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Gretchen Ostberg
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165

AN ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THREE VOCAL WORKS
FOR SOPRANO FROM EIGHTEENTH, NINETEENTH
AND TWENTIETH CENTURIES

A Covering Paper
Presented to
the Graduate Faculty
Central Washington State College

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Education

by
Gretchen Ostberg
August 1967

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APPROVED FOR THE GRADUATE FACULTY

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I.	THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED . . . 1
	The Problem 2
	Definitions of Terms Used 3
II.	"L'AMERÒ COSTANTE" 7
	Factors Influencing "L'amerò Costante" . . . 7
	The composer 7
	The historical period 8
	The musical period 10
	Analysis and Interpretation of "L'amerò Costante" 14
	Analysis of "L'amerò costante" 14
	Interpretation of "L'amerò costante" . . . 18
III.	"EXTASE" 19
	Factors Influencing "Extase" 19
	The composer 19
	The historical period 20
	The musical period 22
	Analysis and Interpretation of "Extase" . . 25
	Analysis of "Extase" 25
	Interpretation of "Extase" 27
IV.	THREE SONGS: "GEFUNDEN," "GEBET," AND "FREUNDE" 29
	Factors Influencing "Gefunden, Gebet and Freunde" 29

CHAPTER	PAGE
The composer	29
The historical period	30
The musical period	31
Analysis and Interpretation of "Gefunden, Gebet, and Freunde"	33
Analysis of Gefunden, Gebet and Freunde" . .	33
Interpretation of "Gefunden, Gebet, and Freunde"	37
V. CONCLUSIONS	38
BIBLIOGRAPHY	40
APPENDIX	42

CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

Throughout history great singing and great songs have managed to survive despite political, social, and cultural changes in the world. Singing is expression through the most universal musical instrument man has: his own human voice. Because the human voice can reproduce words it is capable of expressing emotions and thoughts in a unique way which no other instrument can equal.

Singing is the interpretation of a text set to music. All singing, however, is not great singing; all singing is not artistic. Great singing is more than words and music; it is more than the mere production of beautiful sounds. Great singing is the intelligent recreation, re-expression, and interpretation of a work of musical art created for the human voice.

Music exists in time. The harmony, form and style of a vocal musical work of art is influenced by: social, political, and cultural factors of the historical period in which a work was composed; the stage of evolution of music at a particular time in history; the personality of the composer; and the meaning of the words in the text. Great art is eternal; it transcends the period of history in which it was conceived; it lives beyond the factors influencing

its conception and growth.

Between a musical work of art and the world stands the interpreter: the singer. It is the singer's responsibility to bring a work of art to life in presenting it to the world. It is helpful, therefore, for a singer to become acquainted with factors that could influence the interpretation of a particular work of art. The challenge for the singer is to recreate an artistic representation of a work in light of historical, musical, and stylistic factors affecting the composition. When this is accomplished, then singing is an art.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. It was the purpose of this study to establish a musical and artistic interpretation of three vocal compositions by three composers: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Henri Duparc, and Anton Webern.

Procedures used in the study. In order to determine the interpretation of each song, the following areas were examined: (1) the composer; (2) the historical period in which the composer lived; (3) the stage of development of harmony, form and style in the evolution of music; (4) the meaning of the words of the text; and (5) the music composed to the text.

Limitations of the study. The study was limited to three vocal works and their respective influences: (1) "L'amero costante" by Mozart; (2) "Extase" by Duparc; and (3) Three Songs: "Gefunden," "Gebet," and "Freunde" by Webern.

Importance of the study. The three vocal works were included in the performance of a graduate recital by the writer. In order to present an artistic performance of each work, it was necessary to realize a more comprehensive understanding of each work by examining each song, and the various influences that affected its composition.

II. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

Alberti bass. A keyboard accompaniment figure which consists of breaking each of the underlying chords into a simple pattern of short notes incessantly repeated.

Anticipation. An advance sounding of a note on the upbeat to the tone anticipated.

Appoggiatura. A non-harmonic tone occurring on a strong beat and resolved to a harmonic tone.

Aria di bravura. An aria displaying a singer's skill, capabilities, and cleverness.

Bel canto. The Italian vocal technique of the eighteenth century with its emphasis on beauty of sound and brilliancy of performance, rather than dramatic expression or romantic emotion.

Cantilena. A pure, steady, even flow of tone in singing.

Coda. A section of a composition which is added at the end to form a conclusion, usually affirming and underlining the tonic key.

Componimento drammatico. A composition of Dramatic Art.

Da Capo Aria. A typical form of aria in which the first section (A) is repeated in its entirety after the second (B), thus leading to the scheme: A B A .

Divertimento. An instrumental form of the second half of the eighteenth century consisting of a varying number of relatively short movements of which are either in Sonata-form or are suite-like dances (especially minuets) or variations.

Échappée. A note escaping from the direction of the melodic movement and having to return by skip.

Libretto. The text or words of an opera.

Messa di voce. The sounding of a sustained tone with a swell, beginning by piano, increasing it to full voice and then diminishing it again to piano.

Opera buffa. An opera with a mixture of music on a light or sentimental subject, with a happy ending, and in which the comic element plays a certain part.

Parnassian School. A school of French poets of the latter half of the nineteenth century, characterized chiefly by a belief in art for art's sake, by an emphasis on metrical form and by the repression of emotive elements: so called from Le Parnasse Contemporain, the title of their first collection of poems, published in 1866.

Portamento. The sliding of the voice through the infinitesimal gradations of tone lying between a note and the following one.

Prima donna. A female soprano who sang a leading part in opera.

Prima uomo. A male castrato who sang a leading part in eighteenth century opera.

Recitative. A vocal style intermediate between speaking and singing, resembling recitation, usually employed in connection with prose texts of a more or less narrative

character.

Rondo. A work or movement having one principal subject (A) which is stated at least three times in the same key and to which return is made after the introduction of each subordinate theme; the form represented by letters would be: A B A C A Coda.

Sonata. An instrumentally conceived composition which consists of three or four independent pieces called movements, each of which follows certain standards of character and form.

Sonata-form. A term which designates the form, consisting of exposition, development, and recapitulation, often used for single movements of the sonata or symphony.

Symbolist School. A group of French and Belgian poets of the latter part of the nineteenth century who sought to evoke aesthetic emotions by emphasizing the associative character of verbal, often private, images or by using synesthetic devices.

Viennese Classics. Collective designation for the Viennese masters of classical music: Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven.

CHAPTER II

I. FACTORS INFLUENCING THE WORK: "L'AMERO COSTANTE"

The Composer

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was born in Salzburg January 27, 1756 and died in Vienna December 5, 1791. A child prodigy, he acquired a thorough knowledge of musical composition from his father. He possessed an innate, extraordinary musical talent, and was a prolific vocal and instrumental composer, creating over 626 works.

Mozart was a precocious genius, of roving disposition and unsettled habits, a born showman, a virtuoses pianist, a consummate musical dramatist, but helpless in most of the practical affairs of life.
(8:437)

Mozart possessed an uncanny ability to judge human nature. With all his insight into the essence of characters and affairs of men, he never learned how to impose his personality upon society and the world. He was small, delicate, unprepossessing and poor; he failed in his relation to women and he failed to find a position worthy of the marvelous talent within him.

Mozart's universe was one of art music; he cared nothing for natural scenery, and he had little sympathy for music of the common folk. He looked upon art as an integral part of life, and was born into a gallant era of

Music. His life was like a perpetual tour because he loved to travel and new environments stimulated his creative activity. His travels to Paris, London, Munich, Mannheim and Vienna affected his work; everything he heard in music he either rejected completely or it thoroughly became a part of him. Although born a German musician, he also composed Italian opera, and was one of the few composers to combine in his music elements of opera buffa and opera seria. "As an artist, as a musician, Mozart was not a man of this world." (6:3) He was a meteor on the musical horizon, for whose appearance the world was not yet prepared. (6:133)

. . . he produced art-works that seemed to differ widely from everything that had heretofore been heard and seen in the way of practical application of the laws of art. They were filled with a richness of invention, an abundance and power in execution, which produced a beauty that only a few could elucidate and analyze artistically--the majority could only feel it. (6:134)

. . . he filled his music with so powerful a spell that it seems as if, in a period of a few years, he accelerated the progress of musical taste by more than half a century. (6:133)

The Historical Period

The period from 1770-1830 was known in history as "Classicism" or the era of the Viennese Classics. All religion, philosophy, science, the arts, education, and the

social order during this period were judged by how they contributed to the well-being of the individual.

They did not want to extinguish the individual in the universal; they wanted to co-ordinate the two rather than subordinate one to the other, and what they achieved was the miracle of universalized individualism. (12:623)

Socio-political influence. With the rise of a numerous middle class to a position of influence, eighteenth century philosophy, science, literature and the fine arts all began to take account of a general public instead of a select group of experts and connoisseurs. The nobility still maintained its power, however, and patronage of the arts was still practiced.

Cultural influence. In the classical era music was an adornment of life; it was commissioned for every kind of occasion. A composer was a craftsman serving humanity; he created because he had the gift and because the world was eager for his product.

Both dramatic and lyric theater became the focal point of the temporal arts. Opera rose to popularity because it allowed the public to see human beings in action; they wanted to see themselves on the stage.

Operas were composed for special occasions. The most important participant in the opera was the singer. The composer was in the service of the singer; the librettist

in the service of the composer. The libretto was unimportant; it had no literary value, but merely provided the composer with an opportunity to create a musical picture of life. The composer built everything: characters, situations, and action purely by music.

The Musical Period

Art is expression and form; the two cannot be separated. The age of classicism emphasized form; it strove to perfect existing forms not to create new ones. There was a universality of expression acquired through the use of such prevalent forms as: Sonata, Divertimento, Rondo, and Theme and Variations.

The classical composers valued purity of style, and logical, harmonious proportion. They valued order, lucidity, and restraint. Their music was primarily a logical manipulation of themes within a specific form, often the Sonata-form. The music represented the love of tradition and stability.

Style of music.

Its language should be universal, not limited by national boundaries; it should be noble as well as entertaining; it should be expressive within the bounds of decorum; it should be natural, that is, free of needless technical complications and capable of immediately pleasing any normally sensitive listener.
(8:415)

Vocal forms. Operas were composed of a disjointed sequence of recitatives and arias. The recitatives were merely to carry the action from one aria to another. The Da Capo arias were still used extensively during the eighteenth century. The aria as a form consisted in its instrumental, monumental character; it was a concerto in miniature, in which the voice replaced the solo instrument. This monumental aria was the symbol in operatic history of the triumph of the singer, the primo uomo, and the prima donna.

Vocal style. Arias were written for celebrated singers of the time; the choice of singers influenced the vocal style of a work and other characteristics as well.

In those days to be a great singer meant to have perfect breath control, absolute accuracy of intonation, full command of a sustained and beautiful cantilena, a perfect messa di voce and portamento, and ability to execute the most appalling difficulties in ornament. (10: 93)

The singer interpreted the music through gestures, by phrasing and by coloratura embellishments. The Italian singers exploited their pure and sonorous vowels because they furthered the production of the bel canto style of singing.

Mozart stressed to the utmost the importance of action on the stage. If Mozart's singers, no matter how famous, were lacking in acting ability, he held them in contempt, and was always ready to admonish them with very profane language. (5: 275)

Along with the expressive element in his melodic direction, Mozart insisted on concordance between acting and singing at the historic performances under his direction. (5:276)

Eighteenth century singers were not specialists. The operas did not call for a "dramatic" or "lyric" soprano; all the singers were sopranos, contraltos, and tenors, with an occasional bass. Everyone in an opera was entitled to at least one aria di bravura, and singers excelled in both sustained melodies and sparkling flourishes of coloratura. "To sing Mozart one must sing. For the arias he must find it possible to introduce the tragic accent without departing from the pure bel canto." (10:156)

The use of vibrato as we know it today is quite out of place in music of this period. The great castrati, Caffarelli and Farinelli, were praised for the steadiness of their tones and the perfect smoothness of their style. (10:154) It is evident that the vibrato is a device popularized after their day. (10:154)

Melody. In the classical era, melody was important due to Italian influence. Melodies were most commonly built in four symmetrical phrases, each four measures long, which were punctuated with regularly spaced cadences. The structure was simplified by the use of repetition; the second phrase was often like the first. The third phrase was usually different, while the fourth phrase completed

the melody either by repeating the first phrase or punctuating it with something new.

The melody always emphasized the central key tonality which served as a point of departure and return. A melody was perfectly singable unaccompanied. The substance of the melodies was often a simple chord figuration, decorated by non-harmonic tones and coloratura embellishments. Melodies were influenced by the bel canto style of singing; they were shaped to the curve of the human voice, even when written for instruments.

Harmony. The composers of the eighteenth century constructed music on the basis of closely related keys. They began to introduce contrasts between the various parts of a movement, i.e., Sonata-form, or even within the theme or themes themselves. The strong sense of the "home" key gave the music a sense of movement toward a goal. The harmonic rhythm was slower; the harmonic progressions contained less dissonance, which when it did appear was always resolved immediately. Important harmonic changes coincided with the strong accents indicated by the barlines. The complete subordination of the bass and harmonies was symbolized by the most widely used device of eighteenth century keyboard music, the Alberti bass.

II. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF "L'AMERÒ COSTANTE"

Analysis of "L'amerò costante"

"L'amerò costante" exemplifies the monumental, concerto-in-miniature style of aria so often found in eighteenth century opera. The aria is from the larger work, Il Re pastore, a componimento drammatico, written in April 1775 in Salzburg after Mozart had just returned from a visit to Italy. The libretto was one of the later works of Mestastasio and also one of his weakest.

The two pairs of lovers, who under the patronage of Alexander the Great represent the theme of love versus reasons of state, produce veritable torrents of noble sentiments, and words of wisdom about the duties of a ruler drip unceasingly, sweet as syrup. The arias--half heroic, half pastoral--have hardly any connection with the action. (6:402)

Text. The text translated directly from the Italian reads:

I will love him, I will be constant,
faithful spouse and faithful lover,
Only for him will I sigh.

In such a dear and sweet object,
my joy, my delight, my peace
will I find.

Form. Perhaps Mozart chose the rondo form in order to emphasize the importance of fidelity in marriage. The recurrent A theme, "L'amerò, sarò costante . . ." is repeated exactly each time (m.9-24,48-63,86-101).

The B and C themes contain the same words, but are musically different. Perhaps Mozart wished to exemplify that the joys, delights, and peace one finds in marriage are not always constant. It is more feasible, however, that he chose the rondo form because of the concerto-style of the aria. At the time Mozart composed this work, he was nineteen, unmarried, and flirting with every pretty girl he met. It seems doubtful that he would have had any serious thoughts about the state of matrimony.

Melody. Mozart has reflected the simple sentiments expressed in the text by creating an unpretentious, sustained, consonant, lyrical melodic line practically devoid of dissonance and embellishments. The only two coloratura passages are each one measure long and heighten the cadential close of the B and C themes (m. 45,83).

The melody moves diatonically (m.15) and in consonant leaps that outline basic chords established in the harmonic structure (m. 16-21). Typical eighteenth century ornamentation is included: passing tones (m. 11); anticipations (m. 20); appoggiaturas (m. 31); échappées (m. 35); sequences (m.36-39); and trills at each cadence point (m. 23). The few dissonant notes that are introduced occur primarily in the C theme and are resolved immediately.

Mozart, although adhering to the sixteen measure unit,

broke away from the rigid form of symmetrical phrase lengths. In the A theme, the first two phrases are each four bars (m.9-12,13-16); the second phrase is extended to five measures (m.17-21); and the last phrase is reduced to only three measures including one measure of piano interlude (m.22-24).

The B and C themes consist of five four-bar phrases (m.28-47,67-85), with the exception that the fifth phrase in the C theme is condensed to three measures (m.83-5). The melody reflects the lyrical influence of the bel canto style of singing so prevalent in Italy at this time.


Harmony. The entire aria is strongly rooted in the central tonality of E-flat Major. It is interesting to note that the key of E-flat Major sounded lower in Mozart's day because the tuning "A" was only 422 cycles in his day while today it is 435 cycles and still rising.

Modulations occur only to closely related keys: (1) in the B theme to the dominant: B-flat Major (m.29-47); and (2) in the C theme to the relative minor: c minor (m.68-85). The C theme contains more dissonant, chromatic harmonies and altered chords than any other place in the aria.

The basic I, IV, and V chords are utilized continually in *L'amerò costante*. Perhaps to give added strength to the words of the A theme, Mozart alternates between tonic

and dominant chords for eleven measures (m. 9-19).

Cadences are symmetrically spaced and are easily recognizable by their clear-cut formula: I ii I V I
 (m.23). 6 6 7
 4

Harmonic changes occur on the first beat and third beat of the measure; the harmonic rhythm is slow: .

Texture. The Alberti bass immediately reveals the homophonic texture of the aria; the accompaniment supports the vocal melody (m.9). A polyphonic effect is created if the violin obligato melody is included. Repeated chords and staccato arpeggios are used in the accompaniment for variety (m.17-19). The accompaniment often reinforces the vocal line by playing the same notes (m. 9) and the same rhythmic motif within the aria (m.9-13) and also in the introduction (m.1-3) and coda (m.117-118). The accompaniment assumes an orchestral "tutti" role in the interludes between sections of the rondo (m.24-27).

Dynamics. Very few dynamic markings are found in the aria due to the fact that composers of the Classical era supervised their own performances and enforced their interpretive wishes personally to the performer. Important instructions were given verbally; it was not necessary that they be written down in the music.

Interpretation of "L'amero Costante"

"L'amero costante" is an example of a work of art exemplifying the importance of eighteenth century form. This aria permits a capable singer to display bel canto.

Mozart's melody should be sung with composure, calmness and reserve. Important words such as: "l'amerò, costante, fido, caro, gioia, diletto, and pace" should not be glossed over; they are the key words to the work: "love, constant, faithful, beloved, joy, delight, and peace."

The opportunity for showing more emotion is afforded in the more chromatic B and C themes, "In si caro . . ." (m.28), where she is thinking of her happiness instead of her resolution to remain faithful. The A theme exemplifies the mind overcoming the heart; reason overcoming passion; the thought of "I will" over "my joy, my delight, and my peace."

CHAPTER III

I. FACTORS INFLUENCING THE WORK: "EXTASE"

The composer

Henri Duparc was born in Paris January 21, 1848 and died in Mont-de-Marson February 12, 1933. He showed little inclination toward music in his childhood. While studying law at the Jesuit College of Vaugirard in Paris, he simultaneously studied piano with César Franck, who recognized Duparc's talent and exposed him to music of the great classic masters, particularly Gluck. When Duparc came to realize his own talent, he gave up the study of law and began a serious study of harmony, counterpoint and composition with Franck.

He was very self-critical and destroyed most of his early instrumental compositions. Works which he permitted to survive were the symphonic poem, "Lénore," composed in 1875, and sixteen art songs, composed from 1868 to 1884, which have immortalized his name in music.

Until 1885 Duparc was active in the musical life of Paris. With his friends, Camille Saint-Saëns and Vincent d'Indy, he was one of the founders of the "Société Nationale de Musique." After traveling to Bayreuth, he became an even more fervent admirer of Wagner.

In 1885 he was compelled by a strange mental breakdown to give up all compositions and leave Paris. He suffered from an incurable nervous malady and lived in complete retirement in Switzerland, entirely indifferent to the past, his work and his friends. He lived the last forty-eight years in solitude, a proud and resigned stoic, calmly awaiting the end. He even expressed to a friend in a letter that he lived to regret the things he did not do, without thinking much of the little he did.

Duparc shared with his contemporary Fauré the distinction of creating, in collaboration with poets of the Parnassian and Symbolist schools, a characteristic form of French art song in the *melodie*. (2:811)

He set the finest contemporary poetry to music with a rare combination of dramatic feeling and poetic sensibility. "For Henri Duparc, beauty was something ardent and sad; the ardor was not set free, and the sadness was not spoken, but was exhaled with poignant simplicity." (7:209)

"Duparc's achievement was a highly individual one--- a self-contained little world of remarkable richness." (16:208)

The Historical Period

The period from 1825-1900 was known in history as the period of "Romanticism," or the "Romantic Era." The period emphasized the subjective nature of man: his expressed emotions; his direct personal reactions; his questionings,

yearnings, and longings in life.

Socio-political. Romanticism was bound in many ways to the French Revolution (1789-1799). The Revolution emancipated the middle classes and in so doing gave the cultural leadership to the petty bourgeois spirit, with its eyes set on the practical and hopes set on the continuation of the Enlightenment movement according to its own set of rules. (12:805)

Cultural. Romanticism was a rebellion against classicism; where classicism had valued form in art, romanticism emphasized expression in art.

A fundamental trait of Romanticism was boundlessness. Romantic art aspired to transcend immediate times and occasions, to seize eternity. It cherished freedom, movement and passion, and endless pursuit of the unattainable. Art was subjective; the personality of the artist was merged with the work of art.

Romanticism was primarily a literary movement. The composers of the era were men of extensive literary and philosophical schooling; many of them held doctoral degrees in philosophy; many were able writer, critics, poets, and playwrights. (12:808) The literary influence is evident in the lyricism of both vocal and instrumental music, and particularly in the symphonic "tone poems."

The Romantic musicians did not compose for a patron nor for a particular occasion, but for infinity, for an imaginable audience which would some day understand and appreciate them. (8:495)

The Musical Period

On the one hand romantic music clings to the formal stylistic factors of classicism, on the other it seeks to eradicate boundaries and architectural logic. The loosening and flexibility of the coloristic, freely unfolding melody, the differentiated harmony, rich in dissonances and leaning to a veiling of tonal relationship, resulted in a wide variety of refined tonal and sonorous sense; the immensely enriched rhythm, lending itself to many combinations and indulging in the reversal of strong and weak beats, the intimate, egocentric, dreamy, oscillating and fantastic mood complexes, all created a conflict not only with classicism but within the romantic style itself. (12:816)

Melody. Romantic composers began to extend their melodies, creating "endless," "infinite" melody. The new style contained a sweeping curve of melodic line which revealed the exuberant lyricism of nineteenth century subjectivism, the expression of man's soul. The boundless melodies were abhorred by the public; singers declared them unsingable.

Symmetrical phrases and rhyming cadences were present in the Romantic, but were created with wider ranges of expression and more passionate climaxes.

Harmony. Harmony continued to become more complex throughout the nineteenth century:

The outlines of tonality were extended and blurred by chromatic harmonies, chromatic voice leading, distant modulations, complex chords, freer use of nonharmonic tones, and a growing tendency to avoid distinct cadences on the tonic. (8:500)

Through the extended use of dissonance Romantic composers built up emotional tensions greater than had been known before. Dissonant harmony was created for sensuous color, emotional expression and enchanting sonorities. The harmony wandered restlessly from key to key; abrupt and daring modulations occurred more frequently, while the distance away from the home tonality steadily increased.

Form. The sonata form became merely a framework that held the release of emotions within bounds. The disintegration of classic multiple-movement form was evidenced by the custom of performing in concerts single movements from symphonies. The logic of contrasting themes was replaced by the enriched harmonies and expansive melodies.

The most conspicuous shortcoming in romantic "form" was the lack of unity and cohesion; the logical development of a main theme was lost.

The lines are drawn freely, without much regard as to what precedes and what follows them; the harmonies cease to maintain a planned relationship . . .; the melodies become ample and songlike, too unwieldy for symphonic elaboration, and too numerous for clarity;

episode upon episode follows in a multi-colored sequence, often necessitating extramusical means, such as programs, to give a sense of cohesion and continuity. (12:818)

Vocal style Wagner called singing "word tone speech"; his theory transformed mere singing into a powerful natural union of melody and words. Wagner maintained that the color of vowel sounds gave singing its life-giving dramatic vitality. Communication was the goal of the entire lyric art of this era. With the development of dramatic music in France the demand for clear enunciation was revived throughout Europe.

Music in France. While opera dominated musical life in France, the foundation of "The Société Nationale de Musique" (1871) made it possible for the newer French composers to present their works to the public. It was due to these efforts that music, other than that of the theater again became acceptable.

The French tradition rests on a conception of music as sonorous form. The three great masters of French song were Fauré, Duparc and Debussy. "In each composer is found a superb achievement that is highly personal and a temperament and mentality essentially French." (16:208)

II. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF "EXTASE"

Analysis of "Extase"

Text. Written by the French poet, Jean Lahor, the text reads as follows in translation from the French:

On a pale lily my heart is asleep
 In a slumber sweet like death . . .
 Exquisite death, death perfumed
 By the breath of my beloved . . .
 On your pale bosom my heart is asleep
 In a slumber sweet like death . . .

This text reflects a profound, inward appropriation of an absolute peace; a peace so sweet it resembles nonexistence. It professes an extraordinary tranquility and emotion of blissful repose. The intensity of the emotion is so overpowering that the poet is unable to complete his thought, i.e., "death . . . beloved . . . death" Human words are incapable of expressing such rapture; it can only be felt.

Form. In the construction of the poem, the thought of peaceful slumber is reiterated twice; the second time more subjectively than the first. The last melody (m.34-41) is identical to the first (m.10-17) except for slight contrapuntal changes in the piano accompaniment. The climax of the thought is found in the words: "de la bien aimee" (m.23-4). The melody reaches its highest point on "aimee." (m.24).

Melody. The melody consists of smooth, short diatonic phrases which are confined to the interval of a' third (m.10-19). "Mort parfumée" (m.20-22), however, ranges to a fifth, and "Du souffle de la bien aimée" (m.22-28) extends to an octave. Duparc created a concise and at the same time, a profound and simple musical line. The melody is not cluttered with embellishments; every note is essential. Opportunities for nuances are subtle because of the brevity and exactness of the work. Duparc says what he wishes to say and travels no further.

Harmony. Duparc's "Extase" is Wagnerian in that he continually expands melody and harmony without resolving in the introduction (m.1-8), and piano interlude (m.25-32). Harmonic displacement is evident in the unusual intervallic leaps of his chords: (1) minor third (m.6-7), (2) augmented fourth (m. 7-8), and (3) diminished fifth (m. 10-11).

Within eight measures (m.10-17) the harmony progresses through a series of nine chords unrelated to each other: E Major—B-flat Major—E-flat Major—A Major—e minor G Major—C-sharp Major—F-sharp diminished—A Major.

Traces of the mixolydian mode are apparent in the alteration between D Major and a minor chords (m.18-22). This modal vacillation heightens the mysterious, detached intensity of the words, "Mort exquise, Mort parfumée."

There are three cadences , or resolutions of dominant

to tonic; the last cadence being in the mixolydian mode (m.45-6).

Texture. The smooth, restrained melodic line is supported throughout by an undulating eighth-note accompaniment which contains two inner contrapuntal voices. Included in the texture are pedal points (m.1-4); open fifths in the bass line (m.14-16); and octaves in the bass line throughout. The open fifths used in the modal passages help to emphasize the hollowness, the void of death.

Dynamics. Because of the subdued, restrained intense nature of the words, the dynamic level is very seldom raised above piano or mezzo-piano.

Interpretation of "Extase"

"Extase" should express a feeling of quiet, blissful repose transcending all that is finite. It displays an emotion of intensified rapture, of overpowering, inward exaltation, of complete peace. The song does not outwardly express exuberant happiness. The expression is a private thought to be whispered to the world.

"Extase" should create a feeling of unreality; even though the music stops, the mood should be so strongly expressed that the audience as well as the performer feels

suspended for a few moments in time and space.

Possibilities for subtle nuances exist in the half-step resolutions on the words, "pâle, dort, doux" (m.13); they should be executed with the utmost sensitivity. Sensitivity is also required in rendering "comme la mort" (m.15-16).

The climax (m.24) is restrained. Diminuendo and ritard on a high A" call for a light, pure, falsetto tone. A hushed portamento should follow in the octave interval of "aimée" (m.24-5).

The song should be sung with clear, sustained tones using little vibrato. The variety of French vowels give the song color and variety in sonority.

Above all else, an atmosphere of extraordinary inward peace should prevail. Perhaps, after all, this work of art is a true vision of death.

CHAPTER IV

I. FACTORS INFLUENCING THE WORK: THREE SONGS

"GEFUNDEN," "GEBET," AND "FREUNDE"

The Composer

Anton Webern was born in Vienna in 1883 and lived until 1945. His musical gifts were discovered early; he received a doctorate in musicology from the University of Vienna while simultaneously working in composition. At twenty-one he met Arnold Schoenberg and Alban Berg, two composers of the new atonal music, and studied with Schoenberg from 1904-1910.

Before 1939 Webern conducted concerts in Germany and Vienna and quietly devoted himself to composition and teaching. During the Second World War, the Third Reich condemned his music as "culturally radical," forbade its performance and burned his writings. He was allowed to teach only a few pupils and had to give his lectures on atonal music in secret.

To escape the Allied bombings of Vienna, he and his wife moved to Mittersill, a small town near Salzburg. On September 15, 1945 as he stepped outside of his house after curfew hours, he failed to understand an order to halt and was shot by a trigger-happy sentry of the American occupying forces.

When exposed to Schoenberg's teaching, Webern began creating radical, atonal compositions. He detested repetition and felt: "Once stated, the theme expresses all it has to say. It must be followed by something fresh." (14:385) His works are noted for their brevity. He had an extraordinary sensitivity to sound and to sonorities; each individual tone was valuable in itself. The interval became the basic element in his music and took the place of the theme.

Igor Stravinsky wrote upon Webern's death:

Doomed to total failure in a deaf world of ignorance and indifference, he inexorably kept on cutting out his diamonds, his dazzling diamonds, of whose mines he had such a perfect knowledge. (14:384)

The Historical Period

The period from 1870-1910 was known as the Post-Romantic Era. The last thirty years of the nineteenth century were relatively peaceful and stable in Europe. From the turn of the twentieth century and onward, social unrest and international tension increased to the point of causing the catastrophe of the First World War (1914-1918).

Social influences. Europe more than doubled its population despite the vast numbers who migrated to America. Man's needs became the needs of the masses; hence, the rise

of modern industry and "mass production."

Cultural. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the powerful growth of the masses to importance was responsible for the helpless floundering of culture. (12:1027)

Everything tended from the single, small, individual, and qualitative, toward the colossal, universal, impersonal, and quantitative . . . The dissolving of the human being in the mass apparatus of life, in machinery and bureaucracy, in the mere effort to insure an existence, submerges the individual and tends to extinguish creative art. (12:1028)

Collectivism threatened to overwhelm the individual and stifle creative genius.

Music. The post-Romantic period was one of separate independent music compositions. There was no central standard of excellence by which to judge musical works, nor was there a general philosophy to guide their creators.

Germany's musical position was threatened by a surging nationalism and the rise of a new school of composition in France, which gave birth to Debussy and Impressionism.

The Musical Period

Early twentieth century music began to revolt against conventionalty. Familiar chords and scales, familiar rhythms, standard meter, and familiar tonalities were all rejected. Conventionalisms, however, were replaced with a

strength and a freshness of expression which revitalized music and rendered it capable of conveying new, modern twentieth century meanings.

Melody. The early contemporary composer strove to attain a vibrant, taut melody devoid of non-essentials, stating a melody once and then moving on to other ideas. He wanted to invent short melodies of maximum intensity. Such an intensity made greater demands upon listeners; it required alert, attentive minds which were sophisticated enough to grasp the new music.

Melodies were no longer shaped to the curve of the human voice. The new melodies contained wide intervals, zigzag leaps, and jagged phrases.

Harmony. Polychords were formed in the new music as a result of using new intervallic structures for building chords and extending the old tertial structure beyond that of a fifth, i.e., adding ninths, elevenths, thirteenth, and fifteenth. Polyharmony, where two or more streams of harmony were pitted against each other, became the new aim. The new harmony exploited dissonance as a percussive element, a jabbing thrust of sound capable of producing high tension.

The displacement of tonality gave the music its jagged and angular character. Melody and harmony were completely divorced from one another.

Form. If, as in the classical era a traditional form was used, the cadences were slurred over, phrases did not rhyme, and punctuation marks were not easily discernable. Repetitions were compressed; departure and return disguised.

II. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE SONGS:

"GEFUNDEN" "GEBET" "FREUNDE"

Webern's three songs were composed between 1903-4 in the late Romantic period, before he was influenced by Schoenberg. This music is not tonal; yet it is not atonal; it exists somewhere in the no-man's-land between the two. The three songs are more romantic than they are contemporary by their tonality.

Analysis of Three Songs

Text. The three poems written by Ferdinand Avenarius (1856-1923) were part of a larger work: Stimmen und Bilder. The translation from the German reads:

I Found

Now that we love, my proud happiness soars
 High above the world.
 What can touch us when our destiny
 Holds us together?
 And though the sea draws down the earth
 Into its darkness,
 Yet love soars above the stars
 As the spirit of creation.

II Prayer

Endure it, let pain cut sharp through
 your brain
 And grub harshly through your
 heart---
 That is the plow, after which the
 sower sows,
 That corn may arise from earth's
 wounds.

Corn that stills the poor soul's
 hunger---
 O Father, bless my field with corn:
 Let your plow rend its way
 pitilessly,
 But cast the seed in its furrows, too.

III Friends

Each hour ripens
 Pains and joys
 Into golden fields,
 And amidst the grain smiles
 The beauty of flowers.

But to reap for our hearts
 With ever fuller beat of wings
 Friends, join your strength with us
 Let us secure the divine
 From the earthly,
 That we may harvest
 Life!

The three poems are inseparable; when united they form a narration of human life. Each poem represents a fundamental aspect of human existence: love, pain, and life.

"Gefunden" expresses the joys, the transcendence of finding a beloved and being loved in return.

"Gebet" is man's prayer for strength that he hopes to acquire by enduring pain; this idea is expressed in the

symbolism of a harvest. Earth's wounds are man's heart through which the plow, i.e., pain, renders its way mercilessly. Man is praying that he will harvest corn, i.e. strength, from the field of life. He prays: "Mit Korn, o Vater, segne mein Gefild": Bless my life with strength.

"Freunde" is the fulfillment of man as a social being. It is the consummation of life, with all its joys and all its sorrows, which is to be shared with friends in the world. Life is not to be lived in isolation but is to be expanded and enriched by the strength of friends.

Form. All three songs are through-composed; each melodic idea is stated once and moves on to new material. When a sequence is used, it is extended.

Melody. The passionate melody of "Gefunden" is contemporary in character with its jagged, dissonant leaps: minor seventh (m.5); and Major seventh (m.21-2); and its unusual intervals: augmented fourth (m.5-6); and augmented fifth (m.17).

The melody of "Gebet" offers contrast to "Gefunden" in its more "vocal" melodic line; it is infinitely more diatonic and consonant with the piano. Only twice does Webern use the dissonant interval of a minor seventh: "den Schmerz" (pain) (m.3-4), and "armen Seele" (poor soul) (m.19). The melody is quiet and sustained depicting man's reverent and hopeful nature.

The melody of "Freunde" is exuberant and contains consonant leaps of fifths (m.1-2), thirds (m.5), sixths (m.3), and fourths (m.4). It is the most dramatic melody of the three songs and has the widest range; B-flat to A"-natural, one half step short of a range of two octaves.

Harmony. "Gefunden" is chromatic, devoid of tonality.

"Gebet" has the key signature for either E Major or C-sharp minor and proceeds to weave in and out of both keys interchangeably. The "old-fashioned" tertial structure of chords and harmonies is still in effect in "Gebet." An abundance of suspensions are utilized (m.7-8).

"Freunde" uses harmonic displacement of chords as well as contrapuntal devices (m.11-17).

Texture. The accompaniments of "Gefunden" and "Freunde" are contrapuntal and chromatic and move in sweeping phrases of octaves and incomplete chords.

"Gebet" is purely homophonic; the melodic line is supported by widely spaced chords which are dependent upon the melody for their direction. A feeling of spaciousness is perpetrated with the frequent use of octaves.

Dynamics. Webern included frequent verbal suggestions for both pianist and singer in "Gefunden" in regard to the manner in which he wanted to hear the songs performed, (m.1).

"Gebet" and "Freunde" have less verbal instructions or none at all throughout their music.

Suggestions for interpretation are given at the beginning of each song: (1) Gefunden - With enthusiastic devotion; (2) Gebet - Slowly and with greatest fervor; and (3) Freunde - Very expressively.

Interpretation of Three Songs

The text is of primary importance in interpreting Webern's three songs; the music is conceived to illuminate the words.

The boundless joy of "Gefunden" is tempered by the resolution: "What can touch us when our destiny holds us together?" The passage should be expressed with the strength of conviction and determination. Otherwise the song should be expressed with an abandon which comes from being happy in life and happy with the world.

"Gebet" should be sung with a deep tone, filled with pathos. A prayer is rising from the depth of man's soul to grant him the strength to bear pain in life.

"Freunde" should bring the cycle to a dramatic close. The last high notes, "Leben ernten" (m.21-3), should be sung full voice with all the singer can give. The purpose of human existence is to harvest Life!

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

Through three centuries of music, the increasing importance of man as an individual human being has been revealed in music and song.

The study has revealed that music is yet a pioneer, a pioneer with a rich cultural background. It will continue to overcome present boundaries and expand into new frontiers of expression. As long as man continues to express himself, music in song will continue to reflect that expression. It is not music that controls man; it is man that controls music.

The three works studied, which span a period of 128 years, reveal the evolution and liberation of music as a means of expression. Despite the varying philosophies of each century, the study revealed that man will continually express in art what he cannot express in words and action. This brief survey has revealed a certain truth of mankind, that is; he is eternally growing and expanding in his knowledge of the universe and in his knowledge and understanding of himself. What is of primary importance is the essence of a work of art and not the influencing factors which affected it. Each work in the study conveyed some

universality because it contained the uniqueness of the human individual who wrote it. Because of each composer's genius and insight into human life and talent for expressing emotion in music, these works of art have survived.

Interpretation exists because great men saw the inexplicable in human life and tried to express it through the medium of music. Interpretation is not merely the study or representation of a work itself; it is a retracing, a rekindling of the vision or the emotion that moved the composer to create such a work. The greater the work of art, the greater the problem of the interpreter. Art may be said to express man's most innermost thoughts and yearnings with more exactness than mere words.

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APPENDIX

THE DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC
CENTRAL WASHINGTON STATE COLLEGE

presents in

GRADUATE RECITAL

GRETCHEN OSTBERG, Soprano

JOHN DeMERCHANT, Accompanist

PROGRAM

I

L'amero costante (from "Il Re pastore").....Mozart
Ach, ich fuhl's (from "Die Zauberflote").....Mozart

II

Chanson TristeDuparc
ExtaseDuparc
Chere NuitBachelet

III

GefundenWebern
GebetWebern
FreundeWebern

IV

Ain't it a pretty night? (from "Susannah").....Floyd
Jaroslavna's Arioso (from "Prince Igor").....Borodin
English Version by John DeMerchant

NOTE: This program has been presented by Gretchen Ostberg in partial fulfillment for the Master of Education degree in music.

HERTZ RECITAL HALL
August 13, 1967
3:00 P.M.

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Mozart, Wolfgang Amadeus. *L'amerò, sarò costante. Faithful Heart enraptured: aria (rondo) from the opera Il rè pastore*. Edited and arranged: with cadenzas by Carl Deis, including the cadenza for voice and violin by J. Lauterbach, text by Pietro Metastasio, English version by Lorraine Noel Finley, Musical Score, Italian, 11 pages, G. Schirmer, 1946, New York.

This score is available through WorldCat:

<http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/3215679>

Duparc, Henri, composer. *"Extase"*. Duparc, *Mélodies 4*, Author: Jean Lahor, Musical score, n.d.

WorldCat:

<http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/842220774>

Webern, Anton. *"Gefunden"*. *"Gebet"*. *"Freunde"*. *Three songs for voice and piano*. Author: Ferdinand Avenarius, Editor: Rudolph Ganz, Musical Score, German, 11 pages, Carl Fischer, 1965, New York, N.Y.

WorldCat:

<http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/924761852>