

An exploration of selected art songs by Gustav Mahler, Robert Owens, Lori Laitman, Gabriel Fauré, Jules Massenet, and Kolby Van Camp.

by

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Abstract

This report examines the historical, technical, and interpretive analysis of selected art songs from the tenor repertoire. This document explores the song compositions of Gustav Mahler, Gabriel Fauré, Robert Owens, Lori Laitman, Jules Massenet, and Kolby Van Camp. This masters report provides biographical information on each composer, poetic texts and English translations, figures and musical illustrations, as well as ideas for interpretive and vocal pedagogical insight.

The pieces examined are excerpts from Mahler's Rückert Lieder such as "Liebst du um Schönheit" and "Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen"; Fauré's "Lydia"; Robert Owens' song cycle "Silver Rain", Op.11; Jules Massenet's "Enfermant les yeux" from his opera Manon; Lori Laitman's "The Apple Orchard"; and Kolby Van Camp's song cycle "Water Box Musings" (2019).

The graduate recital was presented in partial fulfillment for the Master of Music degree in vocal performance on October 24th, 2020 at 1st Presbyterian Church in Lawton, Oklahoma. The recital was given by tenor Lorenzo Butler and Diana Webb.

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I also want to thank Kolby Van Camp for creating a wonderful song cycle specifically for me. I am so thankful for your friendship. Your work ethic, faith, and fearlessness inspire me to be a better person. I truly believe in your vision and know whole-heartedly that you will achieve all the things that you want. Your music is truly sensational, and I am honored to have been able to collaborate and share life with you. Thanks for creating these wonderful pieces with me in mind and teaching me to not be afraid, in composition or in life. You are a true friend and I will always be thankful for that.

I also want to thank my committee, Dr. Patricia Thompson, Dr. Jacqueline Fassler-Kerstetter, and Dr. Craig Parker. I am truly indebted to you all for your grace, insight, and support throughout the process. Each of you have embodied what it means to be a professional musician. You all have made my journey at Kansas State superb.

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toughest times in my life. I thank you for always loving me and teaching me about Christ. Words cannot thank you enough.

Dedication

This paper is dedicated to my late grandfather Dr. Charles E. Butler Sr. It is on the shoulders of your life and educational path that has led me to this moment. You inspired me to achieve more than what I could have ever seen for myself. I will remember our many conversations about the planets, musical concepts, and various facts about our world. It was these conversations that inspired me to continue learning and finding new facts to bring to our next meeting. You pushed for me to continue my education after high school even when I did think there was a place for me in academia. I eternally thank you for your love, grace, and inspiration without which I am not here.

Love and Peace until we meet again,

Love,

Lorenzo

Recital Program

Program

Water Box Musings (2019) Kolby Van Camp (1999-)
Denali
Tundra

Excerpts from Rückert Lieder (1901-1902) Gustav Mahler (1860-1911)
Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen
Liebst du um Schönheit

En ferment les yeux from Manon Jules Massenet (1842-1912)

Lydia (1884) Gabriel Faure (1845-1924)

Silver Rain Op. 11 (1958) Robert Owens (1925-2017)
1. In time of silver rain
2. Fulfillment
3. Night Song
4. Silence
5. Carolina Cabin
6. Songs
7. Sleep

The Apple Orchard (2004) Lori Laitman (1955-)

Let Us Break Bread Together (2002) Arr. Richard Walters (1982-)

Chapter 1 - Gustav Mahler

Gustav Mahler (1860-1911) was an Austro-Bohemian composer, conductor,¹ and teacher. He is known for his major symphonic works, songs (most are with orchestra), and his career as a famous conductor.

Life

Early life and education

Gustav Mahler was the eldest of the six surviving children of Bernhard and Marie Mahler. Bernhard was an owner of a distillery and tavern and his financial stability provided Gustav with a supportive environment for music training. The Mahler family later settled in the thriving town of Iglau,² a German speaking Jewish community that was a successful cloth trading town. Iglau had many musical and theatrical outlets like an amateur orchestra, an opera house, a professional theatre, and a military band that would often play at local festivals. While Gustav was growing up he would listen to the music heard during these festivals. In addition, his servants and friends would teach him regional folk songs³ as well, and he would often receive lessons from members of the local theatre orchestra. Bernhard Mahler, with keeping up with societal traditions and his status, bought a collection of music and a piano that Gustav began to play with the proficiency that garnered the title of Wunderkind at the age of 10.⁴ He received his first harmony lessons from Heinrich Fischer.⁵ While Gustav was studying at the New Town

¹ In this paper I will explore Mahler's conducting career as well as some of his compositions as his Conducting career afforded Mahler the leeway and financial stability to focus on composition.

² The German name of Jihlava, Czech Republic.

³ Peter Franklin, "Mahler, Gustav," *Grove Music Online*, ed. Deane L. Root, grovemusic.com.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Musical director of the church of St. Jakob.

Gymnasium in Prague,⁶ Bernhard sent Gustav to Vienna to audition for Julius Epstein, one of the faculty pianists at the Vienna Conservatory. This meeting and audition led to Gustav's acceptance into the conservatory in 1875 where he was able to study piano with Epstein. While at the conservatory Gustav studied composition, which later became his primary focus of study, with Robert Fuchs and harmony with Franz Krenn.

Career

Early Conducting Opportunities

After his time at the conservatory, Mahler began to gain conducting experience through a series of short-term conducting engagements, the first of which was at Bad Hall⁷ for the summer of 1880. The second appointment was at the Landestheater in Laibach⁸ where he conducted over 50 operas starting in 1881. At the beginning of 1883 Mahler accepted the vacant position at Olmutz,⁹ a position he held for three months. These three positions gave Mahler the foundation, skills, and connections¹⁰ to move to more prominent theatres, the first of which was at Kassel.

Kassel

When Mahler arrived in Kassel in 1883, the city was already the musical heart of the new German Empire. This musical hub was to be the stage for early success in Mahler's career as both a conductor and a composer. As a conductor, Mahler started by working for several local theaters. During this time, he would begin to develop his famous persona that was often abrasive

⁶ Gustav moved from the Iglau Gymnasium, of his hometown, to Prague because Bernhard wanted to see improvement in his school results. This venture did not work.

⁷ A small theatre near Linz, Austria.

⁸ Now known as Ljubljana, the capital of Slovenia.

⁹ Also known as Olomouc in the Czech Republic.

¹⁰ Through Karl Ueberhorst, who saw a performance of one of Mahler's performances in Olmutz.

and rigid. This conducting persona, which was demanding and uncompromising, set a high standard of performance for the singers and orchestra. This high demand of rehearsal standards elevated the performances at every position he held, but it would also be the seed that would create the tensions that would inevitably make him leave those positions. Mahler's first great success as his performance of Mendelssohn's *St. Paul*, which had over 500 performers. He also saw the success of his first public performance of his own music in Kassel with his incidental music.¹¹

Prague and Leipzig

After an unhappy exit from Kassel in 1885, Mahler held positions in Prague and Leipzig. His stint in Prague was a one-year contract and was only to be a transitional station between his time in Kassel and Leipzig. While there, he faced different challenges from his employer like trying to revitalize the German Theatre. When Mahler arrived in Prague the German theatre was in dire need of revitalization due to the large Czech population and their growing sense of nationalism whose interests were less inclined to pay for performances with German music. Mahler was able to help with these challenges by successfully conducting performances of Mozart's *Don Giovanni* and Wagner's *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre*.

One of Mahler's early successes came while he was in Leipzig¹² when he completed Carl Maria von Weber's *Die drei Pintos*. Mahler helped complete Weber's unfinished opera by transcribing Weber's sketches, weaving in material from some of Weber's smaller pieces, and

¹¹ Mahler wrote incidental music to a series of *tableaux vivants*, performances where actors and models will reenact scenes from paintings and literature they will often hold the position for thirty or more seconds, for a charity event. These 'living pictures' were based on J.V. von Scheffel's popular narrative poem *Der Trompeter von Säkkingen* which became his first professionally performed composition in Kassel.

¹² Beginning in 1886.

adding some of his own music. This piece was so well received that Richard Strauss became interested in Mahler's arranging and composing¹³ which led to a very successful friendship between them. Mahler also completed his first symphony during his time in Leipzig. In May 1888, Mahler resigned his position in Leipzig and returned to Prague for the summer. Then, based on the recommendation from Guido Adler, Mahler met with the cellist David Popper¹⁴ which led to his position as the director of the Royal Hungarian Opera House.

Budapest

Mahler's time in Budapest was filled with political and societal intrigue¹⁵ and heavy personal lows. In 1889, Mahler had three major deaths in his family. His father, sister Leopoldine, and his mother all passed within the same year. These deaths affected Mahler, as now he was the head of his family and had made provisions for his sisters to stay with him in Budapest. Although this period resulted in little production of new compositions, it did see performances of his first symphony,¹⁶ The first two pieces of what will be the *Lieder für Singstimme* song cycle,¹⁷ and the seventh song in his soon to be *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* cycle,¹⁸ and *Die drei Pintos*. His time in Budapest also included several successful and well-received performances, one of which was heavily praised by Brahms.¹⁹ Mahler's time came to an end in March of 1891 where he submitted his resignation following growing tensions with the

¹³ After attending attended one of these performances.

¹⁴ A Professor in the strings department at the Royal Academy of Music at Budapest.

¹⁵ The matters of which I will not be able to fully tackle in this paper, but essentially there was a power struggle between the pro-German and pro-Hungarian elite and audience members.

¹⁶ at this point was a five-movement symphonic poem.

¹⁷ The first two pieces were *Fruhlingmorgen* and *Erinnerung*.

¹⁸ That piece was *Scheiden und Meiden*.

¹⁹ In reference to a performance of *Don Giovanni*. Peter Franklin, "Gustav Mahler." *Grove Music Online*.

new Intendant Count Géza Zichy.²⁰ At the end of Mahler's tenure in Budapest he accepted a position in Hamburg which would become his longest held position to date.

Hamburg

The position Mahler accepted in Hamburg was to be the chief conductor of the Stadttheater.²¹ Along with holding this position at the Stadttheater, in 1894 Mahler also had a short stint as resident conductor of the Hamburg subscription concerts after the death of Hans von Bülow. During his time in Hamburg, Mahler began to spend his summers on vacation in Austria.²² While on vacation he would spend the majority of his time composing. This would be a regular occasion until his death in 1911. He would often rent an apartment for his family while he would compose in a smaller cottage, resulting with the completion of his symphonies 2-9,²³ Rückert lieder, and his "Kindertotenlieder" among other compositions. Mahler had tremendous success²⁴ in Hamburg, but in 1897 he took the position²⁵ of Kappelmeister for the Vienna Hofoper.²⁶

²⁰ Whose opposition towards Mahler was deeply fueled by the tensions of Hungary (an issue discussed in an earlier footnote) and his speculated Anti-Semitic views. Franklin cont.

²¹ The Hamburg State Opera company.

²² His first regular summer home was at Steinbach, acquired in 1893, near Lake Attersee. He would later build a lake-side studio where he would complete the drafts to his second and third symphonies.

²³ He had sketches of his 10th.

²⁴ He also had some criticism towards to his edits on Beethoven's Ninth Symphony and the resulting loss of revenue for the subscription concerts.

²⁵ Mahler had been eyeing a return to Austria.

²⁶ The Vienna State Opera.

Vienna

Mahler took the position of Kapellmeister in May and in September he was promoted to Director of the Hofoper. Mahler's presence and rehearsal regimen greatly raised the standard of performances and cleared the theater of its debts. In 1899, he was also appointed to be the chief conductor of the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra. In 1900, Mahler began spending his summer vacations in Maiernigg, near Klagenfurt in southern Austria. In his first year in Maiernigg he lived in a cottage while a villa was under construction, to be completed the following year. This is the site where Mahler finished his 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th and parts of his 8th symphony. It was in this year, 1901, that Mahler had a health scare that would impact the rest of his life. In February 1901, Mahler suffered a sudden and nearly-fatal brain hemorrhage after a day of conducting the Philharmonic in the afternoon and conducting an anniversary concert of *Die Zauberflöte*.²⁷ This brush with death would influence his outlook on mortality and legacy that would have a profound effect on his compositional style, his choice of poetry, and his love life.²⁸ In the summer of 1901 he really devoted his summer to composition. By the end of the summer Mahler completed three songs from the "Kindertotenlieder" cycle²⁹, the last of the Wunderhorn lied³⁰, the first three movements of his 5th symphony, and the first four songs of the Rückert lieder.³¹

²⁷ Edward F Kravitt, "Mahler's Dirges for His Death: February 24, 1901." *The Musical Quarterly* 64, no.3 (1978).

²⁸ Tyler J. Smith articulates and explores this event and its events on Mahler's life and composition more carefully in his thesis. (cited below)

Tyler Smith, "*It is my very self!*": Mahler's Brush with Death, the Intentional Fallacy, and Motivic Unification of "*Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen*" and the Adagietto. (Ph.D. diss., the University at Buffalo, State University of New York, 2014).

²⁹ These three songs are "Nun will die Sonn' so hell aufgeh'n", "Nun seh' ich wohl, warum so dunkle Flammen", "Oft denk' ich, sie sind nur ausgegangen."

³⁰ "Der Tamboursg'sell."

³¹ All except "Liebst du um Schönheit."

Later that year Gustav would meet Alma Schindler and in 1902 Gustav and Alma were married. Together they had two children, Maria and Anna. Over time Mahler was able to take absences from his post in Vienna to conduct his own pieces, but the more frequent absences near the end of his time in Vienna caused dissatisfaction with his superiors.³² After ten years of successful performances and compositional output Mahler accepted a position to be a conductor for the New York Metropolitan Opera House. Soon after signing the contract Mahler's oldest daughter fell ill with diphtheria and scarlett fever and died in July of 1907. This tragedy prompted the Mahler's to sell their Maiernigg summer residence. Out of this tragedy Gustav was diagnosed with a heart condition³³ that would later take his life.

New York and Europe

These last years of Mahler's life was filled with a three-year residency as a conductor of the New York Metropolitan Opera and the Metropolitan Philharmonic Orchestra. He also had regular conducting engagements throughout Europe in prominent musical cities like Paris, Amsterdam, Rome and Munich. He would conduct many performances of his symphonies. He also still continued his summers focusing on composition and rented property in Altschluderbach in the Tyrol region in Northern Italy. During these years Mahler completed his last vocal work *Das Lied von der Erde*, his ninth symphony, and sketches of his tenth. Mahler died on May 18, 1911 in Vienna.

³² Most notably Prince Montanuovo.

³³ This diagnosis was spurred by Maria's funeral where Alma fainted and fell ill. The doctor on site checked both Alma and Gustav where the doctor discovered the diagnosis.

Throughout his life Mahler wrote over forty lieder and nine completed symphonies³⁴ among other compositions.³⁵ Mahler's legacy as a conductor brought him a reputation that inspired hatred and respect in almost equal measure.³⁶ He elevated the performance standards of every place he was employed and was a champion for the works of Wagner and Mozart while supporting newer compositions by Tchaikovsky, Strauss, and Charpentier. His legacy as both a successful composer and a conductor transcended his life and would go on to influence the careers of musicians like Leonard Bernstein.³⁷

Friedrich Rückert

Friedrich Rückert (1788-1866) was a German poet, translator, and philologist whose poems are one of the most often set to music out of German poets³⁸ with over 2000 musical settings by over 800 composers.³⁹ His poems found life in music through composers like Franz Schubert, Robert and Clara Schumann, Hugo Wolf, and Gustav Mahler. Early in his life⁴⁰ he studied law, philosophy and philology and eventually became a teacher before turning to poetry. Throughout his life he learned many languages including Arabic, Persian, and Turkish. Rückert studied these languages from Joseph Hammer-Prugstall, which led to his publication of poems titled, "Östliche

³⁴ He had sketches for a tenth and it was completed posthumously by Deryck Cooke.

³⁵ Most of his output focused on his lieder or his symphonies, but he composed a piano quartet, some operatic sketches and adapted Weber's *Die drei Pintos*.

³⁶ Peter Franklin, "Gustav Mahler." *Grove Music Online*

³⁷ Bernstein found a kinship between himself and Mahler and would film several specials detailing his love and respect for Mahler and his music.

³⁸ Only behind Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Heinrich Heine, and Joseph von Eichendorff.

³⁹ Rufus Hallmark, "Rückert, (Johann Michael) Friedrich." *Grove Music Online*, ed. Deane L. Root, grovemusic.com.

⁴⁰ Between the years of 1805-1811 in the towns of Würzburg, Heidelberg, and Jena.

Rosen”.⁴¹ This collection houses the well-known poems of “Du bist die ruh” and “Lachen und Weinen”.⁴² Rückert also published in 1836 most of his poems in a six-volume collection titled “Lyrisches Gedichte” or collected works. This collection has such works like the seven hundred poems work titled “Liebesfrühling.”⁴³ His “Die Weisheit des Brahmanen” is another large collection of poems along with his “Kindertodtenlieder”, which Mahler in his collection of five lieder of similar title. Rückert was also a translator who translated several poems, plays, and literature of eastern cultures into German.

Rückert Lieder

History

Mahler composed the Rückert Lieder in the summer months of 1900 and 1904. This cycle is a collection of songs originally composed for voice and orchestra. These five lieder are connected by all of the texts being written by the poet Friedrich Rückert and can be arranged in performances in different orders and/or as stand-alone pieces. Each piece was written with different instruments in mind⁴⁴, rarely using the full color of the orchestra. This choice of instrumentation allows for each piece to have an individualistic character when performed with orchestra as well as an agreeable transition to a piano accompaniment. This cycle stands out⁴⁵ in

⁴¹ Translated as Eastern Roses, Published in 1821.

⁴² Notable settings of Franz Schubert.

⁴³ This collection of poems is where the poem for “Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen” is found. It is the sixth poem in the Vierter Strauß, fourth bouquet or bunch, titled Wiedergewonnen.

⁴⁴ Except for “Liebst du um Schönheit” which was composed for voice and piano. It was later orchestrated by Max Puttmann.

⁴⁵ Along with his “Kindertodtenlieder”, which he composed during the same time frame.

Mahler's oeuvre as it is one of the few song cycles whose poetry did not come from the Wunderhorn poems.⁴⁶

Liebst du um Schönheit

Liebst du um Schönheit,
O nicht mich liebe!
Liebe die Sonne,
Sie trägt ein goldnes Haar.

If you love for beauty,
O love not me!
Love the sun,
She has golden hair.

Liebst du um Jugend,
O nicht mich liebe!
Liebe den Frühling,
Der jung ist jedes Jahr.

If you love for youth,
O love not me!
Love the spring
Which is young each year.

Liebst du um Schätze,
O nicht mich liebe!
Liebe die Meerfrau,
Sie hat viel Perlen klar.

If you love for riches,
O love not me!
Love the mermaid
Who has many shining pearls.

Liebst du um Liebe,
O ja, mich liebe!
Liebe mich immer,
Dich lieb' ich immerdar.

If you love for love,
Ah yes, love me!
Love me always,
I shall love you ever more.⁴⁷

“Liebst du um Schönheit” was composed in 1902 shortly following his marriage to Alma Schindler. This poem has four stanzas that all follow a similar pattern. Each stanza has four lines and each line functions in the same role in each stanza. The first line finds a reason for love, as the speaker tries to ascertain their love interests' intentions. The second line of each stanza then states the speaker's response to such conditions. The third line then provides a solution or direction that the love interest can love. The last line of each stanza gives a reason that each

⁴⁶ *Das Knabern Wunderhorn* is an anthology of poems collected by Ludwig von Archim von Arnim and Klemens Brentano. These poems are dated to be as early as 1509, the first of this three-edition collection was published in 1805.

⁴⁷ Friedrich Rückert, and English Translation by Richard Stokes. “Liebst Du Um Schönheit: Song Texts, Lyrics and Translations.” Oxford Lieder, www.oxfordlieder.co.uk/song/1940.

solution is viable. The last line of each stanza also rhymes with each other, *Haar, Jahr, klar, immerdar*. This form can be seen in this table.

Table 1.1

	Condition for love:	Response:	Solution to response:	Reason:
1.	Beauty	Do not love me	The sun	Golden hair
2.	Youth	Do not love me	Spring	New every year
3.	Riches	Do not love me	The Mermaid	Many shiny pearls
4.	Love	Love me	Love me	I will love you always

Mahler uses the poem's form to his advantage. Mahler uses the poem's formulaic similarity to utilize a modified strophic form to set this text. The form of this piece can be divided between the first three stanzas and the final stanza. This division is shown in the form of the poem itself. This is first seen in the similarities on the melodic structure for the first three stanzas. The first three stanzas all start on the fifth scale degree and rise to the melodic high point, an appoggiatura on the fourth scale degree. This high point is followed by a descending scale that ends on the fifth scale degree and its chromatic lower neighbor.

This piece can also be divided into sections. The first two stanzas and the final two stanzas. The first and the third stanzas are virtually identical, except for some small changes in the accompaniment. The second and fourth stanza are melodically distinct.

Mahler uses time signature changes throughout to match the spoken rhythm of the text. This use of meter change makes the text more intimate because the voice is reflecting how one would speak the text. This technique also smooths the constant meter changes to be less jarring.

Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen

Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen,
Mit der ich sonst viele Zeit verdorben,
Sie hat so lange nichts von mir vernommen,
Sie mag wohl glauben, ich sei gestorben!

I am lost to the world
With which I used to waste much time;
It has for so long known nothing of me,
It may well believe that I am dead.

Es ist mir auch gar nichts daran gelegen,
Ob sie mich für gestorben hält,
Ich kann auch gar nichts sagen dagegen,
Denn wirklich bin ich gestorben der Welt.

Nor am I at all concerned
If it should think that I am dead.
Nor can I deny it,
For truly I am dead to the world.

Ich bin gestorben dem Weltgetümmel,
Und ruh' in einem stillen Gebiet!
Ich leb' allein in meinem Himmel,
In meinem Lieben, in meinem Lied!

I am dead to the world's tumult
And rest in a quiet realm!
I live alone in my heaven,
In my love, in my song!

Written in 1821, Friedrich Rückert's poem was part of a collection of poems called *Liebesfrühling*,⁴⁸ written for his wife Luise Wiethaus, during their first year of courtship. This three-stanza poem deals with a wealth of emotion from themes of depression, isolationism, and alienation. In this poem, according to Car Niekirk, the narrator reviews his past and feels that he has wasted too much time taking action for or in this world."⁴⁹ Mahler composed this piece in the summer of 1901. It was the last of the pieces to be composed at the end of Mahler's vacation at Maiernigg. "Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen" was originally composed for voice and orchestra.

⁴⁸ This collection of poems was written around this time, but did not get published until 1844.

⁴⁹ Carl Niekirk, *Reading Mahler: German Culture and Jewish Identity in Fin-De-Siecle Vienna*. (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2010). p.187.

This composition is an interesting piece to look into because it is a hybridized song in both genre and form. As much as “Ich bin dir Welt” is an art song, “A short vocal piece of serious artistic purpose,”⁵⁰ (usually seen as a) secular solo song with an independent keyboard accompaniment, it also has elements of a symphonic movement not only in its orchestration, but in its compositional procedures especially in its introduction and interludes. In his thesis concerning this very piece, Tyler J. Smith states that, “The opening nine measures lay much of the groundwork for the entire song.”⁵¹ This is seen and heard as the most important elements of this piece, either rhythmic, melodic, or harmonic, are firstly stated in this introduction.

Figure 1-1: Introduction to "Ich bin der Welt," mm. 1-10



The first important element that is reused from the introduction is the opening phrase of the vocal line in measures 12-14.⁵² In measures 5-6, this left-hand triplet rhythm is reused

⁵⁰ Peter Dickinson, H. Wiley Hitchcock, & Keith E. Clifton, “Art song,” *Grove Music Online*, ed. Deane L. Root, grovemusic.com.

⁵¹ Tyler Smith, “*It is my very self!*”: Mahler’s Brush with Death, the Intentional Fallacy, and Motivic Unification of “Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen” and the Adagietto. (Ph.D. diss., the University at Buffalo, State University of New York, 2014). pg. 30.

⁵² This opening statement occurs first in measures 3-5.

sporadically through the first and third sections in measures 14-15⁵³, 47-48, 50, and 52. This rhythm serves as the rhythmic underbelly of the second section of measures 27-36, as seen in Figure 1-3.

Figure 1-2 "Ich bin der Welt," mm. 11-14

tranquillo
pp
 Ich bin der Welt ab-han-den ge-kom-men,
 O gar-ish world. long since thou hast lost me,

Figure 1-3: "Ich bin der Welt," mm. 26-31

poco animando ma sempre tranquillo
pp
 Es ist mir auch gar nichts da-ran ge-le-gen,
 I do not won-der on it, and I care not,
 ob sie mich für ge-stor-ben hält.
 e'en tho' the world may think I'm dead.
espress.

⁵³ As seen in Figure 1-2.

Another passage of music, although, this time not found in the introduction, is used as another motive in this piece. It happens, this time, in measures 19-20⁵⁴ where this melodic and rhythmic passage in the left hand is first used as an interlude between the last lines sung from the first stanza. This passage is used as an interlude to the third stanza⁵⁵ and as a smaller interlude in measures 47-48. A motivic variant of this passage appears in measures 19-20, where the motive is transposed and set in a different register at measure 37. An incomplete restatement of the introduction occurs in measure 39.⁵⁶

Figure 1-4: "Ich bin der Welt," mm. 18-21

The image shows a musical score for the piece "Ich bin der Welt," measures 18-21. It consists of three staves. The top staff is the vocal line, with lyrics in German and English: "nichts von mir ver-nom-men, surg-ing waves have tussed me." The middle and bottom staves are the piano accompaniment. The left hand has a prominent melodic line, and the right hand provides harmonic support. Performance markings include "p espress" above the piano staff, "m.d." (mezzo-dolce) below the left hand, "poco rit" (poco ritardando) above the piano staff, and "pp a tempo" (pianissimo a tempo) above the piano staff.

⁵⁴ See Figure 1-4.

⁵⁵ See Figure 1-5 Beginning at measure 37.

Figure 1-5: "Ich bin der Welt," mm. 35-41

non trainando *espress.*
 wirk - lich bin ich ge - stor - ben, ge - stor - ben der Welt.
 tru - ly, the hopes I cherished have per - ished, are dead

molto espressivo

ritornando al -

espress.

Tempo I

Measures 58 to the end restate the vocal line from measure 42 to 46.⁵⁷ This brings a nice synergy to the piece as the last stanza lingers in one's thoughts. This ending passage also brings a reminiscent feel to the piece as the 5th to 6th scale degree motion has been consistent throughout the piece.⁵⁸

Figure 1-6: "Ich bin der Welt," mm. 42-46

Tempo I *pp*

Ich bin ge - storben dem Welt - ge - tümmel und ruh' in einem stil - len Ge -
 My soul but listens for Nature's stev - en, whose charms my si - lent soul e - ver

pp

⁵⁷ Seen in Figure 1-6.

⁵⁸ Seen in Figure 1-7.

Figure 1-7: "Ich bin der Welt," postlude mm. 55-66

The musical score for the postlude of "Ich bin der Welt" (measures 55-66) is presented in two systems. The first system shows the vocal line and the beginning of the piano accompaniment. The vocal line is in G major and 4/4 time, with lyrics: "Lie - ben, in mei-nem Lied. / love's sake. whose life is song." The piano accompaniment starts with a half note G in the right hand and a half note G in the left hand, followed by a series of chords and moving lines. The second system continues the piano accompaniment, featuring a "morendo" marking and an "espress." marking. The score is written for voice and piano.

The song's form is also quite interesting as the piece seems to be through-composed, since each stanza has its own musical idea, though Mahler has masterfully unified motives and quotations throughout this piece. These musical areas are separated by each stanza and are made different both rhythmically and harmonically through the accompaniment.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ Especially from measures 27-36.

Chapter 2 - Robert Owens

Robert Owens is an African-American composer, actor, pianist, and teacher.

Life

Robert Lee Owens III was born in Denison, Texas on September 19, 1925. The Owens family, soon after his birth, moved to Berkeley, California. His first musical experiences were from his mother who was, according to Jamie Reimer,⁶⁰ “an excellent pianist, (who) earned extra money playing at piano bars around the Bay Area in the evening.”⁶¹ Because of her talent, Robert began to play the piano where he developed, “a natural affinity for the instrument.”⁶² This led to Robert having his first piano lessons at the age of four. Unfortunately, at the age of eight, Robert’s mother was diagnosed with tuberculosis. This caused her to be confined to a sanatorium. For the next four years Robert would have minimal contact with his mother, since tuberculosis is highly contagious, and this disease would end up tragically taking her life when Robert was in middle school. His mother had an important role in his musical life, not only by giving him piano lessons, but even posthumously by her last words to Robert, “I know you will be a great musician.”⁶³ Robert was so affected by this that he would later recall that, “I remembered what

⁶⁰ An expert on the life and works of Robert Owens, she wrote her dissertation titled, “Fields of Wonder: Exploring the Langston Hughes song cycles by Robert Owens.”

⁶¹ Jamie Michelle Reimer, *Fields of Wonder: Exploring the Langston Hughes Song Cycles of Robert Owens (an Introductory Analysis and Performance Guide)*. “Tearless”, Op. 9, “Silver Rain”, Op. 11, “Desire”, Op. 13, “Heart on the Wall”, Op. 14, “Border Line”, Op. 24, “Mortal Storm”, Op. 29. (Ph.D. diss., The University of Nebraska - Lincoln, 2008).

⁶² Reimer, *Fields of Wonder: Exploring the Langston Hughes Song Cycles of Robert Owens* page 8.

⁶³ Ibid.

she had told me and (I) took it seriously.” At the age of fifteen he had composed his first piano concerto and had it performed by the Berkeley Young People’s Symphony.

At seventeen he was drafted into the US Army. He initially was placed at the Tuskegee Airman training camp in Mississippi.⁶⁴ After hearing that he might be intentionally flunked out of the program,⁶⁵ Owens requested a transfer back to California, reporting that he had allergy problems. Owens was eventually transferred, but instead of California he ended up being stationed at Stuttgart Army Air Field in Stuttgart, Arkansas. It is here in Arkansas where he learned to speak German. He learned the German language from the prisoners held at Stuttgart Army Air Field. After the war Owens used his GI Bill to study in Europe. Even though his initial request to study in Germany was denied,⁶⁶ Owens was able to have his study in France approved. After receiving approval to study in France, Owens moved to Paris in 1946 in hopes to study at the *Conservatoire*. When he arrived he was met with, “the worst of post-war France”⁶⁷ where there was a lack of food and heat. Despite these difficult circumstances Owens remained encouraged as he discovered the vibrant and bountiful music scene in Paris. Although Owens was not accepted into the *Conservatoire*, an examiner at his audition taught at Paris’ *École Normale de Musique*, and Owens soon began to study there. At the *École Normale de Musique* Owens studied piano performance with Jules Gentil and Alfred Cortot. Owens would later move from Paris to Copenhagen in the fall of 1950 to prepare for his eventual debut as a concert pianist

⁶⁴ Owens, when he was in high school, took night classes in flight cadet training.

⁶⁵ Owens said that, “word got around that they had enough Black pilots in Tuskegee for the whole army, and they were beginning to flunk out (the new ones) as soon as possible.”

⁶⁶ Due to heavy damage from the war.

⁶⁷ Reimer, *Fields of Wonder: Exploring the Langston Hughes Song Cycles of Robert Owens* pg. 12.

in April 1952. In 1953, he began further study at the Vienna Academy of Music under Grete Hinterhofer.

In 1957, Owens returned to the United States and began teaching at Albany State College in Albany, Georgia. His tenure there would last only two years due to several heightened incidents of racial tension and violence. These incidents were made worse for Owens as these were his first true encounters of segregation and racism. This short stint in the U.S would not go for naught as in the following summer Owens performed a concert in Berkeley. After the concert, an old family acquaintance suggested that Owens should look into setting the poems of Langston Hughes to music. This recommendation also came with a letter of introduction and a request for an appointment. This would lead Owens to having a meeting with Hughes later that summer. The meeting took place on Owens' return trip from California to Georgia when he made a stop in New York to visit some friends. While in New York he had the opportunity to meet Langston Hughes. Upon arrival, he handed Hughes the letter of introduction, that was written by the acquaintance he met in Berkeley. After Hughes read it, he offered Owens a drink and rummaged around the bookshelf, gave Owens a book titled *Fields of Wonder*, and told him to, "See what (he) can do with it." From there Owens returned to Georgia and began to compose settings of Hughes' poems. Owens completed and premiered his first setting of the *Fields of Wonder* poems with *Silver Rain*, Op. 11 for tenor in 1958. *Silver Rain* was premiered at Albany State's Lyceum concert by John Chadwell, the chair of the music department at Albany State. Around this same time Owens was also working on another *Fields of Wonder* cycle titled *Tearless*, Op. 9 for baritone. In the spring of 1959 Owens left Georgia for good and returned to New York. While in New York, Owens scheduled a meeting with Hughes to show him his two completed cycles. Hughes then arranged to hire a singer who could sing both tenor and baritone

to be accompanied by Owens. After the performance of both cycles Owens recalled that Hughes, “sat there when we completed it all and said, ‘Are those my words? ... My God, they just sound so much more beautiful with music.’” Both Hughes and Owens then discussed particular moments in the cycles and poems as the night went on. After this meeting, they would rarely meet or even have contact, except for a few letters and a brief meeting in 1965.⁶⁸ In one of those letters to Owens, Hughes encouraged him to continue to, “sing ‘our songs’ ... so you don’t have to worry – just have people perform them.” These words were spawned by Hughes knowledge of the publisher in the United States’ habits of only publishing, “anything unless it is a musical or something.”⁶⁹

After this meeting in 1959, Owens moved to Germany. When he arrived in Hamburg he soon realized that his career as a pianist might be over, as he recalled, “I first realized...I wasn’t going to be able to do it.” The reason behind this realization was because he was not financially prepared for the life of a professional concert pianist. In Europe, even with an agent, Owens realized that the musician had the financial responsibility of taking care of audition fees, travel, and other business expenses. With an already expensive move to Germany, essentially relocating his whole life, he was not in a stable or healthy financial place to continue down this career path. In spite of this realization Owens remained flexible. This flexibility led him to begin a career as a film actor. This new career path was brought on through “some gentlemen from whom he was renting a room,”⁷⁰ Over the next four years Owens had acting jobs and concert appearances while also publishing his compositions. While performing in the theatre he began to find various

⁶⁸ Reimer, *Fields of Wonder: Exploring the Langston Hughes Song Cycles of Robert Owens* page 17.

⁶⁹ Robert Owens, interview by Jaime Reimer, September 11, 2007, Lincoln Nebraska, digital recording.

⁷⁰ Reimer, *Fields of Wonder: Exploring the Langston Hughes Song Cycles of Robert Owens* pg. 18.

opportunities rolling off the shelf. For example, Owens composed a setting of Emily Brontë poems for a contralto living in Hamburg. This singer then traded acting lessons focusing on breathing in exchange for Owens' accompanying her. This interaction led to her performing more of his compositions in three concerts in Hamburg. His success in the theatre led him to finally obtain a manager, which led to even more opportunities on the other side of the country in Munich. In 1964, Owens moved to Munich⁷¹ and was met with several opportunities. Owens was already in demand as a theatrical actor, but with this new move to Munich his compositional career began to elevate as well. There were a lot of American singers in Munich, either as fellow expatriates or as touring artists. This influx of artists kept his compositional skills in high demand and also provided him with the financial stability to accept opportunities like performing as an accompanist or a solo pianist. With these new performance opportunities Owens became very successful in almost every area, landing major lead acting roles such as Shakespeare's *Othello*, Ionescu's *The Lesson*, and Uhry's *Driving Miss Daisy*.⁷² He also had many commissions for his compositions and was a frequent collaborator with artists like Felicia Weathers,⁷³ Rhea Jackson, and Thomas Carey.⁷⁴ Owens continued to perform and collaborate with artists until his death at age 91 in Munich on January 5th, 2017.

Langston Hughes

Langston Hughes (1902-1967) was an American author who was one of the most influential and innovative writers of the twentieth century. He lived "one of the most eventful

⁷¹ Which would become his permanent residence.

⁷² Reimer, *Fields of Wonder: Exploring the Langston Hughes Song Cycles of Robert Owens* pg. 20.

⁷³ An American soprano who received many international awards for her outstanding performances.

⁷⁴ An American baritone famous for performing in the world premiere of Michael Tippett's *The Knot Garden* and the second revival of London West End's *Show Boat*.

literary lives in the twentieth century.”⁷⁵ Hughes was extremely prolific in as many literary mediums as possible. He was an accomplished poet, short story writer, librettist, playwright, autobiographer, translator, anthologist, essayist, and critic. His literature has been set to music countless times. He wrote dramatic musicals such as Kurt Weill’s *Street Scene*⁷⁶ and David Martin’s *Simply Heavenly* and opera librettos like William Grant Still’s *Troubled Island* and Jan Meyerowitz’s *The Barrier*. He also had over 60 composers, including Samuel Adler, Jean Berger and William Schuman, set his poems to music resulting in over 200 songs. He also wrote several books on music including a children’s book titled the *First Book of Jazz*. His most famous works are his two autobiographies, *The Big Sea* and *I Wonder as I Wander*, his collections of poetry including *Fields of Wonder* and *The Weary Blues*, and his plays.

⁷⁵ Emmanuel S. Nelson, “Langston Hughes” in *African American Authors 1745-1945: a bio-bibliographical critical sourcebook*. (Westport, Conn., 2002).

⁷⁶ based on a play by Elmer Rice. Kurt Weill, the opera’s composer, also called *Street Scene* a Broadway opera.

Silver Rain, Op. 11

In Time of Silver Rain

In time of silver rain
The earth
Puts forth new life again,
Green grasses grow
And flowers lift their heads,
And over all the plain
The wonder spreads
Of life,
Of life!
Of life!

In time of silver rain
The butterflies
Lift silken wings
To catch a rainbow cry,
And trees put forth
New leaves to sing
In joy beneath the sky
As down the roadway
Passing boys and girls
Go singing, too,
In time of silver rain
In time of silver rain
When spring
And life
Are new.

“In Time of Silver Rain” is the first piece of this song cycle. The poem talks about spring, and with the “Silver Rain” of spring comes new life, joy, and opportunity. The accompaniment carries a constant sixteenth note rhythm, with varying patterns, throughout the piece resembling the showers of rain that will bring forth new life. One of the patterns Owens uses is in measures 9 and 10 where he oscillates minor seconds.⁷⁷ This pattern is a creative way for adding tension to

⁷⁷ See Figure 2-1.

certain moments without disrupting the rhythm or harmony. Owens, in this case, uses this oscillation to create the imagery of watching a time-lapse of flowers slowly lifting their heads to the sun.

Figure 2-1: "In time of silver rain," mm. 9-10



Owens uses more text painting at measure 24 where the vocal line resembles a butterfly's flight pattern until it is able to soar in measure 26, with each triplet pattern resembling fluttering of butterfly wings.⁷⁸

Figure 2-2: "In time of silver rain," mm. 24-26



Owens creates a beautiful melody for the voice to sing, balancing from moving mostly stepwise, to well-placed arpeggios to his use of syncopations. Owens uses syncopation the most in the long legato passages of measures 14-19 and 37-40 where the voice is singing on the notes E-flat, F, and G.⁷⁹

⁷⁸ See Figure 2-2.

⁷⁹ See Figure 2-3.

Figure 2-3: "In time of silver rain," mm. 36-41

As an opening to the cycle, Owens does a wonderful job of inviting us into this world with his use of accompaniment, text painting, and use of rhythm. This song often awakens emotion in the listener, so that the listener desires to hear more.

Fulfillment

The earth-meaning
Like the sky-meaning
Was fulfilled.

We got up
And went to the river,
Touched silver water,
Laughed and bathed
In the sunshine.

Day
Became a bright ball of light
For us to play with,
Sunset
A yellow curtain,
Night,
A velvet screen.

The moon,
Like an old grandmother,
Blessed us with a kiss,
And sleep
Took us both in
Laughing.

“Fulfillment” is the second song in the song cycle and is divided into three sections. The first section serves as a declamatory statement opening the piece. The text is claiming that the meaning of the past season of spring and its many rains has been fulfilled in the fullness we see in the summer in both the earth and sky, as expressed in the context of the previous song. This declamatory statement is reinforced by the opening accompaniment and its theme epically introducing itself in the first two measures. These measures provide a fanfare-like introduction to the words of the singer.⁸⁰

⁸⁰ See Figure 2-4.

Figure 2-4: "Fulfillment," mm.1-2



The accompaniment in measures 3-5 has this recurring bass figure in octaves that can be imagined as the thunderstorms that bring the 'silver rains' from the last movement, crashing and roaring before finally clearing away at the *ritardando* and whole notes at measure 6.⁸¹ The rhythm and high energy finally stops as the voice proclaims that the meaning of this rain and thunder has been 'fulfilled.' The voice then sings a free melismatic passage before transitioning to the next section.⁸²

Figure 2-5: "Fulfillment," mm.4-6



Figure 2-6: "Fulfillment," mm.7-10



⁸¹ See Figure 2-5.

⁸² See Figure 2-6.

The second section starts as the storm finally clears and the narrator joyfully recounts the events of the day. The voice and the right hand of the accompaniment have a duet from measures 9-15.⁸³ This duet between the voice and piano can be seen as the narrator and the person who goes with him to ‘the river’. The eighth notes in the left hand of the accompaniment help move us along as the voice and right hand have steady quarter and half note rhythms.

Figure 2-7: "Fulfillment," mm. 15-17

The section ends as the voice sustains the word ‘sunshine’ in measures 14-15. The left hand uses oscillating minor seconds⁸⁴ that lead to the third section, where the narrator begins to relish in the beauty of day. In the third section, the sixteenth note rhythm in the accompaniment brings a bubbling energy as the narrator plays all throughout the day, night and sunset.⁸⁵ The song ends with the opening accompaniment figure returning as the voice sings a lyric recitative over the lines of the last stanza.⁸⁶

⁸³ See Figure 2-6.

⁸⁴ As seen in movement 1, “In time of silver rain.” See Figure 2-2 and Figure 2-7.

⁸⁵ See Figure 2-7.

⁸⁶ See Figure 2-8.

Figure 2-8: "Fulfillment," mm. 21-23

The image shows a musical score for three staves. The top staff is the vocal line, the middle is the right piano hand, and the bottom is the left piano hand. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The score includes the following markings and lyrics:

- Staff 1 (Vocal): *dim...*, *f Adagio*, *rubato*, *F m r*, *lt*, *ct*. Lyrics: "screen, the moon, Like an old grand mo-ther".
- Staff 2 (Piano Right): *molto rit.*
- Staff 3 (Piano Left): *z + 9 + . m*

Night Song

In the dark
Before the tall
Moon came,
Little short
Dusk
Was walking
Along.

In the dark
Before the tall
Moon came,
Little short
Dusk
Was singing
A song.

In the dark
Before the tall
Moon came,
A lady named
Day
Fainted away
In the
Dark.

“Night song” is the third work in this song cycle and comes as a nice surprise after the rich, lively, and full textures of the first two pieces. The accompaniment is stripped down to a more chordal texture, the melody is to be sung *sotto voce*, and the dynamic range stays between *piano* and *pianissimo*. The text continues on the last line of the previous song where the narrator is saying goodbye to the sun as the sunset or ‘little short dusk is walking along’ as the sun goes away and day faints away in the dark.

This is modified strophic piece starts with the accompaniment playing a quiet two-measure melody in B minor. The voice repeats the melody introduced in the accompaniment.⁸⁷ Then the accompaniment moves to a lower register and plays a rhythmic ostinato⁸⁸ of two half notes and a whole note. Throughout the piece this ostinato also applies to the notes of the bass line. As the piece progresses Owens develops the right hand of the accompaniment by expanding the tessitura and adding more pitches to add to the texture of the piece. This choice adds to the drama and intrigue of the piece while keeping the integrity of the rhythmic ostinato.

Figure 2-9: "Night Song," mm. 1-4

At the end of the piece as the voice sings the line, “fainted away in the dark,” the music reflects this fainting by having the rhythm of the voice match the accompaniment. This creates a

⁸⁷ Reimer states that this is one of the few times this event happens in Owen’s oeuvre.

⁸⁸ See Figure 2-9.

suspension of time allowing the singer to *diminuendo* as the accompanist waits to play the echo of the last half of the initial melody of the accompaniment.⁸⁹

Figure 2-10: "Night Song," mm. 14-16



Silence

I catch the pattern
Of your silence
Before you speak.

I do not need
To hear a word.

In your silence
Every tone I seek
Is heard.

“Silence” is the fourth song in the cycle and is a total of 10 measures long. The accompaniment is pretty bare, as the rhythm is made of whole notes. A feature of the accompaniment in this piece is the bass line, which descends stepwise in each measure a full octave from F-sharp 3 to F sharp 2.

The poem deals with understanding someone even in the midst of their silence. In Reimer’s interview with Robert Owens, he says in regard to this particular piece that “These are

⁸⁹ See Figure 2-10.

the wonderful things I think about – it is someone who *really* understands you.”⁹⁰ This piece is a wonderful showcase on how Robert Owens composes as well as his understanding of the poem. Robert Owens stated, in his interview with Jaime Reimer, that he “doesn’t believe in [using] too many notes,” this is obviously shown by him only using 10 measures for this entire piece. I believe that truly understanding this text comes into play when the singer learns what it means to understand someone, even in silence. When an understanding is met with someone, silence is used as communication on the highest level that can be expressed with as few words as possible. Owens uses this understanding to create this piece where by the end of it we understand the text in total, like the narrator to his listener.

⁹⁰ Reimer, *Fields of Wonder: Exploring the Langston Hughes Song Cycles of Robert Owens* pg. 62.

Carolina Cabin

There's hanging moss
And holly
And tall straight pine
About this little cabin
In the wood.

Inside
A crackling fire,
Warm red wine,
And youth and life
And laughter
That is good.

Outside
The world is gloomy,
The winds of winter cold,
As down the road
A wandering poet
Must roam.

But here there's peace
And laughter
And love's old story told
Where two people
Make a home.

“Carolina Cabin” is the fifth song and one of the more intriguing songs in the cycle. To start, the form of this song is in a three-part form but could be defined as a modified ternary, since the returning A section is flipped from the its initial statement. “Carolina Cabin” is also the only song in the cycle where the singer is instructed to hum. The voice hums the first and last phrases of the song. Reimer observes that since the first section of text is from the perspective of seeing the cabin from the outside, the humming can “give the impression of a casual stroll through the woods.”⁹¹

⁹¹ Reimer, *Fields of Wonder: Exploring the Langston Hughes Song Cycles of Robert Owens* pg. 64.

Figure 2-11: "Carolina Cabin," mm. 1-6

The musical score for "Carolina Cabin" (mm. 1-6) is presented in two systems. The first system shows the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line begins with a hummed note (hmm) and then the lyrics "There's". The piano accompaniment features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes and chords. The second system continues the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line includes the lyrics "There's".

The second section is from the perspective of inside the cabin where we see the ‘crackling fire, warm red wine and youthful laughter.’ The music reflects this change of environment with a key change from E major to G major. In this section we also see another key change as the accompaniment shifts from G major to E minor.⁹² This key change reflects the people from the inside of the cabin looking at the lone ‘wandering poet’ roaming out in the gloomy weather.⁹³ As we return to the home key we are greeted with the melody seen when the voice began singing the text. The piece returned to the musical ideas in the A section, but the order in which they are presented⁹⁴ is flipped.

⁹² While using the same motive.

⁹³ See Figures 2-12 and 2-13.

⁹⁴ First the humming, then sung text.

Figure 2-12: "Carolina Cabin," mm. 11-12

Musical score for "Carolina Cabin" mm. 11-12. The score is in 2/4 time and features a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The tempo/mood is marked *mf*. The lyrics are: "In - - side a crack-ling fi - re,". The piano accompaniment consists of a steady eighth-note pattern in the right hand and a similar pattern in the left hand.

Figure 2-13: "Carolina Cabin," mm. 20-22

Musical score for "Carolina Cabin" mm. 20-22. The score is in 2/4 time and features a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The tempo/mood is marked *meno mosso*. The lyrics are: "good. — Out - side the world is gloom- - y, the". The piano accompaniment consists of a steady eighth-note pattern in the right hand and a similar pattern in the left hand.

Songs

I sat there singing her
Songs in the dark.

She said,
I do not understand
The words.

I said,
There are
No words.

"Songs" is the sixth and shortest piece in the entire song cycle, being only nine measures long. Owens captures the dynamic of the couple's relationship using key centers and register. The piece begins with a solid A-flat major triad as the narrator begins to speak. The melody is rather serene and controlled as it rests upon the whole note accompaniment moving from an A-flat major triad to D-flat major 7 and A-flat major 7. The whole note rhythms also depict the still

and calm demeanor of the narrator. Then as the words transfer from the narrator's to the woman the key changes to C major. Owens also differentiates the characters by having her words be sung *sotto voce* and in a higher tessitura. We also see the accompaniment have more rhythmic movement from whole notes to quarter and eighth notes. Reimer's analysis of this piece enlightens us about Owen's choice to not return to the 'home key' of A-flat, she writes that "Instead of jolting them back to A-flat, the (narrator) adopts the G from (the woman's) half cadence at 'words,' and finds a place of harmonic compromise in the middle, coming to rest on a G major triad at the final cadence."⁹⁵

Sleep

When the lips
And the body
Are done
She seeks your hand,
Touches it,
And sleep comes
Without wonder
And without dreams.
When the lips
And the body
Are done.

"Sleep" is the seventh and final song in *Silver Rain*. The accompaniment carries a rhythmic ostinato⁹⁶ throughout the piece. The vocal melody is settled in G-flat major and sits in a comfortable tessitura for a tenor. The melody revolves around the B-flat for the first half of the piece. In measure seven, the meter changes from triple simple to common time.⁹⁷ On the final statement the voice, as it repeats the opening words, sings a phrase similar to the opening as the

⁹⁵ Reimer, *Fields of Wonder: Exploring the Langston Hughes Song Cycles of Robert Owens* pg. 67.

⁹⁶ See Figure 2-14.

⁹⁷ See Figure 2-15.

accompaniment's rhythmic ostinato is disrupted by syncopation and longer notes. This compositional choice allows for a nice symmetry for the listener as well as reflecting the human body as it now gives in to its exhaustion to finally go to sleep.

Figure 2-14: "Sleep," mm. 1-2

Musical score for measures 1-2 of "Sleep". The score is in 3/4 time, key of B-flat major (two flats). The vocal line (treble clef) begins with a whole rest in measure 1 and a half note in measure 2, marked *mf*. The lyrics "When the" are written below the vocal line. The piano accompaniment (grand staff) features a rhythmic ostinato of eighth notes in the right hand and chords in the left hand, marked *mf*.

Figure 2-15: "Sleep," mm. 5-8

Musical score for measures 5-8 of "Sleep". The score is in 3/4 time, key of B-flat major. The vocal line (treble clef) has a melodic line with lyrics: "done she seeks your hand, touch-es it, and". The piano accompaniment (grand staff) continues the rhythmic ostinato from the previous section, marked *mf*.

Chapter 3 - Lori Laitman

Lori Laitman is an American composer. She is one of today's leading composers of art song. She has written over 300 compositions including choral works, opera, and instrumental music. The majority of this output has been through the medium of art song, for which she has written over 250.

Life

Laitman was born in Long Beach, New York on January 12th, 1955. Her family had a very musical background. As a child she would hear her mother sing, play the piano and violin, and though Laitman says her mother's singing was likely a subliminal influence, she still recalls distinct memories of her mother's sound.⁹⁸ Along with her mother's musical life Laitman and her two sisters pursued musical careers of their own. Laitman, at an early age, made up songs of her own and had heavy exposure to classical children's music.⁹⁹ At the age of five Laitman began to take piano lessons and at age seven she began to take lessons for the flute. It wasn't until her time as a student at Yale University where she began to take formal composition lessons. At the time of entry into the Yale School of Music, she was pursuing a degree in flute performance to be a professional flautist. Over the course of her degree she ended up changing her focus and graduated with her Bachelor's in composition. During the summer that followed her sophomore year, a decision she made would have a tremendous unknown impact on Laitman's life. Before this serendipitous summer Laitman had to decide between an opportunity to study abroad with Nadia Boulanger, an opportunity that both of Laitman's siblings had taken, or study at the

⁹⁸ Helen Teresa Allen, *The Songs of Lori Laitman: An Analysis of Sunflowers and Early Snow*. (Ph.D. diss., The Ohio State University, 2013).

⁹⁹ James Manheim, *Lori Laitman: Biography & History*. allmusic.com.

Interlochen Music Camp in Northern Michigan. Laitman chose the latter, where she studied flute performance as well as composition with George Wilson.¹⁰⁰ She then continued her education at Yale to achieve her Master of Music. After marrying her college sweetheart, Bruce Rosenblum, they moved to Williamstown, Massachusetts, where Bruce was a music teacher at the local private high school called the Buxton School. Laitman would later join the faculty at the Buxton School while also traveling to play with the Vermont Symphony.¹⁰¹ The following year, Rosenblum was accepted into Columbia University's Law School, which required the couple to move to New York City. Upon this move Laitman began teaching the flute at several music schools and began to score music for films. One of the companies Laitman composed scores for was the Dick Roberts Film Company. Laitman claims that this training was important for the advancement of her compositional techniques.¹⁰²

After Bruce graduated from law school, job opportunities brought the couple to Boston, the Washington, D.C. area, and finally to Potomac, Maryland, where they now reside.¹⁰³ Over the next 20 years, Laitman would start raising a family, writing mostly instrumental music, as well as composing scores for film and the theatre.

The unexpected turn in Laitman's life came when a friend from her summer at Interlochen, soprano Lauren Wagner, approached her with an opportunity to compose a piece for Wagner's debut album. When Wagner won a Concert Artist Guild competition in 1991, she was

¹⁰⁰ Kathryn Mary Drake, *A Performance guide to Lori Laitman's 'Living in the Body'* (DMA diss., University of Louisiana State University, 2010), pg. 4.

¹⁰¹ Serdar Ilban, *Songs from the ashes: An examination of three holocaust-themed song cycles by Lori Laitman* (Ph.D. diss., University of Nevada, Las Vegas 2008).

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

afforded the opportunity to record her first professional album. Anxious not to disappoint her friend, Laitman began looking through books of poetry in search of a text that might inspire her.¹⁰⁴ Her search ended when she came across Sara Teasdale's "The Metropolitan Tower" which she set to music by the end of 1991. Gregory Berg¹⁰⁵ writes about this piece and this moment in Laitman's life saying, "Amazingly, Laitman's very first art song was nothing less than a masterpiece, and it was just the spark of what would become a truly glorious career."¹⁰⁶

From this one piece, Laitman's career took a turn of wonderful opportunity and critical acclaim. She has become one of the most performed American composers.¹⁰⁷ In 2000, Laitman won the Boston Art Song Competition with her piece "Armgart" for soprano and piano poem by George Eliot. Her composition "Men with Small Heads" won the Best American Art Song Competition in 2004. Along with receiving these awards, Laitman began having opportunities to compose different kinds of vocal works like her acclaimed opera, *The Scarlet Letter* (2006). Laitman's *The Scarlet Letter* according to James H. North from *Fanfare Magazine*,¹⁰⁸ had the potential to be "A staple of American Opera, on a level with *Susannah* and *Baby Doe*."¹⁰⁹ Laitman continues to compose and has received commissions from the world's most prestigious musical entities like BBC and The Royal Philharmonic Society, Opera America, Opera

¹⁰⁴ Gregory Berg, "Living in the Body: Songs of Lori Laitman." *Journal of Singing*, vol. 76, no. 5, May 2020, pp. 623–624.

¹⁰⁵ An Assistant Professor of Music at Carthage College in Kenosha, Wisconsin, where he teaches private voice. He also works as a music critic for the *Journal of Singing*.

¹⁰⁶ Gregory Berg, "Living in the Body: Songs of Lori Laitman." *Journal of Singing*.

¹⁰⁷ Susan Dormady Eisenberg, "From Art Song to Opera", *Classical Singer* (October 2009), pg. 43
<https://www.csmusic.net/content/articles/from-art-song-to-opera/>.

¹⁰⁸ In his article reviewing Laitman's opera in 2018.

¹⁰⁹ James H North, "Lori Laitman, composer - news - Fanfare magazine reviews the Scarlet Letter."
<http://artsongs.com/news/fanfare-magazine-reviews-the-scarlet-letter.html>.

Colorado, Seattle Opera, Grant Park Music Festival, Washington Master Chorale, Music of Remembrance, and the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra.¹¹⁰

Dana Gioia

Dana Gioia is an American poet, literary translator and critic, and an essayist. Gioia has had many of his poems set to music by prominent composers like Lori Laitman, Paul Selerni, Morten Lauridsen, Dave Brubeck, and Ned Rorem. He has also written librettos for four operas. Gioia collaborated with Laitman on numerous occasions includes over a dozen art songs and a libretto.¹¹¹ Gioia has published five books of poetry and three volumes of literary criticism and over two dozen literary anthologies including *The Norton Anthology of Poetry* and *The Oxford Book of American Poetry*. He was born on December 24th, 1950 in Los Angeles, California. In 1969 Gioia became the first in his family to go to college when he received a scholarship to go to Stanford University. Over the next decade Gioia would receive a B.A. and M.B.A. from Stanford and go on to receive an M.A. from Harvard in Comparative Literature. For the next fifteen years after graduating from Harvard, Gioia began working as a businessman for General Foods¹¹² even becoming the Vice President of Marketing. During this time in his life Gioia would write poetry in his evenings, producing several volumes of poetry. In 1984, he was featured in Esquire Magazine's *Men and Women Under 40 Who are Changing the Nation*. In 1991, Gioia wrote an essay for the *Atlantic Monthly* that would spark a national debate and change his life forever called, "Can Poetry Matter?" In the essay, Gioia argues that poetry is "No longer part of the

¹¹⁰ "Lori Laitman." January 28, 2021, <https://songofamerica.net/composer/laitman-lori/>.

¹¹¹ Gioia and Laitman collaborated on the children's opera *The Three Feathers* in 2014.

¹¹² The General Foods Corporation was a large food company that owned and distributed foods in the United States. Some of its more well-known items and properties were Jell-O, Oscar Meyer, Kool-Aid, Blue Ribbon Mayonnaise and Log Cabin Syrup.

mainstream of artistic and intellectual life.”¹¹³ He was challenging the state of poetry that was losing its place in mainstream thought and had become stagnant in its development of new talent outside of the subculture of academia. He argued that poetry doesn't matter if poets write for cloistered academics rather than the untweedy masses.¹¹⁴ Gioia's essay received a record response for *The Atlantic*, and the essay was expanded into a 1992 book that was nominated for the National Book Critics Circle Award.¹¹⁵ This essay and its response led Gioia to quit his career at General Foods to pursue a full-time career as a poet. Since then he has had tremendous literary success as well as being a former California Poet Laureate and the Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts.

¹¹³ Dana Gioia, “Can Poetry Matter.” <http://danagioia.com/essays/american-poetry/can-poetry-matter/>.

¹¹⁴ Heidi Benson, “Who is dana Gioia? / he's a poet, a businessman, a Northern Californian and President Bush's choice to head the National Endowment for the arts.” January 21, 2012, <https://www.sfgate.com/magazine/article/Who-Is-Dana-Gioia-He-s-a-poet-a-businessman-2670013.php>.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

The Apple Orchard

You won't remember it—the apple orchard
We wandered through one April afternoon,
Climbing the hill behind the empty farm.

A city boy, I'd never seen a grove
Burst in full flower or breathed the bittersweet
Perfume of blossoms mingled with the dust.

A quarter mile of trees in fragrant rows
Arching above us. We walked the aisle,
Alone in spring's ephemeral cathedral.

We had the luck, if you can call it that,
Of having been in love but never lovers—
The bright flame burning, fed by pure desire.

Nothing consumed, such secrets brought to light!
There was a moment when I stood behind you,
Reached out to spin you toward me . . . but I stopped.

What more could I have wanted from that day?
Everything, of course. Perhaps that was the point—
To learn that what we will not grasp is lost.

“The Apple Orchard” is a wonderful art song published in 2004. This piece was originally written for tenor and piano, but now a baritone and soprano version is available. “The

Apple Orchard” was Laitman’s first song written for the tenor voice.¹¹⁶ This piece tells the story about a moment that could have made a friend a lover. It explores the emotions of youthful optimism, wonder, yearning, unrequited love, and missed opportunity. Gioia uses such beautiful imagery that these words feel like he is recounting events as if they were just happening. The reader and audience can see ‘the grove burst in full flower’ and smell ‘the breeze of bittersweet blossoms mingled with dust.’ This imagery firmly roots the reader into the mindset of wonder that the speaker felt during this day, bringing us into their perspective. The poem starts with the line, ‘You won’t remember it’ before entering the memory of ‘that day.’ This line can sometimes go unnoticed as the rest of the story carries on without a hitch, but this line is really important because it sets the tone of the rest of the poem and its inevitable outcome. In this line we get a glimpse, before any further elaboration, about the dynamic between the speaker of the poem and the person he is speaking to. This dynamic can be understood as a pair of friends, where one surely feels that they want something more, but is too scared to tell the other person. When the speaker states this line, the speaker acknowledges that this day was not as important to his friend and almost lover as it was to him. The speaker was ‘a city boy’ who was seeing the beauty of nature with the person he loved. However she didn’t realize his feelings for her even though it was the perfect setting for a relationship to start. This is important in highlighting because the dynamic between these two friends who had ‘the luck of being in love but never lovers’ reflects the effect on this relationship had on the mind of the speaker in his youth. This effect brings the speaker to decide either to take the ‘moment’ and express his feelings or not, a decision which they might have regretted.¹¹⁷ The ‘moment’ in this poem that seems to be so small, but had such

¹¹⁶, Carol Kimball, *Song: A Guide to Art Song Style and Literature*. Hal Leonard. 2005. pg. 304.

¹¹⁷ As seen in the last line, “Perhaps that was the point, to learn that what you will not grasp is lost.”

importance to hold the fate of these two almost lovers, really heightens the drama of this piece when the speaker asks, “What more could I have wanted from that day? Everything, everything, of course.” This line is interesting because the speaker is really fighting with being content with this perfect day and his desire to express his love to his friend. The speaker wanted the beauty of the day, that he was seeing for the first time, to be shared by the person he loves in this blossoming season of spring and new love. This poem really is representative of one of its stand-out lines of, “Spring’s ephemeral cathedral.” This short, ephemeral moment of this day was as fleeting as the blooming season of spring when time continues to glide by to another chapter of life that is still held in high regard in the speaker’s mind like a cathedral of a missed opportunity at love. This poem really showcases the burning of youthful love and the wise reflection of honoring the moment and acknowledging of the past. It does this by accenting the wonderful things in this seemingly insignificant day like the colors of the orchard, the smells of the ‘fragrant grove,’ how the trees arched above them for miles of their walk, how the breeze felt as the ‘blossoms mingled with the dust.’

Understanding the poem this way really helps you appreciate the work that Laitman does to set it to music. The piece starts with a measure and a half prelude, introducing the smooth and sensual piano. The rhythm the piano uses throughout the piece is very dance-like akin to what we see in the Cuban habanera.¹¹⁸ This rhythmic figure in the accompaniment serves as the backbone of the piece as it guides the listener from measure to measure. This rhythmic ostinato serves a similar purpose in this song to that of the habanera. This rhythm provides an undertone of

¹¹⁸ The habanera is an Afro-Cuban dance and song popularized in Havana, Cuba in the late 19th century whose characteristic rhythmic ostinato and general popularity had a large influence in other styles of music like the Argentinian tango and the Spanish zarzuela.

romance that reflects the relationship of these two people who, ‘had the luck, if you can call it that / of having been in love but never lovers / a bright flame burning fed by pure desire.’ This dance rhythm can also show the playful feeling of the day as the two almost lovers walk through this orchard and a hint at some of the conversations that might have been had on this outing. Accompanied with this rhythm are beautiful chords with upper extensions that Laitman lays out to fill each measure with textures and colors that represent the beauty of spring.

Figure 3-1: "The Apple Orchard," mm. 1-4

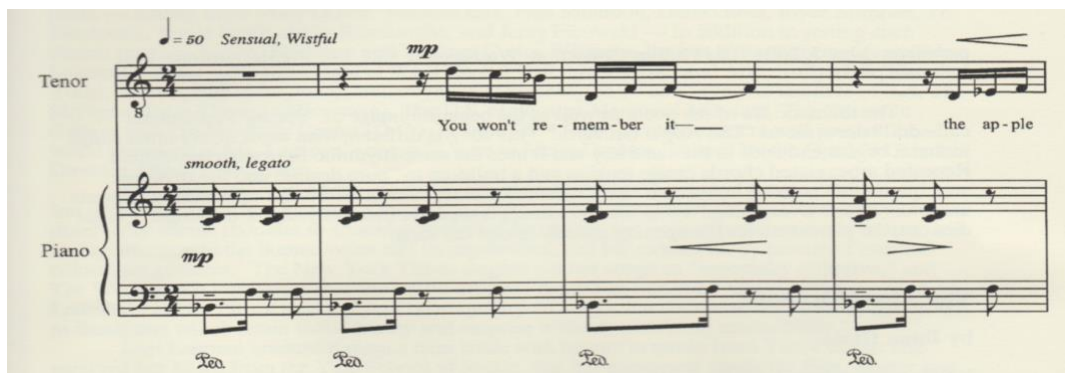


Figure 3-2: Rhythmic ostinato used in the habanera (Barulich, F., & Fairley, J. (2001). Habanera. Grove Music Online.



An interesting moment happens in measure 63, where Laitman silences the piano but keeps the pedal down. This moment creates an interesting effect where the last note of the voice can be heard in the strings before the piano resumes to finish the piece. This moment adds to the weight to the piece where the speaker’s regrets and the memories of this day are suspended in time and are fading away, like this might be the last time the speaker revisits this memory. When

the piano returns to finish the piece, it provides a closure that further suspends this memory in time with the ending not resolving and in a higher register feeling like it is floating in mid-air.

Chapter 4 - Jules Massenet

Jules Massenet was a French composer and teacher. He was a respected, successful, and admired composer of opera. He is responsible for major opera classics such as *Manon* and *Werther* which cemented him as one of France's leading composers. He lived a life of national and international fame, securing almost unlimited access to perform any new production in Paris, making him the most prolific and successful composer of opera in France at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries.¹¹⁹

Life

Massenet was born on May 12, 1842 in Montaud, in St. Etienne in the southeast of France. He was the youngest of four children by Massenet's father and his second wife. Massenet's father was a director of an engineering company and his mother was a pianist who often gave piano lessons. Massenet attributes his early musical development to his mother.

He began to study music intensely at the age of ten when he was admitted into the Paris *Conservatoire*. He studied at the *Conservatoire* for ten years.¹²⁰ Massenet began to study composition with Ambroise Thomas in 1861. His time at the *Conservatoire* was marked with ambition. He won *premier prix*¹²¹ for piano in 1859 and *second prix* for counterpoint and fugue in 1862. While studying at the *Conservatoire* Massenet began to financially support himself by giving piano lessons and playing timpani at the Théâtre Lyrique.¹²² The latter position, which he

¹¹⁹ Annegret Fauser, Patrick Gillis, & Hugh Macdonald, "Massenet, Jules," *Grove Music Online*, ed. Deane L. Root, grovemusic.com.

¹²⁰ Except for a small gap when his family moved to Chambéry in 1854.

¹²¹ First prize.

¹²² One of the four major opera houses and companies in Paris. It was known for its diversity of performances as they were permitted to perform all types of opera including non-French ones.

held for four years, allowed him to immerse himself with the music and operas of compositional giants like Gounod and Mozart. This opportunity allowed Massenet to further develop his ear towards the current performing and standard operas, that would soon include his works as well. In 1863, after failing to qualify the previous year, Massenet won the *Prix de Rome*. Even though he received this honor he produced very few compositions while in Rome. This award did allow Massenet to travel and meet Franz Liszt. Through his connection with Liszt he met his future wife.

After returning to Paris in 1866, Massenet married his wife, Ninon, and began to teach the piano. Later in this year Massenet met with Georges Hartmann who became his publisher. Hartmann and Massenet worked together for 25 years. Massenet also began writing his first opera called *La grand'tante*, which was a one act opera commissioned by the Opéra-Comique, then a requirement for the winners of the Prix de Rome.

Over the next ten years Massenet joined a group of contemporary composers, who at the time were all rather gifted and young, who were trying to make a name for themselves. This group included the likes of Edouard Lalo, Camille Saint-Saëns, Georges Bizet, Leo Delibes, Gabriel Fauré, and Henri Duparc to name a few. Most of them were entering composition competitions at the Opéra-Comique and the Théâtre Lyrique writing songs, operas, orchestral, and chamber music.

After the Franco-Prussian War Massenet began to find a new level of success in his music. He had successes and opportunities to compose, writing operas, incidental music, and suites which finally culminated in his biggest success up to that point when his opera *Le roi de Lahore* premiered in the Palais Garnier in 1877, making it one of the first compositions to do so in this new home (completed in 1875) of the Paris Opera. The success of this opera, “ensured

Massenet's prominence among young French composers and led to considerable international fame."¹²³

In 1878, Massenet became a professor of composition at the Paris *Conservatoire*, a position he held for 18 years, and was elected to the Institut de France.¹²⁴ Some of Massenet's pupils were Reynaldo Hahn, Gustave Charpentier, Florent Schmitt, Ernest Chausson, and Gabriel Pierné.

After honing his habits, techniques, and schedule to compose more efficiently he began to churn out more ambitious projects like *Hérodiade*, an 1881 opera based on the story of John the Baptist, Massenet started a project that would change his life forever. In 1882, Massenet began composing an opera from the libretto by Henri Meilhac and Philippe Gille based on the famous novel by Prevost titled *Manon Lescaut*. *Manon*, premiering at the Opera-Comique in January 1884, was a huge success in both France and abroad. The success of this opera has not waned since its premiere and cemented Massenet as one of the leading operatic composers of his generation. Massenet continued to compose another 20 operas from this point. Having such a successful opera afforded Massenet to not only be financially secure but also allowed Massenet the freedom to be more selective with his librettists, singers, and venues for his premieres. Although not every opera of his turned out to be huge successes like *Manon*,¹²⁵ in 1885 Massenet began working on an opera that would be considered his next masterpiece. *Werther*, an opera

¹²³ Annegret Fauser, Patrick Gillis, & Hugh Macdonald, "Massenet, Jules," *Grove Music Online*, ed. Deane L. Root, grovemusic.com.

¹²⁴ A highly prestigious honor, The Institut de France is a learned society that promotes academic discipline, artistic and achievement.

¹²⁵ In fact, a good number of his operas outside of *Manon* and *Werther* had short lives past their premieres. Especially later in his life, when musical tastes began to change.

based on the wildly famous novel by Goethe, premiered in Vienna in 1892 and soon was featured on many of the famous stages in Europe. *Werther* has been a repertory standard ever since.

After 18 years of teaching at the Paris *Conservatoire*, following the death of Ambrose Thomas, who was the director at the time, Massenet decided to resign his post in 1896. This decision was mainly driven by his focus and demand of new compositions, since he was already using frequent substitutes by this time.

As the century turned, the conventions and limits of harmony began to stretch by composers like Debussy and Strauss; Massenet continued to write operas and musical dramas which further perfected his style and remained consistent with his sensibilities as he completed operas like *Don Quichotte*, *Cléopâtre*, and *Bacchus*.

En fermant les yeux

Instant charmant
ou la crainte fait treve—
ou nous sommes deux seulement
Tiens, Manon: en marchant,
je viens de faire un reve

En ferment les yeux,
je vois la-bas une humble retraite—
une maisonette toute blanche
au fond des bois!

Sous ses tranquilles ombrages
les clairs et joyeux ruisseaux,
ou se mirent les feuillages,
chantent avec les oiseaux!
C'est le paradis!
Oh, non!
Tout est la triste et morose,
car il y manque une chose:
Il y faut encore Manon!
Viens! La sera notre vie,
si tu le veux, o Manon!

Enchanting moment
When apprehension is suspended—
When we two are alone!
Listen, Manon: while walking,
I just had a dream

Closing my eyes,
I see over there a humble retreat—
A cottage all white
In the depth of the woods!

In its tranquil shade
The clear and joyful brooks,
In which the foliage is mirrored,
Sing with the birds!
It is paradise!
Oh, no!
Everything there is sad and gloomy,
For there is one thing missing:
It still needs Manon!
Come! There our life will be.
If you wish it, oh Manon!

“En fermant les yeux” is a tenor aria in the opera *Manon*, an opera comique in five acts which was Massenet’s first major success. Premiering in 1884, *Manon* has become Massenet’s best-known and most popular opera.¹²⁶ The plot centers around the love story of Manon and Chevalier des Grieux. Manon, a woman who has been sent by her parents to live in a convent as a punishment of living a life with a ‘taste for pleasure.’ On her way to the convent Manon meets her cousin, Lescaut, who is to be her guardian and escort. Lescaut then leaves to retrieve Manon’s luggage as she awaits the next coach to the convent. While waiting, Manon meets a couple of interesting characters who try to show their interest in her like Guillot de Morfontaine,

¹²⁶ Rodney Milnes, “Manon”. in *The Grove Book of Operas* 2nd ed, ed. Stanley Sadie & Laura. W. Macy (New York: Oxford University Press.) pp. 384.

a nobleman, who offers her money ‘for a word of love’ and Brétigny, a tax farmer, who states that his stagecoach is always available for her use. After returning Lescaut’s rebuke for entertaining such men, he reminds Manon that his reputation is as a guardian of the family’s honor. As he leaves again to ‘discuss a particular matter,’¹²⁷ and Manon waits again, she meets des Grieux, a young man who is awaiting the same coach to meet his father, a count. Des Grieux immediately falls in love with Manon. Seeing the opportunity to escape the convent, Manon and des Grieux flee with Brétigny to Paris as the first act closes.

“En fermant les yeux” appears near the end of the second act after des Grieux and Manon have run off together to Paris. Des Grieux has written a letter to his father to ask for permission to marry Manon. As he leaves to send off his letter, Manon wrestles with the decision to leave des Grieux for a better life with Brétigny as she sings a beautiful aria (“Asieu, notre petite table”). Seeing her full of tears, des Grieux tries to console her by recounting his dream of a blissful life together picturing a quaint little cottage in the woods. Though this beautiful moment is interrupted by external forces, this aria showcases the beauty of hope, love, and youthful optimism.

The recitative sets the stage as des Grieux finds Manon. The aria begins with a beautiful introduction that paints the picture of the cottage in the woods as snow slowly falls down, akin to opening a page to a book or the opening shot in a movie¹²⁸.

¹²⁷ The particular matter they are ‘discussing’ is for them to drink alcohol. Lescaut, earlier in the scene, sent his guardsmen on a mission to find a place for them to drink.

¹²⁸ As seen in figure 4-1.

Figure 4-1: “En fermant les yeux,” mm. 1-2

Andante lento tranquilliss. ♩ = 46

p

En fer-mant les yeux je vois... Là -
Where the wood sways in the breeze, I

pp *dolciss. e sostenuto*

una corda

The image shows a musical score for the first two measures of a piece. The top staff is for the vocal line, starting with a whole rest in the first measure and a half note in the second. The lyrics are "En fer-mant les yeux je vois... Là -" and "Where the wood sways in the breeze, I". The tempo is "Andante lento tranquilliss." with a metronome marking of ♩ = 46. The dynamic is *p*. The piano accompaniment consists of two staves with a continuous sixteenth-note pattern. The dynamics are *pp* and *dolciss. e sostenuto*, with the instruction *una corda* at the bottom.

Chapter 5 - Gabriel Fauré

Gabriel Fauré, one of the greatest French composers, is recognized as one of the greatest composers of art song. His own compositional style and use of melody and harmony were influential on many 20th-century composers and expanded the ethos on how harmony was taught.

Life

Gabriel Fauré was born in Pamiers, France on May 12, 1845. His parents, Toussaint-Honoré Fauré and Marie-Antoinette-Hélène Lalène-Laprade were members of the aristocracy. Fauré was the youngest of the six children in his parents' household. His father was appointed as the director of the Ecole Normale at Montgauzy in 1849. One of Gabriel's first musical experiences was playing the harmonium¹²⁹ in the chapel next to his father's school. One day while playing the harmonium, an old blind woman heard him and told Fauré's father about his musical gift.¹³⁰ Shortly after this Fauré had his first musical lessons with Bernard Delgay.¹³¹ In 1853, Fauré was heard by Dufaur de Saubiac¹³² who encouraged Faure's father to send him to the newly founded Ecole Niedermeyer¹³³ in Paris, which Fauré would attend a year later. Faure studied and boarded at the Ecole Niedermeyer for 11 years.

His training at the Ecole Niedermeyer was mainly centered around church music like plainsong, organ, and Renaissance polyphonic works. While there he studied counterpoint and

¹²⁹ A type of reed or pump organ.

¹³⁰ Jean-Michel Nectoux, "Fauré, Gabriel." *Grove Music Online*, ed. Deane L. Root, grovemusic.com.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² An official at the *Assemblée nationale*, the lower house of French Parliament.

¹³³ At the time of the conversation, this now prestigious school, was known as the Ecole de Musique Classique et Religieuse, which would later be known as the Ecole Niedermeyer, after the founder of the school Louis Niedermeyer.

fugue with Xavier Wackenthaler, organ with Clément Loret, harmony with Louis Dietsch, and piano and composition with Louis Niedermeyer, the founder of Ecole Niedermeyer. In March 1861, following Niedermeyer's death, Camille Saint-Saëns was hired as the piano instructor at the school. This encounter with Saint-Saëns would be tremendously influential in Fauré's life. After his piano lessons, Saint-Saëns would often play the works of contemporary musicians like Schumann, Liszt, and Wagner to his students, something that was not encouraged in French schools.¹³⁴

Fauré graduated from the Ecole Niedermeyer in the summer 1865 and in the following January he began work as the organist for La basilique Saint-Sauveur at Rennes. While working for the church he would also give lessons to some local families. During this time, Faure began to intensify his compositional output through piano music for his students, church music, art song, and early tries at symphonic form.

Fauré left Rennes for Paris in March of 1870 and immediately found work at the church of Notre-Dame de Clignancourt. His tenure at the church of Notre-Dame was short lived as the Franco-Prussian War forced Fauré to enlist in August 1870. After discharge in 1871, Fauré left Paris during the infamous Paris Commune. During his displacement he held a position as a composition teacher at the Ecole Niedermeyer which was temporarily based in Switzerland.

In 1872, Fauré returned to Paris and was appointed as the assistant organist at St. Sulpice. Fauré found himself to be a regular guest at Saint-Saëns's salon, where he was introduced and began to form relationships with regulars in the Parisian musical scene like Vincent d'Indy,

¹³⁴ Around this time in France many composers were tired of German dominance in France. So as a reaction, many academics tried to distance themselves and their students from the influences of modern compositional giants of the day, by actively omitting them from the repertoire.

Eduoard Lalo, Henry Duparc, Emmanuel Chabrier, and Pauline Viardot. The former four formed the Société Nationale de Musique,¹³⁵ which hosted many debuts of his pieces. In 1874, Fauré worked as a substitute for Saint-Saëns at L'église de la Madeleine. Faure eventually took over Saint-Saëns's position as choirmaster when he resigned in April 1877.

Sadly, a staple of the next period in Fauré's life, around the years 1877 through about 1890 was filled with bouts of depression, which he called spleen¹³⁶, that was spawned by his failed engagement to Pauline Viardot's daughter Marianne¹³⁷ and perpetuated by his lack of advancement as a composer.¹³⁸ Fauré was not without support as the Clerc family helped him as he battled out his deepest areas of depression and Saint-Saëns took him on trips to Weimer (where he met Franz Liszt), Cologne, and London, and met Franz Liszt. During this time, he wrote his Violin Sonata No.1 in A major, Op.13, the Piano Quartet No.1 in C minor, Op.15, and the Ballade in F-sharp major, Op. 19 for piano, which are considered some of his masterpieces.

Fauré's personal life changed when he married Marie Fremiet¹³⁹ in March 1883 and together they had two children, Emmanuel and Phillipe. Around the time of his marriage Fauré composed mainly for piano and the voice, publishing his second collection in 1887. In 1891,

¹³⁵ an important organization in late 19th/early 20th century France to promote French music and to allow young composers to present their music in public.

¹³⁶ Jean-Michel Nectoux, "Fauré, Gabriel." *Grove Music Online*, ed. Deane L. Root, grovemusic.com.

¹³⁷ A decent singer in her own right, Fauré was madly in love with Marianne for four years prior to their engagement. Their engagement only lasted a couple of months as she broke off the engagement in October 1887.

¹³⁸ Which can be attributed to his many obligations that prevented him from focusing primarily on composition and since the musicians of his day rarely varied from repertory to try new works, and because his jealousy of the careers of some of his contemporaries.

¹³⁹ Though their marriage was riddled with frequent absences and infidelity, mostly on Fauré's part, Fauré held Maire in high regard as a friend and trusted confidant, writing to her almost daily during his times away.

Fauré and a group of friends went to Venice and Florence. This extended stay led to the composition *Cinq melodies*, Op. 58 based on poems by Paul Verlaine.

After a stint as an inspector of national conservatories, he succeeded Jules Massenet as the composition teacher for the Paris *Conservatoire* in October 1896. His students throughout his tenure included Florent Schmitt, Nadia Boulanger, and Maurice Ravel. After almost 10 years teaching at the *Conservatoire*, Fauré, in 1905 was promoted to director. Fauré held this position at the *Conservatoire* until he retired in 1920.

By the time he retired, Fauré was considered one of the living legends in French music. His music was popular and highly regarded which was confirmed when he received the *Grand-Croix Legion d'Honneur* which is France's highest award for merit and accomplishment.

Leconte de Lisle

Leconte de Lisle is a French poet who is known for being a leading and defining member of a group called the Parnassians. From the period of 1865 to 1895 he was acknowledged as the foremost French poet apart from the aging Victor Hugo.¹⁴⁰

Born in 1818 on an island called Île Bourbon, now known as Réunion in the Indian Ocean near Madagascar. During his childhood, Leconte would visit India and Madagascar, creating images and memories that he would later explore in his poetry. Eventually, de Lisle traveled to the East Indies to prepare for a business career. In 1837, de Lisle was sent to the

¹⁴⁰ Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia, "Charles-Marie-René Leconte de Lisle." *Encyclopedia Britannica*. <https://www.britannica.com>.

Université de Rennes to practice law, as organized by his father.¹⁴¹ Upon his return home, de Lisle was inspired to study history as well as Greek and Italian instead of practicing law.¹⁴²

As a writer he is most famous for his three collections of poetry: *Poèmes antiques* (1852), *Poèmes barbares* (1862), *Poèmes tragiques* (1884). He is also known for his translations of ancient Greek tragedians and poets, such as Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, and Horace. Leconte de Lisle also wrote two books, *A People's History of the French Revolution* and *A People's History of Christianity*, which led to de Lisle being offered and accepting a position as an assistant librarian at Luxembourg Palace in 1873. De Lisle received a huge honor in 1886 when he was accepted in the *Académie Française*.

In spite of his fame, he lived the majority of his adult life in financial need, as he had the responsibility to provide for his mother, sisters, and his wife.¹⁴³

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² "Leconte de Lisle," *Wikipedia*, May 07, 2021, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leconte_de_Lisle.

¹⁴³ Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia, "Charles-Marie-René Leconte de Lisle." *Encyclopedia Britannica*. <https://www.britannica.com>.

Lydia

Lydia sur tes roses joues
Et sur ton col frais et si blanc
Roule etincelent
L'or fluide que tu denoues;

Le jour qui lui est le meilleur;
Oublions l'éternelle tombe.
Laisse tes baisers de columbe
Chanter sur ta levre en fleur.

Un lys cache repand sans cesse
Une odeur divine en ton sein;
Les delices comme un essaim
Sortent de toi, jeune deesse.

Je t'aime et meurs, o mes amours,
Mon ame en baisers m'est raviel!
O Lydia, rends-moi la vie,
Que je puisse mourir toujours

Lydia on your rosy cheeks
And on your neck fresh and so white
there rolls glistening
the flowing gold that you unfasten;

The day that shines is the best;
Let us forget the eternal tomb.
Let your kisses, dove-like,
Sing on your lips in flower.

A lily hidden away pours without cease
A scent divine in your breast;
Delights, like a swarm,
Emerge from you, young goddess.

I love you and I die, o my loves,
My soul in kisses is ravished from me!
O Lydia, give me back my life,
That I may die forever!

“Lydia” is an art song that was composed c.1870 in the earliest of Faure’s 3 compositional periods. It marks the first time Fauré set one of the texts of Leconte de Lisle. After this piece, Fauré would go on to set four more of de Lisle’s poems, that include “Nell”, “Les Roses d’Ispahan”, “La Rose”, “Le Parfum Impérissable.” All five pieces rank among Fauré’s most successful and most performed compositions. Along with being some of his more successful pieces, Fauré’s relationship with de Lisle’s poetry is also worth highlighting as Fauré comes back to de Lisle’s texts throughout his life. Most of the other significant poets that Fauré set would be confined to a certain time in Faure’s life. “Lydia” was written around 1870, “Nell” in 1878, “Les Roses d’Ispahan” in 1884, “La Rose” in 1890, and “Le Parfum Impérissable” in 1897.

The form of this piece is strophic. The melody and the accompaniment are identical in both of the sections. The accompaniment serves multiple roles. The top voice in the right hand

doubles the melody with the singer, which helps to further emphasize the text. And the middle and lower voices are supplying the rhythmic and harmonic foundation that the melody rests.

Fauré is still able to exude his own style even through the simplicity of the piece's form. Fauré first utilizes a blend of both F major and F Lydian modes. This decision adds an intriguing and individual harmonic and melodic character to the piece.

Fauré also made some edits to the original poetry most notably in the first stanza. The original de Lisle text is read as,

Lydia sur tes roses joues
Et sur ton col frais et plus blanc,
Que le lait, roule étincelant
L'or fluide que tu dénoues;

Fauré first changes the word *plus* to *si* and omits the words *Que le lait*, meaning “as or like milk,” from the piece. He did this to make the lyrics smooth and easier to sing and listen to.¹⁴⁴ Fauré also allowed this gap in text to transfer rather smoothly as the accompaniment takes on what would be melody for *Que le lait*.

Figure 5-1: "Lydia," mm. 1-4



¹⁴⁴ As an exercise, try singing both figures 5-2 and 5-3; see how the omission of these words help to make the melody smooth and less awkward to sing.

Figure 5-2: "Lydia," mm. 5-7

32
5

Et sur ton col frais et si* blanc, roule é -

This musical score shows measures 5-7 of 'Lydia'. The vocal line is in a soprano register, starting on a high note and moving down. The piano accompaniment consists of a right hand with chords and a left hand with a steady eighth-note bass line. The lyrics are 'Et sur ton col frais et si* blanc, roule é -'.

Figure 5-3a: "Lydia," mm. 5-7 if written without changes to the original text of de Lisle.

Et sur ton col frais et si blanc, Que le lait roule é

This musical score shows a revised version of measures 5-7. The vocal line is lower and more melodic than in Figure 5-2. The piano accompaniment is the same as in Figure 5-2. The lyrics are 'Et sur ton col frais et si blanc, Que le lait roule é'.

Figure 5-4b: "Lydia," mm. 5-7 if written without changes to the original text of de Lisle.

Et sur ton col frais et si blanc, Que le lait roule é

This musical score shows another revised version of measures 5-7. The vocal line is similar to Figure 5-3a but with different phrasing. The piano accompaniment is the same as in Figure 5-2. The lyrics are 'Et sur ton col frais et si blanc, Que le lait roule é'.

Chapter 6 - Kolby Van Camp

Life

Early Life

Kolby Van Camp was born in Tulsa, Oklahoma on the 22nd of January 1999 to Dr. Kipp and Tracy Van Camp. Kolby Van Camp's relationship with music started early in his youth when his father, a triple board-certified doctor in radiology, family medicine and osteopathic medicine, would play ragtime on the family piano. His parents also gifted him with a children's drum set so he could play along with his father. Van Camp continued to grow up being surrounded by music as his parents would play classical music when he would go to sleep and as he watched and listened to musical soundtracks and films like the Meredith Wilson's *The Music Man* and Disney's *The Aristocats* to which he "watched very religiously."¹⁴⁵ Van Camp attributes his musicality to his early exposure to these musical experiences.

Early Choral Experience

Van Camp received his initial musical training around the years 2006 or 2007, when his parents started him in piano lessons with a local teacher in Topeka, Kansas.¹⁴⁶ Soon after starting piano lessons, he auditioned and was selected into the Lawrence Children's Choir, a premiere youth choral organization based in Lawrence, Kansas. During his time in the Lawrence Children's Choir he participated in two of their choirs. Van Camp's first ensemble he performed with was their 3rd to 6th grade choir, Choristers, that was under the direction of Pam Bushouse. After graduating from Choristers, Van Camp then performed in their touring ensemble. During

¹⁴⁵ Kolby Van Camp, telephone interview by Lorenzo Butler, May 1, 2021, Edmond Oklahoma, digital recording.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

his time in the Tour Choir, Van Camp performed in international choral festivals and in venues like Carnegie Hall. While in the touring ensemble, Van Camp was offered the opportunity to help conduct and accompany the younger Choristers ensemble. Van Camp even accompanied the ensemble in a four-hand piano choral piece at the 2014 KMEA Conference in Wichita, Kansas. This performance led an impressed Dr. Julie Yu-Oppenheim, the Co-Director of Choral Studies at Kansas State University who was in the audience, to invite Van Camp to attend their 40th year Summer Choral Institute as a student accompanist.

After graduating from the Lawrence Children's Choir, Van Camp continued his choral singing and started performing with *Allegro con Spirito*, a young men's choir in Kansas City under the direction of composer and conductor Dr. Jacob Naverud. After joining *Allegro con Spirito* in 2016, Van Camp had the opportunity to tour Italy that same year and was able to tour St. Louis in the next year in 2017. Dr. Naverud also decided to also teach Van Camp composition lessons. He also performed with his high school choir, *Deo Gloria*.

Van Camp also began to take vocal lessons from Dr. Christopher Smith, the current Director of Choral Activities and Worship Arts at Mid-America Nazarene University in Olathe, Kansas. During this time, Van Camp recounts that, "It was these lessons with Dr. Smith where I really took off as a singer."¹⁴⁷ Under this tutelage from Dr. Smith, Van Camp began to enter in national and international vocal competitions, eventually gaining first prize from the American Fine Arts Festival, where he was provided the opportunity to perform a recital in the Weill Recital in Carnegie Hall. With Dr. Smith, Van Camp was also given the opportunity to gain college level choral experience by volunteering for Dr. Smith's top ensemble, the Mid-America Nazarene Heritage Choir.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

Van Camp also began to participate in the American Choral Directors Association's National Mixed High-School Honor Choirs, where he was under the direction of musical giants like Andre Thomas (2015) and Eric Whitacre (2017).

The First Dream

Van Camp would also continue to take piano lessons throughout his youth. He would start taking lessons from Dr. Sarah Higgins, a pianist and composer who eventually began to teach him in both of these areas of her expertise. Shortly after studying with her Van Camp decided his first goal as a musician was to become a concert pianist. For the next three years, Van Camp started to vigorously practice his craft. He began to perform in competitions both locally and nationally, performing difficult repertoire such as Brahms' Rhapsody in G minor and Rachmaninov's Prelude in G minor.

A Turning Point

Van Camp's life began to change around his tenth-grade year in high school. After a foundational conversation with his father where he was told that he, "was a fine pianist but an even better singer, and (that he) didn't realize it yet." Around this time Van Camp began his journey in composition when he stated his interest in composition to his piano teacher Dr. Sarah Higgins. Dr. Higgins soon divided Van Camp's hour-long lessons into two thirty-minute blocks, the first for piano and the second focusing on composition.

Van Camp realized within himself that the level of focus and energy he would need to require to become a concert pianist, was better suited to focus on other musical interests like singing, choral music, and composition as well as being a more complete and well-rounded individual. With this closing of a door, Van Camp began to flourish in more musical outlets.

With his already solid foundation in piano, Van Camp gained the freedom to further express his musical ideas.

Higher Education

A Family Legacy

Van Camp's desire for higher education started with his grandfather Dr. Vic Van Camp. Dr. Vic Van Camp, born in 1933 in Franklin, Nebraska, initially studied at The University of Nebraska Lincoln on a football scholarship. After a year, he transferred to Kansas State University and studied veterinary medicine. He eventually graduated with his Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree in 1957 and began practicing in Hoxie, Kansas within the next year. He eventually moved to Colby, Kansas where he practiced until he retired in 2005.

Kolby Van Camp's father Dr. Kipp Van Camp studied at Kansas City University of Medicine and Biosciences. Dr. Kipp Van Camp became a triple board-certified doctor in radiology, family medicine and osteopathic medicine and is currently practicing in the Lawrence and Kansas City area.

Kolby Van Camp stated that he always knew that he would want to continue this family legacy of becoming, "Dr. Van Camp 3.0"¹⁴⁸ It was though, in his sophomore year of high school, that he finally realized that music and choral direction would be his route to achieving this goal.

Kansas State University

He began study at Kansas State University with an emphasis in both Music Education and Vocal Performance. Van Camp entered Kansas State initially on both a vocal and keyboard scholarship where he studied vocal lessons with Dr. Bryan Pinkall, piano lessons with Dr. Slawomir Dobrzanski, and eventually organ lessons with Dr. David Pickering. At the beginning

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

of his sophomore year in college, Van Camp began to take composition lessons with Dr. Craig Weston. These lessons with Dr. Weston led him to change his second major from Vocal Performance to Composition. While also at Kansas State, Van Camp became a member in Kansas State University's top auditioned choir under the direction of Dr. Joshua Oppenheim. His time in this ensemble allowed him to perform at two different major choral conferences in 2018 (Southwestern American Choral Directors Association) and 2020 (National Collegiate Choral Organization). Van Camp was an active member of Kansas State's early music ensembles called Collegium Musicum and Madrigals and Motets.

To support himself through school and to gain additional conducting experience, Van Camp accepted a position as the Chancel Choir Director at First Lutheran Church in Manhattan, Kansas. Along with studying at Kansas State he also had some early success with one of his choral pieces, *In Flanders Fields*, which was commissioned and performed at the 2018 "Real Men Sing" festival in Fresno, CA and at the 2019 National ACDA Conference in Kansas City, MO. Van Camp has written pieces for solo voice and piano, mixed chorus, men's chorus, and children's chorus. Van Camp and fellow composer Jesse Kaiser established Novus Music Company¹⁴⁹ in 2019.

Van Camp plans to graduate from Kansas State University in May 2022. He plans to continue his studies in graduate school the following fall.

¹⁴⁹ A music publishing company.

Water Box Musings

Water Box Musings is a song cycle completed in 2019 by Kolby Van Camp. During Van Camp's final theory class, he was instructed to write a composition as his final assignment. After submitting his assignment, Dr. Weston selected it to perform on a recital live in front of his class.

Inspired by this task, Van Camp began to immediately think of his performers. He then approached the author of this document to see if he would be interested in performing his composition. After performing together in Kansas State University's Concert Choir for a year, Van Camp knew the author's voice and was interested in collaborating with him. After receiving the author's acceptance, Van Camp began to think of preliminary ideas. Then one day, inspiration struck him while taking a shower as he noticed the name of shampoo he was using, Old Spice Tundra with mint. Finding the title intriguing he began to think about the scent, the cleansing feeling of the shampoo that it gives across the 'landscape' of his scalp, all while repeating the phrase 'with mint.' This led Van Camp to start writing his own text.

As an inspired Van Camp began to think of ideas and techniques to use for his assignment, he eventually decided to have two distinct sections, the first centering around Parsimonious voice leading, and the second around the G Lydian mode.

After completing "Tundra," Van Camp wanted to add a second piece centering around his body wash, "Old Spice Denali." Hence the title of the cycle *Water Box Musings*, was his muse to compose this entire cycle in was his own personal water box, his shower.

Denali

Denali,
Denali,
Denali.

Denali,
Not a thing
but a thought,
not a thought
but a place,
not a place
but just...

Denali,
here I stand
exposed to you,

Denali,
bathing in the
cool of you,

Denali!

Your scent fills my nose,
your chill rolls over my toes,
and slowly you begin to fade
and vanish
like the autumn rose

Denali,
I wrap myself and now depart

Denali,
your essence always
fills my heart!

“Denali”, composed in 2019, is the first piece in *Water Box Musings* and was the second piece to be composed in the cycle. Denali’s melodic and harmonic framework is built around a

hexachord, A-flat, C, D-flat, E-flat, E natural (F-flat) and G-flat. Van Camp's selective use and manipulation of this hexachord creates an interesting piece with a wildly interesting atmosphere.

While composing this song, Van Camp sought to only use these pitches in this hexachord. This decision allowed Van Camp to be more liberal with his choices concerning pitch class and motives. This gives Van Camp the freedom to voice his limited amount of pitch options through different harmonic and melodic situations which highlight the timbres of the voice and the piano. Van Camp's exploration of pitch class is seen right at the beginning of the piece¹⁵⁰ as the piano voices the hexachord in its lower range and the voice expanding over an octave and a tritone, from G3 to D-flat 5.

Figure 6-1 "Denali," mm.1

words and music by
Kolby Van Camp (ASCAP)

The musical score for the first measure of "Denali" is presented in two systems. The first system shows the Tenor and Piano parts. The Tenor part begins with a rest, followed by the lyrics "De - na - li, De - na - li, De -". The Piano part features a hexachord in the lower register, marked *p* and *Red. sempre*. The second system continues the Tenor part with lyrics "na - li, De - na - li, De - na - li, De - na - li." and includes performance instructions such as *molto accel.*, *molto rall.*, and *gliss.*. The Piano part continues with the hexachord, marked *mp*.

¹⁵⁰ As seen in Figure 6-1.

Van Camp not only explores the range of the singer, as it expands over two octaves, but also utilizes the extensive range of the piano. This is seen clearly near the conclusion of this piece.¹⁵¹ As the voice restates its initial motive in measure 26, the piano is being played in its upper range at E-7 as it descends to the its lower register on C2.

Figure 6-2 "Denali," mm. 25-29

The musical score for "Denali" (measures 25-29) is presented in two systems. The first system covers measures 25-27, and the second system covers measures 28-29. The vocal line (T.) and piano accompaniment (Pno.) are shown. The tempo is marked "Poco meno mosso" and the dynamic is "mp". The piano part includes a "gliss." marking in measure 26. The second system is marked "poco rall.". The lyrics are: "De - na - li, I wrap my - self _____ and now de- part, De - - na - - li, your".

A helpful tool that Van Camp uses to tie the art song together is his use of a particular motive in the voice. The initial use of this device is seen in the introduction as the opening vocal

¹⁵¹ See Figure 6-2.

statement repeats this three-pitch motive of an ascending leap, in this case a tritone, and a descending interval, a perfect fourth.¹⁵² This initial movement repeats through the first phrase. We see Van Camp's first manipulation of this motive occurs in measure six on the words 'a place'¹⁵³ where the ascending interval is a minor sixth and the descending interval is an augmented sixth. Another manipulation of this motive happens in measure 8 under the mezzo forte on the word Denali,¹⁵⁴ as the ascending and descending intervals are the same as the beginning, but instead of G as the starting pitch, the starting pitch is D-flat. Van Camp manipulates this motive throughout the piece in the measures 10, 13, 15, 20. The initial motive returns in measure 26 as the piece begins to close, providing a nice symmetry to the piece.

Figure 6-3 "Denali," mm. 4-8

The musical score for measures 4-8 of "Denali" consists of two systems. The first system (measures 4-5) shows the vocal line (T.) and piano accompaniment (Pno.). The vocal line has lyrics: "na - li, not a thing but a thought, not a thought but a". The piano accompaniment features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The second system (measures 6-8) continues the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line has lyrics: "place, not a place but just... De - na - li, here I stand ex -". The piano accompaniment includes dynamic markings: *p* (piano) in measure 6, *mf* (mezzo-forte) in measure 7, and *pp* (pianissimo) and *mp* (mezzo-piano) in measure 8. A performance instruction "pedal freely" is located at the bottom of the second system.

¹⁵² See Figure 6-1.

¹⁵³ See Figure 6-3.

¹⁵⁴ Also seen in Figure 6-2.

Tundra

A cool, clear splash
across the darkened ground,
nourishes the roots,

here I stand,
exploring
the Tundra,
the landscape
of my head,
imploring my mind to rest.

But!
A scent,
a hint of mint?

But!
A scent,
a hint of mint?

a hint of mint,
a scent of mint,

clearing the sinuses
and cleansing
the firmament.

The hint of mint
lives within the bliss
of mist
contained within the
water box!

“Tundra” is divided into two sections, the first section is built upon the technique of Parsimonious voice leading, and the section is built around the G Lydian mode.

Parsimonious voice leading is defined as the transformation from one triad to another using the simplest of motions: moving one of the voices in said triad by only one half-step or

semitone.¹⁵⁵ This is a useful tool in composition, because any harmony, tonality, or melody can be reached with only a half-step. Van Camp uses this tool to great effect as he weaves both his harmonic and melodic content in this first section.¹⁵⁶ This type of voice leading provides “Tundra” with a unique quality where each pitch change is purposeful but smooth as it transitions through chromatic passages.

Figure 6-4 "Tundra," mm. 13 - 21

The image displays a musical score for the piece "Tundra" from measures 13 to 21. It consists of three systems, each with a vocal line (T.) and a piano accompaniment (Pno.).

- System 1 (Measures 13-15):** The vocal line begins with a whole note chord (F#4, A4, C5) and a half note (B4), followed by a half note (A4) and a whole note (G4). The lyrics are "cross the dark-ened ground,". The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note pattern in the right hand and a bass line of quarter notes in the left hand.
- System 2 (Measures 16-18):** The vocal line continues with a half note (F#4), a quarter note (E4), and a half note (D4), followed by a whole note (C4). The lyrics are "nour - ish - es the roots, the". The piano accompaniment continues with the same rhythmic pattern.
- System 3 (Measures 19-21):** The vocal line starts with a half note (B3), a quarter note (A3), and a half note (G3), followed by a quarter note (F#3), a half note (E3), and a whole note (D3). The lyrics are "roots, here I stand, ex - plor - ing,". The piano accompaniment continues with the same rhythmic pattern.

¹⁵⁵ Matt Klassen, “Constraint-Based Systems of Triads and Seventh Chords, and Parsimonious Voice-Leading,” in: ed. Mariana Montiel, Francisco Gomez-Martin, Octavio A. Agustín-Aquino, *Mathematics and Computation in Music*, MCM 2019. Lecture Notes in Computer Science, vol 11502. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-21392-3_15. (2019).

¹⁵⁶ See Figure 6-4.

The B section stands out for Van Camp's use of rhythm and articulation. After the undulating accompaniment of the first section finally slows to a halt in measure 40, the second section begins with an eccentric and erratic staccato pattern that fights with the written meter to give the whimsical nature of a spontaneous interruption of a thought.¹⁵⁷

Figure 6-5 "Tundra," mm. 41-46

The final 10 measures utilize a combination of both the mode and parsimonious voice leading.¹⁵⁸ The initial pitches of this phrase are foundationally built upon the G Lydian mode, then through a descending sequence of the first cell, the cell begins to change one note at a time

¹⁵⁷ See Figure 6-5.

¹⁵⁸ See Figure 6-6 a and 6-6 b.

until the pitches have distanced themselves from G- Lydian. Van Camp still creates this phrase to sound smooth through the voice leading and sequencing the pattern.

Figure 6-6a "Tundra," mm.63 - 67

Musical score for measures 63-67 of "Tundra". The score is for Tenor (T.) and Piano (Pno.).

Measure 63: T. *rit.* *poco a poco dim.* The

Measure 64: T. *rit.* *Slower, legato*

Measure 65: T. *rit.* *Slower, legato*

Measure 66: T. *rit.* *Slower, legato*

Measure 67: T. *rit.* *Slower, legato*

Musical score for measures 66-67 of "Tundra". The score is for Tenor (T.) and Piano (Pno.).

Measure 66: T. *f* *rall.* hint of mint lives with - in the

Measure 67: T. *f* *rall.*

Pno. *mf* *poco a poco dim.*

Figure 6-7b "Tundra," mm.68 - 74

The image displays a musical score for the piece "Tundra" from measures 68 to 74. It is arranged in three systems, each featuring a vocal line (T.) and a piano accompaniment (Pno.).

- System 1 (Measures 68-70):** The vocal line begins with the lyrics "bliss of mist con - tained with - in the". The tempo is marked "Fast!" with a metronome marking of $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 160$. The piano accompaniment consists of a steady eighth-note pattern in the right hand and a similar pattern in the left hand.
- System 2 (Measures 71-72):** The vocal line continues with the lyrics "wat - er box!". The piano accompaniment features a dynamic marking of *ff* (fortissimo) and continues with the eighth-note accompaniment.
- System 3 (Measures 73-74):** The vocal line is silent, indicated by a whole rest. The piano accompaniment concludes the piece with a final chord in the right hand and a sustained note in the left hand.

Appendix A - Verbatim Transcript of Interview of Kolby Van Camp

Interviewer [Q]: Lorenzo Butler

Interviewee [A]: Kolby Van Camp

Interview Date: May 1, 2021

Q. Kolby? Kolby.

A. Hello.

Q. Hello. Hello.

A. Hey, man. How are you?

Q. I'm doing well. Yourself?

A. I can't complain.

Q. That's awesome.

A. So, what's going on in Lorenzo's world these days?

Q. Oh, man. So right now, I am currently at my brother's house in Edmond, Oklahoma. It's just north of Oklahoma City. I went and spent the weekend with them. Just hanging out.

A. Nice.

Q. Yeah. So other than that, just finishing up these last couple of chapters. I started writing yours a little bit, and I wanted to -- I think I have a good page of just like the things -- that I know generally. And so, from there, it's like, all right, let me get some clarification on this and that; as well as some other things that I haven't written yet.

A. Yeah. Well, cool.

Q. All right.

A. So, do you have some questions for me?

Q. Yes. I do. So, before we start, I wanted to make sure that it was okay for me to record this call?

A. Oh, yeah.

Q. I have my iPad on the side. I wanted to get your approval.

A. Yeah. No. You could totally record this call. Like that's not a problem.

Q. Okay. All right, then, I'm going to do a little clap thing so I can synch up the audio and stuff.

A. Okay. Yeah.

Q. And from there, we'll start.

A. Okay. Sounds good.

Q. All right. So Kolby, the first thing that I'd like to ask you is on -- it's about -- because I know that -- I was looking at FaceBook, and I was like I got things like your parents' name and your birthday.

There's just one thing I'd like to add is just, where were you born?

A. Yeah. I was actually born in Tulsa Regional Hospital in Tulsa, Oklahoma, actually. And that was January 22, 1999, in Tulsa, Oklahoma. So that's when I was born and that's where I was born.

Q. All right. So now we got that stuff, now I want to get to you, like the person. Like you're painting the picture of who you are.

The first thing I want to ask is, how did you get your musical start? How did you start in music?

A. Sure. So, the first thing that I'm going to say before I answer that question, since I'm driving from Manhattan to Topeka, there's two really stupid dead spots on I70. So, if I lose the call, I'll call you right back.

Okay?

Q. All right.

A. I meant to tell you that. I didn't say that before. Yeah.

So, I got started in music in, geese, 2006, 2007. I was in the third grade, and my parents signed me up for piano lessons with a local teacher in Topeka. At that time, we were living in Topeka, Kansas. My parents still live in Topeka, Kansas.

Yeah. And then in that same year, I actually joined the Lawrence Children's Choir. I had no idea that they existed, but my parents saw them on the news. They made the local news because they had just come back from singing at Carnegie Hall, and my parents were like, "That's definitely something that we want Kolby to be a part of." So that's where I started my formal training.

But I mean, I've always been a really musical person. My dad used to, when I was two, my parents got me a little drum set, and my dad plays the piano. And he used to play ragtime, like Scott Joplin. And I played the drums with him, and I'd keep a nice little beat. I apparently had pretty decent coordination, and my parents, there was -- there was like a religious show. There were two shows that I always watched very religiously when I was a kid.

The first one was Meredith Wilson's *The Music Man*. And so, I watched that probably once a day for 10 years. The second one was Disney's *Aristocats*. And I always identified with the singing, and the playing of the piano, and all of that stuff. So that's kind of where I think I got a lot of my musicality from because I was pretty exposed to that kind of stuff at a really early age. My parents played classical music when I went to bed at night.

But I started formally taking lessons, like piano lessons and started singing in choir in the third grade. So that's kind of where I got my start.

Q. Wow. That is pretty cool. So, we got the start like some of your influences in terms of like the ushering of who you are as a musician.

Can you talk about how you got further educated into music? For instance, I'm familiar with -- I think you told me that you and Anna had met at piano competition. Right?

A. Yeah. It was sweet. We actually met in choir.

Q. Oh. Okay.

A. We didn't compete against each other in competition in the piano. Yeah.

Q. Okay. Can you tell me about your education, and especially some of the opportunities that you had before coming to K-State?

A. Yeah. So, I sang with the Lawrence Children's Choir until I was in 10th grade. So, I went from 3rd grade to 10th grade. I had been -- they had a lot of choirs underneath the organization that is known as Lawrence Children's Choir.

And I started in Choristers. That's kind of like their little-person choir. They had younger, but Choristers is kind of the next step before you get into the top ensemble, which is the Touring Choir. And they literally do what their name says. They tour every summer.

So, from third to sixth grade, I sang in Choristers. And that was under the direction of a fantastic lady named Pam Bushouse. And that's spelled B-U-S-H-O-U-S-E. It's like bus-house, but it's pronounced like Bushouse. And she was great. And she actually gave me my first ever opportunity to conduct a piece into a company.

When I first started piano lessons, you know, the first year is kind of like, eh. Because it's all that really, you know, beginner stuff. Like here's where your pitchers are, and just kind of boring. I didn't really enjoy it. But once I started figuring out how to play it, and started figuring out what I could do and how I understood the music, it became a lot more fun for me.

And so, one day, sometime during my time in Choristers, or it was just after. I don't remember exactly when it was, but I -- actually, I do remember when it was. I had graduated out of Choristers, but I had come back to be an assistant. So, I kind of helped, and there were a couple of kids that really needed some supervision because they were really distracting to the ensemble. And so, it was kind of my mission to make sure that these kids stayed on track.

And there was one time where this kid that I was supposed to be watching, he just couldn't get with it, and Ms. Bushouse went over, and all the other assistants were helping other people, and they were in the middle of a song, and she said, "I'm going to take care of him. You go conduct." I was like, "What?" She said, "No. Yeah. The piece is still coming. So go."

So, I hopped up there. I was probably -- that was between seventh and ninth grade. And I hopped up there, and I started conducting. You know, I didn't have any kind of idea about formal time pattern, I just kind of conducted the beats. I tried to show them what I knew from the music. And yeah.

That's kind of like where I got my first opportunity at the podium. And it was -- it was very -- I felt very powerful. So maybe that says something a little bit on the darker side about me. Because I was just kind of like, oh. It wasn't so much like look at the music. It was like wow; I like this power. So that was kind of the first real case that I have of a leadership position like that.

But from 7th grade to 10th grade, I bumped up to the Touring Choir. And I actually -- we went on some really fun tours. My seventh-grade year, we actually stayed in Carnegie Hall. So, I stayed in Carnegie Hall, and that was fun. My eighth-grade year, we actually were invited to the International Choral Festival in Missoula, Montana. So, we spent 10 days at the University of Montana. And that was one of the best tours we ever went on.

My ninth-grade year, we went and toured -- we were invited to a festival -- an honors festival in Louisiana. The capitol of Louisiana is making my mind blank. New Orleans. So, we stayed there.

Then my 10th grade year, we did a tour with a couple of other choirs at the University of Boulder in Colorado; and that's where I finished out my time with the Lawrence Children's Choir.

So that's kind of like my initial choral background.

As a pianist, I kind of took off as a piano player and I loved it. And I loved it so much that I -- I was that kid that I just -- my parents didn't have to tell me to go practice. I would just go practice because I enjoyed it.

And I switched piano teachers and started taking from a lady named Doctor Sarah Higgins, H-I-G-G-I-N-S, Higgins. And she was in Lawrence, and she gave the recommendation of one of the people in Lawrence Children's Choir. And she was great. And she really pushed me, and I learned a lot of really cool stuff with her. It was kind of during that time I think I started taking with her in the seventh grade. It was either the seventh or eighth grade. But I had not yet gotten to high school. And I kind of realized I really love this. I'm practicing for four hours a day. I think I could be a concert pianist.

And so, I kind of -- I've always been a person where if I set my sights on something, and that's my goal, I'm going to go for it. I'm going to give it 100 percent to go get it. And so, I put 100 percent in for -- until I was in 10th grade, to try and be a concert pianist, and I actually learned some rather difficult repertoire. I mean, I learned The Rhapsody in G-Minor by Brahms. I learned a Prelude to G-Minor by Rachmaninoff. I learned the first movement of a Mozart Sonata, Number 5, in G-Major. Perhaps I have an affinity for the Key of G, obviously like the key of G obviously.

But after that, when I hit 10th grade, my dad had always told me, he said, "You're a fabulous pianist, but you're a better singer, and you just don't realize it yet." And I was kind of like, "Yeah. Whatever, dad. I am piano 100 percent." But then I kind of woke up one day, and I said, "You know, I'm not going to be a concert pianist. I don't have the energy any more to put in four hours a day, seven hours a day. Like I just -- I can't do that."

You know, I was involved in sports. In ninth grade, you know, I started dating somebody. So, school being -- like the amount of time that I could dedicate to practicing was

dwindling. There were just other things that I wanted to focus on to -- I wanted to expand my horizons. I wanted to be a well-rounded individual.

So, I kind of gave up that dream of being a concert pianist, and kind of embraced what my dad said about that I was a better singer than I was a pianist. And I'm happy to say that I think he was right. Yeah.

Then I started taking singing very seriously. And when I graduated out of the Lawrence Children's Choir, I then moved on to Allegro Choirs of Kansas City, the artistic director -- the founder of the Lawrence Children's Choir was a lady named Janeal, J-A-N-E-A-L, Janeal Krehbiel; that's spelled K-R-E-H-B-I-E-L, Krehbiel. And her -- a young lady who at the time when she was in the public school system, was her -- a student taught with her, and her name is Christy Elsner; and Christy went on to create the Allegro Choirs of Kansas City. And they have a bunch of -- they're like the Lawrence Children's Choir, but on steroids, and actually had a men's choir called Spirito.

And so, I joined Spirito in 2016, and they also toured. I went on a tour of Italy with them in 2016 as a junior. And in my senior year, 2017, we toured St. Louis. And yeah. And then I sang with my old school choir, Deo Gloria.

I was in a co-op, and we had enough people, and it was called Cornerstone Family Schools in Topeka. And we had enough people that we had a choral program. And we competed at competitions, and on choirs for TV, won our regional -- or won our district, won our regional, and then won the national competition. Every year of high school that I was in, we went to the National American Association of Christian Schools, AACCS, competition in South Carolina; and we won every year that I was in high school. We took first place.

And then -- yeah. And then -- I'm trying to think of all the stuff that I did. There was so much stuff that I did in relation to music. I'll stop talking, and I'll let you ask some more questions, and I'll see what more I can answer.

Q. That is great, and I'm just writing stuff down. I'm just writing -- I just want to let you whoop. I was, "Man, this is really cool stuff." So, this seems like you were not only inclined to do music, but you were avidly enjoying performing music as well as being encouraged by your family to do so.

Right?

A. Yeah. That's correct.

Q. So, when did you know that you wanted to pursue a career or a life in music? Was it during this time? Was there a time or a moment after?

A. It was kind of -- it was -- when I started ninth grade, and that was like I had four years until I got to college, I always knew that I wanted to pursue something in music. It was in 10th grade when I kind of realized that I wasn't going to be the concert pianist that I thought I'd might try and be. I was kind of like, you know, I love singing. I love choir. I'd love to be a choir director someday. And that idea always stuck with me, and it's still sticking with me.

And ever since 10th grade, it was kind of my goal. I remember proclaiming to my parents, I had come down and we were at dinner, and I said, "You know, I'm going to be a professional choir director. And I'm going to go get a doctorate, and I'm going to work in colleges." My parents were like, "All right. We definitely think you can do it, so you should go. We think you have the skills; you should go for it." And so that's kind of where it took shape.

And I've never looked back. So, I would say that I really knew that I wanted to be a professional musician when I first started high school in ninth grade, but it was in tenth grade where I kind of zeroed in and said, "I'm going to be a choir director."

For a personal note, I've always wanted to get a doctorate in something for a long time. And that --

Q. He might have hit a dead spot.

A. -- to be an Oasis of the Plains, as they like to call it. She had a doctrine -- say that again.

Q. Until you cut off right after you said that you had always known that you wanted a doctorate in something.

A. Okay. Yeah. See, that's why I let -- I hit the first dead patch. So, I might be spotty here for about the next 30 seconds.

Yeah. So, I was sure that I wanted to doctorate. Something of my -- and that kind of pre-dated my desire to be a professional -- okay. I'm watching bars on my phone.

Q. Right now, it's a dead patch. Right now, it's a little spotty. Yes.

A. Yeah. Okay. Yeah. I'm still at one bar, but I'm just coming out of it. It's right over by Texaco. It's so irritating. It's this one-minute-long spot for two miles. And after that, it goes back to normal until I get close to my parents' house.

But can you hear me okay now?

Q. Yes.

A. Okay. Yeah. I always wanted to get a doctorate. That always pre-dated my desire to be a professional musician. And that's because my grandfather, a guy named Vic Van Camp, V-I-C. He actually went to Kansas State in the 50s, and he got his doctorate in medicine. He was a large and small animal vet in Colby, Kansas. My dad was born and raised in Colby, Kansas, and that's how I got my name. Yeah. So, he was a doctor at an animal care.

And then, my dad went on to medical school, and he's a triple-board certified interventional radiologist. And so, he's Doctor Van Camp. And so, I've always kind of wanted to be like Doctor Van Camp, 3.0. So that's always kind of been a goal of mine.

And it just -- it became obvious to me when I was about in 10th grade that choir was the best way for me to achieve that. And being a singer -- a professional singer, and chorister, and performer in that way rather than a concert pianist. So that's kind of when that desire came in to effect for me.

Q. Okay. That is awesome. Can you speak a little bit more on the importance that your family has had not only in your musical life, but in your life as general in terms of wanting you to pursue the betterment of yourself? Especially to the encouragement of you.

A. Yeah. So, I know that you know this about me. But I'm a Christian, and my parents are Christians, and my dad has always -- my mom and my dad have always been people that were kind of like everybody on this planet are given talents. And I lived my life by the parable of the talents, you know. I don't want to be the servant that buries his talent and didn't do anything with it even though he had said talent.

And I've never been one to if I knew that I was good at something to just kind of not do it because, I don't know, people thought I should. I don't know. And even though I think I'm a pretty decent musician, I've had a number of people throughout the years kind of in a round-about way -- very few of them have been very point-blank, but there have been a couple. But most people are rather supportive of me and what I do, but there have been a couple of people that have just been kind of like, "You know, that's great, but you're never going to achieve anything. You don't have what it takes."

And my parents have always encouraged me to take those doubters and those naysayers, and to always hold onto that, and let that fuel the fire for me going on to achieve what I want to achieve. But they very much been -- everybody under the impression, and I think it's an

accurate impression, that everybody on this earth has a talent, and it's our responsibility to cultivate that talent to the best of our abilities for the glory of God. And so, it was very obvious.

You know, for me, music was my talent. For my brother, athletics is his talents. For my mom, education was her talent. For my dad, medicine was his talent. And it was very obvious that all of us have these talents, and that we shouldn't bury those, and that we should embrace those and go 100 percent to make the most out of those talents, and achieve everything that we possibly can with those talents.

So, they've always been very supportive of me. They've always told me, "You know, Kolby, if you want to do plumbing, apply. And if that's what you want to do, we would have supported you. And, you know, obviously we think that you're destined for more than being a plumber, not that there's anything wrong with plumbers. You know, the world needs plumbers, and plumbers make big money." But they always said that they wanted me to achieve the highest level that I could achieve in the areas that I'm gifted in. And I think I'm pretty gifted in music, and so I -- and my parents have always told me that I was.

So, they've always encouraged me to pursue everything 100 percent that I possibly could in relation to music. And in doing so, they helped to provide me the best opportunities. You know, the Lawrence Children's Choir; Allegro Choirs of Kansas City, studying with Doctor Higgins.

I forgot to mention that I had a very pivotal voice teacher in my life, a guy named Doctor Christopher Smith. And he was my mentor in high school; and he actually was a doctoral student at KU when I met him. And then, after he graduated from KU, he went on to take the choral director job at Mid-America Nazarene University in Olathe, Kansas. And so, in my senior year of high school, 2017, he said, "This is my first year I need basses. I don't have very many basses in my top ensemble, called Heritage Choir. Kolby, will you come and sing in my choir at Mid-America Nazarene. So, I was actually getting the collegiate experience, like collegiate world experience a year before I actually became a full-time college student. So that's -- I forgot to mention that, and that's really important because Doctor Smith -- as Doctor Smith taught me, that's where I really kind of took off as a singer.

And I won some competitions. I won a couple of national competitions. And I actually won an international competition, and that was with the American of Fine Arts Festival. And I actually got to sing in the -- there's a recital clause -- so there's like Carnegie Hall, the big

hall that everybody is familiar with. And then there's like a smaller recital hall that holds 50 people. It's called -- I think it's Weill Recital Hall. It's spelled W-E-I-L-L. The Weill Recital Hall. But I consider it in Carnegie Hall because it's in the Carnegie Hall Complex. And I actually won that. I actually got to give an honors recital there in 2016. So, if it wasn't for Doctor Smith, I don't think that I would have become the -- or achieved as much as I did in high school as a vocalist leading up to college. And I'm sad that I neglected to say something about him until now. But he's a very important person in my life.

So, it's kind been like my parents; my now-fiancé, then girlfriend, Anna; and then Doctor Smith; and Doctor Higgins; and a couple of really key people in my life that have always been like, "You have what it takes. You need to go for it because you can do something special here." And I've always believed it. So that's what I did, and I went for it, and I'm still going for it, and it hasn't failed me yet.

Q. That is awesome. That was one of my follow up questions was about if you had taken any vocal lessons because by the time that I met you, even though you were already a sophomore, you had already a mature, mature voice. And so, that gives me hints that you might have had vocal lessons as well as just natural talent.

But having that level of intellect about your voice at such a young age usually reflects that you have had some type of vocal training before.

A. Yeah. And I took private lessons from seventh to twelfth grade. So yeah. I was - once a week, I was studying with someone in some capacity. Before my voice changed, while my voice changed, and after my voice changed. Now I like to think that because of that is why I still have a pretty solid command of my falsetto, and many of my peers don't. And yeah. I think that has something also to do with the vocal maturity that I got going into college.

And I'm proud of that. I put a lot of effort in from seventh to twelfth grade, and eleventh and twelfth grade, I really started to reap dividends in it. And I got to K-State, and it's just been a wonderful experience from that point forward.

Then also, I want you to know that I'm a minute away from hitting the second dead patch here right by my parents' house. So, when I hit it, I'm sure you will know. And just flag me down.

Q. Okay.

A. Yeah. I'm keeping an eyeball here on my bars so I can see it on my phone. So just let me know when I cut out because I know it does.

Q. Okay. So, the next set of questions is moving towards like your time at K-State. The time having you -- how you got there? Who you studied with, and what was your influences there?

A. Yeah. So, I always dreamed I was going to go to K-State. I was going to K-State football games while my mother was pregnant with me. So, I am -- if there is anybody that truly bleeds purple, it's me. Like I'm unequivocally -- I will fight anybody that says that they're more of a K-State fan than I am, or that they belong at K-State more than I do, because I -- literally, I think I was bred to go to K-State.

My grandparents. My paternal grandparents, Marge and Vic Bancamp, they studied -- they met at K-State. My dad -- my mom and my dad never went to K-State, but my dad has always gone to K-State football games, basketball games. Honestly, he should have gone to K-State. I think he regrets that he didn't. But then, you know, I've always been purple, through and through, and so it's just a no-brainer for me. It's like I always knew I was going to go to K-State. K-State's 45 minutes from my parents' house. So, it's just far enough that I can kind of cut the apron strings, but at the same time, if ever need be, they are right there.

And I love Kansas State. I love the campus. I love the faculty. You know, it really worked out. So, in 2014, I was actually -- I had a really cool opportunities in ninth grade.

The Lawrence Children's Choir, I sang with the Tour Choir. We got invited to sing at the Kansas Music Educators Association in Wichita. And we gave a concert on one of those pieces. There was a four-hand piano accompaniment, and I got -- I was student-selected. I was selected as the student to play with the staff accompanist, I want to believe named, Marilyn Epp, E-P-P, Marilyn Epp. And she was great. So, I got to play this piece at KMEA.

And after the concert, Doctor Yu, of all people, approached me, and she said, "Hey, we have the Summer Choral Institute. It's our 40th year. It's the Summer Choral Institute in 2014, and we have a student accompanist spot that maybe -- you know we usually -- at the time Choral Institute was only allowed for 10th and 11th graders." But she was impressed enough with me and what I did as the student accompanist that she said, "We want you to come as a ninth grader."

So, I came as a ninth grader to K-State in the Summer Choral Institute. And I learned more about being a choral accompanist, and I got to sit and just kind of experience Summer Choral Institute with Doctor Yu and Doctor Oppenheim, then to Doctor Pinkall. And I actually sat in on one of Doctor Pinkall's master's classes. And as a ninth grader, I said, "I'm going to study with that guy." I was like, "He is the man. I love what he says. I love the way he teaches. He's the man."

So, in 2015, I got invited back, and I was in the Summer Choral Institute again. And I went out of my way to request Doctor Oppenheim -- Doctor Pinkall for a master class. And I got it, and I had a 30-minute master class with him. It was really great. And I just feel from that point forward, K-State is where I'm going to be. I was like, "Summer Choral Institute was great. So, this -- if this is a micro chasm of what they do here at K-State, then this is fantastic," because it was like all of the stars were aligning for K-State to suddenly catch fire in terms of choral music and for me to be right there in the middle of it.

So, I always knew I was going to go to K-State. And senior year came around, I graduated, got some scholarships, went to K-State. When you audition as an undergraduate, if you know any of the faculty, you can put down maybe one of your preference. You have to put down your top three preferences. And it's nothing against any of the other faculty, because I love our voice faculty. But I wanted to study under Doctor Pinkall so badly that I put Doctor Pinkall, Doctor Pinkall, Doctor Pinkall. I didn't want to study with anybody else. I wanted to study with him.

And again, I did the video. I auditioned for concert choir, made concert choir. And it's just been a wonderful experience. Doctor Pinkall has been huge in terms of my vocal maturity. Doctor Oppenheim -- I thought I'd use something about choir going into KC, now I know something about choir. Like, almost at my post-K-State career, Doctor Oppenheim has forgotten more about choral music than most people will ever know. And I truly feel humbled to have invest in that at the feet of his choral genius, and learned from him because it's completely reshaped how I think about choral music and how I am as a musician. So, both of those people have really been influential in my time at K-State.

Q. Okay. The next thing that I want to ask before we move on to other things that you studied at K-State.

Because I think that the major you are graduating with now, if I remember correctly, isn't like an additional major, or a major change than what you had initially coming into K-State?

A. Yeah. So, I had originally entered as a music education in vocal performance. And this will tie into my composing, but I had already been composing rather seriously by that point. And I just -- I didn't love the vocal performance side like I thought that I would.

And again, don't get me wrong, I love it. But it's also extremely taxing for me, physically, emotionally, and psychologically. And I just kind of was like -- I felt like I was burning myself out very quickly. And I said, "You know, I'm just not loving this. I'm never going to see in the path -- like that's not what I want to do. I can take all of the classes that I want to take through vocal performance, and still get a separate degree outside of music education that I really want to get."

It was at that time, I had actually taken a years' worth of one-credit lessons with the composition faculty, Doctor Weston. And I just kind of knew after I took a year's worth of lessons with him, I was like, "I need to get a bachelor's in music education, a bachelor's in music composition. Because I love Doctor Weston."

He's kind of like -- there's three people that have been very influential in my time at K-State: Doctor Oppenheim, Doctor Pinkall, and Doctor Weston. As I was telling you, Doctor Weston, I love his teaching. I love what he has to do. I connect with him really well. And I think what he has to say about my music is very intuitive. And yeah.

So, I want to get a composition major. So, I was like, "I want to do something fun. You know, I want to have those two degrees." I've always been an over-achiever. So, I was like, "I can get a double major." I might as well get as many degrees as possible while I have the time to do so. Yeah. So, I changed up my bachelor's of music in composition in my junior year -- in my sophomore year. I don't remember. I think it was the second semester of my sophomore year. I don't remember exactly when I did, but I did change it halfway through my college -- my undergraduate experience. And that was the best decision I've ever made. It was a fantastic decision.

Q. So as a follow up to that, had you always been composing? Because you said that you kind of ramped up a little bit more as you got into college. So, in terms of composition, and your compositional life, how was that going before and during your time at K-State?

A. Yeah. So, I actually -- so it's really cool how I became a composer. So, my piano teacher, Doctor Sarah Higgins, who is just a really wonderful lady.

And she -- I was talking to her one day about her degrees. Because I was like, "Why do you, as a doctorate, why are you just giving private lessons? Why aren't you teaching at KU or something?" And she said, "Well, that's not the path that I want to go." And she said, "Also, I don't have any conventional degrees." I said, "What do you mean?" She said, "I got my undergraduate -- I got my bachelor's in piano performance, and I got my masters in music theory. And then I got a doctorate in composition." She said, "I'm actually a composer first and a teacher second." And I didn't know that. That completely blew my mind. And I said, "Really?" And at the time, I had recently discovered MuseScore, the free notation software, and I kind of doodled around with some stuff in it because I thought it was kind of interesting. But I didn't do anything really seriously. And I said, "Really? You're a composer?" I said, "You know, I just kind of thumb around -- doing some composing around." And she said, "Well, why don't we do this?" She said, "We have hour-long lessons every week. So why don't we take 30 minutes to work on piano." Because I had already expressed to her that I felt kind of burned out about piano. And she said, "Why don't we take the other 30 minutes and do composition lessons?" I said, "Okay. Yeah. That's cool."

And so, on her first assignment, I'll never forget it. Her first assignment was, "I want you to write a 16-measure piece for the piano, and I want you to write it in musician mode." And so, I did. And she liked it, and I thought it was a lot of fun. And yeah. It kind of -- that's kind of how it started. I said, "You know, I think I'm going to do some more composing." And I enjoyed it. And I loved it. And that was probably 2015 -- 2014/2015.

Then fast-forward to 2016, and at the time, the director of Spirito, when I was singing with the Allegro Choirs of Kansas City, Spirito was conducted by the really prominent choral composer, Jake Narverud, Doctor Jake Narverud. He wasn't Doctor Jake Narverud at the time. He is now. And I had been working on a setting of Sure on this Shining Night. I was very inspired by Morten Lauridsen. And it was -- in looking back, it's a disaster. I think I actually threw the score away in a very brazen kind of way because I was so repulsed by it after coming back six years later and looking at it. But I showed him the score, and I said, "I know you're a formal composer. I've kind of been composing for choir myself. What do you think?" I sent it to him in an email.

He emailed me back really quickly. He said, "I want to talk to you about this at our next rehearsal beforehand. Do you have time?" I said, "Yeah." So, I showed up to rehearsal an hour early, and we went into one of the practice rooms in the Allegro Studio, and we sat down. And he gave me some pointers. He talked to me about it. He said, "Do you think you're going to be composing?" And I said, "Yeah. I love it." And he said, "Well, I'd like to give you lessons that we could work on with choral composing." Okay. Cool. So, I met -- then I started taking two different lessons. I was getting two different opinions about composition.

And then, unfortunately, Dr. Higgins had some really terrible circumstances happen, and her husband got very sick, and he died, and her son was in a terrible motorcycle accident, and she got cancer. It was very Job-esk. And she just stopped giving lessons all together. So, I haven't seen her since 2016, which is really unfortunate. We email every once in a while.

So, then I started taking lessons with Jake, and then -- 2016, 2017. Then I got to K-State, and I was still writing choral music and still doing stuff. So, I think I would say that I officially started composing in 2015, if I could put a date on it. That's what I've been saying I started composing. So, it's almost been -- it's been seven years now -- six years, seven years. So yeah.

Q. Oh, man. That's sick. I didn't know that about you and Jake Narverud. That is -- you got yourself like a mad -- like a pedigree, man. This is awesome.

A. Yeah. I'm a very blessed person. What can I say?

Q. That is awesome. So, before we talk about more things about your compositional life, I'd also like to talk about -- like you said that piano was a large part of your musical development before this major change in focus into both composing in voice/choral.

Did you keep pursuing lessons in piano once you got into K-State?

A. Yeah. So, I actually took one year of piano lessons with one of the K-State faculty because I was required to because I had a keyboard scholarship. And I hated it. I hated it. I did not like the teacher. I didn't click with the teacher. And I keep -- even though I was voice choir was my primary emphasis, he expected me to be a concert pianist. Because I gave him a pretty decent audition. I played some pretty difficult rap. And so, he was kind of like, "Oh. Well, listen, I can learn about your crazy stuff in no time flat."

And I actually bombed my jury -- my second semester of freshman year to the point where he left me a really scathing remark on my teacher evaluation -- not my teacher evaluation, but my jury notes. And it was very frustrating. And I just hated it. And I think that's when I kind of knew that the era of me being a professional pianist was done.

So, in order to fulfill more of the keyboard scholarship requirements, I actually asked this teacher, I said, "Can I -- I have an interest in taking organ. Can I switch over to organ with Doctor Pickering?" And I think he was happy to not have me in the studio, which I understand. Because I didn't exemplify the piano qualities that a lot of his other students did. And that's fine. Like, I didn't have any kind of delusions about it. And he said, "Yeah. That's fine. Go ahead. And yes, we'll keep your keyboard scholarship."

So, I took three semesters of organ lessons with Doctor Hickery before I had to stop that because he ran out of space in the studio. He was kind of like, "Well, you're just kind of like somebody who wants to take lessons, and I have people who actually need to take lessons, so I'm going to have to kick you out." Like very politely. And I totally understood, and it worked out fine with my schedule. I was becoming very busy at the time anyway with more important things.

So, I -- for the first time in my life since third grade, at the end of 2019 was when I stopped taking formal keyboard lessons. So, I've been doing that since then -- or I did it up to then, and then since that point in time, I have yet to take any more lessons.

Q. Okay. From there, I'd like to talk about you as the composer and choral director outside of your coursework at K-State. Let me rephrase that.

A. Okay. Sure.

Q. So, you say that you had a very influential time at K-State, especially academically in terms of lessons, in mentorship, as well as private lessons.

So, what were some opportunities that you were able to have either as a composer, as a choral director senior, as well as a soloist? Were there any competitions that you participated in for voice, composition, and even keyboard if there was any?

A. Yeah. So, at K-State, you know, I competed in NATS, the National Association of Teachers of Singing. They're the collegiate competition I've competed in since I've been a freshman. And I was a finalist in 2017 and 2019. In 2018, I was not a finalist. I was very frustrated. So, in 2017, I was a finalist; 2018, I did not become a finalist; 2019, I was a finalist;

in 2020, I was a finalist. And 2017, I took first place; 2019, I took fifth place; in 2020, I took third place.

So, it was those three years of being a finalist, meaning that I had become a national quarter semi-finalist because you're qualifying for the national competition to become a finalist. And I was in the West-Central Region of the United States. So, I did that.

And then solo vocal work, I -- with K-State -- I mean I was in the opera workshop every semester; and then I did the -- I did the opera with you. I did Susannah in 2020. And then -- yeah. So, there's that.

Q. Okay.

A. Nothing -- nothing really earth-shattering with K-State. But outside of my time at K-State, I had some successes. I actually got the job to be the choir director -- the chancel choir in First Lutheran Church in 2018. They needed somebody to fill in for their Easter Service, so I -- they said, "We'll give you \$500 for five rehearsals and two performances on Easter." And I was like, "Okay." So, I did. And then, afterwards, they said, "Did you like that?" I said, "Yeah. I loved it." They were like, "We like you too, so how about you just become the full-time guy and paid a salary." Okay. So, I did, and I've held that position since 2018.

Then as a solo vocalist, I actually, through a very long and convoluted series of events, was invited to be a keynote performer with the Susanville Symphony in Susanville, California. It's directed by the former Survivor TV personality, a guy named Benjamin Coach-Wade. He's a great guy. I actually have a close relationship with him now because of it. But I was invited out. They paid me to come out and I sang with their orchestra. I sang some pieces I composed, and I sang *Bella siccome un angelo* from *Don Pasquale*, by Donizetti. Yeah. That was a really cool experience.

Oh. And then, at K-State, in 2019, it's called *Rhapsody Six*, I believe it was. We sang Mozart's *Requiem* finished by Robert Levin. And I had one of the solos. I had the baritone solo for the *Benedictus*, which was really cool. I stand out with the choir and the chamber orchestra. I mean, you know that because you were there. But I guess I need to say it for the "camera." But yeah.

That's what I found -- I haven't done anything in terms of keyboard. Nothing impressive. I didn't even try. I didn't audition for anything. I didn't do that kind of stuff.

Let's see. Is there anything else? I don't know. Ask me another question, and maybe I'll come up with something else.

Q. So, I know that our time as choristers at K-State, we were able to have the opportunity to perform at a national choral conference.

So, I was wondering as your choral -- as a choral singer as well as a composer, have you had any opportunities for success? Because I'm familiar that you had a piece but that had also performed at a national conference as well.

A. Right. So, I actually started going to the ACDA National Conferences in 2015. I auditioned for the National Mixed High School Honor Choir, and I got in as a bass. So, I started singing in honor choirs like that in 2015. Then I got in again, because the national conference is every other year. It's a bi-annual thing with the ACDA. Or it's -- you know, that's not my angle, but you know what I mean.

So, in 2015, that was with Doctor **André Thomas** in Salt Lake City. And then 2017, I got in again; and that was in Minneapolis; and that was really cool one because we got to sing with the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra. They're a Grammy-winning orchestra. And we got to work with Eric Whitacre. So, I got spend a week working with Eric Whitacre and seeing his music. And that was revolutionary. That was life changing.

And then, when I came to K-State -- in 2017, I graduated, and I came to K-State. And then concert choir had been selected to sing at the Southwest ACDA Conference that next semester. So, we sang in 2018, we sang at the ACDA -- Southwest ACDA in Oklahoma City. And then in 2019, you were there, and we went to NCCO together in Maryland. So that's cool.

And then, as a college student, I also started singing in some professional choirs in Kansas City.

So, Jake Narverud, who has really been a mentor to me over the years, started a professional choir called the Tall Grass Chamber Choir. And he invited me to a part of the Tall Grass Chamber Choir as a sophomore. And I obviously said yes. And we've been a professional recording ensemble since 2018 -- December of 2018. And we actually have some music on Spotify I would highly recommend you listen to. But that's been really cool. And we've actually premiered some pieces by Ola Gjielo, by Daniel Elder, by Ivo Antognini, and Jake himself. So that's really cool.

And then for a summer in 2019, I sang with KC Vitas, B-I-T-A-S. They're kind of the "premier" new music ensemble in Kansas City. So, I sang with them for their summer series, which was really interesting. But I didn't re-audition. It was kind of a lot to do, and I didn't enjoy it like I thought I would. So, there was that. But they're still an excellent ensemble. It was more me than it was them. So, I did that.

Yeah. It's unfortunate because everything happened with COVID, but the Tall Grass Chamber Choir was actually selected to sing at the 2021 ACDA convention in Dallas; but you know, that was cancelled. And we actually got picked up to record an album of sacred music by NAPSOS, but that is going to cost like \$50,000. So, we're actively trying to raise money for that by grants and stuff. So, it's still in the works. I don't know if it will end up happening, but just the fact that NAXOS was interested in us in the first place was cool. Yeah. That's kind of what I've been doing outside of K-State as a chorister.

And then as a composer, I mean, my first real commission came from Doctor Apanheim for the Real Men Sing Convention in Manassas, Virginia. And he was giving an honor choir -- it was like a district honor choir thing for this -- I can't remember what it was at this point, but it was Manassas, Virginia, and it was a tenor-based ensemble. And I told him -- I had showed him some of my music, and he was impressed with it. He said, "You know, I have this thing coming up, and I don't know -- I have a new piece that I want to program, but I don't have any music. Would you write something?" I said, "Yeah. Of course." And he said, "I won't pay you because I don't have the money to pay you, but what I will do is I actually have a little publishing company, and I'll publish it for you." Okay. Sounds good to me. So that was a real -- that was the first real commission I got.

And I had originally had doodled out this thing for a folk song, *The Rocky Road to Dublin*. And it was rather long. There was a lot of verses. There was a lot of stuff. And I showed it to him and I said, "I'm just not feeling it." And he said, "Yeah. I'm not feeling it either. What else do you got?" And I said, "You know, I recently became reacquainted with the text *In Flanders' Fields*." And at that time, I was really into genealogy, and I had recently discovered that my maternal grandmother, her uncle -- so my great, great uncle was a guy named Frank Sparient Pierce, and he was actually sent to the Argonne Forest in World War I, and he was a part of the Infantry Division that lead the charge into the Argonne Forest when the Doughboys first came on the scene in World War I. And he was actually injured in combat,

taking a village called Cumieres in France, and he was sent back home and had honorably discharged. He got a Purple Heart. He got a Silver Star, and he got a bunch of other awards. And I was blown away by his story. I didn't know that any of this existed, but I was able to contact the National Archives and get all of this information about him. I found this -- his service record. I found his headstone in Missouri. It's really cool. And I was just kind of like I really feeling this World War I thing.

And *In Flanders' Fields*, I was so moved at the moment, so I told Doctor Oppenheim. I think it was on a Thursday. I said, "I'm going to come -- I want to work on *In Flanders' Fields*." He said okay. And I had a three-hour chunk of time between what I just talked to Oppenheim and when I had my next class. And I went down to one of the practice rooms, and I said, "I want to work on it right now." And I doodled out this idea. Well, I wrote the entire piece in three hours. And I came back, and as he was leaving, I said, "Here's the score. Here you go." And I printed off the score and gave it to him. He was like, "Oh, my gosh." So, I literally finished the commission that day.

And he loved it, he programmed it, published it, and then my mentor, Christopher Smith, who was directing *Spirito* at the time when Jake Narverud stepped down. And I showed it to him, and said, "I really love *Spirito* to sing this." He said, "I think it's great. And not only do I think it's great, will you add a cello to it." And only when we added the cello to it, *Allegro* just got invited to sing at the opening concert for the 2019 ACDA convention in Kansas City. And we were allowed to sing one piece, "And I want to sing your piece." So that was kind of like my mountain-top experience so far as a composer was getting to hear *Spirito* -- the ensemble that I sang at in my school, directed by my mentor, sing my piece for 1,500 choral directors in the Kauffman Center of Performing Arts in Helzberg Hall at the 2019 ACDA Convention. And that was just unbelievable. And it's an experience I'll never forget. And I actually listen to the recording of that pretty regularly just because I'd like to remember it.

Q. Oh, man. That is awesome. Before we move forward, I want to check with you. How are you doing? How are you feeling? How much time do you have left? How are things going right now?

A. Yeah. So, I actually just got to my parents' house, but I can still stay on the phone. But I need to get out of my car because they got dinner, and I'm starving, so I want to eat. So, I'm going to eat and talk.

Q. Okay.

A. But I'll grab a pair of headphones and we can talk. Let me unplug you here from my hands-free because we were just in my car.

Q. Okay.

A. And then let me grab my backpack and some of the papers that I brought with me. And then, I'm going to grab my food and my headphones, and then we can keep going.

Okay?

Q. Okay. Sounds good.

A. Okay. Cool. How are you doing on time? I would hate to take so much time away from you while you're hanging out with your family.

Q. I have all the time. Right now, I'm in their little office on the corner of the house. So, I'm in here. I'm chilling. I ate. I'm good.

A. Oh, no. My mask is blowing away. I had to print it off on legal paper because I couldn't fit it all on the score. I'm taking all of these massive pieces of paper into the house. Give me just a second, here. [Conversation with parties not in interview.]

Okay. I'm almost to my headphones. Let me grab my food, and then we can keep going.

Q. All right. Let me know when you're ready.

A. Okay. So, in concert choir, we had a one-day retreat today, and I got sunburned. Oh, my gosh, my arms are killing me.

Q. What did this retreat comprise of? What did you all do?

A. Oh. We just played some games, you know, a water balloon fight. That was fun.

Q. Nice.

A. Okay. I am ready when you are, sir.

Q. Okay. All right. So, the next thing that I want to talk about is your compositional influences. I know that you said that Morten Lauridsen was one of your compositional influences. In terms of who you listen to, who you model your style off of, or at least the initial portion of that.

So, I would like to explore more who are your musical influences? Who do you listen to? Who do you study in terms of composers of the past or recording artists now, or things like that? Who are you influenced by in music?

A. Sure. If I had to list my top five composers that I'm influenced by. It would go from top down: It would go -- some of this is going to be really cliché and some of it is not. But it's just what it is. Top down: Eric Whitacre; then Ēriks Ešņvalds; then Sergei Rachmaninoff; Jake Narverud; and Owain Park. So those are my top five influences.

You know, I always study big guys, and someone that I'm really liking these days is Jaakko Mäntyjärvi. Trinity College Choir released an entire album of Mäntyjärvi's music. It's just fire. And I'm really in love with that these days.

So, I'm sure that will shift and Mäntyjärvi will find someone on the list. And then, there's like five staples that have been influential for me in my time as a composer, it's those five guys.

Q. Okay. Nice. Before we talk about the *Waterbox Musings*, I would like to talk about some of your other interests, or business ventures, or things that you have done or would like to do that are either outside or adjacent to the performing and creating side of music.

A. Sure. Are you trying to -- like hobbies? Is that what you're going at?

Q. For instance, you and another composer, Jesse Kaiser, had started and founded your own publishing company. And so, anything like that, or if you want to expand on that a little more as well.

A. Sure. Yeah. Jesse and I started our own company, Novus Music Publishing. It's mostly because I kind of woke up one day and realized that: A, I hated as a composer backing these big companies like Alliance, and Santa Barbara, and Walton. All these guys just grappling to even giving the opportunity for anybody to see my music, let alone to be considered to be published. I mean, I got turned down multiple times. And that's fine.

But I kind of woke up one day and I realized that traditional publishing is kind of a scam because they take your copyright. They keep your copyright, and then if they -- if your song was the best seller for 10 years; but then when it's not and they discontinue it, well, they still own the copyright, and they own your music. So, if somebody comes to you and says, "Hey, I want to sing this piece. I can't find the score anywhere. Can you give me the score?" Well, no. You can't because it's not your copyright anymore. So essentially, they have the power to make your music not exist anymore. And I think that's really disturbing. I don't think anybody should have that power.

And Jesse and I were under the same impression, and we had a lot of conversations about it once. I said, "We should just start our own publishing company." He said, "Yeah. Maybe." And then I looked into it. I went on to LegalZoom, and kind of figured out that it wouldn't cost that much money. I said, "You know what? Let's do it." He said, "Okay." Yeah. We've been publishing our own music.

We have used it personally as now we're self-publishing. But at the same time, we've also sent it to other composers, and we have their music up there as well. And they're cool stuff. It's not like we just ask anybody. We kind of vett people, but they have some neat stuff up there.

Yeah. That's kind of the idea around Novus Music Publishing, is that it's just kind of -- we don't want to take away peoples' copyrights because we think that's wrong. And then we want to pay you what you deserve. You know, we're not going to give you 10 percent royalties; you get 60, 65 percent royalties. I mean, yeah. That's kind of the business model that we have. And we kind of wanted outside of necessarily performing -- I recently got into some of the recording aspects, you know, using Logic and that kind of stuff.

And that came from a hobby that I discovered that I really enjoy, which is sports broadcasting. I actually got the opportunity to be the play-by-play announcer for my high school's football team. They had their first ever football team last year, and my dad coached it, my brother played on it, and I became -- they're the Cornerstone Saints. I became the voice of the Saints, and it was really fun. And I had a soundboard, I had a mic, and I traveled with them to all their games. We set up a hotspot and my computer, and I brought my laptop, and we broadcast every game all the way up until their playoff bid, and they lost in the first round of the playoffs. But it was great. It was so much fun.

And I kind of discovered that I'm really passionate about that kind of stuff. And so, Jesse and I, as a consequence, started a Podcast literally last month called Musically Inclined. And I get to talk about the stuff that I'm really interested by, and then also get to have the fun aspect of mixing and mastering like a garage band.

Yeah. That's kind of -- those are kind of my primary hobbies at the moment that are sort of related to music. There's a bunch of other stuff that I do that's not even remotely related to music, but that's kind of what -- that's the closest I can get to music.

Q. Yeah. Those are kind of my round-about way of trying to get you to talk about those things. Because I know about your publishing company. And I wanted to include that as well as your Podcast because it shows that you are more than just a musician; but you're also a business person that you have your eye towards entrepreneurship in that aspect. So, I wanted to include those things as well.

So, thank you for sharing that.

A. Sure. And by the way, on a side note, in a couple of weeks, I'm going to get you on the show because it's actually been requested to talk about rap. And I don't know anything about rap. And so, I really want to get you on the show to break down some rap. Also, the entire point of the show is that we kind of direct all of our topics back to composing, and that's something that I know something about. And Jesse thought that was a really cool idea. So, I want to get you on to talk about R&B and Rap, and how that can be related to being a classical musician and composer as well. So, I want to get that side note in there because I really want to get you on a show in the next couple of weeks.

Q. Okay. Yeah. I can start thinking about some things to show you guys and to talk about. Yeah. That sounds awesome.

A. Okay. Cool.

Q. Let me write that down right now. So, the first half of the chapter, or maybe I should say the first portion, because I feel like the life and who you are -- a portion of this is going to be like a larger chunk.

But now I want to talk about the composition like that I was able to perform at my graduate recital; that is *Waterbox Musings*.

A. Yeah.

Q. With that, I would like to know, firstly, what led you to compose this collection of songs?

A. So there are a couple of different things. But the first one was purely out of necessity because I actually wrote the second movement first, *Tundra*. Yeah. It was *Tundra*, it was *Tundra* for Theory IV because we had to -- essentially, we just had to write something weird. There were more kind of stringent ideas behind that for parameters. But I kind of understood it as I just had to write something weird. And I had known you for some time, then Theory IV -- actually now -- I -- because you came my sophomore year -- sophomore/junior

year. So yeah. Theory IV was in the end of my sophomore year. So, I had known you for a semester --

Q. Yeah.

A. -- and I also knew that you had a really unique interior constant. I want to work with Lorenzo at some capacity.

And so, I had been kicking around some different ideas for Theory IV, and I was taking a shower one day, and I was using the Old Spice shampoo Tundra. And it said on the label, "With Mint." And I was literally washing my hair, and it always clears my sinuses when I use this because it has a menthol-kind of thing to it. And I inhaled, and I said, "Ah. I can play mint." I said that to myself.

And then all of a sudden, I just had this -- I kind of chuckled because that's kind of funny. And then I thought to myself a scent of mint. I can get the scent of mint. I was kind of like, "Oh. That's kind of interesting." And then, that's it. Later that day, I went to practice room, I started doodling some stuff around. And I'm like, "That's it. I found my idea. It was just a perfect kind of weird for Theory IV Doctor Weston will love it. I'll love putting this kind of music out there. Yeah. Let's go for it." And that's literally as stupid but as simple as it is, that's how *Tundra* came to be.

And then *Denali*, I knew that I wanted to do one more. I wanted to do a body wash in their shampoo. So, I used Denali, my body wash, as the second one.

Q. Nice. With that, for your initial Theory IV assignment, was there any restrictions that was placed on you in terms of using a certain mode, or a certain cell, or a certain row or something like that?

Was there any restrictions that kind of lead into the actual theory in oral quality to this piece?

A. Yeah. So, there was some parameters that we had to fulfill, but they were rather broad parameters. It was just do something different than tunnel music. But then, we had to present our idea to Doctor Weston, and he had to approve it. And my idea was I'm going to percutaneous voice leading as well as some sort of mode. And that's what I wanted to do. So, I wound up using Parsimonious voice leading.

I believe it was G Lidian at the -- there's a distinctive A-section and B-section of *Tundra*. And the A-section was the Parsimonious voice leading; then the B-section is, I think, G

Lidian, or something like that. I'm not sitting in front of the score, but that's right off the top of my head. You could fact-check me on that if you'd like later. But that's what I think it was.

And then I pitched that to him. And he was like, "Yeah. I mean, that fits the non-total aspect of the requirements for this composition. So sounds good to me."

All right. So, it was very relaxed. But I had just enough guidance to kind of come up with something weird enough for the project but also not so weird that nobody would listen to it, if that makes sense.

Q. Yes. So, before we move a little further, can you give a refresher? I'll research this later, but could you give:

One, how you heard about Parsimonious voice leading as well as define that in terms of what you think -- what you know that it is?

A. Sure. I was introduced to Parsimonious voice leading through Theory IV. We were listening to some compositions by John Adams, I think it was, that used the Parsimonious voice leading. And I thoroughly enjoyed it. I thought that's really cool how you are able to kind of weave in and out of chords just by using very simple ideas.

And the entire concept around percutaneous voice leading is that you're changing chords by using the least amount of movement possible. So, moving -- I don't think you move any individual pitch more than a whole step. So, if you're looking at a triad, you know, percutaneous voice leading, if you went from E-Major, and if you wanted to get to the next closest chord in the least amount of movement possible, it could be E-Minor. You just move the G-Sharp to G. And then it's like, okay. Then what's the next chord that I could do. E-Minor. What's the next chord? Well, E, G, B; you change the B to a C; now you're at C-Major in the first inversion. Right?

So that's kind of the idea of Parsimonious voice leading is that you're shifting chords using the least amount of movement possible.

Q. Okay. And then this next round of questions, or the last ones that I have written down, this would be the thought process on *Denali*. So, we know that *Tundra* was born out of this assignment that had this level of parameters, and the parameters that you put on it was that you wanted to use a technique of this next-level voice leading as well as highlighting the Lydian mode in the second section.

So, in *Denali*, was there any type of parameters that you set for yourself especially because this one was more out of desire to have a second piece than it was of an outside force inspiring you to compose? So, what was that process like in composing it?

A. Sure. So, I knew that I wanted to take advantage of more of the virtuosic qualities of your voice. And I wanted to make something challenging. I truly wanted to write a virtuosic piece for the target. It's just this -- like only a handful of people are going to be able to successfully sing this. And I usually don't think about music that way because I usually try to think about it in a conformability kind of -- that's a very big level of -- or a very big lens that I look at my music through. Is this performable? Could the average choir sing this? If not, why? And that's kind of how I think about my music. But I do, up front, knew that the average performer was not going to be able to sing this piece effectively.

And so, that kind of led to play to your strengths. That was the first thing. But then the second thing was that I also -- because of Theory IV, I was very just turned on to the idea of creating the parameters for yourself anyway. And it was kind of like, okay. This song is going to include just one idea. And what can I do with just one idea? And so, the idea that I created for myself -- so I said, "I can use a hexachord. I'm going to use only six pitches. I'm going to generate those pitches at random. I'm going to sit down at a piano, and I'm just going to play until I find six pitches that I like."

That's literally what I did. I sat down at a piano. I played this really funky chord, and I was like, one, two, three, four, five, six. Perfect. Six pitches. And I said, "All right. I'm going to write an entire piece out of just using these six pitches." And that was the parameter that I set to myself. So, I would have to go back and look, but there are only six pitches that are heard through multiple different octaves. You hear multiple different pitch classes, but there are only six distinct pitches that you'll hear all throughout *Denali*.

And then, just to take a second to talk about the words is that I wrote both of the words. And I wanted it to be a double entendre. It's that I wanted it to have this mysterious quality that you wouldn't understand what the words were unless somebody sat down and said, "This is actually just one massive joke for taking a shower." And I found that concept to be extremely amusing because I love putting this kind of music -- I use this kind of music, actually, in lessons that I give where it's like, okay. What is this piece about? What is the composer, i.e. me, trying to convey? What am I trying to tell you here?

And I love hearing coming up with these really complex allegories for life. And they say this crazy stuff. And I'm like, "It's literally about a shower. That I literally took a shower. That's it."

And it's like music is only as serious as we make it. If you would like it to be an allegory for life, then who says it can't be an allegory for life. I wrote it because I thought it would be funny to write music about a shower that makes people think it's an allegory for life. But maybe that says something dumb about me. But that's something that I found also to be very purposeful in how I wrote the words, but also to be highly amusing on a personal level.

So yeah. That's kind of a hymn about the words. And if you -- when you have that information, and you go back and you read the text, it's like, "Duh. Of course, he's talking about a shower," which is why I wanted to come up with really strange title that didn't point towards a shower, but you are really smart, and you sat down, and you thread the words, it's kind of like, "Oh. Maybe he's talking about a shower."

That's why it's called *Waterbox Musings* because I was literally thinking about it while I was in the shower. And at the time, I was in -- I was living in the dorms at K-State, and the shower room literally like red pickles. It was just an upright brick that you stood in, and that was it. There was no space. It was insignificant. I'm a tall guy. My head almost hit the top of the shower whenever I would get in. I had to bend over to wash my hair. And I just thought that this is -- I always thought to myself it's so constricting it's this tiny box. And then it just occurred to me *Waterbox Musings*. That sounds fun. So that's kind of how all of that came to light.

But for *Denali* specifically in terms of the composition and the theory, it's all -- it's a single hexachord, and that's it. And there's multiple different iterations. I think it spans like, I don't know, four or five octaves on the keyboard, and two octaves for voice I believe. I think it goes from C-Sharp 3 to C-Sharp 5, I believe for the tenor. Yeah. That's kind of what -- that's how it came about to be.

Q. So, before we move on, I have some other questions as you were speaking. I was like, that would be interesting to write about. This would be interesting to write about. But now that you said something about the fact that you wrote the actual lyrics or poem to the cycle, this will kind of segway into the next question as well.

In the vocal music that you write, have you ever written your own words before? And if so, in what cases? Also, can you describe not only your process of composing, but any

other genres, or orchestrations, or styles of music that you have composed and are looking to compose for? I think it's like three questions in one.

A. Sure. Yes. I have written one music and set my own text, which I think is kind of interesting because I don't, in any stretch of the imagination, consider myself a poet. I am getting married to a professional poet, and I wouldn't dare -- like, reading her stuff and reading my stuff, I'm like, "I look like a moron." I'm not even going to try to call myself a professional poet. I write words out of necessity or because I feel very moved to. And that's pretty much it.

The only other time off the top of my head, that I've written my own words was actually for a song cycle that I wrote for myself to sing, but it's dedicated to the State of Kansas, and it's dedicated to my late grandfather, Vic Van Camp. And it's called *The Songs of the Prairie*. And it kind of goes through a single day in the life of a Kansas farmer. It has -- so you have the morning, and it's kind of like you're from Kansas, you just know that May and June, when the sun comes up, it just kind of glides over the corn fields. And it's this -- and I know this personally because there's usually a corn field that sits out behind my parents' house in Topeka.

We live on the outside of Topeka. And I would love going outside, even though I'm not a morning person, it's just beautiful in the morning in the summer, when there's not a cloud in the sky and sunny. It just gently comes out of the east, and it shines right over the top of the corn. And it's just beautiful. And it's kind of what that first rhythm is about.

And the second one is about a thunder storm. If there's any more legendary, I would love to know what it is. But Kansas thunder storms are great. And I storm chase in the summers. It's a Kansas joke that the tornado sirens are going off, what do you do? You go outside with a beer, and sit down, and you wait for the tornado. That's kind of the joke. And I've always definitely been one of those people, my mom and I storm chase.

So, the second movement of *Songs of the Prairie* is a thunder storm, and it's all about -- I use these cluster chords on the piano to simulate thunder, and a bunch of twinkly stuff, higher up in the higher register of the keyboard to simulate rain. And then a combination of both towards the end to kind of simulate this gigantic thunder storm. There's a lot of noise. The singer and the baritone sing high in its register. So that's kind of that.

And then, in the final one, again, I wrote this piece first, and then added the other two movements because I knew what I wanted it to be a complete work, and not just a stand-alone work as well.

But the final is *The Lullaby of the Plains*. And that's what dedicated to my late grandfather. And my late grandfather died of Alzheimer's, and he was single-handedly one of the smartest people that I had ever known. And I didn't know my maternal grandfather because he died when I was very young from an aortic aneurysm. But I got to know my late paternal grandfather. And he was a wonderful guy. Very smart. And it was very painful for me to see him progressively lose his mind. And you know, they ask questions. Have him ask me like, "Who are you?" I was like, "Well, I'm Kolby. I'm your grandson." "I have grandchildren?" "Yes, grandpa. You have grandchildren. I'm one of your grandchildren." "Really? I was married?" And those kinds of questions. It was very painful to see him go through that.

And when he died, I think it gave me closure because he died in a very, I don't want to say unceremonious way, but he was so debilitated that he didn't know where he was. He didn't know who he was. He didn't know who was there. And so, it was kind of my -- a way that I try to provide myself closure as a farewell to my grandfather was that I wrote this piece. And it took me a number of years to actually bring it to fruition. I think I wrote it when I was a freshman at K-State. But yeah. That's kind of where that came from.

And I wrote all of the text for that as well. Yeah. It really varies. It varies on the project. I usually don't like to write my own words. I try to set other peoples' words. If there is a very specific topic that I want to talk about that's personal to me, in my music, then I'll probably be writing my own words. Or it's just so weird like *Waterbox Musings* that it only makes sense for me to write it. So yeah. That kind of thing.

Q. So still in the same vein of what this process of composing. I know that you had said several times that you would -- at least on the pieces that you shared in terms of *In Flander's Fields* and *Waterbox Musings*, about going to a practice room and doodling.

Can you describe a little bit in terms of what are some of your habits in terms of your compositional process, if there is any type of consistency there?

A. Yeah. I've actually -- because I know I'll forget stuff. I'm actually going to also direct you to go listen to I think it's the first episode of *Musically Inclined*, our Podcast that Jesse and I do because we actually talk about each other's compositional process. I break it down pretty in depth of what I do. So, if I forget something, I strongly recommend that you listen to that episode because I'm sure I'll provide something there that I don't here.

But I do do a lot of doodling. That's very -- I call it doodling. And that's very integral to my process. I've never been one of those guys -- I've had it happen once, with one single piece where I kind of sat up. In fact, I had woken up in the middle of the night and was like, "I know exactly what I need to write," and I wrote it all. That's the only time I've ever done that. That was like five years ago, and it has never happened again.

So, for me to discover new ideas for me to expound upon already forming ideas takes significant amount of me sitting down at a piano and just messing around, trying to find stuff. Speaking the words, I don't really write for anything outside of choral and vocal music. So, it's very important for me to have the words, to spend time with the words -- excuse me -- and to speak the words out loud to try to understand the text stress.

Something that's a very big pet-peeve for me as a composer is when somebody writes a vocal or choral piece, and the text is set wrong -- excuse me. I had avocado that started to make my voice choke up. -- where the composer will set the wrong syllable on the wrong beat. So, you know, emphasize an unemphasized syllable. Right? And the colloquial joke is that you put the wrong em-phases on the wrong syl-la-ble. Right? And so, it's a major pet-peeve of mine. So, I try to avoid that at all costs as a composer. I try to put the correct text stress on correct beats. And so, that's part of my doodling process, especially if I'm setting text.

But I actually -- it's unfortunate that I don't have it in front of me at this very moment, but I actually have a flow-chart that I had to create for a class once about my composition process. And essentially, I have a couple of key points I'm always thinking about. It's like, does the music make sense with itself? Do I have a cohesive body of music? What are the things that I need to change?

I always am thinking about engraving as I go along, as I write. It's very important for me to have a clean score and kind of -- Jesse Kaiser has turned me into an engraving guru because he's the engraving guru. So, I spend a lot of time during the composition process making sure that my scores are cleaned up. And that's one way because I'm kind of the type-A personality when it comes to that, and I find it incredibly irritating to have cluttered scores.

But then, B, for instance, I'm currently working on a requiem. It's going to have 17 movements. It's going to be over an hour's worth of music. You would absolutely suck to try to engrave all of that music at once. Like no. So, I try to engrave it as I go along. That's something really big that I do.

But yeah. It usually -- I formulate an idea, I doodle with that idea, I come back to that idea, I cut out what I don't need, then I come back, and I keep refining it, and I keep messing around with that. I have -- it's sort of like absolute pitch, but I don't know. I absolutely remember middle-C, and then I relatively can discover what the pitches are that I need in relation to that. And that's a very time-consuming process. I'm not an absolute pitch person; like, give me a B-flat, and I know where B-flat is. You know, give me a G-sharp, and I can give you G-sharp. Like I can't do that. So, it's very important for me.

I don't write in my head. I write with a piano. A piano or a keyboard is a very integral tool to my process. I have to be able to have that kind of stuff, or I'm just not going to be able to write it. It doesn't work. I've tried. Because I want to be like that. I'd like to be catching an airplane somewhere and to be able to sit on the airplane and compose. I just can't do that. So that's usually when I spend time engraving.

Yeah. That's kind of a very broad thing about my composition process. I guarantee if you listen to the Podcast episode, I'll break down more information that I think you'll find useful. I just can't remember off the top of my head because I actually had notes in front of me, and I was reading off of those notes; and I don't have that at the moment.

Q. That is totally fine. But I love that idea of having a flow chart.

Would you feel comfortable in terms of giving me a copy of that flow chart?

A. Yeah. For sure. I can do that.

Q. Okay.

A. I need to update it because some things have changed since when I last wrote it.

But yeah. I'd be happy to send that to you.

Q. Cool. Not only would I like to include it in this document, but also for me, in the minor composing that I do, I feel like that would be really helpful for me as well as whoever the future composers are that happen to be reading my thesis for one thing or another, for them to kind of know a little bit of the process of how one composer is. And maybe they can do that as well.

A. Yeah. For sure. I can do that.

Q. Okay. And then, the last question that I have, I think, is because you said in terms of the process of trying to inspire the freedom of composing. Like whether it's this highly, noble

ambition for the piece or whether it's just, "Hey, I wanted to write this piece about me in my shower." You said that you have students that you teach.

Can you expand upon what kind of lessons do you give in terms of that opportunity there in terms of you giving lessons? Is it only composition? Or is it in voice? Or keyboard? Or what do you teach?

A. Yeah. So, I've given some informal composition lessons to a couple colleagues and students at K-State who are kind of like, "You compose. I wrote some music. I'd like for you to take a look at it and give me your two cents." So, I've done that.

I have one truly formal student who I meet with on a weekly basis. And she essentially -- her dad is actually mathematics faculty at K-State, and she takes piano lessons with Doctor Pickering. And the mathematics faculty approached Doctor Weston, and said, "My daughter has an interest in composing, and she's written some music, and I'd like to get her enrolled in composition lessons. Will you give her lessons?" He said, "I won't because I don't have the time, but I know just the guy who probably could." So, he referred them to me.

And she's great. She's a very bright individual who writes some really interesting music. And we spend a lot of time talking about kind of the elements of music. I have given her multiple theory lessons. I always try to challenge her to think outside the box while also setting parameters for herself.

A key I think to being a composer, and what I think a lot of beginning composers get really stuck, is that -- and it's more frequently beginning composers, but even the most advanced composers can get stuck in this rut. But I think that it's such a vast ocean of possibilities, it's kind of like you don't even know where to begin. Or if you try to cram as many ideas from that vast ocean of possibilities into your piece, then it just sounds like you could make 10 different pieces of music out of 5 minutes of music.

And that's kind of where I refer to my flow chart. It's kind of like does what I have make sense with itself? Am I trying to implement too many ideas, I guess, is a more broken-down way that I can question myself? And I often question my students -- or my student in that way as well. I say, "You know, I think this is a really cool idea. I don't think it makes any kind of sense with what you've written so far. I like what you've written so far. And I like this separate idea. Maybe copy and paste it to a different pile, and just have that for the future. But I don't think that makes sense for what you're writing right now."

And one of the reasons that I think that *Waterbox Musings* was so successful for me to write is that I had set some really specific parameters for myself. I mean, Parsimonious voice leading and G Lidian. I'm going to use literally only six pitches. And those kinds of parameters are, I think, really important.

So, I knew that in my more nuanced way in my music that I'm writing these days. I know I've referenced a requiem. Like in the Kyrie, I'm like, it's going to be -- any part that says Kyrie eleison is going to be completely aleatoric. The Christe eleison is going to be completely fine. Two separate ideas, two very simple ideas, but very complex in execution. And I think that's something that I also try to influence in my students.

It's kind of like take simple ideas and actually give them complexity. You can take simple ideas and execute them simply. You can simple ideas, you can execute them complexly. If you take complex music and try to execute it complexly, nobody is going to be able to do it, or very few people are going to be able to do it. If you're going to take complex music and execute it simply, you can do that as well. But I try to cultivate an idea from simple to complex rather than from complex to simple. I think that's really important. That's how I doodle. I try to doodle in simplicity, and then add layers of complexity as I go along rather than try to create a fully-formed idea off the top of my head because I want to be like Mozart. I can't do that. I know what my limits are as a composer, and anybody who does that and tells you that they are successful at it are lying or they're just unbelievably gifted.

Yeah. And that's kind of -- there are a lot of different things. And honestly, I think it is -- it depends on the lesson. It really does. I'm very much informed when I tell by -- I am very much informed by what my students give me as to what I tell them. So, if they -- if my student says, "Hey, check this out." And it has a really cool melody in the right hand, but only block chords in the left hand, well then, we need to work on some of the chords in the left hand. How can we accentuate it? Is there something that's rhythmically interesting that we can do?

As far as my composition -- my primary composition student goes, she wrote a really interesting piece that was -- she took one idea, and I was really trying to get her to take one idea and then -- take a simple idea and make it complex. And she did it really successfully in the way that she made a simple idea complex was that she had a simple melody, and then the way that she made the melody complex was that she put it through a bunch of very strange time

signatures. So, there was parts that were in 5/8; there were parts that were 3/8; and then there's a 5/16 bar; because that's just how the music naturally flows. So that's a layer of complexity.

And there's another thing that she wrote that's -- or another layer of complexity is that she modulates the idea all over the place. So, she says, "Okay. I like it in C-major. Well, what do I do if I put it to G-major? Well, it's an inversion by fifth." So, she puts it up a fifth. Now I'm going to move into F. That's an inversion down or it's inversion by fourth from where it came from. So, it's all of that kind of stuff, taking a simple idea and making it complex that I think make any composer extremely successful. And that's kind of the primary thing that I try to impart on all of my students is to take simple ideas and make them complex.

Q. I really like that. And as a composer myself, I'm like I like this nugget. I like this nugget. So, thank you so much for sharing that.

And so, do you teach other disciplines as well? Or is right now composition the main thing that you teach privately?

A. Yeah. So, a couple of years ago, I gave private voice lessons. But when COVID happened, I was like I'm not about to try to teach people voice lessons through Zoom. That's really obnoxious and probably extremely ineffective for the average age of students that I was teaching. So, I said, "Yeah. I'm just going to close my studio for now."

I'm trying to re-open it this summer. I actually got a professional job. You know, I talked about Spirito and the Allegro Choirs of Kansas City. Well, I'm actually the director of Spirito now. I got -- was offered that job. Doctor Smith, my mentor, had to step down for a personal reason. And Christy Elsner approached me, and said, "You're about to graduate. I know that, but you seem like the right fit. I think you're the kind of guy that we need to have right now and I'd love for you to be the director." And I said, "I mean, it's a dream come true. I always thought about directing Spirito. So that would be wonderful. I'd love to."

So, I actually directed Spirito and I'm trying to open up a private voice studio through -- have an actual building that's in Bonner Springs, Kansas, that's directly related to them. So, I'm trying to re-open my private voice studio and use the actual Allegro Studio, the location, as kind of my home base for that, and tap into some of the guys that might be interested from Spirito, and taking private instruction over the summer or into the future.

But yeah. At the moment, all I teach right now is composition, but I am trying to gather more composition students and more voice students.

Q. Wow. Congratulations on the Spirito job.

A. Thank you.

Q. I saw that. Now having talked to you about how this ensemble has essentially has been with you for a good portion of your life. Now that you're the director of it is a huge opportunity not only for experience, but also for a spiritual, emotional win. Like this is something that is, "I was a part of this and now I'm directing it," which is really cool.

A. Yeah. It's very full-circle. And Allegro has been really good to me as a good gig and they've started commissioning a lot of music from me. I've actually had two commissions last year that I finished for Allegro.

One of them was world premiered at the beginning of April. That was cool. It was from one of the students in Spirito. His parents commissioned me to write him a piece, and I got to conduct it. And that was really cool.

And the next one will be out in the fall for -- and it's for the combined SATB choir that they do. But it's very cool. And they've been very gracious to me. Yeah.

It's definitely -- like I said, it's very full-circle, and it's very humbling, and cerebral. And it's also a blast. I come into my music education classes now feeling like I know something because I spent the last year working in this professional setting, and making a lot of mistakes, but necessary ones that I've learned a lot from.

So yeah. It's been a dream come true and also a professional God-send for me leading up to going to graduate school. Yeah. That's been really cool. It's a really cool beat.

Q. And now my very final, final question.

A. Sure.

Q. And you have already given me the perfect segue into it.

What is next for you? What are some things in the immediate future as well as things that you're looking forward to, and the next steps that you are doing in life, in composition, in teaching, in performing? Like the whole thing. What is next for you?

A. Yeah. So that's kind of a huge question. Immediately, I have one more year at K-State. I have one more in-person semester in the fall, and then I student teach in the spring.

And then that May and June is going to be crazy because Concert Choir is actually taking a tour of London and Cambridge. We're actually going to spend some time studying with Trinity College at Cambridge.

Stephen Layton-Mull, it's going to be insane. I'm doing a master class with him, and giving a concert. I think we're actually going to sing at one of the Trinity College even songs, which is going to be insane.

So, I graduate May 14. May 15, we go to London. Come back May 27. June 3, I get married. June 5, I turn around and go on my honeymoon, which may or may not be in Europe. I don't know yet.

And that kind of ties into graduate school because I'm trying to actually go to graduate school abroad. My top two schools right now that I'm trying to study at is:

Number one, the Norwegian Academy of Music in Oslo, Norway.

And then there's also the Academy of Arts in Reykjavik, Iceland.

So those are the two schools I'm trying to really get into in terms of composition. I want to get my masters in composition first. And that's what I want to do, and I want to try and get that abroad so it looks really good on a CV in a very competitive field right now to do something abroad. So, if I go abroad for graduate school, and then I decide that we are going to honeymoon somewhere in North America, probably Hawaii. That would be nice.

But if I end up not getting into anywhere abroad, I have some schools I'm trying to get into. I'm really interested in the University of Washington in Seattle. University of South Carolina in Columbia. And a couple of different schools around the country. So, there are some options in the United States as well.

So, if I get into a school in the United States but not abroad, then Nina and I are going to go a honeymoon in Iceland. So that's -- it's kind of all up in the air right now because all of the access to me, and when.

But I'm going for my composition masters in the fall of '22. Whether that be abroad or in the United States, I'm going for it in composition.

And then I'm going to turn around, after I finish that, I'm going to do another masters in choral conducting. And then I'm going to try, and after that, go find somewhere that will take me for a doctorate in choral conducting. And then, you know, because I'm such a glutton for pain, I might add a doctorate in composition. I don't know.

I've always been that guy that secretly would love to flex on literally anybody that walked in my office and I have like six diplomas on my wall. And I'm track for five. But if I

could get that nice even six, maybe I'll do that. But I don't know. It depends on time. It depends on life.

But a doctorate in choral conducting is my end goal. So that's kind of my 10-year plan. It'll take me just about 10 years to complete it. You know, I'll be 23 in 2022, so by the time I'm 32, it'll look pretty good to have two masters -- two undergrads, two masters, and a doctorate. I think that's going to be pretty competitive in an already oversaturated and competitive collegiate field. Yeah.

Q. That's awesome. Is there anything that we, as the readers, to look forward to in terms of at this moment in time is kind of a time capsule of who Kolby Van Camp is in this moment. So, is there anything else that you would like to include before these next couple of chapters in your life that is yet to be written?

A. Yeah. I think that I would just say that I'm an incredibly blessed person. I think God has blessed me very richly with the people that I've had around me and the opportunities that I've had so far. And because of that, I've worked very hard.

And frankly, I'm very proud of myself. I'm proud of what I do. I've had a lot of success so far; and it's been directly related to the amount of work that I put into it. And I'm always looking for the next gig. I'm always looking for the next commission. I'm always hitting people up. I'm always doing what I need to do for the future. And I've always been that way. And I'll always continue to be that way. But so far, it's been something that's made me very successful as an undergraduate student.

Yeah. I don't at all, but is because of God. God has blessed me, and it's very important to that. And I've put in a lot of hard work; and I'm really excited. I'm really excited for the future. I'm excited to try and go abroad. I'm excited to get married [inaudible 1:58:43].

So, I have a couple of stressful semesters left. But after that, I'm really in the clear, and I'm looking forward to what I have coming up in the near future. But other than that, I think I've been about extended as I could be on the top of my head. So, I think that's about all I've got.

Q. Yeah. And with that, Kolby, I thank you tremendously.

A. Absolutely.

Q. I thank you for giving over two hours. Right now, the recording is at two hours and two minutes of your time, and your intellectual thought, to help me out with this project.

And I hope that I am able to come away with something that we both can be proud of in terms of this.

I thank you immensely not only your friendship, but your encouragement and inspiration. I don't know how to say it in the right words, but it's the drive, the relationship you have with God, the ambition that you have, and your hard work in this, as well as your appreciation for others. Because that is something that I admire and aspire to be.

So, I thank you for sharing your time with me in this. Especially since I should have this done sooner.

A. It's really okay.

Q. But you still just allow that -- as well as just the initial thing of just being my friend and wanting to mentor me. So yeah.

A. You know, Lorenzo, I really appreciate that. And it's really easy to be friends with a guy like you. You make me sound really great, and I appreciate that. But it has a lot to do with you as well. That has a lot to do with the people around me as well. It's easy to be friendly and having a lot of people that surround me at the moment. But I thank you. I appreciate that.

And also, just note that there wouldn't be this particular project and endeavor that you're doing that includes me if you hadn't agreed to sing those pieces. And they're kind of nutty pieces, but yeah. I don't know if anybody else except you is going to be able to successfully sing that. I need to get a really solid professional recording of that sometime in the near future, in the next year. I'm trying to put some money together to actually record some stuff. So, I'd love to fly you up into Kansas and record with you, and get a solid couple of takes so I can have those professional sense and professionally recorded as well.

But you know, you're a great guy as well, Lorenzo, and you do a lot of hard work yourself. I think everything that you were so kind to say about me is also about you. Yeah. I don't know what else to say.

I'm flattered, and I receive that. And I appreciate that, you know, you were willing to sing my music. Because you're only a handful of people so far that are willing to actually go out on that limb and perform my music. So, I appreciate that just about more than anything.

Well, I'm glad that we've been able to put this together and get some stuff on paper for you. Good luck synthesizing two hours and five minutes of material. Cool.

Q. Yeah.

A. Do you need anything else from me?

Q. I feel like I have a lot of material to work with. And if I do have anything, it's definitely not going to come in the next five minutes, or even this evening.

A. Sure. Yeah.

Q. Thank you again. Yeah.

A. Feel free to text me, or call me, or whatever if you have any questions. I'll be happy to work this out for you.

Q. All right.

A. Cool.

Q. Cool.

A. Thank you, sir. I'm going to finish up some work for Doctor Urkle.

Q. All right. Have fun.

A. Yep. Absolutely. I'll talk to you sometime soon. Okay.

Q. All right. Talk to you soon. Peace.

A. All right. Bye.

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