figure 1.18 Cadential repetition, verse 2 ending, m. 19-20

rit. *20* *in tempo*
 jiné - no Tvé na vě - ky vě - ků.
 e - wig und für al - le Zei - ten!
 and I shall sing to my Sav - iour. *in tempo*
 rit. *f* *f*

The B section occurs from measures 31-40, introduces a new vocal melody, a faster tempo and new tonalities (C minor and then A-flat major). The vocal theme is new, but it is placed over a familiar theme in the piano for the first half of the verse. In measure 37, both the accompaniment and key center are changed. The key modulates briefly to C minor and the accompaniment is much more subdued. Any sort of effervescence is abandoned here in favor of a more church-like feel, reflecting the text “I will speak of your wondrous acts” (figure 1.19).

Figure 1.19 Thematic change in B section, m. 37-40

ritard. *pp* *ppp*
 o vě - cech Tvých pře - div - ých mlu - vi - ti
 Del - nor Ge - walt Hei - lig - keit will ich be -
 great - ness my song shall ex - toll, and praise Thy
 ritard. *[ppp]*
in tempo *[mezza voce]*
 bu - du. A moc pře - hroz - ných skut - ků Tvých vši - chni
 sin - gen. Und il - ber al - le Welt ver - brei - tet sich,
 mer - cy. Yea, men shall tell of Thy great mer - cy and
in tempo *ppp*

A dominant pedal acts as the transition into the final verse which returns to the A theme in the original key in measure 40. The accompaniment has a driving triplet rhythm in unison in both hands of the piano, which elongates to a quarter note rhythm in the left hand just before the vocal

climax of the piece. The song then returns to the A theme once more with an instrumental postlude.

Movement six, “Slyš, ó Bože, volání mé (Hear my cry, oh God),” begins with an open chord structure and simplistic tone, much like that found in movements two and four. It is based on the texts of Psalm 61, verses 1, 3 and 4, and Psalm 63, verses 1, 4 and 5, and is a hopeful prayer of anguish. This piece is in G major and centers on the tonic in the accompaniment throughout the entire piece, occasionally adding color using chord substitution and secondary dominance (figure 1.20).

Figure 1.20 Chord substitution and secondary dominants

The image shows a musical score for the piece "Slyš, ó Bože, volání mé". It consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line is in G major and features lyrics in Czech, German, and English. The piano accompaniment is in G major and features a constant eighth note rhythmic pattern in the left hand. A red box highlights a section of the score, specifically measures 20 and 21, which correspond to the text "silný můj ty jsi." The piano accompaniment in this section features a strong tonic chord in both the accompaniment and voice.

The vocal line orients around the third and fifth scale degrees when the text reflects trepidation and longing, then Dvořák uses a strong tonic chord in both the accompaniment and voice when speaking of the strength of God. This is best seen in measures 20 and 21 of the B section, with the text “silný můj ty jsi.” A strong G pedal in the bass during these two measures, reflects the firmness of God, which is accentuated with low, octave G on the downbeat of both measures. This is also reflected in the constant eighth note rhythmic pattern in the left hand of the piano (figure 1.21).

Figure 1.21 Tonic pedal, m. 19-23

The musical score for Figure 1.21 consists of three systems. The first system shows a vocal line with lyrics in Czech and German, and a piano accompaniment. The piano part features a tonic pedal on B5. The second system continues the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The third system shows a vocal line with lyrics in Czech and German, and a piano accompaniment. The piano part features a tonic pedal on B5.

rit. *p* *in tempo* *[pp]*
 kři - del Tvých. Bo - žel!
 Flü - ßel - chen. Her - ger!
 in Thy wings. Lord!

rit. *p* *dim.* *p* *dim.* *in tempo*
 Bůh sil - ný můj Ty jsi, To - behdnevji - tře hle - dám,
 Du bist mein star - ker Gott, ich su - che Dich am Mor - gen,
 Thou art my tower of strength, Lord, I will seek Thee ear - ly.

This eighth-note pattern will continue throughout this section, though the majestic feeling of the initial bars is replaced with a tonally ambiguous passage with the text (in translation) “My soul thirsts for You, my body longs for You, As if thirsty in dry land where no water is.” The descending melodic line utilizes the descending minor second interval, representing longing and anguish. Another pedal, again on B5, transitions to the restatement of the A section theme with a modified ending. The right hand of the accompaniment is symbolic of the singer’s praises reaching heaven with rolled chords resembling a harp in the highest tessitura seen within the cycle until the final movement (figure 1.22).

Figure 1.22 Harp figure

The musical score for Figure 1.22 consists of two systems. The first system shows a vocal line with lyrics in Czech and German, and a piano accompaniment. The piano part features a harp figure in the left hand. The second system continues the vocal line and piano accompaniment.

poco a poco rit. *[pp]*
 chvá - li - la by Tě ú - - sta ná.
 lo - ben Dich, Herr, mein Le - - ben lang.
 ra - tion, sing - ing Thy pra - - ses ev - - er.

poco a poco rit. *f* *dim.* *[pp]*
 8

The seventh movement, “Při řekách babilonských (By the rivers of Babylon),” returns to the *andante* tempo marking and retains the G major key center. It introduces the most complex rhythmic figure seen in the cycle in the accompaniment’s left hand, which carries throughout the

first A section of this ternary piece, and is symbolic of the weeping of captive Israelites (figure 1.23).

Figure 1.23 Introductory rhythmic figure

This rhythmic figure reflects the parlante aspects of the piece, which, though in ternary form, is one of the most speech-like movements of the cycle. The text, based on Psalm 137, verses 1 through 5, has an abrupt change when the Babylonians begin to taunt their captives in measure 29 (figure 1.24).

Figure 1.24 Babylonian theme, m. 29-34

This is represented by an abrupt key change to E major, with a triumphant theme centered entirely on the tonic. This switches to center on the minor vi and V when the Israelites begin their reply, then echo the Babylonians' triumph as they remember the song of their Lord. As they

remember their current trepidation, the accompaniment descends into a return to the A section, paired with a return to the original key of G major (figure 1.25).

Figure 1.25 Retransition to original key, m. 41-44

v ze - mi ci - zo zem - cú? Jest - li - že se za - po - me - nu na Te - be,
 all - wo Fein - des - land ist? Wenn ich Dich eer - gessen soll - te einmal nur,
 be - ing in a strange land? If I e'er for - get my land, for - get my land,

The speech component of the piece emerges in this section, both rhythmically and harmonically. Accents and tonal centers shift continuously. The piece reaches its dramatic and musical climax in measure 50 at the fermata, utilizing a rolled I^6 chord followed by a quick, yet dramatic, German augmented sixth chord (figure 1.26).

Figure 1.26 German augmented sixth chord, m. 50

- le - me, ó, ó,
 - lem, mein Glück, o
 - lem, Oh, oh,

A brief codetta concludes this song with a final cadence of a dominant thirteenth chord resolving to an elongated tonic triad.

Movement eight, “Popatřiz na mne a smiluj se nade mnou (Turn to me and have mercy on me),” centers around an accompaniment theme, which is used both as an instrumental interlude and played with the voice in unison, based on a descending natural C minor scale (figure 1.27).

Figure 1.27 Main melodic theme, accompaniment and vocal

Andante

p

Po-pa-tříž na in-ne a-si-ni-luj se na-de-mnou;
 Blik-ke mich an und er-bar-me Dich mein-er Herr,
 Oh, Lord, have mer-cy and turn Thou Thy face to me

f *p* *pp*

Occasionally, though only when the scale is descending, the leading tone is used in the left hand, creating a chromatic cross-relationship. The simplistic and repetitive nature of the theme allows the sincerity of this prayerful text from Psalm 25, verses 16 through 18 and 20, to become the main focal point of the piece. This liturgical feel is emphasized by the open fourth and fifth sonorities in the left hand of the accompaniment in measures fifteen and sixteen (figure 1.28).

Figure 1.28 Liturgical color, m. 15-16

f *dim.* *p* *p*

z úz-ko-sti mých vy-ved mne, z úz-ko-sti
 ent-he-be mich mei-ner Not, ent-he-be
 From my dis-tress save me Lord. From my dis-

f *p* *f* *p*

The dramatic use of the Neapolitan chord in measure 25 with its irregular resolution assists the dramatic build to the text (in translation) “Protect my soul” in measure 27 (figure 1.29).

Figure 1.29 Neapolitan chord, m. 25

f

Viz trá-pe-ní mé a bi-du mou a od-pusť vše-cky hří-chy mé.
 Sieh all mei-ne Not und all mein Leid, ver-zei-he al-le Sün-den mir.
 Look on my af-flic-tion and my pain. And for-give me my hea-vy sins.

f

The piece then ends with a surprising and sudden shift to the parallel major key center on the word “doufám,” which translates to “I hope” (figure 1.30).

Figure 1.30 Shift to parallel major, m. 33

za-han-ben; ne-bof vTe - be dou - - - -
 Sün-den-fäll, denn ich har - re Dei - - - -
 be ashamed. For I trust in Thee

The piece concludes with a brief codetta in this key, establishing the joyful major feel of the final two songs of the cycle.

Song nine, “Pozdvihuji oči svých k horám (I lift my eyes up to the mountains),” is the second movement to be notated with a different tempo marking, *andante con moto*. This song is through composed in 3/8 time, acting as a recitative to the final movement, hence its short length, its irregular rhythms, and its modulatory nature. It opens with a section of unaccompanied recitative outlining the tonic of A major, which occurs twice with piano interludes, again with an emphasis on the third and sixth (figure 1.31).

Figure 1.31 Opening recitative, m. 1-5

Andante con moto mezza voce

Po - zdvi-hu-ji o - ōi svých k horám,
 Ich he - be den Blick zum Berg em - por,
 My eyes will I to the hills lift up,

The first 23 measures of this 45-measure piece are built on the tonic, except for measures 17-19 which utilize an unusual progression of IV-ii-vi-iii-V⁷-I. This section also utilizes the harp theme of rolled piano chords to represent heaven with the text (in translation) “My help is form the Lord, who made heaven and earth” (figure 1.32).

Figure 1.32 Harp-like section, m. 15-20

Pomoc mi jest od Ho-spo-di-na, kte-rýž u-či-nil na-be i
 Hil-fe komt mir von dem Herren Noj, Schöp-fer Himmels und Schöp-fer der
 My help com-eth from the Lord of hosts, For he made the earth and the
 ze-mi.
 Er-de.
 hea-vens.

A direct modulation into the parallel minor key of A minor occurs, in measure 24. Measures 24 through 33 act as a transition to A minor's relative major key, C major, which the remains the tonic until the conclusion of the piece. The transitional section exhibits the most harmonic diversity, utilizing both a Neapolitan chord and an Italian augmented sixth before using secondary dominants to transition into the new key (figure 1.33).

Figure 1.33 Transitional section

ze-mi. Ne-do-pustif, a-by se
 Er-de. Nie-läßt Er zu, daß wan-ke
 hea-vens. For- He will not suf-fer Thy
 po-hnou-ti mě-la no-ha tvá, ne-bo ne-dři-mef stráž-ný
 o-der daß straucke je dein Fuß, denn dein Hü-ter, Er schlum-mert
 foot to be moved, nor shalt Thou fall. He that keep-eth thee slum-breth
 tvůj. Až- ne-dři-mef, ovšem ne-spi ten, kte-rýž
 nicht. Sieh, nie-mals schläft, niemals schlummert der, der in
 not. Be-hold, slum-ber He shall not nor sleep. He that

The final movement, “Zpívejte Hospodinu píseň novou (Sing to the Lord a new song),” opens in B-flat major in 2/4, and is the third movement of the cycle to have an alternate tempo marking with *allegro moderato*. The opening has a majestic tone, particularly with the dotted-eighth/sixteenth-note rhythm in the right hand of the piano accompanied by a continuous sixteenth-note rhythm in the left hand, hearkening back to Handel’s compositional style (figure 1.34).

Figure 1.34 Opening piano motive, m. 1-8

The image shows a musical score for the opening piano motive, measures 1-8. The score is in B-flat major and 2/4 time, marked "Allegro moderato". It features a piano accompaniment with a dotted-eighth/sixteenth-note rhythm in the right hand and a continuous sixteenth-note rhythm in the left hand. The vocal line enters in measure 4 with the lyrics "Zpi - vej - te Ho - spo - di - nu pi - seň" and continues with "Singt, sin - get Gott, dem Her - ren, neu - e Oh, sing un - to the Lord a joy - ful". The score includes dynamic markings like "mf", "rit.", "in tempo", "mezza voce", and "pp", as well as articulation marks like "stacc." and "acc.".

This piece is in modified strophic form. The introductory rhythmic figure changes to the left hand pulsing eighth notes while the right hand utilizes a triplet figure, mostly in tertian harmony, reminiscent of heralding trumpets (figure 1.35). There is a brief modulation to the relative G minor in measure 14 on beat two, lasting through the accompaniment’s interlude between the two sections of the first verse (figure 1.35).

Figure 1.35 Trumpet motive and use of the relative minor, m. 14-18

The musical score for Figure 1.35 consists of three systems. Each system includes a vocal line (soprano) and a piano accompaniment. The first system starts with a *rit.* marking and a *mezza voce* instruction. The lyrics are: "Zpi - vej - te Ho - spo - di - nu pi - seň / Singt, sin - get Gott, dem Her - ren, neu e / Oh, sing un - to the Lord a joy - ful". The second system continues with: "no - vou, ne - bof jest div - né vě - ci u - činil. / Lie - der, dem Wun - der auf Er - den an uns aus - geführt. / song. He with His right hand bring - eth vic - to - ry." The third system begins with *mezza voce* and includes the lyrics: "Zvuk vydej - te, pro - zpěvuj - te a žal - my zpi - vej - te! / Frei - se Welt, in Ju - bel - is - sen und Paa - len singt dem Herrn! / Make a joy - ful noise to greet Him. Oh earth re - joice and give praise,". The piano accompaniment features a prominent harp-like motive in the right hand, often marked with *ppp* or *f*.

This process is repeated for the second verse, though the minor section is left out of the third verse, which begins with the overlap of the piano’s introduction in measure 47. The third verse also utilizes the harp motive, simplifying the accompaniment to allow the text of the final phrase, “Rejoice, field, and all that is in it; Rejoice, earth, resound sea, And all that is in it!” to be emphasized (figure 1.36).

Figure 1.36 Final harp motive, m. 55-63

The musical score for Figure 1.36 consists of two systems. Each system includes a vocal line (soprano) and a piano accompaniment. The first system starts with a *mf* marking. The lyrics are: "Ple - sej, po - le, a vše, což na něm / Flu - ra, ju - bell und was each fül - let, / Dance, ye fields of gol - den corn." The second system begins with a *rit.* marking and a *mezza voce* instruction. The lyrics are: "ple - sej, ze - mě, zvuč i mo - ře i což v něm jest! / frei - se, Er - de, singt ihr Mee - re und was each füllt! Deutsche Fassung Bedřich Eben. / Let the woods and for - ests sing the praises of the Lord. English arr. by Daphne Rutledge." The piano accompaniment features a harp-like motive in the right hand, often marked with *f* or *mf*.

The codetta repeats the opening piano introduction material, ending on a final rolled tonic chord.

CHAPTER 2 - Wolf's sacred music

Biographical Information on the Composer

Hugo Wolf was born in Windischgraz, Styria, which is now Slovenjgradec, Slovenia, on March 13, 1860 and died in Vienna on February 22, 1903. Wolf was the fourth of eight siblings born to a successful tanner who enjoyed practicing music on his piano or violin, among other instruments, perhaps more so than contributing time to his workshop.¹ Young Hugo received violin and piano lessons with his father, beginning at the age of five, quickly advancing in both instruments.² Despite his father's passion for music, he viewed music not as a vocation but as a leisurely pursuit and sent Hugo first to a regional secondary school in Graz for a semester, a Benedictine abbey in Carinthia for two years and to the secondary school at Marburg (now Maribor).³ All of Wolf's attempts at formal academic education failed after a short period of struggle, for he was impatient with all subjects outside of music. He composed both the *Piano Sonata No. 1* and *Variations* for the piano with a dedication to his father in hopes of attending the Vienna Conservatory.⁴ It was not until his aunt, Katharina Vinzenzberg, offered to allow

¹ Frank Walker, *Hugo Wolf: A Biography* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1952), 1-3.

² *Ibid.*, 4.

³ Eric Sams and Susan Youens, "Wolf, Hugo," in *Grove Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/52073>.

⁴ Walker, 15.

Wolf to live at her home in Vienna that his father relented, allowing Wolf to attend the conservatory beginning in September of 1875.⁵

While at the Conservatory, Wolf studied harmony and composition with Robert Fuchs (along with classmate Gustav Mahler) and piano with Wilhelm Schenner.⁶ He frequently attended the Vienna Opera and sat for hours at the Vinzenzbergs' piano, improvising unusual chord progressions which appeared in some of his earlier works.⁷ One of the most significant events in Wolf's years at the Conservatory was a series of concerts conducted by Wagner in 1875. Wolf met with Wagner in December of that year and was able to show him some of his piano works. Wagner encouraged the young composer to be patient and stated that he looked forward to seeing some of his large scale works, which effectively dedicated Wolf to the Wagnerian movement.⁸ The majority of the Wagnerian supporters were youthful university or conservatory students, since Wagner represented modernism, freedom, and progress. This created a generational conflict in Vienna, dividing the Wagnerian youth from their more conservative parents.⁹ Due to both Wolf's rebellion against authority and a scandal involving a death threat forged in Wolf's handwriting, he was dismissed from the Conservatory in March of 1877.¹⁰

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid., 18.

⁷ Sams.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Walker, 23.

¹⁰ Sams.

Wolf continued on as a music teacher in Vienna, patronized by wealthy families not based upon his teaching skill, but thanks to his charm and talent. Wolf continued composing during this time, particularly art songs, dedicating himself to the study of Schumann by imitating his work throughout his settings of Heinrich Heine's poetry in a *Liederstrauß* in 1878.¹¹ Wolf considered this to be his "days of Lodi," stating, ". . . in those days I composed almost every day *one* good song, and sometimes *two*."¹² Wolf maintained a network of friends and wealthy patrons, namely the minor composer Adalbert von Goldschmidt, the critics Gustav Schönaich and Hans Paumgartner, the sculptor Viktor Tilgner, and the conductor Felix Mottl, who would take him to the opera or symphony, lend him scores and even give him money. These friends would lead to Wolf's eventual insanity in 1897 and death for it was Goldschmidt who took Wolf to a brothel where he contracted syphilis, a deadly disease at this time.¹³ Ironically, at this time he also fell in love with Vally Franck, to whom he dedicated many of his songs, including the Lenau settings *Herbstentschluss*, *Traurige Wege* and *Der schwere Abend*.¹⁴ The moodiness of his compositional output would continue for the next several years, with a happy period on an idyllic summer holiday at Mayerling in 1880, spiraling into a depressive state at the permanent rejection of Vally Franck in 1881, which was reflected in his choral song cycle based on the poetry of Eichendorff.¹⁵ The next few years of his life were uncertain, with no real progress made in his

¹¹ Walker, 71.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Sams.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

musical career. In 1880 he was appointed the Kapellmeister at the Stadttheater at Salzburg, from which he was fired from due to his temperament in 1882.¹⁶

Wolf's musical career blossomed in 1888 in what is seen as his *Liederjahr*. During this year alone, he composed the entirety of both the Möricke and Eichendorff Lieder sets and a portion of the Goethe Lieder, which was completed February 12, 1889.¹⁷ The popularity of these songs spread quickly. They were performed for the Thursday concerts of the Vienna Wagner Verein, where the great Wagnerian tenor Ferdinand Jäger heard them. He became Wolf's Johann Michael Vogl, performing nine songs at a public concert in the Bösendorfer-Saal a month later.¹⁸ Wolf composed almost all of his 250 *Lieder* within a five-year period from 1888 to 1891, adding the songbooks of Geibel, Keller, and Heyse to Goethe, Eichendorff and Heine, and also composing the *Spanisches Liederbuch* and most of the *Italienisches Liederbuch*.¹⁹ Wolf became known as the poet's composer, inheriting the rich tradition of Schubert and Schumann, and gained international fame through these songs. Tragically, Wolf's dormant illness manifested in 1897, which caused the loss of his sanity and rendered him incapable of making music after 1898. He was committed to an asylum in 1897 where he remained until his death in 1903.²⁰

Stylistic and Technical Considerations

Carol Kimball states that, "Hugo Wolf's songs have been characterized as the caviar of *Lieder* literature because they exhibit a highly refined sense of style and intellectual

¹⁶ Walker, 124-125.

¹⁷ Sams.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Kimball, 112.

²⁰ Ibid.

concentration.”²¹ Wolf exhibits a painstaking dedication to the textual line, which also led him to be extremely particular about the text he chose to set. Wolf refused to set text that he felt was inferior, leading to settings of only major poets. Wolf dedicated his song sets to the poet whose work he used, insisting on the title of these pieces to read “Poems by (poet), for voice and piano, set to music by Hugo Wolf” accompanied by a picture of the poet, not of himself.²² Wolf extracted every possible element from the music, stating, “There’s something gruesome about the intimate fusion of poetry and music in which, actually, the gruesome role belongs only to the latter. Music has decidedly something of the vampire about it. It claims its victim relentlessly and sucks the last drop of blood from it.”²³ He is often referred to as the “Wagner of the *Lied*,” often incorporating elements of Wagnerian style in his songs, compacting the larger operatic form into minute art songs.²⁴ Some vehicles of this Wagnerian style are a more declamatory nature of the music, ambiguous harmonic and tonal structures, and motivic repetition.²⁵ Wolf would often read the poetry aloud to his audience before a performance of one of his songs, so that they might better understand the purpose of his music. He utilized an idiomatic *parlando* vocal line so that the text would be clearly enunciated, which proved vital in some of his more complex works where the piano and voice represented conflicting thematic and textual ideals.²⁶ Wolf created ambiguous harmonies through the use of these textual extremes, chromatic

²¹ Kimball, 111.

²² Deborah Stein, *Hugo Wolf’s Lieders and Extensions of Tonality*,” (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1985), 5.

²³ Kimball, 111.

²⁴ Stein, 5.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*

third relations, harmonic substitution, or, occasionally, double tonality. Therein lies the life's blood of Wolf's compositions, taking the compositional skeleton of the works of his predecessors and applying the tonal advances of the late nineteenth century to push the *Lied* to its limits. Susan Youens stated,

The importance of radical tonal manoeuvres and complex harmonic manipulations to Wolf's poetico-musical art cannot be too strongly emphasized. It was central to this composer's appropriation of poetry that an emotion, an idea, an image in the poem is given harmonic flesh and bones, sometimes with breathtaking audacity, although he rightly insisted upon the traditional compositional framework from which his boldest harmonies emerged.²⁷

Theoretical Analysis

Möricke Lieder

The *Möricke Lieder* were written quickly from February to October of 1988, the first year of Wolf's most productive years of song composition, at the rate of approximately one song per day. The collection is based on the poetry of Eduard Möricke (1804-1875) and covers a vast array of moods and styles, containing the widest range of all of Wolf's collections.²⁸ It was a collection well-suited for Wolf for almost none had been previously set to music, with Schumann setting five and Brahms two. Möricke was a Lutheran pastor whose poems characterized this religious devotion, but also humor, realism and imagination with themes of gold—from sunlight to golden bell notes.²⁹ Wolf's songbook covers themes varying from nature scenes, to character

²⁷ Sams.

²⁸ Kimball, 112.

²⁹ Ibid.

portraits, to both symbolic and erotic love songs.³⁰ These mood swings likely appealed to Wolf who was infamous for his various moods, particularly with students. It was Wolf's first mature song collection and by far his favorite. He stated, “. . . and Möricke himself, this darling of the Graces!...that is written with blood, and such tones can only strike one who, suffering, surrenders his innermost being to deeply truthful knowledge.”³¹

Both “Schlafendes Jesuskind” and “Gebet” are devotional songs, for which there was a large market during the latter part of the nineteenth century. Both poet and composer were somewhat religious skeptics, though Möricke was a pastor and Wolf was raised in a devoutly Catholic home. Möricke saw his position as a Lutheran vicar in the town of Pflummern as a means of earning a living only, much preferring to write poetry. In a letter to his mother he states, “I said softly to myself: now, Muses and Graces, flee far away from here! . . . But to have nothing else at hand except PASTORALIA! I can hardly trust myself to look out at the gently sunlit mountains and forests, that, close by, already dream of springtime and nightingales.”³² This juxtaposition of the Catholic and Protestant religions, religious distrust and ambivalence create an interesting canvas for the setting of the devotional poetry. There is not a sense of confliction between these elements, rather they add to the topic at hand, such as the tension in the crucifixion of Christ or hope in the infant Jesus.

Schlafendes Jesuskind (Sleeping Infant Jesus)

Musical themes of religious devotion are prominent in this piece from the immediate onset of this piece. The open chordal structure, intervals of a perfect fifth and fourth, and pedal

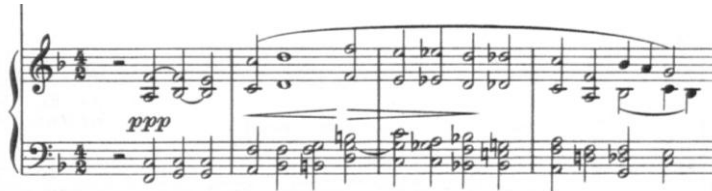
³⁰ Ibid., 113.

³¹ Susan Youens, *Hugo Wolf and his Möricke Songs* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 1.

³² Youens, 140-143.

tones in the bass, are reminiscent of liturgical music. However, Wolf’s Romantic color can be seen in the descending chromatic line and use of secondary dominants in the right hand of the opening instrumental accompaniment (figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1 Opening Accompaniment



Text painting in the next phrase (measures 7-8), leads to the word “Schmerzen,” which translates as “anguish.” An emphasis on open chords in the left hand of the piano, as well as an overall use of fifths continues, though Wolf also uses secundal clusters in the right hand. It ascends throughout the passage, with each restatement of the major second interval beginning on the higher note of the previous cluster (figure 2.2).

Figure 2.2 Secundal figure with open fifths, m. 7-9



The accompaniment for this piece is characterized by the use of parallel octaves, quartal-quintal chords and suspensions (figure 2.3).

Figure 2.3 Quartal-quintal chords and suspensions



This accompaniment is by no means simplistic harmonically, yet it gives the overall impression of simplicity, which is appropriate for the text which foreshadows the crucifixion of Christ, though he is being seen as a sleeping infant. The vocal line represents this with sweeping melodic lines that avoid any cadential or tonic feeling, frequently ending on the seventh scale degree (figure 2.4). The overlapping of the vocal and piano rhythmic figures, and the shifting accents of the accompaniment add a dreamlike quality to the piece, which intensifies at the dramatic climax in measures 20 and 21 (figure 2.4).

Figure 2.4 Unresolved vocal line and shifting accents

The image shows a musical score for a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line is in G major and features a melodic line that ends on the seventh scale degree (F#) in the final measure. The piano accompaniment consists of a steady eighth-note pattern in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The lyrics are: "schwar-zen Wim-bern, sich in sanf-tem Wech-sel ma-len! / long dark lash-es, chang-ing oft in sweet suc-ces-sion." The score includes dynamic markings like *pp* and *ppp*, and articulation marks like *stacc* and *sf*.

This is followed by a restatement of the introductory instrumental prelude, now used as an interlude, followed by the initial two measures of the vocal line and V-I final cadence.

Gebet (Prayer)

Prayer is one of the most performed songs in the *Möricke Lieder*, despite its conflicts with Lutheran doctrine. The poetry begins with a typical prayer setting, asking God to bestow upon them what He will, for they are satisfied in His will. It then immediately retracts that statement by asking God to restrain his joys and sorrows, allowing him to live in moderation. The struggle of compliance with assertion of human will, a central element in the poetry, is reflected in Wolf's musical setting as well.³³ *Gebet*, like the previous piece, frequently uses parallel octaves and quartal-quintal chords. It is tonally ambiguous, with the first instance of

³³ Youens, 152-153.

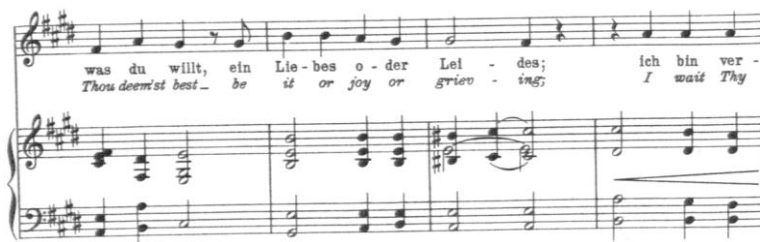
chromaticism occurring in just the fourth beat of the piece in a passing tone to the next measure (figure 2.5).

Figure 2.5 Chromatic passing tones, m. 1-5



The first section is prayer-like, imitating the organ with pedal tones and mostly diatonic and chorale-like harmonies with the use of passing tones (figure 2.6).

Figure 2.6 Choral passage, m. 10-13



The vocal line elides with the accompaniment, and even begins to overlap it as the text moves into the second, less pious section. The chorale-like feel is lost as the left hand of the piano breaks free from its previous pedal tones with octave leaps, possibly representing freedom from the adherence to the previous poetic idea (figure 2.7).

Figure 2.7 Dance-like bass, m. 22-25



Tension is created as the voice begins to enter in syncopation with the piano, as well as the right hand of the piano accenting off beats as well, ending with the hymn-like feel of a plagal cadence (figure 2.8), although a sixth is added to the subdominant chord.

Figure 2.8 Final cadence, m. 29-34



Spanisches Liederbuch

The *Spanish Songbook*, comprised of forty-two songs composed in 1889 and 1890, is based on the *Spanisches Liederbuch* of Emanuel Geibel and Paul Heyse. It contains translations of a variety of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Spanish poetry, including works by Cervantes, Camoens and Lope de Vega.³⁴ It is divided into two sections: the *Geistliche Lieder* contains ten songs based on sacred poems and the *Weltliche Lieder* contains thirty-four worldly poems. The first of the *Geistliche Lieder* paint passionate and almost morbid religious pictures, including conversations between Christ and Man, and *Herr, was tägt der Boden hier* describes the entire tragedy of Calvary in only twenty-seven bars.³⁵ The portraits of the Holy family contrast these pieces, where they are portrayed as very human figures, easily combining the divine nature of the Christ child and his earthly environment. In the secular section, Wolf uses local coloration, such as guitar and mandolin effects and dance-like rhythms.³⁶

³⁴ Walker, 252.

³⁵ Ibid., 253.

³⁶ Ibid., 254-255.

Die ihr schwebet (You who hover)

This piece opens in E major, with a tremolo-like figure in the right hand of the accompaniment and a highly chromatic and repetitive melodic theme in the left hand, which is representative of the turbulent winds (figure 2.9).

Figure 2.9 Wind theme



Mary's distress and pleading with the angels is represented by her continuously high tessitura, which rises higher depending on her level of distress. Constant key changes, modulations and chromatic tones occur throughout the piece, with a total of six key changes, from E major to C major briefly, B minor, back to E major, with the same pattern then repeating itself. As the winds, and Mary's distress, increases, drama intensifies in the piano part. This is exhibited by low parallel octaves in the bass, juxtaposed with a higher tessitura in the right hand (figure 2.10).

Figure 2.10 Texture changes representing Mary's distress, m. 13-16



This piece is a modified strophic ternary piece, with A1, A2, B and A3 verses, all sharing similar elements, but adapting to each verse's unique text. The B section lowers considerably in tessitura

to allow the text to take the dramatic forefront as Mary discusses the forthcoming sorrows that her child will face (figure 2.11).

Figure 2.11 B section texture change, m. 34-37

The image displays a musical score for a vocal and piano piece. It consists of two systems of staves. The first system shows the vocal line (treble clef) and piano accompaniment (grand staff). The vocal line has the lyrics: "Der Him - - mels - kna - be dul - det Be -" and "The Heav'n - - born In - fant knows earth - ly". The piano accompaniment features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes in the right hand and a more melodic line in the left hand. The second system continues the vocal line with lyrics: "schwer - de, ach, wie so müd er" and "sor - row, night bring-eth rest, but". The piano accompaniment continues with similar rhythmic and melodic patterns. Dynamics markings include *p* and *pp*.

Mary's final exasperated plea begins a final dramatic section with the text "Grimmige kälte" before the wind begins to die down in the lengthy instrumental postlude.

Ach, des Knaben Augen (Ah, the Child's Eyes)

This piece is in F major with a time signature of 6/4. It is brief, with the calming text acting as a counterbalance to the dramatic nature of the precious piece, with one translation even saying: "Soft his infant glances, meeting mother's eyes, dispel her care . . ." Deborah Stein stated in *Hugo Wolf's Lieder and Extensions of Tonality* that this piece is a prime example of third relations. He often uses neighbor-tone motion in thirds or in an oscillating pattern, such as movement from V in measure 9, to eventually the flat-major III in measure 13, to V/V and then V in measure 16 (figure 2.12).³⁷

³⁷ Stein, 79.

Figure 2.12 Third relations

The image shows two systems of musical notation. The first system consists of a treble and bass staff with a figured bass line below. The figures are: F: I IV VI V I V bIII. Above the first staff are measure numbers 4., 5., 9., and 13. The second system also has a treble and bass staff with a figured bass line. The figures are: IV I v/v V I IV VI I VI V I. Above the second staff are measure numbers 16., 18., and 24. The bass line in both systems features a prominent descending line of notes, characteristic of tertian harmonies.

The third relations are emphasized by the tertian harmonies which are pervasive in the accompaniment throughout the piece (figure 2.13).

Figure 2.13 Tertian harmonies

The image shows a musical score for a piece titled "Sanfte Bewegung (In gentle motion)". It features a vocal line with lyrics and a piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "Ach, des Kna - ben Au - gen sind mir so schön und klar er - Ah, how fair - that In - fant's eyes, like twin stars in Heav - en". The piano accompaniment is marked "p dolce" and features a steady, rocking accompaniment pattern in the bass line, with chords in the treble line. The tempo is indicated as "Sanfte Bewegung (In gentle motion)".

The melodic line promotes a rocking feeling, due to both the emphasis of a long downbeat as well as in the repetition of pitch on these strong downbeats. This piece is brief, yet sweet and sincere, providing a unique contrast to the previous piece.

CHAPTER 3 - Maurice Ravel: Deux mélodies hébraïque

Biographical Information on the Composer

Maurice Ravel was born on March 7, 1875 in the Basque village of Ciboure, and died December 28, 1937 in Paris. His family soon moved to Paris, within three months of his birth.¹ Ravel's father, who was an amateur pianist himself and French *ingénieur*, encouraged his young son's musical inclinations. However, it was the passionate nature of his Spanish Basque mother that would most greatly influence Ravel's compositions, from *Bolero* (1928) to his *Don Quichotte à Dulcinée* (1935).² The Basque region is comprised of seven provinces shared between France and Spain known for tough peasants, majestic mountains, and the practice of witchcraft. Ravel would maintain a deeply residing love for this region for all of his days, returning there several times throughout his adult life.³

Despite the humble income of the Ravel family, Maurice began piano lessons at the age of seven with Henri Ghys, and soon began studying harmony with Delibes' pupil Charles-René.⁴ Ravel was significantly influenced by the compositions of his predecessors, including Chopin,

¹ Barbara L. Kelly "Ravel, Maurice," in *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/52145>.

² Frank Onnen, *Maurice Ravel* (Stockholm: The Continental Book Company A.B.), 9-10.

³ Benjamin Ivry, *Maurice Ravel: A Life* (New York: Welcome Rain Publishers LLC, 2000), 8.

⁴ Kelly.

Liszt, Mozart, Schumann, the Russian Five, Weber, but particularly Emmanuel Chabrier. Ravel himself states, “As a child, I was sensitive to music—to every kind of music.”⁵ Ravel must have exhibited great speed in his progress as a piano student, soon moving up to the distinguished Emile Descombes, who taught composer Reynaldo Hahn.⁶ He then entered the piano preparatory at the Paris Conservatoire in 1889 and proceeded to win first prize in a piano competition in 1891, gaining him full entry to the Conservatoire.⁷ Ravel’s rebellious nature manifested during this time in a revolutionary style which shocked both his violin instructor Charles de Bériot and his fellow students. However, in his composition courses with Fauré and Émile Pessard, he remained the docile student, adhering to the rules and forms of the Conservatoire to an almost comical point.⁸ Whilst at the Conservatoire, he befriended pianist Ricardo Viñes, who would remain a close companion and great interpreter of his music.⁹

Ravel’s failure to win competitions for piano performance led to his temporary departure from the Conservatoire in 1895, when he began to dedicate himself to composition. He reentered the Conservatoire in 1897, after composing his *Habanera*, *Un grand sommeil noir*, and *D’Anne jouant de l’espionnette*, to study composition with the great Gabriel Fauré and counterpoint with André Gédalge.¹⁰ Yet again, Ravel failed to win any major competitions and was removed from

⁵ Maurice Ravel, *Collected Songs: High Voice*, With preface and translations (Milwaukee: Hal Leonard, 2004), 2.

⁶ Ivry, 9.

⁷ Kelly.

⁸ Paul Landormy and Willis Wager “Maurice Ravel (1875-1937): Reviewed Works,” *The Musical Quarterly* 25/4 (October 1939), 430.

⁹ Onnen, 13.

¹⁰ Kelly.

the composition class in 1900, but remained as an auditor with Fauré until 1903. These failures were only augmented by the fact that Ravel also failed to win the illustrious Prix de Rome five years in a row, between 1900 and 1905, only placing third in 1903. His last attempt and subsequent rejection for writing a chorale using parallel fifths and ending on a major seventh chord ended in scandal and disapproval of the Prix de Rome jury by the public, leading to the resignation of the current director of the Conservatoire and Fauré's appointment to the position. This event is the perfect representation of Ravel's disdain for authority, despite his desire to be successful. This eventually led to his establishment of the *Société Musicale Indépendante* in 1909, so that he might voice his musical opinions freely. Ravel continued to work by commission, in spite of his critical failures. By the end of his compositional career, Ravel's output included symphonic poems, ballets, operas, *mélodies* for both voice with piano and orchestra, piano concertos, orchestral chamber music and piano works. His compositions are usually divided into three periods, though these categories are not to be considered clean delineations. The first period is most commonly concluded in 1905, after his years at the Conservatoire, the second after 1920 concluding with his composition *La Valse*, and the third beginning after his volunteer service during World War I through the end of his life. Many of his great masterpieces emerged from his second, and most happy, period of life, including *Histoires naturelles* (1906), *Rapsodie espagnole* (1908), *Deux mélodies hébraïques* (1914), and *Daphnis et Chloé* (1912), though several of his most well known works emerged in the latter period, including *Bolero* and *Chansons madécasses* (1926).¹¹ Ravel enjoyed great popularity in both France and other countries, particularly England, and even went on an American tour in 1928, supported by the *Association Française d'Expansion et d'Echanges Artistiques* in Paris. This tour

¹¹ Onnen, 38-39.

covered large expanses of the United States and is largely responsible for the initial promotion and popularity of his music among Americans.¹²

Stylistic and Technical Considerations

Ravel represents a transitional style of French *mélodie*, bridging between the works of more traditionally grounded composers, such as Debussy and Fauré, and the more revolutionary and contemporary composers who followed him, such as Poulenc.¹³ The most prominent aspect of Ravel's compositions is the dedication to the expression of the text. Tristan Klingsor, whose poetry Ravel used for his *Shéhérazade*, stated, "For Ravel, setting a poem meant transforming it into expressive recitative, to exalt the inflections of speech to the state of song, to exalt all the possibilities of the word, but not to subjugate it. Ravel made himself the servant of the poet."¹⁴ Perhaps Ravel would have agreed with Monteverdi's 300-year old example in that the text should be the master of the music, rather than the servant.¹⁵

To this careful adhesion to the text, Ravel adds a rich and complex harmonic structure, teeming with crisp, often unresolved, dissonances, tertian chord structures (often in parallel motion), augmented triads, and pandiatonicism.¹⁶ Ravel incorporated driving rhythms with regular metric organization, finding subtlety within traditional meters.¹⁷ Ravel's melodies often display an attractive mixture of tonality and modality, with the occasional usage of atonality. He

¹² Kelly.

¹³ Kimball, 212.

¹⁴ Ravel, *Collected Songs*, 2.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Kimball, 213.

¹⁷ Ravel, 2.

exploits sonorities based on intervals of the second, fourth, and fifth as adaptations of the whole-tone and pentatonic scales, unresolved seventh-chords, ninth-chords, and intricate harmonies over pedal points.”¹⁸

Against his liking, Ravel is often compared to Debussy and much of his tone color can be more accurately attributed to influences like Mussorgsky. In fact, in 1913 Ravel was commissioned along with Stravinsky, with whom there existed great mutual musical respect and appreciation, to re-orchestrate and adapt parts of Mussorgsky’s *Khovantchina*.¹⁹ Many parallels can be drawn between the compositions of Debussy and Ravel, since the similarities of their style, and therefore the authenticity of the nature of Ravel’s work, is often debated by music scholars. For the purposes of this document it can be said that both composers use similar elements of style, for example the use of ninth, eleventh and thirteenth chords, dissonant harmonies and exotic material, however the intent and use of these elements differ greatly, though sometimes in a seemingly subtle way. Ravel had a tendency to emphasize dissonant harmonies, utilize more speech-like rhythmic settings of text, and to compose in a more cerebral and technically impressive manner. Ravel would cut quickly to the inner character of an idea and write precisely fitting those elements, rather than the transparent emergence of the melody in the manner of Debussy.²⁰

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Arbie Orenstein, *Ravel: Man and Musician* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975), 66.

²⁰ Onnen, 28-34.

Deux mélodies hébraïque

This particular set of songs is a direct result of both Ravel's interest in world music and his compositions for a folk setting competition organized by the organized by the Moscow *Maison du lied* in 1910.²¹ The organization was founded for three specific purposes: to stimulate public interest in folk melodies, to increase the repertory of artistically harmonized folk songs by encouraging young composers, and to encourage young singers by providing them the opportunity to sing for the public in small recital halls.²² For this competition, Ravel composed a single *chanson Hébraïque*, along with the rest of his *Chants populaires*. The first four, *Chanson italienne*, *Chant française*, *Chant espagnole* and *Chant hébraïque* were selected as first place winners.²³ Other winners included Olénine's Russian melody and Georges' Flemish and Scottish melodies, and all seven winning pieces were performed by Madame Olénine d'Alheim in December 1910, at the *Salle des Agriculteurs* in Paris.²⁴ Madame Alvina-Alvi, a soprano in the St. Petersburg opera company, commissioned the setting of two additional Hebrew melodies, "Kaddisch" and "L'Énigme éternelle," which proved to be Ravel's final setting of folk melodies. Harmonized during April and May 1914, the songs were performed by Madame Alvina-Alvi accompanied by the composer, at the concluding Société Musicale Indépendante recital of the 1914 season."²⁵ He later transcribed both of these pieces for orchestra in 1919, the same year he began his famous *La Valse*.²⁶

²¹ M. D. Calvocoressi, "When Ravel Composed to Order," *Music & Letters* 22/1 (Jan., 1941), 56.

²² Orenstein, 63.

²³ Landormy, 440.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 69.

Theoretical Analysis

In the “Kaddisch,” Ravel incorporates certain aspects of traditional Jewish chant, while remaining firmly rooted in the harmonic feel of contemporary French *mélodie*. This allows the listener to explore the feeling of the song’s exotic nature, while not being so far removed from their level of comfort as to cause any feelings of discomfort. It is liturgical in tone, but its melodic turns are similar in style to Saint-Saëns’s *Samson et Dalila*.²⁷ He bases the piece in the key of C minor, yet centers around the dominant, rather than the tonic. This is firmly established with the octave G’s in the right hand of the piano accompaniment, as well as by the pitch of recitation of the vocal line (figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1 Emphasis of the dominant

The image shows a musical score for the 'Kaddish' by Maurice Ravel. It consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The tempo is marked 'Lent' and the dynamics are 'p' (piano). The vocal line is in C minor and features a melisma on the word 'dal'. The piano accompaniment features a prominent octave G in the right hand, which emphasizes the dominant of the key.

The Jewish color is found in the use of the raised seventh of the harmonic minor scale, in conjunction with the flat sixth, particularly in melismatic sections. The raised seventh is sometimes accompanied by the raised sixth scale degree, as well as a lowered seventh accompanied by a raised six. This interplay of “major” and minor feeling modes represents the improvisational aspects of Jewish scales, whose scale systems can be more accurately compared to the non-linear scale systems of Hindu music than to the modal system of Western music culture. Ravel’s harmonic structure of the accompaniment more so provides a canvas on which

²⁶ Ibid., 233, 235.

²⁷ Ivry, 83.

the melody is painted, rather than becoming an integral part of the story telling as one might find in a Schubertian *Lied*. The accompaniment in the first section of the “Kaddisch” movement establishes the recitation pitch for the melodic line, then adds first a descending natural minor scale in the right hand with the pedal G tone two octaves separated, then repeats in both hands with a raised 6 scale degree. A brief passage of quartal-quintal chords using the tonic and dominant transitions from the A section of the chant to the B section beginning in measure 24, where Ravel uses arpeggiated, and often inverted, seventh and ninth chords, which center around G and A-flat (figure 3.2).

Figure 3.2 Transition to B section, m. 22-24



Above this, the melodic line mostly maintains a G pedal tone, often staying within the interval of a third until the transition to the C section in measure 46. The melodic line becomes more melismatic, covering the range of the entire piece, while the accompaniment becomes more simplistic with tertian harmonies mixed with quartal-quintal chords, again emphasizing G. It is only when the transition into the C section begins that Ravel emphasizes C minor tonic, which is then quickly reinforced by the octave pedal C and A-flat in measure 46 (figure 3.3).

Figure 3.3 Section C texture change, m. 46-48

The final measures maintain this pedal continuously, usually accompanied by some form of G minor-minor seventh, while the melody embellishing C minor scales. Ravel briefly returns to the G-centric previous passages in measure 50 before a final C minor cadence.

“Kaddisch” also loosely conforms to the formal structure of a the traditional Jewish liturgical chant by the same name. The *kaddisch* prayer can be divided into three distinct sections: beginning phrases, used to introduce a sentence or paragraph; intermediate phrases which carry the main body of the text to be chanted; and concluding phrases, used to close the sentence or paragraph.²⁸ However, Ravel’s work contains two “amen” sections which conclude the A section as well as the C section. In the original liturgical prayer only the second “amen” concluding the work was included.²⁹ The *kaddisch* is traditionally a Jewish prayer of mourning, though it contains no reference to death. *Kaddish* means “sanctification” and the prayer itself is a sanctification of God, praising Him. This particular prayer had historically been recited by priests at the end of a Sunday sermon, or after studying a section of midrash or aggada, and is still referred to as the Pastor’s *Kaddish*. The text used in Ravel’s setting is the half *kaddish*, or mourner’s *kaddish*, which is required to be said by sons (not daughters) for eleven months after

²⁸ Baruch Joseph Cohon, “The Structure of the Synagogue Prayer-Chant,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 3/1 (Spring 1950), 19.

²⁹ Ivry, 83.

and on the anniversary of the passing of a parent, in-law, child, or brother. The first reference to a *kaddish* being spoken dates from the 13th century, possibly as an expression of acceptance of Divine judgment and righteousness at a time when a person may easily become bitter and reject God, or perhaps that by sanctifying God's name in public, the mourners increase the merit of the deceased person.³⁰

“L’Énigme éternelle” is much shorter, and is complex in different areas than “Kaddisch.” Where the first piece of this set is challenging in its ornamentation and expression, the second is simplistic in a melody, though it is often in conflict with the accompaniment. The text of “Kaddisch” is direct and constructed with a strong liturgical basis, while the text of “L’Énigme” is mysterious and ironical, deflating the faith of the first. It shifts from the somewhat more liturgical language of Aramaic, to the more common language Yiddish, asking the world questions and receiving no answer, but “Tra la la.”³¹ The extremely short text reads (in translation):

Everyone asks the old question
Tra la la
One answers
Tra la la
And if one wishes, one can say,
Tra la la.

Perhaps the selection of this particular text reflects Ravel’s own agnostic beliefs, though one cannot argue that the mysterious tone certainly accentuates it. Here, Ravel uses a simplistic repetitive accompaniment figure of ascending fifths in the left hand, evoking a vaguely pentatonic and folk-like feel, with descending whole steps in the right hand of the piano. This is

³⁰ Shira Schoenburg, “Mourner’s Kaddish,” *Jewish Virtual Library*, <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/kaddish.html> (accessed March 11, 2012).

³¹ Ivry, 84.

loosely based in E minor by the i^7 chord with a removed third on the downbeat of each measure. However, the vocal line does nothing to reinforce this key until the “tra la la” section, which is oriented around the tonic (figure 3.4).

Figure 3.4 “Tra la la” section, m. 13-15

Until this point, Ravel almost avoids a tonal center, beginning the melody on the raised 4th scale degree, followed by the “Jewish feeling” interval of an augmented second, and by excessively using the 2nd scale degree. The B section of this piece, beginning measure 25, utilizes arpeggiated ninth and eleventh chords, often in inversion and with missing thirds and sevenths, which is highly unusual and creates an unsettled feeling both in the accompaniment and between the accompaniment and vocal line (figure 3.5).

Figure 3.5 B section, m. 25-30

This section is highly agitated, spurred on by the rise in tessitura, but quickly returns to the almost hypnotic repetition of the opening phrases.

CHAPTER 4 - Excerpts from the Operas of Menotti

Biographical Information on the Composer

Gian Carlo Menotti was born on July 7, 1911 in the Cadegliano region of Northern Italy and died February 1, 2007 in .¹ Menotti showed his extraordinary musical talent at a young age. He completed his first musical works at the age of seven and his first opera, *The Death of Pierrot*, by age eleven. He attended the Milan Conservatory from 1923 until he began study at the Curtis Institute of Music in 1928, where he met his lifelong friend and partner Samuel Barber, for whom he wrote the libretto for *Vanessa* and *A Hand of Bridge*. Menotti composed his first successful opera, *Amelia al Ballo*, in 1933 following his graduation from Curtis, and it premiered in 1937. It was such a resounding success in New York that the Metropolitan Opera accepted it for the following season.² This would be the first of many operatic successes by Menotti, with five earning a place in the standard operatic repertoire: *The Old Maid and the Thief* (1939), *Amahl and the Night Visitors* (1946), *The Consul* (1950), *The Medium* (1946), and *The Saint of Bleeker Street* (1954).³ Menotti revolutionized the operatic genre by being the first major composer to write works with the original intention of being broadcast for home entertainment, versus staged for live performance. The first of these was *The Old Maid and the Thief*, originally composed for radio in 1939, followed by the highly successful Christmas opera *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, which was commissioned by NBC in 1951. Amahl is a true

¹ Bruce Archibald and Jennifer Barnes, "Menotti, Gian Carlo," in *Grove Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/18410>.

² Ibid.

³ Ken Wlaschin, *Gian Carlo Menotti on Screen: Opera, Dance and Choral Works on Film, Television and Video* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 1999), 111.

representation of the approachable nature and popularity of Menotti's works. It ran on NBC every holiday season until a falling out between Menotti and the studio in 1966. It averages more than 500 performances in over 20 languages annually across the globe.⁴ From 1958 onward, much of Menotti's time was dedicated to his adoptive son Chip, for whom he wrote the children's opera *Chip and His Dog*, and managing the *Festival dei due mondi* (Spoleto Festival), which he founded first in Spoleto, Italy, then in Charleston, South Carolina.⁵ In 1973, he and Samuel Barber sold their house in New York where they had lived together since 1943 and moved to Scotland with his son. With his increased responsibilities due to the opening of the *Spoleto Festival USA* in 1977, Menotti's compositional output slowed greatly.⁶ Despite his dabbling in symphonic and choral writing, Menotti would always be remembered for his contributions to the world of American opera and the establishment of a new audience centered approach to opera. Grout states that,

It is not necessary to make extravagant claims for Menotti's originality in order to recognize that he is one of the very few serious opera composers on the contemporary American scene who thoroughly understands the requirements of the theater and are making a consistent, sincere attempt to reach the large opera-loving public; his success is a testimonial to the continuing validity of a long and respected operatic tradition.⁷

Stylistic and technical considerations

Menotti was adventurous in his compositions, staying firmly rooted in the conservative Italianate style favored in America at this time, but fully and willingly accepting developments in compositional techniques and technologies as they became available, such as utilizing electronic

⁴ Archibald.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Donald Grout and Hermine Williams, *A Short History of Opera*, fourth edition (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 752.

music to represent the aliens in *Help! Help! The Globolinks!* Robert Sabin states that, “Menotti is a diverse musical personality—a skillful and witty comedian who nonetheless writes grim and horrible tragedies . . . a realistic social commentator who bursts out into the most fantastic impossibilities.”⁸ Menotti is often considered to be an American *verismatic* composer, although *The Saint of Bleecker Street*, his last grand operas, was his first true *verismo* opera.⁹ Menotti’s compositions were often eclectic. He used whatever strategies necessary to achieve the desired dramatic effect, even acting as stage director for many of his shows to ensure this achievement.¹⁰ In contrast to this operatic ideal, many of Menotti’s operas actually premiered on Broadway. His double-billed operas *The Telephone* (1947) and *The Medium* (1946), a light two-person comedy and a small-scale melodrama, enjoyed a run which lasted several months.¹¹ The only American opera to be performed at the Metropolitan Opera during this period was Samuel Barber’s *Vanessa* (1958), for which Menotti wrote the libretto.¹² Menotti’s ultimate goal was to communicate with the audience, using any tool necessary to convey the emotions of the characters and their life events, whether they were simplistically cheerful or agonizingly distraught. Menotti’s melodies are tonal, sometimes with a modal flavor, and are frequently infused with sequence, repetition, and imitation. The continuous, recitative-like passages set the text with naturalness and clarity, while aria-like sections are typically short to allow for a constant dramatic flow. His harmony is tonal, sometimes using parallel chords over a clear and simple tonal basis, with orchestrations that tend to be light and open, which is well suited for

⁸ John Ardoin, *The Stages of Menotti* (New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1985), 10.

⁹ Grout, 752.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Roger Parker, *The Oxford Illustrated History of Opera* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 320.

¹² *Ibid.*

chamber ensembles. Much like his melodies, his rhythms, even when metrical irregularities are used, are natural and easily grasped by performer and listener.¹³

The Saint of Bleecker Street

The Saint of Bleecker Street is the fifth of Menotti's five memorable operas composed in his great period from 1946 to 1954, and is the most ambitious of the five.¹⁴ Menotti's previous operas *The Telephone* and *The Consul* dealt with everyday situations and common people, thematic elements found in the *verismo* operas of Puccini and Mascagni. However, these works were symbolic in nature. *The Saint of Bleecker Street* truly dealt with the nature of a specific group of people, in this case a small Italian neighborhood of New York City's Little Italy. These thematic elements and the traditions of Italianate operatic writing might possibly be where the comparison between Menotti and other Italian *verismo* composers ends. Menotti's style takes elements of late Romantic composition, minimizes the ingredients, and adds focus to the drama. Menotti ensures that the focus is centered on the drama-text relationship, closely unifying action, text and music, with arias being the main vehicle of the plot, rather than expounding on one particular emotional idea. *The Saint of Bleecker Street* was immensely popular, despite its short stint on the Broadway stage, striking a resonating chord in the lives of the American people. It was commissioned by the City Center for Music and Drama under a grant-in-aid from the Rockefeller Foundation, and premiered on December 27, 1954 at the Broadway Theater in New York City, nearly four years after the premiere of *The Consul*.¹⁵ It ran for a total of 92 performances on Broadway, but in spite of its critical acclaim, its grandeur did not allow for

¹³ Archibald.

¹⁴ Wlaschin, 111.

¹⁵ John Gruen, *Menotti: A Biography* (New York: MacMillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1978), 122.

commercial success. Producer Chandler Cowles stated, “You see, it was such a big production. There were fifty-eight in the orchestra, we had a cast of thirty and a chorus of thirty. It was just too big for Broadway. We lost all our money.”¹⁶ *The Saint of Bleeker Street* earned Menotti his second Pulitzer Prize, the first being for *The Consul* (in 1950), as well as his second New York Drama Critics’ Circle Award.¹⁷

Plot considerations

The setting of Menotti’s self-written libretto reflects his heritage with its focus on a strong Italian-American community, and also addresses both aspects of his faith: that of his deeply rooted Catholic heritage, and his mature agnosticism and doubt. Menotti was active musically in church as a boy, playing organ for the Mass and often being chided by his childhood priest Don Rimoldi: “Musica sacra, Gian Carlo! Musica sacra!” when his improvisations deviated too far from the solemn nature inherent in the Mass.¹⁸ John Gruen says in his biography of Menotti that, “As a young boy, Gian Carlo Menotti was deeply religious, having been raised in the Catholic Church and guided by the religious zeal of Don Rimoldi.”¹⁹ Don Rimoldi was, however, quite the eccentric priest, encouraging dancing and music playing among the church youth and preaching on topics not necessarily rooted in biblical text, but was concerned more with mysticisms and universal concepts. Most, if not all, of Menotti’s operas are colored by religion or mysticism in some form or fashion, whether it is fortune telling and spirits in *The Medium* or the blatant biblical reference of the three magi and the miracle of the Christ child in

¹⁶ Ibid., 123.

¹⁷ Ardoin, 71.

¹⁸ Gruen, 9.

¹⁹ Ibid.

Amahl and the Night Visitors. None, however, center so fully on the conflict of Menotti's own beliefs, nor allow religion to be the core of the plot. His other operas instead utilize religion as a supplement to other moral symbolism or character development. Menotti clung to his Catholic beliefs upon his arrival in America, but as his doubts grew, so did his sense of guilt and sudden bouts of depression. Menotti himself states,

I definitely am not a religious man . . . [but it] is undeniable that the intense and incandescent faith which nourished my childhood and my adolescence has seared my soul forever . . . [The loss of my faith] has left me uneasy . . . And it is this very duality in my character, this inner conflict, which I have tried to express in some of my operas . . .²⁰

This spurred an urgent desire for him to rediscover his faith, and fostered the libretto for *The Saint*. Menotti even took a trip to Italy to meet Padre Pio, a somewhat cantankerous sufferer of the stigmata. Meeting with the Padre failed to rekindle Menotti's previously devout nature, though he admitted to having in fact met a saint.

The Saint of Bleeker Street juxtaposes conflict between three main characters who are used to further the plot: Annina (mysticism and faith), her brother Michele (cynical realism), and his mistress Desideria (earthly love) against a bright, yet often sinister, background of Little Italy.²¹ The vivid loves and strong hates of the characters and lack of supernatural elements and dreams firmly establish and define its *verismatic* nature, which accentuates the harsh and volatile nature of the opera, or the wrestling of angel and devil--sinner and believer--within himself. Annina's theme opens the show, softly rising out of the orchestra with an open, Puccini-like texture in the initial prelude (figure 4.1).

²⁰ Ardoin, 72.

²¹ Gruen, 123.

Figure 4.1 Annina’s Opening Theme—*The Saint of Bleecker Street* Prelude



This is extremely similar to Puccini’s theme for *Suor Angelica* in his opera of the same name, hearkening back to an almost medieval modal color that rises up, representing the eventual ascension of the spirit from its currently earthly distress (figure 4.2)

Figure 4.2 Suor Anglica’s Theme—*Suor Angelica*, Puccini



The chorus plays a significant role in *The Saint of Bleecker Street* from the very onset, opening not with a line from a lead character, but with a dialogue among Annina’s neighbors about the validity of her stigmata and the miracles worked by touching her wounds. Their fanaticism and fixation during Annina’s vision spurs the anger of her brother Michele, who quickly disperses the crowd and demonstrates his deep love for his sister, his disdain of Don Marco who helps Annina, and the crowd’s resentment of Michele. Michele’s theme is texturally dense with quick moving eighth notes and a heavy, ominous bass line. The conflict between these two characters and the ideals they represent come to fruition in their duet later in Act I. Annina has been told that a crowd is coming to carry her away to a religious parade because of their belief in her sainthood and Michele has come to protect her. They quickly launch into an argument concerning the validity of Annina’s beliefs: Michele thinks her mind has been altered by her illness and wants to remove her from their current situation saying “Sister I shall hide you and

take you away” to which she replies, “Brother I shall lead you and show you the way.” These melodies combine elements of both characters, utilizing open harmonies and the same modal figure in the bass during Michele’s line that we find in the opening, but twisting the harmonious nature of the melody by mixing in descending passages and his more agitated theme in the right hand of the piano reduction as seen in figure 4.3.

Figure 4.3 Michele’s theme



The image shows a musical score for Michele's theme. It consists of three staves. The top staff is a vocal line in G major, 4/4 time, with the lyrics: "Sis - ter, I shall hide you and take you a - way, / Schwes - ter, ich ver - steck dich und bring dich hier fort,". The middle staff is a piano accompaniment in G major, 4/4 time, with the tempo marking "Allegro moderato, ma con agitazione" and a dynamic marking of "ppp". The bottom staff is a piano accompaniment in G major, 4/4 time, with a dynamic marking of "pp".

Annina’s response, in turn takes Michele’s agitated and dense theme, but in a significantly higher tessitura, doubled by flutes in the orchestra, adding an ethereal quality to her side of the argument, as seen in figure 4.4.

Figure 4.4 Annina’s version of Michele’s theme



The image shows a musical score for Annina's version of Michele's theme. It consists of three staves. The top staff is a vocal line in G major, 4/4 time, with the lyrics: "Broth - er, I shall lead you and show you the way, / Bru - der, ich be - schütz dich und zeig dir den Weg,". The middle staff is a piano accompaniment in G major, 4/4 time, with a dynamic marking of "pp". The bottom staff is a piano accompaniment in G major, 4/4 time, with a dynamic marking of "pp".

These themes continue to present themselves throughout the opera, intensifying when Michele murders Desideria and when Annina takes the veil and passes from this world, ending the opera with a final chorus, which is almost sinister in nature, rather than restful, and a return of her original theme.

Menotti brilliantly represents the dual nature of humanity through his masterful writing of both solo themes and chorus, as well as his use of orchestral color. Menotti captures the essence of the human voice in each of his characters, emphasizing the root and power of their emotions, which bloom into dramatic conflict. Menotti states that many see his opera as being unresolved. He posed the question,

On whose side am I? Michele the unbeliever, or Annina the saint? But, of course, I cannot take sides because I am both. I am Michele, who envies Annina. That is why I have depicted their love as almost incestuous. The opera symbolizes my own inner conflict—the split in my personality—the impossibility of being both.²²

It is highly appropriate that this opera should receive great critical acclaim, but not receive its due in actual show attendance. The uncomfortable nature of the opera can be difficult for audience members, particularly when presented in such an impactful system of delivery, which may have indeed led to the decline in the popularity and significance of Menotti's output. He would not ever again have as successful an opera as *The Saint of Bleeker Street*, which shall remain a pinnacle of Menotti's operatic work and a uniquely outstanding work.

Theoretical analysis

“Oh, Sweet Jesus” is an immensely rich and harmonically complex aria which utilizes Menotti's typical compositional techniques to further the dramatic action and emotional development of Annina's vision, rather than to create melodies in a specific key or keys. The overall structure of the aria alternates between sections of recitative or arioso style with sections of highly melodic aria. Instrumental color creates a significant portion of the highly dramatic tone and the quickly increasing emotional instability of this particular aria. Thus, the singer encounters some unique challenges when performing with piano. The piano-vocal score will be

²² Gruen, 124.

primarily discussed here with some details of the orchestration in the performance considerations section. At the opening of the aria, its unsettling dramatic nature is quickly established with a rapidly descending and syncopated piano introduction. Harmonically, both lines should be considered separately, with the left hand outlining first a descending A minor triad, providing some feeling of the key, which is followed by an A-flat major triad. The vague key establishment is echoed by the right hand, which outlines a descending A minor triad while the left plays the A-flat major triad. This is followed by a series of slowly descending and inverted seventh chords with added secundal clusters until the first firm establishment of A minor in measure 6 with a root position A minor seventh in root position. The seventh is then used with the minor second of D-flat to create a hypnotically repetitive motive underneath Annina's opening lines, which are also her only conscious lines of the aria. The purpose of this opening arioso section is to establish the emotional and physical instability of the situation at hand. The people are becoming restless, as witnessed in the previous portion of the scene, Michelle is becoming more aggressively protective, and Annina is becoming increasingly sickly. The introduction ends abruptly with an arpeggiated C-flat thirteenth chord in first inversion, enriched by a pedal D₂.

Annina then awakens fully into her vision of the crucifixion, and Menotti writes a brief, minimally accompanied recitative, outlining a B minor chord in the voice. The aria then immediately moves into a polytonal section, beginning in the bass clef only, then moving upward as the tempo, and Annina's tension level, increase. This is the least rhythmically complex section of the aria, written in 12/8 with chords written only on strong beats. This dark, clustered, and driving sound helps create the imagery of the chaotic crowd which has gathered to see and encourage the crucifixion of Christ. This tension culminates in measure thirty with a statement of Annina's theme, and in this case, is also the theme of Christ (fig.4.5).

Figure 4.5 First statement of Annina's Theme in *Oh, Sweet Jesus*



This quickly dissolves into the heralding of the Roman soldier's trumpets, changing from a flat tonality to a sharp tonality, though it remains polytonal. For example, Menotti juxtaposes a C-sharp minor triad against an A-major triad in the second beat of measure 37 (fig 4.6).

Figure 4.6 Trumpet & Soldier Figure, m. 37



This accompaniment figure is short lived, moving into a march with a lop-sided feel in 9/8. It would initially seem that Menotti was returning to the driving rhythmic theme found in the crowd section of the aria, but instead of pure dotted quarter notes, he uses the elongation of the quarter note with a quickly moving third beat of the subdivision, either with sixteenth or eighth notes. This creates the specific text painting of Christ struggling up the hill to be crucified, and is where Annina physically sees Jesus for the first time and tells of his struggle. This continues until the end of measure 53 (figure 4.7) with a small caesura before the next section begins, with Menotti again using a dramatic device, maintaining the same rhythmic figure while the melody line ascending upward with the rising tension.

Figure 4.7 Walking Theme, m. 38



The next section of text is Annina seeing the women weeping and describing the added pain of Christ at the Virgin Mary's presence. This section is marked by the use of tremolo in the accompaniment and two repeated melodic themes seen in figures 4.8 and 4.9, which could also be symbolic of the presence of both the Virgin Mary and Mary Magdalene in the biblical scene.

Figure 4.8 Women's Theme #1, m. 62



Figure 4.9 Women's Theme #2, m. 69



This highly emotional pleading section returns to the soldier marching theme at the 12/8 in bar 91, another polyrhythmic section with the voice vocal line shifting to 3/4 and then 4/4 in measures 93 and 94 respectively, while the accompaniment remains in the compound meters of 12/8 and 9/8 (fig. 4.10).

Figure 4.10 Polymetric with shifting meters, mm. 90-94

The image displays a musical score for two systems. The first system (measures 90-94) features a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line has lyrics: "Oh wo-men, take her home. No hill was ev-er high-er." The piano accompaniment includes dynamic markings such as *p* and *mf*. The second system (measures 95-99) continues the vocal line with lyrics: "The whole world can". The piano accompaniment includes a dynamic marking of *f*. The score illustrates complex meter changes, including 5/4 and 15/8 time signatures, and features a climactic bass passage in the piano part.

Annina's theme reappears in measure 91 as well, when the text begins to focus on the actual figure of Christ. This begins a dramatic build to the end, with more tonal orientation in C minor than has been present in the aria up to this point. Both the vocal line and accompaniment become rhythmically unstable at the text "the nail is held in place," shifting into the irregular meters of 5/4 and 15/8 respectively. From here until the end of the vocal line there is a meter shift every measure, building to the climactic and hammer-like bass passage, reminiscent of the soldiers' theme, in measures 115-117, finally ending on the subdominant F-minor triad.

Amahl and the Night Visitors

Amahl and the Night Visitors was commissioned by Samuel Chotzinoff, the NBC music director who also asked Menotti to compose *The Old Maid and the Thief* for radio in 1939.²³ It was immensely popular, becoming the first program in the *Hallmark Hall of Fame*, was repeated

²³ Wlaschin, 11.

in live broadcast twice the following year, and was chosen to be one of the first color TV programs in 1953.²⁴ The scope of its popularity might be better realized by stating that according to the Central Opera Services Directory in 1972, twenty-one years after its premiere, *Amahl* was the most frequently performed opera in the United States. Up to this point, it was performed almost double the amount of any other opera, and its closest competitors were *La Bohème*, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, and *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*.²⁵ This opera reflects a trend of the twentieth century to compose for smaller ensembles, creating workshop or chamber operas, rather than large spectacles. These operas often required small forces, and could be performed with amateurs or children.²⁶ The amateur aspect of *Amahl* is reflected in its intended audience, if not in the performers themselves, with simplistic melodies and uncomplicated harmonies.²⁷ Menotti fully intended for this opera to be performed for children. He states, “This is an opera for children because it tries to recapture my own childhood. You see, when I was a child I lived in Italy and in Italy—before it became Americanized—we had no Santa Claus. Our gifts were brought to us by the Three Kings instead.”²⁸ Menotti would indeed write several operas to be performed mainly by children and for an audience of their peers, including *Help! Help! The Globolinks*, *Chip and His Dog* and *A Bride from Pluto*, which premiered for the National Children’s Arts Festival of 1982.²⁹ *Amahl* has a significantly smaller cast than *The Saint*, utilizing only six lead

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Gruen, 109.

²⁶ Grout, 580.

²⁷ Archibald.

²⁸ Gruen, 108.

²⁹ Campbell, Mary, “Menotti: The Hans Christian Anderson of children’s opera” *Gadsen times*, May 21, 1982. <http://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1891&dat=19820521&id=RA8qAAAAIABJ&sjid=PNYEAAAAIABAJ&pg=5109,3798366> (accessed November 16, 2011).

singers and an additional small chorus of villagers, shepherds and dancers, which, in addition to a simplistic fixed set, likely added to its popularity with smaller community organizations. The opera itself was inspired by Hieronymous Bosch's triptych *The Adoration of the Magi* (ca. 1480), which depicts the wise men with three distinct personalities, including a black king as Amahl notices, and even a crippled man, albeit he is elderly rather than a youthful shepherd.³⁰

Plot considerations

Amahl tells the story of a poor crippled boy and his Mother, who are extremely poor and are about to be forced to beg after selling their last sheep. Several moral themes are emphasized throughout the short opera, including the pitfalls of frequent lying, the strength of the maternal love of her child, and the transcendence of the love of Christ. The opera opens with a typical mother-son argument concerning Amahl's vivid imagination and constant storytelling, which transforms into his Mother's overwhelming concern for their dire financial situation. She states that they will soon be forced to beg since she recently had to sell the last of their sheep, and Amahl comforts her by saying that if he must be a beggar, then he will be a good beggar. Soon they hear voices approach and his Mother is amazed to find the Three Magi—Melchior, Balthazar, and Kaspar—and their Page upon her doorstep. She invites them in and quickly goes to fetch firewood instructing Amahl not to be a nuisance. Amahl immediately begins to ask as many questions of the Kings as possible, which culminates in Kaspar's aria, *This is my box*. Mother soon returns, chastising Amahl and sending him out to gather the other shepherds to provide food and entertainment for the Kings. The Kings explain to the Mother their search for the Child to bestow upon him their gifts of frankincense, myrrh, and gold in a poignant quartet

³⁰ Wlaschin, 11.

where she expresses her desire for her son to have these gifts. The shepherds enter and dance a lively ballet as they bestow their gifts of food and drink upon the Kings, then depart singing sweet farewells. All of the household settle down to sleep for the night except the Mother who envies the Kings' riches in her aria "All that gold." She then decides that they would surely not miss a small amount of gold if she were to take it to help her child. The Page awakens to find her stealing some of the gold and quickly accosts her. The Kings awaken and are initially angry. Amahl fiercely defends her, beating the Page with his crutch. The Kings relent and Melchior tells her to keep what she wants for the Child needs no earthly possessions. She refuses, stating that she has waited her whole life for such a Child. The Kings go to leave and Amahl offers to take his crutch to the child and is miraculously cured of his disability. Amahl and his Mother say a fond farewell and the party leaves as the offstage shepherds sing a distant song of the dawn of peace.

Theoretical Analysis

Overall, *Amahl and the Night Visitors* is a highly tonal piece, fitting of its amateur performance platform. The role of the Mother often exhibits the most harmonic change and ambiguity, in part because the role is one of the four written for more highly trained musicians, and because she represents the highest level of emotional tension. Though her sections are more technically challenging within the production, it is incomparable to the dense textures and complex tonalities of some of Menotti's dramatic works, such as *The Consul* or *The Saint of Bleecker Street*. The quartet between the three Kings and the Mother follows a recitative section which acts as a modulatory from A-flat major to C major. Melchior's opening vocal melody, in F minor, is used in imitation throughout the quartet. It utilizes the descending harmonic minor scale with a raised seventh and lowered sixth (fig. 4.11).

4.11 Melchior's opening theme, m. 412

Andante calmo, quasi adagio

Melchior *p*

Have you seen a Child the col-or of wheat, the col-or of dawn? His

(76) *p dolcissimo*

This creates a leap of a minor third with a resolution of a minor second to the tonic, creating a mysterious and exotic sound. This is reflected in the piano accompaniment by the descending triads of the right hand with ornamentation that accentuates the lowered sixth and seventh scale degrees, to which Menotti adds pedal C-F fifths in the left hand. The Mother's vocal line imitates Melchior's, though this time in E minor, using the same pattern of the natural minor scale with a raised third scale degree and lowered second. She then transitions back to C minor in measures 427 and 428 for the reentrance of the Magi (fig. 4.12).

4.12 The Mother's retransition to C minor, m. 427

rit.

He's my child, my son, my dar-ling, my own.

p *rit.*

This time Melchior is joined by Balthazar, who sings almost continuously a major third beneath Melchior, with some imitation at the end of the phrase. In measure 433, Balthazar initiates the conclusion of the phrase with the text “incense, myrrh, and gold . . .” with Melchior imitating two beats delayed in time and augmentation of the intervals used (fig. 4.13).

4.13 Imitative King section, m. 433

Melchior In - cense, myrrh, and gold we bring to His side, and the
Balthazar In - cense, myrrh, and gold we bring to His side, and the East - ern Star is our
Mother Yes, I know a child the col-or of earth, the col-or of thorn. His
Melchior East-ern Star is our guide.
Balthazar guide.

Supporting this segment, the right hand of the piano accompaniment is repeating the same pattern, though using the tonic as the third of the triad instead of the fifth, as was used previously. The pedal-tone in the bass remains on F, though instead of the steady eighth-note pattern on the C, Menotti uses a sixteenth-note oscillation between C and B-flat. This oscillating pattern becomes the main accompaniment figure on the repetition of the themes by the vocalists, still descending in the same manner, but utilizing a different rhythmic figure. When the Mother restates her melodic reply to the Magi, her pitches and rhythms are the same as her previous statement, but the accompaniment sees yet another change. Menotti alludes to his previous accompaniment figures by beginning with the block tertian chords, but immediately moves into the new sixteenth-note pattern. After the ornament in the measure 438, the tertian chords make a brief resurfacing in the right hand with the sixteenth note rhythm used in the bass. The following is imitative, allowing each of the three Magi to describe an aspect of the Child they seek in their own character, expressed by the same theme in different registrations. The concluding section of

the quartet uses all three Magi singing the theme at the same time, while the Mother expands on the second section of the theme. The accompaniment features the sixteenth note arpeggiated pattern over what is essentially a pedal A. In measure 461 the piece reaches its dramatic high point, with the Mother declaring her son's name and the Magi emphasize their exotic origins with an elaborate ornamentation accentuating the flatted third, sixth, and seventh scale degrees (fig. 4.14).

4.14 Dramatic Climax, m. 460

The musical score for measure 460 is presented in a multi-staff format. It includes four vocal staves and a piano accompaniment. The vocal parts are for the Mother, Kaspar, Melchior, and Balthazar. The Mother's part begins with a circled measure number 460 and the lyrics "dar-ling, my own, and his name is A - mahl." The three Magi parts begin with the lyrics "and the East-ern Star is our guide." The piano accompaniment features a prominent sixteenth-note arpeggiated pattern over a sustained pedal point. The score includes dynamic markings such as *ff* and *rall.* and a circled measure number 460 at the beginning of the piano part. The number 42736 is printed in the bottom left corner of the score.

CHAPTER 5 - Performance and Pedagogical Considerations

The combination of these particular pieces presents a unique and interesting challenge, both as a performer and as an audience member. The emotional and spiritual themes of these compositions speak through the experience of mature individuals through the medium of religion, creating personalized portraits of a common material. Indeed, each composer approaches the concept of religion from a unique perspective, coloring the text in individual ways, from joyous, to trepidation, to regret. Upon studying this music it becomes clear that the performer not only benefits from approaching these pieces from a position of personal maturity to better relate to the deep rooted religious and life themes, but from a position of musical maturity to understand the musical reflections of these themes.

Performing or teaching Dvořák adds the challenges of language and subtlety of characterization, color and dynamic contrast onto the basic challenges of musicianship. The Czech language is deceptively difficult for singers who are accustomed to Germanic or Romantic languages. Czech shares commonalities with some aspects of Germanic languages, yet is considered to be a Western Slavic language. This is especially seen in the unique pronunciation of the consonant “ř,” which is pronounced by simultaneously saying [ʒ] and rolling an [r], and also in the palatalization of consonants.¹ Dvořák’s use of recitative-like passages in the *Biblical Songs*, as well as the emphasis on the text and text painting, makes language study an important aspect of rehearsal practices. The cyclical properties of the work also emphasize the importance of the text, for the performer must understand theologically what is occurring both in the

¹ Adams, 168-170.

individual piece and within the cycle. Dvořák often alters tone in a minimal and subtle way, relying on the conveyance of the text to be indicative of the change, more so than by changing the music itself.

Wolf offers a similar challenge in the need for complete understanding of the text, but supports those textual changes with extreme harmonic complexities. Comparatively, Wolf wrote his biblical settings in a more youthful part of his life, which is reflected in their experimental nature and grand gestures. Even when writing a hymn-like passage, Wolf pushes the tonalities and rhythmic figures to their limits to reflect the text in almost perfect harmonies. The performer must be able to simultaneously comprehend the function of the vocal line and accompaniment as a poetic unit and also as separate characters of the story being told. Each could represent completely opposite poetic and thematic material, or symbols, making each part integral to the story, and therefore inseparable. Even within an individual song there could be portions of conversational call and response between the voice and piano, and also of individual soliloquies by characters, possibly found in an instrumental interlude or a vocal line devoid of major thematic support in the accompaniment.

A performance practice concern of the *Deux mélodies hébraïque* is what voice type should perform them. Original recordings feature either baritone or mezzo-soprano; however, sopranos of Ravel's time performed the work as well, and today it is frequently sung by both tenor and soprano voices. The versatility of this particular piece lies in its somewhat limited range and comfortable tessitura. As mentioned previously, the majority of all three sections of "Kaddisch" center on (utilizing the pitch classification of the female treble clef) G₄, with the zenith lying on G₅ and the nadir a mere fifth below the sounding tone at C₄. This lies in a comfortable middle-range for voice types, causing the performer to select this piece more so

based on tone color and style than range, again reflecting Ravel's masterful text-based compositional style. A rich vocal quality is preferable for this set, matching the mournful and mysterious nature of the text, but that does not necessarily limit the performers to merely low voice. Just as a rich tone is preferable, a heavier tone is not in order to maintain pitch accuracy and clarity of the unique ornamentations found in "Kaddisch," and the simplicity of the vocal line of "L'Énigme éternelle" in the midst of a tonally ambiguous accompaniment. The versatility of the melody of "Kaddisch" can be reflected in Ravel's instrumental transcriptions of the piece. It is often played as a violin solo with piano, a higher toned, brighter colored instrument, while it is also seen as a featured cello solo with orchestra, though it is played entirely on the A string.

These two Menotti works feature the opposite ends of the spectrum of his work, both the highly approachable *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, and the height of his dramatic operas *The Saint of Bleeker Street*. Both works can be connected, however, not only through their biblical themes, but also in the maternal instinct of the female characters involved. The Mother's maternal instinct and initiative is a prevalent theme of the entirety of *Amahl*, though Annina's maternal nature can be seen in her attempts to care for her brother and for the people who revere her. However, in Annina's aria "Oh, sweet Jesus," she also depicts many other characters which continuously stretch the acting capacity of the performer. Annina takes on several personas, including herself in the real world, herself awaking as a crowd member in her vision, and perhaps even the perspective of Christ as He sees his mother and takes on His enormous task. These perspective shifts are aided by changes in orchestral color, from the trumpets heralding the entrance of the soldiers to the lamenting sound of the oboe which accompanies the wailing women. The continuously high tessitura and technical challenges of this aria can easily detract from these important character changes if the performer does not make a conscious effort to

relate texture, color and rhythm to the portion of the story at hand. It is easy to be lost in the dense rhythmic and harmonic textures of this piece without the clarity of the text and character that the singer provides.

Many of both the most beautiful and most challenging pieces have been born out of spiritual and life struggles in a composer's life, from Brahms's *Vier ernste Gesänge* to Britten's *War Requiem*. The majority of these compositions were written during the high or late period of the composers life, often just before a decline in their health or compositional output. They are not to be taken lightly, as they were not written lightly. They are representative of both individual reflection and reflection of their world during their time of composition, frequently depicting the base emotional elements of fear, anguish and grief. Yet, these pieces also are infused with a sense of hopefulness, of ease and peace. It is interesting that all of these elements are also associated with the Christian God, who the Bible describes as both awesome and terrible in His glory, and as the merciful and loving Christ. It is appropriate, then, for these compositions to be incredibly complex to better represent the various aspects of God, and too, of Mankind.

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Appendix A - Program and Concert Information

STUDENT RECITAL SERIES

Rebecca Ballinger, Soprano

Assisted by

***Amanda Arrington, Piano**

PROGRAM

10 Biblické Písně, Op. 99, B. 185

Antonín Dvořák

1. *Oblak a mrákota jest vůkol něho*
2. *Skrýše má a pavezá má Ty jsi*
3. *Slyš o Bože! slyš modlitbu mou*
4. *Hospodin jest můj pastýř*
5. *Bože! Bože! píseň novou*
6. *Slyš, o Bože, volání mé*

(1841-1904)

Thursday, April 5, 2012

5:30

All-Faiths Chapel

Mörike Lieder

Schlafendes Jesuskind
Gebet

Hugo Wolf

(1860-1903)

Spanisches Liederbuch

Die ihr schwebet
Ach, des Knaben Augen

Deux mélodies hébraïques

Kaddisch
L'Enigme Eternelle

Maurice Ravel

(1875-1937)

The Saint of Bleecker Street

Oh, Sweet Jesus

Gian Carlo Menotti

(1911-2007)

Amahl and the Night Visitors

Have you seen a child...?

Matt Patton, tenor

Drew Hansen, baritone

Tim Cassidy, bass

*Kansas State University Faculty Member

Appendix B - Text and Translations

Antonín Dvořák

Biblické písně, Op. 99

1. Oblak a mrákota jest vůkol něho,
Spravedlnost a soud základ trůnu jeho.
Óheň předchází jej a zapaluje vůkol nepřátele jeho.
Zasvěcujít' se po okršku světa blýskání jeho;
To vidouc země děsí se.
Hory jako vosk rozplývají
se před obličejem Hospodina,
Panovníka vši země.
A slávu jeho spatřují všichni národové

2. Skrýše má a paveza má Ty jsi,
Na slovo vzaté očekávám.
Odstuptež ode mne, nešlechetníci,
Abych ostříhal přikázání Boha svého.
Posiluj mne, bych zachován byl,
A patřil ku stanoveným Tvým ustavičně.
Děsí se strachem před Tebou tělo mé,
Nebo soudů Tvých bojím se náramně.

3. Slyš o Bože! slyš modlitbu mou,
Neskrývej se před prosbou mou.
Pozoruj a vyslyš mne;
Nebot' naříkám v úpění svém, a kormoutím se.
Srdce mé tesklí ve mně,
A strachové smrti přišli na mne,
A hrůza přikvačila mne.
I řekl jsem: Ó bych měl křídla jako holubice!
Zaletěl bych a poodpočinul.
Aj, daleko bych se vzdálil,
A přebýval bych na poušti.
Pospíšil bych ujíti větru prudkému a vichřiči

4. Hospodin jest můj pastýř, nebudu míti nedostatku.
Na pastvách zelených pase mne, k vodám tichým mne
přivodí.
Duši mou občerstvuje; vodí mne po stezkách
Spravedlnosti pro jméno své.
Byt' se mi dostalo jíti přes údolí stínu smrti:
Nebudut' se báti zlého, nebo Ty se mnou jsi;
A prut Tvůj a hůl Tvá, tot' mne potěšuje.

1. Clouds and darkness are around Him,
Justice and judgment are the foundation of His throne.
Fire precedes Him, and burns around His enemies,
His lightnings lighten the world;
the earth sees and trembles.
The mountains melt like wax
Before the face of the Lord,
Master of all the earth,
And the nations behold His glory.

2. You are my hiding place and my shield,
For your word I await.
Withdraw villainous ones from me,
So that I preserve the commandments of my God,
Strengthen me, that I would be saved
And have regard for Your statutes continuously.
My flesh is terrified for fear of You,
And tremendously fear Your judgements.

3. Hear oh God! Hear my prayer,
and hide not Yourself from my supplication.
Attend and hear me;
For I lament in my suffering and grief.
My heart pines within me,
And terrors of death have come upon me,
And dread has overtaken me.
And said I: Oh that I had wings like a dove!
I would fly and be at rest.
Ah, far would I withdraw myself,
And I would dwell in the wilderness.
I would hasten from violent winds and tempests.

4. The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures, He leads
me to still waters.
He refreshes my soul; He leads me along paths
Of righteousness for His name's sake.
Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow
of death.
I will fear no evil, for You are with me;
Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me

5. Bože! Bože! píseň novou zpívati budu Tobě
na loutně,
A žalmy Tobě prozpěvovati.
Na každý den dobrořečiti budu Tobě
A chváliti jméno Tvé na věky věků.
Hospodin jistě veliký jest a vši chvály hodný,
A velikost jeho nemůž vystižena býti.
O slávě a kráse a velebnosti Tvé,
I o věcech Tvých předivných mluviti budu.
A moc přehrozných skutků Tvých všichni rozhlašovati
budou;
I já důstojnost Tvou budu vypravovati.

6. Slyš, o Bože, volání mé, pozoruj modlitby mé!
Nebo jsi býval útočiště mé
A pevná věže před tváří nepřítele.
Budu bydleti v stánku Tvém na věky,
Schráním se v skrýši křídel Tvých.
Bože! Bůh silný můj Ty jsi,
Tebe t' hned v jitře hledám,
Tebe žízní duše má, po Tobě touží tělo mé,
V zemi žíznivé a vyprahlé, v níž není vody;
A tak, abych Tobě dobrořečil
A s radostným rtů prozpěvováním
Chválila by Tě ústa má.

7. Při řekách babylonských,
Tam jsme sedávali a plakávali,
Rozpomínajíce se na Sion.
Na vrby v té zemi
Zavěšovali jsme citary své,
A když se tam dotazovali nás ti,
Kteříž nás zajali,
Na slova písničky říkajíce:
Zpívejte nám některou píseň Sionskou,
Odpovídali jsme:
Kterakž bychom mohli zpívati píseň Hospodinovu
V zemi cizozemců?
Jestliže se zapomenu na tebe, O Jeruzaléme,
O, zapomeniž i pravice má umění svého.

5. Lord! Lord! I will sing a new song to You on
the lute
And merrily sing you psalms.
Every day I will bless You
And praise Your name forever and ever.
Great is the Lord and worthy of all praise,
His greatness is not comprehensible.
Of the glorious splendor of Your majesty
And of your wonders I will speak.
All will proclaim the might of Your terrible acts,

And I will declare Your greatness.

6. Hear my cry, oh God, heed my prayers!
For You are my refuge,
a strong tower before the face of my enemy.
I will dwell in Your tabernacle forever,
I am safe in the shelter of Your wings.
God! You are my strength,
I seek you first in the morning,
My soul thirsts for You, my body longs for You,
As if thirsty in dry land where no water is.
So I will bless You,
And with joyous singing of my lips
My mouth will praise You.

7. By the rivers of Babylon
We sat and wept
When we remembered Zion
On the willows there
We hung up our zithers,
They asked of us
Who they had captured,
Saying:
"Sing us one of the songs of Zion!"
We replied:
How shall we sing the Lord's song
In a land of foreigners?
If I forget you, oh Jerusalem,
Oh, may my right hand also forget its skill.

8. Popatřiz na mne a smiluj se nade mnou;
Nebot' jsem opuštěný a ztrápený.
Soužení srdce mého rozmnožují se,
Z úzkostí mých vyved' mne.
Smiluj se nade mnou!
Viz trápení mé a bídu mou
A odpust' všechny hříchy mé.
Ostříhej duše mé a vytrhni mne
At' nejsem zahanben,
Nebot' v Tebe doufám.

9. Pozdvihuji oči svých k horám,
Odkud by mi přišla pomoc.
Pomoc má jest od Hospodina,
Kterýž učinil nebe i zemi.
Nedopustit', aby se pohnouti měla noha Tvá,
Nebo nedřímět' strážný Tvůj.
Aj, nedřímět', ovšem nespí ten,
Kterýž ostříhá Izraele.

10. Zpívejte Hospodinu píseň novou,
Nebot' jest divné věci učinil.
Zvuk vydejte, prozpěvujte a žalmy zpívejte.
Zvuč, moře, i to, což v něm jest;
Okršlek světa, i ti, což na něm bydlí.
Řeky rukama plesejte,
Spolu s nimi i hory prozpěvujte!
Plesej, pole, a vše, což na něm;
Plesej, země, zvuč i moře,
I což v něm jest!

8. Turn to me and have mercy on me;
For I am desolate and careworn.
The worries of my heart relieve,
And bring me out of my distresses.
Have mercy on me!
See my suffering and distress,
And forgive all my sins.
Protect my soul and deliver me;
Let me not be put to shame,
For in You I hope!

9. I lift my eyes up to the mountains,
From whence does my help come?
My help comes from the Lord,
Who hath made heaven and earth.
He will not your foot be moved,
He who keeps you slumbers not.
Ah, slumbers not, indeed He sleeps not,
He who protects Israel.

10. Sing to the Lord a new song,
For He hath done wondrous things.
Sound break forth, joyously sing psalms!
Resound, sea, and all that fills it;
The world and those which in it dwell.
Let the floods clap their hands,
Let the mountains sing together for joy!
Rejoice, field, and all that is in it;
Rejoice, earth, resound sea,
And all that is in it!

Hugo Wolf

Möricke Lieder

Schlafendes Jesuskind

Sohn der Jungfrau, Himmelskind! am Boden
Auf dem Holz der Schmerzen eingeschlafen,
Das der fromme Meister, sinnvoll spielend,
Deinen leichten Träumen unterlegte;
Blume du, noch in der Knospe dämmernd
Eingehüllt, die Herrlichkeit des Vaters!
O wer sehen könnte, welche Bilder
Hinter dieser Stirne, diesen schwarzen
Wimpern sich in sanfterm Wechsel malen!

Sleeping Infant Jesus

Virgin's son, Child of Heaven, on the floor
On the wood of agony sleeping,
That, suggestively, the pious master
Has set beneath your easy dreams;
Thou flower, still gleaming in the bud,
The glory of the Father!
Oh, to see the picture being painted
Behind that forehead, those dark
Lashes, gently, one upon the other!

Gebet

Herr! schicke was du willst,
Ein Liebes oder Leides;
Ich bin vergnügt, daß beides
Aus deinen Händen quillt.
Wollest mit Freuden
und wollest mit Leiden
Mich nicht überschütten!
Doch in der Mitten,
Liegt holdes Bescheiden.

Prayer

Lord! Send what Thou wilt,
Delight or pain;
I am content that both
flow from Thy hands.
May it be Thy will neither with joys
Nor with sorrows
to overwhelm me!
For midway between
lies blessed moderation.

Spanisches Liederbuch

Die ihr schwebet

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

Ihr Palmen von Bethlehem im Windesbrausen,
Wie mögt ihr heute so zornig sausen!
O rauscht nicht also!
Schweiget, neiget euch leis und lind;
Stillet die Wipfel! Es schlummert mein Kind.

Der Himmelsknabe duldet berschwerde,
Ach, wie so müd er ward vom Leid der Erde.
Ach nun ihm schalf ihm leise gesänftigt
Die Qual zerrinnt,
Stillet die Wipfel! Es schlummert mein Kind.

Grimmige Kälte sauset hernieder,
Womit nur deck ich des Kindleins Glieder!
O all ihr Engel, die ihr geflügelt
Wandelt im Wind,
Stillet die Wipfel! Es schlummert mein Kind.

Ach, des Knaben Augen

Ach, des Knaben Augen sind
Mir so schön und klar erschienen
Und ein Etwas strahlt aus ihnen,
Das mein ganzes Herz gewinnt.

Blickt er doch mit diesen süßen
Augen nach den meinen hin!
Säh er dann sein Bild darin,
Würt er wohl mich liebend grüßen.
Und so geb ich ganz mich hinm
Seinen Augen nur zu dienen,
Den nein etwas strahlt aus ihnen,
Das mein ganzes Herz gewinnt.

You who hover

You who hover about these palms,
in night and wind, Holy Angels,
silence their leaves! My child is asleep.

Palms of Bethlehem in blustering wind,
how can you today so angrily blow!
Oh, roar not so.
Be still, bow softly and gently;
silence the leaves! My child is asleep.

The Son of Heaven is suffering;
ah, so tired has He grown of earth's sorrows.
Ah, now, in sleep, gently softened,
the pain melts away.
Silence the leaves! My child is asleep.

Fierce cold comes rushing;
with what shall I cover the little child's limbs!
Oh All you Angels who, winged,
travel on the wind,
silence the leaves! My child is asleep.

Ah, the Infant's eyes

Ah, the Infant's eyes.
so beautiful and clear they seemed,
and from them something shines
that captures all my heart.

For with those sweet eyes
He looks at mine!
If He then saw His image there,
lovingly would He greet me.
And so I give myself wholly
to serving only His eyes.
For from them something shines
that captures all my heart.

Maurice Ravel
Deux melodies hébraïque

Kaddisch

Yithgaddal weyithkaddash scheméh rabba be'olmà
diverà
'khire'outhé veyamli'kl mal'khouté'khön,
ouvezome'khôu ouve'hayyé de'khol beth yisraël
ba'agalâ ouvizman qariw
weimrou Amen.
Yithbara'kh, weyischtaba'h weyithpaêr weyithromam
weyithnassé weyithhaddar weyith'allé
weyithhallal scheméh dequoudschâ beri'kh hou.
Le'êla min kol bir'khatha weschi'ratha touschbehatha
wene'hamathâ daamirân ah! be' olma.
Ah! Weimrou Amen.

L'Énigme éternelle

Frägt die Velt die alte Cashe
Tra la la la . . .
Enfernt men
Tra la la la . . .
Un as men will kenne sagen
Tra la la la . . .
Frägt die Velt die alte Cashe
Tra la la la . . .

Kaddisch (Doxology)

May His great name be magnified and hallowed in
the world that He created according to His will.
And may He reign over His kingdom in your lifetime
and in your days and in the lifetime of the entire
house of Israel, speedily in our day.
And let us say Amen.
May the holy name be blessed and lauded, glorified
and uplifted, extolled, honored, magnified, and
praised.
Blessed is He, higher than all blessing and hymn,
praise and consolation that are spoken in this world.
Ah! And let us say Amen.

The Eternal Enigma

The world asks the old question:
Tra la . . .
People reply:
Tra la . . .
And when people say:
Tra la . . .
The world asks the old question:
Tra la . . .

Gian Carlo Menotti
The Saint of Bleeker Street

Oh Sweet Jesus

Oh, sweet Jesus, spare me this agony.
Too great a pain is this for one so weak.
Ah, my aching heart, must you again withstand the trial?
Where am I? Who are these people?
Where have I seen this road before, when this barren hill?
What is this drunken crowd waiting for?
Ah, dreadful presentiment!
Eager and loud, they push and sway under the festival sun.
What do they want? What are they waiting for?
I cannot see. Eh! Don't push me! Let me see. Please make room for me.
Oh! Oh! I see now, I see now!
Oh, blinding sight! Oh, pain! Oh, love!

They come up the bending road in golden armor,
The soldiers, and among them a purple cloak.
My Jesus! How large a cross for one man to bear!
Dust in His mouth and salt of bitter tears.
His cheeks ribboned with blood, shed by the sharp and cruel crown. Ah!
But His eyes! Who ever saw in a man's eyes such patient love?

Ah! He falters. They are on him with whips. He struggles on again . . .

Someone is weeping. Where?
I see now a group of wailing women standing behind the crowd.
Weakened by weeping, they sway like reeds as they slowly move.
Tall amongst them, her eyes deepened by pain, the Holy Virgin stands.
Why, Mary, why did you come?
No cross can weigh nor nail can pierce as can a mother's sorrow.
Why, Mary, why did you come?
O women, take her home.
When our God will die, only her Son will bear the agony.
Oh, take her, take her home.
It is her very flesh that will be torn by spear and nail.
Oh, take her, take her home. Oh women, take her home.

No hill was ever higher. The whole world can see the Son of God, sweet Jesus, lying there.
His palm is now held open, those Hands that gave us all, by us are to be pierced.
Soldier, soldier, have mercy on Him, for He alone is your Savior.
The nail is held in place, the huge hammer is raised. Ah!

Amahl and the Night Visitors

Recitative

Mother: Oh these beautiful things, and all that gold!
Melchior: These are the gifts to the Child.
Mother: The child! Which child?
Melchior: We don't know. But the Star will guide us to Him.
Mother: But perhaps I know him. What does he look like?

Quartet

Melchior: Have you seen a Child the color of wheat, the color of dawn? His eyes are mild, His hands are those of a King, as King He was born. Incense, myrrh, and gold we bring to His side, and the Eastern Star is our guide.
Mother: Yes I know a child the color of wheat, the color of dawn. His eyes are mild, his hands are those of a King, as King he was born. But no one will bring him incense or gold, though sick and poor and hungry and cold. He's my son, my child, my darling, my own.
Melchior/Balthazar: Have you seen a Child the color of earth, the color of thorn? His eyes are sad, His hands are those of the poor, as poor He was born. Incense, myrrh, and gold we bring to His side, and the Eastern Star is our guide.
Mother: Yes, I know a child the color of earth, the color of thorn. His eyes are sad, his hands are those of the poor, as poor he was born. But no one will bring him incense or gold, though sick and poor and hungry and cold. He's my child, my son, my darling, my own.
Melchior: The Child we seek holds the seas and the winds on His palm.
Kaspar: The Child we seek has the moon and the stars at His feet.
Balthazar: Before Him the eagle is gentle, the lion is meek.
Balthazar/Kaspar/Melchior: Choirs of angels hover over His roof and sing Him to sleep, He's warmed by breath, He's fed by Mother who is both Virgin and Queen. Incense, myrrh, and gold we bring to His side, and the Eastern Star is our guide.
Mother: The child I know on his palm holds my heart. The child I know at his feet has my life. He's my child, my son, my darling, my own, and his name is Amahl.