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A RECITAL

by

JANET K. RIEDEL BAER

B. S., Kansas State University, 1981

A MASTER'S REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

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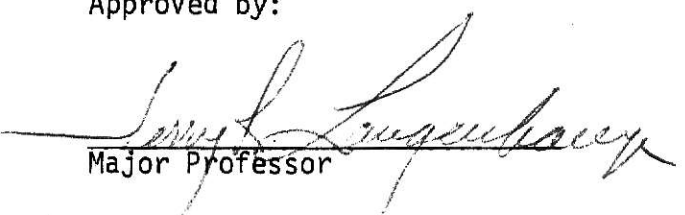
MASTER OF MUSIC

Department of Music

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

1983

Approved by:


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presents

JANET RIEDEL BAER, Soprano

Bachelors of Music Education, Kansas State University 1981

WILLIAM WINGFIELD, Piano

Wednesday, April 6, 1983

All Faiths Chapel

8:00 p.m.

A MASTER'S RECITAL

presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

MASTER OF MUSIC

PROGRAM

Now

Hanley Jackson
(born 1939)
Anton Webern
(1883-1945)

Vier Lieder, Op. 12

Der Tag ist vergangen
Die geheimnisvolle Flöte
Schien mir's, als ich sah die Sonne
Gleich und Gleich

Seligkeit

Franz Schubert
(1797-1828)

Gretchen am Spinnrade

Der Tod und das Mädchen

Auf dem Wasser zu singen

Die Vögel

INTERMISSION

Ariettes Oubliées, Aquarelle

Claude Debussy
(1862-1918)

Green

Spleen

Lia's Aria, from L'Enfant Prodigue

A Charm of Lullabies

Benjamin Britten
(1913-1976)

A Cradle Song

The Highland Balou

Sephistia's Lullaby

A Charm

The Nurse's Song

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JACKSON: NOW

Commenting on his musical philosophies and the music and musicians of his time, John Cage compiled his essays into a book entitled Silence in 1961. The 1960's marked the end of an Avant-Garde era and his views on indeterminacy, silence, and experimental music, influence, or are at least food-for-thought for, many present day composers. One of these composers is Hanley Jackson, who chose to quote Cage literally in the opening of his piece, Now.

Jackson, born in 1939, received his schooling in California; his B.A. in 1966 from California State University in Northridge, and his M.A. in 1968 in Long Beach. He studied theory and composition with Gerald Strang and Aurelio de la Vega. Since 1968, he has been an Associate Professor of Music and Composer in Residence at Kansas State University.¹

Now

(A quote of John Cage, spoken)

Contemporary music is not the music of the future nor the music of the past but simply music present with us: this moment, now, this now moment.

(Writings of Omar Khayyam)

Here with a loaf of bread beneath the bough,
a flask of wine, a book of verse and Thou
beside me singing in the wilderness
and wilderness is paradise anew.

Ah make the most of what ye yet may spend,
before we too into the dust descend.
Dust into dust, and under dust to lie,
sans wine, sans singer, and sans end.

¹ Jackson's more well known songs and instrumental works include: A Child's Ghetto (chorus, tape), Tangents II (orchestra, tape), Tangents III (band, tape), Vignettes of the Plains (chorus, tape), and Tangents IV (piano, tape).

And if the wine you drink, the lips you press,
 end in the nothing all things end in, yes,
 then fancy while thou art, thou art but what,
 thou shalt be nothing, thou shalt not be less.

Ah moon of my delight who knowest no wane,
 the Moon of Heaven is rising once again.
 How oft here-after rising shall she look after the garden,
 through the same garden after me in vain.

In this particular piece, Jackson uses a quote of Cage's as an introductory statement and adapts quatrains of Omar Khayyam to match its mood and message. Khayyam was a twelfth-century Persian mathematician, physicist, astronomer, physician, and philosopher. He was known in the West for his quatrains which were freely translated, The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyam, by Edward Fitz-Gerald (1859). Fitz-Gerald, an intimate friend of Tennyson, translated some verses very closely to the original, but sometimes combined parts of many quatrains into one. Cage's quote stresses the present time, the "now." The first quatrain is perhaps the most famous used in this set, ". . . a loaf of bread . . . a flask of wine . . . and Thou . . ." Khayyam (or perhaps Fitz-Gerald) is stating the importance of the current moment and the peace it can bring. The second quatrain urges one to make the most of the present time because his time on earth is brief. Similarly, the third quatrain suggests that what one does may not be of much consequence, but is never of no consequence. Finally, the last lends the idea that even heaven and celestial beings can do nothing to change time.

Now was written in 1971 for Dr. Jean Sloop, who is also at Kansas State University. Jackson felt free to compose whatever he wished vocally without limitations, because of Dr. Sloop's superb musicianship. This piece was put together with a spirit of fun and the performance should

reflect this. Jackson employed two, two-channel tape machines and an Arp 2500 Analog synthesizer to compose the tape portion. The Arp functions by altering sound waves with the use of filters, mixers, oscillators, and/or ring modulators. These sounds are then controlled by using envelope generators (to control attack and decay), oscillators, sequencers (to rapidly step through a series of events), and/or a keyboard.

Jackson uses a variety of methods to make unusual sounds. The initial spinning noise is made by a waveform controlled by a low frequency oscillator, which is inaudible to the ear. The pitched tones range from sine waves, the simplest soundwave, to complex forms, made by combining different waves to make one sound. White noise is used, a signal that contains all audible frequencies, with the control of a keyboard. Some of the pitches and sections of the recorded voice have been ring modulated, a special form of amplitude (volume) modulation that is used frequently in electronic music. A sequencer steps up each event creating a cross-rhythm ostinato accompanying the third verse. It accelerates by increasing the speed on the sequencer. There is also an ostinato accompaniment in the last verse, found in the bass voice of the tape.

The altered speech sections of the tape all use the text at the opening of the piece. The modified speech acts as sectional delineation and is part of an established compositional practice. When electronic music was in its highly experimental stage, two schools of thought emerged concerning sectional delineation. Pierre Schaeffer in Paris about 1948 began the practice of musique concrète, beginning each new section with acoustical sounds (noises, voices, or percussion). After being recorded, the sounds may be modified by being played slow or backwards, then being re-recorded.

The Germans preferred musik elektronisch, always beginning new sections with electronic sounds such as an oscillator or white noise generator. The tape of Now begins with electronic sound, or musik elektronisch. With each succeeding section, musique concrète, in the form of modified voice, begins the new thought, and then proceeds to musik elektronisch before the soprano enters. Using the equipment of the time, the many recordings and re-recordings contribute to a slight level of excess noise heard on the tape.

In creating this piece, Jackson employs the twelve-tone system, first introduced by Schoenberg in 1923. This organizational system for the creation of atonal music uses all the chromatic steps within an octave and treats them with equal importance. Generally, a composer wants to avoid sets of chromatic steps that imply triads, and not use a note again until the set has been completed. He may choose to write serially, using parts of the same set vertically, or in a parallel fashion, using two or more sets at the same time horizontally. Jackson uses the prime set of twelve tones somewhat loosely, sometimes repeating notes within the row and sometimes using only parts of it. He also employs classical methods of manipulation, such as inversion (I), retrograde (R), and retrograde inversion (RI) to alter the prime set (P). Some of the accompanying material is free, not based on the row. Care is always taken with the tape, however, to give the singer her pitches clearly and in enough time for her to prepare to sing.

In later set theory, the practice of rotation permutation arose. For example, given the set:

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

the set could start with any number, say 7, and the rest would rotate to the end:

7 8 9 10 11 0 1 2 3 4 5 6

Jackson takes one form of the prime set (RI7 in meas. 56) and uses rotation permutation, in addition to the other methods of manipulation already cited.

To supplement the various tones and timbres above, Jackson includes sprechstimme (meas. 11-14, 26, 49-51, 58), another practice associated with Schoenberg because of his song cycle, Pierrot Lunaire, Op. 21 (1912). Sprechstimme is half sung and half spoken, and creates a real challenge to most singers. Jackson calls for speech twice, once in the middle (meas. 26) on the words "sans end" (without end) to more fully deliver the drama, and at the end. The final words of the song are a kind of joke. In the soprano part, "now" (meas. 61) is posed as a question, and the tape booms the emphatic answer, "now!" This insinuates that the contemporary music of the present which we take so seriously is one of the fleeting moments spoken of in Khayyam's quatrains. The quatrains are philosophical and factual and should be delivered in a straightforward manner. The tongue-in-cheek character comes in with the final words.

Now takes four minutes and forty seconds to perform, with the tape beginning immediately after the opening reading. The use of the tape affords many color changes and unusual timbres that, when combined with the vocal modifications, provide a musical collage for the listener to enjoy.

WEBERN: FOUR SONGS, OP. 12

Anton Webern was perhaps the first composer trained as a musicologist. He was born in Vienna in 1883 and lived close to his home town all his life. While studying with Guido Adler at the University of Vienna, he met Arnold Schoenberg in 1904 and became Schoenberg's pupil and lifelong disciple. In 1906, Webern received his Ph.D. in musicology and his thesis was published in the Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Österreich series.

After a brief tour of duty in World War I (he was released because of poor eyesight), Webern conducted and supervised music performed by Schoenberg's Society for Private Musical Performances. He was an "extremely sensitive, fanatically demanding, but patient conductor."¹ He would almost dread rehearsing a new piece: his physical fear of noise such as bad intonation, loudness, false expression, and wrong articulation was torture.² The first performance of the Berg Violin Concerto in 1936 in Barcelona with Webern conducting was a characteristic story. In the first two of three rehearsals, Webern had only prepared the first eight bars to his satisfaction. After a scandal, a less particular conductor performed the work with the one remaining rehearsal.

During World War II and the German annexation of Austria, the Nazis banned Webern's music and burned his writings. About five months after the war in 1945, the town where he was living, Mittersill, was still under curfew. Webern stepped out of the house late one evening to smoke a

¹Robert Craft, brochure for Webern: The Complete Music (Columbia K4L-232), p. 3.

²Ibid.

cigarette. An American soldier accidentally shot and killed him. He was sixty-one years old.

Webern's style and compositional output are quite unique. His writing style parallels his studies of fifteenth-century polyphony reflecting vertical rhythms, hocket, canon, and closed forms. He employed many adjectives with note-to-note changes in tempo, dynamics, articulation, and style. These changes are not made for the sake of variety of complexity, but always function structurally. He was a perfectionist and the composer of the "'expressive ppp semiquaver.'"³

More than half of Webern's music is vocal, favoring lyric and tragic texts to music much like Schubert. Webern was not interested in setting the texts to music, but in expressing them.⁴ He also enjoyed expressing nature: the presence of mountains is felt by some in all his works. Bell sounds in the clear mountain air are evoked in almost every opus.⁵

All of Webern's works are short, and opus numbers 7-12 are particularly so. This is not merely a reaction to late-Romantic length, but he perceives a single musical idea as a complete unit. He does not use classical forms, but tiny forms with their own logic. He believes in "perfection on the smallest scale," and, "music of exceptional concentration."⁶

Of the Viennese School, Schoenberg and his two students Webern and Berg, Webern is the most forward-looking composer. All three composers

³Robert Craft, brochure for Webern: The Complete Music (Columbia K4L-232), p. 4

⁴Ibid, p. 5

⁵Ibid, p. 6

⁶Paul Griffiths, "Webern, Anton," in The New Groves Dictionary of Music and Musicians. (6th edn., edited by Stanley Sadie, 1980), xx, 270.

together grew into atonality and eventually twelve-tone serialism, but each retained a personal style. Berg used atonality and retained classical forms, while Schoenberg was making a contemporary statement with the same twelve-tone system. Webern was concerned with the future and used his contrapuntal training toward the aesthetic of his own personal expressionistic ideal.

Webern's early works resemble Brahms' romanticism and the developing variation style of Schoenberg. His compositional years to 1914 lean more toward atonality. Opus numbers 3 and 4 (1907-9) leave behind the world of reality for that of dream and fantasy. Here he abandoned reference to tonality and rhythmic stability. Characteristics of early atonal music include brevity and an avoidance of repetition. Later, there are basic motifs (pitch-class sets) that appear transformed by traditional contrapuntal manipulation. Being atonal, a work cannot contain a melody to be developed, as this would imply tone centers.

In the Three Little Pieces (1914) for violoncello and piano, the last piece consists of twenty notes. This brevity represents the difficulty in writing atonal, athematic works without the foundation of a text. Webern seemed to have a need to express himself in short fragments. Schoenberg said Webern expresses "'a whole novel in a single sigh.'"⁷ Webern composed no more strictly instrumental music until 1924--immediately after the introduction of serial technique.

The songs of opus numbers 12-15 were written as single songs and put together later, mostly according to instrumentation. Aside from Op. 12,

⁷ Rene Leibowitz, Schoenberg and His School: The Contemporary Stage of the Language of Music, translated by Dika Newlin (New York: Da Capo Press, 1970), p. 198, as quoted from the preface to Webern's Bagatelles, Op. 9.

all other pieces written between 1912 and 1925 are accompanied by varied instrumental combinations. This practice was influenced by Schoenberg's Pierrot Lunaire of 1912 and his radical groupings of the human voice with different instruments. Webern also uses Schoenberg's technique of klangfarbenmelodien, or tone-color melodies. According to this practice, Webern varied pitches and timbres every few notes.

The Four Songs of Op. 12 (1915-17) begin the period of free atonality and refer back to longer arcs of melody as seen in Op. 8. They were written during World War I and are a little longer than his earlier pieces. Beginning with the earliest of Op. 12, the accompaniments become more linear. The vocal line has instrumental characteristics. Wide intervals appear in sections of excessive tension as if the notes are trying to get away. In later works, this is pushed to the limits of the possible. Motivic concentration closely corresponds to more chromatics and the formation of complete or almost complete twelve-tone groups. Op. 12 is not completely a regression of style. A quote of Adorno in Walter Kolneder's book about Webern says:

"With the Songs Op. 12 an almost unnoticeable change begins... Webern's music secretly expands: in his own way he is mastering the solution which Schoenberg first displayed in Pierrot Lunaire and the Songs Op. 22: that one cannot persist with the method of absolute purity without music being spiritually reduced to physical deterioration. The new expansion is only hinted at; the first and last of the songs are still aphoristically short, but they do breathe a little, and the two middle songs have developed vocal lines, though certainly of a subtle character in which the earlier process of splitting-up is still maintained."⁸

From Op. 12 onward, Webern uses sacred texts. Religious thought pre-

⁸Walter Kolneder, Anton Webern: An Introduction to His Works, translated by Humphrey Searle (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1968), pp. 83-85.

occupied many painters, poets, and artists through the war and post-war years. The Four Songs, Op. 12 are alike in style and subject matter, although the texts are from different sources. They are the most forward-looking songs written at this time. Their themes of naive piety and observation of natural principles were to dominate his later vocal works.⁹ The songs' effect on Alban Berg is clear, as shown in a letter to Webern on Oct. 12, 1925.

"A song of yours is a bringer of joy to me, a bringer of joy which irradiates my whole being. As when on dull days the sun suddenly breaks through and one doesn't know why one is suddenly happy. It is just the same with a scent of flowers. . ."¹⁰

Der Tag ist vergangen (The Day Has Gone)

The day has gone,
the night is already here,
goodnight, O Maria,
stay always with me.
The day has gone,
the night is approaching.
Give eternal rest
also to the departed.¹¹

Written in 1915, Number 1 of Op. 12 is the folksong, "Der Tag ist vergangen." The text is of unknown origin like many folksong texts that have been handed down from generation to generation. The song is light and simple in style. The range is wide with a medium tessitura. Being freely atonal, the motion is primarily disjunct to avoid a key center.

⁹Paul Griffiths, The New Groves Dictionary, p. 273.

¹⁰Walter Kolneder, Anton Webern, p. 82.

¹¹Robert Craft, brochure for Webern, p. 23.

Because of this avoidance of keys and repeated material, all four songs are through-composed. The opening two measures show an unusual melodic repetition in the right hand of the piano part. The three G#'s help establish the importance of the major-7th interval found in almost every measure of the piece linearly and/or vertically.

The meter changes between $\frac{2}{4}$ and $\frac{3}{4}$ and the phrase lengths vary to follow the natural rhythm of the text. Webern included occasional triplets to help break up what might be too regular a pulse. The piano score features usually two or more notes played at the same time, but with a tendency toward polyphonic treatment of the parts.

Webern uses silence before part of the text is repeated (meas. 13) for drama and to slightly change the mood from very quiet and calm at the beginning, to utmost calm. The tempo indication is $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 60$. With Webern's care in marking dynamics and tempi, one is convinced to follow his directions explicitly. There is an extensive use of ppp dynamics, which is especially effective on the word "Ruh" (rest) in the last phrase. The voice jumps a major 7th to ppp and the piano rests to ensure the effect of being detached and distant.

Die geheimnisvolle Flöte (The Mysterious Flute)

Upon an evening,
when the scent of flowers
and trees pervaded the air,
the wind brought me the song of a distant flute.
I cut a twig from the willow tree
and my song, giving answer,
flew through the blossoming night.
Since that night,
when the earth is asleep,
the birds hear a discourse in their own language.¹²

¹²Robert Craft, brochure for Webern, p. 23

No. 2, written in 1917, was completed last of the songs in Op. 12. The poem is by Li T'ai Po, who lived in China from 701-762. He was a rival of Tu Fu for the title of China's greatest poet. Li T'ai Po was a free spirit and a wanderer who was romantic in his view of life and verse. He wrote of playful fantasy, friendship, the passage of time, and the joys of nature.¹³ The poem was translated by Hans Bethge and is found in his book of translations, Chinesische Flöte (Chinese Flute).

The song does not get much above the dynamic level of mp and is mostly pp. As in No. 1, there is constant rhythmic complexity: meter changes, triplets, and sixteenth notes blur the steadiness of the rhythm. Instrumental characteristics such as articulation markings and wide leaps are reflective of the subject matter. In measure 12, on the words "Da schnitt ich einen Weidenzweig" (I cut a twig), there is an upward leap of a major 7th and then immediately back down an octave to portray the disconnectedness. There is also a leap of a major 7th on "die Vögel" (the birds, meas. 24) to show the separation of the birds from the sleeping earth.

Although Die geheimnisvolle Flöte is a little slower than No. 1 (♩ = 54), the piano part is busier. It divides itself into three parts through rests in the voice and decreased activity in the piano corresponding to the ends of the three sentences (meas. 11, 18, and 26). As the title suggests (The Mysterious Flute) all three parts are mysterious and elusive as the sound of a distant flute in the wind.

¹³Article "Li T'ai Po," in The New Encyclopaedia Britannica: Micropaedia. (Fifteenth edition, 1980), VI, 251.

Schien mir's, als ich sah die Sonne (It Seemed to Me, as I Saw the Sun)

It seemed to me as I saw the sun
 that I glimpsed the hidden one;
 every man enjoys his doings,
 blessed is he who practices the good,
 For the angered deed which you committed,
 do not repent with malice;
 with goodness console the one you saddened
 and it will do you good.
 Only he who has sinned fears;
 it is good to live without guilt.¹⁴

The most declamatory song of his earlier works, No. 3 sets a mystic moral poem from the Ghost Sonata by August Strindberg. Strindberg (1849 - 1912) was a great playwright, novelist, and short-story writer who had a profound influence on European and American drama. He was emotionally unstable and had a fascination with the emancipation of women. His Ghost Sonata was a late symbolic drama that helped prepare the way for German Expressionistic theatre.¹⁵ Strindberg was one of the writers most important to Webern, although this is Webern's only Strindberg setting.

Written in 1915, this song shows long melodic arches that are not typically Webern's style. The range encompasses two octaves and for one of two times in the set of four songs, the dynamic level reaches a forte. Beginning ruhig fliessend (Quietly flowing) and in $\frac{3}{8}$ time at $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 42$, it suggests a waltz. Webern uses frequent ritards to emphasize important words and ideas.

Webern uses the three sentences of the text as a basis for a three-part through-composed form. Toward the middle, in the second section (meas.

¹⁴Robert Craft, brochure for Webern, p. 25.

¹⁵Article "Strindberg, August," in Encyclopaedia Britannica: Micropaedia, IX, 614.

17), the more declamatory nature of the text causes meter and dynamic changes. In the third section (beginning meas. 30) there is a crescendo to measure 32 and the words "Der nur furchtet" (he who only fears). Here also, Webern employs wide skips to express the tension present. In the next two bars, there is a decrescendo leading to the sehr ruhig section (very calm) and the final words, "gut ist schuldlos leben" (it is good to live without guilt). This last line of text is accompanied by a tempo change to ♩ = ca. 100 and then a ritardando (meas. 38-40) to tempo I in the last measure.

Other examples of word portrayal include (in meas. 8) "die Sonne" (the sun), which brightly outlines a major triad in second inversion. Although the line is quickly led away, it shines as a point of emphasis. "Für die Zornestat" (for the angered) is quite disjunct and "troste" (console) in measure 26 is isolated on a high A.

Gleich und Gleich (The Perfect Match)

A flowerbell blossomed early
from the ground in lovely bloom;
there came a little bee and sucked:
They must have been made for each other.¹⁶

Also written in 1915, Webern set No. 4 to a poem by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. Goethe (1749-1832) is a giant in the world of literature. He was possibly the last European to attempt the diversity of great Renaissance personalities: he was a critic, painter, statesman, novelist, scientist, and natural philosopher, among other disciplines.¹⁷

¹⁶Robert Craft, brochure for Webern, p. 25.

¹⁷Article "Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von," in Encyclopaedia Britannica: Micropaedia, IV, 600.

Almost playful, the poem of song No. 4 is delicate, and yet evokes a sultry exoticism later used in Op. 13.¹⁸ Beginning very quietly and calmly (*♩* = ca. 44), Webern retains a triple meter. In this piece, the piano is the most linear of the set and does not blur the pulse as much.

The first three measures comprise a complete twelve-tone set with no repetition. This happens again, beginning the second half of measure 7 through the first beat of measure 9. Measures 4-12 form a three-part invention with equal status of all voices. In measures 13-14 there is a quasi-recitative section, marked frei (freely) for the words "da kam ein Bienchen und naschte fein" (there came a little bee and sucked) to make the passage sound somewhat spontaneous. Next, the piano is forte for the second time in the four songs and then diminishes. After a fermata (meas. 16), the voice comes in again for the final line of text. The high G and F in the voice suggest their happiness. Again, the piano has the last say, this time shorter, with Webern's characteristic *ppp* dynamic marking.

¹⁸Paul Griffiths, The New Grove Dictionary, p. 273.

SCHUBERT: SELECTED SONGS

The German lied (song) of the nineteenth century is represented by the works of Schubert, Schumann, Brahms, and R. Strauss. The "birthday of the German lied" is said to be October 19, 1814, the day Schubert wrote Gretchen am Spinnrade and opened a new era of song writing.

Franz Peter Schubert wrote in many musical genres, but his compositional genius is most evident in his orchestral, piano, and chamber music works, and his songs. His famous cycles include Die Schöne Müllerin, Winterreise, and Schwanengesang. In his short lifetime of thirty-one years (1797-1828), Schubert composed over six hundred songs, more than two hundred of which are text repeats. His unfortunate death at such an early age was due to syphilis, which was untreatable at the time. It is now felt that he contracted the disease as early as 1822. His last six years afforded him periods of depression and recurring mental stagnation, but his creativity, during these years as before, is astonishing.

Schubert's mastery of song comes from a culmination of style characteristics. Most apparent of these are his melodies. "Schubert's melodies, particularly in his songs, are the most individual and revealing of all the factors in his work."¹ They are usually very singable, and attractive. He was writing in the heart of the "Viennese Symphonic Period" (from about 1770-1830) and used its style

¹Article "Schubert" in The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians (Sixth edition, edited by Stanley Sadie, 1980), XVI, 774.

of exposition and development of thematic fragments, which was attractive to listeners then as now. He complemented his melodies with the varied harmonic palette of the Romantic Period.

The most familiar characteristic of his harmony is passing from tonic major to tonic minor. This may be smooth or abrupt, but always occurs with emotional change. He associates falling dominant sevenths with weariness or grief. Neopolitan and augmented sixth chords are found (German and French forms), along with modulations passing with little or no preparation into the key a major third below tonic. He employs flexible harmonic changes, but always for a poetic effect.

His many beautiful instrumental works will attest that his union of melody and harmony are indeed successful, but when added to an emotional or picturesque text, a new dimension of genius opens for which he is so acclaimed. "His rich vein of melody and his expressive harmony reached the heart of the text in a way that music before him had not known."²

Two important factors helped Schubert establish his style. First, the piano was becoming standard accompaniment for the voice. Schubert had taken lessons while in school and experimented with the "inexhaustible possibilities of picturesque comment."³ "Schubert's accompaniments are celebrated for their graphic reinforcement of the inner meaning of the poem or of the external details of the poet's scene."⁴ The imagery of the poetry is perfectly paralleled in the

²Article "Schubert" in The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians (Sixth edition, edited by Stanley Sadie, 1980), SVI, 752.

³Ibid, p. 774.

⁴Ibid, p. 775.

music. He created inexhaustible contrivances of graceful pianistic gestures for textual illumination, always with a balance of interest between the voice and piano. Secondly, in the late eighteenth century, there was an outburst of lyric poetry, the most outstanding poet being Goethe. Schubert set to music the verse of over ninety poets. He preferred poetry with a "clincher" in the final verse, sometimes the last line. Some historians feel that no previous composer responded to poetry the same way as Schubert. "The miracle he achieved was to match with a reality of music poetry whose depths of human emotion would have appeared to the older composers as rendering it unsuitable for song."⁵

Schubert's success in setting texts has to do with the musico-dramatic elements found in opera. He made the musical and verbal elements cohere to serve one dramatic end. Thus, his songs are true miniature dramas. A perfect example is Der Erlkönig, complete with characters and dialogue. Schubert's dramatic song and Beethoven's orchestra later contributed to Wagnerian drama.

In Schubert's six-hundred-and-three songs, four forms are found. First is the simple strophic song where each verse is sung to the same music. Out of this came the modified strophic form, or verses set to similar music. The endless variety in this category in Schubert's music defies description. The through-composed songs involve various melodies and perhaps interjected recitatives that are welded together by the same, basically unchanged accompaniment. Less common is the

⁵Article "Schubert" in The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians (Sixth edition, edited by Stanley Sadie, 1980), XVI, 774.

"scena" containing separate episodes of different mood and tempo.

Although Schubert has a certain style of composing, his pieces are not punched out as with a cookie cutter. As Arthur Hutchings has stated, "the marvel of most Schubert songs is that they keep the spontaneity of a four-square folk or street song while using various means for variety which one cannot bring oneself to call 'devices.'"⁶ It is no wonder that his songs thrived while he was alive and are still heard today. Some songs are within the grasp of a young singer and some present challenges to a trained artist. Again quoting Hutchings, "Had Schubert written for nothing but the human voice and its accompanying pianoforte, both musicians and musical historians would have still regarded him as a major composer."⁷

The collection of five songs presented were chosen for their individual charm and attractiveness. They represent some of the variety of expression Schubert portrayed so well.

Seligkeit (Bliss)

1. Joys without number
Blossom in Heaven's mansion,
Angels and transfigured beings,
As the fathers taught.
Oh, I wish I were there,
Happy forever!

2. On each one there
A heavenly bride smiles sweetly;
Harps and psalteries sound,
There is dancing and singing!
Oh, I wish I were there,
Happy forever!

⁶Arthur Hutchings, Schubert, The Master Musicians Series (London: J. M. Dent and Sons, Ltd, Second edition, 1973), p. 161.

⁷Ibid, p. 156.

3. I would rather stay here,
 If Laura would smile at me
 With a glance that would say
 That my torments are ended.
 In bliss, then, with her
 I'll stay forever here!⁸

Seligkeit is a verse by Ludwig Höltz (1748-76). Although the poet died young of tuberculosis, he wrote many poems in which springtime is linked with impending death.⁹ Seligkeit is one of twenty-three of Höltz's poems that Schubert set.

The innocent love song is portrayed as a waltz, being in $\frac{3}{8}$ and marked scherzando. It portrays the ländler, an Austrian dance popular about 1800, in slow triple time almost like the waltz. The song reflects many Classical Period characteristics: regular four-measure phrases, melodic signs, and chords predominately IV, V and I. Its strophic structure is straightforward and simple. The piano introduction uses a single-line melody over a "boom-chuck-chuck" bass. When the voice enters, the melody resembles the opening piano motive and is in a sweeping arch. The initial small note (measure 13) should occur on the beat, adding grace to the line. In measure 29 where the words reflect happiness, the accompaniment changes to express uplifting bliss. Here, the right hand has upward arpeggiated triads. The texture is thinner overall and the voice is in a higher tessitura.

⁸Franz Schubert, Two-Hundred Songs in Three Volumes (New York: International Music Co., No. 2012), Translations by Gerard Mackworth-Young, II, p. sviii.

⁹"Höltz, Ludwig," in The Oxford Companion to German Literature (London: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. 400.

In the final four bars, the happiness is punctuated by the repeated chords.

Written in 1816, Seligkeit was one of Schubert's earlier lieder. He was nineteen at the time, but had already written a masterpiece in 1814, Gretchen am Spinnrade.

Gretchen am Spinnrade (Margaret at the Spinning Wheel)

My peace is gone,
my heart is heavy;
I shall find it never,
never again.

Where I do not have him
it is like the grave to me,
the whole world
is bitter.

My poor head
is deranged,
my poor mind
is distracted.

My peace is gone,
my heart is heavy;
I shall find it never,
never again.

Only for him
I look out of the window;
only for him I
leave the house.

His fine bearing,
his noble form,
the smile of his lips,
the power of his eyes,

and the magic flow
of his talk,
the clasp of his hands,
and ah, his kiss!

My peace is gone,
my heart is heavy;
I shall find it never,
never again.

My bosom yearns
for him,
ah, could I grasp him
and hold him

and kiss him
to my heart's content,
under his kisses
to swoon!¹⁰

A poem of Goethe's, Gretchen am Spinnrade has been set by Zelter, Loewe, and Spohr in addition to Schubert. The latter's version was written in 1814, published as Op. 2 in 1821, and dedicated to Count Moritz von Fries to whom Beethoven had once dedicated some early chamber works. Gretchen, a masterpiece, "is the answer to the question whether a perfect work of art can exist, and no one has ever challenged him [Schubert] on this ground."¹¹ This is the first of the Faust songs: Schubert was reading Faust at the time.

In this drama, Faust longs for one special moment in his life that would make him wish that it would last forever. He makes a bet with Mephistopheles (the devil) that he will never experience such a moment. Mephistopheles introduces Faust to Gretchen, a poor maiden, in hopes that his desire for their love to endure would cause Faust to lose the bet. Gretchen and Faust fall in love and she sings this song when they are apart.

¹⁰ The Ring of Words: An Anthology of Song Texts, Selected and translated by Philip L. Miller (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., Second edition, 1973), p. 73.

¹¹ Gerald Abraham, editor, The Music of Schubert (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., Inc. 1947), p. 167.

One of the fifty-nine Goethe settings, Gretchen is a prime example of music enhancing mere words. "This is purest poetry, recreated in music by the composer's imagination."¹² Each of the three stanzas has its own melody and harmonization that is unified by the piano spinning-wheel figure found throughout (see figure 1).



Figure 1.

In addition to the continuous spinning effect, there is also a "heart-beat" figure in the bass that speeds up before the wheel falters in measures 66-68. This figure allows for variety of mood with continuity in texture. The spinning motive was so successful for him, Schubert also used it for the opening of the A minor Quartet, Op. 29.

The form of this song contributes to the drama. It has three stanzas, each increasing in tension, and each begins with the same theme ("Meine Ruh . . ."), always in D minor. This underscores Gretchen's discontent that she is not with Faust. The theme is stated at the beginning. Gretchen laments her situation and repeats the theme. By this time, the spinning figure is becoming more insistent

¹²Hans Gal, Franz Schubert and The Essence of Melody (New York: Crescendo Publishing Co., 1977), p. 86.

and agitated. She tells of her suffering, and then her passion. Her heart beats faster in her excitement (Meas. 55) and her foot unconsciously speeds up the pace of the spinning wheel. She is carried away by her vision. When she thinks about his kiss (meas. 66-68) her foot falters and the spinning motion stops in the piano. She is flustered, but finally gets the wheel going again. The third stanza is exciting and passionate. After her last statement, "an seinem küssen vergehen sollt!" (under his kisses to swoon!), the accompaniment slows. The song dies away repeating the opening words of the theme.

Schubert's harmony has varying degrees of tension and mood to correspond with the drama. Modulations are achieved through a secondary chord, a pivot chord, or arrived at abruptly (as in meas. 50). A series of secondary dominants are used when the text increases in tension line by line (measures 55-60). A German augmented sixth chord is played linearly, but does not resolve traditionally (measures 63-65).

Gretchen am Spinnrade is the first supremely great song of Schubert. Its success is proof of Schubert's early maturity and sensitivity to poetry and emotion. "A 17-year-old had shown how form could be made the servant of emotion by opening up new dimensions of the language of music."¹³

¹³ Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, Schubert: A Biographical Study of His Songs, Translated and edited by Kenneth S. Whitton (London: Cassell and Co. Ltd, 1976), p. 36.

Der Tod und das Mädchen (Death and the Maiden)

The Maiden

Pass by, pass by,
go, horrible skeleton!
I am still young! Go, good man,
and do not touch me!

Death

Give me your hand, lovely and gentle creature!
I am your friend, and do not come to punish you.
Be of good cheer! I am not fierce!
You shall sleep softly in my arms!¹⁴

Written in 1817, a year after Seligkeit, Der Tod und das Mädchen, Op. 7, no. 3, is a simple mini-drama. The poem was written by Matthias Claudius, whose Wiegenlied and An die Nachtigall were also set by Schubert. Der Tod und das Mädchen shows the naturalness, inevitability, and mercifulness of death rather than wickedness and terror.

The death theme, in D minor, is in the piano introduction (see figure 2).



Figure 2.

The tessitura is low and the beat is heavily weighted. Mässig

¹⁴ The Ring of Words, p. 25.

(moderato) is ambiguous, but $\text{♩} = 54$ is suggested. When the maiden pleads with Death (beginning measure 9), the tempo is *etwas geschwinder* (somewhat quicker). Here the piano accompaniment suggests her heart is racing and she is delicate and vulnerable (see figure 3).



Figure 3.

Measures 20-21 are a short, but dramatic transition back to the Death theme. The slower tempo returns and the theme is calm and reassuring, ending in D major.

In the Death section (beginning measure 22), the rhythm and melody are indivisible. The line is declamatory, staying on one note, but is expressive. Its beauty is its simplicity. In the vocal line, the last phrase needs the low D in measure 37 to be fully effective. It is easy to see that this song is best suited for a low voice.

Schubert's apparent philosophy on death is evident in other songs also. He prefers texts where death is not a biblical punishment or chastisement for our sins, but is comforting like a friend, reflecting the growing age of humanism prevalent at the time.

Auf dem Wasser zu singen (To be Sung on the Water)

Amid the shimmer of the mirroring waves,
glides, like swans, the rocking boat
ah, on the soft shimmering waves of joy
the soul glides away like the boat;
for down from the heavens upon the waves
the evening light dances around the boat.

Over the treetops of the grove to the west
the rosy gleam beckons us on;
under the branches of the grove to the east
the iris rustles in the rosy light.
Happiness of the heavens and quiet of the groves
the soul breathes in the blushing light.

Ah, time passes with dewy wings
for me on the rocking waves.
So tomorrow may time fade with its shimmering wings
again, as yesterday and today,
until I, ascending on higher shining wings,
myself shall yield to the changing time.¹⁵

Auf dem Wasser zu singen was written by Friedrich Leopold Graf zu Stolberg (1750-1819). A friend of Goethe's, Stolberg translated Homer, Plato, and Ossian into English. Auf dem Wasser, one of Stolberg's seven poems set by Schubert, was composed in 1823, as Op. 72.

This water song is a barcarole, a boat song imitating the Venetian gondoliers, complete with $\frac{6}{8}$ meter and accompaniment suggestive of the rocking motion of a boat. The accompanimental sixteenth-note figure is found in every verse. It splashes up an octave or a minor ninth and washes back down (see figure 4).

¹⁵The Ring of Words, p. 285.



Figure 4.

Another similar figure is used in the interludes (see figure 5).

Figure 5.

The poem is made of similar, but not identical couplets whose repetition create a dream-like mood. The words are philosophical and contemplative, and give a picturesque setting. Although there is not much dramatic interest in the boatman's satisfaction, the song's charm

lies in the romantic surroundings. The boatman floats all of his words on one tune of the river.

The tune, or melody, was carefully composed. Even though the text is set primarily syllabically, the melody flows with expressive line. The only thinning of texture occurs when the voice rests between verses. The harmony, also skillfully crafted, begins in A minor, but the key signature indicates A major, its parallel key. It sways back and forth between A minor and C major (enharmonically, B major) to create a kaleidoscope of harmonic color. Each of the three strophic verses ends in A major for a splash of warmth and happiness. This song is an example of how a voluptuous melody and imaginative accompaniment can make a beautiful statement out of a non-dramatic poem.

Die Vögel (The Birds)

How lovely and merry
To hover and sing.
From a glorious height
To look down on the earth!

Human beings are foolish . . .
They cannot fly,
They moan in their troubles . . .
We flutter towards heaven.

The keeper would shoot us
For pecking his fruit;
But we must scorn him,
And make off with the spoils.¹⁶

Die Vögel, poem by Friedrich Schlegel, is a folksong written in 1820, and published in 1965 as Op. 172, no. 6. It is light-hearted, but not particularly imaginative. The $\frac{3}{8}$ meter and allegretto tempo,

¹⁶Two Hundred Songs, II, p. xvi.

portray the playful flight of birds. These birds mock men like the birds of Aristophanes, "Dwellers by nature in darkness and like to the leaves' generations . . . poor plumeless ephemerals, comfortless mortals."¹⁵

Schubert's setting captures the birds' most delicate chirpings and flutterings, making it best suitable for a lyric soprano. The first and third verse are set identically. The initial D# in the voice gives the line more momentum (see figure 6).



Figure 6.

The melody in the piano introduction curves down, opposite of the vocal line. Leading away from A major in the first verse, the second verse is in E major, the dominant relation. The melody now has less motion and is in all eighth notes. With the third verse returns the twisting, soaring melody, the tonic key, and a more carefree spirit.

The lighter songs of Schubert convey a charm in their simplicity. That he could convey depths of emotion with a similar simplicity in his more dramatic songs is evidence of genius.

¹⁵The Ring of Words, p. 285.

DEBUSSY: "GREEN," "SPLEEN," ARIETTES OUBLIÉES
AND LIA'S ARIA, FROM L'ENFANT PRODIGE

The late nineteenth century saw the rise of importance of the French art song, which had its roots in the chanson. French secular song had not been this prominent since the writings of Machaut, Jannequin, and Dafáy some 500 years previous. With such names as César Franck, Camille Saint-Saëns, Gabriel Fauré, and Claude Debussy, the French were to again make a unique contribution to the literature of secular song.

One of the leading composers of French art songs was Claude Debussy (1862-1918). His music has often been termed "impressionistic." This term has its origin in the artistic movement represented by French painters such as Monet, Renoir, and Degas, who organized into a group around 1880, and in particular, in a painting entitled "Impressionism" by Claude Monet. Mostly concerned with nature, they believed in representing what the artist sees, not how he knows it should look. The perception would always vary, being different according to light and weather at the time. They wanted to capture an impression of the moment that may never be the same again. To depict the rippling surface of water, they combined colors and obscured the outlines to make the surface look imprecise.¹ The artists used primarily cool colors, pastels, and subtle shadings. The term "impressionism" was applied to Debussy's music because of its elusive quality and his creativity with musical colors that outweigh the importance of form and design. He

¹Stefan Jarocinski, Debussy: Impressionism and Symbolism, translated by Rollo Myers (London: Eulengurg Books, 1976), pp. 5-6.

had no qualms about treating the outgrowth of a harmony as the form itself. Debussy disliked this term "impressionism" very much. He wrote to Durand in 1908, "I am trying to make something new--realities, as it were: what imbeciles call "impressionism."²

Upon more careful inspection, Debussy's music is of closer kin to symbolism, a literary movement represented by the writings of Moréas, Verlaine, Maeterlinck, Mallarmé, and Debussy's closest friend, Pierre Louÿs. These poets helped Debussy to have confidence to deviate from common practice, by being sensitive to unique forms. They also influenced Debussy's style of subtle suggestion and vivid sensuous imagery, as he sought to express the musical equivalent to their poetic style.

Debussy's compositional style is concerned with musically enhancing the expression of the texts he set, although he sometimes achieved impact through understatement. He writes rhythms that match French speech patterns, and he also musically conveys the form and nuance of the poetry. Debussy is one of the *most effective composers* to do so. His melodies pay no attention to the regularity of the barline, and cadences occur infrequently. He quite often uses melodies built on modes, the pentatonic scale, and the whole-tone scale, which emphasizes the tritone. A catalogue of his works shows a predominance of compositions with texts: songs, cantatas, choruses, and dramatic works.³ The strong influence of poetry is also seen in the number of instrumental

²William W. Austin, Music in the 20th Century (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1966) p. 25.

³Arthur B. Wenk, Claude Debussy and the Poets, Appendix A. (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1976), pp. 279-288.

pieces with descriptive titles; some are names of poems or lines from poems, and others contain literary references.⁴

Debussy's piano accompaniment abounds with new patterns, fresher than classic and romantic figures. The richness and texture of the piano provide a means of expression equal to the text. In this respect, the interest and independence of the piano part make it an integral part of the expressive end, not a bare foundation upon which the melody is to be built.

Debussy has forty-three published songs and all of them feature an intimate interweaving of the voice and piano. With the Ariettes oubliées, a set of six songs written in 1888, Debussy moved decisively toward his mature style. These settings of Verlaine were first published as Ariettes, Paysages Belges et Aquarelles, a title derived from Verlaine's own division of his poems. After Debussy's opera success, Pelléas et Mélisande, the songs were re-released in 1903 with greater popularity. Numbers five and six, "Green" and "Spleen," were subheaded Aquarelles (watercolors), featuring harmonic shadings that lend themselves well to this title.

Green

Here are fruits, flowers, leaves, and branches,
and here too is my heart which beats only for you.
Do not destroy it with your two white hands,
and to your lovely eyes may the humble gift seem sweet.

I come still covered with dew
that the morning breeze has chilled on my brow.
Let my weariness, resting at your feet,
dream of dear moments which will bring repose.

⁴Debussy and the Poets, pp. 4-5.

On your young breast let me rest my head
 still ringing with your last kisses;
 let it be appeased after the good tempest,
 that I may sleep a little as you rest.⁵

"Green," number five of the Ariettes oubliées, a text also set by Fauré, demonstrates the confusion of feelings with a new love. Debussy communicates sensations of eagerness, intimacy, and detachment. The prelude of the piano (the two crescendos in the left hand) shows the breathlessness and eagerness of the young lover. The joyeusement animé (joyously animated) tempo is about ♩ = 104 metronome marking. In one line of verse, the branch grows into leaf, flower, and fruit. The music reflects this with strong harmonic progressions to depict the lover's excitement and emotion. When he gives his heart, and on the words "qui ne bat que pour vous" (which beats only for you), the slower harmonic rhythm proves his sincerity. The change also emphasizes a very different kind of gift. At the a tempo (meas. 13) Debussy uses a whole-tone scale for "Ne le déchirez pas" (do not destroy it [my heart]), to show the lover's lack of confidence in presenting his prized gift. This is also portrayed in the unstable harmony, the progression being: V^7 -German⁶- V/V - V . After the slight mood change, there is also chromatic harmony underlying "rêve des chers instant qui la délasseront" ([Let me] dream of dear moments which will bring repose), as the lover recalls recent ecstasies. The third stanza, at the andantino, is slower, about ♩ = 72. Although the musical theme is the same as the beginning, the quiet pace and mood say that the lover gets his reward. The tempo slows to the end and the two lovers fall asleep.

⁵Pierre Bernac, The Interpretation of French Song, translations of song texts by Winifred Radford (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1971) pp. 168-169.

The melody and harmonic scheme are of particular interest. The narrow limits of the vocal melody make the occasional wide leaps and melismata particularly expressive. Harmonically, the key signature is G^b major, but it starts A^b minor. In measure 21 on the word "doux" (sweet), the tonic is finally reached, suggesting that everything so far has been leading to this point. This is paralleled in the poem, by the other gifts being preparation for the gift of his heart. It is easily seen that, "the striking postponement of the tonic emphasized a carefully prepared act of presentation."⁶

Spleen

The roses were all red,
and the ivy quite black.

Dearest, if you so much as move
all my despair returns.

The sky was too blue, too tender,
the sea too green and the air too soft.

Always I fear, such is the consequence of waiting!
some pitiless abandonment by you.

Of the holly with its glossy leaves
and of the shining box tree, I am weary,

And of the boundless countryside,
and of everything but you, alas!⁷

"Spleen" is the final song in the Ariettes oubliées set. The most immediately striking feature of Verlaine's poem is that it is arranged in couplets, a seldom-used arrangement for Verlaine. These are not rhymed couplets, but segments for four-line stanzas that he has separated in this manner. The first and third couplets are descriptive, whereas the

⁶Debussy and the Poets, p. 57.

⁷The Interpretation of French Song, pp. 170-171.

second and fourth depict feelings of different intensity; the second shows occasional anxiety and the fourth, constant anguish at the possibility of being abandoned. The rhythm of this alternation increases in the last two couplets until the description and feeling become inseparable in the last line. Although the description is present, it never creates a complete setting or picture of the scene, but is bits of a memory that fade into "la compagne infinie" (the endless countryside). The connections are in the mind of the poet, but do not appear completely disjunct to the audience.⁸

Spleen, to be "down-in-the-dumps," is expressed by the singer's weariness because of his love and his anxiety about it. Debussy portrays emptiness of this soul in the first line of the voice part which repeats one note and hardly fluctuates in rhythm. The opening motive of the piano (see figure 7) is used to underscore both poetic ideas of the poem, which coincide with the alternation of description and anxiety. The entire



Figure 7

⁸Debussy and the Poets, p. 117.

opening phrase of the piano contains a melody with two tritones and is supported by bass notes a tritone apart (see figure 7). This unsettled quality matches the drame of the poem.

At the con moto (with motion, measure 9), the pace is almost doubled as the anxiety surfaces for the first time. Here again is the initial motive of the piano. Two chords a tritone apart oscillate back and forth without resolution for two-thirds of the song, corresponding to the alternation in the poem (in meas. 3, a Neapolitan chord is followed by an unresolved V^9 through meas. 8). In measure 12, the accompaniment becomes more dissonant for "désepoirs" (despair, the V^9 alters to a vii^7). This also happens on "Quelque fuite atroce de vous" (some cruel flight of yours). Nearing the end, the unbearable weariness is expressed by a crescendo and accelerando. The climax of the piece occurs on the singer's high B^b and the mood returns to despair in the slower tempo. The motive is again repeated in the piano (meas. 29-31) while the bass-line is descending and fills in a tritone, resolving the harmony on the final chord of measure 31 (see figure 8).



Figure 8

In addition to songs, Debussy also wrote cantatas and an opera. In 1884, Debussy won the Grand Prix de Rome for his cantata, L'Enfant Prodigue. Today, only the tenor aria, "Ces airs joyeux" (What joyous airs), and Lia's aris, "L'année en vain" (The sad years roll by), are widely known. Both are included in his volume of songs published by the International Music Company. The text was written by E. Guinand, according to the well-known story biblical of the prodigal son. This cantata was performed in 1978 by the Kansas Bach Choir and soloists from Kansas State University in Manhattan, Kansas.

Lia's Recitative and Aria

Recitative:

Year after year passes in vain
 At each returning season
 Their games and diversions sadden me against my will:
 They reopen my wound and my sorrow deepens . . .
 I seek the solitary shore . . .
 Involuntary grief!
 Idle exertions!
 Lia ever laments the child she has no more! . . .

Aria:

Azäel! Azäel! Why have you forsaken me? . . .
 Your image has remained in my maternal heart.
 Azäel! Azäel! Why have you forsaken me? . . .
 How calm the evenings were
 On the elm-studded plain,
 When, burdened with the harvest,
 The large red oxen were guided home.
 When the toil was over,
 Children, old people, and servants,
 Workers in the fields or shepherds,
 Praised the blessed hand of the Lord;
 And so the days followed each other,
 And in the devout family,
 The youth and the maiden
 Exchanged vows of chaste love.
 Others do not feel the weight of old age, --
 They watch the years pass by,
 Without regret and without sadness . . .

How heavily time weighs on disconsolate hearts!
Azaël! Why have you forsaken me?⁹

Lia's aria begins the dramatic action after the instrumental prelude, which is very calm and describes Lia listening to happy songs in the distance. The score is continuous, without any breaks. Lia begins sadly lamenting that the years have not eased the fact that her son has left home to serve God. In measure 6, the harmony oscillates between two major chords (I and VII⁷) as an introduction to the harmonic patterns used in the aria. The accompaniment in measure 13 (the sixteenth notes grouped in sixes) suggests the undulating of the waters by the shore. The emotional outpouring of the recitative functions as introductory material, and the aria begins with another lament (Meas. 25). The "despair motive" is found in the right hand in measures 37-38 (see Figure 9).



Figure 9

⁹Claude Debussy, *Fourty-Three Songs*, translations by Sergius Kagen (New York: International Music Co., 1961) p. x.

In measure 39, she is calm, recalling happier days and pleasant times. In the accompaniment, D major and C major chords alternate over a D pedal point. The sixteenth-note chords suggest the ordinary passing of time. This only pauses when she prayed (meas. 45) and when the youth and the maiden (she and her husband) exchanged wedding vows (meas. 51). The oscillating harmonies continue on various pitch centers during her recollections. In this section, a motive is used in the voice part portraying calmness (see figure 10).



Figure 10

In measure 53, the weight and despair of the present time returns as shown by the length of notes used in the accompaniment. The piano part reiterates the despair motive in the left hand in measure 60. Sixteenth notes and tremolo in the accompaniment signal her increasing anxiety and she returns to her lament. In the last line, she is completely overcome as she repeats (piano) "pour quoi m'as-tu quittée?" (Why have you forsaken me?). The piano ends the aria, where words are no longer meaningful, by repeating the despair motive.

These settings of Debussy's show the extreme sensitivity he has towards the poetry he sets. Using every resource available to him, melody, harmony, texture, timbre, and rhythm, he melds his music with the words to create an art-form greater than the sum of the music and poetry themselves.

BRITTEN: A CHARM OF LULLABIES

Benjamin Britten (1913-1976) was a very prolific composer. His music, although imaginative, is not avante-garde in nature, but succeeds through its simple statements. In addition to his composing, Britten was also a conductor and pianist. Perhaps because of this, his instrumental music predominated at first. Later in his compositional career, after the opening of his opera Peter Grimes, the public thought of him as the most gifted English music dramatist since Purcell. After this he turned to chamber opera, using voices and an orchestra of solo instruments.

Britten's chamber operas are on the whole very successful. Among the most noted ones are The Rape of Lucretia (1946), Albert Herring (1947), and Billy Budd. Gloriana, a study of Queen Elizabeth I, was written as a tribute to Elizabeth II. The Turn of the Screw was written for the 1960 Aldeburgh Festival, which Britten and the English Opera Group started.

In addition to his operas, Britten composed symphonic works, instrumental music, songs and song cycles, and choral works. A great deal of his music was written for amateurs and young players. His solo vocal music is known for its practicality.¹ He uses voice and piano more often than specialized ensembles found in much modern music. Most songs are written as cycles that do not effectively separate. The texts come from a wide range of sources and he has set German and Russian texts in the original languages.

A Charm of Lullabies, Op. 41, was written in 1947 and is a set of

¹Article, "Britten, Edward Benjamin," in The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians (Sixth edition, edited by Stanley Sadie, 1980), III, p. 296.

five lullabies for mezzo-soprano and piano. It is more relaxed than other works written about this time. It offers few of the flights of imagination found in previous cycles. However, if one considers conjuring up five *interesting and contrasting* lullabies, part of the problem is surely due to the subject matter. The title, A Charm of Lullabies, refers to the magical attraction and pleasure that lullabies bring about, as well as being a pun on the character of the middle songs. Britten wrote the set for Eric Crozier's wife, Nancy Evans, who played Lucretia at Glyndebourne in 1946. The first and last songs may faintly recall the music of the sleeping Lucretia ("She sleeps as a rose").³ Each song uses the text of a different poet, which is partially why the pieces form a set and not a cycle. Britten did not relate them musically. Their union consists entirely of the subject matter, and each piece provides a contrast in mood to the next. Each song has its own unique charm.

A Cradle Song

Sleep! Sleep! beauty bright,
 Dreaming o'er the joys of night;
 Sleep! Sleep! in thy sleep
 Little sorrows sit and weep.

Sweet Babe, in thy face
 Soft desires I can trace,
 Secret joys and secret smiles,
 Little pretty infant wiles.

O, the cunning wiles that creep
 In thy little heart asleep.
 When thy little heart does wake . . .
 Then the dreadful lightnings break,

From thy cheek and from thy eye,
 O'er the youthful harvests high.
 Infant wiles and infant smiles
 Heav'n and Earth of peace beguiles.

³Peter Evans, The Music of Benjamin Britten (London: J.M. Dent and Sons, Ltd., 1979), p. 356.

The first song sets a poem of William Blake (1757-1827). Blake is said to be the creator of a simple and emotionally direct method of thought and expression in the arts.⁴ He was a poet, painter, and engraver who portrayed a prophetic vision in his writing. Britten set his verses in three of his cycles: Serenade, the Spring Symphony, and A Charm of Lullabies. A Cradle Song creates a sleepy atmosphere. The conjunct vocal line is treated in a legato, dolcissimo style. The piano part has in the left hand a constant quarter-note rhythm, giving the feeling of an ostinato. The right hand creates an undulation and often clashes with the voice at a major second. The dissonance is gentle, however, and suggests a slight reluctance against impending slumber. This parallel and close movement between the voice and the right hand is typical of Britten. The allegretto tranquillo tempo flows evenly along in a $\frac{4}{4}$ meter mostly in four measure phrases. In measure 18 on "cunning wiles," the piano changes to a closely spaced white key/black key bitonality section, centered around C and G^b. At the same time, the voice is ppp repeating a G^b marked parlando, or speaking. The clashing seconds return in measures 23-24 on the words "the dreadful lightnings." Beginning in measure 29, the home key of E^b major comes back. Here, to add a little variety, Britten has again started the voice on beat 2 as at the beginning, but the strong accent of the word "infant" is on a weak beat. He does this again in the next measure, giving the word an agogic accent rather than a metric one. The left hand motion slows, there is a slight ritard, and the piece ends on an upward scale holding two notes a major second apart.

⁴Article, "Blake, William," in Encyclopaedia Britannica: Micropaedia (Fifteenth edition, 1980), II, p. 71.

The key scheme is controlled by a few essential pitch moves of the bass. The cadential corners are a little sharp, not flowing with Britten's usual skill. The form could be molded into an A-B-A format, but would be better described as going away from and coming back to an idea. Having begun in E^b and the last two pitches held are F and G, the next song sounds fresh and lively in B major.

The Highland Balou

Hee balou,^a my sweet wee^b Donald,
 Picture o' the great Clanronald!
 Brawlie^c kens^d our wanton Chief
 What gate^e my young Highland thief.

Leeze^f me on thy bonnie^g craigie!^h
 An'ⁱ thou live, thou'll steal a naigie;^j
 Travel the country thro' and thro',
 And bring hame^k a Carlisle cow!

Thro' the lawlands,^l o'er the Border,
 Weel,^m my babie, may thou funder!ⁿ
 Herry^o the louns^p o' the laigh^q Countrie,
 Syne^r to the Highlands hame to me!

- a. lullaby
- b. little
- c. bravely, handsomely
- d. recognize
- e. got
- f. expression of great pleasure
- g. beautiful
- h. neck
- i. if
- j. horse
- k. home
- l. lowlands
- m. well
- n. succeed
- o. plunder
- p. rascals
- q. low
- r. afterwards

The Highland Balou is a Celtic lullaby adapted from the Gaelic. The poem is by Robert Burns (1759-1796) who had the ability to enter into the spirit of older folksong and to assume the ancient role of the Scottish bard.⁵ He was the national poet of Scotland and is one of the best loved poets of all time. Britten hints at the graceful Scottish snap rhythm in this song to reflect the nature of the text. The Scottish snap rhythm is:



⁵Article, "Burns, Robert," in Encyclopaedia Britannica: Micropaedia (Fifteenth editions, 1980), II, p. 390.

At an andante maestoso tempo, the piano has this motive throughout:



and it is marked marcato. The double dots place the short note so near to the beat that it almost is the Scottish snap rhythm. The voice begins ritmico (rhythmically) with this same motive, then relaxes to a slower, single-dotted rhythm. Although the meter is again $\frac{4}{4}$, Britten deviates to $\frac{5}{4}$ (meas. 7) and $\frac{3}{4}$ (meas. 15-17). These sections do not seem syncopated, but add interest to the gentle lilt.

The melody is primarily disjunct, but is easily singable. The piano accompaniment follows one basic pattern: the left hand holds long notes reminiscent of a bagpipe, and the right hand provides two voices and the rhythmic interest. The harmony is traditional and affords no real surprises, changing centers through mediant and chromatic-mediant relations. It is through-composed with a structural return to tonic. For the end, Britten repeats the first line of text and dwells on "Hee balou!" (lullaby) to hush the child to sleep. Surprisingly, the final release is slightly accented in both the voice and piano. The purpose of this, one would have to surmise, is to be different from the traditional lullaby that would fade into slumber at the end.

Britten's apparent determination to write some unconventional lullabies is evident in his setting of A Cradle Song. The rhythmic motive and the final accent are a surprise, but are not alarming. The next two texts appear as more of a surprise for a lullaby, and, as a result, their delivery is a little more contrived.

Sephestia's Lullaby

Refrain:

Weep not, my wanton, smile upon my knee;
When thou art old there's grief enough for thee.

Mother's wag, pretty boy,
Father's sorrow, father's joy;
When thy father first did see,
Such a boy by him and me,

He was glad, I was woe;
Fortune changed made him so,
When he left his pretty boy,
Last his sorrows, first his joy.

Refrain:

The wanton smiled, father wept,
Mother cried, baby leapt;
More he crowed, more we cried,
Nature could not sorrow hide:

He must go, he must kiss
Child and mother, baby bliss,
For he left his pretty boy,
Father's sorrow, father's joy.

Refrain:

This verse is by Robert Greene (1558-1592) and is from his romance, Menaphon, written in 1589. A romance is a literary genre that originated in medieval France in the period between 1130 and 1150. Menaphon, one of Greene's two best known romances, includes the character Sephestia who delivers these lines. Greene was an English poet, prose writer, and dramatist. One of the earliest professional authors, he was noted for skillful narrative and charming heroines.

Britten chose to set the first two lines of the poem in a lento tempo and the other text doppio movimento (allegretto). A duple meter is

common in both sections. In the piano accompaniment, the grace notes and their slowed-down version are a unifying device for the song. The beginning slow section is marked piangendo (weeping) in the piano and is emphasized by a raised-forth-scale-degree appoggiatura. The voice is dolce (sweet) to show the mother's comfort in unhappy circumstances. The next section is rhythmic in the piano and the voice is leggiero (nimble, thoughtless). The overall effect is somewhat whimsical. The sections alternate, but the final lento switches back to allegretto on the last word of the text (meas. 57). Again, this is a choice by Britten not to end on a slow, saddened note.

Melodically, Sephestia's Lullaby shows a witty treatment of chromatic relations. Each section begins in E minor, but Britten bends the melody around to where he wants it to go and the harmony appears to just follow along. These temporary shifts of harmony do not always function traditionally, but appear only briefly. The effect is tender and charming, but not overly serious.

A Charm

Quiet, sleep! I will make
Erinnys^a whip thee with a snake,
And cruel Rhadamanthus^b take
Thy body to the boiling lake,
Where fire and brimstone never slake;
Thy heart shall burn, thy head shall ache,
And ev'ry joint about thee quake;
And therefore dare not yet to wake!

Quiet, sleep! or thou shalt see
The horrid hags of Tartary,^c
Whose tresses ugly serpents be,
And Cerberus^d shall bark at thee,
And all the furies that are three--
The worst is called Tisiphone,^e
Shall lash thee to eternity;
And therefore sleep thou peacefully.

- a. Female spirits who punished offenders against blood kin.
- b. A Cretan lawgiver--son of Zeus.
- c. A dark region beneath the earth.
- d. The watchdog of Hades (Hell).
- e. One of the Erinnys.

The "charm" in the title is trying to put a magic spell of sleep on a child. The imagination and wit shown in the text is typical of the work of Thomas Randolph (1605-1635). For living only thirty years, Randolph was very prolific. His work shows clear poetic fancy.⁶

Britten chose to set this text as one of the few prestissimo furioso lullabies ever written. The opening statement is largamente, but is meant to follow the voice. An opening clash between C and D# centers sets a pattern for much of the harmony. At the first prestissimo (meas. 4), the rapid phrases follow the $\frac{7}{4}$ meter and build on each other. Measure 6 is repeated sequentially and measure 8 is retimed to create a sequential extension. In measure 10, the bass escapes from tonic D and goes up a symmetric whole step scale with a half step in the middle. In the next bar, the voice inverts this. The melodic motion and the accents indicated add to the scolding by the parent. The largamente in measure 13 is both stern and soothing, but prestissimo tempo two measures later says all is not calm. Measure 17 begins the alternating sections as at the beginning. The final "Quiet!" is again fast and the piece ends in an upward flourish. The final notes are G#-C#, and D which suggests that the child is still, unsurprisingly, unsettled. The harmony basically moves from the tonic, d minor, by step to the dominant with other subtle shadings. Britten uses guitar-like forth chords above the dominant for this "oddly-venomous little song."⁷

⁶Article, "Randolph, Thomas," in Dictionary of National Biography, Edited by Sir Leslie Stephen and Sir Sidney Lee (London: Oxford University Press, 1922), XVI, p. 723.

⁷The Music of Benjamin Britten, p. 356.

Up to this point in the set, each song has become a little more for afield from the conventional lullaby. In all its fury, even A Charm retains a particular enchantment. The final song, The Nurse's Song, puts to rest any doubt that Britten did not know how to write a true, soothing lullaby.

The Nurse's Song

Refrain:

Lullaby baby, lullaby baby,
Thy nurse will tend thee as duly as may be.

Be still, my sweet sweeting, no longer do cry;
Sing lullaby baby, lullaby baby.
Let dolours be fleeting, I fancy thee, I
To rock and to lull thee I will not delay me.

Refrain:

Thy gods be thy shield and comfort in need!
Sing lullaby baby, lullaby baby.
They give thee good fortune and well for to speed,
And this to desire I will not delay me.

Refrain

The score of A Charm of Lullabies lists John Philip as the author of the text for The Nurse's Song. The only documented writing of Philip's was in 1566, when he wrote three black-letter tracts chiefly in doggeral verse describing a trial at Clemsford of three witches.⁸

The Nurse's Song begins with an unaccompanied refrain centered on D, the ending note of the previous piece. Although marked andante piacevole,

⁸Article, "Philip, John," in Dictionary of National Biography, Edited by Sir Leslie Stephen and Sir Sidney Lee (London: Oxford University Press, 1922), XV, p. 1042.

the opening is not measured, and the voice may express freely. After the third fermata, the piano joins the voice a tempo. Here, the triple meter begins and the piano states the characteristic rhythmic and harmonic motive of the piece (see figure 11).

The musical score for Figure 11 consists of two staves. The top staff is for the voice, written in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). It begins with the lyrics "ba - by!....." followed by "Be still, my sweet sweet-ing, no long - er do". The bottom staff is for the piano, written in bass clef with a key signature of one flat. It features a characteristic rhythmic and harmonic motive, marked "p espress" and "a tempo". The piano part includes a 5-measure rest, a 6-measure rest, and a 7-measure rest, indicating a triple meter.

Figure 11

The melody is molto espressivo and dolce and is in long, sweeping arches. When the refrain appears again, it is measured, but not strictly. The piano adds strategically placed flourishes. For the second verse, Britten returns to the initial metered material. There is a crescendo, appassionato, then the motion is slowly brought back down to the unaccompanied refrain that slows and diminishes to the end.

The key movement is fluid and bewitching like the melody. "Each modulation has delightful inevitability which is free from predictability."⁹

⁹The Music of Benjamin Britten, p. 356.

This final lullaby has a simple sophistication that may be somewhat lacking in the previous pieces. Britten's use of chromaticism tends to imply new directions in harmonic expression, but never seems to get very far from home.

Although this collection of Britten's songs is not forward-looking with respect to twentieth-century music, they are effective and lovely pieces. If a recitalist wishes to end his/her program with five lullabies without losing the audience, this set may be the best way to do so.

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A RECITAL

by

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AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S REPORT

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ABSTRACT

This Master's Report (recital) features vocal selections by Hanley Jackson, Anton Webern, Franz Schubert, Claude Debussy, and Benjamin Britten. Included with the recital program and a tape of the recital is a series of program notes. These notes deal with each selection individually, including pertinent biographical information of the composer, historical background, and style analysis of each work.