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EXTENDED PROGRAM NOTES ON A SOPRANO RECITAL

by

CYNTHIA SCHEIDEMAN-MILLER

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B. M. E., Wichita State University, 1978

A MASTER'S REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF MUSIC

COMPANYING MATERIALS
CATED IN AUDIO-VISUAL

Department of Music

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
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Major Professor

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Master's Recital Program	1
Historical and Theoretical Analysis	2
Texts and Translations	32
Bibliography	45
Abstract of the Master's Report	48

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CYNTHIA LEIGH SCHEIDEMAN-MILLER

Master Recital

Voice

Assisted by

Janet Anschutz, Piano

Sunday, June 26, 1983

All Faiths Chapel Aud.

3:00 p.m.

"Un certo non so che".Antonio Vivaldi

"Stizzoso, mio stizzoso"
from La Serva padronaGiovanni Pergolesi

Deux Mélodies HébraïquesMaurice Ravel
"Kaddisch"
"L'enigme Eternelle"

"Ah! Je veux vivre"
from Roméo et JulietteCharles Gounod

INTERMISSION

Frauenliebe und Leben, op. 42Robert Schumann
"Seit ich ihn gesehen"
"Er, der Herrlichste von allen"
"Ich kann's nicht fassen"
"Du Ring an meinem Finger"
"Helft mir, ihr Schwestern"
"Süsser Freund"
"An Meinen Herzen"
"Nun hast du mir den ersten Schmerz getan"

Six Elizabethan Songs.Dominick Argento
"Spring"
"Sleep"
"Winter"
"Dirge"
"Diaphenia"
"Hymn"

Early Italian

"Stizzoso, mio stizzoso" from La Serva padrona

The Baroque period in music was from approximately 1600-1750. One of the greatest achievements in music of this period was the creation of the opera. The opera's forerunners included liturgical drama, intermezzos, madrigal cycles and the pastoral plays, all of which combined music with drama. The opera was the culmination of all these, both by the singing of all the dialogue and by overcoming the problem of combining musical movement with theatrical movement in such a way that the story proceeded harmoniously. The way in which this was accomplished was to use recitative to move the story along by narration, while the aria provided a reflection upon a particular emotion and gave a lyrical break from the tension of the drama.

The earliest Italian operas presented in public theatres combined humorous and serious elements. However, by the latter half of the eighteenth century they were separated. The opera seria maintained a serious theme throughout, while the intermezzo introduced a new comic story between acts of the opera. Interestingly, intermedi started out as musical interludes between acts of plays. They were then performed without the plays and expanded into full length operas. These full length operas became serious in nature themselves. Intermezzi again were inserted between the acts of the opera to give emotional relief.

Intermezzi were comic in nature, usually simple in plot, and often only used two to four singers (who often were also in the opera as well). Whereas the opera seria dealt mostly with gods and legendary kings and leaders

of the past (often elevating them to nobility above mortals), the intermezzi dealt with the commonplace people and their situations. Often the commoner (generally a soprano maidservant) was made the clever person and the noble (generally a basso buffo) a stupid person who was the object of jest. Giovanni Battista Pergolesi (1710-1736) was a leading figure in the rise of Italian comic opera during the eighteenth century. His first major works were two oratorios, an opera seria (Salustia), and an opera buffa (Lo Frate'nnamorato). His third opera was the opera seria Il Prigionier superbo (1733). The intermezzo La Serva padrona was inserted between its three acts.

La Serva padrona is a merry musical interlude approximately one hour in length. It originally was written for four strings and basso continuo. "Stizzoso, mio stizzoso" uses this same instrumentation, with basso continuo used alone for the recitative. (My version for performance uses the piano reduction. Dynamic markings and slurrings were added by the editor.) The simple plot and humor of La Serva padrona became so popular that it was soon performed without its serious companion. The plot for this intermezzo was taken from a book written by G. A. Federico, who was also the librettist. It consists of two singing characters (Uberto and Serpina) and one mute character (Vespone). The story is this: Uberto, a member of the nobility and a bachelor tired of being single, decides to marry. Serpina, his young maid who has been ruling the house for some time already, is delighted with his decision to marry because she would like to be his wife. To accomplish her goal of marriage, she gets the foolish servant, Vespone, into a disguise of a

fierce warrior, and presents him to Uberto as her fiancé. The old man, from fear and pity, finally agrees to marry Serpina and the masquerade is then revealed. The point at which "Stizzoso, mio stizzoso" is sung occurs when Serpina first attempts to get Uberto to consider her for marriage. It is her first aria, and in it her character is revealed. She is clear headed above all, and knows how to coax her employer (measures 1-6) before scorning him (measures 7-33). The original score had Serpina's arias written in the brighter sharp keys to contrast with Uberto's arias in more somber flat keys. The Parisotti edition (G. Schirmer, 1926) lowered the aria "Stizzoso, mio Stizzoso" from the key of A major to the key of A-flat major. The character of Serpina is not altered by this key change. The use of a largely conjunct melody highlighted by intervals of fifths and octaves as well as ornamental additions (measures 5 and 26) give Serpina the image of youth. The rapid tempo and basic syllabic treatment of the text give the impression of quick thinking and vitality. As was the style of the time, the short text is repeated several times. The coaxing and scolding is repeated once then, with slight musical changes, followed by a softer interlude in which she sings "I believe that you understand me, since you have known me many a day." To make sure the meaning is brought home, the first 84 measures (section A) are repeated after a piano interlude, giving the aria an ABA form (the most common aria form of this time) measures 88-105 being the B section. The aria ends with a coda and a piano postlude.

"Un certo non so che"

Antonio Vivaldi (born 4 March, 1678, Venice; 28 July, 1741, Vienna), like many composers, also entered the priesthood. Vivaldi did not function as a priest because of ill health but taught at the Conservatory of the Pieta in Venice, a girl's orphanage, from 1703-1709 and 1711-1718. Although chiefly known now for his instrumental works, Vivaldi devoted much of his career to writing operas. Vivaldi's 45 operas (only 21 are extant) were successfully staged in many of the major operatic centers of the time, including Florence, Milan, Rome, Verona, and Vienna. There is also a collection of arias not belonging to known operas from which "Un certo non so che" comes from.

This arietta is not a strict da capo aria because the repeated A section is slightly different with an added coda. The text itself is short, but the opening phrases are repeated several times, with variations of music. Vivaldi seemed to concentrate more on the music and its form rather than word phrases. In this piece, the basic form is ABA, with the definite divisions being AA'BB'CC'. Section A lasts to measure 18 in the key of E major. A' comprises measures 19-30, in the key of a minor. At this point, Vivaldi set the second verse to music, with measures 31-39 in the key of A major (B section), before switching to the parallel minor in measure 48 (B' section). The A sections are repeated with a few minor ornamental changes and a coda (measure 76 to the end) finishes the piece in a minor. Vivaldi used many conjunct chromatic lines in this song. The rising lines were used to elevate the vocal tessitura

in section A (measures 6-7) and lower it in section B (measures 31-32). Ornaments of upper and lower neighbors, passing tones and portamentos abound in this piece, giving it a graceful line and expresses the affection. The accompaniment is basically chordal in nature, enabling the voice to be freer in its treatment of the melodic line. The accompaniment assumes more importance in the interludes between sections and in the postlude.

DEUX MÉLODIES HÉBRAÏQUES

Maurice Ravel (7 March 1875--28 December 1937), often classified as an Impressionistic composer by many, himself denied that he was such. Though better known for his instrumental works, Ravel also wrote several vocal works which are among the most outstanding French songs of this century. Deux Mélodies Hébraïques was written in 1914 as a commission from Madame Alvina-Alvi, a soprano in the St. Petersburg opera company. The texts used in the set are entitled "Kaddish", and "L'Enigme Eternelle". These ancient texts derive from quite different sources -- a prayer and a Yiddish folksong -- yet are joined together by Ravel's musical treatment of them.

Kaddish

Magnified and sanctified be God's great name in the world which He has created according to His will. May He establish His kingdom soon, in our lifetime. Let us say: Amen.

Hallowed and honored, extolled and exalted, adored and acclaimed be the name of the Holy One, though He is above all the praises, hymns, and songs of adoration which men can utter. Let us say: Amen.

-----Likrat Shabbat-----

The Kaddish is among the best known and most frequently recited Jewish prayers, for it is the prayer chanted for the dead at the graveside, on memorial occasions, and at all synagogue services. "Kaddish"

means "sanctification," an appropriate title since the whole prayer sanctifies the name of God. Centuries ago it was used to open or close every important moment of the synagogal rite. Today, it is less pervasive, but is recited (not sung) at least twice during the service. It is often referred to as the "mourner's prayer," but does not refer to mourning or grief in the text. The reason for this, as well as the origin of the Kaddish, are cited in the Liber Shabbat:

The Kaddish was originally composed for recitation at the conclusion of a lesson in the 'house of study'. Gradually, it passed into the 'house of prayer,' and then into the 'house of mourning.' And so, although it is popularly known as the mourner's prayer, the Kaddish does not include a syllable about pain of parting or the anguish of sorrow. It seems altogether silent about those thoughts which are likely to fill the mourner's mind and the feelings that his heart is prone to harbor.

Sources differ as to whether Kaddish has always been spoken or if it was once sung. According to Eric Werner, the Kaddish was first sung in a free-swinging melismata, which turned into a more standardized melodic formula. (ex. 1 is the melodic formula given by Werner, with ex. 2 showing the melody used by Ravel).



1. Rabbi Jonathan D. Levine, ed. Likrat Shabbat--Worship, Study, and Song for Sabbath and Festival Services and for the Home. Compiled and translated by Rabbi Sidney Greenberg. (Bridgeport, Conn.: The Prayer Book Press, 1975), p. 180.



The "leading motif" of this formula is the part that the cantor uses most often. After this leading motif, the cantor is free to create a tune to reflect the festival or portion of the liturgy for which the Kaddish is being sung. The text does lend itself to chant usage and Ravel's piano interpretation brings to mind the use of gongs (the A section, which ends with the first Amen) and of the harp (the B section, which is the rest of the song). Both of these instruments have been used since ancient times in the Hebrew culture, a fitting accompaniment to an ancient prayer. The melody of "Kaddish" is written in C major over a G pedal point in the piano. The texture in the first section is sparse, but poignant, as Ravel contrasted parallel chords in the piano with the melismatic vocal line. The A and B sections are clearly defined by the vocal line becoming more syllabic (except for the Ah's), and the piano becoming more elaborate in rhythm with more intervals included in the chords. In measures 24-37, Ravel used fluid passages in the piano to support the musical imagery of the singer switching from a simple narrative of suffering and prayer to overwhelming religious fervor. The last part of the B section also brings to mind an almost fanatical exaltation of the worshiper with its ecstatic vocalises over tone clusters, which heightens the tension and leaves a lasting impression on the listener.

2. Eric Werner, The Sacred Bridge (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), p. 539.

L'Enigme Eternelle

Asks the world the old question
Tra, la, la, la, la,
Answer men:
Tra, la, la, la, la,
And as men who know will say:
Tra, la, la, la, la,
Asks the world the old question
Tra, la, la, la, la,

Ravel chose a folk song sung in Yiddish to complement the Kaddish and show another view of the Jewish people. What is the question being asked? No one knows for sure, but most agree that it has something to do with the ancient relationship of man to God.

In this song, Ravel demonstrates a keen ear for verbal stresses and for musical interpretation of the text. The piece is in ABA form, the A sections containing the line "Asks the world the old question, tra, la, la, la, la,.." The sections are again clearly defined, this time by a change of melody in the vocal line and melodic alteration in the piano part. Ravel contrasts the simple vocal melody with hypnotic reiterations of a single accompaniment figure (measures 1-5). The key of the song is E minor, but Ravel adds the dissonances of A sharp and D sharp to the repetitious accompaniment, creating anxious, humorous and possibly cynical flavors in the piece.

"Juliet's Waltz Song"

Charles Gounod (1818-93) was born in Paris and later studied composition at the conservatory there. At age 21, he won the Prix de Rome, enabling him to study church music in Rome. He returned to Paris and studied for two years to become a priest, but gave it up and started writing opera. He wrote twelve operas in all, but only two, Faust and Roméo et Juliette, were successful. The latter was first performed at Paris in April of 1867. The libretto was by Barbier and Carre and closely parallels the original Shakespearean play. Juliet's most famous aria from this opera is the Waltz Song which she sings during the party given by the Capulets. The nurse has just hinted to her that there is a possibility of marriage for Juliet, and Juliet wants nothing to do with it. This is, of course, before she meets Romeo.

As the title of the aria suggests, a waltz tempo and figure are predominant throughout the piece, both in the piano accompaniment and the vocal line. The main exception from the waltz figure is section C (the piece is AABAC-coda with the C section measures 135-151) where both the voice and piano become more legato reflecting the new thought of the text. There is also displacement of the downbeat creating syncopation. In the B section (measures 79-100) the vocal line becomes more legato also, but the piano maintains the waltz figure. Every section ends with an ornamental run, the runs becoming longer and more elaborate with each successive section. The aria is written in F major changing to the relative key of a minor at measure 79, returning to F major at measure 105. At measures 135-150, Gounod makes an excursion into

c minor over an F pedal point. The coda (starting measure 166) makes a return to F major then again touches on c minor before making a solid finish in the home key. A piano prelude and postlude using the waltz figure completes the piece.

FRAUENLIEBE UND LEBEN, op.42

Frauenliebe und Leben (Woman's Lives and Loves) by Robert Schumann (8 June 1810 -- 29 July 1856) was written in 1840 during the Romantic period of music dating from approximately 1800-1910. The song or Lied thrived in Germany during this period. Lied could be described as a musical reading of poetry, for the two were inseparately intertwined. They generally followed a very idealized approach to life, taking everyday happenings and feelings and then exaggerating them to isolate and elevate a specific aspect of a situation. For example, a current writer might speak of walking home after meeting a girl and briefly go over, in a factual way, what had taken place. The nineteenth century poet, in the same situation, would not walk home but, rather, would fly on winged feet, his heart soaring to the pale moon whose luminous glory fades when compared to the fair maid he has just glimpsed.

Music of the Romantic period was meant to appeal to the masses (masses meaning a wide cross-section of society, not necessarily large audiences as we think of masses today), not to just an educated few as was often the case in earlier periods. Song literature, while performed in salons or smaller halls, rather than the large operatic theaters, was widely known and appreciated. Part of the appealing element of Romantic music was its highly programmatic and emotional nature. Vocal music, too, often emphasized emotional extremes. The type of poetry just mentioned was well suited to the "modern" style.

Schumann was one of the great Lieder writers, but initially resisted writing in this medium. As Martin

Cooper wrote in his essay "The Song":

"Do you, I wonder, feel as I do?" wrote Schumann to Hermann Hirshbach in June 1839. "All my life I have thought vocal music inferior to instrumental and have never considered it to be a great art." Only eight months later, in February, 1840, he wrote of "composing nothing but songs" and in a letter to Clara, "Since yesterday morning I have written nearly 27 pages of music--something new, of which I will only say that I laughed and wept for joy as I wrote. . . . Oh! Clara, what a joy it is to write for the voice, a joy I have lacked too long."

The year of 1840, mentioned above, was a doubly important one. First, it was the culmination of seven years of battle with Clara's father (Friedrich Wieck; formerly Robert's piano teacher) to get permission for them to marry. In 1840, the courts ruled that Wieck had failed to prove his charge of Schumann's drunkenness, and granted Clara and Robert legal consent to marry. They were wed on September 12. The other happening of major importance of that year was that Schumann wrote 130 songs, an impressive amount of material for someone who had so recently scorned that medium of music. What was the cause for this outburst of song writing? Partially it can be attributed to the realization of his dream to marry Clara. Certainly he already had the musical background to create Lieder, being not only a fine composer, but also an ardent admirer of Schubert. He was also well-read, particularly in poetry. One other factor for this creative outburst was suggested by Eliot Slater:

1. Martin Cooper, "The Songs," in Schumann--A Symposium, edited by Gerald Abraham (London: Oxford University Press, 1952), p. 98.

that Schumann had a cyclothymic disposition (alternate lively and depressed moods) and 1840 was an energetic "high" year.² Whatever the reasons, part of Schumann's effort resulted in Frauenlieben und Leben, a song cycle of eight *Lieder*.

In Frauenliebe und Leben, the girl whose story is being told considers herself quite lowly in comparison to the man she loves. At least part of the poetry was based on the feelings of a real person--the young wife of the poet Adelbert Chamisso (his poetry is the text of the cycle). At the time of their marriage, she was eighteen and he was forty. In addition to the husband vs. wife relation, the age and economic gap between them would help to explain some of the awe that the woman in the cycle hints at when she speaks of her love.

Typical of the *Lied*, this cycle used the same character throughout, following a woman's life in relation to her love. It is not surprising that Schumann should choose poems about a woman's life since to him all women were embodied in his wife Clara. The woman in the poems becomes unusually real to us since the lyrics and the musical treatment of the lyrics give a detailed picture of her and the specific situations of a universal topic. For example, in the first song, "Seit ich ihn gesehen" (Since I saw him), we find a young girl (with even younger sisters) who has been strangely moved and mystified emotionally by a man she has just seen. In the second poem, "Er, der Herrlichste von allen" (He, the most magnificent

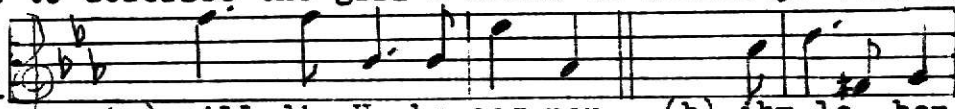
2. For his detailed argument, see Eliot Slater's "Schumann's Illness" in Robert Schumann--The Man and His Music, edited by Alan Walker (London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1976).

of all), the young girl now knows why she cries and adores this man at a distance--the crying is due to love, and the distance is because she considers herself below this man in worth. The third poem, "Ich kann's nicht fassen" (I can't comprehend or believe it), speaks of her disbelief that he has chosen her for his wife, while the fourth poem deals with her inner thoughts--she now believes he is serious--as she looks at her engagement ring ("Du Ring an meinem Finger" -- Your ring upon my finger). The fifth poem "Helft mir, ihr Schwestern" (Help, my sisters) heralds the wedding day of the young girl and all the activity that goes with it. The girl bubbles with excitement and last minute instructions as her sisters bustle around her in hurried preparation for the ceremony. "Süsser Freund " (Sweet friend), the sixth poem, is a little mystical at first, as the young bride tries to find a way to break some news to her husband. Only after most of the song is through do we finally find out that she is expecting a baby. The baby arrives, and the woman happily sings to it in the seventh song "An meinem Herzen" (On my heart). Up to this point, all the subjects of the poems have been happy or at least lively. The final poem, "Nun hast du mir den ersten Schmerz getan" (Now you have given me my first pain), is isolated from the rest, for in this poem the man dies, and the fairytale happiness of the woman dies with him. There was a ninth poem, where the woman becomes a grandmother, but Schumann omitted it in favor of using an instrumental, rather than vocal, ending (discussed later).

Schumann's songs are typical examples of Romantic miniatures. For example, the first song is strophic with the two verses separated by a two-bar piano interlude.

The accompaniment is chordal, with its uppermost line highlighting the vocal line. The key chosen to start the cycle was B-flat, which is retained for the duration of the song. Schumann favors diatonic harmonic movement relative to the home key. The accompaniment is kept simple, clearly to support the singer, not outshine her. The vocal range in "Seit ich ihn gesehen" is modest, spanning an octave from E-flat¹ to E-flat² with the tessitura hovering between F¹-C². The simple rhythms and stepwise motion of the harmony and melody along with the triple meter help to portray the hesitancy of the young girl as she enters into a part of her life that she has never before experienced. The use of chords in both hands, as well as the intermittent rests, also helps set the impression of hesitancy and possible breathless wonder of the young girl. Schumann repeats the opening bars in a postlude.

Schumann used a descending interval throughout the cycle to describe the girl's sense of humility. (ex. 1)

ex. 1 

(a) will die Ho-he seg-nen (b) ihm le--ben

The first one occurs when (a) she promises to bless her rival in the second song, "Er, der Herrlichste von allen," another one (b) she swears to love him ('ihm Leben') in "Du Ring an meinen Finger."

For "Er, der Herrlichste von allen" Schumann chose the sub-dominant of B-flat: E-flat. He used a more complex form of AA'BCA with interludes before B and closing A. The sections are A (measures 1-9) A' (measures 9-17) B (measures 21-38) C (measures 38-54) and A

(measures 57-66). The tempo is quicker than in "Seit" and the piano maintains an excited pattern of steady eighth-note chords in the right hand, imitating her beating heart, throughout the piece. The A section has the left hand starting in a chromatic climb at a much slower pace than the right hand. The whole section (particular measures 5-8) is repeated for the following A sections. The melody is disjunct and has a wider tessitura than in the first song. After a piano interlude, the piano quiets using closer harmonies and utilizing seventh chords. Here, too, Schumann keeps the harmonies moving, but now they are less chromatic until measure 29 where the bass line moves chromatically downward in contrast to the opening of the A section. Chromaticism is used during the points of the poem at which the young girl seems confused, seeming to blur the harmonies as her thoughts are blurred. In the melody, the movement is more stepwise, with the line rising or falling as the poetry suggests. For example, measures 24-25, the line falls on "nur in Demut" (only in humility) only to later leap a sixth as she calls him a "noble star" (measures 34-35 -- "hoher Stern"). For the first half of the B section (measures 38-on), there is a return to the tonic key followed by more chromatic usage as she blesses whoever will be the object of his love, building to the climatic point "deine Wahl" (measure 41-42 -- "your choice"). The piano interlude returns us to the disjunct movement of section A with some slight chord changes, but is basically identical to the opening section. An epilogue in the piano concludes the piece.

Schumann uses an ABA form for the third piece, "Ich kann's nicht fassen." Again, he uses ⁶8 to express the

excited uncertainty in the young girl, as well as a combination of repeated notes and disjunct motion. The key is again E-flat and the harmonies are diatonic. This time, however, Schumann does not use a piano introduction. Rather, the voice starts the song. Section A (measures 1-16) emphasizes the girl's disbelief and amazement in "I cannot comprehend or believe it" by the use of staccato chords in the piano, as well as the quick notes and short phrasing of the vocal line. For section B, there is a sudden break ushered in by sustained chords in the piano, slower tempo and lowered tessitura as the girl mulls over the source of her amazement: the man she loves has chosen her for marriage. The excited staccato chords now join section B as the vocal line swells, suggesting overflowing happiness culminating in the words "in Tränen." The A section returns and the whole song is then complemented by a piano interlude which is followed by another A section, this time a fifth higher. This final statement almost gives us a musical image of her shaking her head "no" in disbelief yet again.

"Du Ring an Meinem Finger" can be compared with "Ich kann's nicht fassen" in several ways. Both are in E-flat, use ABA form, begin with the voice (rather than the piano), and are reactions to the man she loves asking her to marry him. This song, however, differs in many respects. Overall, it is much more flowing and lyrical. The voice is mainly in stepwise motion with key words outlining the harmony while the piano moves freely in a broken chord style, often with interplay between the hands (in the A sections), the tempo is slower and the meter is duple. The B section (measures 16-33) uses the

same repeated chord figure (ex.2) that was utilized in "Er, der Herrlichste von Allen" and which will be used in the next song "Helft mir, ihr Schwestern," as well as in the middle section of "Süsser Freund."



The ascending vocal line (measures 26-29) helps intensify this excitement as she pledges to live for and serve him. The A section returns (measure 34) as the girl returns once more to her contemplations and Schumann ends the piece with a quiet, descending-line postlude.

"Helft mir, ihr Schwestern" is in duple meter, and Schumann returns to the key of B-flat. The form is ABA and the first A section could easily be described as AA'A. This song as well as the previous one, "Du Ring on meinem Finger," uses a flowing piano accompaniment with parallel octaves between hands. This rapid rising and falling movement in the accompaniment heralds the arrival and activity of the wedding day of the young girl. In the A' section (measures 15-18) the vocal line outlines two chords, one note of the chord per measure. The B section uses the related keys of F major and G major as the girl pledges to serve this man. This touch of humility is swept away while she gives last minute instructions to her sisters who bustle around her in hurried preparation of the ceremony in a return to section A. At measures 41-42, the girl has a moment of

quiet and the lowered vocal line suggests unshed tears as she bids her sisters a fond farewell. The piano completes the action with a postlude reminiscent of a wedding march.

"Süsser Freund" starts uniquely by employing a recitative-like figure, giving the idea of an appeal for compassion. This is accomplished by using a high elongated pitch followed by an intervallic drop. The rest of the vocal line stays within a fifth, mirroring intimacy between the two lovers as well as low speaking tones, (A sections; measures 1-24 and measures 45-58) of the ABA form. In section A, the girl struggles to find the courage to tell her husband why she has alternate times of happiness and crying. She can't find the courage, so the accompaniment tells her husband the news by raising the tessitura and using an announcement rhythmic figure (ex.3) that ends in a half cadence, using a transition chord to the key of C and the B section.

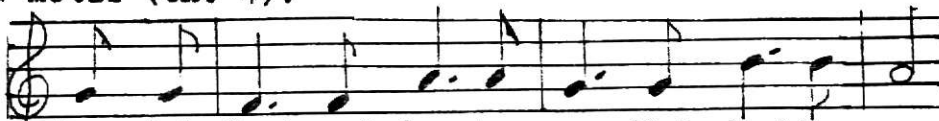


For Schumann to actually make section divisions by a key change suggests "complex emotions"³ (as Schumann advocated himself). The key change at measure 25 represents a

3. Cooper, "The Songs," p. 126.

complete change in mood as the girl happily holds her husband yet closer while they share the happiness of the moment. This happiness is echoed by an upward movement of a new motif (ex. 4).

ex. 4



dass ich fest und fes-ter nur dich drucken mag

What good news are they sharing? There is a return to the original key (measure 45) and the plea-for-compassion motive with the words "Here by my bed has the cradle space," now we know that a baby is due. Schumann adds a postlude ending with a happy sigh as the woman speaks of the baby as "your (the man's) image."

The key for "An Meinen Herzen" is D major and the meter is $\frac{6}{8}$. The woman is now an ecstatic mother singing to her baby. The rapidly fluctuating lines of the piano and the disjunct motion of the voice suggests lively joy. Schumann states the same thematic material three times, increasing the tempo in each repetition. The words spill out faster and faster as the jubilant mother holds the child, possibly dancing with it. In the third statement, however, it seems that the piano can no longer keep up its flowing broken-chord figure, but now resorts to a bare staccato chord accompaniment. The piano postlude slows down the motion and lowers the tessitura, bringing an image of the mother quieting and laying down the baby.

Even if the first songs seemed overly poetic to the listener, the last song of the cycle--"Nun hast du mir den ersten Schmerz getan"--is full of stark reality. In the key of d minor, recitative in form and manner of delivery, and effectively low in tessitura, the woman

looks down upon her husband's dead body. She bitterly accuses him of giving her her first real pain, calling him harsh and unmerciful. The use of the falling interval of a fifth in this key illustrates her bitter grief. The vocal line has extensive use of chromaticism which up to now in the cycle was mostly used in the accompaniment and cadences in the vocal line. This chromaticism, as well as the starkness of the piano accompaniment, emphasizes her bitterness turning into loneliness (starting measure 7). No words are repeated, no hidden meanings or roundabout approaches--only statements of fact as she sees it, each phrase hangs poignantly in the air:

I draw myself silently back into my inner being.

The veil falls.

There I have you and my lost happiness

You, my world.

The piano accompaniment that has been her constant companion during the cycle now seems burdened with her grief, only moving slowly and softly. Then, better than any words could express, the piano quietly gives a musical image of the thoughts of the widow as she remembers "The first time I saw you" (once again) by playing a verse of the first song, making the cycle truly a cycle, ever beginning again.

SIX ELIZABETHAN SONGS

Dominick Argenta (born 27 October, 1927; York, Pennsylvania) received his Bachelor and Master of Music degrees at Peabody Conservatory of Music and received his Doctor of Philosophy at Eastman School of Music in 1957. In 1959 he was appointed professor of composition at the University of Minnesota. He was awarded the Pulitzer prize in 1975 for his song cycle "From the Diary of Virginia Woolf."

"My primary concern," Argento said "is to make contact with an audience and, with luck, to move it."¹ According to Argento, the voice is the best medium in which to achieve this:

Of all the instruments for the production of music, the voice, in my opinion, takes pride of place: it is the original instrument, the one₂ for which and with which music was invented.

The true purpose in composing a song, at least for me--and as both Mozart and Stravinsky agree--is not so much the setting of text as the writing of music for the solo voice. The text is important because it allows the song to₃ be created, but it does not create the song.

1. Roger Scanlan, "Spotlight on contemporary American composers," National Association of Teachers of Singing Bulletin, XXXII/ 52-3, n. 3, p. 52.

2. Dominick Argento. "The Composer and the Singer." National Association of Teachers of Singing Bulletin, XXXII/ 18-31, nr, p. 19.

3. Ibid., p. 31.

The final comment in the above quotation is worth comparing to Schumann's ideas of songwriting. Schumann took the opposite stand, as mentioned earlier, saying that the text creates the song, the composer and performer cause the song to be verbalized and its meaning heightened.

In Argento's song cycle Six Elizabethan Songs, the unifying elements are (a) all the texts were written by Elizabethan poets (William Shakespeare, Thomas Nash, Samuel Daniel, Henry Constable, and Ben Jonson), and (b) Baroque musical traits are combined with twentieth century styles. The music of each song is as different as the poets, though there are some style similarities. The cycle was commissioned by the Minneapolis Baroque Ensemble in 1962, who premiered the work in 1963. The instrumental version is scored for oboe, violin, viola, cello, and harpsichord. The original set contained the four songs "Spring," "Dirge," "Winter," and "Hymn." The other two, "Sleep" and "Diaphenia" were added later, and the order altered for the current publication by Boosey and Hawkes.

The original Elizabethan songs were more late Renaissance than early Baroque, but the texts might still have been used by early Baroque composers. Argento incorporated several Baroque characteristics into the cycle. Like many contemporary works, the songs in this cycle have no written key signature, but they are organized tonally in major keys with altered chords. Argento used a unifying rhythmic pattern throughout the piece, or throughout a section of the piece as in "Spring," and a stylized ground bass in "Sleep." Hunting songs, or motives imitating the sound of the horns during a hunt,

were also popular (especially in Renaissance chansons) and which are reflected in the song "Winter" (measures 2-3). "Winter" also displays the characteristic dotted driving rhythms of the English gigue. An instrumental part could serve to support the vocal line harmonically or rhythmically, or it could have a melodic line itself, which weaves in and out of the vocal line. This is the case in the fourth song of the cycle, "Dirge," where the piano seems to imitate the lonely whine of the wind. A motor-like rhythm was not used by Argento in his vocal lines, another Baroque characteristic. He did utilize it in his song "Diaphenia" in the piano accompaniment with the use of constant eighth note rhythms for most of the song. The final song, "Hymn," differs from the rest in that it contains sections that are recitative-like (as in measures 5-8).

The first song, "Spring" (poem by Thomas Nash) is written in the key of F major and uses an ABA form. The A sections use a motoric rhythmic pattern of eighth notes in the right hand with the left hand serving to emphasize the strong beats of the measure by staccato octave chords which move stepwise. The resulting thin texture, along with the fast tempo, and high vocal tessitura help to dramatize the subject of the poem. The B section (measures 25-54) with a slightly lower voice tessitura, incorporates more chromaticism than the A section, and keeps the rhythmic motion going by the use of long pickups leading to the downbeat at a higher pitch level, and doubling of the ornamental runs in the voice (ex. 1). Both the vocal line and accompaniment in section B are more disjunct than in the A section. The vocal line in section B is legato in contrast to the piano which has

ex. 1



the marking "quasi pizzicati," giving a lute- or guitar-like effect. It is interesting to note that two different poets used the call of a bird both as a phrase to end each verse and as an association with a different season of the year (Shakespeare's "Winter" and Nash's "Spring"). Argento treats the calls similarly, with both calls written high in the vocal range and separated into three sections--the last section held for at least two measures.

"Sleep" (poem by Sameul Daniel), the second song of the cycle, is written in B-flat major and is in rounded binary form, the first half ending with measure 16. The outer sections (1-8 and 25-30) reflect the quietness of the night by the use of arpeggios at a more relaxed tempo and a single moving line (ground bass) in the piano part as well as a legato voice line. The voice is written with a wide tessitura, sweeping easily down and up an octave. At measure 9, the tempo quickens and there is an agitated section where hemiolas, high instrumental tessitura, contrasting melodic lines between the voice and piano, dissonances, and narrower vocal arches give the music momentum and create tension. At measure 17, the voice now wails before dropping to a lower pitch level and the piano also drops its tessitura and three-against-two rhythms. The piano does maintain syncopated rhythms

and returns to a thicker texture, eventually adding arpeggios in measure 21 as a prelude to the return of the image of a quiet night in measure 25. The vocal line also slows down and returns to its more legato style by measure 25, and ends with a downward movement as if falling to sleep.

"Winter" (poem by William Shakespeare) is a fast moving descriptive piece which uses points of imitation in the accompaniment (measures 2-4 and 6-8) and between the accompaniment and the voice (measures 27-29). This two-verse song, in modified strophic form, is in A major, with excursions into other key areas of F major (measures 24-26) and E major (measures 60-62). As with the second song, "Winter" is intersected with several meter changes to facilitate the spoken rhythms of the poem. The vocal line again arches within the range of an octave. The line is marked "marcato," which with the driving rhythms used, help to convey the briskness of the winter cold and how people react to it physically.

A collection of Elizabethan poems would not be complete without a poet who is in abject misery due to unrequited love, a typical subject in many poems of the period. Argento chose "Dirge" to display this affection. This text derives from Shakespeare's The Twelfth Night. At this point in the drama, a young man makes fun of his friend's mourning over an unhappy love affair in an attempt to cheer him up enough to go out for a night's merriment. However, Argento's setting of the song treats the text seriously, as one would expect with a dirge. It is written in a modified binary form (the first half comprises measures 1-25), with the meter remaining $4/8$ throughout. The song is written in G major with periodic

excursions into A major (measures 16-19). Altered chords appear frequently. The piece starts with the piano playing a haunting "echo" which is used as a prelude to both verses and as a postlude to the song. The poem is set syllabically with the exception of the word "weep" (measures 41-42) where Argento uses text painting. The mainly disjunct vocal line lies predominantly low with an occasional upward sweep as an emphasis of a repeated line (measures 7-8). The vocal phrases start on the offbeat for rhythmic momentum in an otherwise commonplace rhythmic treatment of a slow song. The regular rhythm adds to the solemnness of the piece. By measure 16, the piano loses its individual melodic line and becomes a chordal support for the voice, enabling the voice to become more lyrical and narrative. From measure 25 to the end of the song this approach is abandoned in favor of a return to the echo motif that was heard at the beginning.

The next song, "Diaphenia" (poem by Henry Constable), is again in G major. It is similar in meter and tempo to the third song, "Winter." This piece, however, is homophonic with the right hand of the accompaniment often doubling the voice. The extremely fast tempo can cause diction problems for the singer, since the text is treated primarily syllabically and contains many voiced consonants. There are upper and lower neighbor non-harmonic tones added to all three verses with the text "I do love thee. . ." This song is strophic, with the main differences among the verses being the musical treatment of the final line of each verse. In each verse the rhythmic motion slows, but with each successive verse the piano accompaniment becomes thicker texturally and more harmonically complete.

Argento chose to complete the cycle with a hymn to a goddess, reflecting the fascination of the era with Greek mythology.⁴ This poem by Jonson is about the moon goddess Diane (sometimes spelled Diana), sister of Apollo (the sun god). She was supposedly a virgin who, with other maidens, loved to hunt and run free among the hills of Greece. Her favorite game animal was the deer (hart). The moon in its crescent is her bow, and when the moon is full, she lays down her bow and arrows to pick up the lute (her second love) and sing with her companions as well as the nymphs of the woodlands. "Cynthia's orb" refers to the moon, "Cynthia" being the name the earliest recorded Greeks gave the goddess of light. Silver is the metal of the moon as opposed to gold, the sun's metal. Hesperus is a minor god whose duty it was to lead out the stars in the evening. He is the evening star which first appears after sunset.

The vocal line of "Hymn" is legato and primarily conjunct. The piano accompaniment is chordal and moves little--mostly stressing the strong beats of the bar. The voice line is more interesting with the use of anticipations and syncopations. The piece is basically through-composed, with each verse ending with "Goddess excellently bright" set to the same musical rhyme. This serves as a division between verses as well as a unifying device. The key is D major for the first two verses (with flagrant juxtaposition of relative keys). The

4. The attempts of the so-called Florentine Camerata, headed by Count Giovanni Bardi 1580 until 1592, when Jacopa Corsi took over as leader, to revive Greek drama at the end of the sixteenth century led to the development of opera. A majority of the operas composed during the Baroque had mythological subjects.

third verse is ushered in with a deceptive cadence to the key of F-sharp major before returning to the beginning key of D at measure 60. The bass line moves diatonically for the most part, with the vocal line somewhat more disjunct. Again, passing tones and neighboring tones are used as ornaments, though to a lesser extent than in the other pieces. The overall effect of the piece is of tranquillity and reverence.

Un certo non so che

A certain person, who I do not know
Arrives at and passes my heart
And yet sorrow (there) is not
Suppose this could be Love?
By his voracious ardour
Already you lay down (an) unwary foot.

* Translations, unless otherwise noted, by
Cynthia Scheideman-Miller

Stizzoso, mio stizzoso

Angry, my angry one,
You make (like) the arrogant one,
But I cannot help you
It is necessary by my prohibition
To remain silent and not to speak.
Silent! Serpina wills (it) so.
I believe that you understand me,
For you have known me many and many a day.

Frauenliebe und Leben, op.42

1. Since I saw him,
I believe myself to be blind;
Wherever I look,
I see him alone
Like in a waking dream
His image floats before me.
Rising from the deepest darkness
Brighter, brighter solely upwards

Otherwise all round about me is lightless and
colorless

Of the sister's games I wish no more (to be a part of)
I would like rather to weep silently in my little room
Since I saw him
I believe myself to be blind.

2. He, the most magnificent of all
How so kind, how so good
Charming lips, clear eyes
Bright wit and unshakeable courage.
So as there in blue depths,
Bright and magnificent that star.
Thus he is in my heaven
Bright and magnificent, exalted and remote

Wandering, wandering your paths
Only to consider your brilliance
Only in humility to consider it
Only blessed and sad be
Hear not my silent prayer
Dedicated only to your happiness.
You dare not know me, (a) lowly maid,
(you) Noble star of splendor.

Only the worthiest of all
Dares (to be) your blessed choice
And I will bless the noble one many thousand times
(I) will be delighted then and weep,
Blessed am I then.
Should my heart also break
Break, oh heart, what does it matter?

Frauenliebe und Leben, op.42

3. I can't comprehend, nor believe (it).
 A dream has beguiled me.
 How could he have among all
 Elevated me, a poor one, and made me happy
 It was to me that he had spoken:
 "I am forever yours"
 It was as if I were dreaming still
 Indeed it can never be so.
 O let me in dreaming
 Die cradled on his breast
 My blissful death to quaff
 In tears of endless delight.

4. Your ring upon my finger
 My little golden ring
 I press you devoutly to my lips,
 To my heart.
 I had come to an end of childhood's peaceful lovely
 dream,
 I found myself alone lost in bleak, unending space.
 Your ring on my finger,
 There have you first instructed me,
 Had my vision opened of life's endless profound worth.
 I want to serve him, to live for him, to belong en-
 tirely to him.
 To surrender myself and find myself transfigured,
 And find myself transfigured in his splendour.

5. Help me sisters, kindly adorn me
 Serve the happy one today
 Busily wind around my forehead the yet blooming
 myrtle wreath
 Like I satisfied with cheerful heart
 At other times lay in the arms of my sweetheart
 Always still he called yearning in my heart
 Impatiently for this day.
 Help me sisters, help me banish a foolish anxiety
 That I may receive him with clear eyes
 Him, the source of joyfullness.
 When have you, my beloved, appeared to me
 Will you give me, sun, your light?
 Let me in devotion, let me in humility
 Let me bow to my Lord.

Frauenliebe und Leben, op.42

Strew for him, sisters, strew for him flowers,
 Bring him budding roses there.
 But yourselves, sisters, I greet with wistfulness.
 Joyfully parting out of your band.

6. Sweet friend, you look astonished at me
 You cannot understand how I can cry
 Let the moist pearls, unusual ornament,
 Joyfully bright tremble in my eyes.
 How very anxious my bosom, how very rapture filled
 If I only knew with words
 How I should tell it
 Come and bury your face here on my breast.
 I will whisper in your ear all my delight

Now you know the tears that I weep
 Should you not see them, you beloved, beloved Man?
 Stay on my heart, feel its beat
 That I may only press you firmer and firmer
 Here by my bed the cradle has space
 Where it silently may hide my precious dream
 The morning will come when the dream awakes
 And out of that your image laughs towards me,
 Your portrait!

7. On my heart, on my breast,
 You my delight, you my pleasure
 Happiness is love, love is happiness
 I have said it and will not take it back.
 I have effusively esteemed myself
 I am but now extremely fortunate.
 Only she who suckles, only she who loves the child
 To whom she gives nourishment
 Only a mother alone knows what is called loving
 And can be happy.

Oh how sorry I am for the man
 Who can not feel a mother's happiness
 You dear, dear Angel, you look at me and smile
 towards me
 On my heart, on my breast,
 You my delight, you my pleasure.

Frauenliebe und Leben, op.42

8. Now have you done to me the first pain
Which but struck me
You sleep, you harsh unmerciful man,
The sleep of death.
There stares the abandoned one in front of herself
The world is empty, is empty
I have loved and lived
I am living no more
I silently draw myself back into my inner being
The veil falls
There I have you and my lost happiness
You my world!

Ah! Je veux vivre

Ah! I want to live in the dream that intoxicates
me for a long time yet! Sweet flame, I will keep
you in my heart as a treasure!

This drunkenness of youth lasts, alas! but a day.
Then comes the hour when one weeps.
The heart gives in to love, and happiness forever
flees.

Far from the gloomy winter let me, let me slumber,
and breathe the scent of the rose. Breathe in its
scent before I pluck its petals. Stay in my heart
like a sweet treasure for a long time yet!

*Translation by Dr. Jean Sloop

Six Elizabethan Songs

Spring

Spring, the sweet spring, is the year's
pleasant king: then blooms each thing,
then maids dance in a ring. Cold doth not
sting, the pretty birds do sing, cuckoo,
jug-jug, puwe, towitta woo!

The palm and may make country houses gay,
lambs frisk and play, the shepherd pipes
all day, and we hear ay birds tune this
merry lay, cuckoo, jug-jug, puwe, towitta
woo!

The fields breathe sweet, the daisies kiss
our feet, young lovers meet, old wives a
-sunning sit, In every street, these
tunes our ears do greet, cuckoo, jug-jug,
puwe, towitta woo! Spring!

Six Elizabethan Songs

Sleep

Carecharmer sleep, son of the sable night,
brother to death, in silent carkness born,
Relieve my anguish and restore thy light;
With dark forgetting of my care return. And
let the day be time enough to mourn the ship-
wreck of my illadventured youth: let waking
eyes suffice to wail their scorn without the
torment of the night's untruth. Cease, dreams,
the images of day desires to model forth the
passions of the morrow; Never let rising
sun approve you liars to add more grief to
aggravate my sorrow: Still let me sleep,
embracing clouds in vain, and never wake to
feel the day's disdain.

Six Elizabethan Songs

Winter

When icicles hang by the wall and
Dick the shepherd blows his nail,
And Tom bears logs into the hall,
And milk comes frozen home in pail:
When blood is nipt and ways be foul,
Then nightly sings the staring owl:
Tuwhoo! tuwhit! tuwhoo! a merry note!

While greasy Joan doth keel the pot,
When all aloud the wind doth blow,
And coughing drowns the parson's saw,
And birds sit brooding in the snow,
And Marian's nose looks red and raw;
When roasted crabs hiss in the bowl
Then nightly sings the staring owl:
Tuwhoo! tuwhit! tuwhoo! a merry note!
While greasy Joan doth keel the pot.

Six Elizabethan Songs

Dirge

Come away, come away, death,
And in sad cypress let me be laid;
Fly away, fly away, breath;
I am slain by a fair cruel maid.

My shroud of white stuck all with yew,
O prepare it!
My part of death, no one so true
Did share it!

Not a flower, not a flower sweet
On my black coffin let there be strown:
Not a friend, not a friend greet my poor
Corpse, where my bones shall be thrown;
A thousand thousand sighs to save,
Lay me, o where sad true lover
Never find my grave,
To weep there.

Six Elizabethan Songs

Diaphenia

Diaphenia, like the daffadowndilly,
White as the sun, fair as the lily,
Heigh ho, how do I love thee!
I do love thee as my lambs are beloved
of their dams;
How blest were I if thou would'st prove me.

Diaphenia, like the spreading roses,
That in thy sweets all sweets encloses,
Fair sweet, how I do love thee!
I do love thee as each flower loves the sun's
Life-giving power;
For dead, thy breath to life might move me.

Diaphenia like to all things blessed
When all thy praises are expressed,
Dear joy, how I do love thee!
As the birds do love the spring,
Or the bees their careful king:
Then in requite, sweet virgin, love me!

Six Elizabethan Songs

Hymn

Queen and huntress, chaste and fair,
Now the sun is laid to sleep,
Seated in thy silver chair
State in wonted manner keep:
Hesperus entreats thy light,
Goddess excellently bright.

Earth, let not thy envious shade
Dare itself to interpose;
Cynthia's shining orb was made
Heaven to clear when day did close:
Bless us then with wished sight goddess,
Goddess excellently bright.

Lay thy bow of pearl apart
And thy crystal shining quiver;
Give unto the flying hart space to breathe,
How short so ever:
Thou that mak'st a day of night, goddess,
Goddess excellently bright!

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EXTENDED PROGRAM NOTES ON A SOPRANO RECITAL

by

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EXTENDED PROGRAM NOTES ON A SOPRANO RECITAL

The paper consists of extended program notes on selected composers representing a cross-section of styles and time periods. The works are reviewed harmonically and structurally. In addition, special attention has been placed on the relation of music and text. A brief note on the historical setting of the time the piece was written and biographical material of the composers are included. The repertoire discussed is "Stizzoso, mio stizzoso" from La Serva Padrona by Giovanni Pergolesi, "Un certo non so che" by Antonio Vivaldi, Deux Melodies Hebraiques by Maurice Ravel, "Ah! Je veux vivre" by Charles Gonoud, Frauenliebe und Leben, op. 42, by Robert Schumann, and Six Elizabethan Songs by Dominick Argento.

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