

DAWALT, LAURA F., D.M.A. *Terre de France: Nostalgia in Louise Talma's French Song Cycle*. (2013)  
Directed by Sarah Dorsey. 68pp.

Louise Talma's songs are under-represented in both scholarship and performance, yet are deserving of more attention. Talma composed in this medium throughout her career, which lasted over six decades. Musicians and scholars should be aware of the existence of these high caliber works, as well as their musical workings and historical context. This study seeks to generate familiarity with Talma's *Terre de France* song cycle through documentary research into the lives of Talma and those who influenced her, as well as through musical and poetic analysis of the cycle.

This document examines text setting, form, rhythmic devices, and neoclassical techniques in the five songs of *Terre de France*, composed in 1943 and 1945. In this cycle, Talma addresses several personal losses, changes in her life, and hopes for the future of France through a nostalgic treatment of traditional French poetry. Aspects of Talma's relationship with Nadia Boulanger illuminate Talma's treatment of *Terre de France*. Written at a turning point in her life, *Terre de France* shows parallel development and progression in her compositional style. Talma's articulate, neoclassical settings of relevant, quality French poetry merit a prominent place in art song study and performance. Knowledge and understanding of the changes in Talma's life during this time will allow performers to convey a sensitive, informed expression of the music and poetry.

*TERRE DE FRANCE: NOSTALGIA IN LOUISE TALMA'S*  
FRENCH SONG CYCLE

by

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A Dissertation Submitted to  
the Faculty of The Graduate School at  
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro  
in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Musical Arts

Greensboro  
2013

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my advisor, Dr. Robert Bracey, for the guidance, support and wisdom he has shared with me these last five years. I am so thankful for my research director, Sarah Dorsey, who has worked tirelessly with me to develop, edit and polish the project, sharing her time, energy and passion for this music. This project would not exist without her assistance and expertise. I would also like to thank Dr. Robert Wells and Clara O'Brien for their support and guidance.

I would like to thank Dr. Carolyn Hart and Dr. Kathleen Kastner, who have each been sources of inspiration and motivation to me.

I dedicate this work to my loving family, Marilyn, Jessica, Larry, Brandon, Donald and Evelyn Dawalt, and Harry and Elaine West.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Louise Talma (1906-1996) was an award-winning composer, pianist, and pedagogue who produced a large output of musical compositions in a variety of genres, styles, and languages. Talma was the first American composer to have an opera performed in a European opera house (1962), the first woman to receive a Sibelius Medal (1963), the first woman to receive two Guggenheim Fellowships (1946, 1947), and the first woman composer to be elected to the National Institute of Arts and Letters (1974).<sup>1</sup> In spite of being awarded numerous commendations while she was living, Talma's compositions are now seldom found on recital programs. This research aims to initiate an increase in scholarship and performance of her works.

Her oeuvre consists primarily of vocal music, with fifty-three voice compositions out of eighty-three complete works.<sup>2</sup> These include thirty solo vocal works, twenty-one choral compositions, one full opera, one oratorio and one chamber opera.<sup>3</sup>

Talma successfully developed her career at a time when opportunities for women in music were limited. Until the mid-1900's, not many women were hired as professors in

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<sup>1</sup> Arthur Cohn, et al., "Talma, Louise," *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/27425> (accessed March 24, 2013).

<sup>2</sup> Kendra Preston Leonard, "Towards a Works List for Louise Talma." *Fontes Artis Musicae* 59, no. 2: 117-126, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1112241484?accountid=14604> (accessed March 1, 2012).

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.



conservatories.<sup>4</sup> Talma was among the few women to be engaged in this capacity and taught at some of the finest music schools throughout her life. At age twenty, she taught theory and ear training at the Manhattan School of Music (1926-1928).<sup>5</sup> She served on the faculty of Hunter College for fifty-one years (1928-1979) and in 1936, became the first American to teach at the Conservatoire Américain at Fontainebleau in France.<sup>6</sup> Talma also excelled as a performer, receiving several awards for her piano performances (1927-1928).<sup>7</sup>

Success and recognition in the realm of composition continued to be a challenge for women, while Talma was composing.<sup>8</sup> American women published songs under pen names or men's names to protect their identities because harmonization and composition were considered men's work, not proper for women.<sup>9</sup> Renowned pedagogue Nadia Boulanger was one of the key figures of the 20<sup>th</sup> century who helped to transform public opinion about women in music. Boulanger had a significant influence upon American

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<sup>4</sup> Judith Tick, et al., "Women in Music II: Western Classical traditions in Europe and the USA, 4: Since 1800," *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/52554pg2>. accessed February 8, 2013.

<sup>5</sup> Luann Dragone, Louise Talma Society Website, <http://www.omnidisc.com/Talma/Biography.html#AWARDS> (accessed July 25, 2012).

<sup>6</sup> Arthur Cohn, et al., "Talma, Louise." *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/27425> (accessed March 24, 2013).

<sup>7</sup> Luann Dragone, Louise Talma Society Website, <http://www.omnidisc.com/Talma/Biography.html#AWARDS> (accessed July 25, 2012).

<sup>8</sup> Judith Tick, et al., "Women in Music II: Western Classical traditions in Europe and the USA, 4: Since 1800," *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/52554pg2> (accessed February 8, 2013).

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

composers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and her male and female students excelled under her dedicated instruction and encouragement.

Despite Talma's success, scholarship dedicated to her works is limited. This literature consists of six analytical studies of her piano compositions, one of a choral work, one of an orchestral work with voice, two that discuss her songs, and two that examine general stylistic tendencies. There is a scarcity of scholarly publications both in the art song genre and in the compositions of women.

The majority of scholarship on Talma focuses on her piano repertoire. Susan Teicher wrote a dissertation<sup>10</sup> in 1982 on Talma's solo piano works and discussed the style of these works in an article published the next year in *The Musical Woman: An International Perspective, 1983*.<sup>11</sup> Helen McClendon-Rose gave a musical analysis of piano sonatas 1 and 2 in 1992.<sup>12</sup> Yumiko Oshima-Ryan provided an analysis of six piano pieces in 1993 (two early works and four late works), in which she includes a discussion on the influence of Boulanger and Stravinsky on Talma and other American students.<sup>13</sup> Eunice Stackhouse analyzed ten piano works (1995), including the six analyzed by

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<sup>10</sup> Susan Teicher, "The solo works for Piano of Louise Talma," (DMA diss., Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University 1982), In ProQuest Dissertations & Theses (PQDT), <http://search.proquest.com/docview/303281304?accountid=14604> (accessed September 4, 2012).

<sup>11</sup> Susan Teicher, "Louise Talma: Essentials of Her Style as Seen Through the Piano Works," in *The Musical Woman: An International Perspective, i: 1983* (Westwood, CT: Greenwood Press, 1984), 127-146.

<sup>12</sup> Helen McClendon-Rose, "The Piano Sonatas of Louise Talma: A stylistic analysis," (DMA diss., The University of Southern Mississippi, 1992), In PROQUESTMS ProQuest Dissertations & Theses, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/304024551?accountid=14604> (accessed September 12, 2012).

<sup>13</sup> Yumiko Oshima-Ryan, "American Eclecticism: Solo Piano Works of Louise Talma," (DMA diss., University of Cincinnati, 1993), In PROQUESTMS ProQuest Dissertations & Theses (PQDT), <http://search.proquest.com/docview/304032488?accountid=14604> (accessed October 3, 2012).

Oshima-Ryan.<sup>14</sup> In 2008, Sarah B. Dorsey and Anna Neal co-wrote a journal article on Talma's short piano works.<sup>15</sup>

Another significant contribution to the study of Talma came in 2003 when Luann Dragone wrote a comprehensive overview of Talma's stylistic qualities documenting an interview with Talma. Her study proposes that Talma's compositions fall into three main categorical periods; Neoclassical, Serial and Atonal, which Talma confirmed in the interview.<sup>16</sup> The five *Terre de France* songs are a part of Talma's Neoclassical period. Carole Jean Harris wrote a dissertation in which she analyzes the musical influences on Talma and others, entitled "The French Connection: The neoclassical influence of Stravinsky, through Boulanger, on the music of Copland, Talma and Piston."<sup>17</sup>

Talma began her career as a song composer and vocal music has been recognized as her preferred and most utilized medium of composition,<sup>18</sup> yet only four published studies have focused on her works for voice. The first article, published in 1972 by Elaine Barkin, was a brief examination of Talma's work for orchestra and baritone, "The Tolling

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<sup>14</sup> Eunice Wonderly Stackhouse, "A Survey of the Solo Piano Compositions of Louise Talma, Composed from 1943 to 1984" (DMA diss., University of Kansas, 1995), In PROQUESTMS ProQuest Dissertations & Theses, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/304181841?accountid=14604> (accessed July 28, 2012).

<sup>15</sup> Sarah B. Dorsey and Anna Neal, "Sarah, Anna and Louise – What No Thelma? Discovering Louise Talma and Her Shorter Piano Works," *Music Reference Services Quarterly* 10, no. 2 (2006).

<sup>16</sup> Luann Regina Dragone, "Stylistic Tendencies and Structural Design in the Music of Louise Talma," (PhD diss., City University of New York, 2003), In PROQUESTMS ProQuest Dissertations & Theses, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/288331031?accountid=14604> (accessed August 29, 2012).

<sup>17</sup> Carole Jean Harris, "The French Connection: The Neoclassical Influence of Stravinsky, through Boulanger, on the Music of Copland, Talma and Piston," (PhD diss., State University of New York at Buffalo, 2002), In ProQuest Dissertations and Theses, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/305512494?accountid=14604> (accessed September 4, 2012).

<sup>18</sup> Madeleine Goss, *Modern Music Makers* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Company, 1952), 383.

Bell.”<sup>19</sup> The second study of Talma’s vocal music was conducted 36 years later, when Laura Moore wrote a dissertation for the University of North Carolina at Greensboro on Talma’s seven-movement choral cycle, *Holy Sonnets: La Corona* (2008),<sup>20</sup> but neither of these studies focus on a solo song.

In addition to writing a book that chronicled the legacy of Fontainebleau, and a works list article, musicologist Kendra Preston Leonard has recently taken up the discussion of Talma’s vocal works, publishing the third and fourth articles on the subject. In 2010, she published an article on Talma’s Christmas carol entitled “Chorus Angelorum, Piccolissima Fughetta, Molto Tonale, Sopra un Téma, Torentoni Niventis Wilderi,” an unpublished three voice motet she discovered in Yale’s Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.<sup>21</sup> The motet was written in 1959 as an amusing Christmas present for MacDowell colleague Thornton Wilder,<sup>22</sup> with whom she wrote her opera, *The Alcestiad* (1955-58). Leonard added an analysis of Talma’s songs to her scholarship, published in October 2012, in which she analyzes Talma’s four earliest songs for voice

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<sup>19</sup> Elaine Barkin, “Colloquy and Review: Louise Talma: ‘The Tolling Bell,’” *Perspectives of New Music*; Spring/Summer 1972; 10, 2; International Index to Music Periodicals Full Text, 142.

<sup>20</sup> Helen McClendon-Rose, “The Piano Sonatas of Louise Talma: A stylistic analysis,” (DMA diss., The University of Southern Mississippi, 1992), In ProQuest Dissertations & Theses, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/304024551?accountid=14604> (accessed September 12, 2012).

<sup>21</sup> Kendra Preston Leonard, “Louise Talma's Christmas Carol,” *Quarterly Journal of the Music Library Association* 66, no. 4: 739-744, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/753562634?accountid=14604> (accessed November 10, 2012).

<sup>22</sup> Thornton Wilder, American novelist and playwright, won three Pulitzer Prizes, for his *The Bridge of San Luis Rey* (novel), *Our Town* (play) and *The Skin of our Teeth* (play). He met and became close friends with Talma at the MacDowell Colony, and produced an opera with her.

and piano (1925-1928).<sup>23</sup>

Overall, the body of scholarship literature on Talma illuminates the foundational elements of her style, but her impressive oeuvre of vocal music certainly merits additional study. Talma's songs are of a high caliber, and were composed with close attention to detail. The vast majority of Talma's songs are set to English texts and only one work, *Terre de France* (1943-45), stands out for its use of the French language.<sup>24</sup>

*Terre de France* is a cycle of five songs composed from 1943 to 1945. Talma dates the last four as having been completed in 1945, with the marking "Peterborough, NH," the location of the MacDowell artists' colony, where she composed most of her music. Talma chose to set texts from four poets, Charles Péguy (1873-1914) for the first and last songs, Joachim du Bellay (1522-1560), Charles d'Orléans (1394-1465) and Pierre de Ronsard (1524-1585).

In order to understand these songs, it is necessary to have a knowledge of the changes in Talma's life during this time, and their effects on her. This enhances an interpretation of the poems and compositional techniques she chose to use in *Terre de France*, and allows performers to develop and convey a sensitive, informed expression of the music and poetry. *Terre de France* expresses loss, displacement and other hardships of life, as well as hopes for the future of France. This cycle represents a turning point in Talma's compositional development.

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<sup>23</sup> Kendra Preston Leonard, "Style and Form in Louise Talma's Early Songs," *Journal of Musicological Research* Vol. 31, Iss. 4: 2012, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01411896.2013.720913> (accessed January 21, 2013).

<sup>24</sup>Library of Congress, "Vocal Music," *Louise Talma Papers 1875-1996*, [http://findingaids.loc.gov/db/search/xq/searchMferDsc04.xq?\\_id=loc.music.eadmus.mu011004&\\_start=126&\\_lines=125](http://findingaids.loc.gov/db/search/xq/searchMferDsc04.xq?_id=loc.music.eadmus.mu011004&_start=126&_lines=125) (accessed September 28).

Talma's mother passed away in January 1942, the year before she began *Terre de France*. A brief analysis of Talma's relationship with Boulanger, her godmother, reveals the depth of Boulanger's influence as a teacher and role model. Talma experienced a rift with Boulanger soon after Talma's mother died. World War II prevented Talma from continuing her visits to Fontainebleau, and added to the loss and separation she was experiencing during these years.

This study seeks to inspire performances of this work, and to motivate further research on the vocal works of Talma. This will be achieved by informing performers and audiences of the compositional techniques, poetic elements, context and literary history that make up the *Terre de France* cycle. Each of these factors illuminates the meaning of the cycle and enhances interpretation.

## CHAPTER II

### NEOCLASSICISM AND LOUISE TALMA

In order for performers to interpret *Terre de France* it is necessary to understand the existential function of nostalgia. In “Nostalgia: Conceptual Issues and Existential Functions” authors Sedikides, Wildshut and Baden define the concept of nostalgia as “an existential exercise in search for identity and meaning, a weapon in internal confrontations with existential dilemmas, and a mechanism for reconnecting with important others.”<sup>25</sup>

During the period between the two World Wars, many composers, including Talma, were utilizing the techniques of neoclassicism.<sup>26</sup> The term neoclassicism was first used in 1923 to describe the music of Stravinsky, and is defined as a use of concepts of balance, economy, “incisiveness of expression” and extended tonality.<sup>27</sup> In its earliest usage it was considered a “reaction against the excessive orchestration of the late 19<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Constantine Sedikides, Tim Wildshut, and Denise Baden, “Nostalgia, Conceptual Issues and Existential Functions” *Handbook or Experimental and Existential Psychology*, ed. Jeff Greenberg, Sander L. Koole and Tom Pyszczynski (New York: Guilford Press, 2004), 202-203.

<sup>26</sup> Luann Regina Dragone, “Stylistic Tendencies and Structural Design in the Music of Louise Talma” (PhD diss., City University of New York, 2003), In PROQUESTMS ProQuest Dissertations & Theses, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/288331031?accountid=14604> (accessed August 29, 2012), iv.

<sup>27</sup> Arnold Whittall, “Neo-classicism,” *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/19723> (accessed February 19, 2013).

century Romantics.”<sup>28</sup> While its conventions can be practiced in a variety of ways, most composers writing in the style utilize an allusion to stylistic characteristics of past composers.<sup>29</sup> The stressing of balance, economy, and references to the past are fitting choices for a generation dealing with the effects of world war. *Terre de France* displays a usage of these techniques, which Talma developed studying with Nadia Boulanger, and an integration of allusions to older poetic styles.

This section will explain Nadia Boulanger’s relationship with Talma, and describe the influence Boulanger had on Talma. It will address Talma’s adaptation to changes in this relationship and other primary factors in her life before World War II, and demonstrate the ways Talma used *Terre de France* as an expression of internal confrontations with existential dilemmas.

Louise Talma was born in Arcachon, France to opera singer Cecile Talma. Talma’s father was absent from her upbringing. From 1922-1930 Talma studied at the Institute of Musical Art in New York (later called the Julliard School of Music), and received her Bachelor of Music degree from the New York University in 1931.<sup>30</sup> As her musical aptitude became increasingly apparent, Cecile and Louise Talma decided that a chance to study at the American Conservatory at Fontainebleau would be beneficial and

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<sup>28</sup> "Neo-Classicism," *The Oxford Dictionary of Music*, 2nd ed. rev., *Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/opr/t237/e7205> (accessed February 19, 2013).

<sup>29</sup> Arnold Whittall, "Neo-classicism," *Grove Music Online*, *Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/19723> (accessed February 19, 2013).

<sup>30</sup> Arthur Cohn, et al, "Talma, Louise." *Grove Music Online*, *Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed January 26, 2013, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/27425> (accessed March 24, 2013).



they saved the funds to make their first journey back to France, in 1926.<sup>31</sup> When Talma first arrived at Fontainebleau, she studied piano with Isidore Philipp but was soon advised to join Nadia Boulanger's harmony class.<sup>32</sup> Boulanger recognized Talma's talent and encouraged her to dedicate herself to composition.<sup>33</sup>

Vocal works quickly became an important compositional medium for Talma, who composed the majority of her works, as well as her first serious pieces, for voice. Talma accepted her first commission from American conductor Gerald Reynolds, a fellow student at Fontainebleau.<sup>34</sup> He asked her to compose for the Women's University Glee Club, and she produced *Three Madrigals* in 1929 and *La Belle Dame Sans Merci* in 1930.<sup>35</sup>

Talma's compositional style was evolving at a time when French tradition and influence played an important part in American musical development. Nadia Boulanger was at the center of this musical exchange. Boulanger had a deep influence upon American composers of the 20th century and her students include acclaimed composers such as Aaron Copland, Walter Piston, Elliot Carter, Darius Milhaud, Virgil Thompson and Ned Rorem.

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<sup>31</sup> Madeleine Goss, 'Louise Talma,' *Modern Music Makers* (New York: E. Dutton and Company, 1952), 384.

<sup>32</sup> Goss, 384.

<sup>33</sup> Goss, 385.

<sup>34</sup> Goss, 385.

<sup>35</sup> Goss, 385.

Boulanger assumed an increasingly influential role in Talma's life over thirteen years of summer study at Fontainebleau. In addition to being a major role model in Louise's life, she became Louise's godmother in 1935.<sup>36</sup> Talma studied at Fontainebleau every summer from 1926 to 1939, just prior to the Second World War.<sup>37</sup> Carole Jean Harris states that among three famous American composers highly shaped by Boulanger; Copland, Piston and Talma, Talma studied with Boulanger the longest and was influenced by her the most.<sup>38</sup> During Talma's extended studies at Fontainebleau she developed a close relationship with Boulanger that shaped and directed her musical and personal life. Kendra Preston Leonard considers the personal relationship between Boulanger and Talma in her study of Talma's *Three Madrigals*, noting that little has been written on the relationship between Talma and Boulanger.<sup>39</sup> The letters between them in the Library of Congress reference multiple meetings and conversations, and allow for a close analysis of the relationship.<sup>40</sup> Leonard recognizes the intensity and depth of this relationship, and concludes that it must have been a romantic one.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Louise Talma, Letter to Nadia Boulanger on August 4, 1935, Louise Talma Collection, Library of Congress.

<sup>37</sup> Luann Dragone, Louise Talma Society Website, <http://www.omnidisc.com/Talma/Biography.html#AWARDS> (accessed July 25, 2012).

<sup>38</sup> Carole Jean Harris, "The French Connection: The Neoclassical Influence of Stravinsky, through Boulanger, on the Music of Copland, Talma and Piston" (PhD diss., State University of New York at Buffalo, 2002), In ProQuest Dissertations and Theses, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/305512494?accountid=14604> (accessed September 4, 2012), 3.

<sup>39</sup> Kendra Preston Leonard, "A Great Desire: Autobiography in Louise Talma's *Three Madrigals*," *Current Musicology*, no. 92 (Fall 2011) 53-54.

<sup>40</sup> Kendra Preston Leonard, "A Great Desire: Autobiography in Louise Talma's *Three Madrigals*," *Current Musicology*, no. 92 (Fall 2011), 54.

Boulanger affected Talma's musical identity in several ways that can be traced not only in her neoclassical period, but also throughout her compositional career. The aspects include Boulanger's position toward women in music, meticulous control of detail, personal faith, and use of neoclassical techniques. Talma drew upon this influence during her creation of *Terre de France*. Boulanger's direct influence can be traced in Talma's conviction for assiduous musical creation.

Boulanger was a pioneer of female musical ability, success and influence. She created a role for herself in a world with few female composers, influencing music composition in a way that broke free from the standard gender expectations of the 20th century music scene. Opportunities for women were increasing in the realm of music performance, but not in the realm of composition. Copland recalls his first time studying with Boulanger, saying, "On 26 October I went to 36 rue Ballu to talk to Nadia Boulanger about composition lessons...I had never heard of any composer who had studied with a woman."<sup>42</sup> He described their meeting as the beginning of "the decisive musical experience of my life, for Nadia Boulanger turned out to be one of the great music teachers of her time."<sup>43</sup>

Female students were encouraged to compose through Boulanger's example, training and encouragement. The female composers she mentored produced works with

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<sup>41</sup> Kendra Preston Leonard, "A Great Desire: Autobiography in Louise Talma's *Three Madrigals*, *Current Musicology*, no. 92 (Fall 2011), 53-77.

<sup>42</sup> Aaron Copland and Vivian Perlis, *Copland 1900 Through 1942* (NY: St. Martin's /Marek, 1984), 61.

<sup>43</sup> Copland and Perlis, 62.

inventiveness and skill equal to that of her male students, yet they are seldom recognized.<sup>44</sup> These composers include Katherine Wolff, Helen Hosmer, Thea Musgrave, Julia Perry, Graznya Bacewicz and Suzanne Bloch.<sup>45</sup> Of these women, only Musgrave has received a notable level of recognition.

With all of her students, Boulanger passionately exercised and demanded a high level of dedication to music that required students to master important skills, yet allowed them to develop individual styles. She said, “One must approach music with a serious rigour and, at the same time, with a great, affection.”<sup>46</sup> She enforced high standards upon her students, and stated, “I love to teach... I think that I can help them go through stages of development which are arduous, and difficult, and encourage them – in a way impose a certain law, a certain habit of ‘doing one’s daily duty’.”<sup>47</sup>

She approached the task of training dozens of young composers with humility, acknowledging the existing talent and inspiration of American musicians and their basic need for training.<sup>48</sup> She equated the early 20<sup>th</sup> century American musical scene to that of Russia in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, with plenty of ingenuity but needing instruction.<sup>49</sup> This

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<sup>44</sup> Diane Devries, “The Pedagogical Influence of Nadia Boulanger on the Works of her Female Students: An Analysis of Selected Compositions” (master’s thesis, Michigan State University, 1998), In PROQUESTMS ProQuest Dissertations & Theses, <http://search.proquest.com.libproxy.uncg.edu/pqdtft/docview/304448364/13C3C469A83733F624/1?accountid=14604> (accessed September 7, 2012), 1.

<sup>45</sup> Devries, 1.

<sup>46</sup> Alan Kendall, *The Tender Tyrant: Nadia Boulanger, A Life Devoted to Music* (Wilton, CT: Lyceum Books, 1976) 60.

<sup>47</sup> Kendall, 60-61.

<sup>48</sup> Kendall, 46.

<sup>49</sup> Kendall, 46.

allowed Talma and a generation of American artists to craft their own individual styles, and in turn, the musical language of 20<sup>th</sup> century America.

Boulanger was inspired by many of Stravinsky's musical techniques, including his free use of rhythm, meter and form, and the neoclassical techniques of balance and economy. She equipped her students with the skills to execute their ideas with a similar freedom, and therefore a more articulate, individualized musical expression. She advocated the use of these freedoms to create a unified work to achieve a concept called "la grande-ligne." This expression implied a construction focused on forward motion.<sup>50</sup> Diane Devries describes this concept that Boulanger emphasized so often, saying, "By this she meant that each composition must have an underlying movement, a goal of melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic motion that allows the music to move from start to finish with coherence."<sup>51</sup> In a dissertation on Boulanger, Teresa Walters also discusses the concept, and states, "Boulanger observed that a beautiful performance depends upon the successful contribution of the smallest elements within a piece."<sup>52</sup>

Talma's achievements as a composer were extraordinary for a woman of her generation, and her successes spanned a variety of major musical mediums. Boulanger's passionate, focused direction provided an effective motivation for Talma and helped her

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<sup>50</sup> Harris, 13.

<sup>51</sup> Devries, 7.

<sup>52</sup> Teresa Walters, "Nadia Boulanger, Musician and Teacher: Her life, concepts, and influences" (DMA diss., Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University, 1981), ProQuest Dissertations & Theses (PQDT), <http://search.proquest.com/docview/303150582?accountid=14604> (accessed August 1, 2012), 144.

to envision and achieve a high degree of success, atypical for a female composer at this time. During Talma's studies with Boulanger at Fontainebleau, Boulanger expressed enthusiasm for Talma's talent, saying, "Louise, you have got something – you really have talent! You ought to work to prepare yourself so that some day you can apply for a Guggenheim Fellowship."<sup>53</sup> Boulanger made this recommendation in 1928, at a time when no woman had ever won this fellowship. Ruth Crawford Seeger was the first female to achieve this award, winning one in 1930, and Talma became the first woman to win two Guggenheims (1946-47), at a time when many male composers had won two or three.<sup>54</sup> The copious correspondence between these two includes requests by Talma for musical guidance and encouragement from Boulanger.<sup>55</sup>

Talma developed her characteristic style of vocal writing at Fontainebleau,<sup>56</sup> and it displays a close attention to detail in her work, similar to that of Boulanger. Later in life, she estimated that she composed at a pain-staking rate of four measures per day.<sup>57</sup> Talma's musical demands are high in *Terre de France*. For the singer, the cycle contains long phrasing, spans a wide range (nearly two octaves). She employs copious and intricate expressive directions to move and color the dynamics, tempo, articulation, vocal

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<sup>53</sup> Goss, 385.

<sup>54</sup> The John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, <http://www.gf.org/fellows/all/> (accessed January 14, 2013).

<sup>55</sup> Louise Talma and Nadia Boulanger, Letters of correspondence, Louise Talma Collection, Library of Congress.

<sup>56</sup> Kendra Preston Leonard, *The Conservatoire Américaine: A History* (The Scarecrow Press: Lanham, MD, 2007), 33.

<sup>57</sup> Bruce Duffie, "Louise Talma: A Conversation with Bruce Duffie," on March 1, 1986, <http://www.bruceduffie.com/talma.html> (accessed August 4, 2012).

style and use of vibrato. The singer must execute the highest level of vocal control, breath support and breath management to meet each of these expressive demands.

Her close attention to detail is evident in the high number of expressive directions and markings she includes in the score for the singer and the pianist. As Talma is no longer living, there is no further opportunity to ask her about her works. However, there are performers still living who have worked with her.

Professional singer, performer and teacher Paul Sperry has recorded and performed many modern American song compositions. He has frequently worked with the composers personally, including Talma. Sperry's knowledge of her performance methods and preferences about how Talma's compositions should be approached is invaluable, and his recording<sup>58</sup> of *Terre de France* can serve as a model for interpretation. Sperry expressed confidence that his execution of the material met with Talma's approval. He states, "She didn't hide those thoughts. If she had a preference, I'm sure she would have expressed it and I would have done it."<sup>59</sup>

He remembers Talma's desire that her music be rendered exactly as her score indicated. In a discussion about the tempo of "Ballade" Sperry remarks, "It was a question of one tick on a metronome, but she really didn't want to budge. My feeling is that she is one of very few composers that I worked with who really absolutely meant the metronome mark that was there. She had obviously put it on with care, and she knew

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<sup>58</sup> Paul Sperry et. al., *Paul Sperry Sings American Cycles and Sets*, Albany Records 1991.

<sup>59</sup> Paul Sperry, unpublished interview with Laura Dawalt, October 5, 2012.

what she wanted.”<sup>60</sup> Sperry also notes, “She was, you could say, a stern taskmaster, but she had good reason. I imagine she was a good teacher. She had a lot of knowledge and a lot of discipline, and it takes that to be a great teacher.”<sup>61</sup> Sperry’s comments reveal that Talma had a clear conception of how the work should sound and took each of her markings extremely seriously, not as expressive suggestions, but as a significant element of the work.

Talma’s cycle includes some texts with older spellings, which she did not modernize in her score. When asked how he prepared for and approached the delivery of these texts, Sperry remarked that his studies with Pierre Bernac led him to modernize most texts in order to prioritize intelligibility, and that he approached this work with the same view.

Talma’s works display a prominent role of rhythm and high level of control over rhythmic elements. Boulanger scholar Diane DeVries traces Boulanger’s advocacy of Stravinsky’s rhythmic techniques in Talma’s use of changing meters to achieve continuous flow in her Piano Sonata no. 1.<sup>62</sup>

Boulanger played an important role in overseeing not only Talma’s musical growth, but also her personal and spiritual growth. Boulanger was a devoted Catholic and her letters demonstrate a willingness to share these convictions and the strength she finds

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<sup>60</sup> Paul Sperry, unpublished interview with Laura Dawalt, October 5, 2012.

<sup>61</sup> Paul Sperry, unpublished interview with Laura Dawalt, October 5, 2012.

<sup>62</sup> DeVries, 7.



in them with Talma.<sup>63</sup> She frequently reminded Talma of her prayers for her, and sometimes includes references to Bible verses.<sup>64</sup> One of Talma's letters to Boulanger expresses the peace of mind and helpful outlook that she found at church.<sup>65</sup> The themes most frequently found in Talma's many songs are spiritual. Talma was confirmed in the Catholic Church in 1935, when Boulanger became her godmother. After Talma's confirmation, she addressed her letters to Boulanger, "Chère Marraine" (dear godmother). Boulanger signed each of her letters with this title. Talma explained the deep meaning "marraine" held for her in a letter to Boulanger on August 11, 1935:

All the ways I think of you- as friend, teacher, guide, counselor, example, director of the way, refuge, strength, help, light, and your own dear name of Hope, - are summed up in that one word Marraine, and never did name more fittingly grace anyone than that does you.<sup>66</sup>

The letter is signed with Talma's full baptismal name, Louise Juliette Nachejda Cecile. This name adds the acknowledgment of both her mother and her godmother to her birth name. It includes the middle name of Talma's mother (Cecile), and Nachejda, the full Russian name for Nadia. While a name cannot contain reference to all of the significant persons in one's development, it is only appropriate that Talma's Catholic

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<sup>63</sup> Nadia Boulanger, Letters to Louise Talma, Louise Talma Collection, Library of Congress.

<sup>64</sup> Nadia Boulanger, Letters to Louise Talma, Louise Talma Collection, Library of Congress.

<sup>65</sup> Louise Talma, Letter to Nadia Boulanger on June 18, 1935, Letters of correspondence, Louise Talma Collection, Library of Congress (©2013 The MacDowell Colony, Inc.), used with permission.

<sup>66</sup> Louise Talma, Letter to Nadia Boulanger on August 4, 1935, Louise Talma Collection, Library of Congress. Reproduced with permission of The MacDowell Colony (©2013 The MacDowell Colony, Inc.), used with permission.

name would contain a reference to Boulanger, whose musical, personal and spiritual influences were a significant part of Talma's life in the period prior to World War II.

### CHAPTER III

#### NOSTALGIA: WAR AND LOSS

Recognition of the circumstances surrounding Talma as she composed these works and an understanding of their nostalgic significance are imperative to an interpretation of *Terre de France*. Talma's response to the losses incurred in a character-defining period of her life was indeed "an existential exercise in search for identity in meaning... and a mechanism for reconnecting with important others."<sup>67</sup> Talma employs thematic and musical material that recall past periods of France's history. Her use of these elements suggests that she may have found security and comfort in these historic elements and employed them as an expression of hope.

Historically, the term nostalgia first surfaced in a dissertation by Johannes Hofer in 1688 diagnosing military men in foreign countries with extreme cases of homesickness.<sup>68</sup> Hofer chose the Greek words "Nostos" (homecoming) and "Algos" (pain) to define the malady.<sup>69</sup> In his book, *Yearning for Yesterday: A Sociology of Nostalgia*, Fred Davis traces the nostalgic experiences of society and the progression of public opinion about the subject. He notes "the passing of 'home' in the old sense arises from the tremendous mobility of persons in their occupations, residences, localities, and even countries of

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<sup>67</sup>Sedikides, 202-203.

<sup>68</sup> Johannes Hofer, "Medical Dissertation on Nostalgia," published in 1688 in Latin and translated into English by Carolyn K. Anspach, *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 2 (1934), 381.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid.

birth.”<sup>70</sup> Nostalgia is often linked with displaced groups, including servicemen, immigrants, mariners, and boarding students.<sup>71</sup>

Talma treats this cycle with nostalgia, using her knowledge of French musical and literary history as a resource. She voices grief over death, displacement, and dilemmas of identity. Attempts to cope with difficult situations by dwelling on elements of the past can be seen in a variety of art forms. Jeff Greenwell’s analysis of nostalgic elements in American literature considers the works of William Faulkner and F. Scott Fitzgerald, whose characters attempt to recreate aspects of life as it was known before a war.<sup>72</sup>

Talma’s relocation from her country of birth, the death of her mother, and break in the 13-year pattern of visiting France and Fontainebleau created the potential for a feeling of displacement and search for identity and meaning.

After Talma’s consecutive summers of studying at Fontainebleau in the 1920’s and 1930’s, she experienced a period of intense hardships that affected her relationships, her career, and her music. Talma’s stopped attending Fontainebleau for a time, after summer of 1939. Over the next three years, Talma endured the effects of the Second World War, separation from her beloved France, estrangement from her teacher and godmother Boulanger, and the death of her mother.

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<sup>70</sup> Fred Davis, *Yearning for Yesterday* (NY: The Free Press, 1979), 6.

<sup>71</sup> Sedikides et al., 202 (The authors reference two other works in this conclusion: J. L. Cox, “The overseas student: Expatriate, sojourner or settler?” *Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica*, 78, (1988) 179–184, and S. W. Jackson, *Melancholia and depression: from Hippocratic times to modern times* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1986).

<sup>72</sup> Jeffery Greenwell, “Nailed Down to the Past: Nostalgia, Masculinity, and Corporeality in American Literature, 1900-1950” (PhD diss., University of California Riverside, 2011), In ProQuest Dissertations and Theses, <http://search.proquest.com.libproxy.uncg.edu/pqdtft/docview/900728890/13C3C74438E4008F8C/1?accountid=14604> (accessed December 20, 2012), 5.

Though she was in America, the ramifications of the war in her birthplace had a profound effect on Talma. She sought to send aid to those French citizens she knew who might be in need. In a letter to Boulanger dated July 28, 1942 she states, "...I have told you in previous letters how I feel about my obligations to France. I live as frugally as the circumstances of my life permit, so as to send as much as I can to those who are in such terrible need."<sup>73</sup>

The death of Talma's mother, the only immediate family member she had ever known, was devastating. Cecile Talma sculpted and enhanced Louise's musical abilities, giving up her successful career singing in European opera houses and the Metropolitan Opera to raise her.<sup>74</sup> She also oversaw her daughter's education by teaching solfeggio and piano, and chose regular intervals for them to speak in French, Italian and German together.<sup>75</sup> Talma regretted that her mother was unable to witness the performance of her celebrated *Toccata* (1944) by the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, stating that it would have been "the culmination of a lifetime of devotion and effort and self-denial and hope."<sup>76</sup>

These three elements; the loss of her mother, the estrangement from Boulanger, and her loss of access to France, each had a profound impact on the formation of Talma's

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<sup>73</sup> Louise Talma, Letters of Correspondence to Nadia Boulanger, Louise Talma Collection, Library of Congress; Reproduced with permission of The MacDowell Colony (©2013 The MacDowell Colony, Inc.).

<sup>74</sup> DeVries, 10.

<sup>75</sup> Goss, 383.

<sup>76</sup> Goss, 383.

personal and musical identities. While the exact extent to which the elements affected Talma cannot be determined, it is clear that her emotional and musical worlds were shattered. Her response to the distress and suffering of this time period includes the composition of these five songs, each containing elements that reference historical periods in France.

Paul Sperry has worked with performers of Talma's works, and remarked on one singer's interpretation of *Terre de France* as "a very tame performance that didn't get to the heart of the piece."<sup>77</sup> His comment shows his belief that performers of this cycle need to understand and portray the key elements that contribute to its depth and significance.

The relationship between Talma and Boulanger suffered a rift during the war. Talma's letters express pain over the physical and emotional distance between them, including an issue of returned checks and of a withdrawal on the part of Boulanger. Boulanger's few letters during this time are short and succinct and assert her care for Talma while maintaining a pronounced level of reserve not found in her earlier letters. On August 19, 1942, Boulanger writes explaining that she cannot take responsibility for the checks and letters to friends that Talma sent, and that she prays special prayers for Talma during these days.<sup>78</sup>

As Talma experienced the absence of her mother, the inaccessibility of Boulanger, and the impossibility of continued study at Fontainebleau, she found ways to

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<sup>77</sup> Paul Sperry, unpublished interview with Laura Dawalt, October 5, 2012.

<sup>78</sup> Nadia Boulanger, Letters of Correspondence to Louise Talma, Louise Talma Collection, Library of Congress.

advance her career and shape her musical identity by reaching out to American artists for guidance and inspiration. Marion Bauer, one of Talma's teachers at Columbia, was an important figure that shaped Talma's later musical career and development. After the death of Talma's mother, Bauer suggested that she apply for a residency at the MacDowell Colony, an artists' colony in Peterborough, New Hampshire, where she ultimately composed the majority of her works.<sup>79</sup>

*Terre de France* marks a culmination of the French influences of Talma's life and a shift towards her American identity. *Terre de France* was likely one of the first pieces that Talma wrote at the MacDowell Colony. Talma's choice to compose a work set to French text was wholly unique for her. This cycle can be interpreted as "a mechanism for reconnecting with important others,"<sup>80</sup> expressing appreciation for her birthplace, experiences in France, and her relationship with Boulanger.

Her residencies at the MacDowell Colony allowed Talma to become acquainted with dozens of influential American artists, including Irving Fine<sup>81</sup> and Thornton Wilder. The importance of the foundational elements set up by Boulanger remains, as many of these influential artists were students whose works centered on methods she promoted.

In summary, it is clear that an understanding of the existential function of nostalgia in the composition of *Terre de France* is necessary for an interpretation that

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<sup>79</sup> Dorsey, 39.

<sup>80</sup> Sedikides et al., 202, 203.

<sup>81</sup> Irving Fine's use of 12-tone technique in a beautiful, tonally oriented way, inspired Talma to use the compositional style in a similar fashion.

expresses “the heart of this piece.”<sup>82</sup> Talma’s musical and poetic treatment of this work will further demonstrate the relevance of this interpretation.

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<sup>82</sup> Paul Sperry, unpublished interview with Laura Dawalt, October 5, 2012.



## CHAPTER IV

### MUSIC AND POETRY

Talma's *Terre de France* holds a unique place in the American art song genre as a cycle of French poetry that comments on World War II, a major socio-political struggle for both France and the United States. Yet many American performers lack the level of fluency and familiarity with French language and literary tradition with which Talma designed the cycle. Any number of English texts could have effectively expressed solidarity with a distressed population or grief over loved ones. However, Talma chose to set the work to French texts, forming a unique statement in her oeuvre. Each of Talma's five chosen poems recalls elements or periods of France's history, both recent and ancient, and address issues with which Talma was coping.

A survey of each poem informs the significance of its role in France's history and of Talma's decision to it. Talma selected, culturally significant texts, and does not repeat, rearrange or alter them in her settings. She utilizes poetry from the 15<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, with themes of nostalgia, exile, homesickness, and hope. Her musical treatment highlights these themes, compliments and enhances the configuration of the poetry and informs an interpretation of the text.

Table 1. An Overview of the *Terre de France* Cycle.

Song title, date composed	Poet, date written	Tempo	Themes	Meter	Rhythmic figures	Tonal centers	Texture
"Mère, voici vos fils" July 1 1943	Charles Péguy 1913	quarter=56	displacement, death of soldiers, prayer for soldier, love for the land	2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 6/4, 17 meter changes	primarily quarter and eighth note movement	E minor, C minor, Ab minor	dense chordal
"Sonnet" June 25 1945	Joachim du Bellay c. 1557	quarter=69	displacement, homecoming, homesickness, love for France, unknown return	3/8, 5/8, 6/8, 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 14 meter changes	eights and quarter values in the A section, dotted rhythms in the B section	C major, Eb major, G minor, D major	wide range, thin texture
"Ballade" July 5 1945	Charles d'Orléans c. 1433	quarter = 69-72 quarter=60	displacement, love for France, homesickness, anti-war	28 meter changes	dotted rhythms	E major, D major, A major, Eb major, F major, C major	triads, dyads
"Ode" July 12 1945	Pierre de Ronsard 1550	2 eighths = 132	love, nature, poetry	45 meter changes	even constant eighths	A major	thin,
"Adieux a la Meuse" July 25 1945	Charles Péguy 1897	quarter=56 dotted quarter=72 quarter=56	displacement, departure, love of nature, uncharted territory, unknown return, turmoil and rest	42 meter changes, use of polymeter	duple against triple	Eb major, bitonality	arpeggiated, separate musical figures

Boulanger's emphasis on intentional construction of rhythm and meter to maintain a clear, uninterrupted expression can be seen in each piece. The cycle opens and closes with the poetry of Charles Péguy, set to a metronome marking of 56 beats per minute. Talma includes specific tempo markings and abundant meter changes, which she manipulates to fit the nuances of the text and highlight the themes she chooses. The return of Péguy text at the end of the cycle unifies the work and includes themes found in each

of the earlier songs.

“Mère, voici vos fils...”

Charles Péguy, was born in Orléans, France in 1873, just after the Franco Prussian War (1870-1871). This was the hometown of Charles d’Orléans, another poet included in the cycle; and Joan of Arc, about whom Péguy wrote his famous eight-part trilogy, *Jeanne d’Arc* (1897). This text was selected from one of Péguy’s last works, *Ève* (1913), was a monumental poem comprised of four thousand Alexandrine sonnets contemplating the human condition from a Christian perspective.<sup>83</sup> Péguy’s poem addresses the mother of humanity, of whom Christ was a descendant.<sup>84</sup> Péguy entreats God to bless the soldiers and have mercy on their souls.

Despite his wife’s pregnancy, Péguy volunteered for front-line duty when France entered into World War I.<sup>85</sup> He died within a month of his deployment in the First Battle of the Marne, a pivotal victory for France and the Allies.<sup>86</sup> He was dedicated to his country and is best remembered for his strong faith, his poetry and his heroic sacrifice.

The poetry and legacy of Péguy was of great inspiration and significance to the French nation during the Second World War. Charles de Gaulle served as a general

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<sup>83</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, s. v. "Charles Peguy", <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/448803/Charles-Peguy> (accessed March 27, 2013).

<sup>84</sup> Hans A. Schmitt, *Charles Peguy: The Decline of an Idealist* (Louisiana State University Press, 1967), 32.

<sup>85</sup> Schmitt, 33, 34.

<sup>86</sup> Schmitt 35.

during World War II and went on to become France's first president. He quotes Péguy's *Eve*, as a powerful reference to the immense number of Frenchmen who gave their lives before this point and would yet do so in the future:

Ever since France understood her willpower to triumph, there hasn't ever been a doubt, a weariness, a renunciation. United in combat, we go all the way to the end of our duty to her, we go to the end of the national liberation. So, our final task, our modest role, after all those who served her since the dawn of her history, before all those who will serve in the eternal future, we say to France, simply, as Péguy did:

“Mère, voyez vos fils, qui se sont tant battus”  
(Mother, see your sons, who have fought so hard)

De Gaulle - Discours du 18 juin 1942<sup>87</sup>

It is with this very line that Talma chose to begin her cycle the summer after these riveting words were spoken in 1942. This was also the summer after her mother passed away. It is unknown whether she had already planned the inclusion of the four other songs in her work, as no drafts or documents allude to the conception of an entire cycle when she first began. However long she intended the work to be, it seems she wanted these words to be first. In the context of Talma's cycle, the term “mother” can also be seen as metaphor for France. The relationship of France's soldiers to their native country is an intimate one, like that between mother and son. The longing for a mother is especially relevant to Talma during this period of her life, separated from the two women who filled that role, her mother and godmother.

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<sup>87</sup> Charles de Gaulle, *Discours et messages*, (tome 1) *Pendant la guerre, Juin 1940 - Janvier 1946* (Plon, 1970), 204. Excerpt translated by Laura Dawalt.

The song laments the sufferings of war, addresses the tension and discord of displacement and war-caused deaths, and includes prayers for soldiers. As seen in Figure 1, nearly every beat of the song includes the intervals of a second and a fifth, in different ranges. This consistently reflects the tension and dissonance of the text. Talma does not vary from this construction until the 34<sup>th</sup> beat of the song, when she begins to include a few exceptions in preparation for the last phrase of the song.

The image shows a musical score for a song. It consists of three staves: a vocal line at the top, a piano accompaniment on the right, and a bass line on the left. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 56. The lyrics are: "Mère, voici vos fils et leur immense armée. Qu'ils ne soient". The piano accompaniment features dense chords, primarily tetrachords, with a recurring pattern of major 2nd and perfect 5th intervals. Pedal points are indicated at the beginning and end of the piano part.

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Figure 1. “Mère, voici vos fils...” mm. 1-3. Recurring chords with major 2<sup>nd</sup> and perfect 5<sup>th</sup> intervals.

Talma includes no introduction or postlude, but begins and ends the piece with the voice and piano line closely united, emphasizing the relationship between the poetry and the music. The song’s chordal texture is fairly dense and consists primarily of tetrachords. The harmonies center around E minor at first and then tonicize a variety of different key areas without cadencing or adhering completely to a particular key. The lack of cadences contributes to a feeling of forward motion that Boulanger promoted.

Talma continues to displace any chance of resolution by avoiding harmonic triads and including the unsettling combination of the major second and the perfect fifth. Other dissonances are sometimes added, but this basic structure prevails through most of the piece.

Figure 2 shows the return of the opening theme that occurs in the second half of the song, giving the piece a sense of balance, central to neoclassicism. Talma carefully modifies this theme to reflect the building intensity of the poetry. To achieve this effect, she uses chromaticism in the melodic line, adds the marking “très intense” (very intense), and emphasizes the last word of the phrase, “battus” (battered), by placing it at the highest point of the melodic contour (mm 22).

The image shows a musical score for a vocal and piano piece. The vocal line is in the upper staff, and the piano accompaniment is in the lower staff. The key signature has one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 4/4. The vocal line is marked "très intense" and includes the lyrics "MÈ-re, voy-ez vos fils qui se sont tant bat-tus. Vous les voy-ez cou-". The piano accompaniment also has a "très intense" marking and includes the instruction "cresc.". The music is characterized by chromaticism and dissonance, particularly in the piano part.

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Figure 2. “Mère, voici vos fils...” mm. 20-22. Opening theme returns and is modified.

Talma’s last phrases highlight the dichotomy of the poem and its themes of hope and grief. She depicts the calming effects of hope and prayer, as well as the heaviness of

death by including harmonies without discord or the presence of major second intervals, for the first time, under a prayer for mercy on the souls of the soldiers (“Que Dieu ménage un peu ces êtres débattus”). Talma strongly suggests that we have arrived in A-flat minor, a key very distant from her opening choice of E minor. The addition of consonant and major harmonies occurs along with an indication to perform the last phrase “sans nuances jusqu’à la fin” (without nuances until the end).<sup>88</sup> This phrase portrays the restrained controlled expression of emotion the neoclassicists strive to achieve. The dynamic level decreases to *piano* and the song closes with the text, “Ces coeurs plains de tristesse et d’hesitation” (hearts filled with grief and uncertainty). Measure 33 of figure 3 shows the return of Talma’s opening and most often utilized harmony of a second and a fifth, in the key of E minor.

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<sup>88</sup> Louise Talma, *Terre de France* (NY: C. Fischer, 1978), mm 28-33.

sans nuances jusqu'à la fin poco rit.

Dieu mé-nage un peu ces ét-res dé-bat-tus, Ces coeurs pleins de tris-tesse et

legato sans nuances poco rit.

sans Ped

d'hési-ta-ti-on

a tempo poco rit.

Nonchalant J=64 Ped Il Sonnet Ped. Juillet 1943  
Joachim Du Bellay

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Figure 3. “Mère, voici vos fils...” mm. 28-33. Consonance and Dissonance.

The return of these devices suggests that the instability and tension Talma articulated throughout the work have not disappeared but remain present, even after an expression of hope. This close and deliberate placement of harmonic dissonance and consonance, and of major and minor harmonies, highlights the gravity and complexity of war and loss.



“Sonnet”

Talma made her second selection from the sonnets of Joachim du Bellay. Du Bellay was born to gentleman farmer Jean de Bellay, who served in the French army.<sup>89</sup> Du Bellay was born in the Château de la Turmelière, on the Loire River in Anjou, and both his parents died when he was nine or ten years old.<sup>90</sup> Du Bellay’s affection for the Loire River and the Anjou region can be traced in sonnets 3, 21, 40, and 79 of *Olive*; sonnets 19, 25, 31, and 122 of *Les Regrets*; and other poems.<sup>91</sup> He portrayed a longing for France in the style of an Italian sonnet, which he perfected while living in Rome (1553-1557).<sup>92</sup>

Du Bellay accompanied his second cousin, Cardinal Jean du Bellay on a journey to Rome in 1553.<sup>93</sup> During his four years in Rome he wrote a collection of 191 sonnets called *Les Regrets*.<sup>94</sup> Du Bellay dedicated the work to M. d’Avanson, the French ambassador to Rome, and borrowed the title from Ovid’s first century work, *Tristia*.<sup>95</sup> With his French translation of Ovid’s title, du Bellay referenced their comparable displacements, du Bellay to Rome, and Ovid from Rome.<sup>96</sup> Du Bellay uses Ovid’s themes of exile and homesickness, and the depiction of smoke rising in a village that Ovid

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<sup>89</sup>L. Clark Keating, *Joachim de Bellay* (NY: Twane Publishers Inc., 1971), 1.

<sup>90</sup>Keating, 2.

<sup>91</sup> Dorothy Gabe Coleman, *The Chaste Muse: A study of Joachim du Bellay’s Poetry*, (Leiden: Brill, 1980) 83.

<sup>92</sup> Keating 70-73.

<sup>93</sup>Keating, 55.

<sup>94</sup>Keating 73.

<sup>95</sup>Ibid. (K73)

<sup>96</sup>Ibid. (K73)

employed with the subject of exile.<sup>97</sup> Du Bellay references Ulysses (Odysseus) in several of his poems containing themes of nostalgia, exile and homesickness.<sup>98</sup> He does not chose his themes in this collection merely for their poetic qualities, but explains in this first sonnet of *Les Regrets* that these verses express his deepest thoughts, sadness, and secrets.<sup>99</sup>

Du Bellay scholar Dorothy Coleman notes that du Bellay refrains from recounting any of the adventure of the Odyssey or any detail of the story of the Golden Fleece, in order to stress the ending of these stories.<sup>100</sup> His references are bare and subtle. In his reference to the Golden Fleece, he doesn't even include the name of the myth's main character. Du Bellay reveals the function of these allusions in the third and fourth lines, to emphasize a their allusion to a homecoming.<sup>101</sup>

The sonnet Talma selected references the displacement of du Bellay, Ovid, and Homer's Ulysses. L. Clark Keating includes the sonnet in his discussion of *Les Regrets*, and introduces it by claiming, "Every literate speaker of the French language knows it well."<sup>102</sup> Talma's choice inherently contains allusions to displaced artists of the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC, and 1<sup>st</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, a time when the war made it unsafe for her and her loved ones to return to France. Its expansive inclusion of historic and literary

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<sup>97</sup> Coleman, 81.

<sup>98</sup> Coleman, 81.

<sup>99</sup> Keating, 76.

<sup>100</sup> Coleman, 82.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid. (C82)

<sup>102</sup> Keating, 75.

displacement directs attention to examples of continuity and solution found amidst the turmoil of tragedy and upheaval.

In Talma's "Sonnet," rhythmic devices are used to delineate form. Talma follows the structure of the 13th and 14th century Italian (Petrarchan) sonnets, laying out a succinct argument. The poetic octave (eight lines) contains two quatrains that open the poem by presenting a difficulty, a predicament or a question. The sestet (six lines) contains two tercets and provides a resolution.

This structure is highlighted in Talma's setting. She utilizes purely eighth, quarter and dotted quarter note values in the first quatrain. In the second, she includes the addition of tied quarter notes, triplet quarters, and tied half notes creating a whole note value. Figure 4 shows the longer values and triplet quarters set against eighth notes in the accompaniment. This addresses the question stated in this quatrain. Talma also employs multiple tenuto markings, and a *poco ritardando* marking conferring a sense of stretching and hesitation. Coleman states, "The second quatrain makes explicit the nostalgia, the yearning, the feeling of helplessness and the apparent impossibility of ever seeing his native country."<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Coleman, 83.



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Figure 4. “Sonnet,” mm. 23-27. Introduction of Duple against Triple Rhythms.

In the sestet of the sonnet, Talma introduces sixteenth note values for the first time in the song. This gesture adds a playful quality. Talma marks the section “*leger*” and “*souple*” (light and flexible). She also includes the direction, “*la double croche en peu plus courte qu’un quart de temps*” (the dotted eighth note a bit shorter than a quarter). This implies that the dotted eighth note is almost as long as a quarter note value, and the sixteenth notes can be shortened and treated as pickups, lightening the notation even more. Talma includes a slur from each sixteenth into the following note, further breaking up the plodding eighth values or the octet by initiating each with a lilting, shortened sixteenth-note. The juxtaposition of these two rhythms can be seen in Figure 5, in the difference of note values in measures 32 and 33 from those in measures 34 and 35.

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Figure 5. "Sonnet," mm. 32-35. Shift from the octave to the sestet.

Several elements serve to enforce the references to journey, motion, departure and return. Throughout the piece, the majority of her melodic phrases span the range of an octave, contain large leaps of perfect fourths and perfect fifths, and frequently change direction to create an oscillating contour. Her tempo marking of 69 beats per minute reflects an easy walking pace, underlines the poetic theme of journey and is peppered with jaunty syncopations. While she delineates the differences between separate functions of the form's structure, these musical elements remain consistent and unify the piece.

### “Ballade”

Talma sets the third song of the cycle, “Ballade,” to a poem by Charles d’Orléans. Just as Talma and Boulanger were forced to stay away from their homeland during the war, 15<sup>th</sup> century poet Charles d’Orléans experienced a war-related deportation. D’Orléans was born two decades before Joan of Arc, and his youth was spent in the Loire Valley, cloistered away from much of the turmoil experienced by the rest of the nation.<sup>104</sup> Like Joan of Arc, he exiled and imprisoned in England during the Hundred Years War. His captivity lasted 25 years.

D’Orléans’ years in Dover inspired one of the most famous French poems of the 1400’s,<sup>105</sup> and the text that Talma chose for her song “Ballade.” French literature scholar David Fein comments on the progression of perspective found in this poem. The opening line sets the scene and attitude of the poem, stating that the speaker is looking toward France, not at it.<sup>106</sup> Fein notices the importance of this position toward France as one of longing for home, compensating for the lack of detail caused by distance by expanding the thought with sweet memories of the past.<sup>107</sup>

This poem allowed Talma to identify with previous generations displaced from France by war. As she did in the first song, Talma chose an example of the inclusion of prayer in a response to the hardships of war. D’Orléans writes of his hopes that God will quickly grant peace. The text includes the imagery of a ship loaded with Hope and sent to

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<sup>104</sup> David Fein, *Charles d’Orléans*, (Boston, Twayne Publishers, 1983) 13.

<sup>105</sup> Fein, 43.

<sup>106</sup> Fein 44.

<sup>107</sup> Fein 44.

France to convey his wishes and prayers, and to bring a memory of him to France. Like d'Orléans, Peguy, and Jeanne d'Arc, Talma knew the pain of being separated from France during a war. She too, sent wishes for peace and help to those in need in France, and chose to express herself as one who felt the conflict deeply, even from across the sea.

D'Orléans uses three stanzas of seven lines, and a four-line envoy to conclude the ballade. Fein comments on d'Orléans' concluding contemplation of war and peace, noting its musical qualities and the closing impression it makes:

“Je He guerre,” a flatly unpoetic declaration, stands out from the rest of the ballad as a bald statement of contempt. The staccato effect of this phrase, especially perceptible after the melodious smoothness of the preceding verse, breaks the rhythm of the poem, accentuating the disruptive force of war. After fleeting incursions into the past and future, the poem ends squarely in the present with its one overbearing reality, the fact of war and exile.<sup>108</sup>

Again Talma has chosen themes of exile and displacement that convey heartfelt longing and hope for the welfare of France, and set them in a way that highlights the structure of the poem. This particular choice is not merely a declaration of patriotism, but as Fine notes, a “controlled expression of the yearning of a *dépaysé* (displaced person) for his family, friends, and homeland.”<sup>109</sup> Talma was able to musically convey her own similar expressions in ways that spoke into the situations of her time as much as these words did to the generations of the Hundred Years War.

In this song Talma changes the style of her vocal setting and utilizes a madrigal melodic style, reminiscent of a troubadour. Unlike the other four songs with exact tempo

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<sup>108</sup> Fein, 46.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid. (F46)

markings, Talma permits some flexibility in tempo for this piece. Talma indicates that the quarter notes of “Ballade” should fall between 69 and 72 beats per minute. Talma’s choice of light duple eighth-note movement in the accompaniment imitates the movement and rhythm of the easy, carefree stroll of a troubadour.

Talma achieves a free, improvisational expression of love for France with carefully articulated directions that include lift markings after each dotted eighth note of measure 15. Talma uses syllabic text setting (one syllable per note) almost exclusively in this cycle, breaking her pattern for the joyful declaration of the word “France” (France). Figure 7 shows this jaunty exclamation, which spans the range of a ninth and is set over four measures. Talma includes a  $3/2$  measure, which elongates the climax of the phrase on the important word “coeur” (heart).



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Figure 6. “Ballade” mm. 13-18. Madrigal melody line.

Talma illustrates the separate form of the envoy by giving it a completely new tempo. This is the first time in the cycle that Talma has indicated more than one tempo marking in the same piece. Talma slows the pace and abandons the running eighth note figures that had pervaded the piece up to this point. She uses half note chords in the accompaniment, and begins a repeated melodic pattern consisting of a quarter note followed by two eighth notes placed a perfect 5<sup>th</sup> lower than the quarter. Figure 6 shows this even pattern, set to the words “Paix est tresor qu’on ne peut trop louer” (Peace is a treasure that one cannot praise too much). Talma’s differing phrases reflect the juxtaposition of D’Orléans’ sentiments and peace. She breaks her previous pattern and

sets two short phrases, each beginning on an offbeat, with staccato and marcato markings. These techniques capture the rhetoric of the poem, and depict the harsh realities of war in sharp contrast with the health and value found in peacetime.

Poco meno  $\text{♩} = 60$

Paix est trésor qu'on ne peut trop louer, de hé guerre, point ne la doit priser, Des-tour

mf sf marcato très sec sans pédale

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Figure 7. “Ballade” mm. 58-61. Juxtaposition of Peace and War.

### “Ode”

Pierre de Ronsard was born in 1524 at a manor on the Loire River.<sup>110</sup> At twelve years of age he began his work as a page in the royal court, and was sent to Scotland in the household of Madeleine de France after her marriage to James V. of Scotland.<sup>111</sup>

Ronsard wrote “Des Roses Plantées prez un Blé” in 1550, and referenced the ancient Roman lyric poet Horace (65 BC-8 BC). Ronsard listed Horace as one of his primary inspirations, and sought to bring parts of the Greek poetic tradition to French literature.<sup>112</sup> Ronsard scholar K. R. W. Jones states, “Taking his inspiration from the

<sup>110</sup> Kenneth R. W. Jones, *Pierre de Ronsard* (NY: Twayne Publishers Inc., 1970), 7.

<sup>111</sup> Jones, 9.

<sup>112</sup> Jones, 23.

ancient Greek concept of the union of music and poetry, Ronsard further claims to have revived this ancient art and to have introduced it to the French.”<sup>113</sup> The second edition of his *Odes* included music printed in the collection.<sup>114</sup>

This poem stands out among Talma’s five choices because its thematic material is very different from that of the other four poems. Talma’s musical expression fittingly stands apart from the other four as well. She presents a faster tempo and only one key area, A major, to represent the cheerful salutation of the rose, the symbol of the one the speaker loves.

Talma’s setting does not follow Ronsard’s recommended repetition of musical material for each stanza. In fact, she adds a rhythmic irregularity to bring out parts of the texts that might be overlooked in a purely symmetrical repetitive setting.

Talma manipulates the meter to highlight the pleasing musical qualities of Ronsard’s text, without falling into monotony. She employs forty-five meter changes within the song’s sixty-nine measures, alternating between nine different time signatures. This song serves as an excellent example of Boulanger’s teaching of rhythmic manipulation to achieve “la grande-ligne” (the great line) in Talma’s oeuvre. Figure 8 demonstrates how Talma positions different meters to accent the three syllable line between two longer lines, seen in the structure of the poem. She places the matching “é” sounds of lines “vois redoublé” and “Dans le blé” (you see doubled in the wheat) on unanticipated downbeats.

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<sup>113</sup> Ibid. (J23)

<sup>114</sup> Jones, 24.

The image displays a musical score for the first four measures of a piece. The score is written on a grand staff with a treble clef on the top line and a bass clef on the bottom line. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#). The time signature changes from 3/4 in the first measure to 4/4 in the second, 3/4 in the third, and 9/8 in the fourth. The lyrics are: "vois re-dou - - blé Dans le blé Ta fa--ce, de ci-na--br". The melody is written on the treble clef, and the piano accompaniment is written on the bass clef. The score is enclosed in a large, hand-drawn bracket above the staff.

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Figure 8. “Ode” mm. 18-21. Meter positioning.

Her setting draws the listener’s attention to the words that compliment each other, and texts with unique syllabic structuring in the original poem. Talma places these specific moments on downbeats to avoid a consistent pulse. In measures 30 to 33 of “Ode,” Talma sets “ton odeur, plein d’ardeur” (your scent, full of passion) in a phrase consisting of a different meter in each measure, allowing the matching sounds in odeur and ardeur to fall on strong beats, but at unpredicted times.



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Figure 9. “Ode.” mm. 30-33. Crafting of rhythm and meter.

#### “Adieux à la Meuse”

Talma concludes the cycle with the other text by Péguy. This poem again contains references to war, but in a subtler, concealed manner. Talma chooses an excerpt from Péguy’s “Jeanne d’Arc,” again referencing a period of French history. Her story and yearly celebrations allowed Péguy to escape from the quotidian troubles of his impoverishment and post-war childhood.<sup>115</sup> He wrote an additional work on her story entitled *La Mystère de la charité de Jeanne d’Arc*, in 1910.<sup>116</sup> Péguy scholar Hans Schmitt traces a resurgence of Joan of Arc literature culminating just before the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of her birth. He notes the publications of fourteen works on the subject between 1909 and 1911.<sup>117 118</sup> Talma may have appreciated that Péguy’s works were

<sup>115</sup> Schmitt, 42.

<sup>116</sup> Schmitt, 24.

<sup>117</sup> Schmitt, 24. Schmitt builds upon the work of Wilhelm Grenzmann to draw this conclusion.

relevant both to the past and the present, since he was the most contemporary of her chosen poets and also included references to France's history.

Joan of Arc lived during the height of the Hundred Years War and played a pivotal role by leading France to victory in several battles. Péguy's original manuscript displayed her name in red letters on the cover, and nothing but the years she lived, 1412-1431, on the binding.<sup>119</sup> Interest in her life peaked in the years prior to the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Joan of Arc's birth.<sup>120</sup> The consideration of a past era was an important part of his book. Péguy anticipated and allowed space for moments of reflection for the reader by including blank pages interspersed throughout his work.<sup>121</sup> Joan of Arc was beatified in 1909 and canonized in 1920, both during Talma's lifetime.

Talma's selected excerpt includes references to the shepherdess and the spinner. These historic tasks were dependent upon a close relationship with the land, and a strong personal connection to a single location. These themes may have resonated with Talma because of her love of the French land, and the upheaval associated with her loss of that connection at the time.

The fifth and last song of the cycle, "Adieux à la Meuse," is an excellent example of Talma's achievement of "la grande-ligne" through metric manipulation. Figure 10 shows Talma's setting of the right hand of the piano part to a  $\frac{12}{8}$  meter, which gently weaves through the juxtaposed eight notes set to  $\frac{4}{4}$  in the left hand. This subtle rocking

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<sup>118</sup> Wilhelm Grenzmann, *Die Jungfrau von Orleans in der Dichtung* (Berlin, 1929), 73.

<sup>119</sup> Schmitt, 42.

<sup>120</sup> Schmitt, 24.

<sup>121</sup> Jérôme and Jean Tharaud, *Notre Cher Péguy, I* (Paris: Plon, 1926), 142-143.



“endormeuse” (lulling) giving it prominence and linking it with the rocking motion heard below in the treble.

Figure 11 shows the rhythmic figures crossing parts, with the duple figures in the bass moving to the treble and the triplet figures of the treble moving to the bass of the piano, under the text, “Je ferai la bataille et passerai des fleuves,” (I’ll go to battle and cross rivers). Prior to this point, the piece maintains a smooth sound with dynamic levels of *mezzo-piano* and softer. On the first beat of this phrase, Talma employs accents and a *mezzo-forte* dynamic for the first time. These continue throughout the phrase, and can also be seen in Figure 11.

The image shows a musical score for a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line is in treble clef and has the lyrics "en des pa-ys nou-veaux: Je fe-rai la ba-". The piano accompaniment is in bass clef and features a complex rhythmic pattern with markings "poco a poco cresc." and "mf". The score is a triple against duple arrangement.

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Figure 11. “Adieux à la Meuse.” mm. 16-18. Triple against duple arrangement.

Talma introduces an accidental D-flat first in the triplet piano figures, weaving it in and out of the figure, between the C and D-natural, tightening and loosening the figures without breaking the stepwise motion. This prepares the listener for the addition of this note in the voice line, but its prominence remains is accented as the highest note heard in



both the vocal and piano lines up to that point. She approaches this note from below, setting it to the text “pays nouveaux” (new country). This connects an association of pain with this concept of the foreign land.

### Conclusion

Louise Talma shaped the *Terre de France* cycle to express a reaction to her detachment from key identity building relationships, her birthplace, her mother, and her godmother. Each of these pieces includes themes of nostalgia, set with a neoclassical treatment, and other musical techniques inspired by Stravinsky and Boulanger. The volume of work on Talma in both scholarly and performance circles is still small in comparison to some of her contemporaries like Copland and Fine. Current opportunities for deeper study exist. They include the examination of letters and scores in the Library of Congress, and the opportunity to talk with those who worked with Talma and knew her. The recent literature on her vocal works may forge a new level of interest in both the study and performance of the works of this female pioneer of American composition.

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## APPENDIX A

### TERRE DE FRANCE TEXT AND TRANSLATIONS

“Mère, voici vos fils...” Charles Péguy  
Mère, voici vos fils et leur immense armée.  
Qu'ils ne soient pas jugés sur leur seule misère.  
Que Dieu mette avec eux un peu de cette terre  
Qui les a tant perdus et qu'ils ont tant aimée.  
Que Dieu mette avec eux dans le juste plateau  
Ce qu'ils ont tant aimé, quelques grammes de terre,  
Un peu de cette vigne, un peu de ce coteau,  
Un peu de ce ravin sauvage et solitaire.  
Mère, voyez vos fils qui se sont tant battus.  
Vous les voyez couchés parmi les nations.  
Que Dieu ménage un peu ces êtres débattus.  
Ces coeurs pleins de tristesse et d'hésitation.

“Mother, Behold your sons...”  
Mother, behold your sons and their immense army.  
May they not be judged only by their sorrows.  
May God grant them a little of this land,  
That has lost so many who loved it so much.  
May God grant them from this true plateau  
What they've loved so much, some grains of earth,  
A little of this vine, a little of this hillside  
A little of this ravine, savage and solitary.  
Mother, behold your sons so defeated.  
You see them lying among the nations.  
God show some mercy on these disputed souls,  
These hearts full of grief and uncertainty.

“Sonnet” Joachim de Bellay  
Heureux qui, comme Ulysse, a fait un beau voyage,  
Ou comme cestuy-là qui conquist la Toison,  
Et puis est retourné, plein d'usage et raison,  
Vivre entre ses parents le reste de son aage!  
Quand revoiray-je, hélas! de mon petit village  
Fumer la cheminée, et en quelle saison  
Revoiray-je le clos de ma pauvre maison,  
Qui m'est une province, et beaucoup d'avantage?  
Plus me plaist le séjour qu'ont basti mes ayeux,  
Que des palais romains le front audacieux,  
Plus que le marbre dur me plaist l'ardoise fine;  
Plus mon Loyre gaulois que le Tybre latin,  
Plus mon petit Lyré que le mont Palatin,  
Et plus que l'air marin la douceur angevine.

“Sonnet”  
Happy he, who like Ulysses, made a fine journey,  
Or as he who conquered the Golden Fleece,  
And then returned, full of purpose and maturity,  
To live among his family for the rest of his days!  
When will I see, alas, in my little town  
The smoke of a chimney, and in what season  
Will I see the interior of my modest house,  
Which to me is a province, and so much more?  
I am more pleased with the home of my fathers,  
Than Roman palaces with audacious facades,  
More than hard marble, with fine slate;  
More with my Gallic Loire than with the Tiber,  
More with my Lyré than the Palatine,  
And more than the sea air, the sweetness of  
Angers.

“Ballade” Charles d'Orléans  
En regardant vers le país de France,  
Ung jour m'avint, à Dovre sur la mer,  
Qu'il me souvint de la douce plaisance  
Que je souloye où-dit país trouver.  
Si commençay de cueur 'à soupirer,  
Combien certes que grant bien me faisoit  
De veoir France, que mon cueur amer doit.

“Ballad”  
Looking toward the country of France,  
One day at Dover on the sea,  
I remembered the sweet pleasure  
That I found in that country.  
And I began to sigh from my heart,  
How much good it did me  
To see France, that my heart must love.

Je m'avisay que c'estoit non sçavance  
De tells soupirs dedens mon cueur garder,  
Veu que je voy que la voye commence  
De bonne paix, qui tous bien peut donner.  
Pour ce tournay en confort mon penser:

I decided that it was not wise  
To keep such sighs within my heart,  
I see that the road begins  
To give sweet peace to all  
For this turn of mind comforted me:



Mais non pourtant mon cueur ne se lassoit  
De veoir France, que mon cueur amer doit.

Alors chargeay en la nef d'espérance  
Tous mes souhaitz, en les priant d'aler  
Oultre la mer, san faire demourance,  
Et à France de me recommander.  
Or, mous doint Dieu bonne paix sans tarder;  
Adonc auray loisir, mais qu'ainsi soit,  
De veoir France, que mon cueur amer doit.

Paix est trésor qu'on ne peut trop louer,  
Je hé guerre, point ne la doit priser;  
Destourbé m'a longtemps, soit tort ou droit,  
De veoir France, que mon cueur amer doit.

“Ode” Pierre de Ronsard  
Dieu te gard l'honneur du printemps  
Qui étens  
Tes beaux trésors sur la branche,  
Et qui découvres au soleil  
Le vermeil  
De ta beauté naïve et franche.  
D'assez loin tu vois redoublé  
Dans le blé  
Ta face, de cinabre teinte,  
Dans le blé qu'on voit réjouir  
De jouir  
De ton image en son verd peinte.  
Près de toy, sentant ton odeur,  
Plein d'ardeur  
Je façonne un vers dont la grâce  
Maugré les tristes Soeurs vivra,  
Et suivra  
Le long vol des ailes d'Horace.  
Les uns chanteront les oeillets  
Vermeillets,  
Ou du lis la fleur argentée,  
Ou celle qui s'est par les prez  
Diaprez  
Du sang des princes enfantée.  
Mais moy, tant que chanter pourray,  
Je louray  
Toujours en mes Odes la rose,  
Autant qu'elle porte le nom  
De renom  
De celle où ma vie est enclose.

But yet my heart has not left its desire  
To see France, that my heart must love.

Then I loaded in the nave of Hope  
All my wishes, letting them go  
Beyond the sea, without delay,  
And to remember me to France,  
Now may God give sweet peace without delay:  
Then I will have leisure, but may it be so,  
To see France, that my heart must love.

Peace is a treasure that one cannot praise too much,  
I hate war, I should not value is one bit:  
It has prevented me too long, right or wrong,  
From seeing France, that my heart most love.

“Ode”  
God protect you, honor of spring  
Who spreads  
You beautiful treasures on the branch  
And who uncovers to the sun  
The ruby  
Of your naïve and fresh beauty.  
From far off you see doubled  
In the wheat  
Your face, of crimson tint,  
In the wheat that one sees delighting  
To Enjoy  
Amid the green,  
Near you, smelling your scent  
Full of passion  
I fashion a verse of the grace  
The sad sisters live  
And follow  
The long flight of Horace  
The carnations will sing  
Crimson,  
Or the silver flower, the lily,  
Or the flower which in the meadow  
Dispensed  
The blood of young princes.  
But I, while I can sing,  
I will praise  
Always in my verses the rose,  
Because she carries the name  
Renowned  
Of she who encompasses my life.

“Adieux à la Meuse” Charles Péguy  
Adieu, Meuse endormeuse et douce à mon enfance,  
Qui demeures aux prés, où tu coules tout bas.  
Meuse, adieu: j'air déjà commencé ma partance  
En des pays nouveaux où tu ne coules pas.

Voici que je m'en vais en des pays nouveaux:  
Je ferai la bataille et passerai les fleuves,  
Je m'en vais m'essayer à de nouveaux travaux,  
Je m'en vais commencer là-bas les tâches neuves.

Et pendant ce temps-là, Meuse, ignorante et douce,  
Tu couleras toujours, passante accoutumée,  
Dans la vallée heureuse où l'herbe vive pousse,  
O Meuse inépuisable et que j'avis aimée.

Un silence.

Tu couleras toujours dans l'heureuse vallée;  
Où tu coulais hier, tu couleras demain.  
Tu ne sauras jamais la bergère en allée,  
Qui s'amusait, enfant, à creuser de sa main

Des canaux dans la terre, -- à jamais écroulés.  
La bergère s'en va, délaissant les moutons.  
Et la fileuse va, délaissant les fuseaux.  
Voici que je m'en vais loin de tes bonnes eaux,  
Voici que je m'en vais bien loin de nos maisons.  
Meuse qui ne said rien de la souffrance humaine,  
O Meuse inaltérable et douce à mon enfance,  
O toi qui ne sais pas l'émoi de la partance,  
Toi qui passes toujours et qui ne pars jamais,  
O toi qui ne sais rien de nos mensonges faux,  
O Meuse inaltérable, ô Meuse que j'aimais.

Un silence.

Quand reviendrai-je ici filer encor la laine?  
Quand verrai-je tes flots qui passent par chez nous?  
Quand nous reverrons-nous? et nous reverrons-  
nous?  
Meus que j'aime encore, ô ma Meuse que j'aime.

“Farewell to the Meuse”  
Goodbye, Meuse, lulling and sweet from my youth,  
Who dwelled close by, murmuring low.  
Meuse, goodbye: I've already begun my departure  
to new countries where you do not flow.

From this point I go to new countries:  
I go to battle and cross rivers,  
I go off to try new work  
I go off to begin new attempts there.

And during that time, Meuse, ignorant and sweet,  
You flow always, accustomed bystander,  
In the happy valley where the grass sprouts with  
liveliness.  
O Meuse, inexhaustible that I have always loved.

A silence.

You flow always through the happy valley;  
Where you flowed yesterday you will tomorrow.  
You will not know the feeling shepherdess,  
Who amuses himself, child, digging by hand.

In the canals of the land, never to collapse,  
The shepherdess leaves, leaving her sheep.  
And the spinner goes, leaving her spools.  
From here I go far from your good waters,  
From here I go very far from our houses.  
Meuse who knows nothing of human suffering,  
Oh Meuse, unchanging and sweet from my youth,  
Oh you who know not of the turmoil of my  
departure. You who pass always and never leave,  
O you who know nothing of our false lies,  
O Meuse unchanging, O Meuse who I love.

A silence.

When will I return here to spin wool again?  
When will I see your streams that pass by our  
house?  
When will we see each other? And will we see  
each other?  
Meuse who I love yet, Oh my Meuse who I love.

APPENDIX B  
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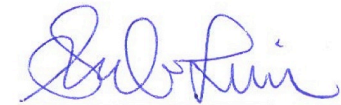
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## APPENDIX C

### PAUL SPERRY INTERVIEW WITH LAURA DAWALT

October 5, 2012

L.D. - Thank you so much for agreeing to speak with me. As Ms. Talma is no longer living and there is no scholarship dedicated to any of her solo vocal works, it is wonderful that you are willing to share your experiences with the cycle when you worked with Ms. Talma. I think your recollections will be invaluable to the project.

I'm primarily interested in your own experiences with learning and performing the cycle, as well as any memorable moments that you had with Louise while working on it.

P.S. - What I remember from the process is that as I was learning it and we were rehearsing it there were a couple of pieces that I certainly wished could have gone a little faster. I kept trying to nudge Louise on the tempo and I got absolutely nowhere So I figured, well, this is exactly what she wants, so I guess that's what she will get and we did it in her tempi. But sometime later, I mentioned it to her and she was totally taken aback. It was a major surprise to her that I had been trying to move the tempo. It was a question of one tick on a metronome, but she really didn't want to budge. My feeling is that she is one of very few composers that I worked with who really absolutely meant the metronome mark that was there. She had obviously put it on with care, and she knew what she wanted.

She was a very good pianist, and she wrote difficult things for both piano and voice. There is something about Louise that reminds me of the old French system, including the thought that there were absolutes. When I was teaching at Juilliard, I would schedule a Louise Talma class from time to time. I had to stop doing it because she would reduce the kids to tears most every time. It wasn't any cruelty on her part; it was just that she didn't understand why people didn't do what was there. If they're supposed to learn it, why don't they learn it?

She was quite special. When I did *Diadem* for the first time, it was with the "Da Capo Chamber Players." They are very meticulous. Boy, did they rehearse. They would spend a long time on a small amount of music, and that obviously delighted Louise. She was really happy to work with such serious young musicians. I always admired that about her. She had standards and she stuck to them. I very much liked the fact she was very demanding.

The early pieces that I had done, *Terre de France*, Auden's "Leap Before you Look," and Hopkins' "Glory Be to God for Dappled Things," are all tonal. I liked her music very much and when my niece graduated from Temple with her master's as an oboist, I thought it would really be fun to have a piece for us both to play. I commissioned Louise. I knew that she had set "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird" for chorus and I thought that would be an interesting text for voice and oboe. When I got the music, I found out she had changed her style. Although I found the pieces difficult, there was something about her use of the twelve-tone system that was very sparse and linear, and it always made sense to me. She really knew what she was doing

and in any style, her music is very persuasive. One time she really surprised me. Quite late in her life she was working on a cycle of Wallace Stevens poems and I asked who was going to premiere it, and she said, "You are." Needless to say, I was delighted and flattered.

L.D. - What made you chose Louise to write the piece for your niece, and what makes her compositions unique to you?

P.S.- I don't know precisely why. I thought that it would be really nice for Jenny to do a piece by a woman. There weren't that many women composers around and of those, Louise was my favorite.

She taught for 50 years at Hunter College. She had to have had some sort of distinguished professorship or something and she must have been making a decent salary. She didn't spend any money on herself that I could see. I remember she said at one point that she studied with Boulanger at Fontainebleau in the summers because she could never afford to go to France for the whole year. I was startled to discover that she left over a million dollars to the MacDowell Colony when she died.

L.D. - Did she ever make any references to Boulanger's influence?

P.S. - She would have assumed that everybody knew it and it never came up when I was with her. But she kept a lot of that to herself.

L.D. - I'm curious how you approached the old texts and spellings in *Terre de France*.

What sources aided in your approach?

P.S. - When I studied with Bernac his point of view on this was that intelligibility comes first, so he tends to modernize. I followed his advice.

L.D. - Did Talma comment on that approach?

P.S. - I certainly wouldn't have done it if she hadn't approved it.

L.D. - She would have told you otherwise.

P.S. - Well yes, I'm sure of that! She didn't hide those thoughts. If she had a preference, I'm sure she would have expressed it and I would have done it.

L.D. - How many times have you performed with Louise?

P.S. - With her, probably about six. . We made a record of "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird" together and also of "Have You Heard, Do You Know?"

L.D. - I imagine you worked with her more often than that?



P.S. - Yes: at least a dozen times. I certainly would have rehearsed anything with her, carefully, before performing it.

L.D. - You've performed "Rain Song," *Diadem*, "13 Ways of Looking at a Blackbird," "Pied Beauty," "Leap Before You Look," *Terre de France*, *Infanta Marina* and "Have you heard? Do you know?"

P.S. - Yes, "Rain Song" was the first not so tonal piece of hers that I did. I have to say I enjoyed it. We recorded *Have You Heard? Do you know?* and I think she played that. We performed it once before we recorded it.

L.D. - It seems that *Terre de France* allows for good balance with the singer. Were there ever any balance issues that you had to work on?

P.S. - The big piano outbursts are when you are not singing. I think she was very sensitive to that. I don't remember that there were ever any balance issues.

L.D. - Were there any phrases that were hard to manage with the slower tempos she chose?

P.S. - I don't think that was it. It was particularly the third song that I just felt should have a little more of a lilt to it. It wasn't that it was uncomfortable to sing. It was that I had a

slightly different idea about the music than she did. But it was her piece so her vote counted more than mine. When somebody is that definite about what they're looking for, that's impressive in itself.

L.D. - Do you have any other comments for singers who tackle *Terre de France*?

P.S. – Yes: not enough of them do. When Joy In Singing included some Louise Talma on one of its composer's concerts, we hired a mezzo with a gorgeous voice to do it. I wish she had come to me to work on it because I felt it was a very tame performance that didn't get to the heart of the piece. I was very disappointed because I wanted everybody to be knocked out by this piece. American singers don't seem to be rushing to do American songs by French composers. But if French is one of your main languages it shouldn't be any more difficult than learning a Poulenc cycle, certainly not harder than Messiaen and a lot easier than Boulez.

About her music in general, I know that a lot of people consider her music to be difficult. When I'm teaching American song, I very rarely give 12-tone pieces because a week or two is not sufficient time to learn them. I also tend to stick to English texts in those classes, which leaves very little Talma to assign. Sometimes I've taught a class on French settings by Americans. There are a lot of good ones; a lot of American composers are Francophiles.

L.D. - Do you have a favorite part of the cycle?

P.S. – I love the jazzy rhythms of the fourth song, and I think the last song is sensational. It really should get a very emotional response from people; it's powerful.

L.D. - I really appreciate all of your insights. I'm hoping that this will generate some more interest in Talma's work, and *Terre de France* in particular.

P.S - I would be thrilled if it did, and I certainly hope it will. I'm so delighted to think that you've taken an interest in Louise's music and that maybe it will get some more play. She was a very special lady. She had a very strong sense of living up to the potential of the music. She was, you could say, a stern taskmaster, but she had good reason. I imagine she was a good teacher. She had a lot of knowledge and a lot of discipline, and it takes that to be a great teacher. As you can tell, I was a big admirer.