

ACCOMPANYING MATERIALS  
LOCATED IN MUSEUM

EUGENE ROBERT THOMAS

B.A., Tabor College, 1984

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submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

## MASTER OF MUSIC

### Vocal Performance

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY  
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Approved by \_\_\_\_\_

Major Professor

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EUGENE THOMAS, Lyric Baritone  
B.A., Tabor College, 1984

Assisted by  
ANNE WESTGATE, Piano

Monday, May 2, 1988

All Faiths Chapel Aud.

8:00 p.m.

A MASTER'S PROGRAM  
presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of  
MASTER OF MUSIC, VOCAL PERFORMANCE

PROGRAM

Songs from *Six Elizabethan Songs*

Dominick Argento  
(born 1927)

Spring

Sleep

Dirge

Diaphenia

Hymn

Dans le Jardin (No. 2 from *Deux romances*)

Claude Debussy  
(1862-1918)

Les Cloches

Songs from *Ariettes Oubliées*

Green

Spleen

The Jolly, Jolly Breeze

John Eccles  
(1650-1735)

Music for Awhile

Henry Purcell  
(?1658-1695)

Bonvica's Song

INTERMISSION

Songs from *Eichendorfflieder*

Hugo Wolf  
(1860-1903)

Der Freund

Der Musikant

Verschwiegene Liebe

Der verzweifelte Liebhaber

Largo al factotum della città  
from *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*

Gioacchino Rossini  
(1792-1868)

## ART SONGS

The composition of an art song is an effort to fuse text and tone, the music giving the text fuller meaning. Melody, phrasing, harmony, mood, form, and the interpretation of the song are determined by the poem. Art songs can be divided into three classes. The first class is strophic song where one mood must be generally conceived. The music may vary slightly from line to line, but the dominant sentiment must take precedence. Folksongs are major representatives of this class. The second class is through-composed song where the music changes as the mood of the poem changes. It is the opposite of strophic song. The composer tries as much as possible to reflect the individual sentiments of each phrase. A panoramic song of this type sometimes loses musical unity as each idea is expressed. The class is a composite form which fluctuates between the other two classes. Repetition serves as a unifying device, but variation at key points elaborates the poet's different manipulations of the main idea. Ideally, art song is distinguished from popular song by the equal status it gives to the accompaniment. The voice and accompanying instrument are expressive partners. The voice is responsible for declamation of the text and the accompaniment is responsible for commentary, atmosphere, and musical support of the vocal line.

Up to the early 18th century, songs for the drawing room were accompanied by lutes, solo instruments, and small or large instrumental ensembles. The newly-developed piano's expressive versatility, dynamic

range, and standard sound allowed composers freedom to write music filled with effects, plain accompaniments, or showy accompaniments, or to reduce instrumental works to appropriate size for chamber performance. In the late 19th century, the voice became treated more like an instrument and the voice and the accompaniment began to vie for importance.

German art song developed from a popular heritage of folk songs, folk poetry, and religious music. The songs of the central 18th century were simple and sincere. A serious interest in the Lied began to flourish in the late 18th century with Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven. Musical ideas suggested by the text were set for voice and piano with the intention being to provide formal unity and to enhance details. The songs tended towards noble, psychological, sometimes excessively sentimental subjects. The Minnesinger tradition had left German composers with a pure, mystical, extremely subjective perspective on romance.

The development of Lied presupposes a development in German poetry. Goethe is the best-known author of Romantic, German verse. His poetry, which ranged from lyric, classical meters to folksy couplets or quatrains, carried the central theme of poignant personal feeling externally shaped by forces of Nature, historical tradition, and contemporary society. Musicians seized on this theme, setting it in classical operas, oratorios, and cantatas, or in lyric, popular and folksy songs appropriate for the new poetry. The dramatic and lyric styles began to meld, and the piano/vocal duo became the primary vehicle for composition.

Schubert is the best-known Lieder composer and developer. He capitalized on the songs of his predecessors which began to exhibit illus-

strative effects in their accompaniments. In Schubert's music, music became just as important as the text. Schubert was followed by Schumann, Mendelssohn, Wagner, Liszt, and Brahms, Wolf, Mahler, and R. Strauss.

Hugo Wolf was born on March 13, 1860, in Windischgraz, Austria, now a part of Yugoslavia. His father, a tanner who was interested in music, began teaching young Hugo piano and violin early. In 1868, Wolf saw his first opera, Donizetti's Belisario, and was very impressed by it.

Wolf was basically self-educated. From 1870 to 1877 he attended one school after another, being expelled often because of a lack of academic discipline and interest. He cared for nothing but music, especially opera. This interest led him eventually to the Vienna Conservatory. Anneliese Landau credits Wolf for having a genius far ahead of his teachers and reports his intense interest in reading.<sup>1</sup>

In December of 1875, he met his idol, Richard Wagner. He was an avid Wagnerian and attended operas constantly, especially Wagner's. During his tenure at Vienna, Wolf was also a friend of Gustav Mahler. These associations with composers especially noted for large-scale works did not dissuade him from continuing composition of small forms, even though Wagner advised him to explore large forms.

In March of 1877, he returned home and composed the first song he deemed worthy of publication, "Morgentau." Upon his return to Vienna in November, he joined a social circle of Wagnerians. This circle of

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1 Anneliese Landau, The Lied: The Unfolding of its Style, (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1980), p. 79.

friends supported him financially as he began a career as a composer. Unfortunately, on an excursion to a brothel with these friends, he contracted syphilis, a condition which affected his subsequent social life and eventually brought about his death.

From this time on, he depended on friends for support. He led a life of penury and always sought seclusion, an attitude occasioned by medical advice governing his social habits where syphilis was concerned. But this did not prevent him from romance. He had an affair with debutante Vally Franck from 1878 to 1880. In 1879 he met Melanie Köchert and spent the rest of his life after 1881 admiring her. Many influential people, including Heinrich Köchert, Melanie's husband, supported Wolf and permitted him to use their vacant residences.

It was during his times of passion, times when he was either separated from his lovers or when he was actively engaged in the affairs, that he composed most vigorously. Eric Sams refers to the years 1878-1880 as Wolf's "sexual phase."<sup>2</sup> During his affair with Mme. Franck, he chose emotional texts from the pens of Heine, Lenau, Rückert, and Goethe. Sams calls 1888 the year of Wolf's "artistic maturity."<sup>3</sup> He was rendezvousing with Mdm. Köchert at this time.

After 1881, Wolf walked on a precarious ledge professionally. In November of 1881, a friend helped him find a conducting job in Salzburg. Due to personality conflicts which were largely his own fault, he

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<sup>2</sup> Eric Sams, "Hugo Wolf," in Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians, 6th ed., edited by Stanley Sadie (New York: MacMillan, 1980), p. 476.

<sup>3</sup> Eric Sams, The Songs of Hugo Wolf (London: Eulenburg Books, 1983) p. 1.

returned to his circle of friends in Vienna early in 1882. His demeanor became gloomy and his songs graphed wide mood swings. In 1884, Heinrich Köchert helped him get the position of music critic for a Sunday tabloid called the Weiner Schonblatt. His fanaticism for Wagner and comments against Brahms made him enemies quickly. He was criticized by Eduoard Hanslick and black-listed by the foremost performers in Vienna, all of whom were pro-Brahms. Wolf wrote his last critique and returned home in May, 1887.

That month his father died. This event was made bittersweet by news that a friend had persuaded a publisher to publish two volumes of Wolf's songs, each containing six songs. Volume one, for a female, was dedicated to his mother, and volume two, for a male, was dedicated to his late father. A creative euphoria emerged and Wolf entered 1888 writing masterpieces. He wrote almost 100 songs in rapid succession. Through 1891 he wrote over 200 compositions to texts by Mörike, Eichendorff, Goethe, Geibel, Keller, and Heyse. He also began experimenting with larger forms. Then the creative bubble burst; he was creatively silent from 1892-1894. He was also stricken by a throat malady indirectly caused by his syphillitic infection. Concert performances, however, kept him busy.

On March 2, 1888, Rosa Papier became the first singer to publicly perform a Wolf song. On March 23, 1888, Wolf performed for the Wagner Society and impressed many musicians including tenor Ferdinand Jäger, famous for the role of Parsifal. They became friends and sang the first of many duo recitals that December. Wolf's creative silence was followed by an opera, Der Corregidor, which he worked on between



recitals from 1895 to 1897. He also wrote thirty-plus songs during this time period.

In March, 1897, he wrote his last songs to German translations of sonnets by Michelangelo. A Wolf Society was formed, but his creativity waned as insanity due to syphilis overtook him. He was institutionalized in November, 1897, but was discharged in January, 1898, after a remission. After brief but futile visits to spas, he returned to the institution in October. Wolf died there on February 22, 1903.

His anti-Brahmsian perspective was not only a part of his life as a critic, but also as a composer. He was a non-traditionalist composer more in the vein of Wagner. He sought to create expressions which would reflect the emotional power of the verse rather than writing tuneful melodies which characterized the poetry in general. Wolf has been compared to Schumann more than to any other Lieder composer. Comparisons to Schumann include stylistic elements and historical elements.

Wolf's style of creating a personal repertoire of specific expressive devices which melded the word and the music was also a trademark of Schumann. They both wrote their songs with an emphasis on the keyboard while vocal or instrumental lines provided counterpoint. Sometimes chordal textures evolved into linear, contrapuntal textures. Virtuoso piano interludes would separate verses or phrases, and sometimes, the piano accompaniment was enough to be a concert piece on its own.

Wolf and Schumann both published volumes according to the poets they set--Gedichte von Moricke, Heine, etc. They were both critics. In Wolf's case, he sought to acquire better linguistic disciplines

which would enable him to understand poetry better. Like Schumann's year of 1840, Wolf had his creative burst in the year 1888, apexing a slow maturing process. And, they both died of insanity, although from different causes.

Wolf disapproved of Brahms's musical approach to poetry. Rather than letting poetic expression direct the music, Wolf felt that Brahms ignored the potential that texture, melody, and rhythm had to bring out dramatic intent. He also felt Brahms was insensitive to declamation labelling him cold and archaic. Wolf did not appreciate Brahms's "folksy" approach to music and resented the success of those composers such as Humperdinck who were musically simpler. Wolf liked Wagner because of his harmonic creativity; he liked Wagner's idea of setting words and treating the vocal line as part of the ensemble, not as the primary object of attention. However, Wolf's music was not as spacious as Wagner's, but tended to be more concentrated like chamber music.<sup>4</sup>

Even though his music is not "folksy," more than half of his mature works reflect the popular tradition in the poetry he selected. Simple poems best communicated those behind-the-scenes aspects of poetry Wolf felt important such as construction, action, character, plot and subplot, narrative, gesture and mime, dance and song, costume, scenery, and stage properties of lighting effects and decor. Sams calls Wolf's art the art of "framing, embodying, presenting, [and] enacting the life of words." He chose the poetry he used with four things in mind:

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<sup>4</sup> Philip Radcliffe, "Germany and Austria," in A History of Song, edited by David Stevens (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1960), pp. 254-258.

- 1) the poet--Each volume represented one poet or source.
- 2) the text--This was so important that when performing, he would read the text before performing the song.
- 3) the musical setting--He never chose a text which already had been set successfully in his opinion. This reflects his consideration of music as a translation or representation of the word rather than a personal commentary.
- 4) the dramatic essence--This was the influence of Wagner.<sup>5</sup>

He wrote the music with three major things in mind: melody, harmony, and motivic treatment.

Melodically, the words are either painted by appropriate intervals or the melodic phrases curve to fit the inflection of the text. The voice may be required to leap or drop in wide intervals for serious or comic effects. In "Elfenlied," the singer must sing octave jumps as he yelps at the cunning elf's tricks. The curvature and flow of the melody is an important consideration when determining the mood and meaning of the music. Vocal compass, melodic pattern, step or leap, and highest or lowest points of the text were what Wolf took advantage of as he read the poems over and over to determine the song's melodic character. The melodic lines of falling semitones in appoggiaturas were perfect for complex German poetry like Mörike's, full of disyllables and feminine rhymes. They naturally led to chromatic tension and resolution in contrapuntal combination which produced dissonances reminiscent of Wagner.<sup>6</sup>

Wolf has been criticized for this dissonance which usually prompts singers to look twice before learning his songs. However, he felt that every series of unresolved discords and every unprepared key change

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<sup>5</sup> Grove's, "Hugo Wolf," XX, pp. 485-488.

<sup>6</sup> Sams, The Songs of Hugo Wolf, p. 10.

could be defended by classical harmonic theory. These were not merely novel ideas, but intuitive responses to poetic intent that had theoretical integrity.<sup>7</sup>

Harmonically, Wolf's music relies on tonal centers to provide unity. Again, the use of tonal centers mirrors the mood of the song text. For instance, when a point of stress occurs, the tonality diverges and fluctuates to reflect the stress. This resolves back to the tonal center as the dramatic tension resolves. This practice was not uncommon, but the key centers he chose to diverge to sometimes were. "Der Freund" begins in E major, but as excitement builds to a stormy war against evil, the key changes to F-sharp minor, a key Sams associates with bliss or comfort, through B major, the dominant of E. The key change has been prepared by chromatic movement, and chromatic movement also prepares the next fluctuation to F major through a brief return to E. Chromatic modulation brings the key to G major as tension keeps mounting and when the dominant B major is finally heard, the last section of the song is reached. Here the melody briefly remains on a b<sup>0</sup>, but the harmony slips back to E major. Chromatic modulation begins again and one hears E major as a fleeting dominant to A major, but this modulation is false and the song ends in E major.

Motivically, Wolf built a repertoire of motives to which he returned again and again. Some of them could be traced to Baroque affections, but others were personally meaningful. He used melodies, intervals, rhythmic patterns, keys, and harmonic progressions to create feeling

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7 Ibid, p. 9.

and structural unity. Specific examples will be examined later when we examine some of his songs. The motifs he created were expressive effects designed not as trivial gestures of affections, but as symbols in a three-dimensional, theatrical design.<sup>8</sup>

These effects were musical means of painting pictures. Pitch differences could indicate height or depth in the vertical plane. Dynamics and texture could bring objects or ideas closer, or push them away, or make them large or small. Rhythm and tempo indicated lateral movement on the horizontal plane. Repetition acted as an intensifier, and articulation as a modifier. For instance, high staccato notes connoted twinkling stars and solid, four-part harmony underscored a fundamental idea or strong sentiment such as religion.

Of course, the keyboard plays an important role in painting these pictures. So much so that the piano must be treated as an equal partner in expression rather than as mere accompaniment. Sams points out that many of Wolf's piano reductions were more interesting than the orchestral versions of his larger works showing the great influence his study of Wagner's opera reductions had on his compositions.<sup>9</sup> The piano provides a scenic backdrop in front of which the vocalist must perform the characterization. The following analyses of Wolf's songs are much indebted to Eric Sams, especially where motives are concerned.

"Der Freund" has already been mentioned in connection with its tonal progression. The first song of the Eichendorff volume, written

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid, pp. 14-18.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, p. 17.

on September 26, 1888, it has been called "Wolf at his worst" by Wolf devotees.<sup>10</sup> This song is an exaggerated characterization of manly values which are contrasted with child-like innocence in the first two lines. Thereafter, however, the song becomes a bombastic statement of a man's steadfast fight against evil. An ascending melody in the bass (see Example 1) pervades the song. This motif, which Sams associates with manliness, occurs in triplet rhythms and dotted rhythms. Offbeats

Example 1--Manliness motive, m. 12 and m. 27



and rocking eighth-notes in triplets heard in the opening bars are associated with child-like submission, sleep, and night (Example 2).

Example 2--Submission/Sleep motive, m. 1



The building chromaticism mentioned previously can make the vocalist over-sing, but the drama is more effective if left to the piano.

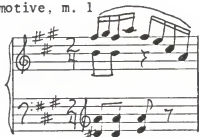
The second song of the volume is "Der Musikant," a charming characterization of a wandering minstrel written on September 22, 1888.

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid, p. 152.

Walking is suggested by the piano's opening rhythms (Example 3). The

Example 3--Walking motive, m. 1



vocal line is melodically and rhythmically square and uncomplicated. The tonal centers oscillate between tonic A major and dominant E major. Sams identifies a singing motive, which occurs typically in Wolf's works with any mention of singing, characterized by a chain of rising sixth chords. In this song, the chords are outlined in the vocal melody (Example 4).

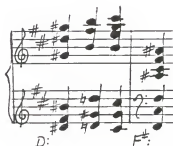
Example 4--Singing motive, ms. 5-8



"Verschwiegene Liebe" is a masterful nocturne for voice and piano written on August 31, 1888. The subject is a dreamy Nature scene. This masterpiece is full of Wolfian motives and harmonies. The first three bars of accompaniment set the stage by introducing the primary vocal melody which appears later over rocking rhythms associated with sleep and/or night. Sams associates mystery with a chordal progression which chromatically shifts two unrelated tonalities (Example 5). This progression was prepared for by shifting semitones (e-flat and e-natural)

which accomplish a change from Phrygian mode on D to D major in measures three and four. The shift begins between measures five and six where

Example 5--Chordal progression, ms. 6-9



the key signature belatedly identifies the tonal center of the song. Up to this point, the key signature has implied g minor as the tonal center. The harmony shifts from D major to a G-sharp-major minor-seventh chord which resolves through a G-sharp-diminished minor-seventh chord to F-sharp major in measure nine. This lasts one measure as D major is brought back in measure ten only to shift to a g-minor major seventh harmony. This in turn shifts to a G-major major seventh and a dominant A-major minor-seventh chord which resolves to D major, the key the voice began in.

Verse two begins without any introduction except a freedom/release motive resembling rising horn calls (Example 6). These calls underscore

Example 6--Freedom/release motive, m. 12



the poetic concept of free-flying thoughts and are expanded at the end of verse two which also returns to the opening bars of verse one.



Octave expansion extends a cadence juxtaposing g-minor and D-major chords which briefly fools the listener into thinking that g-minor is the tonal center. Finally, the song ends in D major as echoes of the primary vocal melody fade into the night. This song contains tonal references to bliss (f-sharp minor) and poetic questioning (D major and dominant sevenths coloring "wer holte," etc.).

"Der verzweifelte Liebhaber" is a comical characterization of a student down on his academic and romantic luck. Wolf set the student's musing wishes with a dramatic flair, beginning with a recitative punctuated by chords as the student shares his problems. The aria begins with a one-measure introduction which summarizes the sequential progression found throughout the rest of the song: parallel phrases sequence in episodes which chromatically shift like the "mystery" progression discussed earlier. The first episode begins in g minor, the tonal center of this song, progresses through the dominant D-major-seventh, and ends in F major after coursing through chromatic runs in octaves echoing the manly sentiments of "Der Freund." The next episode of three phrases, two parallel antecedents and one consequent phrase, ends in E-flat major. This episode is characterized by a martial rhythm of sixteenth- and eighth-notes. The next episode is dreamy. Its vocal melody, repeated in two parallel phrases, is chromatic and sustained chords in the piano resolve to D major. The last two phrases cadence with a IV-V-I progression, ending in G major.

This song is comical but not original. Much of its content is taken from other pieces. It's main idea, that of a musing student, is echoed in another song, "Der Scholar," conceptually, and falling fifths

in the bass can be seen in both settings. This setting was composed on September 23, 1888.

The French mélodie was an accompanied art song form of the 19th and 20th centuries associated with piano/vocal settings of a serious, lyric poem. Its predecessor, the romance, was a naive song about ancient love and gallantry. Its simplicity was characterized by its strophic form, recurring three-bar phrases, thin texture, and narrow range. It exploited expressive sentimentality by suddenly expanding the melodic range, filling the texture, and shifting to chromatic harmonies near the end in a burst of emotion. This style was perfect for opéra comique, and the romance pervaded French opera through the late 1700's and early 1800's.

Drawing room romances were distinguished from operatic romances by their limited accompaniment and use of eight or more stanzas. Drawing room songs were perfect vehicles for patriotic, idealistic, and critical themes, and so, after the Revolution, the subject matter became less gallant and more commercial--adored by the general public but disdained by the music critics. Romances became lyrically freer and their accompaniments more elaborate. After 1830, attempts were made to dramatize them--Rossini's use of extensive ornamentation in "Sombre forêt" from Guillame Tell was one attempt--but most were fruitless. The terms romance, mélodie, and chanson became interchangeable and the romance faded as a strong form by 1870.

In response to the growing commerciality of the romance, the mélodie arose as an artistic form. The term mélodie was associated with

French translations of Schubert Lieder which in turn stimulated French composers to use folk or exotic elements in French songs. For instance, Thomas Moore's Irish Melodies were translated and set by French composers. With the development of French Romantic poetry, composers strayed from strophic forms and welded the voice to the accompaniment more. They were able to explore freer forms because of the uneven lengths of lines in the poetry which distorted strophic symmetry.

Hector Berlioz wrote Les nuit d'été in 1840. This is the first example of mélodie as an artistic song form. Strong dissonances, rich and original harmonies, rhythmic flexibility enhancing daring and declamatory phrase structures, and motivic development between the voice and accompaniment were traits of the burgeoning song form. Ravel credits Gounod with giving mélodie its particularly French character: "Gaellic grace, displaying perfect craftsmanship and stylistic elegance while retaining freshness and simplicity." Gounod was also the first French songwriter to faithfully render the difficult rhythms of the native language in songs.<sup>11</sup> Massenet provided still more unity between the voice and piano and was the first Frenchman to write a true song cycle where the prelude included motifs which reappeared at the cycle's end, unifying the separate pieces. This was a particular influence on

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11 "Melodie," David Cox, Groves, XII, p. 113.

The difficulty of setting French to music lies in the etymology of word stress where in song the primary accent of the word usually falls on the last, voiced syllable and the word, therefore, becomes subordinate in consideration to the phrase. For instance, in spoken French the accents would be bois jolis (> is primary, A is secondary). In sung French the accents and word order change to jolis bois. There is no convincing explanation. Stevens, A History of Song, p. 204.

Debussy, who, along with Faure and Duparc, is credited the most for developing mélodie along French lines.

Claude Achille Debussy was born into a lower-class family on August 22, 1862. His father ran a china shop in St. Germain-en-Laye and later became a salesman and clerk; his mother was a seamstress. He first took piano lessons from Mme. Mauté, mother-in-law to Paul Verlaine, noted French poet. He attended the Paris Conservatoire and studied piano. A career as a virtuoso pianist seemed eminent until 1878 and 1879 when his board examinations did not go very well, so he began studying composition seriously. In 1883, he won the Second Prix de Rome, and the following year, he won the First Prix de Rome for his cantata L'Enfant Prodigue.

His first love was Mme. Vasnier, an amateur singer, but they did not marry. His subsequent romantic life included a nine-year live-in arrangement with amateur singer Gabrielle Dupont and an engagement to Thérèse Roger in 1894. Debussy married Rosalie Texier on October 19, 1899, only to leave her for Emma Bardac in June, 1904. They did not marry until January 20, 1908, a little over three years after their daughter Claude-Emma, or Chou-Chou, was born.

Debussy's life revolved around artistic circles rather than social circles and love affairs. Early influences included trips abroad to Russia, Germany, and back to Paris. During his teens he travelled to Russia and was greatly impressed by Mussorgsky and influenced by his folk ideals. Wagner operas intrigued him and he visited Bayreuth in both 1888 and 1889. Also in 1889, he heard Javanese gamelan music at the Paris World Exhibition and became interested in their "new sounds."

He frequented the artistic circles of poets and painters and was strongly influenced by the pictorial movement of Impressionism and the literary movement of Symbolism.

In 1891, he wrote the first set of Fêtes galantes. In December of 1894, Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune, based on a text by Mallarmé, premiered and Pierre Boulez remarked, "...just as modern poetry surely took root in Baudelaire's poems, so one is justified in saying that modern music was awakened by Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun."<sup>12</sup> He finished the vocal score of his only opera, Pelleas et Melisande, in 1895, but it was not accepted at the Opera-Comique until May, 1901, and it premiered there on April 30, 1902. He had completed Trois chansons de Bilitis in the summer of 1897, and in 1904 and 1905, he produced the second set of Fêtes galantes, the first set of Images for piano, L'isle Joyeuse, and La Mer.

During rehearsals of Pelleas, Debussy had been prosecuted for non-payment of debts, and in 1907, Bardac's uncle disinherited her, so Debussy, under financial duress, had to tour Europe as a performer until 1917. In 1909, he became a member of the Conservatoire's advisory board, Pelleas triumphed in England, he began composing five of the first book of Preludes for piano, and Laloy published the first biography of Debussy. By December of 1915, he began to feel the acute pain of rectal cancer which had begun to trouble him in 1909. He performed his last concert in September of 1915 and died in Paris on March 25, 1918, of acute gastro-intestinal pain brought on by cancer.

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12 "Claude Debussy," Grove's, V, p. 297.

Not only was he a prolific composer in all genres, he had written critical essays as music critic of La revue blanche espousing his philosophy of musical sound. He had rebelled against the traditional methods of teaching composition: copy the Masters, then develop a mature pen. He stated, "In art there can be no obligatory respect; that is the sort of nonsense that has been off-loaded to a number of people who have become respectable only through having lived long ago." He agreed with Rameau and Mussorgsky that the ear should direct the sound, not tradition. Imitation was not the rule, but a native, French tradition which emoted through direct application of sounds, like those of the gamelans he had heard in Paris.<sup>13</sup>

He was reticent, though, and objected to the emotional extremes he saw in Beethoven. His songs reflect this in terms of concise, unconfusing forms which do not rage emotionally, but understate, leaving the power of the emotion in the background. In Debussy's music, passion is not rendered by volume. He sought to steer away from Wagnerism, seeking instead simplicity and elegance where the voice could be primary rather than just one part of the musical scheme. He also strove for variety, experimenting with new sounds even if they were considered non-traditional "noises." He dabbled with plainsong, church modes, synthetic scales, whole-tone scales and the augmented-fifth chords which they contain, octatonic scales, as well as Oriental techniques. And, as was mentioned earlier, Debussy was strongly influenced by Symbolism

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid, pp. 307-309.

and Impressionism. The literary and artistic perspectives on his composition are therefore important to discussing his music.

The main Symbolist poets of France included Charles Baudelaire, Stephan Mallarmé, Paul Verlaine, Arthur Rimbaud, and playwright Maurice Maeterlinck. Mallarmé, describing the objective of Symbolist poetry, said, "To name an object is to sacrifice three-quarters of that enjoyment of the poem which comes from guessing bit by bit. To suggest it--that is our dream." Symbolist poetry avoided the strong emotions of the French Romantics like Victor Hugo and rather, beat around the bush by hinting delicately, sensuously, and voluptuously--implying rather than indicating.<sup>14</sup> This is much like Debussy's reticent rejection of Beethoven's excess and the weighty, overlarge emotions of Wagner. The poets accomplished their aim textually, by avoiding narration, which allowed sensations or objects symbolize abstract states of mind. Meaning was blurred by irregular syntax, unexpected metaphor, and an emphasis on the sonority and rhythm of words.<sup>15</sup>

This can be seen best in the poetry of Paul Verlaine, the poet who, after Baudelaire, most influenced Debussy. Verlaine, himself influenced by Baudelaire, is one of the most accessible Symbolist poets and is known for his ability to manipulate the French language. In his poetry, there is no hard realism, exultation, or Romantic sentimentality; rather, there is abstract mysticism and symbolic sensuality. His

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<sup>14</sup> Article "Symbolism," Percy A. Scholes, The Oxford Companion to Music (10th ed. by John Owen Ward, London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1975), p. 282.

<sup>15</sup> Bryan R. Simms, Music of the Twentieth Century: Style and Structure (New York: Schirmer Books, MacMillan, Inc., 1986), p. 186.

treatise Art poétique, written in 1874 but published ten years later, discusses his opposition to the Parnassian style of poetry in which he began to write and defines the principles of Symbolism: it should be music, stress nuances rather than color, and unite vagueness with precision. These principles are vague in themselves, and in practice, Verlaine used uneven phrases of uneven numbers of syllables making the verse more supple and flowing, less pedantic. Despite this, much of his poetry still contains regularity. Verlaine said, "In this kind of writing, language is vaporized as the poet tries to translate the evanescence of his dreams and to express the ineffable."<sup>16</sup>

This concern with vague hinting approximates the art of Monet, Renoir, Sisley, Degas, Basille, Pissarro, and Cézanne, who conceived a "preoccupation with light and atmosphere" which seeks to portray "an envelope surrounding the form....Matter loses substance and space is dissolved. Nature disappears into an almost pattern of vibrating colors." The painter is not allowed to merely reproduce a scene which is predetermined as a sculptor or portrait painter would reproduce a model, but must record the moment's glance at a scene in colors without the painstaking detail of a gaze. This disallows editorial comment and sentimentality other than what might be obtained from a first impression.<sup>17</sup> Hence, the term coined by Louis Leroy, critic for the Paris journal Charivair: impressionism.

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<sup>16</sup> "Paul Verlaine," Wallace Fowlie, The Encyclopedia Americana, International Edition (danbury, Conn.: Grolier Inc., 1986), XXVIII, p. 24.

<sup>17</sup> "Impressionism," The Oxford Companion to Art, ed. by Harold Osborne (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), p. 564.



Again, as with Symbolist poetry, the concern is with the vague nuances of light on objects. Subjects are usually unpretentious scenes from everyday life. Matter was dissolved by blurring the appearances of objects, emphasizing rather the haze of blending colors and their interplay and the effects of light. Lines became unimportant as shades were sought. Debussy, although influenced by the concepts and ideals, objected to the term classifying him as an Impressionistic composer. Regarding his Images for piano, he wrote his publisher, "I am trying to do...something 'different'--an effect of reality, but what some fools call 'Impressionism.'"18

Debussy's "Impressionism" dates from 1887 when he returned to Paris from a trip to Rome and began to "seek shapes less" and "tints and tinges more." He began to avoid the strong, dramatic, involved, or direct expression in Romantic music and began subtly hinting at the outlines.<sup>19</sup> He began accepting tone as tone, or color, like a line in a sketch, not as a tool or brush. His music included variable rhythms and meter, illustrative effects, and a sensitivity to vocal and instrumental accents and intervals, color, and atmosphere and suggested the sensuousness of Nature and the external world. He frequently used harmonic foundations other than the classic scale, intentionally dissonant harmonies which provided color rather than mere musical interest since his goal was not really consonance, parallel seventh, ninth, eleventh, and thirteenth chords to stretch the tonal system, and repeated motifs, repetition, and contrast as programmatic devices.

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18 Simms, Music of the Twentieth Century, p. 189.

19 Scholes, The Oxford Companion to Music, p. 509.

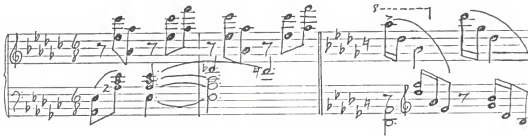
Debussy's mature style of art song composition emerged in Ariettes Oubliées and Poems de Baudelaire. The former set was first published in 1888 as Ariettes, Paysages Belges, et Aquarelles and reissued later under its shorter name as a collection of six songs. The final two songs of this set are aquarelles, or water colors, with English titles. It is interesting to note the term borrowed from pictorial art. Of the two, "Green" is known for its many Debussian characteristics.

The text was composed by Verlaine in 1872 while he was wintering in England (hence, the explanation for the English title). The Alexandrine verse has a classical correctness with clear syntax, imagery, and sentiment. The references to plants and Nature in general uses the titular color to paint a picture of fervent romance. Debussy leaves the clear design of the poem alone, setting it in repetitions of two- or four-bar phrases with exceptions only at the terminal phrases, measures 17-20 and 36-39, and at the cadences. The piano is restricted to two-bar phrases, but the vocal line varies between two and four bars. The piano is mainly responsible for melody and atmosphere while the voice declaims in French language rhythms.

The form of the song is ABA'. The key signature of G-flat major is not established until measure 20, for A and A' begin in A-flat minor. The 6/8 time signature is not adhered to since the voice sings in 4/8 most of the time while the piano changes, frequently juxtaposing 4/8 and 6/8. The tempo is quick and animated, but in keeping with Debussy's reticence, the dynamics remain piano and pianissimo throughout with individual phrases swelling and diminishing with inflection. Parting with Faure, the wide vocal range is c<sup>0</sup> to a-flat'.

Programmatic development occurs in B where sixteenth-note runs imply the breeze indicated in the text. In B, the rhythmic motive of A (Example 7) is changed slightly to indicate the increasing fervor of the lover as he pleads with his mistress. A' returns to the same

Example 7--Rhythmic motive, ms. 1-2, m. 24



rhythm, changing to sustained and elongated rhythms under the last two phrases of text as the lover stretches out in repose. Repose is also suggested by an *Andantino* marking at A' which slows even more through the last stanza.

"Spleen" was also written by Verlaine sometime between 1885 and 1888. During this period, he grew very affectionate with Rimbaud, his travelling companion. "Spleen's" mood is of rising anguish and insecurity, possibly mirroring Verlaine's own insecurity and uneasiness in dealing with feelings for Rimbaud and his wife. The color here might be blue in general; however, "spleen" indicates malice and the text refers to the despairing vividness of reds, blacks, blues, and greens which pound on the poet's anxious spirit.

Debussy's setting begins calmly and slowly in A-flat major until the piano reaches an accented C-major minor-ninth chord, contrasting the alternating states of peace and passion in the singer. On a mono-

tone e-natural, the singer quietly but firmly pronounces each syllable of the first two phrases of text as if staring into the distance, detached from the world. Debussy creates this effect with the monotone and staccato/tenuto markings over each eighth-note. The two phrases are separated by a false start of thirds in the piano, foreshadowing the main accompaniment figure which begins con moto in measures eight and nine.


The singer pleadingly jumps up an octave at this point and the piano juxtaposes eighth-note duplets and triplets over the introductory theme which now becomes a ground bass. Debussy then begins developing rhythmic figures of  $\underline{\text{J}}\underline{\text{J}}$ ,  $\underline{\text{J}}\underline{\text{J}}\underline{\text{J}}$ , and  $\underline{\text{J}}\underline{\text{J}}\underline{\text{J}}$  in the accompaniment, the latter being the last portion of the ground theme (Example 8). These

Example 8--Ground theme, ms. 9-10



figures are used throughout the song. Again, the piano provides atmosphere as the voice has its own melody above it.

Use of diminished seventh chords is prevalent in this song, especially as A closes and B begins at measure 13. In Tempo I, the key signature signifies B major, but this is obscured by g- and a-natural accidentals. No real tonic sounds through section B. The dynamics remain quiet, but frustration is implied by a melodic climax on g-sharp'. Section C begins at measure 18 with another key change back to A-flat major. The right hand overlaps the two sections by suspending octave g-naturals as the ground theme begins again in the left hand.

In the next four measures, the tritone interval becomes important in the voice and the rhythmic figure  pervades the accompaniment. Tension mounts as Debussy signifies stringendo and crescendo in these bars.

The following eight measures are indicated poco a poco animato and molto mosso. D major is heard briefly (again, a tritone relationship with A-flat major), then B-flat major, F-minor, and finally G-flat major. Accents and a dynamic increase to forte allow the singer to release pent-up anguish. The last five measures recall the ground bass and the harmony slowly progresses to C major (again, tritone with G-flat major). The final cadence is deceptive, leading from C major to F minor, with an A-flat in the bass, and finally to A-flat major. The dynamic level of this closing progression is piano and pianissimo, muting the singer's anguish. Debussy allowed a little raging, but only a little.

"Les Cloches" is an example of a more programmatic song--programmatic in the sense that Debussy deliberately uses certain motives and techniques to focus the listener's mind on the poetry. The poem, by Paul Bourget, shares past memories called up by church bells in the country, and Bourget's imagery includes delicate foliage which indicates the passage of time. Debussy concerns himself with the sound of the bells.

He composed this song in 1886, but reportedly revised it in 1891.<sup>20</sup>

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20 The revision consisted of added melismas, possibly an attempt to include a chant-like idiom in this song with religious ideas, a practice deviating from the normal, syllabic settings of French (cont.)

The first measure sets up a sparse rhythmic/melodic motive referring to bells which is subsequently developed in the accompaniment (Example 9). The left-hand figure becomes more chordal in the second line. By

Example 9--Bell motive, m. 1



the end of the second stanza, the right-hand motive develops into eighth-note appoggiaturas and another, offbeat rhythm is added to it in the interlude prededing stanza three (Example 10). The chords in

Example 10--Interlude, ms. 21-22



the motives become more lush in stanza three and in the closing six bars, clear bell sonorities in clean octaves alternate with the arpeggios to form the final cadence (Example 11).

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poetry. (Marie-Claire Rohinsky, *The Singer's Debussy* (New York: Pelion Press, 1987). The International edition of Debussy songs for voice and piano (New York: International Music Co., 1961) which was edited by Sergius Kagen from the original manuscript contains only one melisma in the last stanza. The rest of the setting is syllabic.

## Example 11-Final Cadence



The key signature implies C-sharp minor or E major, but the tonic of the vocal melody seems to be A-natural. By the end of the first stanza, the tonic has modulated to F-sharp minor: however, the end of stanza two cadences on a C-sharp minor chord. The tonal center remains ambiguous until the final nine bars. Nine bars from the end, Debussy uses an A-major major-ninth chord with a minor seventh ( $IV_7^9$ ) which leads to E major by way of C-sharp minor (Example 11). The final bar ends on E-major. This could be seen as an expanded plagal cadence, appropriate for a poem with religious sentiment since most hymns end with a plagal cadence.

The 4/4 time signature is not changed at any time and there are no rhythmic alterations besides the introduction of triplets in the vocal line which are prompted by the poetic meter. The rhythms of the song are straight-forward and the dynamics do not range far, staying reservedly between pianissimo and mezzo forte. The setting remains gently expressive without drama to create a reserved, reminiscent mood.


"Dans le Jardin" is not a masterpiece. The text is by Paul Gravelot, written in 1891, and Debussy composed the setting as one of two romances in 1903. The poem is a one-sided conversation with a

young lady where the lover confesses the first time he saw her and loved her. Debussy attempted to set it conversationally and so the form is through-composed with a return to the opening lines and music at the end. This is an anti-Symbolist example of Debussy's work since it consists of narrative and direct expression. The text is primarily set syllabically and in accompanied recitative style.

As in "Les Cloches," the key signature is E major, but the tonal center is obscured by the relationship of an F-sharp-minor major-ninth chord to a C-sharp-minor major-ninth already seen in "Les Cloches" and "Spleen." These can be seen in measures two and three (Example 12). E major does not become established until measures seventeen

Example 12--Ms. 2-3



and eighteen with an authentic cadence in the bass. Measure 21 completes the first section which contains two lines of text and a rhythmic motive, , which allows for non-harmonic passing tones in conjunct melodic motion, providing the otherwise pedantic text with interest. Most of these are within the key signature, but the addition of accidentals reinforces the obscuration of the tonal center and makes chromatic modulation easy (Example 12).

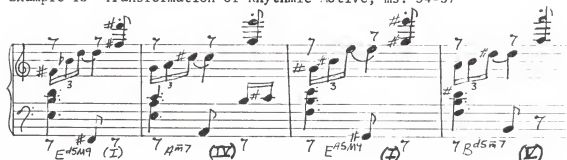
The next two phrases of text are accompanied by planed triads in first inversion. The third phrase of this stanza, "Et ma souffrance



était divine" (and my suffering was divine), is accompanied by two, two-bar phrases displaced by one octave. They involve the progression of an A-augmented major-eleventh chord (A-C $\sharp$ -E $\sharp$ -G-B-D $\sharp$ ) to a D-major minor-seventh major-ninth chord (D-F $\sharp$ -A-C-G $\sharp$ ). These chords provide interesting color to paint the text. Not the V-I relationship between A and D.

At this point, the key signature changes to E-flat major, and the same accompaniment of the first two phrases mentioned above occur under a new melody, one half-step lower. The key signature changes to C major and the rhythmic motive is transformed (Example 13). These four

Example 13--Transformation of Rhythmic Motive, ms. 34-37



bars are repeated as the vocal melody continues totally disjunct from its accompaniment. The harmony is varied in the repetition. These harmonies can be described as color chords used in dominant-tonic relationships (see numerical analysis under Example 13) which allow the vocal melody chromatic freedom.

After these eight measures, the key signature of the next section reverts to E major. The harmonic progression is a four-bar sequence of major-minor-seventh chords repeated in a new rhythmic transformation of the original motive:  $\text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩}$ . After eight bars, another eight-bar, sequential progression of the same type occurs, lightly modified at

the end to accomodate a transition to the reprise of the first stanza. The melody climaxes on a high f-sharp' just before this transition. This climax is the only part of the song marked forte. The harmony and melody of the reprise are varied slightly in the beginning, but arches back to the beginning mood by the closing of the song. The closing chord is a C-sharp-minor minor-seventh chord, which could also be analyzed as a tonic E-major triad quietly obscured by a pianissimo c-sharp".

Both Debussy and Wolf represent creative peaks in their respective genres and national styles. American art song did not have a long-standing tradition from which to draw upon like the Minnesingers and troubadors.. It developed through imitation of German and French forms and of composers such as Wolf and Debussy.

American art song in the late 1700's was folksy and strongly influenced by religious fervor and popular society. Hymnody and Anglo-Celtic music were two strains which reached back the farthest in the American music heritage. In the 1800's, American music imitated European music or was influenced by African music, an imprint of slavery. German art song became the vogue in late 19th-century New England with composers such as George Chadwick, Horatio Parker, Arthur Foote, and John Knowles Paine. Americans even took sides on the Wagner-vs.-Brahms issue.

American song of the early 1900's leaned towards French song. John Alden Carpenter was a devotee of Debussy. Charles Martin Loeffler wrote after the style of Faure, but also combined French and Wagnerian

elements. Charles T. Griffes is credited for being an all-around international who was familiar with most of the musical movements of early 20th-century Western music. He was not content to copy and struck out on his own. So did Charles Ives. Subtleties of diction, timbre, and dynamics which belong to the European repertoire do not belong in Ives' informal, "American" music. Ives utilized major or minor tonality whenever they were warranted by the text and atonal chord progressions or non-triadic sonorities were common.<sup>21</sup> France also extended its influence to composers like Aaron Copland and Samuel Barber. A prevalent mood for individuality and exploration seems to have gripped American composers to the modern day. Eclecticism seems to be a good way to describe any of the major song composers of this century. Dominick Argento is a living heir to this eclectic tradition.

Dominick Argento is a Professor of Music Theory and Composer-in-Residence at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis. He was born in York, Pennsylvania, on October 27, 1927. His first interest in music was sparked at age fourteen when he read some biographies of composers, especially that of Gershwin. He began to study harmony and composition on his own. He was given a piano at age sixteen and began taking lessons. He wrote his first polka for piano soon after. After serving a two-year stint in the Army as a cryptographer, he attended Peabody Conservatory where he studied piano and composition. He chose

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<sup>21</sup> "United States of America," Hans Nathan, A History of Song, Stevens, p. 408-432.

composition as a career after reading Mozart's letters. His teachers encouraged and interested him in opera.

After graduating, he received a Fulbright which enabled him to study in Florence, Italy. Again he studied piano and composition, the latter with Luigi Dallapiccola, Italy's foremost serialist. He returned to Peabody in 1953 and worked towards a Master of Music degree in composition under the tutelage of Henry Cowell. On September 9, 1954, he married soprano Carolyn Bailey. After graduating from Peabody in 1955, they moved to the Eastman School of Music where he studied with Alan Hovhaness, Howard Hanson, and Bernard Rogers. The Boor, his first one-act opera, was completed in 1957 and premiered in Rochester on May 6. Upon graduating with a Ph.D. in composition in 1957, he received a Guggenheim which allowed him to return to Florence. One year later, he became a member of the University of Minnesota faculty, concentrating in composition and opera.

In 1962, he wrote the Six Elizabethan Songs during a stay in Italy. David Ewen describes their place in Argento's compositional history as an "impressive indication of increasing articulateness and technical skill..."<sup>22</sup> In 1964, he helped to found the Center Opera of Minneapolis, now known as the Minnesota Opera, and received a second Guggenheim. He completed the opera Postcard from Morocco in 1971 and it premiered on October 14. It was a triumph and gained world-wide exposure.

In 1975, he received a Pulitzer Prize for From the Diary of Virginia Woolf which was premiered in Minneapolis by Dame Janet Baker on

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22 "Dominick Argento," American Composers, A Biographical Dictionary, David Ewen (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1982), p. 25.

January 5, 1975. In it he used a strict twelve-tone technique built on Gregorian chant and other early styles to set this modern play. He was awarded an honorary doctorate of humane letters and completed The Voyage of Edgar Allen Poe, a very successful opera on a libretto by Charles M. Nolte, in 1976. The opera premiered in St. Paul on April 24. He was elected to the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters in 1980.

Argento is most successful when writing for the vocal soloist. He believes that "the voice is our representation of humanity" and that instruments try to imitate the voice.<sup>23</sup> He anticipated the 1970's neo-Romantic movement on his own, eclectic standards. A particular hallmark of his writing is a quiet, calm ending. Self-discovery has evolved as the central theme in his work. Argento seeks communication with his audience and mistrusts theoretical analysis. He believes that musicians spend too much time analyzing how and it is what or why that he is concerned with. The essence of his music is the meaning or emotional impact, not the form, modulations, or keys.<sup>24</sup>

Nevertheless, it is necessary to take a peak at the score to find out how Argento expresses the text. Much of the information about the Six Elizabethan Songs comes from a letter dated in March, 1988. As was mentioned previously, the songs were written in 1962 in Italy. Like Wolf, he is an avid reader of poetry and is very concerned with

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23 The New Grove Dictionary of American Music, ed. by H. Wiley Hitchcock and Stanley Sadie (London and New York: MacMillan Press, Ltd., 1986), p. 64.

24 From a letter dated, March, 1988, to Eugene Thomas. Also quoted in Ewen, American Composers, p. 25.

the musical accuracy of setting the text and how to impart to the audience the "force" of the poetry. He chose the six poems from Palmgrave's "Golden Treasury" collection to provide a variety of moods. His basic musical concern in setting them was to create an Elizabethan quality--simpler harmonies and textures than Debussy and Wolf."

In the attempt to create an "Elizabethan" quality, he turned to the style of 17th-century Britain and 20th-century composer Benjamin Britten. Arthur Jacobs lists three major characteristics of Britten's style:

enlargement of harmonic resource, particularly by a simultaneous combination of tonic and dominant harmony;...the florid, expansive, "Purcellian" treatment of melody, especially the extension of a single syllable..over a long run of notes; by the building accompaniments...through the use of short melodic motives often contrapuntally used and having both thematic and expressive value.<sup>25</sup>

Also, there is a definite preference for an easy, singable tune. These traits can be seen in the Six Elizabethan Songs.

These songs are not marked with key signatures. Tonic-dominant-subdominant and mediant relationships seem to be more important than tonal centers. This follows Britten's ideas of harmonic resource. The main ideas developed throughout this cycle include stepwise ground patterns in the bass, broken-chord accompaniments, scalar runs, the use of motives in contrapuntal fashion, the variation of registers to produce varying moods, and characteristic uses of ninth, eleventh,

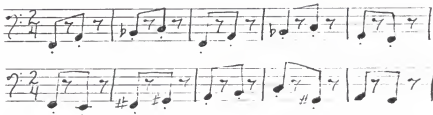
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<sup>25</sup> "The British Isles," Arthur Jacobs, A History of Song, Stevens, pp. 175-176

and thirteenth chords to blur otherwise square-sounding harmonies such as major triads.

"Spring" is a bouncy, light-hearted poem by Thomas Nash which describes Spring in terms of several pastoral scenes and of a clear, crisp morning when birds are chirping. The first verse of 24 measures includes a ten-measure bass pattern which provides the basic harmonic foundation for this song and has some properties found throughout the cycle. It is a rhythmically steady, melodically conjunct pattern of ascending or descending steps or small intervals (Example 14). Many

Example 14--Basic Bass Pattern, ms. 1-10



individual patterns are excerpted and developed later as contrapuntal motives from this bass pattern.


The song's texture is thin, created by a simple broken-chord accompaniment in the right hand and a cheery, easily-singable vocal melody which ranges from  $e^0$  to  $f'$ . Chromatic alterations (namely, a leading-tone  $g$ -sharp) prepare and accomplish a brief change from F major to A minor in mediant relation. The accompaniment is repeated an octave higher for the chorus of bird calls and a transition to verse two which begins abruptly with a juxtaposition of A major (V) and D minor (i) harmonies.

Verse two's opening vocal figure is used as another motive, repeated contrapuntally through verse two at different pitch levels along with pedal tones and ascending and descending bass figures from verse one (Example 15). The texture thickens as more chords are intro-

Example 15--Opening measures of verse two, ms. 25-26



duced in counterpoint to the motivic treatment. The bird-call chorus is repeated and verse three begins, again abruptly, after twenty measures of verse two. The advantage of using simple bass figures and clear accompaniment patterns is that it is very easy to modulate chromatically.

Verse three begins in D-flat major and with a new rhythmic pattern: . Seconds and small clusters provide close harmony over little or no bass for ten measures and then the opening music returns in F major for the last stanza. The sixteenth-note rhythm lends a sense of rhythmic acceleration as dynamics build to a climax on f' as Spring! is proclaimed. The whole effect is as if a whistling walker describing the season stops to admire and exult in Nature, and as the figuration in the piano gets quieter, he continues on his walk. Dynamics through this song are mezzo forte to forte with successively quieter markings at the beginning of each verse (f, mp, and p).



"Sleep," text by Samuel Daniel, is again set with a repeated bass pattern, this time with more harmonic properties like a chaconne. The first four measures of accompaniment are repeated and varied throughout the first and third sections of the ABA' song under vocal melodies. The basic harmonic progression is  $B^b-D^b-B^b-C^7-c^\sharp-f-d$  (note the mediant relations) and a melodic motive (Example 16) within the progression germinates a shorter motive used contrapuntally throughout the song (Example 16a). An ascending, four-note pattern in the bass occurs as

Example 16--Ms. 1-4

Example 16a



a surreptitious, contrapuntal motive. The pattern is reminiscent of the patterns discussed in "Spring." The prime key center is B-flat major and the range is  $e\text{-flat}^0$  to  $f'$ . Argento changes the meter from 8/8 to 6/8 to push along the meter of the text in measure six and later on at similar spots.

The second verse begins abruptly at measure nine with new accompaniment figures, new tonality, and new meter (4/8). It is important to note the register changes as each hand is now in treble clef. The vocal line basically maintains a sixteenth-note rhythm in contrast to the triplet-sixteenths over eighths in the accompaniment. Whereas the conjunct rising melodies of A creates an image of someone awaiting

sleep, B is disjunct and rises and falls, depicting those torments which are avoided by sleep. The accompaniment is light and tinkly like stars in the right hand and somber in the left hand. Each measure is repeated once, some with slight variation. The left hand at measure eleven is transposed up a tritone. Measures thirteen and fourteen have constantly changing accents, which are kept and combined with fuller chords in measures fifteen and sixteen, building to the climactic cry of "Cease!" at measure seventeen where A' begins. B is basically atonal, relying on a melody detached from the accompaniment. This melody tends to gravitate to A-natural, but varies chromatically, obscuring A-natural as the real tonic.

A' is divided into two parts, two verses, and begins on B-flat minor. The fortissimo cry of "Cease!" on f' serves as the climax of B and is the emotional peak of the song. The first part of A' is a development of the material in A at different pitch levels. The dynamics begin to taper off, reaching pianissimo by the last verse which is a simpler recap of verse one. Now the singer, after the anguish of day which sleep will enable him to escape, quietly requests eternal sleep. The music quietly recedes with an expansion of the opening measures in the accompaniment.

"Winter", poem by Shakespeare, starkly contrasts with "Sleep."<sup>26</sup> Instead of the condensed, complicated figures in "Sleep," "Winter" contains fresh, vital melodies in distinct three-measure phrases in 6/8 time which alternate with chordal oscillations in the piano.

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<sup>26</sup> "Winter" was not performed on this recital and will not be found in the program.

Again there are descending, step-wise patterns in the bass. Each phrase changes to a new tonality and juxtaposes seventh and dominant relationships within the oscillating accompaniment: A/A<sup>7</sup>, B/B<sup>7</sup>, G/G<sup>7</sup>, F<sup>#</sup>/B, F/B<sup>b7</sup>, B<sup>b</sup>/C, A<sup>7</sup>/D, and back to A. Measure 38 introduces contrapuntal treatment of a melodic motive developing the first, fifth, and fourth scale degrees of a major scale, echoing the melody of "A merry note!" A monotone e<sup>0</sup> expresses the drudgery of Joan and her job. Scalar patterns appear once more, possibly painting the text's imagery of keeling a pot. After a brief piano interlude, the voice takes up verse two which repeats the form and material of verse one except for a variation at the conclusion. The range of this song is the widest so far: e<sup>0</sup> to a'.

The mood of "Dirge" is stately and sorrowful; the tempo designated is "Largo e semplice," slow and simple. Again we see ascending, conjunct patterns in the bass, this time in thirds to make the sound more sonorous. The melodic theme above it, also in thirds, becomes the major motive of this song (Example 17). Also used throughout this

Example 17--Ms. 1-4

Example 17a--Harmonic progression



this song is the introduction's closing harmonic progression which begins and ends on E-major and progresses diatonically in the bass through an

F-sharp-minor major-eleventh ( $ii^{M11}$ ) and an A-major major-seventh ( $V^{\frac{4}{2}}$ ), the latter chord again juxtaposing tonic and dominant harmonies. This progression (Example 17a) also sets up an offbeat rhythmic pattern seen later, also.

The tonal center is again obscured, for it begins in no key, but uses E major, G major, G minor, A major, B major, and ends in C major. Note the ascending, diatonic pattern. The vocal melody is disjunct from the accompaniment, which concerns itself with developing the theme of thirds: its range is less than an octave:  $e^0$  to  $e\text{-flat}'$ . It begins in G major, alternating with G minor. Stanza one ends on a g-sharp, the third scale degree of E major, to accomodate the harmonic progression seen in Example 17a. Line one of stanza two is in A major with a tuneful vocal melody accompanied by suitable vertical harmonies which contrast with the preceding linear processional. Again the bass pattern is an ascending-descending, diatonic pattern. Line two is in B major which returns to E major and the opening melodic theme. Argento also lightly echoes the last words of both lines.

As this poem by Shakespeare has two verses, and Argento follows the poetic form, this song also has two major sections, both the same with only subtle variations in the second verse. In this verse, line one of the vocal melody stays in E major and line two is in E major and E minor. The vocal melody ends with a stentando melisma on "weep." In the accompaniment to this melisma there is a descending pattern of thirds. The ending chord is major, which also occurred in "Sleep." Argento is known for quiet endings and explains these major endings not as mere consonant resolutions of dissonant harmonies, but as an



Example 19--Opening vocal melody and right hand accompaniment, ms. 5-7



tonal center idea once more. The interludes between the verses vary: the first utilizes the two-beat motive in sequences over a sequence of a short, three-note melody in the left hand (Example 20); the second

Example 20--First interlude, ms. 22-24



develops the two-beat motive in the same fashion as the introduction of the song.

The first stanza of each verse begins in the same way, but thereafter, each verse goes its own way, varying the melody of the first verse. Verse two uses melismas on the words "power," "dead," and "life." These melismas are mostly in G minor but progress to C major by their ends. Verse three becomes a stentorian fanfare with full triads accompanying the last two phrases which modulate to a C-sharp major ending. Five things about this ending are important: 1) The melisma on the word "love" relates to Purcell's and Britten's use of fioritura on one syllable; 2) the melody of the melisma alternates

descending steps and thirds, a melody seen throughout this song in different forms (Example 21 and compare to the middle voice in Example 20); 3) the chords supporting it are all major, using quartal V-I-IV

Example 21--"Love" melisma melody



progressions; 4) there is extreme dynamic contrast between fortissimo, pianissimo, forte, and fortissitissimo, characterizing the extremely emotional state of the lover; 5) in the cadence, Argento resolves to C-sharp major using an harmonically rich  $c\sharp-d\sharp-f\sharp-g\sharp$  cluster and a quartal  $c\sharp-g\sharp-d\sharp$  broken chord over a c-sharp pedal.

One of Argento's goals in composing this cycle was to set up contrasting moods. So far the songs have alternated jubilation and reserve. The last song, "Hymn," poem by Ben Jonson, follows suit. It also reiterates Argento's prejudice for the quiet ending. Its time signature, 6/8, follows the pattern of using an eighth-note tactus, for only one of these songs has contained a 4/4 signature, "Spring."

Hymns are noted for harmonic accompaniments. Harmony is the important factor in this setting. The first four measures of this song outline crucial harmonic and rhythmic structures (Example 22). Note the mediant relationships between the two, two-measure progressions. The first two stanzas in each verse are symmetrical, having eight measures of stately, chordal harmony, either sustained or in the rhythmic form shown in Example 22. Also important to note is the chromatic, non-traditional progressions, use of descending and ascending diatonic

## Example 22--Ms. 1-4



or chromatic bass lines throughout the song, and the use of seventh and thirteenth chords. The third stanza of each verse contrasts an outpouring of praise with a subito piano *trattendo* ending which uses fading melismas. The range of the melodies in each of these stanzas is broad and hemiolas are used effectively.

The key relations between the verses are interesting. The first verse begins in D major, the second in E major, and the last in F-sharp major. The melodies of each of the first stanzas are varied to suit the mood of the text and the melodies of the second and third stanzas are repetitive formulas as if they were refrains; however, the last is sung one half-step higher. The endings of each third stanza are varied, also. The final progression of the song follows the first four-measure harmonic formula over a d-pedal and ends on a d pedal tone.

If the reader will refer back to the characterizations of Britten, he will find that they apply, also, to the Six Elizabethan Songs with Argento's own touches: non-traditional uses of dominant-tonic harmony, mediant relationships, contrapuntal repetition of motivic themes, and the importance of the text and melody. Textures range from extremely simple and clearcut to thick and lush. Argento maintains that the composer must keep developing and retain a wealth of creative ideas which



will enable him to creatively compose, not stagnate. Ewen's comment about Argento's "increasing technical skill" is borne out by the conservation of ideas and the wealth of creative uses for those ideas in this cycle. Some were used again and again but masked so that their unity is not apparent to the listener without close examination of the score.

## DRAMATIC SONGS

Circa 1600 A.D. the Florentine Camerata attempted to create a style of solo song in drama which approximated the Greek ideal of early Greek music. This was the beginning of Italian opera. As opera grew in popularity in Italy, France, and Germany, its style began to influence the way songs were composed (see p. 2). Early songs sung by the travelling minstrels were simple songs conveying news or relating stories of love. Art songs developed from the combination of popular song styles with the dramatic styles of cantata, oratorio, and opera.

Dramatic songs and art songs have much in common, but the primary difference between the two types is the situation for which they are written. Art songs are written to poetic texts for recital purposes. Dramatic songs, although they, too, can be performed in a recital, are written for the stage. Drama and plot accompany them. They reveal character traits or action or emotions. Usually they are not as philosophical as an art song, for what audience wants to sit through two to four hours of philosophy? Dramatic songs can be composed strophically, through-composed, as in a monologue, or in a composite form. They are usually written for larger ensembles and need reduction to a piano score if they are to be performed in recital. Just as the composition of art songs tended to adhere to nationalistic traditions, so did the evolution of the dramatic song. England and Italy developed dramatic song on opposite sides of the aesthetic spectrum.

England of 1600 was a country where music was not the primary outlet of emotion or source of entertainment. Alfred Einstein wrote in his revised edition of A Short History of Music (New York: Vintage Books, 1954), music "is not the natural means of expression for the English to the same extent as it is for the Italian." Edward J. Dent said music exaggerates the personality of the Italian and annihilates that of the Englishman in his Foundations of English Opera (reprinted New York: Da Capo, 1965).<sup>27</sup> Apart from church music, English song between 1600 and 1850 was vulgar or linked to the theater. Pubs and docks probably rocked with their drunken denizens singing catches or seafaring songs. The royal court did not favor these, however, so "England" did not favor them.

Theatre songs were a different matter. When courtiers sought entertainment at the theater before 1600, they went to see the masque. The English masque was, like French ballet, an allegorical spectacle, with scenic effects and lavish costumes. The ceremonial drama was carried through dialogue, incidental vocal or instrumental music, and dancing by the courtiers themselves. After 1600, the masque became the testing ground for "ayres" from composers like John Dowland. The songs themselves did not assume too much importance. They provided respite from the drama, much like the Italian comic Intermezzo.

The masque flourished under James I and Charles I until 1649 when the Puritans opposed stage plays. Thereafter, it became known as "A Representation by the art of Prospective Scenes and the Story sung

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<sup>27</sup> Both quoted in Curtis A. Price, Henry Purcell and the London Stage (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 4.

in Recitative Musick." The addition of music became important and the first English opera, a compilation of different composers called The Siege of Rhodes, was produced in 1656. Unfortunately, it was only a musical exhibition which masked a theatrical spectacle. In 1660, Charles II restored plays to their prominence, an order which gladdened the English audience who sought to entertain its mind rather its ear. It cared for tragedy and comedy mixed in with dance and music, an attitude fostered by the masque tradition.<sup>28</sup> This attitude was also fostered by actors, playwrights, and dancers, who had the most to lose if musicians began getting all the jobs.

The popularity of musical shows increased in the early 1670's due to increased attendance at concerts and the newly introduced French opera and ballet. The court began to get interested around 1674 with the special preparation of Calisto (1674), which was labelled "a play and an opera," and Psyche (1675).<sup>29</sup> The music itself was influenced by French and Italian compositional styles. Composers were sent to foreign countries by the court and returned with foreign ideas and techniques. For instance, two of Purcell's teachers, John Blow and Pelham Humphrey, studied in Italy and France, respectively. There was little interest in Italian opera, however, until 1700.

Opera has been defined as that genre in which music is the principle articulator of the plot. Usually, grand architecture, costuming, and special effects accompanied the music and the drama.

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<sup>28</sup> Robert Etheridge Moore, Henry Purcell and the Restoration Theatre (London: Heineman Educational Books Ltd., 1961), p. 33.

<sup>29</sup> Robert D. Hume, The Development of English Drama in the late Seventeenth Century (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), p. 206.

However, John Dryden defined opera as

a poetical Tale or Fiction, represented by Vocal and Instrumental Musick, adorn'd with Scenes, Machines, and Dancing. The [characters]...are generally supernatural, as Gods and Goddesses, and Heroes...The Subject therefore being extended beyond the Limits of Humane Nature, admits of that sort of marvellous and surprizing conduct, which is rejected in other plays.<sup>30</sup>

Hence, the Baroque English, operatic ideal was a monumental theatre piece achieved by combining different elements into a single entertainment experience where dialogue was primary and music was secondary. This was the opposite of what Italian opera seria was developing into.

For an English audience, singing broke the autonomy of the drama. English opera was a genre on the brink of true opera as we have come to know it. Song and dance occurred naturally in comedies and fancy staging and set design were musts for successful heroic plays. Combining these with the masque tradition yields the formula for English semi-opera: the theater works composers such as Purcell and Eccles wrote music for.

Henry Purcell was born in London in 1658. Some historians quibble that he was born in 1659, so the exact date is not known. His father, also named Henry, was a gentleman employed by the Chapel Royal. Young Henry sang there as a boy and learned to play the organ; in fact, Blow taught him so well that in 1679, he replaced Blow as the organist at Westminster Abbey, a position he held until his untimely death.

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30 Ibid, p. 207.

In 1677, the Chapel Royal had appointed him composer for violins and in 1682 they made him the organist. He continued at both the Chapel and the Abbey, composing choral music for the church and royal odes. He also wrote harpsichord suites, instrumental music, and spent much of his time composing for the theatre. Unfortunately, many of these theatre works are unperformable in their entirety due to "the courtier-like extravagance of the words" and are "chiefly kept in remembrance by the performance of isolated songs."<sup>31</sup> Music for dramas represents over half of his total output for the theatre. Some of the songs are "operatic" in that they supply emotions, characterizations, and foreshadowings not apparent in the dialogue.<sup>32</sup>

The first play for which Purcell wrote the accompanying music was Theodosius in 1680 for the Duke's Co. at Dorset Garden, filling in for the late Matthew Locke who had been their chief composer. Purcell had been employed by the King's Co. at Drury Lane for their 1680-81 season. When Purcell filled the other vacancy, they were not happy. Consequently, even though Purcell produced two plays at Drury Lane that season, they did not renew their association with him until 1688.

His big break came in April of 1688 when he wrote the music for A Fool's Preferrment produced at the United Co.<sup>33</sup> His next composition was an opera more in the style of Italian opera seria called Dido and

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<sup>31</sup> Scholes, The Oxford Companion of Music, pp. 843-4.

<sup>32</sup> Price, Henry Purcell and the London Stage, p. 7.

<sup>33</sup> Drury Lane and Dorset Garden had merged into the United Co. in November of 1682. They split again in March, 1695, into Drury Lane's Patent Co. and the Lincoln's Inn Fields Co. due to financial mismanagement and financial "slighting" of leading actors. The star performers and John Eccles went to Lincoln's Inn Fields while Purcell stayed at Drury Lane with the beginners.

Aeneas, written for a girl's school in Chelsea in collaboration with two others under auspices of the school's owner. It was not popular with the public and Purcell did not write another like it.

Dioclesian triumphed in June, 1690, at the United Co. with Purcell's music and his theatrical career solidified. All new United Co. productions contained his music in whole or in part. Dioclesian was followed by King Arthur (1691), Oedipus and The Fairy Queen (1692), and Don Quixote (1694), a trilogy, to name a few highlights. Purcell gave a final creative burst, composing Bonduca, The Libertine, Timon of Athens, and The Indian Queen, before dying in November of 1695. Many historians conjecture that, given more time, he might have developed an operatic form which would have been acceptable to the English audience.

Purcell championed the pure declamation of poetry and reacted against the obscuration of text in polyphonic music of the late sixteenth century. His early secular music changed from syllabic settings, where the poetic meter was matched to musical rhythms, to later works where the text was set to rhetorical figures in flowing melodies. His mature style began to emerge in A Fool's Preferrment and in Dido and Aeneas.

In English theater, the main actors spoke the dialogue and secondary actors sang songs which commented on the situation's irony, pathos, or humor, or foreshadowed events, or revealed character traits not presented in the dialogue. Purcell came up with a compositional technique which would present these traits effectively and dramatically: the rhetorical gesture, the English version of the Baroque affection.

His music after 1690 contained devices similiar to motives which allude to specific occurences , situations, or topics. For instance, melismas of dotted rhythms depicted joy or descending chromatic lines depicted grief or death. Keys could also allude to situations. Death was set in G minor, eroticism in A minor or D minor, pastorelles in F major or B-flat major, sorcery or horror in F minor, and so on. Modulation shifted the mood and oscialltions between major and minor signified struggle or ambivalence. Keys that did not correlate foreshadowed things to come.

These rhetorical gestures unified the drama and the music within a song. However, they can be mistreated anlytically. Purcell carefully controlled his tonal centers and stayed within theoretical guidelines. His songs were specifically designed to promote specific feelings and emotional states or to reinforce specific dramatic events.<sup>34</sup>

Price and Hume classify the plays Purcell contributed music to into four categories, three semi-operatic types and one operatic: serious dramas, which were revisions of old tragedies containing no comedy; tragic extravaganzas, which were new plays based on heroic tragedies and were scenically spectacular; tragic comedies, which were scenically spectacular, satirical or ironic commentaries on politics, contemporary issues, etc.; and operas, in which music was the principal articulator of the plot.<sup>35</sup> Oedipus and Bonduca are varieties of tragic extravaganzas. They needed substantially more music than the other two semi-operatic types but did not rely on music to articulate the plot.

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid, pp. 17-27.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, p. vii, and Hume, The Development of English Drama, p. 397.



The music in Oedipus included six incidental tunes and an overture, all in C major, by Louis Grabu, but the vocal music was Purcell's. None of the original vocal music exists except for "Music for Awhile" which was published in the second book of Orpheus Brittanicus. There are many versions of it due to copying mistakes, but the most reputable source extant is in a manuscript in the British Library Addition, MSS #31447. The play, written by John Dryden and Nathaniel Lee, was produced in September, 1678; it was the most admired work of its day. The music was added to a 1692 revision. Act III contains a necromantic scene in which the ghost of King Laius is raised by Tiresius the seer so he may reveal his killer. "Music for Awhile," an incantation for countertenor, is flanked by trios for alto, tenor, and bass.

Tiresius finds Laius to be stubborn and asks if he must have music, too. He bids the trio of priests to "tune your voices, and let 'em have such sound as Hell ne'er hear since Orpheus brib'd the Shades." The following trio, "Hear ye sullen powers," is to distract the attention of the underworld gods so that Tiresius can charm Laius from his resting place.

Price analyzed "Music for Awhile" according to the rhetorical gestures he found.<sup>36</sup> The ground bass represents the shackles of death while ascending chromatics represent the ghost's detachment from the bones of its corpse (Example 23). Variations of the ground after its modulation to G minor, which occurs after the text "how your pains were eas'd," indicate the spirit's release. Remember, the dominant key,

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid, pp. 105-110.

## Example 23--Ground bass, ms. 1-3



G minor, represents death or doom, and the tonic C minor is associated with mystery and awe. The ground continues in two voices as Alecto, one of the Furies, is called upon to free the dead. The keys proceed through doom to a calm B-flat major and E-flat major, the key of triumph. The word "eternal" is painted by two melismas of oscillating major seconds over an extension of the ground.<sup>37</sup> There is an unexpected return to C minor at the word "drop" which shifts to G minor reminding us that Laius' resurrection is temporary and the air closes with an extended da capo.

Bonduca, on the other hand, is a violent play of epic proportion. In five acts it recounts the last battle between Celtic queen Boadicea (Bonduca) and the Roman army attempting to control her renegade tribes. The 1695 version to which Purcell contributed music was a hurried adaptation by George Powell of an earlier play by Beaumont and Fletcher. It was produced at Drury Lane in response to the success of the renegade Lincoln's Inn Fields Co. Modern critics such as Price call Bonduca a "cheap and careless revision" saved only by Purcell's music.<sup>38</sup>

"Bonvica's Song" is also somewhat contrived. This song displays more readily the gestures of the Baroque. Bonduca's army and family

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<sup>37</sup> Earlier editions showed an oscillation between minor seconds which clash with the figured bass and is not supported by MSS #31447.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, p. 125.

are surrounded in their castle and are about to die under siege. Bonvica, Bonduca's youngest daughter and a warrior in her own right, unseen really until Act V, complains to her maid in a speech preluding suicide. The following air is meant to bolster her own courage to defy the conquering Romans and "leave this dire consuming melancholy."

The sighing of the opening bars sets the mood for the piece. The opening is in three parts and the sighing quickly changes to fanfare with "where the shrill trumpets never sound." The third section is quieter, reflecting the "eternal hush" which is painted by pregnant pauses. The aria opens with a pleasant, curving melody in 3/4 time. The voice enters with "There let me soothe my pleasing pain" and continues to a glorious B section which contrasts the A section's legato with dotted rhythms of battle.

The original key is C minor, but the shrill trumpets sound in E-flat major and are hushed back in C minor. The A section of the aria is in C minor, briefly touching E-flat major, finally progressing to its dominant, G major, at the beginning of B. By the end of the glorious battle, the aria has returned to C minor through E-flat major.

Price labels this song the "only song in the serious dramas that relies on a child and on contrived drama for effect."<sup>39</sup> Robert E. Moore calls it trivial and doesn't appreciate the way the "fine chromatics" of the opening bars are "shattered" by shrill trumpeting. He defends it by citing the Baroque notion of contrast, but cannot forgive the repetition in the aria portion.<sup>40</sup> Despite the contrivance, Purcell was

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid, p. 125.

<sup>40</sup> Moore, Henry Purcell and Restoration Theatre, p. 154.

and is a very respected composer of dramatic music. So was John Eccles in his day, but he was no Purcell.

There is not much biographical knowledge about John Eccles. He was born in London in 1650, the eldest of Solomon Eccles, who was a musician in the service of King James II. John was a pupil of his father and later became Master of the King's Band. He died, after a pleasingly successful career as a composer of drawing-room songs and stage music, in Kingston-on-Thames in 1735. He had retired there to fish.

Eccles was popular in his day. He did write a dance for Sir Anthony in Love (1690) which included a ground bass, but he is better known for his collaboration with Purcell and other composers. He collaborated with Purcell to write the music for Love Triumphant (January, 1694) and Don Quixote, I and II (1693-4). Of the three sets of lyrics in Love Triumphant, Eccles set two. Price reports that he received the better lyrics, but did not reflect this in "repetitious" and "tedious" music. He did better when he wrote "Beyond the desert mountains" to replace one of Purcell's songs in The Married Beau (originally produced in April, 1694). This song is in F minor and is accompanied by a "lush" string quartet. However, Price criticizes this one for its overt sentimentality in its dramatic context.<sup>41</sup>

Don Quixote was better. This trilogy contains music by Eccles in the first two parts. "I burn, I burn, my brain consumes to ashes" was

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41 Price, Henry Purcell and the London Stage, p. 152.

highly regarded as a mad song. This may have been due to Anne Bracegirdle's stunning performance. In all, he contributed music to several major plays besides those above including Macbeth (1664), Aureng-Zebe (1675), The Richmond Heiress (1693), The Loves of Mars and Venus (1696), Rinaldo and Armida (1698), and Semele (1706-7), a semi-opera which was not performed until earlier this century.

Arthur Jacobs identifies Eccles as the stylistic bridge between Purcell and Handel.<sup>42</sup> His music is usually harmonically simple with imitation between the melody and bass. "The Jolly, Jolly Breeze" from Rinaldo and Armida is a good example. As the breezes "run o'er golden gravel," the accompaniment imitates the voice in sequences which climax on an e'. Coloratura figuration accompanies text such as "down the hill," "curling the crystal rills," "wanton motion," and most of the A section in a typical example of Baroque text painting.

Rinaldo and Armida was the only semi-opera attempted at Lincoln's Inn Fields. It fits the semi-operatic mold described earlier in the discussion of English opera. Price describes it as a tragedy or "pocket opera."<sup>43</sup> Hume liked this Purcell-style opera and accords it success although the competition, he reports, drew much of its crowd to Drury Lane, cutting its premier audience.<sup>44</sup>

Another way of defining opera is "a drama, either tragic or comic, sung throughout, with appropriate scenery and acting, to the accompa-

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<sup>42</sup> "The British Isles," Arthur Jacobs, A History of Song, Stevens, p. 131.

<sup>43</sup> Price, Henry Purcell and the London Stage, p. 97.

<sup>44</sup> Hume, The Development of English Drama, p. 457.

niment of orchestra." It is the "sung throughout" portion which is important. Some operas admit spoken dialogue, but it is the combination of vocal music with theatrical representation which makes an opera. It has its conventions, for there must be some way for the music portion to develop musically, but the drama will always be wanting to move.<sup>45</sup>

Nineteenth-century Italian opera can be traced back to Peri, a representative composer of the Florentine Camerata, and its master composer, Monteverdi. They began with Pastoral forms which were subsequently standardized by the Neapolitan composers Zeno and Metastasio in the late 17th century. They created a three-act form which dealt with subject matter from history and legend, bringing it closer to the people than mythology. The center of the dramatic expression in Neapolitan opera was the aria, the subjective expression of thoughts and emotions by the character. The standard form for the aria became Da Capo.

By the mid-18th century, Mozart had clarified subtle characterizations, musically integrated vocal and instrumental factors to more directly relate the drama and music, and perfected the use of the Classical symphonic style in ensemble finales.<sup>46</sup> The "proper" technique for singing was termed bel canto, a technique begun in 1680 by Pistocchi and his pupil, Bernacchi. Bel canto singers were able to improvise flowery passages into the composer's melody, showing off their great agility, breath control, expansive range, and portamento. Unfortunately, some composers began to feel that this improvisation,

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45 Willi Apel, Harvard Dictionary of Music (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1966), pp. 505-506.

46 Ibid, p. 511.

although favored by the audience, demolished the composition and undermined the drama.

Towards the latter part of the 18th century, opera buffa began to flourish. They were satires of manners or current events or parodied opera seria. They were oriented to the audience and were subject to the practice of inserting "hits," or well-known arias, to please them. Rossini was one buffa composer who began to rebel against the demolition of his crafts by the performers. So he undertook to revolutionize this excess and wrote the fioritura into the composition and would not allow the performers to deviate from it. Rossini became the leader of the Italian-national opera composers of the 19th century. He was followed by Bellini, Donizetti, and Verdi.

Gioacchino Rossini was born in Pesaro, Italy, on leap-year day, February 29, 1792. He revered his parents, Giuseppe, a Municipal Trumpeter, horn player, inspector of public slaughterhouses, and Jacobin patriot, and Anna, daughter of a baker, who sang minor roles in minor opera theaters in the region. He especially adored his mother and she most likely provided the influence on his career decision. Since the political situation in Italy was very unstable around the turn of the 19th century, Pesaro was not the safest place for a Jacobin, so Gioacchino was left in the care of an aunt in Pesaro while his parents toured the region as musicians. In 1802, the whole family finally settled in Lugo.

After a stint as a blacksmith's apprentice, an occupation which he rejected but from which he learned some discipline, he more

seriously continued lessons on horn, voice, theory, violin, and viola. He joined the Liceo Musicale of Bologna in 1806 where he concentrated on singing, cello, and piano, and studied counterpoint with Padre Mattei, a well-known theorist of the region. His composition career began modestly and his popularity began to spread around the region. His first three operas were for Venice, 1810-1812. An opera buffa, La Pietra de paragone, produced in Milan, September 26, 1812, made his name a household word in Italy, securing for himself an exemption from military service and a beautiful mistress. His next two, serious operas, Tancredi and L'Italiana in Algeri, were produced in Venice in 1813. At this time he was living in Paris, and these operas gave him premier status among Italian composers and won him European fame. He was only twenty-one years old.

Unfortunately, his next success wasn't until 1814 when he accepted a contract from the impresario Barbaja at Naples to write two operas a year for his theaters. His first under this contract was Elisabetta, d'Inghilterra, produced in Naples on October 4, 1815. The success of this opera was due mostly to the performance of prima donna Isabella Colbran, Barbaja's mistress at that time.

He went to Rome on a leave of absence and accepted a contract from Duke Sforza-Cesarini to write two operas for his Argentine Theatre. The second of these proved to be the opera for which Rossini is best remembered, Il Barbiere di Siviglia, produced on February 20, 1816, and conducted by the twenty-three-year-old Rossini. The premier was far less than successful due to the presence of supporters of composer Paisiello, who had written an opera on this subject earlier. They



created so much noise and disturbance that Rossini refused to attend the second night's performance, contrary to tradition, and had to be told later of its success. It was a European smash and has not lost its place in the standard repertoire.

This opera proved to be the height of his career. He continued composing for the opera theatre until 1829. That year he produced Guillaume Tell, a nationalistic opera ripe for the Revolutionary mindset of the times. After 1829, he stopped composing operas and was pensioned by the French government. However, with the onset of the Revolution in 1830, his pension was suspended, forcing him to sue the government. It ~~was~~ finally settled in 1835.

He had married Mme. Colbran in March, 1822. They separated in 1837, however, and she died in 1845. Rossini married Olympe Pelissier in August, 1846, and they lived in Bologna until 1848. He was a consultant there with the Liceo Musicale, a post he had had since 1836. In 1848 they moved to Florence and moved again in 1855 to Paris where they resided until his death on Friday, November 13, 1868. While he was in Paris, he lived the high life of a socialite, entertaining and cooking for friends. He was highly esteemed and entombed in the Church of Santa Croce in Florence. That Friday the 13th was not a lucky day for Rossini who had been superstitious all his life.

He had composed for Italy 32 operas, two oratorios, twelve cantatas, two symphonies. and chamber works for voice and for instruments. He is also known for the reform of the role of the singer in opera. In all his operas after 1815, he wrote into his music the ornamentation for singers who had been used to improvising ornamentation, sometimes

changing the melody or character of the aria. This reform went against the grain of established bel canto tradition.

Stendhal criticized Rossini for not allowing the singer to show his vocal mettle by improvising. In his opinion, Rossini's sin was the taking away of the professional singer's power "to enrapture audiences with vocal flights of fancy and fantasy." He said, "If art is to be a source of genuine pleasure it must produce a powerful emotional reaction in the observer...The individual vocalist must have room to display his own unique interpretation with his own unique voice, not the pen of the composer,"<sup>47</sup> a typically Italian viewpoint. However, as the popularity of his music shows, Rossini's music can provoke powerful emotional reactions.

Il Barbiere di Siviglia is Rossini's opera based on the first of Beaumarchais's trilogy of Figaro comedies. Mozart had set the second of these in May, 1786, and Paisiello had ~~set~~ an earlier version of the first. The libretto was proposed to Rossini by Cesarini, the impresario of the Argentine Theatre, Rome, where Rossini's Torvaldo e Dorliska had failed. Stendhal and Kobbe report that young Rossini wrote to Paisiello about setting the libretto in deference to the elder composer's position, but Toye, Rossini's biographer, disagrees. He argues that the practice of setting plays that had already been set was a time-honored practice. Rossini had no need to write Paisiello. In any case, Paisiello did not object publicly. He assumed it would

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<sup>47</sup> Stendhal, Life of Rossini (New York: Orion Press, 1970), pp. 331, 353-354.

fail, privately, and left it to his followers to provide the impetus for its failure.

Opening night was a fiasco. The curtain was howled down after Basilio's aria because the crowd, mostly Paisiello's followers, was bored with the opera's triviality and distracted by many technical problems, although Rosina, sung by Mme. Giorgi-Righetti, was applauded occasionally through the night. The second night was a triumph, but the Paris premier on September 9, 1819, was a failure. In this case, when a critic called for a revival of Paisiello's version and was rewarded with its presentation, Paisiello's opera was judged even more boring and Rossini's was brought back.

Rossini's music played equally well to French ears as to Italian ears. The subject matter is very French. In the story, Count Almaviva assumes the identity of Lindoro, a minstrel, and serenades his love, Rosina, the ward of Dr. Bartolo. After the serenade and a short chorus, Figaro, a barber whose talents range from confidant to the intrigues of young lovers to barber-surgeon for the elderly, enters with an aria, Largo al factotum, in which he introduces and describes himself. He plots with Almaviva to capture Rosina's heart and hand, despite Bartolo's desire to keep her hand and dowry for himself. The rest of the opera reveals how Figaro and Almaviva succeed in winning Rosina and duping Bartolo.

If the reader will refer back to Ravel's definition of the French musical character (p. 16 and ff.) and compare it to Donald Grout's description of Rossini's music, he may recognize the French qualities in Rossini's music. Grout said Rossini's music "combines an inexhaus-

tible flow of melody with pungent rhythms [also an Italian quality], clear phraseology, well-shaped and sometimes quite unconventional structure of the musical period, a sparse texture, clean and discriminative orchestration, and a harmonic scheme, though not complex, which [is not] unoriginal."<sup>48</sup> Figaro's introductory, bravura aria is one of the most popular and widely recognizable arias in the high baritone repertoire. The sarcastic mimicry of his clientele calling to him from all corners has been parodied in Bugs Bunny cartoons and used in other entertainment media. What makes it so entertaining and popular is the same thing which endeared it to the French and Italian opera-goers: its simplistic directness and delicate wit. The musical construction has the same touches. Stendhal said of Rossini's music in general, "The only indispensable virtue needed in the artist is technical agility; and provided a singer...possesses this one quality, he can always be certain of enjoying a reasonable amount of success--at least insofar as Rossini is concerned."<sup>49</sup>

The scheme of this long aria can best be represented in a table. (see Table, following page). Rossini does not stick to a predetermined form, but sets each section of text with a new, inspiring melody. Each of these melodies is simple, usually based on triads, each in a new tonic or its dominant. Harmonically, the aria includes many secondary dominants but is structurally uncomplicated. Rossini does indulge in the use of mediant relationships, a fad among early Romantic composers.

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<sup>48</sup> Donald Jay Grout, A History of Western Music, 3rd edition with Claude V. Palisca (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1980), p. 617.

<sup>49</sup> Stendhal, Life of Rossini, p. 348.

There is much repetition of musical material, but he was able to vary it, slightly changing a little bit at a time. One of his many variation techniques was the patter, a condensation of phrases into quick runs which challenge the singer's diction and breath control. One learns quickly that when singing Rossini's music, one must not force the characterization, one must allow Rossini's pen to do the work. The singer should only have to do a little acting in the interludes.

Section	Measures	Key Center/Modulation	Associated Text
A	43	C major	Symphonic Introduction
B--a	15	C major	Largo al factotum...
b	14	C major to G major	Ah, che bel vivere...
a	28	C major	Ah, bravo, Figaro...
C--	10	C major to G major	Interlude
c	12	G major to E major	Pronto a far tutto...
d	12 1/2	E <sup>♯</sup> major	
e	13 1/2	E <sup>♯</sup> major	V'e la risorsa...
b	12	C major to G major	Ah, che bel vivere...
D--f	25	C major	Tutto mi chiedono...
g	6	C major	Figaro!
h	16	A <sup>♭</sup> major to E major to C major	Ohime!...
f'	25	C major	Figaro! son qua...
	3	C major chords	Cadential extension
E--i	17	C major	Ah, bravo, Figaro...
j	14	C major	Sono il factotum...
	6	C major	Extension/Finale

## CONCLUSION

We must agree that the beauty of a work of art will always remain a mystery, in other words we can never be absolutely sure 'how it's made.' We must at all costs preserve this magic which is peculiar to music and to which, by its Nature, music is of all arts the most receptive. --Debussy<sup>50</sup>

This quote seems to encapsulate the mystique of music. Poetry is the lofty expression of sentiment or idea using text or language. Music combined with poetry in song expresses the emotion or feeling behind the language, "an immediate and satisfying method of expression and intensification of feeling" on a simple and direct basis.<sup>51</sup> Therefore, how a composer utilizes the tools of his trade may not be as important as what kind of emotional response is invoked by the performance of his efforts. Unfortunately, the text, which provides the basis of interpretation for the music, recedes when the music is heard; poetic comprehension is lost when music is grafted onto the poem, especially if the poem is in a foreign language.

As soon as we sing any poetry to a recognizable melody we have at that instant left the art of poetry for the art of music...The music of a song destroys the verbal music of the poem utterly. --Michael Tippett<sup>52</sup>

Dramatic music, on the other hand, is meant to be felt and understood. The composer must be able to evoke emotional feeling and communicate verbal sentiment; the text must be, should be, understood. This can be done formally through repetition of text while developing musical themes, stylistically through natural declamation in recitative or emotional utterance in a cantabile line or aria, or texturally through the use of appropriate orchestration. Sometimes an aria with

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50 Grove's, "Debussy," V, p. 310.

51 Hall, The Art Song, p. 3.

52 "Conclusion," Michael Tippett, A History of Song, Stevens, p. 462.

less musical complication can communicate more than an art song, much like plain speech versus legalese, or portrait art versus conceptual art. However, most often it's the context of a situation which lends itself to the understanding of a song, dramatic or art. And there's where the two song-types meet: subject matter. No matter how a composer chooses to set a text, the techniques of writing art songs and operas are alike, for the "situations which make good songs are often situations that crystallize from the human dramas of opera."<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Tippett, *ibid*, p. 465.

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## DER FREUND

Whoever sleeps on the waves, a softly cradled child,  
Knows not the depths of life, being blinded by sweet dreaming.  
But whoever is called by tempest to bid adieu to the world,  
And whoever is called by tempest to bid adieu to the world--  
As I never have, I have learned to be a careful world--  
He learns to bear himself bravely and to steer safely.  
Through night and reefs with a staunch and earnest heart.  
He is a man of true grain, tested in joy and grief;  
He believes in God and the stars, and he shall be my  
helmsman.

## DER MUSIKANT

I love to wander through life, and to live as best I can.  
Even if I wanted to take pains, it just wouldn't suit me.  
I know beautiful old songs, in the cold, barefoot,  
I strike my tambourine in the street, and know not where I'll  
rest at night:

Many a fair one makes eyes, it's true, and thinks I would  
please her well  
If only I'd settle down and weren't such a poor vagabond.  
May God scrape up a husband for you, and proved you with a  
good house and home:  
If we two were together, my singing might die away.

## VERSCHMITTENE LIEBE

Over the treetops and the standing corn,  
Way up to the bright stars--  
Who can guess their secrets,  
Who could overtake them!--  
Thoughts go floating:  
The night is silent, thoughts fly free.  
If only she could guess who has thought of her  
Asid the rustling of the groves  
When no one else is awake  
But the flying clouds:  
My love is as silent and beautiful as the night.

## DER VERZWEIFELTE LIENHABER

Studying is unprofitable, my coat is out at the elbows,  
My sither won't play, my sweetheart doesn't love me.  
I wish that the fairest of women were walking in the meadows  
I'd be a dragon and carry her off away with me into the blue  
I wish I were out questing in armour; with couched lance,  
I'd chase all the Philistines out of sight.  
I wish I were now lying in silent and spacious heaven,  
Asking nothing about the world's vanities,  
Just filled with contentment.

## DANS LE JARDIN

I looked into the garden, furtively, across the hedge:  
I saw you, child: end, suddenly, my heart was troubled:  
I loved you!

I pricked myself with thorns, my fingers bled from the  
And my weeping was divine: I saw your little boyish face,  
Your hair of gold and your pure brow: Grown up and yet

Childlike.  
Coquetish only by instinct--Your blue eyes, shaded with  
long lashes,  
Which gaze around so tenderly, a body rather frail and  
charming.

A voice of May, with gestures of April:

I looked into the garden, furtively, across the hedge:  
I saw you, child: end, suddenly, my heart was troubled:  
I loved you!

---Paul Gravelot

## LES CLOCHES

The leaves were opening along the edge of branches,  
delicately,  
The bells were ringing, lightly and clearly, into the  
fair sky.

Mythical and fervent as a hymn, this distant call  
brought to my mind the Christian whiteness  
Of flowers of the Altar.

These bells were telling of happy years, and, in the  
deep forest,

The faded leaves seemed to grow green again, as in days  
long past.

---Paul Bourget

## GREEN

Here are fruits, flowers, leaves, and branches.  
And here, also, is my heart which beats only for you.  
Do not tear it apart, with your two white hands.  
And may this humble offering seem sweet to your so lovely  
eyes.

I come, still covered with dew,  
Which the morning wind has turned to frost on my brow.  
Permit that my fatigue, reposing at your feet,  
May dream of the cherished moments that will refresh it.

On your young bosom let me cradle my head.  
Still filled with music from your last kisses;  
Let it be soothed after the good storm.  
And let me sleep a little, while you rest.

---Paul Verlaine

## SPLEEN

The roses were completely red, and the ivies were all black.  
Deer, if in the least you stir, they revive all my despair.

The sky was too blue, too tender, the sea too green and  
the air too sweet.  
I always dread that which is from waiting:  
Some cruel flight from you!  
Of the blackly-gleamed leaf end of the gleaming boxwood I  
am tired  
And of the infinite countryside, and of everything.  
Except you, Ales!

---Paul Verlaine

## LARGO AL FACTOTUM DELLA CITTA

Make room for the factotum of the city, make room!  
 Quickly to the shop, because the dawn is already here, quickly!  
 Ah, what a beautiful life, what beautiful pleasure for a barber of quality!  
 Ah, bravo, Figaro, bravo, bravissimo, bravo!  
 Luckiest one indeed, bravo!

Ready to do everything, the night and the day, always he's on the go.  
 A better livelihood for a barber, a nobler life, is not to be had.  
 Razors and combs, lancets and scissors, at my command here is everything.

There are matters of business, of discretion, with the young ladies  
 And the young gentlemen.  
 They all ask for me, they all want me, ladies, boys, old men, young girls,  
 Here the wig...quickly the beard...here the blood-letting...quickly the note...  
 Figaro!

Alas! What a frenzy! Alas! What a crowd!  
 One at a time, for heaven's sake!  
 Figaro! I'm here. Figaro...I'm here.  
 Figaro here, Figaro there, Figaro up, Figaro down.  
 Ready as can be, I'm like the lightning: I am the factotum of the city!

Ah, bravo, Figaro, bravo, bravissimo, bravo!  
 To you, fortune will not be lacking.  
 I am the factotum of the city!

A RECITAL OF ART AND DRAMATIC SONGS

by

Eugene R. Thomas

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AN ABSTRACT OF A REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
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## ABSTRACT

This Master's Report contains expanded program notes on Hugo Wolf, Claude Debussy, Dominick Argento, Henry Purcell, John Eccles, and Gioacchino Rossini. Besides biographies, discussions about their compositional styles, and brief analyses of the representative songs performed on this recital, historical surveys of German Lieder, French mélodie, American art song, early English theater, and Italian opera are included for background. These surveys compare and contrast the different national tendencies between the art song composers and the difference in aesthetics between English semi-opera and Italian opera. The biographical material is not simply a listing of dates, places, and compositions, but an investigation into the influences lifestyle, education, other art forms, and the poetry had on the composers. Finally, there is a comparison of the art song genre with dramatic songs to determine common characteristics or differences.