

A study of the histories and inspirations behind selections of songs  
from the soprano repertoire

by

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## Abstract

The purpose of this graduate report is to explore the influential stories and historical aspects behind the composition of selected works from the soprano repertoire. This document is completed in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Music degree in vocal performance. The recital was held on Sunday, April 29, 2018, at seven-thirty o'clock in the evening at the First Presbyterian Church, located on 801 Leavenworth Street in Manhattan, KS.

Works for this recital were chosen to create a contrasting and unique program to span the soprano repertoire from the Baroque era to late twentieth century, and to display the histories and influences of these compositions. The following works are examined in detail within this document:

1. "Komm in mein Herzenhaus" from *Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott*, BWV 80, by Johann Sebastian Bach
2. "On mighty pens" from *The Creation* by Franz Joseph Haydn
3. *Fêtes galantes I* (1882) by Claude Debussy
  1. "En sourdine"
  2. "Fantoques"
  3. "Clair de lune"
4. "Senza mama" from *Suor Angelica* by Giacomo Puccini
5. *As it fell upon a day* by Aaron Copland
6. *A Letter from Sullivan Ballou* by John Kander
7. "What Good Would the Moon Be?" from *Street Scene* by Kurt Weill
8. *Les filles de Cadix* by Léo Delibes

Each chapter of this document is dedicated to a specific work from the program, and contains the following: 1) biographical information on the composer, 2) historical information and influences on the composition as well as from its grander counterpart if the selection is from a larger work, and 3) a textual and musical analysis of the selection.

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## Chapter 1 - Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

### and *Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott*, BWV 80 (1723)

#### *Biographical Information on the Composer*

Johann Sebastian Bach (b. Eisenach, March 21, 1685; d. Leipzig, July 28, 1750) was a German composer and organist (Figure 1.1), who is considered to be “the supreme musical genius of the late Baroque period.”<sup>1</sup> Throughout Bach’s lifetime, he composed over 1,100 works for every genre of music during his day, with the exception of opera. “Bach's supreme achievement was as a polyphonist. His N. Ger. Protestant religion was the root of all his art, allied to a tireless industry in the pursuit of every kind of refinement of his skill and technique.”<sup>2</sup>

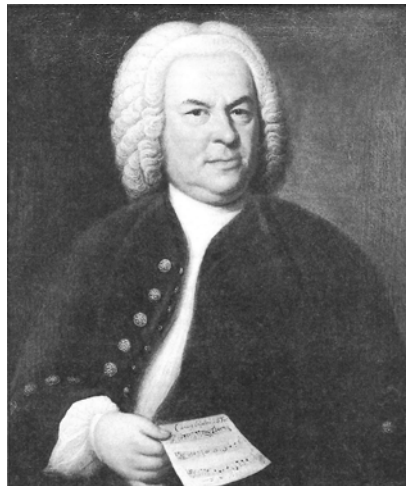


Figure 1.1: Johann Sebastian Bach,  
painting by Elias Gottlob Haussmann  
(1748; replica by the artist of his 1746 portrait version)

Christoph Wolff, *Johann Sebastian Bach: The Learned Musician* (New York & London: W.W. Norton & Company, 2013).

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<sup>1</sup> Basil Smallman, "Bach, Johann Sebastian," *The Oxford Companion to Music* (Oxford University Press), accessed 9 January 2018. <http://www.oxfordreference.com.er.lib.k-state.edu/view/10.1093/acref/9780199579037.001.0001/acref-9780199579037-e-522>.

<sup>2</sup> Michael Kennedy and Joyce Bourne Kennedy, "Bach, Johann Sebastian," *The Oxford Dictionary of Music*, edited by Tim Rutherford-Johnson (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012). <http://www.oxfordreference.com.er.lib.k-state.edu/view/10.1093/acref/9780199578108.001.0001/acref-9780199578108-e-643>.

## **Bach in Leipzig (1723-1750)**

In July of 1720, Bach's happiness in Cöthen as court Kapellmeister to Prince Leopold Anhalt-Cöthen was disrupted due to the sudden death of his wife, Maria Barbara Bach. The following year in December 1721, Bach remarried to Anna Magdalena Wilcken, who was the 20-year old daughter of a court trumpeter. Shortly after his marriage to his second wife, Bach's employer, Prince Leopold, married Friederica Henrietta of Anhalt-Bernburg. As misfortune would have it, Prince Leopold's new wife showed no interest or support of music or any form of culture, and her position on the matter resulted in the removal of Bach from the position of court Kapellmeister.

Upon the loss of his coveted position, Bach applied for the position of Thomaskantor in Leipzig in 1722. As part of his *Probe*, a test of competence in organ playing and composition, Bach conducted his *St. John Passion* at St. Thomas, and was awarded the position in April 1723. However, Bach was not the first choice for the position, and was only offered the position after it had been declined by Telemann and Graupner.<sup>3</sup>

Leipzig offered Bach endless opportunities for his talents as a musician. In Leipzig, Bach and his pupils from the Thomasschule were responsible for providing music at the city's four main Lutheran churches. At two of the four churches, St. Thomas and St. Nicholas, Bach presented cantatas performed by the school's choir at each church in turn on most Sundays, and at both on major feast-days. It was often customary for a cantata that was performed during the morning service at one of the main churches to be performed at the other main church during the evening Vespers service, and on Good Friday an oratorio-style Passion was to be performed annually during the Vespers services at each church. With such high demands of musical output,

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<sup>3</sup> Smallman, "Bach, Johann Sebastian," *The Oxford Companion to Music*.

Bach composed three annual cycles of cantatas (about 150 works), his two Passions (*St. John*, 1724, and *St. Matthew*, 1727), his *Magnificat*, (1723, first version in E-flat) and many other motets and sacred pieces within the first five years of his tenure in Leipzig.<sup>4</sup>

During his residence in Leipzig, Bach not only busied himself with liturgical music, but also secular compositions and performances as well. From 1729 to 1742, Bach directed the *Collegium Musicum* that Telemann had established in Leipzig in 1702, which was made up of university students and semi-professional musicians who performed weekly concerts. No surviving records detail what music was performed at these weekly concerts, but it is expected that the concerts included some of his instrumental works, including his harpsichord concertos, the second and third of his *Orchestral Suites*, his secular cantatas *Der Streit zwischen Phoebus und Pan*, BWV 201 (The Dispute between Phoebus and Pan) and the *Coffee Cantata*, BWV 211 ('*Schweigt stille, plaudert nicht*'—'Be silent, don't chatter'). During this time in Leipzig, Bach also composed the four sets of *Clavier-Übung* ('Keyboard Practice', 1731–1742), often referred to as his *Organ Mass*, *Italian Concerto*, BWV 971 (1735), and *Goldberg Variations*, BWV 988 (1741), and the second volume of *The Well-Tempered Clavier* (c.1742), along with most of his over 200 surviving cantatas.<sup>5</sup>

On July 27<sup>th</sup>, 1733, Bach appealed to the new Elector of Saxony, Friedrich August II, for a court title as a means to advance his status in Leipzig. As part of his appeal to the Elector of Saxony, Bach submitted the Kyrie and Gloria of the Lutheran mass, which would later become part of his *B Minor Mass* (1748). Bach was finally granted his coveted title of Royal Court Composer in November of 1736. One of Bach's priorities during the last years of his life was to

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

revise, and order his earlier compositions in hopes of composing new works that demonstrated his prowess of theoretical and technical skills. In 1747, Bach succeeded in joining the Corresponding Society of Musical Sciences, upon his submissions of his *Musical Offering* (1747) and *Canon triplex*, BWV1076.<sup>6</sup>

Beginning in 1740, Bach's eyesight began to fail him. Within the last ten years of his life, Bach had two surgeries on his eyes by the English surgeon, John Taylor, but the surgeries offered no resolution to his failing eyesight. Bach spent his last year completely blind, and it is also suspected that he may have suffered from a severe form of diabetes. Johann Sebastian Bach died on July 28<sup>th</sup>, 1750, in Leipzig, and was buried with honor three days later in the Johanniskirche church's graveyard.<sup>7</sup> J.S. Bach's death marked the end of the life of one of history's greatest composers.

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

## ***Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott, BWV 80 (1723)***

As mentioned previously, Bach not only supervised the music for St. Thomas, but also the music at three other local churches in Leipzig. Among his many duties, Bach was in charge of training choristers, composing church music for regular and special services, such as feast days, along with producing at least one new cantata each week for the services.<sup>8</sup> After 1700, the church cantata replaced the existing Gospel motet, which had served in the Lutheran tradition since the Reformation, as an enhancement of the reading of the Gospel.<sup>9</sup> The church cantata took the Gospel motet's original function a step further by not only highlighting a passage from the Gospel, but interpreting it as well. The construction of Bach's Leipzig cantatas was based on the structure of the Lutheran sermon: *explicatio* and *applicatio*, biblical exegesis and theological instruction followed by practical and moral advice.<sup>10</sup>

Christopher Wolff describes the configuration of Bach's cantatas in the following passage.

The libretto ordinarily opens with a biblical dictum, usually a passage from the prescribed Gospel lesson that serves as a point of departure (opening chorus). It is followed by scriptural, doctrinal, and contextual explanations (a recitative-aria pair), leading to considerations of the consequences to be drawn from the lesson and the admonition to conduct a true Christian life (another recitative-aria pair). The text concludes with the congregational prayer in the form of a hymn stanza (chorale).<sup>11</sup>

Although, the exact composition date of the cantata, *Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott*, BWV 80, is unknown, it is suspected to have been composed between 1723-1734 while Bach was employed as the cantor, or director, in Leipzig for St. Thomas's Church. According to the

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<sup>8</sup> W. Murray Young, *The Cantatas of J.S. Bach: An Analytical Guide* (Jefferson, NC: MacFarland, 1989), 31.

<sup>9</sup> Christoph Wolff, *Johann Sebastian Bach: The Learned Musician* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2013), 255.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

*Oxford Composer Companions: J.S. Bach*, this cantata was composed in Leipzig, Germany, and first premiered on October 31<sup>st</sup>, 1723, in its earliest edition.<sup>12</sup>

*Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott*, BWV 80, was composed for the use of the Reformation Festival on October 31<sup>st</sup>, or for the 23<sup>rd</sup> Sunday after the Trinity, according to the church calendar, and for the Reformation Jubilee in 1730. The Reformation Festival marks the anniversary of the day Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses to the door of the All Saints' Roman Catholic Church in Wittenberg in protest for the church's corrupt teachings of indulgences in 1517.<sup>13</sup> This particular cantata was composed especially for the Reformation Festival marking the 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Augsburg Confession.<sup>14</sup> The Augsburg Confession was a document presented to the Diet of Augsburg and the emperor, Charles V, that laid out the theological beliefs of the Lutheran faith. It was, in a sense, the historical moment of the establishment of the Lutheran faith. With such an important significance to the Lutheran faith, this cantata would have been performed during the Reformation Festival, despite whether or not October 31<sup>st</sup> fell on a Sunday or a weekday (Figure 1.2). Another work that Bach composed for use during the Reformation Festival was the cantata, *Gott der Herr ist Sonn und Schild*, BWV 79 (*God, the Lord, is Sun and Shield*) (1725).<sup>15</sup>

In honor of the Lutheran Reformation, Bach composed *Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott*, BWV 80, by basing the cantata's chorale melody on Martin Luther's hymn tune of the same name. Luther's hymn, *Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott*, was composed in 1529, and was inspired by Psalm 46, "God is our refuge and strength," or as many people know it today, "A Mighty

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<sup>12</sup> Robin A. Leaver, "Ein' feste Burt ist unser Gott," *Oxford Composer Companions: J.S. Bach*, edited by Malcolm Boyd (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 149.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> W. Murray Young, *The Cantatas of J.S. Bach: An Analytical Guide*, 95.

<sup>15</sup> Alec Robertson, *The Church Cantatas of J.S. Bach* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1972), 341.

Fortress is our God.” This particular hymn is often referred to as the “battle-song” or “Marseillaise” of the Reformation.<sup>16</sup>

Figure 1.2: Church music at the time of Bach (from the title page of J. Walther’s *Musicalisches Lexicon*, Leipzig, 1732). Source: W. Neumann, *Bach: Eine Bildbiographie* (Munich, 1960), P. 33.



Günther Stiller, *Johann Sebastian Bach and Liturgical Life in Leipzig* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1984), 168.

Because of the incredible amount of music that Bach was charged with composing and supervising, he did what many composers of his time did: he recycled works. *Ein’ feste Burg ist unser Gott*, BWV 80, was derived from Bach’s cantata *Alles, was von Gott geboren*, BWV 80a

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<sup>16</sup>Alec Robertson, *The Church Cantatas of J.S. Bach*, 338.



(*All, that from God is born*), which he composed in 1715 when he was employed in Weimar, Germany. *Alles, was von Gott geboren*, BWV 80a was composed for the Third Sunday in Lent; however, Bach was not able to make use of this original cantata in Leipzig due to the fact that no cantatas were allowed during the Lenten period, so Bach recycled it and rewrote *Alles, was von Gott geboren*, BWV 80a, as *Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott*, BWV 80.<sup>17</sup> Unfortunately, Bach's original manuscripts have been lost over the centuries, so it is impossible to trace the different stages of this cantata's evolution as he rewrote it. Scholars have come to the conclusion that Bach composed an early Leipzig version, and a later Leipzig version, with the later version being the one performed in present day.<sup>18</sup> The loss of the original manuscripts has also caused uncertainties of the scoring for the work. The edition that we are most familiar with is a more modern version with trumpets and timpani scored for the 1<sup>st</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> movements, which are said to have been added by Wilhelm Friedemann Bach after J.S. Bach's death.<sup>19</sup>

The libretto for the cantata is a combination of the verses from Martin Luther's hymn, and the original libretto from *Alles, was von Gott geboren*, BWV 80a, by Salomo Franck (1659-1725), who was a German poet, cantata librettist, and court official. The "plot" of the cantata is based on Franck's libretto of Luther's hymn, which concerns the casting out of a devil by Christ in Luke 11:14-28, and relates to the dominant theme of Luther's hymn of resisting the devil and standing strong in the faith. The theme can also be interpreted as concerning the word of God, or the well-being of the Christian Church.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Alfred Dürr, *The Cantatas of J.S. Bach: With Their Librettos in German-English Text* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 709.

<sup>18</sup> Robin A. Leaver, "Ein' feste Burt ist unser Gott," 149.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 150.

<sup>20</sup> Alec Robertson, *The Church Cantatas of J.S. Bach*, 338.

Bach's cantata, *Alles, was von Gott geboren*, BWV 80a, set to Franck's libretto, consisted of six movements. The first movement was a duet for soprano and bass, in which the second verse of Luther's *Ein' feste Burg* is introduced. This same verse was used for the concluding chorale. When Bach revised this cantata to compose *Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott*, BWV 80, he kept these six original movements, but added the first and third verses of the chorale as movements 1 and 5. Bach then ended the cantata with a traditional chorale using the last verse of Luther's hymn, which resulted in the revised cantata containing all four verses of Luther's hymn.<sup>21</sup> The final revised cantata *Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott*, BWV80, contains eight movements, which are explained in detail in Table 1.1 on the next page.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Robin A. Leaver, "Ein' feste Burt ist unser Gott," 149-150.

**Table 1.1: Movements from *Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott*, BWV 80**

<i>Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott</i> , BWV 80 by J.S. Bach							
Movement No.	Title	Translation	Ensemble	Scoring	Key	Meter	Relation to BWV 80a
1.	“Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott”	“A mighty fortress is our God”	Chorus	SATB Timpani 2 Trumpets 2 Oboes 2 Violin Viola Continuo	D Major	4/4	-
2.	“Alles, was von Gott geboren, Ist zum Seigen auserkoren”	“Whatsoever is born of God is elected for victory”	Aria-Duet	Soprano Bass Oboe 2 Violins Viola Continuo	D Major	4/4	1 <sup>st</sup> movement in BWV 80a
3.	“Erwäge doch, Kind Gottes”	“Consider well, Child of God”	Recitative	Bass Continuo	b-f# minor	4/4	2 <sup>nd</sup> movement of BWV 80a
4.	“Komm in mein Herzenhaus”	“Come into my heart's house”	Aria	Soprano Continuo	b minor	12/8	3 <sup>rd</sup> movement of BWV 80a
5.	“Und wenn die Welt voll Teufel wär”	“And though the world were full of devils”	Chorus	SATB 3 Trumpets Timpani 2 Oboe- d'amore Taille 2 Violins Viola Continuo	D Major	6/8	-
6.	“So stehe dann Bei Chrisit Blutgefärbten Fahne”	“Stand fast, then, by Christ's blood-stained banner”	Recitative	Tenor Continuo	b minor to D Major	4/4	4 <sup>th</sup> movement in BWV 80a
7.	“Wie selig sind doch die, die Gott im Munde tragen”	“How blessed indeed are those who carry God in their mouths”	Aria-Duet	Alto Tenor Oboe-da- caccia Violin Continuo	G Major	3/4	5 <sup>th</sup> movement in BWV 80a
8.	“Das Wort sie sollen lassen stahn”	“They shall let that Word abide”	Chorus	SATB Oboes Violins Viola Continuo	D Major	4/4	6 <sup>th</sup> movement of BWV 80a; revised chorale

## Analysis of No. 4 Aria, “Komm in mein Herzenhaus”

The aria “Komm in mein Herzenhaus” is the fourth movement of Bach’s cantata, *Ein’ feste Burg ist unser Gott*, BWV 80. It is preceded by the bass recitative “Erwäge doch, Kind Gottes,” and followed by the chorus “Und wenn die Welt voll Teufel wär.” Like the third movement, the soprano aria is only accompanied by continuo, with its charming melody providing a stark contrast to the first two movements of the cantata.<sup>23</sup> The text of the aria is presented as a prayer. The soloist asks the Lord to enter into her heart to drive away the temptations of the world and Satan; longing for the renewal of Christ’s image within her.<sup>24</sup>

“Komm in mein Herzenhaus” is composed in the traditional ABA’ form in the key of B minor. The aria is set in the compound meter of 12/8, with the dotted quarter note averaging about 50-55 for the tempo. One of the most attractive characteristics of the aria is the continuo accompaniment. Although the continuo keyboard is distantly present, the frequent use of the tenor clef in the accompaniment and the alternating positions of the clef that occur in the aria, strongly suggest that the cello is the sole accompanying instrument.<sup>25</sup>

The aria opens with a two-measure ritornello that features a descending motive in the cello. The cello’s accompaniment is meant to symbolize the inviting of Christ into the “Herzenhaus” (heart’s house). The cello motive shown (Figure 1.3) is associated with the invitation of the Savior, and makes several appearances throughout the aria in both its original and varied forms.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Alfred Dürr, *The Cantatas of J.S. Bach: With Their Librettos in German-English Text*, 711.

<sup>24</sup> W. Murray Young, *The Cantatas of J.S. Bach: An Analytical Guide*, 95.

<sup>25</sup> W. Gillies Whittaker, *The Cantatas of Johann Sebastian Bach: Sacred and Secular*, Volume I (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), 225.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 225-226.

Figure 1.3: Cello motive associated with the inviting of the Savior.  
W. Gillies Whittaker, *The Cantatas of Johann Sebastian Bach: Sacred and Secular*, Volume I, 226.



“As in most movements in continuo texture, the vocal melody unfolds freely and expressively over the continuo ritornello theme, which is repeated many times and in various modified forms.”<sup>27</sup>

The vocal line enters in m. 3 echoing the opening cello motive, “Komm in mein Herzenhaus” (Figure 1.4). This same phrase is repeated a second time in m. 5, but is joined by a second phrase “Herr Jesu, mein Verlangen.” Bach incorporates an extensive melisma on the word “Verlangen”. Underneath the vocal line’s melisma, the continuo’s constant eighth-note accompaniment has become scarce, and has instead transitioned to quarter-note downbeats to aid in the marking of the four macro-beats in each measure, as well as to allow the soprano soloist to showcase her coloratura artistry (Figure 1.5).

Figure 1.4: Bach— “Komm in mein Herzenhaus” from *Ein’ feste Burg ist unser Gott*, BWV 80, meas. 1-4. Opening motive echoed by the vocal line in m. 3.

<sup>27</sup> Alfred Dürr, *The Cantatas of J.S. Bach: With Their Librettos in German-English Text*, 711.

Figure 1.5: Bach— “Komm in mein Herzenhaus” from *Ein’ feste Burg ist unser Gott*, BWV 80, meas. 5-12. Extensive melisma on “Verlangen” with accompaniment.

The image shows a musical score for a vocal and continuo part. The vocal line (S.) and continuo line (Cont.) are written in G major and 3/4 time. The lyrics are: "komm in mein Her - zens - haus, Herr Je - su, mein Ver - lan - gen, Herr Je - su, mein Ver - lan - gen!". The vocal line features a long melisma on the word "Verlangen" starting at measure 10. The continuo line provides a steady accompaniment with a repeating eighth-note pattern.

A variation of the opening ritornello theme appears at m. 11 marking the music’s transition to the aria’s B section. Bach uses tone painting in the vocal phrase at m. 13, “Treib’ Welt und Satan aus.” As the soloist asks the Lord to drive Satan and the world from her heart, Bach concludes the phrase with an ascending leap of a sixth in the vocal line, a gesture of throwing out evil (Figure 1.6).<sup>28</sup> The B section features another fantastic melisma on the word

<sup>28</sup> W. Gillies Whittaker, *The Cantatas of Johann Sebastian Bach: Sacred and Secular*, Volume I, 226.

“erneuert” from meas. 16-18. The continuo accompaniment is uninterrupted throughout the entirety of the B section, with the cello motive constantly present.<sup>29</sup>

Figure 1.6: Tone-painting on the word “aus,” symbolizing the casting out of evil.  
W. Gillies Whittaker, *The Cantatas of Johann Sebastian Bach: Sacred and Secular*, Volume I, 226.



From meas. 20-25, the accompaniment becomes the most active with continual ascending and descending passages. On the text “Weg, schnöder Sündengraus!” Bach doesn’t hesitate to include another example of tone-painting. This entire vocal passage is decorated with leaps of sixths and sevenths on the word “Weg” (Away), as the soloist condemns sin and its impurities (Figure 1.7).

Figure 1.7: Bach— “Komm in mein Herzenhaus” from *Ein’ feste Burg ist unser Gott*, BWV 80, meas. 19-24. Tone-painting on the word “Weg” (Away).

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 225-226.





## Chapter 2 - Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809) and

### *The Creation (1798)*

#### *Biographical Information on the Composer*

Franz Joseph Haydn (b. Rohrau, Lower Austria, March 31, 1732; d. Vienna, May 31, 1809) was one of the greatest and most praised composers of the Classical era (Figure 2.1). Haydn is revered as the first of the three “Viennese Classics,” followed by Mozart and Beethoven. “He excelled in every musical genre; during the first half of his career his vocal works were as famous as his instrumental ones, although after his death the reception of his music focused on the latter (except for *The Creation*).”<sup>1</sup> Despite his achievements in all genres of music that he composed for, Haydn’s *Die Schöpfung*, or *The Creation* (1798), is considered to be the crowning jewel of his career.



Figure 2.1: Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)

Classical Net, “Franz Joseph Haydn,” 31 March 2018. <http://www.classical.net/music/comp.lst/haydnfj.php>.

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<sup>1</sup> Georg Feder and James Webster, “Haydn, (Franz) Joseph,” *Grove Music Online* (New York: Oxford University Press), accessed 22 January 2018. <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.er.lib.k-state.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561591630-e-0000044593>.

## Haydn in London and Vienna (1795-1809)

Throughout his lifetime Haydn made two visits to London; the first in 1791 to 1792 and the second in 1794 to 1795. During this time, Haydn was teaching, composing, and performing for Johann Peter Salomon, the London impresario. Salomon was an active promoter of the arts in London, as well as a violinist and concert producer. In 1790, Salomon was attempting to secure musicians for the upcoming performance season the following year. The news of the death on September 28, 1790, of Haydn's former employer, Prince Nikolaus Esterházy, had traveled all the way to London, prompting Salomon to travel to Vienna to persuade Haydn to visit London to perform a series of concerts. Under the employment of Prince Nikolaus Esterházy, Haydn had been unwilling, or unable to negotiate his freedom.<sup>2</sup> With the succession of the former prince's son, Prince Anton, the court orchestra had been disbanded, with the exception of Haydn, who was kept on as Kapellmeister on a stipend of 1,000 florins.<sup>3</sup> Under these circumstances, and with Haydn's work becoming limited under a prince who had very little interest in music, Haydn was granted a year's leave to travel to London to serve Salomon. Haydn's visits to London allowed him ample opportunities to travel, compose, perform, expand his social circle, and allow for the growth of his reputation as a famous composer.<sup>4</sup>

In 1795, Haydn decided to return to Vienna, but before his departure from England, Johann Peter Salomon approached Haydn with a libretto entitled *The Creation of the World*. This libretto was originally given to George F. Handel, but he had never taken on the task of

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<sup>2</sup> Georg Feder and James Webster, "Haydn, (Franz) Joseph," *Grove Music Online*.

<sup>3</sup> Nicolas Slonimsky, Laura Kuhn, and Dennis McIntire, "Haydn, (Franz) Joseph," *Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians*, ed. Nicolas Slonimsky, Centennial Edition (New York, NY: Schirmer Books, 2001), 3: 1496.

<sup>4</sup> Georg Feder and James Webster, "Haydn, (Franz) Joseph," *Grove Music Online*.

setting it.<sup>5</sup> This very text, along with the Handelian experience that Haydn witnessed while in England would later contribute to Haydn's greatest masterpiece, *The Creation* (1798).

Upon his return to Vienna in 1795, Haydn reacquainted himself with the Esterházy family. His former employer, Prince Paul Anton, had recently passed away in 1794, and his son Prince Nikolaus II had succeeded him. Upon the new prince's succession, Prince Nikolaus reinstated the court orchestra and appointed Haydn once again as Kapellmeister. Under the new prince, Haydn's main responsibility was to compose a mass each year in honor and celebration of the name day, September 8<sup>th</sup>, of Maria Hermenegild, Nikolaus's wife.<sup>6</sup> From that point on, Haydn became thoroughly interested in composing sacred works, and as a result produced six masses: *Missa in tempore belli* (1796), *Heiligmesse* (1796), *Nelsonmesse* (1798), *Theresienmesse* (1799), *Schöpfungsmesse* (1801), which contains a theme from *Die Schöpfung* (*The Creation*), and *Harmoniemesse* (1802).<sup>7</sup>

When Haydn returned to Vienna, his reputation as a composer and musician had reached new peaks, and he was hailed as a cultural hero. Outside of composing for the prince, many of his remaining works were composed in collaboration with the cultural-political establishment, and were viewed as works of social, ideological, and musical caliber. One of the most prominent figures of Haydn's cultural-political collaboration was Baron Gottfried van Swieten. At the time, Baron Gottfried van Swieten was the imperial librarian, censor, and the leader of the

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Nicolas Slonimsky, Laura Kuhn, and Dennis McIntire, "Haydn, (Franz) Joseph," *Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians*, 3: 1496.

Gesellschaft der Associirten, which was an organization of noble patrons who specialized in large-scale performances of oratorios and musical repertoire.<sup>8</sup>

During the last few active years of his life, Haydn composed a number of master vocal works. Beginning in 1796, Haydn collaborated with Baron van Swieten on the oratorios, *Seven Last Words* (1796), *The Creation* (1798), and *The Seasons* (1801), with the last two being the final masterpieces of Haydn's career. Before the completion of *The Seasons*, Haydn fell seriously ill, perhaps signaling the upcoming years of Haydn's declining health. *The Seasons* was performed privately at the Schwarzenburg Palace in Vienna on April 24, 1801, with its first public performance on May 19, 1801, at the Redoutensaal in Vienna.

“Although the initial reception of *The Seasons* was favourable – Haydn wrote to Clementi that it had enjoyed ‘unanimous approval’ and that ‘many prefer it to *The Creation*, because of its greater variety’ – critical opinion soon became mixed, owing in part to its perceived ‘lower’ subject, in part to a growing aesthetic resistance to its many pictorialisms.”<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, many today rank *The Seasons* second behind *The Creation*.

In 1799, Haydn began to complain of mental and physical weakness. Not long after these first signs of declining health, Haydn once again fell severely ill in 1802, and shortly thereafter resigned from his position as Kapellmeister to Prince Nikolaus. Haydn's last public musical function was on December 26, 1803, where he conducted the *Seven Last Words*. During the last six years of his life, Haydn grew frailer from his illness. He made his last public appearance at a concert given in his honor at the Great Hall of the University of Vienna on March 27, 1808, with Salieri conducting *The Creation*. After serving four generations of princes, and giving the world

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<sup>8</sup> Georg Feder and James Webster, “Haydn, (Franz) Joseph,” *Grove Music Online*.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

hundreds of musical treasures, Haydn passed away on May 31, 1809 in Vienna, and was buried at the Hundsturm Cemetery.<sup>10</sup>

### ***The Creation (1798)***

Although *The Creation* was one of the last major works that Haydn composed, it remains one of the most important works of his career and of the Classical era. *The Creation* was composed during 1796-1798 upon Haydn's return to Vienna after his second trip to England.<sup>11</sup> Before his departure from England, Johann Peter Salomon approached Haydn with a libretto entitled, *The Creation of the World*. The libretto was originally written for Handel, but had never been set to music. Therefore, the task was presented to Haydn, who eagerly jumped on the opportunity.

Haydn's influence to compose the text into an oratorio came from his Handelian experience while in England, where he attended several concerts and performances of Handel's music. After Handel's death in 1759, his music continued to flourish in popularity and be performed throughout England. Beginning in 1784, London initiated an annual concert series of monumental Handel Commemorations at Westminster Abbey (Figure 2.2). In 1791, Haydn attended the series, the "Grand Musical Festivals," during his first trip to London. Among the Handel oratorios that Haydn attended, he experienced *Israel in Egypt* and *Messiah*, along with excerpts from *Joshua*, *Esther*, *Saul*, *Judas Maccabaeus*, *Deborah*, *Acis and Galatea*, *Samson*, *Alexander's Feast*, *Solomon*, and *Theodora*.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Nicolas Slonimsky, Laura Kuhn, and Dennis McIntire, "Haydn, (Franz) Joseph," *Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians*, 3: 1497.

<sup>11</sup> Bruce C. MacIntyre, *Haydn: The Creation* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1998), 1.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 29-31.

Figure 2.2: Engraving of Handel Commemoration Concert, west end of Westminster Abbey (close up), London, 1784. Engraving by J. Spilsbury, after drawing by E.F. Burney, in Charles Burney, *An account of the Musical Performances in Westminster Abbey, and the Pantheon, May 26<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup>; and June the 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup>, 1784; In Commemoration of Handel* (London, 1785), Plate 7. New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.



Bruce C. MacIntyre, *Haydn: The Creation*, 3.

There are many accounts of Haydn's reaction to this event. According to one of his early biographers, he 'confessed...that when he heard the music of Hendl [*sic*] in London, he was struck as if he had been put back to the beginning of his studies and had known nothing up to that moment. He meditated on every note and drew from those most learned scores the essence of true musical grandeur.'<sup>13</sup>

No one knows exactly who the true author of this text was since no copy survives; although, it is supposed by many scholars that the text is the work of an Englishman by the name

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<sup>13</sup> Nicholas Temperley, *Haydn: The Creation* (Cambridge and London: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 5, as taken from Giuseppe Carpani, *Le Haydine* (Milan, 1812), pp. 162-163; trans. Landon, vol. III, p. 84.

of “Lidley”, or perhaps Thomas Linley (1733-1795). Others propose that the libretto was a manuscript among the Handel materials in the possession of John Christopher Smith, who took over the management of Handel’s oratorios, with the manuscript eventually falling into the hands of his successors, his own son and then Thomas Linley. Of all the poets who provided librettos for Handel’s oratorios, it is suspected that Newburgh Hamilton may have written the text, as his work, *Samson*, which is based on Milton’s *Samson Agonistes*, shares constructed similarities to Milton’s text in the same way that *The Creation* is based on Milton’s *Paradise Lost*. However, suspicions still arise as *Samson Agonistes* is considered to be a more sophisticated text than that of *The Creation*.<sup>14</sup>

“Moreover the prosody of the two works is very different. While *Samson* uses regular blank-verse pentameters for recitative and rhyming strophic verse for arias, *The Creation* has prose for most recitatives and free unrhymed verse for arias and the remaining recitatives.”<sup>15</sup> Nevertheless, the one fact that remains for certain, is that the text was originally written for Handel.

When Haydn showed the text to Baron van Swieten, he commented: “I recognized at once that such an exalted subject would give Haydn the opportunity *I had long desired*, to show the whole compass of his profound accomplishments and to express the full power of his inexhaustible genius.”<sup>16</sup> Haydn’s publisher, Baron van Swieten, collaborated on the project of *The Creation*, translating the English text to German, with careful precision to preserve the libretto in keeping it as close as possible in its interpretation to the English word order and

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<sup>14</sup> Nicholas Temperley, *Haydn: The Creation*, 19-20.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>16</sup> Georg Feder and James Webster, “Haydn, (Franz) Joseph,” *Grove Music Online*.

rhythms.<sup>17</sup> *The Creation* was the first large-scale musical work to be published with a bilingual text. Despite this historical fact, the text's translation did cause some negative results in the beginning. When Salomon heard that the text had been translated, he threatened to sue Haydn, because he thought Lidley's text had been translated illegally; fortunately, the accusation was dropped with Lidley's death.<sup>18</sup>

Beyond this, *The Creation* 'made history' immediately and on a pan-European scale in a way equaled by no other composition, owing to its fortunate combination of sublime subject, cultural-historical 'moment' on the cusp between Enlightenment and Romanticism, appeal to both the high-minded and ordinary listeners, Haydn's unrivalled stature and the originality and grandeur of his music. His pride in and personal identification with the work, in addition to his usual concern for financial advantage, induced him to publish it himself, selling it 'by subscription' all over Europe....<sup>19</sup>

The libretto of *The Creation* is based on three sources: the book of Genesis 1:3 through Genesis 2:3, from the King James Bible of 1611, Milton's *Paradise Lost* (revised version of 1674), and the Bible's Book of Psalms, especially Psalms 19:1-5 for (nos. 12 and 13), and Psalms 104: 27-30 for (No. 28).<sup>20</sup> The text of *The Creation* alone is substantial in length, and is divided into three parts. The first two parts of the oratorio depict the six Biblical Days of Creation, with the first part focusing on the first four Days of Creation, and the second part focusing on the Fifth and Sixth Days of Creation. The third part depicts Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.

For parts I and II, the Six Days of Creation, with the exception of the First Day, are organized in the following sequence: 1) Prose narrative from Genesis (recitative), 2) commentary in verse (aria or ensemble), 3) narrative (recitative), and finally 4) a choral hymn of praise by

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<sup>17</sup> Nicholas Temperley, *Haydn: The Creation*, 21.

<sup>18</sup> Bruce C. MacIntyre, *Haydn: The Creation*, 57.

<sup>19</sup> Georg Feder and James Webster, "Haydn, (Franz) Joseph," *Grove Music Online*.

<sup>20</sup> Nicholas Temperley, *Haydn: The Creation*, 20.



heavenly host. The oratorio is narrated and choral solos and arias sung by three archangels: Gabriel (soprano), Uriel (tenor), and Raphael (bass), along with a chorus of heavenly hosts who “watch” as the story of Creation unfolds. The archangels foretell the story of the creation of the world to humankind, with each passing Day of Creation leading to a triumphant chorus by the heavenly host. For Part III, the text turns away from the book of Genesis, and is drawn from *Paradise Lost* and the Book of Psalms, with the recitative written in free iambic verse. Adam (bass) and Eve (soprano) appear and sing both a hymn recounting the major works of Creation and a love duet; both inspired by the text of Milton’s *Paradise Lost*. Adam and Eve are then given a brief warning to not to fall into temptation, and the oratorio comes to a close with a final chorus of praise from the heavenly host.<sup>21</sup>

Many symbolic aspects contribute to the musical organization of *The Creation*, one of which is Haydn’s clever use of different keys. The opening movement begins in C minor symbolizing the chaos of darkness before the world was created, but by the end of the movement Haydn has shifted the music into the key of C major representing light. The key of C major also appears throughout the piece: at the end of the Second Day (no. 4, “The marv’lous work beholds”), at the end of the fourth day (no.13, “The heavens are telling”), in Part II after God creates man (no. 24, “In native worth”), and in Part III, (no. 30, “By thee with bliss). In Part III, no. 30, begins in C major, but ends in B-flat major, suggesting several symbolisms: Adam and Eve, who are human, are lower than the angels, and their suggested fall from God’s grace. Movement no. 30 is Adam and Eve’s first duet with chorus, which is altogether the most active in the entire oratorio regarding modulations. The duet begins in C major, but then eventually progresses through the keys of F major, B-flat major, A-flat major, G-flat major, E-flat minor, F

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 23-24.

minor, G minor, G major, and then back to C major, and their love duet (no. 32, “Graceful consort) is in E-flat major, suggesting their lower station as their love duet and the final chorus are simpler and of a “lower style.” Finally, Haydn ends the oratorio in B-flat; however, it was not a coincidence, as Haydn hinted at the final closing key in Part II, which began in F major, but closed in B-flat.<sup>22</sup>

Perhaps one of the most influential characteristics of Haydn’s, *The Creation*, is its *Thonmahlerey*, or “tone painting,” bringing the music to depict the text through raging seas, thundering heavens, descriptions of plant and animal life, and the representation of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.<sup>23</sup> While setting the libretto for the piece, Haydn’s partner, Baron van Swieten, offered many insights and ideas as to what the composer might take into consideration, and Haydn didn’t hesitate in adopting many of those ideas.

[No. 1 ‘And the Spirit of God’] In the Chorus, the darkness could gradually disappear; but enough of the darkness should remain to make the momentary transition to light very effective. ‘And there was light &c.’ must only be said once....

[No. 16 ‘Be fruitful all’] Here it seems that the bare accompaniment of the bass moving solemnly in a straight rhythm would create a good effect. [This was Haydn’s first idea of the final, finished version and it would seem that it was performed that way on the first evening; then he added two violoncelli and still later the divided violas.]...

[No. 18 Terzetto] For these strophes, a quite simple and syllabic melody would probably be the best thing to have, so that the words can be understood clearly; but the accompaniment could paint the course of the brook, the flight of the bird and the quick movement of the fishes. [Haydn in the middle and sometimes also upper strings gives a convincing feeling of flowing water, and he also imitates the birds, the bottom of the ocean and, delightfully, ‘th’immense Leviathan.’]<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Lawrence Schenbeck, *Joseph Haydn and the Classical Choral Tradition* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: Hinshaw Music, 1996), 304-305.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 307.

<sup>24</sup> Lawrence Schenbeck, *Joseph Haydn and the Classical Choral Tradition*, 307-308, as taken from “Gottfried van Swieten’s Suggestions to Haydn: English Translation” in Landon *Creation*, 84-86. Bracketed comments by Landon.

With benefactors for *The Creation* in both London and Vienna, Haydn had a difficult time in choosing which city to premiere the oratorio. His indecision about where to premiere the work essentially came from his two benefactors, Salomon in London who had given the text to Haydn, and Baron van Swieten in Vienna, the translator-librettist, who as the leader of the Gesellschaft der Associirten, sought to promote oratorios and music in Vienna. Haydn had originally promised to premiere *The Creation* in London, but in the end decided to premiere the work in Vienna instead.<sup>25</sup>

It is suspected that Haydn's decision to premiere the work in Vienna ultimately came from the promised substantial payment by the Gesellschaft der Associirten, who offered Haydn 500 ducats to fund the copying and performance of the work. The organization produced and rehearsed the work in private at the Schwarzenburg Palace on April 29, 1797, with an official premiere on April 30<sup>th</sup> and additional performances on the 7<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> of May in 1797. The first public performance of *The Creation* took place on March 19, 1799, at the Burgtheater with about 180 performers taking part in its public premiere.<sup>26</sup>

As the crowning jewel of Haydn's career, *The Creation*, not only left a historical mark on Classical repertoire, but also made Haydn immensely wealthy. Not only did Haydn receive the 500 ducats that were originally promised to him upon commission for the work, but he also received an additional 100 ducats as a bonus from Prince Schwarzenburg, who hosted the premiere event at his palace. With a total of 600 ducats that Haydn received for *The Creation*,

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<sup>25</sup> Bruce C. MacIntyre, *Haydn: The Creation*, 57.

<sup>26</sup> Georg Feder and James Webster, "Haydn, (Franz) Joseph," *Grove Music Online*.

his sum was about one and two-thirds times larger than his annual income of 337 ducats from the Esterházy family.<sup>27</sup>

Meanwhile, Salomon and a rival concert promoter, John Ashley (1734-1805), were eager to premiere *The Creation* in London, and both had ordered copies of the work.

Hayden [sic] sent the manuscript of *The Creation* to Salomon in London for its premiere performance in London. The package was delivered on March 23, 1800, by stagecoach and sailboat from Vienna, and the postage was £30 16s. 0d., a sum equal to £650 today, c. \$1000. In 1800 this sum was enough to purchase a horse, or to pay the living expenses for a family of four for a year.<sup>28</sup>

Unfortunately, tensions arose in London when John Ashley received his copy a day before Salomon, beating him to the punch by premiering the work on March 28, and April 21, 1800, with Salomon premiering the work later on April 21 and May 5, 1800. Salomon's resentment of not premiering the oratorio first in London, provoked him to threaten to sue Haydn. Despite these rivalries accompanying the London premieres of *The Creation*, Haydn's oratorio received praise and many other successful premieres all throughout Europe, including Germany, Scandinavia, the Low Countries, Bohemia, Russia, Switzerland, and France.<sup>29</sup>

Today, audiences continue to be astounded by Haydn's compositional virtuosity combined with the glory of the story of "The Creation." But above all others, it is the musicians involved who are the most privileged to not only hear the music of *The Creation*, but to experience it as well. *The Creation* is not only a choral and orchestral masterpiece, but has presented several of its treasures as part of the standard vocal repertoire for singers.

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<sup>27</sup> Bruce C. MacIntyre, *Haydn: The Creation*, 60.

<sup>28</sup> Nicolas Slonimsky, Laura Kuhn, and Dennis McIntire, "Haydn, (Franz) Joseph," *Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians*, 3: 1496.

<sup>29</sup> Bruce C. MacIntyre, *Haydn: The Creation*, 265-266.

## Analysis of No. 15 Aria: “On mighty pens”

The aria “On mighty pens” (No. 15) takes place at the beginning of Part II of the oratorio, and is preceded by Gabriel’s recitative “And God said: Let the waters bring forth” taken from Genesis 1:20. One of five arias sung by the angel soloists without chorus, “On mighty pens” is the third largest movement in the work, consisting of 207 measures.<sup>30</sup> It is only outnumbered by the aria “By thee with bliss, o bounteous Lord,” (No. 30) sung by Adam and Eve with the chorus (340 measures), and the duet “Graceful consort” (No. 32) sung by Adam and Eve (219 measures).<sup>31</sup> It is considered to be a soprano showcase with proportions and *passaggi* that recall the Baroque concerto or opera seria.<sup>32</sup> The libretto for the movement is taken from John Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, Book VII, that narrates the creation of the different species of birds such as the eagle, lark, and nightingale.

Perhaps the largest characteristic that defines the aria, “On mighty pens,” is Haydn’s principal device of tone-painting. Throughout the aria, Haydn cleverly employs musical and artistic techniques and ornaments that represent the eagle, lark, dove, and nightingale. “Illustrative arias about birds are a well-worn cliché of *opera seria*, and Haydn could be very sure of his ground in No. 15, but the painting is of the decorative order, superimposed on a rather traditional structure in which the main themes are innocent of tone-painting.”<sup>33</sup> As Haydn was composing *The Creation*, he spent a laborious amount of time and effort in composing the aria,

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<sup>30</sup> Angela Carr, *Solo Angel Roles in Vocal Music: Tracing the Use of Angel Roles from 1600 to the Present* (D.A. dissertation, Ball State University, 2015), 74, as taken from Temperley, *Haydn: The Creation*, 54.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Lawrence Schenbeck, *Joseph Haydn and the Classical Choral Tradition*, 309.

<sup>33</sup> Nicholas Temperley, *Haydn: The Creation*, 72.

“On mighty pens;” his original sketches presented the work in  $\frac{3}{4}$  time and featured even more coloratura-like passages for the soprano soloist.

The form of the aria can be described as an elaborated ABA’ form with ritornellos. The aria opens with a thirty-four-measure long ritornello in the tonic key of F major; the ritornello opening presents the opening theme of the vocal line. The soloist makes her entrance at m. 35 with “On mighty pens uplifted soars the eagle aloft, and cleaves the sky in swiftest flight to the blazing sun.” During this first line of text, Haydn has already made brilliant use of tone painting, as the ascending vocal and instrumental lines easily depict the soaring eagle (Figure 2.3).

Figure 2.3: Haydn— “On mighty pens” from *The Creation*, meas. 43-46.  
Tone-painting of the soaring eagle in the instrumental accompaniment and vocal line.



In measures 52-53, the tune of a lark is heard by a solo clarinet, followed by the vocal phrase, “His welcome bids to morn the merry lark.” The lark continues to be represented by the solo clarinet in an ascending triplet figure in measures 57-58, and is shortly followed by the vocalist singing the previous phrase of text a second time.<sup>34</sup> At measures 63-67, Haydn has not only incorporated tone painting in the instrumental accompaniment, but also in the vocal line as well with the melody resembling the cooing of a dove. The singer’s “cooing” motive occurs in measures 64 and 66, with the instrumental accompaniment responding with a bird call after each

<sup>34</sup> Angela Carr, *Solo Angel Roles in Vocal Music: Tracing the Use of Angel Roles from 1600 to the Present*, 75.

“cooing.” Haydn also added “bird-like” ornaments to the vocal line in the form of trills and ornamental turns as those found in m. 68 and meas. 70-71 (Figure 2.4).

Figure 2.4: Haydn— “On mighty pens” from *The Creation*, meas. 69-71.  
 “Bird” ornaments in the vocal line (meas. 70-71).



At m. 80, the music of the “majestic eagle” returns in both the vocal line and the instrumental accompaniment in an even more elaborate version of the original A section. This glorified return of the opening material not only contains more ornate musical lines and ornaments, but features an extravagant melisma from measures 110-115 on the word “zarte” or “tender” in the English score. This melisma instigates the conclusion of the aria’s A section on the downbeat of m. 115, ending in C major, the dominant key of F major. Measures 115-125 present a brief ritornello in C major featuring an ornamental flute part that “chirps” over the strings.

The B section of the aria begins in m. 126, and creates a contrasting section of music in the relative key of D minor. “From every bush and grove resound the nightingale’s delightful tone.” The conclusion of the B section can be interpreted at two different locations: at m. 133 or m. 150.<sup>35</sup> For this particular study, the conclusion of the B section will take place at m. 150. A brief instrumental interlude continues in the key of C major from meas. 133-137. At m. 138, the

<sup>35</sup> Nicholas Temperley, *Haydn: The Creation*, 73.

music has returned to the tonic key of F major. During this section of the aria, we are presented with the last verse of text, “No grief affected yet her breast, nor to a mournful tale were tun’d.”

The vocal line continues to imitate the gentle cooing and trills of the birds through descending intervals of fourths as in meas. 138 and 144 and ornaments in meas. 147 and 149. Throughout this particular section of music, the flute in the accompaniment is especially prominent as seen in the triplets, staccato notes, and trills.<sup>36</sup>

At m. 150, two melodic ideas replace the A section after the return to the tonic: two nightingale motives presented in measures 151-155 and measures 164-166, respectively (See Figures 2.5 and 2.6).

Figure 2.5: Haydn— “On mighty pens” from *The Creation*, meas. 149-154.  
First nightingale motive (meas. 151-154).

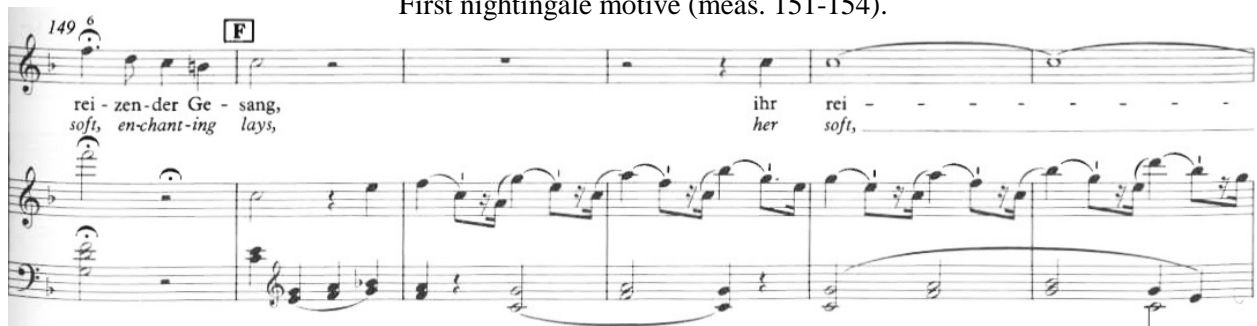


Figure 2.6: Haydn— “On mighty pens” from *The Creation*, meas. 160-171.  
Second nightingale motive (meas. 164-166).



<sup>36</sup> Angela Carr, *Solo Angel Roles in Vocal Music: Tracing the Use of Angel Roles from 1600 to the Present*, 75.



These motives are not anticipated in the A section itself, but were already presented in the work's previous ritornellos in meas. 19-22 and meas. 119-121.<sup>37</sup> Beginning at m. 152, Haydn introduces another decorative melisma in the vocal line. From measures 152-155, the vocal line holds out a suspended C5, permitting the first nightingale motive to be displayed underneath in the accompaniment. However, once the nightingale motive ends in m. 155, the vocal line takes over with an intricate melody featuring detached triplet figures impersonating the chirping of birds. From meas. 162-177, the vocal line is doubled by the instrumental accompaniment, with the second nightingale motive returning briefly in measures 164-166.

The first nightingale motive returns at m. 177 followed by a second lavish melisma at m. 179 featuring syncopation in measures 182-183, "chirping" sixteenth-note figures in measures 187-188, and lush ascending and descending lines in measures 189-192. The virtuosic melisma comes to a conclusion through a deceptive cadence (V-VI) at measures 195-196. The vocal line is doubled by the instrumental accompaniment for one final phrase from measures 195-199 before the aria comes to a powerful conclusion with a final ritornello.

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<sup>37</sup> Nicholas Temperley, *Haydn: The Creation*, 73.

## Chapter 3 - Claude Debussy (1862-1918) and *Fêtes galantes I* (1882)

### *Biographical Information on the Composer*

Claude Debussy (b. St Germain-en-Laye, Aug 22, 1862; d. Paris, March 25, 1918) was a French composer ahead of his time (Figure 3.1). He is often described as the equivalent master of French *mélodie* to Hugo Wolf's German Lieder. By reinventing the use of harmonic innovations, Debussy paved the way for generations of composers leading into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. "He made a decisive move away from Wagnerism in his only complete opera *Pelléas et Mélisande*, and in his works for piano and for orchestra he created new genres and revealed a range of timbre and colour which indicated a highly original musical aesthetic."<sup>1</sup> Debussy's collection of songs, *Fêtes galantes*, demonstrates his early and emerging compositional style of French *mélodie*.



Figure 3.1: Claude Achille Debussy (1862-1918)

Durand-Salabert-Eschig.com Website, "Debussy, Claude," 31 March 2018. <http://www.durand-salabert-eschig.com/en-GB/Composers/D/Debussy-Claude.aspx>.

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<sup>1</sup> François Lesure and Roy Howat, "Debussy, (Achille-) Claude," *Grove Music Online*, accessed 16 February 2018. <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.er.lib.k-state.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000007353>.

## Debussy: The Early Years (1862-1887)

Claude Debussy was born to a poor family in St. Germain-en-Laye, France. His father Manuel-Achille had served in the marine infantry for seven years, and had settled in St. Germain-en-Laye with his wife to run a china shop. From an early age, it was Manuel's dream that Claude would follow in his footsteps and become a sailor. However, fate had a different destiny in mind for Debussy. In 1870, the Franco-Prussian War broke out, and the family saw refuge with Manuel's sister, Clementine, in Cannes, France. It was Debussy's aunt who sought to his musical upbringing by enrolling him in his first piano lessons with the Italian musician, Jean Cerruti. As the Franco-Prussian War progressed, Debussy's father lost his livelihood, and eventually joined as a captain in the armed forces in Commune. However, during the following year, 1871, Manuel was arrested and sentenced to four years imprisonment, and after a year was released with suspension of civil rights.<sup>2</sup>

After this difficult time, Debussy's musical up-bringing was entrusted to Antoinette Mauté, the mother-in-law of the poet Paul Verlaine, who prepped him for entrance into the Paris Conservatoire, where he was later admitted in 1872 at the age of 10 years old. Among his first teachers were Antoine Marmontel for piano and Albert Lavignac for solfège, who quickly recognized Debussy's musical ear and sight-reading abilities. After 1877, Debussy became quickly discouraged of ever becoming a piano virtuoso when he failed to obtain a *premier prix*, and had only managed to secure minor prizes for solfège and piano. Nevertheless, Debussy was determined to continue in music, and enrolled in Emile Durand's harmony class and August

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

Bazille's accompaniment classes at the conservatory. Debussy later won his one and only *premier prix* for accompaniment.<sup>3</sup>

In 1879, Debussy began to try his hand at composing French *mélodie* using texts by Alfred de Musset. During the summer of 1880, Debussy was introduced and hired by Nadezhda von Meck, Tchaikovsky's patroness, to teach piano to her children and to play duets with her, first in Arcachon and then in Florence, where Debussy composed his first work for piano and the Piano Trio.<sup>4</sup> Debussy continued to work for Madame von Meck on several occasions during his early years. In the summers of 1881 and 1882, he stayed with the patroness in Moscow, where he became acquainted with the music of Tchaikovsky. Although Debussy never really came to appreciate the music of Tchaikovsky, he became interested and inspired by the compositions of Mussorgsky.<sup>5</sup>

Upon returning to Paris after the summer, Debussy enrolled in Ernest Guiraud's composition class, and supported himself by playing accompaniments for Victorine Moreau-Sainti's singing classes. It was in Victorine Moreau-Sainti's classes that Debussy met his first love, Madame Marie Vasnier, for whom he later wrote *mélodies* on poems by Gautier, Leconte de Lisle, and Banville, and to whom the collection *Fêtes galantes* is dedicated. It is also thanks to Madame Vasnier that Debussy was able to make his first professional premiere as a composer on May 12, 1882, on a concert given by the violinist, Maurice Thieberg, in Paris.

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Nicolas Slonimsky, Laura Kuhn, and Dennis McIntire, "Debussy, (Achille-) Claude," *Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians*, ed. Nicolas Slonimsky, Centennial Edition (New York: Schirmer Books, 2001), 2: 822.

Under the tutelage of Guiraud, Debussy began to compose profusely, and was eventually awarded second place for the Prix de Rome in 1883. “He was runner-up for the Prix de Rome in 1883, with his cantata, *Le gladiateur*; by that time his works already included more than 30 *mélodies*, two *scènes lyriques*, choruses, a cello suite, and a symphony (scored only for piano four hands). He became accompanist for the Concordia choral society, where Gounod took him under his wing, and meanwhile composed yet more *mélodies* for Marie Vasnier, on texts by Bourget and Verlaine.”<sup>6</sup>

In 1884, Debussy won a Prix de Rome for his cantata, *L’Enfant prodigue*. As per requirements for Prix de Rome winners, Debussy was required to spend two years in Rome at the Villa de Medici. While in Rome, Debussy composed a choral work, *Zulmina* (1885-1886), based upon Heine’s *Almanzor*, and a cantata, *Diane au bois*; neither of which have survived. Upon his return to Paris in 1887, Debussy completed the symphonic suite, *Printemps* (1887), only to face severe criticism and the failure of his piece to gain formal recognition. Debussy redeemed himself with his cantata *La Damselle élue* (1887-1889), which caught the attention and praise of many French musicians.<sup>7</sup>

From 1887 onward, Debussy’s musical and compositional style continued to evolve from the conservative French Romanticism to the exotic and tantalizing music of the approaching twentieth century.

What thoroughly engaged his interest was the oriental music that he heard at the Paris World exposition in 1889. He was fascinated by the asymmetric rhythms of the thematic content and the new instrumental colors achieved by native players; he also found an inner valence

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<sup>6</sup> François Lesure and Roy Howat, “Debussy, (Achille-) Claude,” *Grove Music Online*.

<sup>7</sup> Nicolas Slonimsky, Laura Kuhn, and Dennis McIntire, “Debussy, (Achille-) Claude,” *Baker’s Biographical Dictionary of Musicians*, 2: 822.

between these oriental modalities and the verses of certain French impressionist poets, including Mallarmé, Verlaine, Baudelaire, and Pierre Louys.<sup>8</sup>

Exoticism not only influenced Debussy's vocal works, but his instrumental works as well, and forever influenced and characterized the evolving style of the emerging Debussy.

### Madame Vasnier: Debussy's Muse

Debussy composed several works entitled *Fêtes galantes*. His first work of this title was composed in 1882, when Debussy was only twenty years old. The work was a collection of five songs for voice and piano, with the texts based on a collection by a similar name by Paul Verlaine.<sup>9</sup> When writing his texts for this collection of poetry, Paul Verlaine took inspiration from eighteenth century French paintings, notably those of Jean-Antoine Watteau.<sup>10</sup> This collection, along with many of his other *mélodies* of the same period, were written for Debussy's first love, Madame Blanche-Adélaïde Vasnier (Figures 3.2 and 3.3).



Figure 3.2: Claude Debussy (20 years old)  
Georg Predota, "Minors of the Majors Claude Debussy: L'enfant prodigue," *Interlude*, 31 March 2018. <http://www.interlude.hk/front/minors-majors-claude-debussy-lenfant-prodigue/>.



Figure 3.3: Madame Blanche-Adélaïde Vasnier  
Victor I. Seroff, *Debussy: Musician of France* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1956).

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<sup>8</sup> Nicolas Slonimsky, Laura Kuhn, and Dennis McIntire, "Debussy, (Achille-) Claude," *Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians*, 2: 822.

<sup>9</sup> Rovi Staff, "Description" from *Claude Debussy: Fêtes galantes (3), song cycle for voice and piano, Set I, L. 86 (80)*, All Music, 2018, 18 February 2018. <https://www.allmusic.com/composition/fêtes-galantes-3-song-cycle-for-voice-piano-set-i-l-80-mc0002358983>

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

Debussy came from an unhappy and unsupportive family background. His father was often described as pretentious and rather stupid, and his mother, mean and narrow-minded. Looking for a means of escape from his family, and to make his way in the world, Debussy began giving piano lessons, and secured the position of accompanist for Madame Moreau-Sainti's singing classes.<sup>11</sup> Madame Vasnier and Debussy first became acquainted with each other at the Paris Conservatory in Madame Moreau-Sainti's singing class; Madame Vasnier was a soprano studying with Madame Moreau-Sainti. Madame Vasnier was married to Eugène-Henry Vasnier, who was a respectable civil servant, architect, and supporter of the arts. He was eleven years older than his wife, and the two had two children together, Marguerite and Maurice Vasnier.

At the time, the young and distressed eighteen-year-old Debussy was looking for encouragement, support, and understanding. Upon becoming acquainted with Madame Vasnier, Debussy inquired of her and her husband if he could come and work in their home. The Vasniers welcomed Debussy with open arms, and viewed him as one of the family. Debussy himself often referred to the Vasniers as his "second family."<sup>12</sup> Debussy frequented the Vasnier home, as well as their country house at Ville d'Avray during the summer; it was at the Vasnier household that Debussy composed most of his music associated with his earlier period.

Debussy's relationship with Madame Vasnier influenced many of his early vocal works. Madame Vasnier introduced him to various artists and literary icons of the day, such as Paul Bourget, Théodore de Banville, and Paul Verlaine, many of whose poems Debussy set to

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<sup>11</sup> Victor I. Seroff, *Debussy: Musician of France* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1956), 39.

<sup>12</sup> Edward Lockspeiser, *Debussy: His Life and Mind, Volume I, 1862-1902* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 68.

music.<sup>13</sup> Under Madame Vasnier's care, Debussy was inspired to write many songs for her. The first set of *Fêtes galantes*, "Mandoline," "Pantomime," "En sourdine," "Clair de lune," and "Fantoques," based on Paul Verlaine's poems, were composed merely on Madame Vasnier's suggestion and Debussy's admiration.<sup>14</sup>

In the most elaborate handwriting the 'eternally grateful author' dedicated to Madame Vasnier 'these songs which she alone made live and which would lose their enchanting grace if they were never again to come from her singing fairy lips.' These ecstatic lines were the only outburst (in print) of his passion not censored by Achilles's regard for Madame Vasnier's reputation; the rest, his and the fairy lips kept to themselves.<sup>15</sup>

It was with Madame Vasnier and her husband that Debussy made his first public appearance as a composer. His debut concert was on May 12<sup>th</sup>, 1882, on a concert given by the violinist, Maurice Thieberg, at the Salons Flaxland in Paris.<sup>16</sup> Throughout their relationship, Debussy accompanied Madame Vasnier at many of her appearances at musicale societies.

Some researchers have suggested that Debussy and Madame Vasnier had an intimate physical relationship; however, no supportive evidence of that suspicion exists. After studying Debussy's cordial correspondence from Rome with Monsieur Vasnier, there is nothing to suggest that their attachment developed to this point. However, researchers hypothesize that there may have been some evidence of correspondences with Madame Vasnier that have been either lost or destroyed, and it is presumed that Debussy's several flights from Rome were under the intentions of rejoining Madame Vasnier in Paris.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Victor I. Seroff, *Debussy: Musician of France*, 39.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

<sup>16</sup> Edward Lockspeiser, *Debussy: His Life and Mind, Volume I, 1862-1902*, 68-69.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 71.



In a letter from Debussy to his friend Claudius Popelin, he writes of a possible deepening bond between himself and Madame Vasnier.

“Need I tell you that in these two months I haven’t changed in the least, that certain of my feelings have only become more acute?...As I’ve told you, I’ve allowed her image to sink too deeply into my every action and thought. I’m sorry to make this confession for it doesn’t suffice that I’ve been able to follow your advice to turn away from this mad, blinding love and to rediscover our relationship of friends.”<sup>18</sup>

During this time in his life, Debussy viewed himself as a “free artist,” and showed no interest in furthering his accomplishments and education at the Conservatory. However, Monsieur Vasnier encouraged Debussy to pursue the Prix de Rome, hoping to awaken the young composer to the nature of reality: that it was too early for Debussy to live and compose as the “free artist” that he viewed himself to be, and that he needed to continue to pursue his education.<sup>19</sup> Winning the Prix de Rome offered many advantages to the penniless Debussy: official recognition, along with material advantages, three years free of financial worries, and the education to further his maturing compositional style. “Debussy listened to M. Vasnier but did not betray his own thoughts: three years away from Madame Vasnier certainly was not his idea of happiness, and he pretended not to see through M. Vasnier’s pathetic argument that only interest in Achille’s career dictated his concern.”<sup>20</sup>

After winning the Prix de Rome in 1884, Debussy begrudgingly went to Rome to study and compose at the Villa de Medici as per his requirements as a Prix de Rome winner. Debussy knew that for the next three years he would be forced to give up his “free” way of life, his freedom to compose how and when he wished, and to be parted from Madame Vasnier.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 71.

<sup>19</sup> Victor I. Seroff, *Debussy: Musician of France*, 54.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 57.

During his three years there in Rome, Debussy ultimately loathed the position in which he was forced into.

Returning from his trip to Rome in 1887, Debussy was a changed man. Madame Vasnier's daughter, Marguerite, recalls that, "...the former intimacy was no longer there. He had changed, as we had. We had moved house, made new friends, and he, with his moody unsociable character and unwillingness to alter his habits, no longer felt at home."<sup>22</sup>

Debussy still remained in company with the Vasniers for some time after his return from Rome, but he no longer composed for Madame Vasnier or accompanied her at concerts. Their once intimate relationship had diminished to that of only friends. For a short period of time, Debussy gave piano and harmony lessons to Marguerite Vasnier. However, the lessons were soon abandoned as Debussy's disposition and limited patience negatively affected the lessons. Marguerite recalls, "What an appalling teacher! Not an ounce of patience and incapable of explaining anything in a way that could be understood by a young girl like myself; one had to have understood before he had finished explaining. We abandoned the enterprise.... Then gradually, he too made new acquaintances; he stopped coming and we never saw him again."<sup>23</sup>

### ***Fêtes galantes I (1882)***

The collection *Fêtes galantes* is a collection of songs based off of Paul Verlaine's (1844-1896) poems *Les Fêtes galantes* that were published in 1869.<sup>24</sup> Debussy was first introduced to

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<sup>22</sup> Roger Nichols, *Debussy Remembered* (Portland, Oregon: Amadeus Press, 1992), 20, as taken from Marguerite Vasnier, "Debussy à dix-huit ans," *ReM*, 7 (1 May 1926), 17-22.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 20-21.

<sup>24</sup> Carol Kimball, *Song: A Guide to Art Song Style and Literature* (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard, 2005), 194.

Verlaine's poetry through the poet's mother-in-law, Madame Antoinette-Flore Mauté de Fleurville, who was one Debussy's first piano instructors. She ultimately encouraged the young Debussy to pursue a career in music, and educated him for his entrance exams to the Paris Conservatoire.<sup>25</sup>

Verlaine's poems were inspired by a series of eighteenth-century paintings by Jean-Antoine Watteau (1684-1721). His artwork featured the elegance and gaiety of courtly life in beautifully illustrated environments, as well as the personalities of characters from the Commedia dell'arte (Figure 3.4 and Figure 3.5). The Commedia dell'arte was an improvised genre of theatrical comedy in the 16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries. The actors wore masks that represented traits of their character.



Figure 3.4: "Fête Galante in a Wooded Landscape" by Jean-Antoine Watteau  
The Society of Analytical Psychology Website, "An Exploration of Antoine Watteau's 'Fêtes galante in a Wooded Landscape,'" 31 March 2018.  
<https://www.thesap.org.uk/events/anexploration-of-antoine-watteaus-fete-galante-in-a-wooded-landscape/>.



Figure 3.5: "The Love Lesson" by Jean-Antoine Watteau  
Paula Bargiese Website, "Fête galante and Commedia dell'arte," 31 March 2018.  
<https://www.paulabargiese.nl/Visee-Watteau/HOME.html>.

The masks were designed to not only represent characters, but to depict one emotion to partially hide deeper lying feelings.<sup>26</sup> Verlaine's poems are less narrative in nature, and instead

<sup>25</sup> Arthur B. Wenk, *Claude Debussy and the Poets* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 22.

<sup>26</sup> Andrea Gedrasik, *Scholarly Program Notes of Recital Repertoire* (M.M. thesis, Southern Illinois University Carbondale, 2011), 20.

are more descriptive of paintings, illustrating the scenes of Watteau's artwork in detail. Many composers were attracted to Verlaine's poetry for its musical and lyrical qualities, with Debussy setting more of his texts than any other composer.<sup>27</sup>

The present collection of *Fêtes galantes* that were composed in 1882 for Debussy's first love, Madame Vasnier, are five in number: "Pantomime," "En sourdine," "Mandoline," "Clair de lune," and "Fantoques." The present order of the first versions of these songs was first presented in the Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, manuscript 17716.<sup>28</sup> However, Debussy composed two additional sets entitled *Fêtes galantes I* (1892) and *Fêtes galantes II* (1904). The first series of *Fêtes galantes* (1892), contains a revised set of three of the songs from the 1882 collection: "En sourdine," "Fantoques," and "Clair de lune." For the first series of *Fêtes galantes* (1892), "En sourdine" and "Clair de lune" were completely rewritten from their original versions, while the second song of the trio, "Fantoques," was left mostly intact with the exception of a few alterations. The second set, *Fêtes galantes II*, was written twelve years after the first in 1904, and contains the songs "Les Ingénus," "Le Faune," and "Colloque sentimental."

Due to the existence of the earlier 1882 versions of "En sourdine," "Fantoques," and "Clair de lune," they are often separated from the previously mentioned set of five, and are performed or studied as a trio similar to their younger counterpart the *Fêtes galantes I* (1892). When the 1882 set is being studied or compared with the 1892 set, they are referred to as *Fêtes galantes I* (1882), first set, first version, and *Fêtes galantes I* (1892), first set, second version, respectively. The second version of the first set of *Fêtes galantes I* (1892) is more commonly studied as it was published first; the songs from the first set, first version of the *Fêtes galantes*

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> James R. Briscoe, *Songs of Claude Debussy, Volume I: High Voice* (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard, 1993), 13.

trio were published separately, “En sourdine” (1944), “Fantoques” (1993), and “Clair de lune” (1926), as they were dedicated to Madame Vasnier. The second version of the trio is also considered more highly as a work of the mature and iconic Debussy. Nevertheless, the first version of the *Fêtes galantes* trio offers much insight into the early compositional style of the young Debussy. Therefore, the set of *Fêtes galantes* that will be studied in this report is the *Fêtes galantes I* (1882), first set, first version.

*Fêtes galantes I* (1882) is a collection of three songs based on unrelated subjects of Verlaine’s poetry. The only unification between the three songs are their Watteau-like scenes, and the fanciful and flirtatious moods that run through each piece.<sup>29</sup> The first set, first version of *Fêtes galantes I* is as follows: “En sourdine,” “Fantoques,” and “Clair de Lune.”

### **Analysis of “En sourdine” (Muted)**

Of all of Verlaine’s poems, “En sourdine,” was the first Verlainian poem to inspire Debussy.<sup>30</sup> Debussy composed this song on September 16, 1882, while in Vienna with the von Mecks; however, this first version of “En sourdine” was not printed until 1944 by the publisher Elkan-Vogel in Philadelphia.<sup>31</sup> This first version of “En sourdine” features an elegant vocal line with a high tessitura; written for Madame Vasnier’s voice in mind. The mood of the song is dream-like and intimate. Of the songs in the collection *Fêtes galantes*, “En sourdine” is the only song that was not inspired by the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>32</sup> The poem does not feature any characters from the Commedia dell’arte, but instead, depicts a more romantic setting. The poem can be

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<sup>29</sup> Carol Kimball, *Song: A Guide to Art Song Style and Literature*, 194.

<sup>30</sup> Marie-Claire Rohinsky, ed. *The Singer’s Debussy* (New York: Pelion Press, 1987), 69.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

interpreted as having two subjects: a romantic encounter between lovers, and nature as a means of refuge from worldly sufferings.<sup>33</sup> In *The Singer's Debussy*, Marie-Claire Rohinsky shares this narrative of “En sourdine”:

In the silence of a late summer's day, two lovers lie under the shade of some branches after the ecstasy of love. One implores the other to let no thoughts, memories, or schemes break the suspended moment of bliss. Dusk falling, though; autumn is close, and soon the nightingale will sing its desperate song. In this muted dreamlike atmosphere where reality is transposed into suggestion, the poet's soul dangles precariously between happiness and premonitions. Nature may respond and surrender to the languor of the soul, yet it may also forebode anguish.<sup>34</sup>

“En sourdine” begins in the key of E major in  $\frac{3}{4}$  time and follows an ABA' form. The two-bar piano prelude presents the poem in a warm, “muted” color, and is built on syncopated chords and a triplet figure (Figure 3.6). The melody enters in m. 3 with a descending line in thirds, creating a mood that is calm and inviting. The music of the two-bar piano prelude is repeated twice consecutively under the vocal line. At m. 7 the accompaniment continues with its syncopated rhythm up until m. 10, while the vocal line floats above, diminishing to *pianissimo* to create the “silence” mentioned in Verlaine's text, “De ce silence profound.”

Figure 3.6: Debussy— “En sourdine” from *Fêtes galantes I* (1882), meas. 1-2.



<sup>33</sup> Carol Kimball, *Song: A Guide to Art Song Style and Literature*, 195.

<sup>34</sup> Marie-Claire Rohinsky, ed. *The Singer's Debussy*, 69.

At m. 11, both the vocal line and accompaniment take on new forms. The accompaniment has employed the use of triplet rhythms in both hands in different octaves of the piano. The vocal line ascends in m. 14 to a high A-sharp 5 and is *forte* on the word “extasiés.” After this climactic point, the vocal line descends and diminishes to *pianissimo*. In m. 19, the vocal line highlights the text as the accompaniment doubles the vocal line. This same melodic line is repeated as a sequence that is lowered by a half-step in meas. 23-26.

The B section begins in m. 27. The accompaniment is made up of a repetitive, alternating pattern of eighth-note pairs that function as a form of text painting for the wind and grass. The accompaniment eventually gives way from the repetitive eighth-note pattern to a repetitive triplet pattern in m. 35, and alternates between the eighth-note and triplet patterns (Figure 3.7). “Debussy used alternating duplet and triplet rhythms to blur the placement of the bar lines and remove the feeling of a beat. It gives the song a feeling of being suspended, almost in water.”<sup>35</sup>

Figure 3.7: Debussy— “En sourdine” from *Fêtes galantes I* (1882), meas. 33-38.

The image displays a musical score for the song "En sourdine" from the collection *Fêtes galantes I* by Claude Debussy. The score covers measures 33 through 38. It is written for voice and piano. The vocal line is in the upper staff, and the piano accompaniment is in the lower staves. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 3/4. The piano part is characterized by complex rhythmic patterns, including triplets and eighth-note pairs, which create a sense of suspension. The vocal line includes the lyrics "des de ga - zon roux." and "Et quand, so - len -". The score is marked with "pp" (pianissimo) and "a tempo".

<sup>35</sup> Andrea Gedrasik, *Scholarly Program Notes of Recital Repertoire*, 21.

The return of the modified A section begins at m. 38. Although this is a return of the A section, it is not a complete repetition of the music. Instead of returning with music from the very beginning of the previous A section, the triplet motives in the piano accompaniment from meas. 11-12 return and are extended by two additional measures. The vocal line returns as a combination of the melodic lines seen in meas. 5-6 and meas. 11-13. The song concludes with the return of the melody from meas. 19-26 with the text “Voix de notre désespoir, Le rossignol chantera.” Debussy repeats this line of text a second time, keeping the original idea of the sequenced melody found in m. 23, but slightly altering it in meas. 46-49 in an attempt enhance the dream-like state of the music. The song comes to its conclusion through a brief piano postlude featuring the return of the music from the piano prelude.

### **Analysis of “Fantoche” (Marionettes)**

The first version of “Fantoche” was composed on January 8, 1882, but was not published until 1993 in James R. Briscoe’s *Songs of Claude Debussy Volume I: High Voice*.<sup>36</sup> “Fantoche” is the second song of the set and serves as a contrasting piece between the two slower songs, “En sourdine” and “Clair de lune.” Unlike the songs “En sourdine” and “Clair de lune” that depict scenes, “Fantoche” features characters from the Commedia dell’arte. Scaramouche, a mute pantomime character and Pulcinella, a vulgar character of crude wit,<sup>37</sup> are the two puppeteers who direct the action of the song.<sup>38</sup> Dottoro Graziano, the “docteur bolonais” who usually appears as a lawyer, but on occasion is also a doctor, is about gathering

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<sup>36</sup> Andrea Gedrasik, *Scholarly Program Notes of Recital Repertoire*, 23.

<sup>37</sup> Arthur B. Wenk, *Claude Debussy and the Poets*, 228.

<sup>38</sup> Carol Kimball, *Song: A Guide to Art Song Style and Literature*, 195.



medicinal herbs.<sup>39</sup> All the while the doctor's daughter, often suggested to be the character, Colombine, sneaks under the cover of night half-naked to find her Spanish pirate.<sup>40</sup>

'Fantoche' is nothing but a dazzling jest in four octosyllabic triplets. The poem resembles 'Pantomime' in form and setting, but its mood is explicitly established and defined by Verlaine from the beginning by the title: None of the characters are to be taken seriously; they are puppets and nothing else. Even the languorous love call of the nightingale in the last tercet is humoristic. The short scenes from the Italian comedy are skillfully and daintily presented. No satirical intent, hidden meaning, or melancholy underlie them. The maiden who in "Pantomime" was left dreaming of voluptuous pleasures, here appears very determined to satisfy her longings, even with the most outlandish lover, in this case the extravagant Spanish pirate. The poem is fun and folly.<sup>41</sup>

"Fantoche" maintains a fast, jerky, detached, marionette-like personification throughout; the accompaniment alternating for each of the puppet's actions.<sup>42</sup> The song requires rhythmic precision, biting articulation, supple phrasing, as well as a humoristic and elegant delivery.<sup>43</sup> The singing of the nightingale at the end of the song was another Debussy tribute to display Madame Vasnier's vocal abilities.<sup>44</sup>

"Fantoche" is a song that is built on chromaticism, making its tonality hard to decipher. However, Debussy clearly marks the tonality of the work through low A pedal points throughout the song, and ultimately ends the piece on two low A's an octave apart from each other. Marked *Allegretto vivace*, "Fantoche" begins with a five-bar piano introduction. The accompaniment throughout the entire song is based on a continuous sixteenth-note rhythm joined by a chromatic line in the left hand. "The various figures in the accompaniment are no more than stock devices

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<sup>39</sup> Arthur B. Wenk, *Claude Debussy and the Poets*, 228.

<sup>40</sup> Carol Kimball, *Song: A Guide to Art Song Style and Literature*, 195.

<sup>41</sup> Marie-Claire Rohinsky, ed. *The Singer's Debussy*, 181.

<sup>42</sup> Andrea Gedrasik, *Scholarly Program Notes of Recital Repertoire*, 23.

<sup>43</sup> Pierre Bernac, *The Interpretation of French Song* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1970), 179.

<sup>44</sup> Andrea Gedrasik, *Scholarly Program Notes of Recital Repertoire*, 24.

which have been used for chase music from before Schumann's *Knecht Ruprecht* to the piano improvisations accompanying silent film melodramas."<sup>45</sup>

At m. 6, the characters Scaramouche and Pulcinella are introduced concocting some menacing design under the light of the moon. At m. 8 a motive appears in the accompaniment that aligns itself with the different characters throughout the song (Figure 3.8). This particular motive plays a significant role in the music as it instigates most of the action of the poem: the staccato steps of the doctor's daughter, the chromaticism of the nightingale's cry, and the menacing plans of Scaramouche and Pulcinella.<sup>46</sup> The motive consists of eighth-note octaves on beats one and two of each measure in the left hand followed by a group of alternating sixteenth-notes after each downbeat in the right hand. As each new character appears throughout the song, Debussy presents variations of this motive.<sup>47</sup> The vocal line is detached and jaunty, giving way to a melisma in meas. 13-16 on the word "lune" (moon).

Figure 3.8: Debussy— "Fantoches" from *Fêtes galantes I* (1882), meas. 6-20.

<sup>45</sup> Arthur B. Wenk, *Claude Debussy and the Poets*, 229.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 231.

<sup>47</sup> Carol Kimball, *Song: A Guide to Art Song Style and Literature*, 195.

The opening piano accompaniment repeats itself at m. 18, setting the stage for another Commedia dell'arte character, the Doctor Bolonais. During this character's introduction, the vocal line is doubled by the chromatic passage of the piano accompaniment's left hand. The character motive has been modified from its previous appearance. During the scene of Scaramouche and Pulcinella, the sixteenth-note figure in the right hand moved up by step in contrary motion with the octaves in the left hand. For the Doctor Bolonais, the figure in the right hand alternates twice between two different groups of sixteenth-notes, and then repeats one set of sixteenth-notes followed by a repetition of the second set. The octaves in the left hand follow suit by alternating with each downbeat.

The entrance of the doctor's daughter in m. 34 is considered to be the most intricate passage of the song as the phrase shapes of the vocal line depict her demeanor, mood, and actions.<sup>48</sup> Her entrance on "Lors sa fille, piquant minois, Sous la charmille," is coquettish and features a soaring leap of a ninth on the word "charmille".<sup>49</sup> The melody crescendos at the melisma "Se glise," portraying the daughter as she sneaks away half-naked. The character motive has presented itself at the melisma in m. 42, with the sixteenth-note groups and octaves descending in stepwise parallel motion, and then ascending in stepwise parallel motion at m. 44 (Figure 3.9).

Figure 3.9: Debussy—"Fantoches" from *Fêtes galantes I* (1882), meas. 41-45.



<sup>48</sup> Carol Kimball, *Song: A Guide to Art Song Style and Literature*, 195.

<sup>49</sup> Arthur B. Wenk, *Claude Debussy and the Poets*, 229.

The character whom the doctor's daughter seeks to make her conquest is the Spanish pirate in m. 47. The accompaniment is most subtle here, its rhythmic patterns evoke the sounds of a Spanish guitar. The vocal line itself takes on an exotic Spanish sound, incorporating turning triplet figures. The character motive is absent here for the pirate, but returns in m. 56, with the mention of the nightingale. This time the motive appears with both hands of the accompaniment in the treble clef. Octave leaps in the right hand ascend stepwise, as the left hand moves in contrary motion as a single descending quarter-note chromatic line.

The nightingale that is mentioned is not like the romantic nightingale mentioned in "En sourdine," but is instead considered to be a stage prop nightingale from the *Commedia dell'arte*.<sup>50</sup> "Fantoche" concludes with the nightingale's song in m. 70; a line designed to show off the soprano's agility and artistry. The nightingale's cry is marked *pianissimo* on a trill between G-sharp 5 and A5, and is sustained over four measures before evolving into a chromatic melisma that ends on a high A. The accompaniment throughout the nightingale's cry continues to alternate chromatic figures, ultimately reaching a thrilling chromatic descent from a high C7 to a low pair of octave A's.

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 228.

## Analysis of “Clair de Lune” (Moonlight)

Like its predecessors, “Clair de lune” was composed in 1882, but was not printed until May 1, 1926, by the publisher, La Revue musicale, in Paris.<sup>51</sup> The atmosphere of Verlaine’s poem is inspired by the *fêtes galantes* of 18<sup>th</sup> century paintings. The text poses no plot, but gives a description of a masque in the moonlight, the scenery decorated by nature, fountains, and statues. However, what would be considered as an elegant and joyous scene, Verlaine depicts a sadness hidden beneath the masks.<sup>52</sup> “Debussy does not mirror the sadness with the simple, elegant melody and largely major accompaniment; but he reflects the peaceful, rather than rollicking setting of Verlaine’s masque. Debussy felt that the restraint in the poetry needed to be matched by restraint in the composition, which led to the simpler, more elegant musical lines.”<sup>53</sup>

Set in 3/8 time in the key of F-sharp major, Debussy artistically evokes the concept of moonlight in “Clair de lune” through the use of cascading triads; this “moonlight” motive is in essence the backdrop for the entire piece (Figure 3.10).<sup>54</sup>

Figure 3.10: Debussy— “Clair de lune” from *Fêtes galantes I* (1882), meas. 1-7.



<sup>51</sup> Marie-Claire Rohinsky, ed. *The Singer’s Debussy*, 83.

<sup>52</sup> Andrea Gedrasik, *Scholarly Program Notes of Recital Repertoire*, 22-23.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Arthur B. Wenk, *Claude Debussy and the Poets*, 26.

The luminous atmosphere is maintained by the slow and simple harmonic alteration between the dominant C-sharp major and the tonic F-sharp major every two bars, from meas. 11-19.<sup>55</sup> The melody enters the scene on beat three of m. 12 with a romantically legato vocal line, the “moonlight” motive highlighting the melody from underneath. In m. 21, the “moonlight” motive temporarily disappears, and is replaced by blocked chords followed by eighth-note pairs that alternate between the treble and bass lines of the accompaniment. The new accompaniment text paints the strumming of the lutes, transitioning to alternating chords in m. 25 under “Sous leurs déguisements fantasques.”

Although the music for the majority of the song is in F-sharp major, Debussy briefly modulates to the relative key of D-sharp minor in meas. 31-34, playing on the text, “Tout en chantant sur le monde mineur”.<sup>56</sup> In meas. 35-38, the accompaniment sustains one blocked chord for each measure, exhibiting the soaring vocal lines on “L’amour vainqueur et la vie opportune,”; the vocal line ascending to a high A-sharp on “opportune.” The vocal line descends from this climactic point in the following measure of the music, the mood shifting to a more melancholic atmosphere in meas. 39-42, “Ils n’ont pas l’air de croire à leur bonheur.”

The music in meas. 43-52 becomes chromatically active. Debussy incorporates the “moonlight” motive underneath the vocal line as a text painting mechanism on the phrase “Et leur chanson se mêle au clair de lune.” Debussy sets this line twice with exotic harmonies that are appropriate to the “masques et bergamasques” of the Spanish and Italian theaters.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Samuel Hsu, *Imagery and Diction in the Songs of Claude Debussy* (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, 1972), 90.

<sup>56</sup> Arthur B. Wenk, *Claude Debussy and the Poets*, 26.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

The “moonlight” motive reappears in m. 54, setting the stage for another luxuriously soaring vocal line this time with the text “Au calme clair de lune triste beau;” a modified reprise to the song’s opening melody. From m. 61 onwards, the vocal line grows in intensity and passion with the heightened emotions of the dreaming birds and the sobbing fountains. Debussy applies two metaphorical motives in the accompaniment for the verse “les grands jets d’eau.” The first motive is a sixteenth-note triadic motive that is associated with the light of the moon (Figure 3.11). The second motive is the ascending chords in meas. 69-70 which represent the strumming of the lute that accompanies the masquers’ song.<sup>58</sup> In some editions of the first version of “Clair de lune,” a small melisma occurs in meas. 75-76 before the final refrain of “Au calme clair de lune triste et beau” in meas. 77-81. “Clair de lune” comes to a shimmering conclusion with a brief piano postlude of major triads.

Figure 3.11: Debussy— “Clair de lune” from *Fêtes galantes I* (1882), meas. 64-79.

The image shows a page of a musical score for Claude Debussy's "Clair de lune" from the collection *Fêtes galantes I*. The score is for measures 64 through 79. It is written for voice and piano. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 3/4. The vocal line is in the upper staff, and the piano accompaniment is in the lower staff. The lyrics are written below the vocal line. The score includes various musical markings such as *ritenuto*, *a tempo*, and *morendo et très retenu*. The piano accompaniment features a prominent sixteenth-note triadic motive in measure 64 and ascending chords in measures 69-70.

<sup>58</sup> Arthur B. Wenk, *Claude Debussy and the Poets*, 26.

## Chapter 4 - Giacomo Puccini (1858-1924) and *Suor Angelica* (1918)

### *Biographical Information on the Composer*

Giacomo (Antonio Domenico Michele Secondo Maria) Puccini (b. Lucca, December 22, 1858; d. Brussels, November 29, 1924) was a celebrated Italian composer, and is renowned as one of the greatest of all Italian opera composers (Figure 4.1). By the time Puccini composed *Suor Angelica* (1918), he had already made many great contributions to the operatic world and standard vocal repertoire. Some of Puccini's most treasured operas are *Manon Lescaut* (1893), *La Bohème* (1896), *Tosca* (1900), *Madama Butterfly* (1904), *La fanciulla del West* (*The Girl of the Golden West*)(1910), his collection of three one-act operas known as the *Il Trittico* (1918) consisting of *Il tabarro*, *Suor Angelica*, and *Gianni Schicchi*, and his final operatic work *Turandot* (1926).<sup>1</sup> Today, most of Puccini's operas are firmly established in the standard operatic repertoire throughout the world.



Figure 4.1: Giacomo Puccini (1858-1924)

The Famous People Website, "Giacomo Puccini Biography," 31 March 2018.  
<https://www.thefamouspeople.com/profiles/giacomo-puccini-486.php>.

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<sup>1</sup> Nicolas Slonimsky, Laura Kuhn, and Dennis McIntire, "Giacomo (Antonio Domenico Michele Secondo Maria) Puccini," *Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians*, ed. Nicolas Slonimsky, Centennial Edition (New York: Schirmer Books, 2001), 5: 2885-2886.



## Puccini: The Final Years (1903-1924)

The period between 1903 and 1910 proved to be one of the most difficult periods of Puccini's life, both personally and musically. In January 1904, Puccini married Elvira Gemignani, with whom he had been having an affair with since 1884.<sup>2</sup> That same year, Puccini's opera, *Madama Butterfly*, premiered, and brought him international fame. After the stunning success of *Madama Butterfly*, Puccini was eager to find new material and inspiration for his next work. He explored several literary works such as Victor Hugo's *Notre Dame de Paris*, Oscar Wilde's unfinished play, *A Florentine Tragedy*, and Pierre Louÿs' *La femme et le pantin*.<sup>3</sup> Puccini eventually found satisfaction in another David Belasco play, *The Girl of the Golden West*. David Belasco was the very same playwright who inspired Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*, and Puccini hoped for a second success with *La fanciulla del West* (*The Girls of the Golden West*).

Just when Puccini began work on *La fanciulla del West*, he became involved in a marital crisis. For the first several years of their marriage, Puccini and Elvira had been very happy, but as the years progressed Elvira became increasingly discouraged and irritable due to Puccini's unfaithfulness and his relations with other women. This matter reached a dramatic climax, when Elvira Puccini suspected her husband of having an affair with their maidservant, Doria Manfredi. Driven by her suspicions of their affair, Elvira publicly threatened and harassed Manfredi,

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<sup>2</sup> The Biography.com Website, "Giacomo Puccini Biography," 1 April 2018.  
<https://www.biography.com/people/giacomo-puccini-9448208>.

<sup>3</sup> Julian Budden, "Puccini, Giacomo," *Grove Music Online*, 15 March 2018.  
<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.er.lib.k-state.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-5000903793>.

forcing the woman to commit suicide in 1909. Manfredi's autopsy revealed that she was a virgin, and her family pressed charges against Elvira for gross defamation of character.<sup>4</sup>

Disgusted with his wife's actions, Puccini temporarily separated from Elvira, and sent her to live in Milan for a short period of time. Elvira Puccini was eventually found guilty in court, and sentenced to serve five months in prison. Puccini spared her that humiliation when he offered to pay a substantial sum to Manfredi's family to drop the charges against his wife.<sup>5</sup>

With this domestic affair settled, Puccini set to work on completing *La fanciulla del West*, which he had prolonged for nine months. *La fanciulla del West* premiered at the New York Metropolitan Opera in December 1910 and received mixed reviews. "To outward appearance it was a triumphant success, but its new harmonic elaboration, combined with a curbing of the lyrical impulse that had marked Puccini's earlier scores, alienated many of the composer's admirers; the opera has never entered the circle of steady favourites."<sup>6</sup>

With the mediocre success of his opera *La fanciulla del West* (1910), and opposition of a new generation of up and coming composers, Puccini struggled to once again find new inspiration. Puccini mulled over the idea of writing three one-act operas, but with his struggle to find material for the project, and with discouragement from his publisher, Giulio Ricordi, he set the idea aside. He eventually found inspiration in Lehár, and began to compose *La rondine* (1917). *La rondine* was a Viennese commission that was originally intended for the Carltheater, and was composed between 1914-1917, overlapping into Italy's entry into World War I.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> The Biography.com Website, "Giacomo Puccini Biography," 15 March 2018, <https://www.biography.com/people/giacomo-puccini-9448208>.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Julian Budden, "Puccini, Giacomo," *Grove Music Online*.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

Throughout *La rondine*'s compositional period, Puccini became involved with political struggles, as he was suspected of not showing support for the Allied cause. Puccini received much backlash for not joining Debussy, Elgar, Mascagni, and several others in contributing to Hall Caine's *King Albert's Book* in honour of 'brave little Belgium.' As a means to show his support, and to appease the hostility directed towards him, Puccini later devoted a year's profits from performances of *Tosca* by the Opéra-Comique to benefit and aid France's wounded.<sup>8</sup> *La rondine* premiered at Monte Carlo in 1917; however, it never saw success in Italy or abroad.

After *La rondine*, Puccini turned his attention to his long-awaited project: a trilogy of one-act operas. For the task, Puccini collaborated with two librettists. Giuseppe Adami, who had contributed the libretto for the recent *La rondine*, wrote the libretto for the first opera of the trilogy, *Il tabarro*, using the Grand-Guignol melodrama, *La Houppelande*, by Didier Gold as the inspiration for the text. The second librettist with whom Puccini collaborated with was Giovacchino Forzano, who contributed the librettos for the second and third operas, *Suor Angelica* and *Gianni Schicchi*. The trilogy, or *Il Trittico*, premiered at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York on December 14, 1918.<sup>9</sup> All three of the operas in *Il Trittico* are regarded as genuine products that demonstrate Puccini's confidence and refined musicality.

By 1920, Puccini was Italy's leading and unchallenged opera composer.<sup>10</sup> During his final years, Puccini worked towards composing one last large-scale opera, which would become *Turandot*. Puccini's inspiration for *Turandot* came from a fairytale by the 18<sup>th</sup>-century Venetian

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> John Louis DiGaetani, "Il Trittico [Triptych]," *International Dictionary of Opera*, L-Z/Indexes (London: St. James Press, 1993), 2:1362.

<sup>10</sup> Julian Budden, "Puccini, Giacomo," *Grove Music Online*.

playwright Carlo Gozzi.<sup>11</sup> The composition of *Turandot* took up the remainder of Puccini's life, and was a difficult project due to Puccini's failing health and to disagreements between himself and the librettists. In fact, the librettists Adami and his partner Renato Simoni never succeeded in completing the libretto to Puccini's satisfaction for the final duet of the work, and the opera became incomplete upon Puccini's death from throat cancer in 1924.<sup>12</sup> The opera did not premiere until two years later in 1926, when it was finished by the Italian composer, Franco Alfano.<sup>13</sup> At the time of his death in 1924, Puccini had become the most commercially successive opera composer of all time, with his assets to be estimated at \$200 million.<sup>14</sup>

### ***Suor Angelica (1918)***

What set Puccini apart from other composers of his day was his virtuoso use of the *verismo* style. The genre of *verismo*, the Italian word for "realism," involves stories with dramatic plots of passion, intense emotions, and violent and tragic deaths that usually involve characters of lower class society. The genre of *verismo* originated in Italian literature through the works of Italian writers, Giovanni Verga (1840-1922), Luigi Capuana (1839-1915), and Federico De Roberto (1861-1927). *Verismo* transferred over into opera as a genre through Verga's *Cavalleria Rusticana* which became the source of Mascagni's opera of the same name,

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<sup>11</sup> Julian Budden, "Puccini, Giacomo," *Grove Music Online*.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Nicolas Slonimsky, Laura Kuhn, and Dennis McIntire, "Giacomo (Antonio Domenico Michele Secondo Maria) Puccini," *Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians*, 5: 2886.

<sup>14</sup> The Biography.com Website, "Giacomo Puccini Biography."

ultimately setting the stage and expectations for future composers of the *verismo* genre.<sup>15</sup> Puccini was a master of *verismo*, and was a virtuoso in writing music that reflected the drama, tragedy, and romance of his works. By the year 1918, *verismo* had run its course as an operatic style. *Il Trittico* (1918) was not only Puccini's completed final work; it was the last masterpiece to incorporate the *verismo* style.

The one-act opera, *Suor Angelica*, is the second of the three one-act operas in the trilogy *Il Trittico* (*Triptych*). "*Trittico*" or "Triptych" is defined as a picture that is divided into three parts or painted on three folding panels, hinged side by side, allowing it to be folded shut or displayed open as a whole or in various combinations.<sup>16</sup> The three one-acts in *Il Trittico* are bound together by recurring *verismo* themes. "All three of the *Trittico* operas involve the themes of death, revenge, and inter-family conflicts. In terms of symbolism, the operas use imagery of water, money, growth, death, and social conflict."<sup>17</sup> *Il Trittico* was a long-standing project of Puccini's, and was delayed for several reasons: the discouragements of his publisher, Giulio Ricordi, difficulty in obtaining inspirations and materials for the work, the outbreak of World War I, and larger works that occupied Puccini's attention. The three one-act operas that make up *Il Trittico*, in order are: *Il tabarro* (*The Cloak*), *Suor Angelica* (*Sister Angelica*), and *Gianni Schicchi*.

Puccini's original idea of *Il Trittico* was to base the three operas respectively on Dante's *Divine Comedy* following the sketches of *Inferno-Purgatorio-Paradiso*; however, only the third

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<sup>15</sup> Stephen Scovasso, *Il Trittico: Giacomo Puccini's Enigmatic Farewell to Italian Opera* (M.A. thesis, Arizona State University, 2015), 4.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>17</sup> John Louis DiGaetani, "*Il Trittico* [Triptych]," *International Dictionary of Opera*, 2: 1364.

opera, *Gianni Schicchi* was ever derived from this original concept.<sup>18</sup> Puccini's original idea of using Dante's three concepts is still manifested within this trio of operas. "*Tabarro*, with its oppressive and hopeless story, relates to the *Inferno*; *Suor Angelica*, a tale of mortal sin and salvation through Divine Grace, to the *Purgatorio*; and *Schicchi*, in its liberating and life-enhancing atmosphere, to the *Paradisio*. In this reading, the three episodes of the *Trittico* suggest the idea of a gradual rise from darkness to light...."<sup>19</sup>

For this project, Puccini collaborated with two different librettists. *Il tabarro* was born from the inspiration of *La Houppelande*, a play by Didier Gold, with the libretto written by Giuseppe Adami. The librettos for the other two one-acts of the trilogy, *Suor Angelica* and *Gianni Schicchi*, were written by Giovacchino Forzano, with *Gianni Schicchi*'s libretto being derived from lines of Dante's *Inferno*. The libretto for *Suor Angelica* was an original, as it had been planned as a spoken play by Forzano. In the winter of 1916-1917, Forzano offered the text to Puccini for his *Il Trittico* project, which he quickly accepted.<sup>20</sup> Of the three one-acts, Puccini worked the hardest on *Suor Angelica*, as it was his favorite due to the passion, suffering, and suicide of the main character. Coincidentally, *Suor Angelica*, also shares many similarities to another of Puccini's own favorite works, *Madama Butterfly*.

Both centre on a single character who is a woman. In both the chief motive for the heroine's suicide is the cruel frustration of a mother's love of her child. Both contain a scene subjecting the heroine to extreme mental torture, i.e. the visit of Sharpless, in which he informs the geisha of Pinkerton's desertion, is matched by the Aunt's visit in which she informs her niece of the death of her young son. And, lastly, Butterfly's farewell to her child just before committing suicide is paralleled by Angelica's lament addressed to the image of her dead child

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<sup>18</sup> Mosco Carner, *Puccini: A Critical Biography*, Third Edition (London: Duckworth, 1992), 473.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Julian Budden, "*Suor Angelica*," *Grove Music Online*, 15 March. 2018.  
<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.er.lib.k-state.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561591630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-5000904505>.

before she takes poison. Such striking similarities to Puccini's favourite opera clearly point to the active part he played in the fashioning the libretto of *Angelica*.<sup>21</sup>

For inspiration and guidance, Puccini turned to his sister Igenia, Mother Superior, at the convent at Vicepelago near Lucca. During the composition period, Puccini frequented the convent to play the score for the nuns, all of whom were moved to tears by the music and the heartbreaking story. Puccini also confided in his lifelong friend, the priest Father Pietro Panichelli, who aided Puccini with the text of the final scene, "Marcia reale della Madonna."<sup>22</sup> Refer to Table 4.1 for the roles of *Suor Angelica*.

**Table 4.1: Cast of *Suor Angelica*\***

<i>Suor Angelica</i>	
Setting: A convent, towards the end of the 17 <sup>th</sup> century	
Cast	Voice
Sister Angelica	Soprano
The Princess, her aunt	Contralto
The Abbess	Mezzo-soprano
The Monitress	Mezzo-soprano
The Mistress of the Novices	Mezzo-soprano
Sister Genovieffa	Soprano
Sister Osmina	Soprano
Sister Dolcina	Soprano
The nursing sister	Mezzo-soprano
The alms sisters	Sopranos
The novices	Sopranos
The lay sisters	Soprano/mezzo-soprano
Offstage chorus of women, children, and men	

\*Julian Budden, "*Suor Angelica*," *Grove Music Online*.

The story of *Suor Angelica* takes place during the last half of the seventeenth century at a convent. The opera opens with the nuns completing their daily chores and recreational work,

<sup>21</sup> Mosco Carner, *Puccini: A Critical Biography*, 487.

<sup>22</sup> Julian Budden, "*Suor Angelica*," *Grove Music Online*.

with the Monitress dealing out punishments for those who are showing idleness and misdemeanors. As the nuns continue to talk amongst themselves, they inquire of each other what they miss or desire most from their previous lives before the convent. When they ask Sister Angelica what she desires, she responds that she does not have a desire for anything. Stunned, the other nuns begin to gossip about Angelica; no one knows anything of her past or from whence she came, nor do they believe her when she says that she has no desires.

The Abbess enters, and announces that a carriage is approaching the cloister. The sisters and Angelica inquire as to whom the carriage is for, and the Abbess replies that the visitor who arrived in the carriage is here to meet with Sister Angelica. Sister Angelica's visitor is none other than her aunt, the Princess, who has come so that Angelica may sign off her birthright, completely disowning her from her family. It is this meeting between Angelica and the Princess in which the story reaches its climax. It is revealed that Sister Angelica was forced into the convent by her family for having a romantic affair resulting in an illegitimate child, her only son.

At this time in history during the seventeenth century, convents were not only places of religious means, but they were also used as female penitentiaries by wealthy families.

When an aristocratic family had an unmarried daughter who insisted on disobeying them in important matters or who had disgraced them by becoming pregnant, she was ordered into a convent.... This, of course, reflects exactly what happens to Angelica. She did not volunteer to enter the convent, but her family forced her there after she had a love affair and then a bastard child. Her actions meant, from the social point of view, that they could never find a suitable husband for her and that for the rest of her life she would be a disgrace and a financial burden to them.<sup>23</sup>

After an uncomfortable meeting with her aunt, and before agreeing to sign off her birthright, Angelica pleads with her aunt to tell her of her son whom she was forced to leave

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<sup>23</sup> John Louis DiGaetani, *Puccini the Thinker: The Composer's Intellectual and Dramatic Development*, Second Edition (New York: Peter Lang, 2001), 94.



behind. The Princess tells Angelica the heartbreaking news that her son had fallen ill several years ago and had died. “The greatest musical and dramatic success of the opera is the confrontation between Angelica and her aunt, the Princess. The dramatic intensity of their confrontation remains the most powerful scene between two women that Puccini ever wrote. And his orchestration of the music clearly delineates the varying intensity of the action and the characters of the opposing women. His use of strikingly atonal chords parallels effectively the conflict between the two women.”<sup>24</sup>

Overcome with grief for the loss of her child, Angelica mixes a poisonous draught to kill herself. However, she immediately becomes panicked after taking the poison, and prays to the Mother Mary for forgiveness for having committed a mortal sin. The opera comes to a close with Angelica seeing a heavenly light where she is reunited with her son.

One of the most interesting aspects of *Suor Angelica* is that it indicates Puccini’s views on God, religion, and the Roman Catholic Church. In *Suor Angelica*, Angelica has not benefited from God or religion, but has instead suffered from it during her time in the convent. Puccini also depicts the Church as being allied with the aristocracy and death through Angelica’s suicide. Puccini’s anti-clerical and anti-Catholic opinions, in no doubt, stemmed from the Italian movement known as *Risorgimento*, which occurred during his childhood. *Risorgimento* was a movement that was born from the effort of unifying Italy and to free it from foreign domination and division into a series of small city-states; for those active in the *Risorgimento*, the Catholic Church was seen as an adversary to these political goals.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 97.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 97-98.

Puccini completed *Suor Angelica* on July 25, 1917 (his name day), and paired it with the two other works: *Il tabarro* and *Gianni Schicchi*. Puccini had originally planned on having the work premiere in Rome, but due to the lack of available singers and wartime conditions that made the preparations for the new production too expensive, he had to look at the prospect of an international debut.<sup>26</sup> The trio premiered in America the following year at the Metropolitan Opera in New York on December 14, 1918. The premiere featured Geraldine Farrar as Sister Angelica, Flora Perini as the Princess, and the conductor was Roberto Moranzoni.<sup>27</sup> Unlike the premieres of his previous works, Puccini was unable to attend the premiere of *Il Trittico*, as transatlantic travel was still difficult with World War I having come to an end the previous month. Instead, Puccini focused his efforts on *Suor Angelica*'s Italian and European premiere, which took place on January 11, 1919 at the Teatro Costanzi in Rome with Gino Marinuzzi as the conductor, Gilda dalla Rizza as Sister Angelica, and Matilde Blanco Sadun as the Princess.<sup>28</sup>

Even after *Suor Angelica*'s American and Italian premieres, Puccini continued to make alterations to the work. One such alteration was the extension of Angelica's aria, "Senza mamma, bimbo tu sei morto" (*Without your mother, child, you died*), over a reprise of the long orchestra-based melody that occurs when the Princess's carriage is arriving at the convent. A second alteration was the cut of the aria, "Amici fiori, voi mi compensate," which Angelica sings as she gathers the flowers to make the poison for her suicide. The short aria is a modern piece with polytonal characteristics. Puccini rewrote and replaced this aria with a 16-bar extension of the preceding intermezzo. Over this extension the soprano sings an altered text containing the

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<sup>26</sup> Howard Greenfeld, *Puccini: A Biography* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1980), 243.

<sup>27</sup> Julian Budden, "Suor Angelica," *Grove Music Online*.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

ironical reference to the “wasp” episode that Puccini had originally marked as an optional cut. This “rare” aria can still be heard on a recording made by Lotte Lehmann in 1920, and the only printed score to contain this aria is the 1918 first edition of the entire *Il Trittico*.<sup>29</sup>

The reception of *Il Trittico* was mixed, with many critics liking only one or two of the operas versus all three. Puccini’s intention was for all three one-acts to be performed together as a single unit; however, there was the matter of public taste. Audiences and critics loved *Gianni Schicchi* the most of the three operas, with *Il tabarro* ranked in the middle, and *Suor Angelica* the least. With *Gianni Schicchi* quickly becoming the public’s favorite, it was often performed separately from its counterparts, or paired with another one-act opera. Upon the early performances of *Il Trittico*, many opera houses were skeptical of *Suor Angelica*, and it was the first of the trio to be discarded, much to Puccini’s annoyance, who claimed that *Suor Angelica* was his favorite of the three one-acts. In addition, many companies were also finding it incredibly difficult to fund and cast three different works simultaneously.

Many critics pointed at a change in Puccini’s style, and his use of “Debussyian harmonies,” especially those apparent in *Il tabarro* and *Suor Angelica*.<sup>30</sup> Opera managements were annoyed with the prospect of an all-female cast, and Protestant audiences were indifferent towards the plot and subject material of *Suor Angelica*. Controversial opinions also questioned as to whether or not Puccini rose to the challenge of creating the dramatic and heavenly miracle at the end of the opera, which many considered to be out of his range of abilities.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Julian Budden, “*Suor Angelica*,” *Grove Music Online*.

<sup>30</sup> Howard Greenfeld, *Puccini: A Biography* (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1980), 245.

<sup>31</sup> Julian Budden, “*Suor Angelica*,” *Grove Music Online*.

Despite the difficult history and reception that *Suor Angelica* has received over the years, it remains one of Puccini's finest compositional gems. Over the recent years *Suor Angelica*, along with *Il tabarro*, have continued to gain popularity, with many opera companies staging all three operas from *Il Trittico* together, just as Puccini had intended. *Suor Angelica* is an opera that continues to entrance audiences with its rich orchestrations, beautiful arias, and dramatic plot.

### **Analysis of “Senza mama”**

Despite the mixed reviews that *Suor Angelica* received upon its premiere, one cannot deny the beauty and passion that is transcribed through Angelica's aria, “Senza mama.” Puccini composed “Senza mama” for the sole purpose of achieving a sense of pathos and sentimentality.<sup>32</sup> *Suor Angelica* reaches its theatrical climax in the middle of the opera. The Principessa, Angelica's aunt, has come to the convent so that Angelica might renounce her birthright. Angelica pleads with her aunt for news of her son who was taken from away from her the moment he was born. The Principessa relays to Angelica that her son was stricken with some fatal illness two years prior and died. Overcome with sorrow over the death of her son, Angelica sings the aria, “Senza mama;” Angelica's grief and passion ultimately leading her to commit suicide.

The aria “Senza mama” begins in the key of A minor and is led by a three-note ascending motif. This particular motif is heard several times throughout the opera; for instance, it is heard upon the Principessa's arrival, and eventually transforms into a motif for the Principessa (Figure

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<sup>32</sup> Stephen Scovasso, *Il Trittico: Giacomo Puccini's Enigmatic Farewell to Italian Opera*, 88, as taken from Giacomo Puccini, *Il Trittico: “Suor Angelica”* (Milan: Ricordi, 1918), 189.

4.2).<sup>33</sup> The aria is through-composed, and is a prime example of Puccini's instinct for evoking passion and drama through music. As the aria begins the vocal line is lamenting and takes on its form through descending and ascending melodic lines. The accompaniment is stagnant in texture, composed mainly of a repeating pattern of a pair of eighth notes followed by a half note. The left hand of the accompaniment occasionally plays a perfect fifth interval of a low A1-E2; firmly keeping the key of A minor present.

Figure 4.2: Puccini— “Senza mama” from *Suor Angelica*, meas. 1-2, motif.



In m. 16, the vocal line remains lyrical, but simultaneously becomes more dramatic, desperate, and sorrowful; consisting of repeated notes and ascending and descending fifths. The accompaniment also reflects the passion of Angelica's cries, as the texture has become thicker and the rhythm has become syncopated creating instability and tension (Figure 4.3).

Figure 4.3: Puccini— “Senza mama” from *Suor Angelica*, meas. 16-18.  
Leaps of descending 5ths in vocal line.

SISTER ANGELICA  
SUOR ANGELICA

-ess me! Ohthou art. dead, \_ love, dead without know \_ ing, how much thy  
cro - ce! E tu sei mor - to sen - za sa - pe - re quan - to t'a -

cresc. sostenuto

<sup>33</sup> Elizabeth A. Jones, *Convent Spaces and Religious Women: A Look at a Seventeenth Century Dichotomy* (Ph.D. dissertation, Ohio University, 2008), 145-146.

At m. 21, the music modulates to the key of F major, a key of hope for Angelica as she dreams of her son in heaven. While the vocal line maintains its lyrical and melancholic melody, the accompaniment has evolved and stabilized from its previous measures. The music in the treble voice of the accompaniment has evolved from blocked chords to sweeping arpeggiated chords that are heavenly and angelic in sound. As the music in the treble line continues its arpeggiation, the bass line firmly tonicizes and establishes the chords of each passage either through blocked chords, rolled chords, or half notes approached with grace note ornaments. Throughout the entirety of the aria, the vocal line continues to ascend, reflecting Angelica's heightened passion, followed by its descent reflecting her despair.

The aria begins to ascend to its climactic point at m. 37, with the dramatic descent of "O dolce fine d'ogni mio dolore." The accompaniment follows the direction of the melody as arpeggiation is apparent in both the treble and bass voices of the accompaniment; its forward motion pulsing under the vocal line, evoking Angelica's tears. In the following phrase, "Quando in cielo con te potrò salire?..." (*When will I go with you to heaven?*) the majority of the vocal line lies in the lower tessitura, with Puccini writing a dramatic octave skip from E4-E5 on the word "salire." Puccini cleverly composed this ascent in the vocal line to set up the crowning moment of the aria, Angelica's desperate cry, "Quando potrò morire?" (*When will I die?*); the vocal line ascending to a high A5, and briefly suspending the note before descending to its octave, A4. In anguish, Angelica repeats this text two more times, each phrase sung a little lower in pitch than the last. A musical technique on Puccini's part, to dramatize Angelica's spiraling descent into despair and death.

Measure 45 marks the beginning of the end of the aria. Although the music is still marked as in F major in the key signature, the music has reverted back to the haunting key of A

minor. This modulation is due to F major being the submediant of the key of A minor. The accompaniment for this section has changed to alternating syncopated blocked chords that present themselves almost as a death march as if foreshadowing Angelica's suicide. Above these ominous tolls, the vocal line is marked "Calmo" and *pp*; ascending in two parallel phrases, as Angelica asks her son in heaven when she will be reunited with him. Her plea becomes even more despairing in m. 51, as the vocal line rests on the passagio on E5. The *rallentando* in both the accompaniment and the vocal line produces theatrical and musical tension, as the vocal line that has been hovering around E, the dominant of A minor, longs to resolve. The melody reaches its resolution in m. 53 as the vocal line ascends one final time and is suspended by a fermata on a high A5; Angelica's final cry (Figure 4.4). Under the suspended high A, the accompaniment performs a chromatic flourish before suspending a D-sharp 5, a colorful dissonance under the vocal line's high A. The death march resumes in the accompaniment and continues for two more measures before bringing the aria to its conclusion on a low foreboding A minor chord.

Figure 4.4: Puccini— "Senza mama" from *Suor Angelica*, meas. 51-53.  
Angelica's final cry.

SISTER ANGELICA  
SUOR ANGELICA

Speak to me, speak to me, my lov'd one, my lov'd one, my love!  
Par-lami, par-lami, a-mo-re, a-mo-re, a-mor!

*dim:..... rall:.....*

## Chapter 5 - Aaron Copland (1900-1990) and

### *As it fell upon a day (1923)*

#### *Biographical Information on the Composer*

Aaron Copland (b. Brooklyn, NY, November 14, 1900; d. North Tarrytown, NY, December 2, 1990) was an American composer, musical writer, pianist, and conductor (Figure 5.1). He is regarded as a nationalist of American music. Some of his most popular works include *Billy the Kid* (1938), *Fanfare for the Common Man* (1942), and *Appalachian Spring* (1944).

In his music, he captures the openness of spirit embodied in America's landscape and evokes an emotional response consistent with American culture. He wrote with a fresh, direct style that quickly became symbolic of American values and ideals. He pioneered musical sound qualities that we immediately identify with Copland-qualities that are linked with a national, classic feeling of 'populism'.<sup>1</sup>



Figure 5.1: Aaron Copland (1900-1990)  
Cody Nelson, "Aaron Copland didn't like his famous nickname," 31 March 2018.  
<https://www.mprnews.org/story/2017/03/28/history-aaron-copland-dean>.

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<sup>1</sup> Carol Kimball, *Song: A Guide to Art Song Style and Literature* (Milwaukee, MI: Hal Leonard, 2005), 275.



Copland never considered himself to be a vocal composer even though he wrote almost exclusively vocal music between 1949 and 1954. Many of his compositions for the voice are derived from his training and writing for instrumental techniques.<sup>2</sup> The chamber work, *As it fell upon a day*, for soprano, flute, and clarinet, is a perfect example of Copland's early artistic writing style for the voice and instruments.

### **The Young Aaron Copland and Nadia Boulanger**

Aaron Copland was the youngest of five children from a Jewish family. Copland adopted an early appreciation for music from his sister, Laurine, whom he was especially close too. Laurine was Copland's first music instructor, introducing him to ragtime, opera, and the fundamentals of piano playing. At the age of seven, Copland was already showing his talent at the piano by making up his own tunes, and by the age of twelve, he was notating short pieces.<sup>3</sup> From 1913 until 1917, Copland studied piano lessons with Leopold Wolfsohn, who cultivated his musical palette by having him study works by Mozart, Beethoven, and Chopin.

In 1917, Copland began studying theory and composition under Rubin Goldmark, and continued to study with him until 1921. Instead of pursuing a university degree after graduating from the Boys' High School in 1918, Copland decided to cultivate his talent and passion for music. During 1917-1919 he studied piano with Victor Wittgenstein, and then with Clarence Adler from 1919 until 1921. As a means to further his musical education and training, Copland

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 276.

<sup>3</sup> Howard Pollack, "Copland, Aaron," *Grove Music Online*, 13 Mar. 2018.  
<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.er.lib.k-state.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561591630-e-1002249091>.

regularly attended concerts, operas, and ballet recitals.<sup>4</sup> It was during this period of his life that Copland completed some of his most important early works: his *Piano Sonata* (1921), written as a “graduation” piece for Goldmark, *Three Moods for Piano* (1920-1921), and *The Cat and Mouse* (1920), his first published work.

During the summer of 1921, Copland attended the American Conservatory in Fontainebleau, where he studied composition with Paul Antonin Vidal and conducting with Albert Wolff. During his voyage to Fontainebleau, Copland met the painter Marcel Duchamp, who made the suggestion that instead of going to Fontainebleau, that Copland go straight to Paris. However, Copland continued his original journey to Fontainebleau. For Copland, the instruction at Fontainebleau proved adequate, and his composition instructor, Paul Antonin Vidal struck him as a “French Rubin Goldmark.” Copland later wrote to his parents, “He is a man with Mr. Goldmark’s tastes, and was therefore quite satisfied with the stuff I showed him and played for him... However, he is not the sort of man I shall want to study with, when I get to Paris in the winter.”<sup>5</sup> Copland’s brief stay in Fontainebleau allowed him the opportunities to work on his French, make connections, and to meet Nadia Boulanger, with whom he would later study with in Paris.

From 1921-1924, Copland sought further instruction in Paris, where he briefly studied piano with Ricardo Viñes, and composition with Nadia Boulanger, who is regarded as his most important and influential teacher. Copland first met Nadia Boulanger while he was a student at Fontainebleau, and recalls that he was virtually dragged to attend one of her harmony classes by

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Howard Polluck, *Aaron Copland: The Life and Work of an Uncommon Man* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1999), 45.

one of his classmates, Djina Ostrowska, a harpist. After this encounter, Copland continued to sit in on Boulanger's classes, and knew that she was the teacher he had been searching for.<sup>6</sup>

On October 26, 1921, Copland approached Boulanger in hopes that she would accept him as one of her students. During his meeting with Boulanger he played "Jazzy" from his *Three Moods*, and she immediately accepted him as one of her students (Figure 5.2). "'One could tell his talent immediately,' Boulanger later remarked. 'The great gift is a demonstration of God.'"<sup>7</sup>

Figure 5.2: Nadia Boulanger and her class, Paris, 1923.  
Library of Congress, "Nadia Boulanger and her class, Paris, 1923," 31 March 2018.  
<https://www.loc.gov/item/copland.phot0094/>.



Under Boulanger, Copland followed a strict routine of musical study. While continually composing, studying orchestration, score reading, and analysis, Copland also arranged other composers' piano music for orchestra, and composed small original works for specified instrumental combinations. In addition, Copland was required to sight-read orchestral scores at the piano, while Boulanger brought to his attention the details of harmony, rhythm, counterpoint,

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 46.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 46.

and forms of the works.<sup>8</sup> “Boulanger instilled in Copland, as with so many others, a special regard for Monteverdi, Bach, Fauré, Ravel, and Stravinsky, while strongly encouraging his own interest in popular music and jazz.”<sup>9</sup>

On Wednesday afternoons, Boulanger would hold informal classes at her home. She and her students would occupy themselves by playing through and analyzing unfamiliar scores, sing early choral music, or discussing a new novel over tea and cakes. Through these afternoon tea gatherings, Copland met many musical icons of the day. Stravinsky, Milhaud, Poulenc, Roussel, Ravel, Villa-Lobos, and Saint-Saëns were among the guests who frequented Boulanger’s Wednesday afternoon teas.<sup>10</sup>

Among her many attributes, Copland especially valued her thorough grasp of music literature, her sensitivity to clarity, elegance and formal continuity (‘la grande ligne’), and her confidence in her young American students. He also appreciated the opportunity to meet the distinguished artists who came to her Wednesday teas, events he described as ‘a continuing link in that long tradition of the French intellectual woman in whose salon philosophy was expounded and political history made.’<sup>11</sup>

During his stay in Paris during the early 1920s, Copland never ceased his quest for musical knowledge and education, and habitually immersed himself in the musical culture Europe had to offer. Copland often frequented Sylvia Beach’s legendary bookstore, attended classes, museums, plays, ballets, and concerts. His thirst for music influenced him to travel throughout Europe, taking in the works of national composers, both of the past and present. His

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<sup>8</sup> Howard Polluck, *Aaron Copland: The Life and Work of an Uncommon Man*, 47, as taken from Julia Smith, *Aaron Copland: His Work and Contribution to American Music* (New York: Dutton, 1955), 46-47.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 48.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 48.

<sup>11</sup> Howard Pollack, “Copland, Aaron.” *Grove Music Online*.

travels included England, Belgium, Italy, Austria, and Germany, and allowed him the opportunities to meet with composers, examine scores, and to hear new music.

“He responded especially strongly to the music of Stravinsky, the ‘hero’ of his student days, and Milhaud, whose assimilations of French, Jewish and American traits he particularly esteemed. He also developed an admiration for the music of Fauré and Mahler, considering the contrapuntal textures of both composers progressive.”<sup>12</sup>

In February 1922, Copland had the opportunity to experience his first musical debut at a public concert under the support of the *Société Musicale Indépendante*. Copland’s *Old Poem* was performed on the concert through Boulanger’s interventions, and was received with great success. Copland was included on the organization’s program two consecutive years later, premiering his *Passacaglia* and *As it fell upon a day*.<sup>13</sup>

Boulanger was responsible for playing a hand in premiering several of Copland’s early works; the largest premiere taking place in 1924. Upon his departure to the USA in 1924, Boulanger arranged a premiere of Copland’s organ concerto that was to be performed by the New York Symphony Orchestra under Walter Damrosch, as well as by the Boston Symphony Orchestra under Sergey Koussevitzky, with herself as the soloist.<sup>14</sup> This premiere resulted in the acclaimed praise for Copland’s *Symphony for Organ and Orchestra* (1924).

During the three years that Copland studied with Nadia Boulanger, he produced four motets (a cappella), a *Passacaglia* for piano, a *Rondino* for string quartet, and *As it fell upon a day* for soprano, flute, and clarinet.<sup>15</sup> In addition, with the support and instruction of Nadia

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<sup>12</sup> Howard Pollack, “Copland, Aaron,” *Grove Music Online*.

<sup>13</sup> Arthur Berger, *Aaron Copland* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953), 10-11.

<sup>14</sup> Howard Pollack, “Copland, Aaron,” *Grove Music Online*.

<sup>15</sup> Arthur Berger, *Aaron Copland*, 9.

Boulanger, Copland completed his first orchestral score, the ballet, *Grohg*, in 1922. Copland's works *Grohg*, *As it fell upon a day*, and the *Symphony for Organ and Orchestra* are considered to be the first works of Copland's professional beginning.<sup>16</sup>

### *As it fell upon day (1923)*

Copland composed the chamber work, *As it fell upon a day*, in 1923 for flute, clarinet, and soprano during a trip to Vienna, in fulfillment of a composition assignment by Nadia Boulanger. Boulanger had required that the assignment be for flute and clarinet, but Copland added a solo voice part, using the text from a poem by Richard Barnefield (1574-1627), producing the piece *As it fell upon a day*.<sup>17</sup>

Nadia Boulanger's original instructions for the composition were that Copland compose a piece using imitative counterpoint for the two instruments. Copland successfully served these instructions during the introduction of the work. By adding the vocal part to the two woodwind instruments, Copland creates a texture of "ascetic severity." Although the vocal line is treated freely, it also possesses declamatory and lyrical attributes of the madrigal text. Copland took the opportunity to use modal (mixolydian) harmonies and intervals for several passages, paying homage to the relationship of English music of the late 16<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>18</sup>

Copland had this to say about his process for writing *As it fell upon a day*:

I had been playing around with some ideas for the flute and clarinet assignment when I came upon a poem by the seventeenth-century English poet Richard Barnefield. 'As It Fell Upon a Day' had the simplicity and tenderness that moved me to attempt to evoke that poignant expression musically...The imitative counterpoint between the two instruments in the introduction would satisfy my teacher's request. The harmonies that seem to evoke an early

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 38.

<sup>17</sup> Neil Butterworth, *The Music of Aaron Copland* (London: Toccata Press, 1985), 22-23.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

English flavor were suggested by the nature of the text. I am often asked about ‘modal’ writing in connection with ‘As It Fell....’ I can only say that I never learned all about the modes-major and minor were the only modes my generation were taught! If the music sounds modal it is because I wanted to come close to the expression of the poetry.’<sup>19</sup>

The text is ultimately interesting in itself in this work. Barnefield’s text narrates a story with simultaneous happenings: springtime and a nightingale’s solitary lament. The text references the character King Pandion from Greek mythology, suggesting that the nightingale in the song is his daughter Philomela.<sup>20</sup>

According to Greek mythology, Philomela and her sister Procne were the daughters of King Pandion. Procne was married to King Tereus, who developed a lustful passion for her sister, Philomela. King Tereus eventually raped Philomela, cut her tongue off, and threw her into prison, so that she could tell no one of his crimes towards her. However, Philomela devised a way to tell her sister what King Tereus had done to her by weaving a tapestry. Procne aids her sister in revenge against her husband by murdering her own son, and feeding him to King Tereus. Outraged at the crime that his wife and her sister have committed against him, King Tereus pursues them. However, before he can capture them, the god Zeus intervenes, and changes all three characters into birds--King Tereus into a hoopoe, Procne into a swallow, and Philomela into a nightingale (hence the nightingale is often referred to as a “Philomel” in poetry and literature).<sup>21</sup> As the nightingale cries, “Tereu, Tereu!” it is interpreted that she is uttering an

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<sup>19</sup> Aaron Copland and Vivian Perlis, *Copland: 1900 through 1942* (New York: St. Martin’s/Marek, 1984), 90-91.

<sup>20</sup> Amanda Cook, “Copland: *As It Fell Upon A Day* Program Notes,” *Between the Ledger Lines*, 13 March 2018. <https://betweentheledgerlines.wordpress.com/2014/09/12/copland-as-it-fell-upon-a-day-program-notes/>.

<sup>21</sup> James Hunter, “Philomela,” *Encyclopedia Mythica*, 1997, 13 March 2018. <https://pantheon.org/articles/p/philomela.html>.

accusation against her rapist. The poetry sympathizes with the nightingale as all of the other birds continue to sing cheerfully, oblivious to her sad cries.<sup>22</sup>

*As it fell upon a day* was premiered in Paris at the *Société Musicale Indépendante*, and received great reception from its audience and Parisian critics. “Raymond Charpentier wrote in *Commedia*: ‘It shows a sensitive flexible nature and a technique which is already highly finished. With so few instruments a composer cannot bluff; he must play fair. Therefore every effort is doubly meritorious.’”<sup>23</sup>

Aaron Copland remarked: “The SMI was once again responsible for a premiere. ‘As It Fell...’ was played first under their auspices in the Salle Pleyel on 6 February 1924. Ada MacLeish, wife of the poet Archibald MacLeish, was the soprano soloist. The reviewer for *Le Ménestrel* called ‘As It Fell...’ the best piece on a program that included works by Leo Sowerby, Jean Deré and Roussel.”<sup>24</sup>

The work was performed a second time in Paris on May 5<sup>th</sup>, 1926, at a concert of American music. *As it fell upon a day* made its American premiere in New York on October 11<sup>th</sup>, 1935, in an all-Copland concert. “Kirkpatrick considered *As it fell upon a Day* for soprano, flute, and clarinet by far the best music Copland had yet written, and he admired the *Symphony for Organ and Orchestra*-- ‘a work most strongly influenced by Mlle Boulanger.’”<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Amanda Cook, “Copland: *As It Fell Upon A Day* Program Notes,” *Between the Ledger Lines*.

<sup>23</sup> Neil Butterworth, *The Music of Aaron Copland*, 23, as taken from Julia Smith, *Aaron Copland* (New York: Dutton, 1955), 61.

<sup>24</sup> Aaron Copland and Vivian Perlis, *Copland: 1900 through 1942*, 91.

<sup>25</sup> Peter Dickinson, ed. *Copland Connotations: Studies and Interviews* (New York: Boydell Press, 2002), 60.



## ***Analysis of As it fell upon a day***

As per Nadia Boulanger's composition assignment, Copland composed *As it fell upon a day* for clarinet and flute, while incorporating techniques of imitative counterpoint, and later adding the soprano line using the text of Richard Barnefield's poem, "Address to the Nightingale."<sup>26</sup> Among Copland's output of vocal repertoire, it is one of the most obscure, and is often overshadowed by such works as his *Old American Songs* and *Twelve Poems of Emily Dickinson*. "It is an early work whose functionality is hampered because the three melodic lines all fall within the same range. The soprano voice is difficult to hear over the high flute and clarinet."<sup>27</sup> Regardless, the work shows great charm and strength not only as a work for the vocal repertoire, but for the clarinet and flute repertoires as well. Even as an early Copland work, *As it fell upon a day*, foreshadows the classic "Copland sound" that would later lead Copland to be known as America's most famous composer.<sup>28</sup>

The form of the work is as follows: Introduction-ABCB'C'-Coda. Measures 1-17 make up the Introduction of the piece. Throughout the work, Copland has masterfully bound the instruments and voice together through several motivic structures and compositional techniques. One such technique that he uses is the merging of the clarinet and flute parts together through leaps of perfect fourths, and the rhythmic pattern of eighth notes followed by two sixteenth notes in the Introduction.<sup>29</sup> The Introduction serves as an instrumental duet between the two

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<sup>26</sup> Steven Edwin Hoyle, *The Songs of Aaron Copland* (M.M. thesis, University of Houston, 1973), 29.

<sup>27</sup> Jay Eric Niepoetter, *Solo and Chamber Clarinet Music of Pulitzer Prize-Winning Composers* (D.M.A., dissertation, University of Maryland, 2004), 55.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Steven Edwin Hoyle, *The Songs of Aaron Copland*, 29.

instruments using imitative counterpoint, as requested by Nadia Boulanger (Figure 5.3). At m. 15, the flute and clarinet have both dropped out, as the voice enters to conclude the Introduction before proceeding to the A section. The voice's motivic lament on "Ah" is later seen in the flute and clarinet accompaniments and is used throughout the song.

Figure 5.3: Copland— "As it fell upon a day," meas. 1-7.  
Introduction with imitative counterpoint.

The musical score for measures 1-7 of Copland's "As it fell upon a day" is presented. It features four staves: VOICE, FLUTE, CLARINET in C, and PIANO. The tempo is marked "Allegro". The key signature consists of two flats. The voice part is mostly silent, with a few notes in measure 7. The flute and clarinet parts play a melodic line with imitative counterpoint. The piano part provides a harmonic accompaniment with a bass line that includes a circled "5" in measure 5. Dynamics include "p" (piano) and "cresc." (crescendo).

The A section of the work begins on m. 18. The vocal line is syllabic and is constructed with a series of two repeating eighth notes on each pitch of the melody (Figure 5.4). This characteristic is apparent throughout the entirety of the work for every phrase of text; however, Copland adds diversity to the work by altering, inverting, or augmenting the pitches of the vocal line. The phrases of text are often grouped into one-measure phrases when the vocal line is inverted or slightly altered, and then in two-measure phrases when the vocal line is augmented. The phrases themselves are usually grouped into sets of four with instrumental interludes

between the sections.<sup>30</sup> For each section, Copland has incorporated tempo changes to reflect the mood of the text. Sections of faster, lighter music reflect a gay, carefree pastoral mood;<sup>31</sup> the clarinet and flute mimic the birds, wind, and nature. The sections of the work that are slower and more serious, reflect the anguish and loneliness of the nightingale. The changes in tempi, also serve to outline the form on the work: Introduction-ABCB'C'-Coda.

Figure 5.4: Copland— “As it fell upon a day,” meas. 18-19.  
Repetitive pitches in melody line.



Section B begins at m. 25. As the vocal line continually develops throughout the work, so does the instrumental accompaniment. Using a technique called “rhythmic displacement,” Copland evolves the instrumental accompaniment by shifting the placement of the accompaniment’s motives throughout the work, allowing for unity through repetition and variety through syncopation.<sup>32</sup> Throughout the B section, the clarinet and flute take on the image of chirping birds, while the vocal line introduces the setting of the poem and the nightingale.

Section C begins at m. 33 with the clarinet and flute imitating each other. Although the C section is the longest component of the work, it is the most elaborate. The flute continues to

<sup>30</sup> Steven Edwin Hoyle, *The Songs of Aaron Copland*, 31.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

mimic the sound of chirping birds, while the clarinet accompanies with intervals of thirds, seconds, and chromatic lines. Simultaneously the vocalist, sings of the lonely nightingale and of her laments.

Copland not only alters, inverts, and augments the melody in the vocal line, but he has incorporated those same characteristics into the instrumental lines as well. On several occasions throughout the work, the melody that was previously in the voice will appear in one or both of the instrumental lines. For example, in m. 48 and m. 50, the vocal part is marked *pp*, with specific instructions to imitate a bird's call on the words "Fie, Fie" and "Tereu, Tereu," using a descending major sixth interval followed by an ascending major third interval in rapid succession. The flute echoes the singer's calls, while the clarinet is suspended underneath (Figure 5.5). In measures 53-55, the lamenting "Ah" motive from the Introduction has been transposed and is tossed between the flute and clarinet. In m. 61, the clarinet echoes the melody from the vocal line in m. 52, with the rhythmic speed of the melody being prolonged in the form of quarter notes.

Figure 5.5: Copland—"As it fell upon a day," meas. 47-52.  
"Bird" motives in the vocal line and flute.

The musical score for measures 47-52 of "As it fell upon a day" by Copland. The score is written for voice and piano. The vocal line is in the upper staff, and the piano accompaniment is in the lower staff. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major/D minor). The time signature is 4/4. The score includes the following lyrics: "Fie Fie Fie Now would she cry" and "Te-reu Te-reu by and by That to hear her so com-plain". The piano accompaniment features a descending major sixth interval followed by an ascending major third interval, imitating a bird's call. The score is marked with dynamics such as *pp*, *ppp*, *p*, and *mf* (as before). The score is numbered 50 in a circle.

The B section returns at m. 70, with musical alterations and extensions in all three lines from meas. 77-78. The clarinet and flute rapidly ascend to a climatic point on beat one of m. 79. A fragment of the C section returns at m. 79, with the music from measures 52-54 transposed a half-step lower. Another transposed fragment returns in measures 81-83, the flute mimicking the bird calls that were once in the vocal line with the clarinet suspended underneath (measures 48-49). The Coda begins at m. 85; the nightingale's "Ah," motive from the Introduction, transposed down by a half-step, reappears from m. 89 to the end

The contrapuntal lines of the flute and clarinet create a harmonic arrangement that is freely dissonant, with no relationships to tertian chords. "There is a succession of 'unprepared' dissonances (intervals of major and minor seconds and their derivatives) quickly alternating with strong consonances (perfect unisons, fourths and fifths)."<sup>33</sup> The harmonies associated with the work are based on septatonic scales with added dissonances to provide color and texture.

The work, *As it fell upon a day*, doesn't have an official key, but is instead constructed upon the different modalities of each septatonic scale. With each new septatonic scale that appears a new mode is established, hindering the work of any established key or stable center.<sup>34</sup> *As it fell upon a day* incorporates the use of several different modes: Mixolydian, Aeolian, Phrygian, and Dorian.<sup>35</sup> Copland incorporated modes into this work to reflect upon with the Renaissance-style text and the expression of the poetry.

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

## **Chapter 6 - John Kander (b.1927)**

### **and *A Letter from Sullivan Ballou* (1994)**

#### ***Biographical Information on the Composer***

John Harold Kander (b. Kansas City, MO, March 18, 1927) is an American composer and songwriter known for his works in musical theater (Figure 6.1). Together with his friend, collaborator, and lyricist Fred Ebb (1932-2004), the duo composed the music for eleven Broadway musicals that opened between 1965 and 1997; their most popular hits being the Tony Award-winning *Cabaret* (1966), *Chicago* (1975), *Kiss of the Spider Woman* (1993), and *Zorba* (1968).<sup>1</sup> The duo also made great strides in the entertainment industry composing for films, television shows, and albums for rising stars.



Figure 6.1: John Kander (b. 1927)  
Masterworks Broadway.com Website, "John Kander," 31 March 2018.  
<http://www.masterworksbroadway.com/artist/john-kander/>.

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<sup>1</sup> Geoffrey Block, "Kander, John (Harold)," *The Grove Dictionary of American Music*, ed. Charles Hiroshi Garrett, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 567.

Kander and Ebb also helped to establish the careers of many major female stars in the entertainment and theater industry including Liza Minnelli, Lauren Bacall, and Barbra Streisand.<sup>2</sup> Although Kander is primarily recognized for his work in musical theater, he has also dabbled in chamber music, several orchestral pieces, a one-act opera, and art songs including *A Letter from Sullivan Ballou*.<sup>3</sup> Based on a letter from a Civil War soldier, Kander captures the last words of a husband to his wife in a beautifully haunting masterpiece.

### **John Kander on Broadway**

John Kander became interested in music at a very young age, taking up piano when he was only four years old, and began formal lessons at the age of six. During his teens, Kander continued to study piano with Wiktor Labunski, and showed promising talent as a composer, writing his school's musical during his senior year.<sup>4</sup> John Kander's formal education as a musician took place at Oberlin College with his childhood friend, James Goldman, where the two composed two shows together. John Kander has described himself as "musically schizophrenic," as his interests reside in both classical and theatre music due in part to his

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<sup>2</sup> Geoffrey Block, "Kander, John," *Oxford Music Online*.

<sup>3</sup> Jennifer Wright Corbell Hough, *America at War: Song Composers' Settings of Letters Inspired by Wartime* (D.M.A. dissertation, University of North Carolina, 2014), 5, as taken from New Music USA, "John Kander: Passing Through Curtains," New Music Box Web site, 9:07, <http://www.newmusicbox.org/articles/john-kander-passing-through-curtains/>.

<sup>4</sup> William Ruhlmann, "Kander, John (Harold), and Fred Ebb," *Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians*, ed. Nicolas Slonimsky, Centennial Edition (New York, NY: Schirmer Books, 2001), 3:1814.

family's tradition of listening to popular music and the Metropolitan Opera broadcast each Saturday.<sup>5</sup>

After his graduation from Oberlin in 1951, Kander sought to pursue a Master of Music degree in composition at Columbia University, where he had the opportunity to study with the composers Jack Beeson, Otto Luening, and Douglas Moore. Kander served in the army and merchant marine for a brief period of time before beginning his career in the theater after completing his master's degree.<sup>6</sup>

One does not usually see John Kander's name without the name of his musical partner and collaborator, Fred Ebb. Kander's collaboration with Ebb lasted for forty-two years, surpassing the forty-year collaboration of another iconic musical pair, Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II.<sup>7</sup> Between 1965 to 1997, Kander and Ebb wrote and composed eleven Broadway musicals. Two additional musicals that the duo collaborated on premiered after Ebb's death in 2004. Kander and Ebb's most successful musical outputs include *Cabaret* (1966; revived 1987 and 1998), *Kiss of the Spider Woman* (1993), *Zorba* (1968; revived 1983) and *Chicago* (1975; revived 1996).<sup>8</sup>

Until the 1996 revival of *Chicago*, *Cabaret* was their most successful work, running a total of 1,166 performances, as well as winning Kander and Ebb Tony Awards for Best Musical

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<sup>5</sup> Jennifer Wright Corbell Hough, *America at War: Song Composers' Settings of Letters Inspired by Wartime*, 4, as taken from New Music USA, "John Kander: Passing Through Curtains," New Music Box Web site, 9:07, <http://www.newmusicbox.org/articles/john-kander-passing-through-curtains/>.

<sup>6</sup> William Ruhlmann, "Kander, John (Harold), and Fred Ebb," *Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians*, 3:1814.

<sup>7</sup> Geoffrey Block, "Kander, John (Harold)," *The Grove Dictionary of American Music*, 4: 567.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.



and Best Composer and Lyricist. The musical also won the Tony for Best Revival in 1998 for its Broadway revival. The cast album spent nine months on the music charts, and won the 1967 Grammy for Best Score and Original Cast Show Album. The musical *Zorba* (1968) reached 306 performances, with its cast album also reaching the charts. *Chicago* (1975) became the duo's second most popular musical, running for 947 performances.<sup>9</sup> In 2002, *Chicago* was developed into a film, and was the first film-musical to be awarded the Academy Award for Best Picture in thirty-four years.<sup>10</sup> The 1996 revival of *Chicago* (currently still playing) is the longest-running musical revival in history, and has made *Chicago* the second-longest running show, exceeded only by *The Phantom of the Opera*.

Beginning in the 1970s and 1980s, Kander and Ebb began composing separately, with each pursuing different commissions and projects. Kander was busy composing music for the film *Kramer vs. Kramer* (1979), and Ebb was working with Liza Minnelli to produce two television specials in which she was appearing in, *Goldie and Liza Together* (1979) and *Baryshnikov on Broadway* (1980). Ebb and Kander once again joined forces for their musical, *Woman of the Year* (1981), which was another success for the composers, running 771 performances and the cast album making the charts. After the premiere of *Woman of Year*, Kander began to write music for the 1982 film, *Still of the Night*.<sup>11</sup>

The possibility of failure is not a stranger to anyone, especially those who are active in the world of show business. As with several of their previous musicals *70, Girls, 70* (1971) and

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<sup>9</sup> William Ruhlmann, "Kander, John (Harold), and Fred Ebb," *Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians*, 3:1815.

<sup>10</sup> Geoffrey Block, "Kander, John (Harold)," *The Grove Dictionary of American Music*, 4: 567.

<sup>11</sup> William Ruhlmann, "Kander, John (Harold), and Fred Ebb," *Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians*, 3:1816.

*Flora, the Red Menace* (1965), Kander and Ebb faced another disappointment in their newest work, *The Rink* (1984). Out of the three musicals, *The Rink*, ranked as the third most unsuccessful running only 204 performances on Broadway; *Flora* saw 87 performances, and *70, Girls*, 70, saw only 35 performances.

The early 1990s brought great success with several new works. In 1991, Ebb and Kander collaborated on an anthology of about thirty songs for an Off-Broadway show entitled *And the World Goes 'Round: The Songs of Kander and Ebb*, running 408 performances. Another collaborative anthology, *Sing Happy*, appeared in London the following year in 1992.<sup>12</sup> Kander and Ebb's next musical, *Kiss of the Spider Woman* (1993), was their longest collaborative work. Beginning in 1990, the show was presented at a workshop at New York State University in Purchase, N.Y. Afterwards, the composers revised the work for premieres in Toronto and London in 1992. *Kiss of the Spider Woman* finally made its Broadway premiere in May 1993, and experienced a successful run of 906 performances and won a Tony for Best Musical.<sup>13</sup>

In 1994, Kander began work on an elaborate art song based on the text of a love letter from a Civil War soldier named Sullivan Ballou to his beloved wife. The work was written for and premiered by the soprano, Renée Fleming. This lone work of Kander's is filled with passion, sensitivity, and is a hauntingly beautiful piece.

Since the late 1990s up until Ebb's death in 2004, the songwriters saw two revivals of their most popular musicals *Cabaret* (revival 1998) and *Chicago* (revival 1998), as well as the premiere of *Steel Pier* (1997), which ran for 76 performances. Before Ebb's death, he and

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<sup>12</sup> Geoffrey Block, "Kander, John (Harold)," *The Grove Dictionary of American Music*, 4: 567.

<sup>13</sup> William Ruhlmann, "Kander, John (Harold), and Fred Ebb," *Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians*, 3: 1816.

Kander had made progress on four other musicals, two of which premiered after Ebb's passing: *Curtains* (2007) and *The Scottsboro Boys* (2010).<sup>14</sup>

Kander has proved to be one of the most prolific musical theater composers of the twentieth century through his talent and knowledge of varying compositional styles.

Kander is almost invariably praised for his tuneful scores, his professionalism, and his ability to compose music that serves the show at hand. His impressive mastery of styles range from Weill pastiches (*Cabaret*), Greek bouzouki music (*Zorba*) and popular styles of the 1920s and 30s (*Flora*, *Chicago* and *Steel Pier*), to the glittery musical spectacles of Las Vegas floor shows (*The Act*).<sup>15</sup>

Kander and Ebb are especially known for their musical pastiches that showcase the popular music of the 1920s and 1940s; most notable are their songs "Cabaret" and "New York, New York."<sup>16</sup>

### **Who was Sullivan Ballou?**

John Kander's dramatic monologue, *A Letter from Sullivan Ballou*, was written for Renée Fleming in 1994.<sup>17</sup> The work is based on a letter from a Union soldier in the Civil War, Sullivan Ballou, to his wife, Sarah. In the letter, Sullivan expresses his passionate feelings for Sarah and his family, his thankfulness to God for all of his blessings, and the importance of duty to his country in its dire time of need. To this day, Ballou's letter has remained one of the most treasured pieces of Civil War literature.

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<sup>14</sup> Geoffrey Block, "Kander, John (Harold)," *The Grove Dictionary of American Music*, 4: 567.

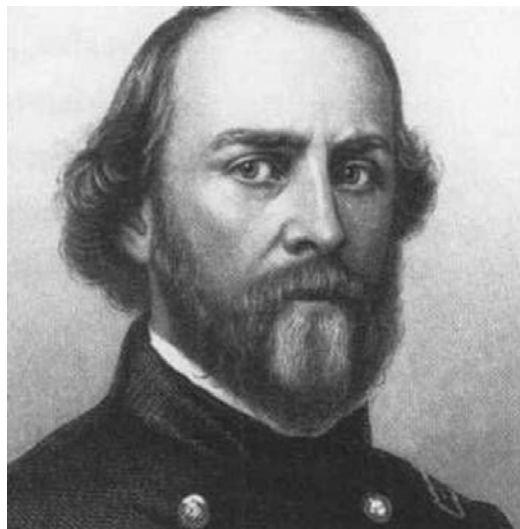
<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> William Ruhlmann, "Kander, John (Harold), and Fred Ebb," *Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians*, 3:1814.

<sup>17</sup> Jennifer Wright Corbell Hough, *America at War: Song Composers' Settings of Letters Inspired by Wartime*, 4.

Sullivan Ballou was born on March 28, 1829, in Smithfield, Rhode Island (Figure 6.2). Ballou grew up to become a successful lawyer with an extensive education from the Phillips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts, and Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island. After his graduation, Ballou attained a teaching position to teach allocation, while studying law at the National Law School in Ballston, New York.<sup>18</sup> He received his admittance to the Rhode Island Bar in 1853.

Figure 6.2: Major Sullivan Ballou (1829-1861)



Manassas National Battlefield Park, “‘My Very Dear Wife’-The Last Letter of Major Sullivan Ballou,” 17 March 2018. <https://www.nps.gov/articles/-my-very-dear-wife-the-last-letter-of-major-sullivan-ballou.htm>.

During his short life, Ballou became an active politician, registering as a member of the new Republican Party, and was a strong supporter of Abraham Lincoln.<sup>19</sup> In 1854, Ballou was elected as the clerk of the Rhode Island House of Representatives, and in 1857, became a

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<sup>18</sup> Evan C Jones, “Sullivan Ballou: The Macabre Fate of an American Civil War Major,” *America’s Civil War Magazine*, November 2004, 17 March 2018. <http://www.historynet.com/sullivan-ballou-the-macabre-fate-of-a-american-civil-war-major.htm>.

<sup>19</sup> Jonathan R. Allen, “The Sullivan Ballou Letter,” *The Civil War: Civil War History and Stories*, 17 March 2018. <http://www.nellaware.com/blog/sullivan-ballou-letter.html>.

member and served as the House's speaker.<sup>20</sup> Through his affiliations with the Republican Party, Ballou became acquainted with Governor William Sprague, a wealthy mill owner who became the governor of Rhode Island in 1860, and was to be the youngest state executive in U.S. history, elected at the age of 29.<sup>21</sup> The following year on October 15, 1855, Sullivan married Sarah Hart Shumway, with whom he would have two children, Edgar and William.

With Sullivan's history of public service, it is no surprise that he enlisted in the Union Army with the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861. On June 5, 1861, volunteers banded together to form the 2<sup>nd</sup> Regiment of Rhode Island Detached Militia, with John Slocum elected as its colonel.<sup>22</sup> Ballou was initially against the idea of enlisting in the militia for he knew that the consequences would be detrimental for his wife and young sons.<sup>23</sup> Nevertheless, persuaded by Governor Sprague and driven by his duty to his country, Sullivan Ballou enlisted in the regiment, receiving a commission as major from Governor Sprague.<sup>24</sup> Shortly after joining the militia in the spring of 1861, he and his small army departed from Providence, Rhode Island, on June 19, 1861, to make their way to Washington D.C.

One of the unique features of Sullivan's letter is that it was written exactly one week, on July 14, 1861, before the First Battle of Bull Run during his regiment's residence at Camp Clark. It is almost as if Sullivan had a premonition of his death, and used this opportunity to write

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<sup>20</sup> Evan C. Jones, "Sullivan Ballou: The Macabre Fate of an American Civil War Major," *America's Civil War Magazine*.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Jonathan R. Allen, "The Sullivan Ballou Letter," *The Civil War: Civil War History and Stories*.

<sup>23</sup> Jennifer Wright Corbell Hough, *America at War: Song Composers' Settings of Letters Inspired by Wartime*, 5, as taken from Robin Young, *For Life & Liberty: The Untold Civil War Story of Major Sullivan Ballou and His Famous Love Letter* (New York, Thunder's Mouth Press, 2006), xxvi.

<sup>24</sup> Evan C. Jones, "Sullivan Ballou: The Macabre Fate of an American Civil War Major," *America's Civil War Magazine*.

home.<sup>25</sup> He knew that they would be moving southward soon to meet the Confederate Army; time was of the essence. Ballou's letter is displayed below in Table 6.1.

**Table 6.1: Sullivan Ballou's Letter\***

Headquarters, Camp Clark  
Washington, D.C., July 14, 1861

My Very Dear Wife:

Indications are very strong that we shall move in a few days, perhaps to-morrow. Lest I should not be able to write you again, I feel impelled to write a few lines, that may fall under your eye when I shall be no more.

Our movement may be one of a few days duration and full of pleasure and it may be one of severe conflict and death to me. Not my will, but thine, O God be done. If it is necessary that I should fall on the battle-field for any country, I am ready. I have no misgivings about, or lack of confidence in, the cause in which I am engaged, and my courage does not halt or falter. I know how strongly American civilization now leans upon the triumph of government, and how great a debt we owe to those who went before us through the blood and suffering of the Revolution, and I am willing, perfectly willing to lay down all my joys in this life to help maintain this government, and to pay that debt.

But, my dear wife, when I know, that with my own joys, I lay down nearly all of yours, and replace them in this life with care and sorrows, when, after having eaten for long years the bitter fruit of orphanage myself, I must offer it, as their only sustenance, to my dear little children, is it weak or dishonorable, while the banner of my purpose floats calmly and proudly in the breeze, that my unbounded love for you, my darling wife and children, should struggle in fierce, though useless, contest with my love of country.

I cannot describe to you my feelings on this calm summer night, when two thousand men are sleeping around me, many of them enjoying the last, perhaps, before that of death, and I, suspicious that Death is creeping behind me with his fatal dart, am communing with God, my country and thee.

I have sought most closely and diligently, and often in my breast, for a wrong motive in this hazarding the happiness of those I loved, and I could not find one. A pure love of my country, and of the principles I have often advocated before the people, and "the name of honor, that I love more than I fear death," have called upon me, and I have obeyed.

Sarah, my love for you is deathless. It seems to bind me with mighty cables, that nothing but Omnipotence can break; and yet, my love of country comes over me like a strong wind, and bears me irresistibly on with all those chains, to the battlefield. The memories of all the blissful moments I have spent with you come crowding over me, and I feel most deeply grateful to God and you, that I have enjoyed them so long. And how hard it is for me to give them up, and burn to ashes the hopes of future years, when, God willing, we might still have lived and loved together, and seen our boys grow up to honorable manhood around us.

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<sup>25</sup> Jonathan R. Allen, "The Sullivan Ballou Letter," *The Civil War: Civil War History and Stories*.

I know I have but few claims upon Divine Providence, but something whispers to me, perhaps it is the wafted prayer of my little Edgar, that I shall return to my loved ones unharmed. If I do not, my dear Sarah, never forget how much I love you, nor that, when my last breath escapes me on the battle-field, it will whisper your name.

Forgive my many faults, and the many pains I have caused you. How thoughtless, how foolish I have oftentimes been! How gladly would I wash out with my tears, every little spot upon your happiness, and struggle with all the misfortune of this world, to shield you and my children from harm. But I cannot, I must watch you from the spirit land and hover near you, while you buffet the storms with your precious little freight, and wait with sad patience till we meet to part no more.

But, O Sarah, if the dead can come back to this earth, and flit unseen around those they loved, I shall always be near you in the garish day, and the darkest night amidst your happiest scenes and gloomiest hours always, always, and, if the soft breeze fans your cheek, it shall be my breath; or the cool air cools your throbbing temples, it shall be my spirit passing by.

Sarah, do not mourn me dear; think I am gone, and wait for me, for we shall meet again.

As for my little boys, they will grow as I have done, and never know a father's love and care. Little Willie is too young to remember me long, and my blue-eyed Edgar will keep my frolics with him among the dimmest memories of his childhood. Sarah, I have unlimited confidence in your maternal care, and your development of their characters. Tell my two mothers, I call God's blessing upon them. O Sarah, I wait for you there! Come to me, and lead thither my children.

- Sullivan

\* Manassas National Battlefield Park, “‘My Very Dear Wife’-The Last Letter of Major Sullivan Ballou” 17 March 2018. <https://www.nps.gov/articles/-my-very-dear-wife-the-last-letter-of-major-sullivan-ballou.htm>.

The First Battle of Bull Run (also known as the First Battle of Manassas) occurred on July 21, 1861, and is considered to be the first major battle of the Civil War. The Union Army, of approximately 35,000, marched to Washington, D.C. to clash with a Confederate Army of 20,000 along the river of Bull Run.<sup>26</sup> Although the Union Army greatly outnumbered the Confederate Army, the Union Army was made up of many ill-trained soldiers. Their inexperienced army and disorganization on the battle field ultimately led to their demise, with the Confederate Army dominating the area, and forcing the Union regiments to retreat back to Washington, D.C. The First Battle of Bull Run cost the Union Army approximately 3,000

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<sup>26</sup> History.com, “First Battle of Bull Run,” 17 March 2018. <https://www.history.com/topics/american-civil-war/first-battle-of-bull-run>.

soldiers, while the Confederates only suffered approximately 1,750 soldiers; a little more than half the casualties of the Union Army.<sup>27</sup>

The First Battle of Run served as an eye-opening experience for both sides of the Civil War. The Union Army's defeat had come as a shock to the North, and their underestimation of the Confederates was an abrupt awakening to the war that lie ahead. The Confederate's victory, gave the South a sense of confidence; however, they too underestimated the Union Army, and had not even begun to comprehend the reality of the long road of war ahead of them.<sup>28</sup> The First Battle of Bull Run was only the beginning of America's bloodiest war in history (Figure 6.3).

Figure 6.3: Color drawing of Colonel Burnside's Brigade, First and Second Rhode Island, and Seventy-First New York Regiments with their artillery attacking the rebels at Bull Run. The drawing was published by H.H. Lloyd and Cos.



History Central Website, "The First Battle of Bull Run," 31 March 2018.  
<http://www.historycentral.com/CivilWar/Bullrun.html>.

Despite the gruesome aftermath of the battle, Major Sullivan Ballou did not perish immediately, but had barely survived the battle. He along with Colonel Slocum, who had also

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<sup>27</sup> History.com, "First Battle of Bull Run."

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.



been fatally wounded, were taken to a nearby Confederate field hospital.<sup>29</sup> During the battle, Ballou's right leg had become severely injured from a six-pound Confederate artillery shell that had collided into him and his horse. Ballou's horse was killed instantly, and the remains of his right leg were amputated.<sup>30</sup>

Due to the lack and inconsistent communications of the time, false reports of Sullivan Ballou's death had already reached Sarah Ballou. During her formal period of mourning, Sarah received letters Sullivan had written to her before his injury and death.<sup>31</sup> However, of all the letters that she received, the famous "Letter from Sullivan Ballou" was not among them. Sullivan had never mailed that particular letter, but instead left it with his belongings, perhaps as a way to comfort his wife should he die in the upcoming battle. Major Sullivan Ballou passed away seven days later from his injury on July 28, 1861, three days after the passing of Colonel Slocum (July 25, 1861); he was only thirty-two years old.

After the First Battle of Bull Run, Confederate forces controlled the area. As much as we would like to leave Ballou's story with a peaceful ending, his story after death is macabre in origin. "According to witnesses, gruesome treatments of Ballou's body followed. Confederate soldiers (supposedly, members of the 21<sup>st</sup> Georgia Infantry, but there is some uncertainty regarding this) dug up Ballou's body, chopped off his head, and performed further insults and profanations to his remains."<sup>32</sup> It is believed that the 21<sup>st</sup> Georgia Infantry committed this

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<sup>29</sup> Robert Grandchamp, "'O Sarah!' Did Sullivan Ballou's Famed Letter Come From Another's Pen?" *America's Civil War Magazine*, November 2017, 17 March 2018. <http://www.historynet.com/o-sarah-sullivan-ballou-letter.htm>.

<sup>30</sup> Jonathan R. Allen, "The Sullivan Ballou Letter," *The Civil War: Civil War History and Stories*.

<sup>31</sup> Jennifer Wright Corbell Hough, *America at War: Song Composers' Settings of Letters Inspired by Wartime*, 6.

<sup>32</sup> Jonathan R. Allen, "The Sullivan Ballou Letter," *The Civil War: Civil War History and Stories*.

desecration as a means to avenge their fallen comrades from the 8<sup>th</sup> Georgia Infantry after the First Battle of Bull Run.

The 8<sup>th</sup> Georgia Infantry was the only Georgian regiment present during the battle of Bull Run that could have come in contact with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Rhode Island Regiment. The 21<sup>st</sup> Georgia Infantry did not appear at Manassas until after the battle, and continued to occupy the area through the winter.<sup>33</sup> As the infantry desecrated the graveyard of Sudley Church, they came across both the bodies of Major Sullivan Ballou and Colonel Slocum; Slocum was buried in a simple box, and Ballou in a coffin.<sup>34</sup> The Confederates mistook Ballou to be Colonel Slocum based on his burial arrangements, and desecrated the grave and body.

On March 19, 1862, almost a year after the First Battle of Bull Run, Rhode Island's Governor William Sprague and his men traveled to Virginia to gather the bodies and belongings of soldiers from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Rhode Island regiment to return them home to their families and loved ones.<sup>35</sup> Word had traveled that the Confederates had abandoned the area, and now was the time to recover the bodies and belongings of those lost. When Governor Sprague and his men came to the graves of Sullivan Ballou and Colonel Slocum, they found both graves disturbed, but only one grave had a body. Governor Sprague confirmed the only body in the grave was that of Colonel Slocum, which led to the alarming question...where was the body of Major Sullivan Ballou? Witnesses were able to lead Governor Sprague and his men towards the suspected remains of Sullivan Ballou. Among the remains were ashes, bones, hair, and two shirts, both of which Governor Sprague insisted that he recognized as clothes belonging to Sullivan Ballou;

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<sup>33</sup> Evan C. Jones, "Sullivan Ballou: The Macabre Fate of an American Civil War Major," *America's Civil War Magazine*.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

however, whether or not the remains really belonged to Sullivan Ballou will always remain a mystery.<sup>36</sup> Major Sullivan Ballou's remains were placed in a coffin, transported back to Rhode Island to his family, and laid to rest at Providence's Swan Point Cemetery. Nevertheless, Sullivan Ballou's remains were not the only thing returned to his wife, Sarah, back in Rhode Island -- so were his belongings, among them...the precious letter.

At the time of Sullivan's death, his wife, Sarah was only twenty-four years old. She never remarried, but relocated to New Jersey, where she lived the remainder of her life with her son, William. Sarah lived a long life, passing away at the age of 80 in 1917, and was eventually reunited at long last with her husband.<sup>37</sup>

Ballou's letter made its first public appearance in 1868 in a chapter from *Brown University in the Civil War*, a volume written by Horatio Rogers, Jr., and dedicated to alumni who had perished in the Civil War.<sup>38</sup> Rogers had attended Brown University, and served in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Rhode Island Regiment alongside Ballou. The letter's second public appearance came in 1888 in *An Elaborate History and Genealogy of the Ballous in America*, by Adin Ballou, a distant relative.<sup>39</sup> Since then, the letter's existence was largely forgotten until after the turn of the twentieth century, when copies of the letter began to appear in historical society archives, magazines, and literature.

Over the years, Ballou's letter has appeared to take on several different versions. John Kander's setting of Ballou's letter is not the only version of the letter known to exist, nor is it

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<sup>36</sup> Evan C. Jones, "Sullivan Ballou: The Macabre Fate of an American Civil War Major," *America's Civil War Magazine*.

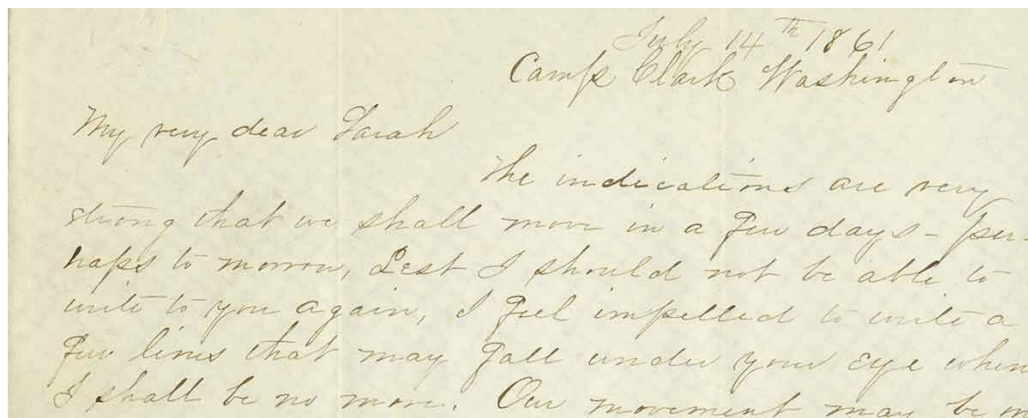
<sup>37</sup> Jonathan R. Allen, "The Sullivan Ballou Letter," *The Civil War: Civil War History and Stories*.

<sup>38</sup> Robert Grandchamp, "'O Sarah!' Did Sullivan Ballou's Famed Letter Come From Another's Pen?" *America's Civil War Magazine*.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

likely to be the original letter. “In fact, the original Sullivan Ballou letter apparently did not survive, and has been lost to history. There are many versions of the letter to be found today, but it is unknown which is most similar to the original written by Ballou.”<sup>40</sup> Robin Young wrote in her 2006 biography of Sullivan Ballou, *For Love and Liberty*, that she had discovered eight different versions of the letter in repositories around the U.S., with one of two copies located at the Rhode Island Historical Society possibly being the original; its twin was donated to the society in 1975 by Colonel Slocum’s descendants (Figure 6.4). There is also the unsupported theory that the original letter from Sullivan Ballou was buried with his wife.<sup>41</sup>

Figure 6.4: Copy of Sullivan Ballou’s letter at the Rhode Island Historical Society.



Robert Grandchamp, “‘O Sarah!’ Did Sullivan Ballou’s Famed Letter Come from Another’s Pen?” *America’s Civil War Magazine*, November 2017, 17 March 2018. <http://www.historynet.com/o-sarah-sullivan-ballou-letter.htm>.

Despite these mysteries and speculations, Ballou’s letter remains idolized as a historical and treasured piece of Civil War literature. “As poignant as it is prescient, Ballou’s epistle captures not only the spirit of patriotic righteousness that led many men to the enlistment office,

<sup>40</sup> Jonathan R. Allen, “The Sullivan Ballou Letter,” *The Civil War: Civil War History and Stories*.

<sup>41</sup> Robert Grandchamp, “‘O Sarah!’ Did Sullivan Ballou’s Famed Letter Come From Another’s Pen?” *America’s Civil War Magazine*.

but it also drives home the stark reality that casualties of war were not confined to the battlefield. There were hundreds of thousands of soldiers who would not return to their families over the next four years, leaving behind a Sarah, or a Willie and Edgar who would ‘never know a father’s love or care’.”<sup>42</sup>

### **Analysis of *A Letter from Sullivan Ballou***

John Kander’s work, *A Letter from Sullivan*, is a unique piece for the soprano repertoire. Although the work possesses many ascending vocal lines, the majority of the work lies in the soprano’s middle tessitura, and requires the singer to maintain an accurate placement of the vocal sound between registers throughout the work. The work is also unique in that it does not focus on vocalism, but on the conveyance of the text of Ballou’s letter to his wife.

When setting Ballou’s letter to music, Kander did not set the entire document, but instead chose specific excerpts to compose an emotionally and musically moving work. One such excerpt that Kander decided to omit from his setting of Ballou’s letter is a sentence regarding Sullivan’s premonition of death.

“I cannot describe to you my feelings on this calm summer night, when two thousand men are sleeping around me, many of them enjoying the last, perhaps, before that of death, and I, suspicious that Death is creeping behind me with his fatal dart, am communing with God, my country, and thee.”<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Manassas National Battlefield Park, “‘My Very Dear Wife’-The Last Letter of Major Sullivan Ballou,” 17 March 2018. <https://www.nps.gov/articles/-my-very-dear-wife-the-last-letter-of-major-sullivan-ballou.htm>.

<sup>43</sup> PBS, “Historical Document: Sullivan Ballou Letter,” PBS Web site, 24 March 2018. <http://www.civilwar.org/education/history/primarysources/sullivan-ballou-letter.html>.

Kander opens the work with a monologue taken from the beginning of the letter, in which Ballou addresses his wife, Sarah, and tells her of their intentions to move southward in preparations for the First Battle of Bull Run.

“My very dear Sarah: The indications are very strong that we move in a few days—perhaps tomorrow. Lest I should not be able to write again. I feel impelled to write a few lines that may fall upon your eye when I am no more.”

In order to preserve the original language of Sullivan Ballou’s letter, Kander took many cautions in setting it to music, taking careful consideration of the natural rhythms of speech and punctuation. One of the techniques that Kander used to preserve the letter through music is the use of irregular phrasing. The phrases throughout the work are often between two to six bars long, with the phrases of music constructed to follow the letter’s punctuation and original syntax. The vocal line is syllabic in nature, a setting that has been determined by the natural flow and emphasis of the text. For polysyllabic words, Kander incorporates sixteenth-note and triplet figures into the vocal line.<sup>44</sup>

After the opening monologue, the accompaniment enters in 4/4 time with a hypnotic quarter note pattern (F-A-B-F) in the right hand and a whole-note pedal in the left hand on F. Although, a true key is not clarified, the consistent pedal point focuses on F as the tonal center for measures 1-21. Even though the main attraction of this work is the musical setting of Ballou’s text, the piano accompaniment continues to play a vital role in portraying the mood and power of the text.

I have no misgivings about, or lack of confidence in, the cause in which I am engaged, and my courage does not halt or falter. I know how strongly American civilization now leans on

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<sup>44</sup> Jennifer Wright Corbell Hough, *America at War: Song Composers’ Settings of Letters Inspired by Wartime* (D.M.A. dissertation, University of North Carolina, 2014), 7.

the triumph of the government, and how great a debt we owe to those who went before us through the blood and sufferings of the Revolution, and I am willing, perfectly willing to lay down all my joys in this life to help maintain this government, and to pay that debt.

The consistent quarter note rhythms in the piano accompaniment of the opening twenty-one measures evoke the consistency of Ballou's commitment to his country.<sup>45</sup> In measures 22-24, the accompaniment echoes the melody of the opening vocal line, "I have no misgivings about or lack of confidence."

Another technique that Kander expends in order to preserve the natural rhythms of speech in the letter is a *quasi-recitative* with mixed meters beginning at m. 25. For the *quasi recitative*, the music has modulated to the key of D major, a bright, romantic key in which to showcase Sullivan Ballou's declaration of love. The *quasi-recitative* lasts from m. 25 to m. 43 and incorporates several mixed meters: 10/4 in m. 25, 8/4 in m. 26, and then 4/4 in measures 27-43. Although the meter transitions to 4/4, Kander gives specific instructions for rhythmic groupings in order to direct the shaping of phrases.<sup>46</sup> During measures 25-32, the accompaniment takes on the role of rolled chords, allowing a *secco recitative* style delivery of the text. In measures 33-43, the accompaniment switches to blocked chords, and continues to support the vocal line in a recitative style, and at m. 40, modulates from D major back to F major.

Kander cleverly incorporates military bugle calls and signals throughout his work in the vocal line. One such call he assimilates in the work is the military '*Taps*' performed to honor those who have given their lives, the ultimate sacrifice, for their country (Figure 6.5 and Figure 6.6). "The ascending shape of the first melodic phrase is reminiscent of the farewell tune,

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 8.

‘*Taps*,’ however, the phrase ultimately completes with a descending line to mirror Ballou’s humanity and to foreshadow his untimely death.”<sup>47</sup> Excerpts of bugle calls also appear in the vocal line such as in m. 28, and again in measures 71-72.

Figure 6.5: Kander— “A Letter from Sullivan Ballou,” meas. 25. *Taps* motif.

Figure 6.6: Kander— “A Letter from Sullivan Ballou,” meas. 28. Bugle call in the vocal line.

At m. 43, the music returns to a strict 4/4 time, and modulates from F major to D-flat major. The accompaniment becomes most interesting at this point in the music, as it begins to take on a more active role. Up until this point in the music, the accompaniment has been very limited to blocked or rolled chords, and quarter note or half note patterns. As the vocal line begins to evolve lyrically, the accompaniment follows suit, its texture becoming thicker and

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 9.



more diversified. The left hand continues to play blocked or rolled chords, while the right hand adds harmonic texture with fifths and doubles the melody; qualities of early American parlor music.<sup>48</sup> “Ballou is resolute in his commitment to his cause and to his family and the juxtaposition of these two commitments is reflected in the piano part with the left hand representing his commitment to his cause and right hand reflecting his commitment to his family.”<sup>49</sup> At m. 51, the music modulates back to F major, and the accompaniment reverts back to blocked chords as Sullivan Ballou recalls the blessings of his life.

In m. 55, the music dramatically shifts back to D-flat major. Both hands of the accompaniment are in the treble clef with a sextuplet underlay in contrary motion. Ballou writes of his hope of one day seeing his family again: “But something whispers to me, perhaps it is the wafted prayer of my little Edgar, that I shall return to my loved ones unharmed.” However, Kander has cleverly and symbolically incorporated the interval of a minor third into the underlay, foreshadowing Ballou’s death (Figure 6.7).

Figure 6.7: Kander— “A Letter from Sullivan Ballou,” meas. 55-56.  
Minor third interval in contrary motion sextuplet figures.

55 In two

some - thing whis - pers to me. per - haps it is the waft - ed prayer

*pp* *sim.*

Another modulation from D-flat major to D major occurs at m. 61, with the music growing in intensity and romanticism, highlighting Ballou’s love for his wife, Sarah, while

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 10-11.

displaying Kander's more intimate and romantic Broadway style. Kander incorporates octaves, open sixths, fifths, and thirds that double the melody, with the piano line either doubling the melody or echoing it. "Interestingly though, when the piano and voice are combined there are subtle dissonances that appear, all functioning within a I-IV-V-I chord progression. Kander changes the color of a standard chord progression by adding non-chord tones, which makes the piano part appear to be polytonal."<sup>50</sup>

Kander incorporates one final key change to the piece at m. 78 modulating the music back to the original key of F major. The accompaniment has changed to set the scene for a new thought. Ballou writes comforting words to Sarah declaring that if he does perish in battle that he will continue to be by her side in spirit. Arpeggiation is introduced in the left hand of the accompaniment, representing Ballou's thoughts, and the right hand continues the romantic style, doubling the vocal line in octaves.<sup>51</sup> The work reaches a climactic point in m. 87, when Ballou declares "always, always." There is dissonance in the accompaniment as the right hand plays an A-major chord, which contrasts against the left hand's F-major arpeggiation.<sup>52</sup> In measures 78-91, the vocal line continues to grow in intensity with heightened emotions of the text as the vocal line sits on the singer's passaggio. Kander employs text painting at m. 92 with blocked chords moving in contrary motion to represent the breeze that Ballou speaks intimately about to Sarah (Figure 6.8). "And if there be a soft breeze upon your cheek, it shall be my breath, as the cool air fans your throbbing temple, it shall be my spirit passing by."

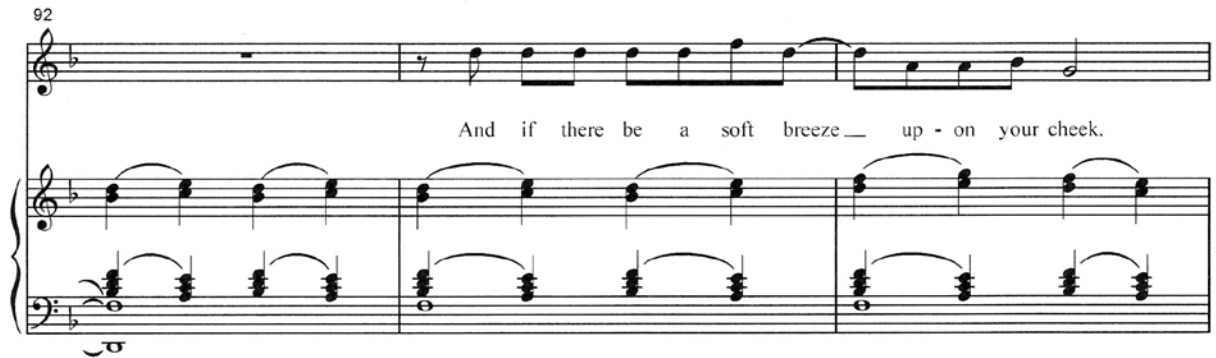
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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 12.

Figure 6.8: Kander— “A Letter from Sullivan Ballou,” meas. 92-94.  
Text painting in accompaniment.



Kander’s romantic style returns at m. 101, the left hand resuming its arpeggiation and the right hand doubling the vocal line in octaves. Ballou implores of Sarah to not mourn for his death, but to simply think of him as being temporarily “gone,” and promises her that one day they will meet again. Kander incorporates text painting once again by applying a fermata in m. 107 on the word, “wait;” a simple punctuation to add a dramatically heightened effect to the music and text. The vocal line comes to a conclusion on a high suspended A5 on the final word, “again” in m. 110; an effect that easily portrays Ballou’s longing, sadness, and hope.

*A Letter from Sullivan Ballou* concludes with a seventeen-measure piano postlude that reiterates a transposed version of the ‘Taps’ melody found in the vocal line in m. 25. At m. 116, the opening monologue is reiterated over the piano postlude. As the song comes to a close, the accompaniment outlines a IV-I chord progression with the postlude concluding with a plagal cadence.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 13.

## Chapter 7 - Kurt Weill (1900-1950) and *Street Scene* (1947)

### *Biographical Information on the Composer*

Kurt Julian Weill (b. Dessau, March 2, 1900; d. N.Y., April 3, 1950) was a talented German-born American composer of the twentieth century (Figure 7.1). Kurt Weill has composed many musical genres throughout his lifetime; scores for films, ballet, orchestra, chamber music, choral music, vocal repertoire, and jazz.<sup>1</sup> However, Weill's works for the operatic and musical theater stage remain his most significant.



Figure 7.1: Kurt Weill (1900-1950)

Encyclopedia Britannica Website, "Kurt Weill: German-American Composer," 31 March 2018.  
<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Kurt-Weill>.

Kurt Weill's life can be divided into two musical periods: his European career (1921-1934) and his American career (1935-1950).<sup>2</sup> Weill's European career is defined from his earlier works, most notably those composed with his collaborator, Bertolt Brecht, and his other works

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<sup>1</sup> The Kurt Weill Foundation for Music, "Weill," 19 March 2018. <https://www.kwf.org/pages/kw-biography.html>.

<sup>2</sup> Stephen Hinton, "Weill, Kurt," *Oxford Music Online*, 19 Mar. 2018.  
<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-5000006990>.

written during his life in Germany and France. Weill's later works composed after 1935 make up his American career.<sup>3</sup>

Although the works produced after the collaborations with Brecht were not as directly political, however, during his career in the US Weill produced important works critiquing US optimism and the 'American way of life,' and tackling such issues as the unequal distribution of wealth, segregation, and the effect of industrialisation of families. Weill enjoyed an unusual level of control over the dramatic structure of his works, and used this to increase their power and social relevance.<sup>4</sup>

One of Kurt Weill's most significant works from his American period that embodied many of his American ideals and the American culture was his "American opera," *Street Scene* (1947).

### **The "American" Kurt Weill (1935-1950)**

By the early 1930s, Nazism was already established, and making its ascent as a destructive power in Germany. At the time, Kurt Weill's operas were continuing to see growing success in Germany; however, the influences of the Nazi regime were jeopardizing his life. Nazi protests would often interfere or interrupt performances, and working conditions were beginning to affect his marriage as well. With the strong social and political elements embodied in many of Weill's works, theaters were becoming more and more reluctant to perform his works for fear of the Nazi regime.<sup>5</sup>

Many Jewish and left-wing writers, artists, and professionals, including Brecht, had evacuated Germany on February 28<sup>th</sup>, following the day after the Reichstag fire, Hitler's first act

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<sup>3</sup> Music and the Holocaust Website, "Kurt Weill," 19 March 2018. <http://holocaustmusic.ort.org/politics-and-propaganda/third-reich/weill-kurt/>.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

of political purging.<sup>6</sup> About a month afterwards, Kurt Weill and his wife, Lotte Lenya, eventually found themselves on the Nazi blacklist and were soon to be arrested.<sup>7</sup> In an attempt to save their lives, Weill and his wife fled to Paris in March 1933. Not even two months after their escape to France, the works of Brecht and many others were publicly burned. Weill's own works were protected by his publisher, Universal Edition, in Austria until 1938 when the German Gestapo attacked the publisher.<sup>8</sup> Shortly after their escape to France in September 1933, Weill divorced Lotte Lenya. From 1933 to 1935, Weill continued to compose and take up various commissions while continuing to live in France.

During his residency in France in the summer of 1934, Weill was approached to write a Biblical drama *Der Weg der Verheissung* (*The Way of the Promise*), which was eventually, renamed *The Eternal Road* (1937). The work was to be a pageant depicting the story and fate of the Jewish people. Although Weill had moved away from his Jewish heritage, the recent persecutions of the German Jews, which he had witnessed and experienced, influenced him to take on the commission.<sup>9</sup> Although this work would later prove to be one of Weill's most unsuccessful works, it is nevertheless important, as its premiere in New York, which was originally set in 1936, would be the motive that brought Kurt Weill to America in 1935.

Upon his arrival to America, Weill became reunited with his ex-wife, Lotte Lenya, and the two remarried in 1937. Weill's success as an American composer did not come immediately, and within their first few years in America, the couple struggled financially. In 1936, Weill received a commission from the Group Theatre of New York for *Johnny Johnson*, a musical anti-

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<sup>6</sup> Douglas Jarman, *Kurt Weill: An Illustrated Biography* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1982), 67.

<sup>7</sup> Music and the Holocaust Website, "Kurt Weill."

<sup>8</sup> Douglas Jarman, *Kurt Weill: An Illustrated Biography*, 67.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 70.

war play, written by the playwright, Paul Green, Professor at the University of North Carolina and a former Pulitzer Prize winner. In the summer of 1936, Weill took a temporary summer position at the Group Theatre in Connecticut, teaching and lecturing on musical theatre.<sup>10</sup> During this summer teaching position, Weill met Elmer Rice, the playwright, whose Pulitzer Prize winning *Street Scene* Weill had seen in Europe. Weill approached Rice with the idea to write a score for the play, but Rice declined, and the idea was temporarily abandoned until almost a decade later.<sup>11</sup>

Weill soon found work in Hollywood by composing film scores, but found the work intolerable. "Composition to Weill included orchestration as an integral part of it, but Hollywood required not much more than a tunesmith--a role Weill considered a prostitution of his principles."<sup>12</sup> Weill knew that in order to fully establish himself as an American composer, he would have to adopt the "American style" of music.

Quickly absorbing the modes and fashions of American popular music, he recreated, with astonishing facility, and felicity, the typical form and content of American musicals; this stylistic transition was facilitated by the fact that in his European productions he had already absorbed elements of American popular songs and jazz rhythms. His highly developed assimilative faculty enabled him to combine this Americanized idiom with the advanced techniques of modern music (atonality, polytonality, polyrhythms) and present the product in a pleasing, and yet sophisticated and challenging, manner.<sup>13</sup>

Kurt Weill's compositional style has also been compared to that of Handel, with both composers taking advantage of recycling and borrowing of previously used materials.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Douglas Jarman, *Kurt Weill: An Illustrated Biography*, 72-73.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 73.

<sup>12</sup> Stephen Hinton, "Weill, Kurt," *Oxford Music Online*.

<sup>13</sup> Nicolas Slonimsky, Laura Kuhn, and Dennis McIntire, "Weill, Kurt (Julian)," *Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians*, ed. Nicolas Slonimsky, Centennial Edition (New York, NY: Schirmer Books, 2001), 6: 3882.

<sup>14</sup> Stephen Hinton, "Weill, Kurt," *Oxford Music Online*.

Weill's American breakthrough didn't occur until 1938, with his hit musical *Knickerbocker Holiday*. The Broadway show was a success with 168 performances. However, despite its considerable success, it was not a "smash hit." Weill's "smash hit" would not happen for another three years with his opera, *Lady in the Dark* (1940).<sup>15</sup> Meanwhile between the premiere of *Knickerbocker Holiday* and the manifestation of *Lady in the Dark*, Weill composed *Davy Crockett*, a folk-opera, and a musical play *Ulysses Africanus*, and a cantata *Magna Carta*.

Weill once again saw success in 1943 with his musical comedy, *One Touch of Venus*. The musical comedy became Weill's longest-running Broadway show with 567 performances. However, his greatest success was shortly followed by his greatest disaster of his American career, the two-act operetta, *The Firebrand of Florence*: the show only saw 43 performances.<sup>16</sup> The failure of *The Firebrand of Florence* resulted in a radical shift in Weill's musical style, with Weill abandoning the flashy techniques and style of the Broadway musical to take up a more conservative and simpler American folk style.<sup>17</sup>

This new style became apparent in Weill's one-act folk opera, *Down in the Valley* (1948). Although it was originally written in 1945 to be a series of folk operas for the radio, the idea eventually backfired, and was rewritten in 1948 as a one-act opera.

It grew out of a quest to develop new forms and new outlets with a view to discovering a new audience for musical theatre. It is also an extreme manifestation of Weill's attitude to musical material. The principal melodies are not original, but folksongs--and hence familiar to the audience. The composer's creative imagination is employed elsewhere, in the skillful arrangement of the material into a dramatically convincing whole.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Douglas Jarman, *Kurt Weill: An Illustrated Biography*, 75.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 78-80.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 80.

<sup>18</sup> Stephen Hinton, "Weill, Kurt," *Oxford Music Online*.



In 1947, Weill reached a new compositional peak with his “American opera.” The “American opera” *Street Scene* (1947), became an achievement that embodied the best of Weill’s European and American aspirations for a popular yet authentic form of musical theatre.<sup>19</sup> Although it wasn’t the hit of the Broadway season, *Street Scene* ran for 148 performances on Broadway, and was described by the New York critic, Olin Downes, “the most important step towards significantly American opera yet encountered in musical theatre.”<sup>20</sup>

The last three years of Weill’s life saw the premiere of two more completed works: his folk opera *Down in the Valley* (1948), and his final work, the musical tragedy, *Lost in the Stars* (1949). Before his sudden death in 1950 from a heart attack, Weill had been collaborating with Maxwell Anderson on a musical play of Mark Twain’s *Huckleberry Finn*. Weill had only completed five songs for the work, and the score was left unfinished.<sup>21</sup>

Despite Weill’s success as an American composer, he never achieved the fame and recognition that he once had back in Germany. Until his death in 1950, Weill and his works remained on the outskirts of the musical establishment.<sup>22</sup> Kurt Weill’s death brought about many controversial opinions of his career as a composer. The Americans knew little of his works from his “European career,” and likewise, the Europeans that did know of his “American career,” were nowhere ready to accept those works. Weill’s music from the 1920s and onwards was in itself controversial compared to the traditional music of the nineteenth century. Today, Kurt Weill is considered to be a post-modernist composer before his time.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Douglas Jarman, *Kurt Weill: An Illustrated Biography*, 81.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 83.

<sup>22</sup> Music and the Holocaust Website, “Kurt Weill.”

<sup>23</sup> Stephen Hinton, “Weill, Kurt,” *Oxford Music Online*.

## **The American Opera, *Street Scene* (1947)**

Kurt Weill's "American opera," *Street Scene*, made its premiere at the Adelphi Theater, in New York on January 9, 1947. The inspiration for the two-act opera came from Elmer Rice's Pulitzer Prize winning play of the same name. Weill first saw Rice's play in Berlin, Germany, before his immigration to the United States, and considered it to be "very American" in nature.<sup>24</sup> "Now that he was in America he saw in the work the seeds for a new kind of Broadway opera that would rival the Rodgers and Hammerstein musical play."<sup>25</sup> Kurt Weill met Elmer Rice while teaching summer classes and helping to rehearse his own work, *Johnny Johnson* (1936) at the University of North Carolina in 1936. When Weill approached Rice with the idea of setting his drama to music, Rice rejected the idea, stating that it was "too early for that sort of show."<sup>26</sup>

It wasn't until almost a decade later when Weill approached Rice a second time with the same idea. The Broadway scene had changed in the last ten years since Weill had first approached Rice with the idea: opera had become a popular form of entertainment in America, audiences had become interested in music and singing, and composers had become more 'book conscious.'<sup>27</sup> This time when Weill discussed making *Street Scene* into an opera, Elmer Rice agreed to the proposal, with the duo adding one more man to the project, the black poet, Langston Hughes, to help write the lyrics.

Even after agreeing to Weill's proposal of making his play into a dramatic musical, Rice still posed doubts to the project, but nevertheless, wanted to see the project through as a success.

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<sup>24</sup> Foster Hirsch, *Kurt Weill on Stage: From Berlin to Broadway* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2002), 256.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Douglas Jarman, *Kurt Weill: An Illustrated Biography*, 73.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 80, as taken from Kurt Weill "A Musical Play About New York" reprinted in *Weill-Lenya* (New York: Goethe House, 1976).

As a result, Rice became very protective of his original work, and conflicts often ensued between him and Weill about lines and suggestions when it came to constructing the book for the musical.<sup>28</sup> Nevertheless, the trio's collaboration remained strong during the hectic preparations of the opera's development. "The collaboration between Weill, Rice, and Hughes was extraordinarily close and egalitarian and probably accounts in large measure for the opera's strength."<sup>29</sup>

The plot of *Street Scene* is *verismo* in style with the plot revolving around two love affairs. The first affair involves Anna Maurant's adulterous affair with her neighbor, Steve Sankey, and the consequences of her infidelity to her husband, Frank. The second romance focuses on Rose, Anna's daughter, and the young law student, Sam Kaplan.<sup>30</sup> See Table 7.1 for character list and vocal roles.

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<sup>28</sup> Foster Hirsch, *Kurt Weill on Stage: From Berlin to Broadway*, 259.

<sup>29</sup> Jürgen Schebera, *Kurt Weill: An Illustrated Life* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995), 313.

<sup>30</sup> William Thornhill, "Street Scene," *International Dictionary of Opera*, L-Z/Indexes (London: St. James Press, 1993), 2: 1296.

**Table 7.1: Cast of *Street Scene*\***

<i>Street Scene</i>	
<b>Setting: A sidewalk in front of house no. 346 in New York City in June</b>	
<b>Cast</b>	<b>Voice</b>
Anne Maurant	Soprano
Frank Maurant, her husband	Bass-baritone
Rose Maurant, their daughter	Soprano
Sam Kaplan, law student, in love with Rose	Tenor
Abraham Kaplan	Tenor
Greta Fiorentino	High soprano
Carl Olsen	Bass
Emma Jones	Mezzo-soprano
Olga Olsen	Contralto
Henry Davis, janitor	High baritone
Daniel Buchanan	Tenor
George Jones	Baritone
Lippo Fiorentino	Tenor
Jennie Hildebrand	Soprano
Two Graduates	Soprano, mezzo-soprano
Harry Easter	Mezzo-soprano
Mae Jones	High baritone
Dick McGann	Singer-dancer
Willie Maurant	Singer-dancer
First Nursemaid	Boy soprano
Second Nursemaid	Soprano
Shirly Kaplan	Mezzo-soprano
Steve Sankey	Spoken
Vincent Jones	Spoken
Dr. Wilson	Spoken
Officer Murphy	Spoken
City Marshal	Spoken
Fred Cullen	Spoken
Policemen	

\* Stephen Hinton. "*Street Scene*." *Oxford Music Online*.

Act I of the opera introduces the story's characters and the ensuing plot. The story of the opera orbits around the Maurant family, consisting of Frank and Anna Maurant (husband and wife), and their two children, Willie and Rose. Frank Maurant is a severe alcoholic, and is often away from home on business, while his wife, Anna, keeps house and cares for their two children. Discouraged about her life with Frank, Anna Maurant begins an affair with their neighbor, Steve Sankey. Meanwhile, her oldest child, Rose becomes attracted to the young law student, Sam Kaplan, but at the same time is being pursued by her boss, Harry Easter.

In Act II, Frank returns unexpectedly from one of his trips to see Anna with Steve Sankey. Now aware of his wife's affair, Frank storms into the house, with Sam Kaplan trying in vain to stop the angry man's violent intentions and in an attempt to warn Mrs. Maurant. Gunshots are soon heard from inside the house, and Frank leaves before the police are summoned. Rose enters shortly afterwards, only to discover the bodies of her mother and Steve Sankey being taken from her home and her father being arrested. The opera ends with Rose and Sam Kaplan parting ways; Rose looking to escape from the tragedy that has befallen her family and to start a new life elsewhere.

Before the show's initial premiere in New York, *Street Scene* was rehearsed, and given a try-out performance at the Schubert Theater in Philadelphia on December 16, 1936. Sponsors of the work were very hesitant of the opera, and were especially discouraged with its Philadelphia performance.<sup>31</sup> Many people involved with the show wanted significant changes to be made to make the show more "appealing." The producer, Billy Rose, made several attempts to convince Weill to shorten some of the numbers, and to make the operatic elements less important. One

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<sup>31</sup> Douglas Jarman, *Kurt Weill: An Illustrated Biography*, 81.

number in particular that Billy Rose wanted shortened was the character, Anne Maurrant's aria at the beginning of the opera; an aria which took between eight to ten minutes to sing. "If that aria doesn't work then I haven't written the opera I wanted to write. I won't change a note," Kurt Weill replied.<sup>32</sup>

Sponsors were also uneasy about calling the show an "opera." Weill's wife recalls that the word "opera" frightened everyone on Broadway.<sup>33</sup> In the end, Weill decided to label the work as a "dramatic musical," claiming that if he labeled the work as an opera, that audiences and critics would expect certain aspects of an opera that simply could not be accomplished as a Broadway production.<sup>34</sup>

Almost a month later after its Philadelphia premiere, *Street Scene* opened at the Adelphi Theater in New York in January 1947, and was met with success. Its premiere cast featured Polyna Stoska and Norman Cordon as Anne and Frank Maurrant, along with Anne Jeffreys as Rose and Brian Sullivan as Sam, with Maurice Abravanel as the conductor (Figure 7.2).<sup>35</sup> Although *Street Scene* was met with public success, it unfortunately never saw financial success. When *Street Scene* made its premiere, two big Broadway musicals opened around the same time. The day after *Street Scene*'s premiere, *Finian's Rainbow* opened, followed by *Brigadoon* in March. The show only ran for 148 performances, "a mediocre run for a 'dramatic musical,'" as Kim Kowalke remarked, "but an impressive string of consecutive performances for an American

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<sup>32</sup> Douglas Jarman, *Kurt Weill: An Illustrated Biography*, 81, as taken from Lotte Lenya quoted in Horowitz 'Lotte Lenya Recalls Weill's *Street Scene*' (*New York Times*, 26 October 1979).

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 81.

<sup>34</sup> Larry Stempel, "Street Scene and the Enigma of Broadway Opera," *A New Orpheus*. ed. Kim H. Kowalke (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1986), 322, as taken from Kurt Weill (as told to Edward J. Smith), "Broadway Opera: Our Composers' Hope for the Future," *Musical Digest* 28 (December 1946), 42.

<sup>35</sup> Stephen Hinton, "Weill, Kurt," *Oxford Music Online*.

opera.”<sup>36</sup> Even with its brief life on Broadway, *Street Scene* continued to grow in recognition and popularity within the next two years, with many of its songs and excerpts being performed at public concerts.

Figure 7.2: Brian Sullivan (Sam) and Anne Jeffreys (Rose) are at center stage in this full-cast publicity photo for *Street Scene*. Jo Mielziner designed the famous set; Lucinda Ballard designed the costumes.



Foster Hirsch, *Kurt Weill on Stage: From Berlin to Broadway*, 273.

*Street Scene* became the work to defy the standard norms of the Broadway musical in the 1940s. “*Street Scene* represents a significant change in direction regarding subject matter and musical technique. Weill believed that each of his earlier works was a ‘stepping stone’ toward the fully-integrated musical structure in *Street Scene*.”<sup>37</sup> One of Weill’s principal goals with *Street Scene* was to write an opera that achieved a musical balance between opera and Broadway

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<sup>36</sup> Stephen Hinton, “*Street Scene*,” *Oxford Music Online*, 1 April 2018. <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.er.lib.k-state.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-5000904820?rskey=5YtGJP&result=1>.

<sup>37</sup> William Thornhill, “*Street Scene*,” *International Dictionary of Opera*, L-Z/Indexes (London: St. James Press, 1993), 2: 1297.

that depicted the culture of America both theatrically and musically. “The description ‘American opera’ nonetheless applies: it is an opera *for America* – that is, for a Broadway public; and it is an opera *about America*, both musically and in terms of plot.”<sup>38</sup>

What set *Street Scene* apart from Weill’s previous works was his experimentation of new musical and operatic techniques. Even before Weill began composing the music for *Street Scene*, he had been studying the scores of Verdi and American folksongs.<sup>39</sup> “Weill’s score is extremely varied. Pieces that are very closely related to Gershwin’s *Porgy and Bess* alternate with grand opera arias in the style of Puccini; jazz-inspired songs are juxtaposed with large choral scenes and smooth musical instrumentation.”<sup>40</sup> Weill’s incorporation of “Broadway” style songs into *Street Scene* offered the work more marketability as a show on Broadway, compared to if he had composed the work as a “traditional” opera.

Perhaps the most important and dramatically effective of these new techniques was to incorporate his experience with film music onto the theatrical stage. Weill used the film technique of “underscoring,” or musical accompaniment under spoken speech; a device used to enhance the drama of a scene.<sup>41</sup> This technique also helped to keep the opera moving along, and to maintain the “flowing technique” that Weill was aiming for rather than the traditional “number-by-number technique” associated with musicals.<sup>42</sup> Weill also used a leitmotif technique for characters in the opera. The leitmotifs not only help to connect the opera’s

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<sup>38</sup> Stephen Hinton, “*Street Scene*,” *Oxford Music Online*.

<sup>39</sup> Jürgen Schebera, *Kurt Weill: An Illustrated Life*, 315.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 316.

<sup>41</sup> William Thornhill, “*Street Scene*,” *International Dictionary of Opera*, 2: 1297.

<sup>42</sup> Foster Hirsch, *Kurt Weill on Stage: From Berlin to Broadway*, 263.



individual numbers, but to also serve the opera's rising drama by highlighting and shaping the dramatic action in the same way that film music cues help to move the plot of a film along.<sup>43</sup>

The brilliance of *Street Scene* has continued to shine into the twenty-first century. In a correspondence with Arnold Sundgaard, his librettist for *Down in the Valley*, Kurt Weill predicted, "Seventy-five years from now *Street Scene* will be remembered as my major work."<sup>44</sup> *Street Scene* has proved to be Weill's most enduring work, and has seen more revivals than any of his other works.

### **Analysis of "What Good Would the Moon Be?"**

The song, "What Good Would the Moon Be?" is sung by the character Rose Maurrant and appears toward the end of Act I of *Street Scene*. "What Good Would the Moon Be?" is preceded by a Broadway-style song entitled "Wouldn't You Like to Be on Broadway?" which is sung by Harry Easter, Rose's boss. "It is a soft-shoe number, with a touch of tango in the bridge section, in which Rose's oily boss, Mr. Easter sweet-talks her with the promise of stardom in return for her favors."<sup>45</sup> As mentioned previously, one of Kurt Weill's objectives with *Street Scene* was to have the music continually flow from one scene or song to another, without interruption or applause, an objective, which the song "Wouldn't you Like to Be on Broadway?" threatened to disrupt. As a means to remedy the possibility of interruption, Weill decided to present a sequence of songs that would act as a "conversation" between Rose and Mr. Easter.

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<sup>43</sup> William Thornhill, "Street Scene," *International Dictionary of Opera*, 2, 1297.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Foster Hirsch, *Kurt Weill on Stage: From Berlin to Broadway*, 265.

In response to Mr. Easter's advances, Rose sings "What Good Would the Moon Be?" essentially telling him that true love can never be bought. Mr. Easter then answers Rose with a shortened version of the second chorus of his song. "The entwined songs would then dramatize the conflict between the characters, Easter's seduction rubbing against Rose's dewy romanticism, and thereby undercut the possibility of an unwanted break in the tension that a showstopping number would have caused."<sup>46</sup>

Even though *Street Scene* is set in the 1920s, Weill's popular Broadway-style songs reflect the music of the 1940s: the Glenn Millerish foxtrot "What Good Would the Moon Be," the jitterbug "Moon-Faced, Starry-Eyed," and the Rodgers and Hammerstein charm song "Wrapped in a Ribbon."<sup>47</sup> The lyrical foxtrot "What Good Would the Moon Be?" is set in the key of E-flat major in common time and begins with a recitative-like verse. The rhythms of the recitative carefully follow the inflections of speech for the text. Beginning in m. 10 and going into m. 12, a *ritardando* marks the end of the recitative on the phrase, "I'd rather have two loving arms!" with the vocal line reaching a brief climactic point on E-flat 5, resolving to D5.

The cavatina begins at m. 12, marked *Moderato, with warm expression*. Decorated with elements of jazz in the accompaniment, the vocal line gradually ascends on the title phrase, "What good would the moon be," and answers the question with a descending vocal line, "Unless the right one shared its beams?" The vocal line, characterizes Rose's romanticism, following the inflections of her questions, as well as her answers throughout the song (Figure 7.3).

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<sup>46</sup> Foster Hirsch, *Kurt Weill on Stage: From Berlin to Broadway*, 265.

<sup>47</sup> The Kurt Weill Foundation for Music, "Weill."

Figure 7.3: Weill— “What Good Would the Moon Be?” from *Street Scene*, meas. 11-16.



Weill also incorporates jazz elements in the lyrical vocal line using triplets and chromatic lines. The chromatic lines seen in m. 16 on the phrase, “What good would dreams-come-true be” and the triplets in m. 18 “love wasn’t” and in m. 22 “would be the” add variety, color, and highlight to the text (Figure 7.4).

Figure 7.4: Weill— “What Good Would the Moon Be?” from *Street Scene*, meas. 17-19.



From measures 28-45, the same music from the beginning of the cavatina is repeated with new text. Weill presents new material from m. 36 to the end, with the intensity and drama

building within each phrase. “No, it won’t be a primrose path for me, No, it won’t be diamonds or gold,” The song begins to ascend to its climax in m. 40, when the vocal line switches to a higher tessitura at the phrase “But maybe there will be Someone who’ll love me” (Figure 7.5). The music reaches the song’s dramatic climax in m. 46, “Someone who’ll love just me,” ending the phrase unresolved on G5 and creating musical and dramatic anticipation with a fermata. After the dramatic suspense, the song comes to a romantic conclusion with the phrase “To have and to hold!” and ending with a classic blues-style accompaniment.

Figure 7.5: Weill— “What Good Would the Moon Be?” from *Street Scene*, meas. 41-48.

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The musical score for "What Good Would the Moon Be?" from *Street Scene* (measures 41-48) is presented in a four-system format. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats), and the time signature is 4/4. The score includes a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "will be Some one who'll love me. Some one who'll love just me To have and to hold!". The piano part features a blues-style accompaniment with triplets and a fermata on G5 in measure 46. The score is numbered 218 in the top left corner.

## Chapter 8 - Léo Delibes (1836-1891) and

### *Les filles de Cadix (1874)*

#### *Biographical Information on the Composer*

Léo Clément-Philibert Delibes (b. St. German du Val, February 21, 1836; d. Paris, January 16, 1891) was a French composer and organist of the Romantic era (Figure 8.1). Delibes is somewhat of an obscure composer, despite his many contributions to various musical genres. Delibes is first and foremost remembered as an opera and ballet composer, and secondly a choral composer. Even if one has never heard of any of his operas, you still have probably heard the “Flower Duet” from his most famous opera, *Lakmé*.<sup>1</sup> Although Delibes is mostly recognized for his theatrical works, he also tried his hand in the genre of French *mélodie*, publishing 29 songs during his lifetime.<sup>2</sup> His most popular French *mélodie* is his *Chanson espagnole*, or more commonly known as *Les filles de Cadix* (1874).



Figure 8.1: Léo Delibes (1836-1891)

Classical Net Website, “Léo Delibes,” 31 March 2018. <http://www.classical.net/music/comp.lst/delibes.php>.

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<sup>1</sup> Georg Predota, “Léo Delibes: A Life of Muted Passions,” *Interlude*, 21 March 2018. <http://www.interlude.hk/front/leo-delibes-life-muted-passions/>.

<sup>2</sup> David Tunley and Frits Noske, “Mélodie,” *Oxford Music Online*, 21 March 2018. <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000042953>.

## Léo Delibes: The Later Years (1870-1891)

The 1870s brought a change and advancement in the life and career of Léo Delibes. On May 2, 1870, Delibes saw success with his ballet, *Coppélia, ou la fille aux yeux d'émail* at the Paris Opéra. The ballet *Coppélia* originated from a story by the German Romantic writer and composer E.T.A. Hoffman, and tells the tale of an infatuation with a mechanical dancing doll that comes to life.<sup>3</sup> “Based on E.T.A. Hoffmann, it has remained one of the best loved of all classical ballets and shows Delibes’s musical gifts at their most appealing.”<sup>4</sup> *Coppélia* became such a huge success that it is now a standard in the ballet repertoire.<sup>5</sup>

The following year in 1871, Delibes relinquished both his positions as the organist of St. Pierre de Chaillot and as the chorus master at the Paris Opéra. Delibes ultimately came to this career-changing decision, so that he might devote his entire attention and efforts as a full-time composer. The year of 1871 also brought about romance and love for Delibes, as he married and became the husband to Léontine Estelle Denain.<sup>6</sup>

With Delibes’s grand success with *Coppélia*, the Opéra – Comique in Paris commissioned three separate works from Delibes between 1873 and 1883.<sup>7</sup> Delibes’s first commission from the Opéra – Comique was his comedy, *Le roi l’a dit* in 1873, which was soon followed by his second full-length ballet, *Sylvia* (1876). Delibes’s second commission for the

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<sup>3</sup> Georg Predota, “Léo Delibes,” *Interlude*, 21 March 2018. <http://www.interlude.hk/front/leo-delibes-1836-189-lets-dance/>.

<sup>4</sup> Hugh Macdonald, "Delibes, (Clément Philibert) Léo," *Oxford Music Online*, 21 Mar. 2018. <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000007469>.

<sup>5</sup> Georg Predota, “Léo Delibes,” *Interlude*.

<sup>6</sup> Hugh Macdonald, "Delibes, (Clément Philibert) Léo," *Oxford Music Online*.

<sup>7</sup> Georg Predota, “Léo Delibes,” *Interlude*.

Opéra – Comique, premiered in 1880, with his opera, *Jean de Nivelle*. Although this opera was an immediate success upon its premiere, it has only ever been revived once.<sup>8</sup> The third commission for the Opéra – Comique would not make its grand entrance until 1883 with Delibes's operatic masterpiece, *Lakmé*.

The 1880s ushered in another new chapter of Delibes's life. In 1881, the composer was appointed to teach composition at the Paris Conservatoire, even though Delibes himself admitted to not knowing anything about fugue or counterpoint.<sup>9</sup> This appointment was followed by the composition of six pieces in 1882 in an elegant pastiche style for Victor Hugo's play *Le roi s'amuse*. As mentioned prior, the year 1883 brought about the crowning jewel of Delibes's operatic works with his opera, *Lakmé*. The opera, *Lakmé* premiered at the Opéra – Comique on April 14, 1883. *Lakmé* tells the tragic love story between a British officer and the daughter of a Brahmin priest.<sup>10</sup> "Its success was lasting; the oriental colour, the superb part of the title role, a well-constructed libretto and the real charm of the music all contributed to a work on which, with the ballets, Delibes's fame has rested."<sup>11</sup>

The final years of Delibes's life were comfortable and noble; he became an elected member of the French Institute in 1884. Delibes's final operatic work, *Kassya*, was completed, but was never orchestrated upon his death in 1891. "*Kassya*, his last work, has a Galician setting with oriental inflections in the music. The vocal writing is of the highest quality, and there is a

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<sup>8</sup> Hugh Macdonald, "Delibes, (Clément Philibert) Léo," *Oxford Music Online*.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Georg Predota, "Léo Delibes," *Interlude*.

<sup>11</sup> Hugh Macdonald, "Delibes, (Clément Philibert) Léo," *Oxford Music Online*.

fine close to the first scene of Act 3, with snow falling on the deserted stage.”<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, this last work of Léo Delibes was not destined to be lost to history. The French opera composer, Jules Massenet took on the task of completing the orchestration, and the opera premiered at the Opéra – Comique in 1893.

Like many of his contemporaries in the late 1800s, Delibes became curious of the evolving styles of the late Romantic period. Although he greatly admired the works of Wagner, Delibes could not bring himself to incorporate extreme modernisms into his compositional style.<sup>13</sup> Delibes’s early compositional style reflects the music of his predecessors Boieldieu, Hérold, and his composition teacher, Adolphe Adam, with the latter helping to provide the foundations of Delibes’s early operettas. The compositional style of Delibes’s later works are often accredited to Delibes’s attempts to break free of Offenbach’s milieu, in order to showcase his talents as a ballet and opera composer.<sup>14</sup> “Delibes was a master of melodious elegance and harmonious charm; his music possessed an autonomous flow in colorful timbres, and a finality of excellence that seemed effortless while subtly revealing a master of the Romanic technique of composition.”<sup>15</sup>

Delibes was also inspired by the music of Meyerbeer, Gounod, Bizet, and Lalo; their influences reside in Delibes’s later works. Léo Delibes and Georges Bizet shared a great admiration for each other’s works, despite the fact that they were never close friends.<sup>16</sup> The two

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<sup>12</sup> Hugh Macdonald, "Delibes, (Clément Philibert) Léo," *Oxford Music Online*.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Nicolas Slonimsky, Laura Kuhn, and Dennis McIntire, “Delibes (Clément-Philibert-) Léo,” *Baker’s Biographical Dictionary of Musicians*, ed. Nicolas Slonimsky, Centennial Edition (New York, NY: Schirmer Books, 2001), 2: 836.

<sup>16</sup> Hugh Macdonald, "Delibes, (Clément Philibert) Léo," *Oxford Music Online*.



composers supported each other in various ways over the years. One such example is Bizet's collaboration with Delibes on his opera *Malbrough s'en va-t-en guerre* (1867), and Delibes's attendance at the premiere of Bizet's *Carmen* (1875).<sup>17</sup> Bizet's admiration of Delibes's music is even featured in the "Gypsy Song" from *Carmen*, as its vocal line shares many similarities to that of Delibes's *Les filles de Cadix* (1874). Delibes's veneration of Bizet and his music is apparent in his later works, particularly that of *Lakmé*. "*Lakmé* is clearly indebted to both *Les pêcheurs de perles* and *Carmen*, and the similarities of the two composers' harmonic and orchestral nuances are often striking."<sup>18</sup>

Although Delibes was most notably a theatrical composer, he also composed several works outside of the theatrical stage. Besides opera and ballet, Delibes also composed a small number of French *mélodie*, and several instrumental, church, and choral works. However, because Delibes composed so few of these other works in comparison to his theatrical compositions, these works are often cast aside or forgotten. Nevertheless, the obscurity of these works makes them all the more valuable as artifacts of the Romantic period.

### ***Les filles de Cadix* (1874)**

The French *mélodie*, *Chanson espagnole* or more commonly known as *Les filles de Cadix* was composed in 1874, and is one of Léo Delibes's most popular art songs. The inspiration for *Les filles de Cadix* came from the wave of exoticism that swept through France during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The "fashion" of exoticism in the 19<sup>th</sup> century originated from the growing interest in

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<sup>17</sup> Hugh Macdonald, "Delibes, (Clément Philibert) Léo," *Oxford Music Online*.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

bringing “local colour” of all kinds into music, or exploiting “characteristic styles.”<sup>19</sup> Exoticism in music was also related to program music and musical nationalism, as well as to various non-musical works from around the same period such as art, literature, clothing, and furniture imitating Chinese, Japanese, ancient Egyptian, and other styles.<sup>20</sup>

The improvements of transportation and communication efforts also played a significant role in the spread of exoticism throughout Europe in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. With new modes of transportation and communication, musicians and audiences could easily travel to new lands to meet new people and discover new cultures; foreign performers saw the opportunity to perform in Western theatres and world fairs.<sup>21</sup> “By the 1870s numerous Europeans, including composers such as Saint-Saëns, were taking winter vacations in North Africa and the Middle East or even settling there.”<sup>22</sup> Because of this exchange of cultures, composers began to incorporate foreign and exotic dances and musical styles into their compositions. Some of the musical styles that had an impact throughout Europe were the Scottish ecossaise, Spanish bolero, Italian tarantella, the Bohemian polka, Hungarian csárdás, the syncopated and African-influenced rhythms from Louisiana and the Caribbean, and the colorful, drone-accompanied melodies of the Middle East.<sup>23</sup>

Western composers took the opportunity of using foreign and exotic musical styles as a means of refreshing and expanding their own musical languages.<sup>24</sup> These exotic musical styles

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<sup>19</sup> Ralph P. Locke, “Exoticism,” *Oxford Music Online*, 21 March 2018.  
<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000045644>.

<sup>20</sup> Ralph P. Locke, “Exoticism,” *Oxford Music Online*.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

took on many shapes and forms in music from opera, ballet, to symphonies and program music, to the French *mélodie*. “The two most favoured exotic settings for western European operas and ballets through the 19<sup>th</sup> century and into the 20<sup>th</sup> were southern Spain, as in Bizet’s *Carmen*, and what might be called the ‘greater Middle East’ -- extending from Morocco to Persia-- as in Saint-Saëns’s *Samson et Dalila*.”<sup>25</sup> The exoticism of the Middle East would eventually play a significant role in Delibes’s operatic masterpiece, *Lakmé* in 1883.

French *mélodie* appeared under the titles *barcarolle*, *Tyrolienne*, *chansonnette*, *nocturne*, *tarantella*, and *bolero*.<sup>26</sup> These titles are ultimately determined by two characteristics: 1) either by character of the song, 2) literary subject, or 3) a combination of both elements. For example, the terms *bolero* and *tarantelle* are specific terms used to characterize poems that deal with Spain or Italy.<sup>27</sup>

The country of France was not immune to the wave of exoticism, and embraced it enthusiastically. France was entranced with the sights and sounds of the exotic, especially with the song and dance forms that hailed from Spain.<sup>28</sup> The allure of the Spanish culture motivated many non-Spanish composers to incorporate Spanish rhythms and melodies into their music.<sup>29</sup> Georges Bizet’s *Carmen* (1875) is a perfect example of Spanish influences upon French Romantic music, with *Carmen*’s “habanera” and “séguedille” numbers.<sup>30</sup> One year before the

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<sup>25</sup> Ralph P. Locke, "Exoticism," *Oxford Music Online*.

<sup>26</sup> Frits Noske and Rita Benton, *French Song from Berlioz to Duparc: The Origin and Development of the Mélodie*, 2nd ed., American Musicological Society-Music Library Association Reprint Series (New York: Dover Publications, 1970), 5.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> Georg Predota, “Léo Delibes: A Life of Muted Passions,” *Interlude*.

<sup>29</sup> Suzanne Draayer, "Seductively Spanish-Programming: Ideas for Spanish Song Repertoire," *Journal of Singing - The Official Journal of the National Association of Teachers of Singing*, 67, no. 5 (2011): 528.

<sup>30</sup> Georg Predota, “Léo Delibes: A Life of Muted Passions,” *Interlude*.

premiere of Bizet's *Carmen*, Delibes became interested in this new and exotic art form, thus producing his *mélodie*, *Les filles de Cadix* (*The Girls of Cadiz*).

The exoticism of the piece is in the title itself. Cadiz is an ancient Spanish city, located on the southwestern tip of Spain and faces southward towards Morocco and westward towards the Atlantic Ocean.<sup>31</sup> "A cultural and trading crossroads of a variety of cultures over the centuries, it inspired Delibes to compose an obsessive bolero dance rhythm that seductively pulses below a restless melody."<sup>32</sup> Cadiz's rich history and culture in itself serve as a perfect example of exoticism, making it an exquisite subject for a French *mélodie* full of Spanish flavor.

*Les filles de Cadix* was originally a poem written by the French writer, Alfred de Musset (1810-1857). "Nineteenth century German poets considered Spain to be exotic, and in the spirit of Romanticism they were drawn to Spain's chivalrous code, its Moorish/Christian legends, and its evocative poetry."<sup>33</sup> Over the years, several composers including Puccini, Offenbach, and Ethel Smyth have utilized Musset's literary compositions for their musical aspirations. Many composers were drawn to Musset's literary works for their natural charm and elegance; "his works are interspersed with lyrics which by their form, language and character invite a musical setting."<sup>34</sup>

In Musset's poem, *Les filles de Cadix*, he tells a story from the perspective of a young, flirtatious, Spanish woman who has just come from seeing a bullfight with her friends. After the

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<sup>31</sup> Georg Predota, "Léo Delibes: A Life of Muted Passions," *Interlude*.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Suzanne Draayer, "Seductively Spanish-Programming: Ideas for Spanish Song Repertoire," *Journal of Singing - The Official Journal of the National Association of Teachers of Singing*, 67, no. 5 (2011), 529.

<sup>34</sup> Martin Cooper and Christopher Smith, "Musset, (Louis-Charles-) Alfred de," *Oxford Music Online*, 21 March 2018. <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000019470>.

bullfight, the young woman and her companions spend the evening dancing. Delibes's accompaniment magically captures the excitement of the group's bolero and the sound of the castanets. As the woman's song continues, she tells of her encounter with a Spanish gentleman, who tries to seduce the young woman with his riches and handsome features. The woman rejects the gentleman's advances, and proudly proclaims that the women of Cadiz do not listen to the flatteries of men.

Delibes perfectly illustrates the exoticism of the Spanish culture and his passion for dance music in this French *mélodie* by setting the text of Musset's poem to the dance music of a Spanish bolero (Figure 8.2). The vocal line is lyrical, flirtatious, and dramatic, showing off the singer's agility, as well as the fiery personality of the young Spanish woman in the poem. Although the vocal line of the piece is primarily lyrical, it also possesses coloratura-like qualities with its large leaps, trills, and ornaments, adding to the exoticism of the song. Through his mastery of dance music and the exotic, Delibes has composed a stunning and challenging vocal piece that shows off any soprano's inner *Carmen*.

Figure 8.2: The bolero in Granada.



Spanish Culture Website, "The bolero in Granada," 31 March 2018.  
[http://www.spainisculture.com/en/obras\\_de\\_excelencia/museo\\_de\\_la\\_casa\\_de\\_los\\_tiros\\_](http://www.spainisculture.com/en/obras_de_excelencia/museo_de_la_casa_de_los_tiros_)

## Analysis of *Les filles de Cadix*

As mentioned previously Delibes set the text of Alfred Musset's poem to the music of a popular Spanish dance, the bolero. "Of the several possible etymologies considered by Suárez-Pajares, the most plausible are those deriving from the verb *volar* ('to fly') and from the name *boleras*, given to the Gypsy women 'who were the first to dance it [and called so] because of the little gold-braided balls (*bolitas de pasamanería*) that adorned their dresses'."<sup>35</sup> The bolero evolved from the Spanish dance, *seguidilla*. "After the *seguidilla* had absorbed steps and movements from such other dances as the fandango, *polo*, *tirana*, and *cachucha*, two types gained prominence: the *seguidilla manchega* (which later became the bolero) and the *seguidilla muricana*."<sup>36</sup> The bolero is usually performed by a couple, or by four to eight couples in theatrical performances. During the performance, dancers often accompany themselves with singing (vocalise), castanets, guitar, and tambourine.<sup>37</sup>

Even though the bolero usually follows the AAB form, Delibes chose to construct the work to follow a traditional strophic form with each stanza being separated into two passages: a verse and a vocalise. The piece is constructed in three quarter time, which is typical of the Spanish bolero. Marked *Allegretto con moto*, the song begins with a thirteen-bar long prelude displaying traditional bolero rhythms in the pattern of an eighth note followed by two sixteenth notes followed by two pairs of eighth notes (Figure 8.3).<sup>38</sup> Measures 1-11 of the prelude are

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<sup>35</sup> Willi Kahl and Israel J. Katz, "Bolero," *Oxford Music Online*, 23 March 2018.  
<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000003444>.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

made up of harmonized thirds in the treble line, with a staccato bass line underneath.<sup>39</sup> A pedal point on a low F-sharp is also present in the bass, firmly establishing the key of F-sharp minor (Figure 8.4).

Figure 8.3: Example of Bolero rhythm.



Willi Kahl and Israel J. Katz, "Bolero," *Oxford Music Online*.

Figure 8.4: Delibes— "Les filles de Cadix," meas. 1-5.



Beginning in m. 11, the accompaniment's texture becomes thinner, with rapidly arpeggiated figures that mimic the strumming of a guitar. This change in texture, announces the entrance of the vocal line in m. 14. "The entry of the voice is preceded by at least one bar of sharply marked rhythm, and short instrumental interludes separate the sung couplets."<sup>40</sup> With the entrance of the ascending vocal line, the rhythmic accent of the melody becomes slightly

<sup>39</sup> "Blue" Gene Tyranny, "Léo Delibes: Les Filles de Cadix, bolero for voice & piano (or orchestra)," *AllMusic.com*, 23 March 2018. <https://www.allmusic.com/composition/les-filles-de-cadix-bolero-for-voice-piano-or-orchestra-mc0002360965>.

<sup>40</sup> Willi Kahl and Israel J. Katz, "Bolero," *Oxford Music Online*.

shifted. This is most likely a Spanishism of the period, as the melody continues to dance along its own path.<sup>41</sup>

Delibes pays homage to the Spanish culture not only through the song's accompaniment, but also through the melody of the vocal line. The vocal line of the song is richly elaborated with melismas and Spanish-like ornaments (Figure 8.5). Within the phrase of text, “Nous venions de voir le taureau, Trois garçons, trois fillettes,” Delibes has presented a melismatic turn on the word “fillettes.” For the next phrase of text, “Sur la pelouse il faisait beau,” Delibes repeats the opening ascending melody allowing it to grow within the next phrase, “Et nous dansions un bolero.” As the vocal line ascends beyond the octave, Delibes inserts a *rallentando* for dramatic effect, and an ornament on the word “bolero” before having the vocal line descend and the music revert to *a tempo*. On the following phrase, “Au son des castagnettes,” a melisma decorates the word, “castagnettes,” with the accompaniment resuming its staccato, harmonizing thirds and pedal point.<sup>42</sup> Towards the end of the melisma, Delibes inserts another *rallentando* and fermata before the line's resolution.

Figure 8.5: Delibes— “Les filles de Cadix,” meas. 23-30.  
Vocal line with Spanish-like ornaments.

The musical score for measures 23-30 of "Les filles de Cadix" by Léo Delibes. The vocal line is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The piano accompaniment is written in bass clef. The score includes the following lyrics and musical markings:

**Measure 23:** *rall.* We danced the joy-ous bo-le-ro, In mirth our hearts de-light-  
Et nous dan-sions un bo-lé-ro Au son des ca-sta-gnet-tes

**Measure 24:** *a tempo*

**Measure 25:** *colla voce* ing-tes: Neigh-bor, tell me pray,  
Dt-tea-moi, voi-sin,

**Measure 26:** *a tempo*

**Measure 27:** *rall.* *p un poco rit.*

**Measure 28:** *sostenuto*

<sup>41</sup> “Blue” Gene Tyranny, “Léo Delibes: *Les Filles de Cadix*, bolero for voice & piano (or orchestra),” *AllMusic.com*.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*



With a slight *ritardando* in m. 30, the music takes on a different personality. The accompaniment reverts back to its “strumming;” the vocal line becoming softer, more intimate, and seductive. Measures 30-37 are more conversational in nature, as the Spanish woman in the text asks her audience if she is beautiful in her dress this morning. “Dîtes-moi, voisin, Si j’ai bonne mine, Et si ma basquine Va bien ce matin. Vous me trouvez la taille fine? Vous me trouvez la taille fine?”

Measures 38-61 present a dramatic coloratura section that shows off the soprano’s agility and power. The passage is essentially a spectacular and exotic vocalise built upon trills, arpeggios, chromatic runs, and rhythmic punctuations of repeated notes.<sup>43</sup> The text “Ah! Les filles de Cadix aiment assez cela” is repeated three times throughout the vocalise. Pierre Bernac recommends that the performer provide variety to the vocal line with each repetition of the text. “It is easy to vary the three stanzas; the first one sung with much coquetry; the second ironical and mocking, the coloratura on ‘Ah!’ being like peals of laughter; and the final stanza easy, sprightly and gay.”<sup>44</sup> From meas. 51-57, during the second repetition of the text, a line of “la ra la la” is added into the vocalise, mimicking the bolero and its growing intensity. The vocalise reaches its climax after the third repetition of the text in meas. 58-61 ending with two brief, but highly elaborated statements of “Ah,” decorated with trills, arpeggios, and a chromatic run (Figure 8.6).

After the conclusion of the first stanza, the accompaniment repeats the opening material, and the second stanza and vocalise follow the same musical lines and analysis of the first stanza, with only a minor alteration at the end of the second stanza’s vocalise. At the end of the

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Pierre Bernac, *The Interpretation of French Song* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1976), 57.

dramatic vocalise in meas. 118-122, instead of having two statements of “Ah” as in the first stanza, Delibes adds an extra statement between the original two, having the vocalise ascend to a high C-sharp 6 before concluding with the vocalise’s final chromatic run.

Figure 8.6: Delibes— “Les filles de Cadix,” meas. 38-61.  
Bolero Vocalise.

*a piacere*

*dim.* *P* *2*

ah! ah! ah! ah! ah! ah!

ue? ah! ah! ah! ah!

*colla voce*

— We maid-ens of Ca - diz like well to hear such words, ah!

— Les fil - les de Ca - dix ai - ment as - sez ce - la, ah!

*poco rall.* *a tempo*

— We maid-ens of Ca - diz like well to hear such words, la ra la la la la

— les fil - les de Ca - dix ai - ment as - sez ce - la, la ra la la la la

*poco rall.* *a tempo*

*cresc.*

la la ra la la la la la, We maid-ens of Ca - diz like well to hear such

la la ra la la la la la, les fil - les de Ca - dix ai - ment as - sez ce -

*cresc.*

words, ah! ah!

la ah! ah!

*p e staccato*

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# **Appendix A - Graduate Recital Program**

## **STUDENT RECITAL SERIES**

**Katherine Louise Knoles, Soprano**

**Assisted by**

**Amanda Arrington, Piano**

### **PROGRAM**

*Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott*, BWV 80 (1723) J.S. Bach

Komm in mein Herzenhaus (1685-1750)

Mitchell Jerko, Organ  
Gabe Bazil, Bassoon

*The Creation* (1798) Franz Joseph Haydn

On mighty pens (1732-1809)

*Fêtes galantes I* (1882) Claude Debussy

En sourdine (1862-1918)

Fantoches

Clair de lune

*Suor Angelica* (1918) Giacomo Puccini

Senza mamma (1858-1924)

**PAUSE**

**Sunday, April 29, 2018**

**7:30pm**

**First Presbyterian Church, Manhattan, KS**

*As it fell upon a day* (1923)

Aaron Copland

(1900-1990)

Jessica Brummel, Flute  
Meredith Casey, Clarinet

*A Letter from Sullivan Ballou* (1994)

John Kander

(b. 1927)

*Street Scene* (1947)

Kurt Weill

What Good Would the Moon Be?

(1900-1950)

*Les filles de Cadix* (1874)

Léo Delibes

(1836-1891)

## Appendix B - Program Notes and Translations

Thank you so much for joining me this evening to witness the culmination of my two-year expedition at K-State. For the subject of my graduate report, I explored the in-depth and extensive histories and influences behind these compositions. I have included brief summaries of my historical research in the program notes for tonight's performance. I hope you enjoy tonight's program!

### **“Komm in mein Herzenhaus” from *Ein’ feste Burg ist unser Gott*, BWV 80 (1723)**

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

The cantata *Ein’ feste Burg ist unser Gott*, BWV 80, was composed for the Reformation Festival on October 31<sup>st</sup>. The Reformation Festival marked the anniversary of the day Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses to the door of the All Saints’ Roman Catholic Church in protest for their false teachings of indulgences in 1517, sparking the Protestant Reformation. In honor of the Lutheran Reformation, Bach based the cantata’s chorale melody on Martin Luther’s hymn of the same name. Luther’s hymn, *Ein’ feste Burg ist unser Gott*, was composed in 1529, and was inspired by Psalm 46, “God is our refuge and strength,” or as it’s more commonly known, “A Mighty Fortress is our God.”

*Ein’ feste Burg ist unser Gott*, BWV 80 is derived from one of Bach’s earlier cantatas, *Alles, was von Gott geboren*, BWV 80a (1715), but had been unable to make use of the cantata in Weimar due to the Lenten period. The libretto for *Ein’ feste Burg ist unser Gott*, BWV 80 is a combination of verses from Luther’s hymn and the original libretto from *Alles, was von Gott geboren*, BWV 80a by Salomo Franck (1659-1725). The aria, “Komm in mein Herzenhaus” is the fourth movement of Bach’s cantata, and was written for a continuo pair and soprano voice. Although the continuo keyboard’s accompaniment is active in the aria, the main focus of the aria is the duet between the cello (or bassoon for tonight’s performance) and the soprano voice. The aria is presented as a prayer; the singer asking for Christ to enter into her heart, to drive away worldly sins and the devil, and to be reborn in Christ.

Komm in mein Herzenhaus,  
Herr Jesu, mein Verlangen!  
Treib Welt und Satan aus  
Und laß dein Bild in mir erneuert  
prangen!  
Weg! schnöder Südengraus!

Come into my heart's house,  
Lord Jesus, my desire!  
Cast the world and Satan out  
And let Your Image shine forth from a  
renewed me!  
Away, vile horror of sin!

Text by Salomo Franck (1659-1725)

Dürr, Alfred. *The Cantatas of J.S. Bach: With Their Librettos in German-English Text* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 708.

### **“On mighty pens,” from *The Creation* (1798)**

Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)

Before his departure from London in 1796, Haydn received the libretto, *The Creation of the World*, from his colleague, Johann Peter Salomon. Although the libretto's true author is unknown, it remains a fact that the text was originally written for Handel, but he never set the text. The task was then presented to Haydn, who eagerly accepted the opportunity. For the project, Haydn collaborated with his colleague, Baron Gottfried van Swieten, who set to the task of translating the English text into German; his efforts resulted in the first large-scale musical work to be published with a bilingual text. Of all of Haydn's vocal works, *The Creation*, has remained his crowning achievement.

*The Creation* is an oratorio with its plot focusing on the Biblical creation of the world and Adam and Eve before their fall from grace. *The Creation* is narrated by three archangels: Uriel (tenor), Raphael (bass), and Gabriel (soprano), who are accompanied by the heavenly host (chorus) who look on as the story unfolds. Gabriel's aria, “On mighty pens,” opens the second portion of the oratorio, and narrates the Fifth Day of Creation; the creation of the different species of birds. The aria is a prime example of text-painting as Haydn cleverly employs ascending lines, trills, figures, and ornaments in both the accompaniment and vocal line to illustrate the flight of the eagle, song of the lark, and coo of the nightingale. The aria is considered to be a showcase for the soprano voice.

On mighty pens uplifted soars  
the eagle aloft, and cleaves the sky  
in swiftest flight to the blazing sun.  
His welcome bids to morn the merry lark,  
and cooing, calls the tender dove his mate.  
From ev'ry busy and grove resound  
the nightingale's delightful note.  
No grief affected yet her breast,  
nor to a mournful tale were tun'd  
her soft, enchanting lays.

Text based on John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Book VII  
Temperley, Nicholas. *Haydn: The Creation* (Cambridge and London: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 57.

***Fêtes galantes I (1882)***  
Claude Debussy (1862-1918)

The young Claude Debussy was only twenty years old when he composed *Fêtes galantes* for his first love, Madame Blanche-Adélaïde Vasnier. Madame Vasnier and Debussy first became acquainted with each other at the Paris Conservatory in Madame Moreau-Sainti's singing class; Madame Vasnier was a soprano studying with Madame Moreau-Sainti, and Debussy was a student accompanist. After carrying on an eight year affair, Debussy's relationship with Madame Vasnier dissipated in 1887 when he returned from completing his studies for the Prix de Rome. Madame Vasnier and her family had moved on in society, and Debussy had returned from Rome a changed man.

The songs associated with *Fêtes galantes* are based on a collection of poetry by the French poet, Paul Verlaine (1844-1896), *Les Fêtes galantes* (1869). Verlaine's poems were inspired by a series of 18<sup>th</sup> century artwork by Jean-Antoine Watteau (1684-1721); his artwork depicts the elegance of courtly life, as well as the characters from the 16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> century theater, Commedia dell'arte. The songs "En sourdine," "Fantoques," and "Clair de Lune" that were written in 1882 for Madame Vasnier were later rewritten in 1892 and published as *Fêtes galantes I* (1892), along with another set, *Fêtes galantes II* (1904). Debussy's 1892 versions are more popular than his 1882 versions, as they are considered to demonstrate the style of the more iconic and mature Debussy. Nevertheless, the 1882 versions provide a look into the youthful artistry of the emerging Debussy.

*“En sourdine”*

“En sourdine” depicts two lovers who lie under the shade of some branches after the ecstasy of love; their focus only on one another and their moment of bliss. As dusk approaches, the nightingale will soon sing, and the lovers will have to depart from one another. Although this poem easily depicts the subject of love, it can also be interpreted as nature offering refuge from worldly sufferings.

*En sourdine*

Calmes dans le demi-jour  
Que les branches hautes font,  
Pénétrons bien notre amour  
De ce silence profound.

Fondons nos âmes, nos coeurs  
Et nos sens extasiés,  
Parmi les vagues langueurs  
Des pins et des arbousiers.

Ferme tes yeux à demi,  
Croise tes bras sur ton sein,  
Et de ton coeur endormi  
Chasse à jamais tout dessein.

Laissons-nous persuader  
Au soufflé berceur et doux,  
Qui vient à tes pieds rider  
Les ondes de gazon roux.

Et quand, solennel, le soir  
Des chênes tombera,  
Voix de notre désespoir,  
Le rossignol chantera.  
Voix de notre désespoir  
Le rossignol chantera.

*Muted*

Calm in the half-light  
That the high branches make,  
Let us permeate our love  
With this deep silence.

Let us melt our souls, our hearts  
And our senses in ecstasy,  
Among the vague languors  
Of the pines and strawberry trees.

Half close your eyes,  
Fold your arms on your breast,  
And from your sleeping heart,  
Drive away all care forever.

Let us be drawn  
By the gentle, rocking wind  
That comes and ripples at your feet  
The waves of russet grass.

And when solemnly the evening  
Shall fall from the dark oaks,  
That voice of our despair,  
The nightingale will sing.  
That voice of our despair,  
The nightingale will sing.

Text by Paul Verlaine (1844-1896)  
Briscoe, James R., ed. *Songs of Claude Debussy, Volume I: High Voice* (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard, 1993), 13-14.



### *Fantoches*

“Fantoches” features characters from the Commedia dell’arte. Scaramouche is a mute pantomime and Pulcinella is a crude and vulgar character. The doctor from Bologna, often appears as both a doctor and lawyer in the Commedia dell’arte. Meanwhile, his daughter slips through the darkness in search of her Spanish pirate. The song ends with a call from a “stage prop” nightingale. The song is pure fun, and not meant to be taken seriously

#### *Fantoches*

Scaramouche et Pulcinella  
Qu’ un mauvais dessein rassembla  
Gesticulent, noirs sous la lune.

Cependent l’excellent docteur  
Bolonais cueille avec lenteur  
Des simples parmi l’herbe brune.

Lors sa fille, piquant minois,  
Sous la charmille, en tapinois,  
Se glise demi-nue, en quête

De son beau pirate espagnol,  
Dont un langoureux rossignol  
Clame sa détresse à tue-tête.

#### *Marionettes*

Scaramouche and Pulcinella  
Whom some evil scheme brought together  
Gesticulate, dark figures beneath the moon.

Meanwhile, the fine doctor  
From Bologna slowly gathers  
Simples among the dark grass.

Then his daughter, that saucy looker,  
Beneath the bower slyly  
Slips in, half nude, in quest

Of her handsome Spanish pirate,  
Whose distress a languorous nightingale  
Proclaims in full voice.

Text by Paul Verlaine (1844-1896)

Briscoe, James R., ed. *Songs of Claude Debussy, Volume I: High Voice* (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard, 1993), 17.

### *Clair de lune*

Debussy captures the image of moonlight in the piano accompaniment, and magically sets the stage for a moonlight masque decorated with fountains, statues, and trees. Debussy captures the serenity of the masque bathed in the moonlight, rather than the sadness of the text.

Votre âme est un paysage choisi  
Que vont charmant masques et bergamasques  
Jouant du luth et dansant et quasi tristes  
Sous leurs déguisements fantasques.

Your soul is a chosen landscape  
Where charming maskers and bergamaskers go about  
Playing the lute and dancing and are almost  
Sad beneath their whimsical disguises.

Tout en chantant sur le mode mineur  
 L'amour vainqueur et la vie opportune,  
 Ils n'ont pas l'air de croire à leur bonheur  
 Et leur chanson se mêle au clair de lune,  
 Et leur chanson se mêle au clair de lune,

While singing in the minor of  
 Love triumphant and of the good life,  
 They seem not to believe in their own happiness  
 And their song is mixed and lost in the moonlight  
 And their song is mixed and lost in the moonlight,

Au calme clair de lune triste et beau,  
 Qui fait rêver les oiseaux dans les arbres  
 Et sangloter d'extase les jets d'eau,  
 Les grands jets d'eau sveltes parmi les marbres.  
 Au calme clair de lune triste et beau.

In the calm moonlight, sad and beautiful  
 That makes the birds dream in the trees  
 And the fountains sob in ecstasy,  
 Those tall, slender fountains among the statues,  
 Ah, calm moonlight, sad and beautiful.

Text by Paul Verlaine (1844-1896)

Briscoe, James R., ed. *Songs of Claude Debussy, Volume I: High Voice* (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard, 1993), 15.

### **“Senza mamma” from Suor Angelica (1918)**

Giacomo Puccini (1858-1924)

*Suor Angelica* is the second of three one-act operas from the trilogy *Il Trittico* composed by the Italian opera composer, Giacomo Puccini. The operas of *Il Trittico* are linked through similar themes of death, revenge, and inter-family conflicts. *Il Trittico* consists of *Il tabaro*, *Suor Angelica*, and *Gianni Schicchi*, and premiered on December 14, 1918, at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York. Although, Puccini meant for all three one-acts to be performed together as a set, the trilogy was met with opposing views, and the one-acts were eventually split up and performed separately. Of the three operas, *Gianni Schicchi* was hailed as the most popular, while *Suor Angelica* was the first to be stripped from the trio, much to Puccini's dismay as it was his favorite of the three.

The plot of *Suor Angelica*, focuses on the nun, Sister Angelica, and takes place at a convent during the latter portion of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. During the 17<sup>th</sup> century, convents were not only meant to serve as religious institutions, but also as penitentiaries for women of elite status who dishonored their family. At the climactic point of the opera, Sister Angelica is visited by her aunt, the Princess, who has come so that Angelica may relinquish her birthright. During her aunt's visit, it is revealed that Angelica came from an elite family, and dishonored them through an affair that resulted in an illegitimate child. Angelica begs her aunt to tell her of her son; her aunt hesitates, but eventually reveals that her son died two years ago due to a severe illness. Heartbroken, Angelica sings her aria, “Senza mamma,” mourning the death of her son.

Angelica's despair drives her to commit suicide, but she begs the Mother Mary to save her from her sin. The closing scene of the opera features a heavenly light as Angelica is reunited with her son.

Senza mamma, o bimbo,  
tu sei morto!  
Le tue labbra, senza i baci miei,  
scoloriron fredde, fredde!  
E chiudesti,  
o bimbo, gli occhi belli!  
Non potendo carezzarmi,  
le manine componesti in croce!  
E tu sei morto  
senza sapere  
quanto t'amava  
questa tua mamma!

Ora che sei un angelo del cielo,  
ora tu puoi vederla la tua mamma!  
Tu puoi scendere giù pel firmamento  
ed aleggiare intorno a me...ti sento...  
Sei qui...sei qui...  
mi baci e m'accarezzi.  
Ah! dimmi, quando in ciel potrò vederti?  
Quando potrò baciarti?...  
O dolce fine d'ogni mio dolore,  
quando in cielo con te potrò salire?...  
Quando potrò morire?  
Dillo alla mamma, creatura bella,  
con un leggero scintillar di stella...  
Parlami, amore, amore!

Without you mother, o babe,  
you died!  
Your lips, without my kisses,  
grew pale and chilled, chilled!  
And you closed,  
O babe, your beautiful eyes!  
Powerless to caress me,  
you crossed your little hands!  
And you died  
never knowing  
how much you were loved  
by your mother!

Now that you are an angel in heaven,  
finally you can see your mother!  
You may descend to earth  
and hover near me...I feel you...  
You are here... you are here...  
you kiss me and you caress me.  
Ah! tell me, when will I see you in heaven?  
When will I kiss you?...  
O beloved end all of my pain,  
when will I be with you in heaven?  
When will I die?  
Tell your mother, beautiful creature,  
with the twinkle of a star...  
speak to me, my love, my love!

Libretto by Giovacchino Forzano (1884-1970)

Larsen, Robert L., *G. Schirmer Opera Anthology: Arias for Soprano*, Volume 2, (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard, 2004), 23-24.

*As it fell upon a day (1923)*

Aaron Copland (1900-1990)

Aaron Copland composed his chamber work, *As it fell upon a day*, for soprano, flute, and clarinet in fulfillment of a composition assignment for his teacher, Nadia Boulanger. The original instructions for the assignment was to compose a work using imitative counterpoint between flute and clarinet. Copland satisfied this requirement in the opening prelude of the work. As he was composing the work, Copland became attracted to the text from a poem by Richard Barnefield (1574-1627), and added a soprano vocal line to the composition. The chamber work narrates two simultaneous happenings: the celebration of springtime and the nightingale's lament. Barnefield's text makes references to King Pandion from Greek mythology, suggesting that the nightingale is his daughter, Philomela, who was raped and tortured by her brother-in-law, King Theseus, and was later transformed into a nightingale.

Out of Copland's vocal works, *As it fell upon a day* is one of the most obscure, and is often overlooked in the vocal repertoire. One of the most challenging aspects of this piece is that all three melodic lines fall in the same range. Nevertheless, *As it fell upon a day*, along with Copland's ballet, *Grohg* (1925), and *Symphony for Organ and Orchestra* (1924), are considered to be the first works of his professional beginning. *As it fell upon a day* is a prime example of Copland's "early American sound," that would later lead him to be known as America's most famous composer.

As it fell upon a day  
In the merry month of May,  
Sitting in a pleasant shade  
Which a grove of myrtles made,  
Beasts did leap and birds did sing,  
Trees did grow and plants did spring;  
Everything did banish moan  
Save the Nightingale alone:  
She, poor bird as all forlorn  
Leaned her breast up-till a thorn,  
And there sung the dolefull'st ditty,  
That to hear it was great pity.  
Fie, fie, fie! now would she cry;  
Tereu, Tereu! by and by;  
That to hear her so complain  
Scarce I could from tears refrain;

For her griefs so lively shown  
Made me think upon mine own.  
Ah! thought I, thou mourn'st in vain,  
None takes pity on thy pain:  
Senseless trees they cannot hear thee,  
Ruthless bears they will not cheer thee:  
King Pandion he is dead,  
All thy friends are lapp'd in lead;  
All thy fellow birds do sing  
Careless of thy sorrowing:  
Even so, poor bird, like thee,  
None alive will pity me.

Text by Richard Barnefield (1574-1627)

Cook, Amanda. "Copland: *As It Fell Upon A Day* Program Notes," *Between the Ledger Lines*, accessed 13 March 2018. <https://betweentheledgerlines.wordpress.com/2014/09/12/copland-as-it-fell-upon-a-day-program-notes/>.

### ***A Letter from Sullivan Ballou (1994)***

John Kander (b. 1927)

Known mostly for his Broadway musicals, *Cabaret* (1966) and *Chicago* (1975), John Kander composed the dramatic monologue, *A Letter from Sullivan Ballou* for the famous soprano, Renée Fleming. The work is based on a Civil War letter from Major Sullivan Ballou, to his wife, Sarah, one week before the First Battle of Bull Run (July 21, 1861). Major Sullivan Ballou served in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Regiment of Rhode Island Detached Militia, and was fatally wounded during the battle. He died on July 28, 1861, due to complications from an amputated leg. Approximately one year later, the governor of Rhode Island, William Sprague, and his men were able to travel to Virginia to retrieve the bodies and belongings of those lost, and return them to their loved ones and families back home. However, Ballou's body had been one of many that had been desecrated and destroyed during the Confederate occupation of the region. His remains and the letter were returned to his family, and he was buried at Swan Point Cemetery. His letter is a treasured piece of American Civil War literature, and is a testimony of patriotism, love, and hope.

Kander's compositional style features many patriotic symbolisms in the work. The vocal line is decorated with military bugle calls throughout, the most symbolic being the recurring "Taps" motif; a symbolism of honor and humility to the fallen Major Sullivan Ballou. As the vocal line evolves throughout, so does the accompaniment; the left hand remains constant to symbolize Ballou's commitment to his country, while the right hand romantically doubles and ornaments the vocal line, representing Ballou's love for his wife and family.

*My very dear Sarah,*

*The indications are very strong that we move in a few days--perhaps tomorrow. Lest I should not be able to write again, I feel impelled to write a few lines that may fall upon your eye when I am no more.*

*I have no misgivings about, or lack of confidence in the cause in which I am engaged, and my courage does not halt or falter. I know how strongly American civilization now leans on the triumph of government, and how great a debt we owe to those who went before us through the blood and sufferings of the Revolution. And I am willing, perfectly willing to lay down all my joys in this life to help maintain this government, and to pay that debt.*

*Sarah, my love for you is deathless. It seems to bind me with mighty cables, that nothing but omnipotence could break; and yet, my love of country comes over me like a strong wind, and bears me unresistably on with all these chains, to the battlefield. The memories of the blissful moments I have spent with you come creeping over me, and I feel most gratified to God and you, that I have enjoyed them so long. And hard it is for me to give them up, and burn to ashes the hopes of future years, when, God willing, we might still have lived and loved together, and seen our sons grow up to honorable manhood around us.*

*I have, I know, but few and small claims upon Divine Providence, but something whispers to me, perhaps it is the wafted prayer of my little Edgar, that I shall return to my loved ones unharmed. If I do not, my dear Sarah, never forget how much I love you, and when my last breath escapes me on the battle-field, it will whisper your name. Forgive my many faults, and the many pains I have caused you. How thoughtless and foolish I have oftentimes been! How gladly would I wash out with my tears, every little spot upon your happiness.*

*But, O Sarah, if the dead can come back to this earth, and flit unseen around those they loved, I shall always be near you in the gladdest days, and the darkest nights, always, always. And if there be a soft breeze upon your cheek, it shall be my breath, as the cool air fans your throbbing temple, it shall be my spirit passing by. Sarah, do not mourn me dead; think I am gone and wait for thee, for we shall meet again.*

Text by Sullivan Ballou (1829-1861)

Manassas National Battlefield Park. "My Very Dear Wife"--The Last Letter of Major Sullivan Ballou," accessed 17 March 2018. <https://www.nps.gov/articles/-my-very-dear-wife-the-last-letter-of-major-sullivan-ballou.htm>.

Kander, John. *A Letter From Sullivan Ballou* (Alfred Publishing Co., Inc., 1994).

## **“What Good Would the Moon Be?” from *Street Scene* (1947)**

Kurt Weill (1900-1950)

The “American” opera, *Street Scene*, is based off of Elmer Rice’s Pulitzer Prize winning play of the same name. Weill first approached Rice with the idea of composing an opera based on the play back in 1936, but Rice had rejected the idea, stating that it was “too early for that sort of show.” A decade later Rice agreed to a second offer by Weill, and the they, along with the African-American poet, Langston Hughes, set to work on the opera. Even though *Street Scene* is considered to be an opera, it is a work that incorporates Broadway-style songs and music. *Street Scene* premiered at the Adelphi Theater in New York on January 9, 1947 and ran for 148 performances. Out of all of Weill’s works, *Street Scene*, has proved to be his most enduring, and has been revived more than any of his other works.

The plot of *Street Scene* focuses on the crumbling marriage of Mrs. Anne Maurant and her husband, Mr. Frank Maurant, and the blossoming love interest between their daughter, Rose Maurant, and the young law student, Sam Kaplan. Rose’s *cavatina*, “What Good Would the Moon Be?” is composed in the style of a “blues” ballad, and occurs in the latter part of Act I. Harry Easter, Rose’s boss, enters walking Rose home, and tries to seduce her with promises of fame on Broadway if she agrees to elope with him. However, Rose replies with “What Good Would the Moon Be?” stating that her affections can’t be bought, and that she dreams of true-love.

I’ve looked in the windows at diamonds,  
They’re beautiful, but they’re cold.  
I’ve seen Broadway stars in fur coats,  
That cost a fortune, so I’m told.  
I guess I’d look nice in diamonds,  
And sables might add to my charms,  
But if someone I don’t care for would buy them,  
I’d rather have two loving arms!

What good would the moon be  
Unless the right one shared its beams?  
What good would dreams-come-true be  
If love wasn’t in those dreams?  
And a primrose path, what would be the fun  
Of walking down a path like that without the right one?

What good would the night be  
Unless the right lips whisper low:  
Kiss me, oh darling, kiss me,  
While ev'ning stars still glow?  
No, it won't be a primrose path for me,  
No, it won't be diamonds or gold,  
But maybe there will be  
Someone who'll love me,  
Someone who'll love just me  
To have and to hold!

Text by Langston Hughes (1902-1967)

Walters, Richard, ed. *The Singer's Musical Theater Anthology: Soprano, Volume I*, Revised Edition (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard, 1987), 214-218.

***Les filles de Cadix (1874)***

Léo Delibes (1836-1891)

Although Léo Delibes is primarily known for his theatrical works, he also composed and published some 29 *mélodies* during his lifetime. Composed one year before the premiere of Bizet's *Carmen*, Delibes's setting of Alfred Musset's (1810-1857) poetry, *Les filles de Cadix* is a prime example of the Spanish exoticism that swept through France during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Delibes cleverly sets the exotic text to the dance of a Spanish bolero. The ancient city of Cadiz is located on the southwestern tip of Spain, near Morocco and the Atlantic Ocean. The city has served as a cultural and trading crossroads over the centuries. Cadiz's rich history and exotic culture make it an exquisite subject for a French *mélodie* full of Spanish flavor.

In Musset's poem, *Les filles de Cadix*, a young, flirtatious, Spanish woman has just come from seeing a bullfight with her friends. After the bullfight, the young woman and her companions spend the evening dancing. Delibes's accompaniment magically captures the excitement of the group's bolero and the sound of the castanets. As the song continues, the woman tells of her encounter with a Spanish gentleman, who tries to seduce her with his riches and handsome features. The woman rejects the gentleman's advances, and proudly proclaims that the women of Cadiz do not listen to the flatteries of men. One of the highlights of Delibes's *mélodie* is the woman's dramatic vocalise, a traditional element of the Spanish bolero. *Les filles de Cadix* is a stunning and challenging vocal piece that shows off any soprano's inner *Carmen*.



Nous venions de voir le taureau,  
 Trois garçons, trois fillettes.  
 Sur la pelouse il faisait beau,  
 Et nous dansions un boléro  
 Au son des castagnettes.  
 < Dites-moi, voisin,  
 Si j'ai bonne mine,  
 Et si ma basquine  
 Va bien, ce matin.  
 Vous me trouvez la taille fine?...  
 Ah! ah!  
 Les filles de Cadix aiment assez cela. >

Et nous dansions un boléro  
 Un soir, c'était dimanche  
 Vers nous s'en vint un hidalgo  
 Cousu d'or, la plume au chapeau,  
 Et la poing sur la hanche:  
 < Si tu veux de moi,  
 Brune au doux sourire,  
 Tu n'as qu'à le dire,  
 Cet or est à toi.  
 -- Passez votre chemin, beau sire...  
 Ah! Ah!  
 Les filles de Cadix n'entendent pas cela. >

We had just seen the bull,  
 three lads, three young girls,  
 on the lawn it was find,  
 and we were dancing a bolero  
 to the sound of the castanets.  
 "Tell me, sir,  
 if I look well,  
 and if my skirt  
 suits me, this morning,  
 do you find my waist slender?...  
 Ah! Ah!  
 We the girls of Cadiz are fond of that!"

And we were dancing a bolero,  
 one evening, it was a Sunday,  
 toward us came a hidalgo  
 stitched in gold, feather in hat,  
 and hand on the hip:  
 "Should you want anything of me,  
 Dark, sweet-smiled one,  
 you need only say,  
 this gold is yours.  
 --Be on your way, handsome sir...  
 Ah! Ah!  
 The girls of Cadiz do not listen to that!"

Text by Alfred Musset (1810-1857)  
 Goldsack, Christopher. "Les filles de Cadix," *The Mélodie Treasury*, accessed 20 April 2018,  
[http://www.melodietreasury.com/translations/song183\\_Les%20filles%20de%20Cadix.html](http://www.melodietreasury.com/translations/song183_Les%20filles%20de%20Cadix.html).