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A GRADUATE RECITAL IN VOICE

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate School in
Fulfillment of Requirements for the Degree of
Masters in Vocal Performance

Theresa Fischer

Pittsburg State University

Pittsburg, Kansas

May 2023

A GRADUATE RECITAL IN VOICE

Theresa Fischer

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A GRADUATE RECITAL IN VOICE

An abstract of the thesis by
Theresa Fischer

The following thesis consists of accompanying program notes for my graduate vocal performance recital. The recital includes a variety of music including composers such as Carlisle Floyd, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Richard Strauss, Lili Boulanger, and Pauline Viardot. Each song is accompanied by program notes that include a brief biography of the composer, information about the song, text and translation, and a performance reflection.

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Pittsburg State University
Pittsburg, Kansas

Department of Music
Graduate Recital

Theresa Fischer, soprano
Jung Hee Lee, piano

Saturday, March 25, 2023
Sharon K. Dean Recital Hall
3:00 p.m.

Non Mi Dir.....Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
from *Don Giovanni* (1756-1791)

from *Vier letzte Lieder*.....Richard Strauss
Frühling (1864-1949)
September
Beim Schlafengehen
Allerseelen, Op. 10, No. 8

intermission

Bei Männern, welche Liebe fühlen.....Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
from *Die Zauberflöte*
Patrick Howle, baritone

Reflets.....Lili Boulanger
(1893-1918)

Fleur Desséchée.....Pauline Viardot
Hai Luli! (1821-1910)
Les Filles de Cadix

The Trees on the Mountains.....Carlisle Floyd
Ain't It a Pretty Night (1926-2021)
from *Susannah*

CHAPTER I

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791) was born in Salzburg to an exceptionally musical family and established his career at a very young age. He was only five years old when he wrote his first musical composition. He became popular as a composer and pianist traveling with his family and performing in many different venues. In 1768 he wrote his first opera, *Bastien und Bastienne*. He then moved to Italy where his operas became more popular and wrote *opera seria*, such as *Mitridate* and *Lucio Silla*. Mozart then spent some time in Paris where he wasn't as successful in writing operas but wrote other works such as *Sinfonia Concertante* and other chamber works. The last ten years of his life were spent writing music in Vienna writing six symphonies and many other chamber pieces, as well as solo instrument pieces. Mozart's last work, *Requiem*, was unfinished at the time of his death and was later finished by his pupil Franz Süssmayer.¹ The resting place of Mozart is still unknown to this day. He was buried in a common grave as only the wealthy and aristocrats of that time were buried in marked graves.² The music of Mozart is still popular even today. In 2016 on the 225th anniversary of Mozart's

¹ (n.d.). *Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart*. Encyclopedia of World Biography. Retrieved February 20, 2023, from <https://www.notablebiographies.com/Mo-Ni/Mozart-Wolfgang-Amadeus.html>

² Hillcock, K. (n.d.). *5 Things You Didn't Know About Mozart*. San Diego Symphony. Retrieved February 25, 2023, from <https://www.sandiegosymphony.org/blog/5-things-you-didnt-know-zart-about-mozart/>

death, a box cd set was released with over 200 CDs and over 240 hours of music from Mozart. This box set sold even more copies that year than the very popular Beyonce album, *Lemonade*.³

Mozart was one of the most influential composers of the Classical period composing over 600 works in multiple genres including opera, choral music, chamber music, and symphonic works. *Don Giovanni* and *Die Zauberflöte* are among some of Mozart's most celebrated operas.

DON GIOVANNI

Don Giovanni is based on the story of Don Juan. The opera starts with Don Giovanni perusing Donna Anna when her father intervenes. He kills her father and then her fiancé, Don Ottavio, pledges to Donna Anna that he will avenge her father's death. Don Giovanni also encounters Donna Elvira who has been abandoned by her fiancé and comforts her. He then has his servant, Leporello, explain to her that he was just another one of his conquests. Don Giovanni holds a party at his house for the wedding of Masetto and Zerlina. During the party, he lures Zerlina into his study and then she screams, causing everyone to come to her rescue. However, Don Giovanni manages to escape without being caught. He and his servant, Leporello, escape to a cemetery where they find a statue of Donna Anna's father, the Commendatore. The statue tells Don Giovanni that he will pay for his sins. Don Giovanni thinks it is all a joke and takes the statue back

³ S. (2023, February 12). *20 Bizarre and Interesting Musical Facts*. La Escuela De Música Shine. <https://www.shinemusicschool.es/2020/05/20-bizarre-and-interesting-musical-facts/>

to his home. He throws a banquet where Donna Elvira comes and begs him to marry her. He refuses and the statue tells Don Giovanni that he needs to repent for his sins. He refuses and is swallowed up by the flames of hell.

NON MI DIR

The aria “Non mi dir” comes late in the opera when Don Ottavio proposes to Donna Anna while comforting her about her father's death. She refuses his proposal and tells him that she is not cruel and still loves him, but is tormented by her father's death.

Non Mi Dir

Say Not

Text by: Lorenzo da Ponte

Crudele? Ah no, mio bene!
Troppo mi spiace allontanarti un ben
che lungamente la nostr'alma desia
Ma il mondo, o Dio!
Non sedur la Costanza
Del sensibil mio core;
Abbastanza per te mi parla amore

Non mi dir, bell'idol mio,
Che son io crudel con te
Tu ben sai quant'io t'amai,
Tu conosci la mia fe'.
Calma, calma il tuo tormento,
Se di duol non vuoi ch'io mora.
Forse un giorno il Cielo ancora
Sentirà pietà di me.

I cruel? Ah no, my dearest!
It grieves me to postpone
a bliss we have long desired for
But what would the world say?
do not tempt the fortitude
of my tender heart;
which already pleads your loving call.

Say not, my beloved
that I am cruel to you
you know how much I love you,
And you know that I am true.
Calm your torments
If you would not have me die of grief.
one day, perhaps, Heaven again
Will smile on me.⁴

⁴ IPA Source. Retrieved January 18, 2023, from <https://www.ipasource.com>

DIE ZAUBERFLÖTE

Die Zauberflöte (The Magic Flute) was Mozart's last written opera. It is about Prince Tamino who is saved from a serpent by the Queen of Night's three ladies. He is soon accompanied by, the bird catcher, Papageno. The Queen tells Tamino that he needs to rescue her daughter, Pamina, who has been enslaved by Sarastro. The Three Ladies give Tamino a magic flute and Papageno magic bells, as well as spirits, to keep them safe. Tamino has seen a picture of Pamina and has fallen in love with her. Papageno goes to tell Pamina that Tamino loves her and is coming to save her. Tamino goes to see Sarastro and is told by a high priest that The Queen of the Night is the evil one, not Sarastro. Pamina and Papageno are chased by Sarastro's servant, Monostatos, but Papageno plays his magic bells which allow them to escape. Sarastro finds Pamina and brings her back home, promising that he will eventually set her free. He then tells the high priest that Tamino is ready for his initiation rights to the brotherhood. Meanwhile, The Queen of the Night comes to Pamina and gives her a dagger so she can kill Sarastro. Tamino and Papageno are told by the high priests that they are to remain silent and are not allowed to drink or eat. Pamina sees Tamino, but since he can't talk to her, she thinks he does not love her and is heartbroken. Papageno decides he does not want to be part of the brotherhood but wants to marry instead. He settles for an old lady and after he vows his love, she turns into the beautiful Papagena. Pamina and Tamino are reunited while the Queen and her Three Ladies try to take over Sarastro. They are defeated and banished from the temple. Pamina and Tamino can finally live happily together.

BEI MÄNNERN, WELCHE LIEBE FÜLEN

Bei Männern, welche Liebe fühlen (In men, who feel love) is a duet that comes in Act 1 between Pamina and Papageno. Papageno has told Pamina that Tamino is in love with her, and she is thrilled to have true love coming to her rescue. Papageno is sad because he does not have anyone to love. Pamina comforts him as they sing together about the joys of marriage and “Mann und Weib”(Man and Wife).

Bei Männern, welche Liebe fühlen

Men who feel the call of love

text by: Emanuel Schikaneder

Pamina:

Bei Männern, welche Liebe fühlen,
fehlt auch ein gutes Herze nicht.

Papageno:

Die süßen Triebe mitzufühlen,
ist dann der Weiber erste Pflicht.

Beide:

Wir wollen uns der Liebe freu'n,
wir leben durch die Lieb' allein.

Pamina:

Die Lieb' versüßet jede Plage,
ihr opfert jede Kreatur.

Papageno:

Sie würzet uns're Lebenstage,
sie wirkt im Kreise der Natur.

Beide:

Ihr hoher Zweck zeigt deutlich an:
nichts Edler's sei, als Weib und Mann.
Mann und Weib, und Weib und Mann,
reichen an die Gottheit an.

Pamina:

Men who feel the call of love
Do not lack a gentle heart.

Papageno:

To share these sweet desires
Is women's first duty.

Both:

We shall rejoice in love,
We live for love alone.

Pamina:

Love sweetens every sorrow,
All creatures pay it homage.

Papageno:

Love adds spice to our days on earth,
Love is at work throughout all nature.

Both:

Its exalted goal is manifest:
Nothing is more noble than man and wife.
Man and wife, and wife and man,
Attain divinity.⁵

⁵ IPA Source. Retrieved January 18, 2023, from <https://www.ipasource.com>

PERFORMANCE REFLECTION

Musically the most difficult part for me in the aria, “Non mi dir”, was the long, fast melismas at the end of the second section, as well as the recitative in the beginning. Singing fast melismas was very easy for me as a younger singer with a lighter voice. As my voice has matured it has a much darker, heavier timbre, making it more difficult to move with ease. I had to practice these passages consciously singing with a lighter tone. The recitative was harder for me since there was no set rhythmic time. I tend to rush through recitatives in general. I practiced saying the words like dialogue in a play and then putting them with the pitches to make it seem more speech-like. I always enjoy singing arias as I think that it is much easier to understand the story of a song when it is from a much larger production.

The Magic Flute is my favorite opera and getting to sing the duet, “Bei Männern, welche Liebe fühlen” from that opera with my teacher, Mr. Howle was such a pleasure. The most challenging part of this song was singing the melismas at the end in time and then coming in together on the downbeat of the next measure. I enjoy the lightheartedness of this song. It was very enjoyable to collaborate with two other talented musicians for this performance.

CHAPTER II

RICHARD STRAUSS

Richard Strauss (1864-1949) began composing as early as five years old and continued to compose to the very end of his life. Strauss' father was a famous horn player at the time and his connections in the music society helped his son start working as a composer after he graduated from the music conservatory. Strauss was appointed the assistant director of the Meiningen Orchestra and held positions with the Munich Opera, the Royal Court Opera of Berlin, and the Vienna State Opera in his lifetime.⁶ Strauss married Pauline de Ahna in 1884. On the night of his wedding, he composed Opus. 27, as a present for his new wife.⁷ It is thought that his love for his wife was the reason he wrote so many songs for the soprano voice. Strauss wrote in many different genres, but his main contributions included opera and lieder.⁸ He remained active in composition right up until the end of his life. One of the last things that Strauss ever said was "Dying is just the way I composed it."⁹ While Strauss could be referring to the *Vier Letzte Lieder*

⁶ Michael Kennedy, "Richard Strauss", Encyclopedia Britannica Online, accessed April 10, 2023, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/568524/Richard-Strauss>.

⁷ Laura Ward and Richard Walters, ed., *Richard Strauss – 40 Songs*, (Milwaukee: Hal Leonard, 1995), 72.

⁸ E. Runyan, W. (n.d.). *Four Last Songs, TrV 296 | Runyan Program Notes*. Retrieved February 25, 2023, from <https://www.runyanprogramnotes.com/richard-strauss/four-last-songs-trv-296-0>

⁹ Mandel, M. (n.d.). *BSO*. BSO. Retrieved April 10, 2023, from <https://www.bso.org/works/death-and-transfiguration>

(The Last Four Songs) that were written right before his death, author Marc Mandel believes that he was referring to the orchestra tone poem, “Tod und Verklärung”(Death and Transfiguration) that was written in 1889.¹⁰

VIER LETZE LIEDER

Vier letzte Lieder (the Last Four Songs) was written near the end of Strauss' life (at the age of 84) and were thought to be his epitaph.¹¹ Specifically written to showcase the soprano voice, Im Abendrot(In the Evening Glow), was written first then followed by Frühling (Spring), September, and Beim Schlafengehn (Time to Sleep) soon after. In 1947, Strauss was introduced to a new poet named Hermann Hesse. He quickly selected some of his poetry to set to music for “Frühling”, “September” and “Beim Schlafengehen”. He first wrote the music to “Im Abendrot” although this particular text was not by Hermann Hesse, but by Joseph Eichendorff. Now, Im Abendrot is traditionally performed as the fourth song in the series although they were not set in this order until after the composer's death. These songs were not performed until after Strauss died. The songs were put in order according to the length of music in each song. This work was considered Strauss' *opus ultimum* or his final work at the conclusion of his career.¹²

¹⁰ IBID

¹¹ *The Story Behind Strauss' Four Last Songs*. (n.d.). Classic FM. Retrieved April 9, 2023, from <https://www.classicfm.com/composers/strauss/guides/story-behind-strauss-four-last-songs/>

¹² Belcher, Owen. (2020). Analysis from a Dualist Perspective: “Frühling” from Richard Strauss's Vier Letzte Lieder. GMTH Proceedings. 551-561. 10.31751/p.30.

FRÜHLING

Frühling is the first in the series and translates into English as “Spring”, although the dark quality of the introduction does not sound very spring-like. The contemplative mood of this piece suggests spring is something that is to come or something the author is looking forward to. This perspective may look much different from an 84-year-old Strauss compared to a younger composer. There are two sections of this song separated by a double bar line. The song starts in C minor and ends in A Major.

Frühling

Text by: Herman Hesse

In dämmrigen Grüften
Träumte ich lang
Von deinen Bäumen und blauen Lüften,
Von deinem Duft und Vogelsang.

Nun liegst du erschlossen
in Gleich und Zier,
von Licht übergossen
wie ein Wunder vor mir.

Du kennest mich wieder,
Du lockest mich zart,
Es zittert durch all meine Glieder
Deine selige Gegenwart!

Spring

In twilit vaults
I have long dreamed
of your trees and blue breezes,
Of your fragrance and bird-song.

Now lie you opened
in brilliance and adornment,
with light flooded,
Like a miracle before me.

You recognize me again,
you beckon to-me tenderly;
it trembles through all my limbs
Your blessed presence!¹³

SEPTEMBER

The text of September is describing the end of summer turning into autumn. Strauss uses imagery in “Golden tropft Blatt um Blatt”(Golden, drop leaf after leaf)

¹³IPA Source. Retrieved January 18, 2023, from <https://www.ipasource.com>

where he uses descending notes to describe the falling of the leaves from the tree. Each stanza of the text describes a different part of the transition between summer and autumn. The first stanza is describing the summer showers coming to an end and the flowers starting to die. The second stanza is the beginning of autumn with the leaves falling and summer wearily fading away. The last stanza describes the final roses standing and hanging on before they die, and autumn is here to stay.

September

Text by: Herman Hesse

Der Garten trauert,
Kühl sinkt in die Blumen der Regen.
Der Sommer schauert
Still seinem Ende entgegen.

Golden tropft Blatt um Blatt
Nieder vom hohen Akazienbaum.
Sommer lächelt erstaunt und matt
In den sterbenden Gartentraum.

Lange noch bei den Rosen
Bleibt er steh'n sehnt sich nach Run.
Langsam tut er die großen
Müdigwordnen Augen zu.

The garden mourns,
Coolly sinks into the flowers the rain.
The summer showers
Quietly toward its end

Golden, drop leaf after leaf
Down from the high acadia tree.
Summer smiles astonished and weary
Into the dying garden dream.

For a long time still by the roses
Remains he standing, longing for peace
Slowly closes he the large
Grown tired eyes.¹⁴

¹⁴*IPA Source*. Retrieved January 18, 2023, from <https://www.ipasource.com>

BEIM SCHLAFENGEHN

The text of Beim Schlafengehn is focused on the end of life. Whether it be the end of summer into autumn with flowers dying and leaves falling or the end of Strauss' actual life. Sleep is described as something that is desired like a weary child, a time to forget about all the thoughts in your mind and fly free. Sleep or death is portrayed as a peaceful and fulfilling end.

Beim Schlafengehn

Text by: Herman Hesse

Nun der Tag mich müd gemacht,
Soll mein schnliches Verlangen
Freundlich die gestirnte Nacht
Wie ein müdes Kind empfangen.

Hände, last von allem Tun,
Stirn, vergiss du alles Denken,
Alle meine Sinne nun
Wollen sich in Schlummer senken.

Und die Seele unbewacht
Will in freien Flügen schweben,
Um im Zauberkreis der Nach
Tief und tausendfach zu leben.

Time to Sleep

Now that the day me weary has made,
shall my most longed for desires
kindly the stary night
Like a weary child receive.

Hands, leave from all activity,
brow, forget you all thinking;
all my senses now
Want themselves into the slumber to sink.

and the soul, unobserved
wants in free flights to glide
so that in the enchanted circle of the night
Deep and thousandfold to live.¹⁵

ALLERSEELEN

Allerseelen (All Souls Day) is about the loved ones who have passed away and the longing for them to come back. This song has three stanzas, each stanza ending with

¹⁵*IPA Source*. Retrieved January 18, 2023, from <https://www.ipasource.com>

the text “Wie einst in Mai”(As long ago in May). The text seems strophic although this is a mostly through-composed song. The arpeggiation in the piano line contributes to the simplicity of the song and showcases the melody line.

Allerseelen

All Souls’ Day

Text by: Herman von Gilmm

Stell auf den Tisch di duftenden Reseden,
Die letzten roten A stern trag’ herbei,
Und lass uns wieder von der Liebe reden,
Wie einst im Mai.
Gib mir die Hand, dass ich sie Heimlich drücke,
Und wenn Man’s sieht, mir ist es einerlei;
Gib mir nur einen deiner süs sen Blicke,
Wie einst in Mai.
Es blüht und duftet heut’ auf jedem Grabe,
Ein Tag im Jahr ist ja den Toten frei,
Kommen an mein Herz dass ich dich wieder habe,
Wie einst in Mai.

Place on the table the fragrant mignonettes
Bring here the last of red asters,
And let us speak again of love,
As long ago in May.
Give me the hand that I may secretly clasp it,
And if it is observed by others, I will not mind;
Give me one of your sweet glances,
As long ago in May.
Today each grave is flowering and fragrant,
Once a year is All Souls’ Day,
Come to my heart that I again may have you,
As long ago in May.¹⁶

PERFORMANCE REFLECTION

There were many difficulties in learning Vier letzte Lieder (Frühling, September and Beim Schlafengehn). The rhythmic timing of the vocal line combined with the piano accompaniment consumed most of my practice time. This was not a song that I could look at once and be able to sing straight through. Also, it took a lot of study and memorization of the intervals without relying on the accompaniment for musical support. This set also required a great deal of breath support and careful consideration of where to breathe. I particularly liked the long phrases in September and how the piano introduced

¹⁶ *IPA Source*. Retrieved January 18, 2023, from <https://www.ipasource.com>

the melody and then the vocal line took it over for the remainder of the song. I hope to someday perform one or all of these works with a full orchestra.

CHAPTER III

LILI BOULANGER

Lili Boulanger(1893-1918) was born and grew up in Paris. As a young child, she survived bronchial pneumonia that was almost fatal and remained in frail health through her short life. She studied music with her older sister, Nadia. She was unable to attend school regularly because of her health, but as a composer completed almost 50 works. Boulanger was a singer and played the piano, violin, cello, harp, and organ. She was the first woman to be awarded the Prix de Rome for her cantata *Faust et Hélène*. The text of *Reflets* was written by poet Maurice Maeterlinck(1862-1949).¹⁷ Lili Boulanger died at the age of 24.

REFLETS

Reflets(Reflections) is about someone reflecting on a dream that is frightening. The simple broken chords in the piano accompaniment give the song a very haunting feeling and the vocal line floats above it. There are two very distinct sections of this song. The first two stanzas are very similar. The song starts out in cut time and in G minor and while there are tonal harmonies throughout, the tonal center is not always steady and

¹⁷ Kimbal, C. (Ed.). (2004). *Women Composers A Heritage of Song*. Hal Leonard.

clear with the rest of the music. The last stanza changes to 4/4 time and the piano accompaniment becomes much denser with lots of octave doubling in both the bass and treble clef. When the song ends, we are again clearly in G minor.

Reflets

Reflections

Text by: Maurice Maeterlink

Reflets

Sous l'eau du songe qui s'élève
Mon âme a peur, mon âme a peur.
Et la lune luit dans mon cœur
Plongé dans les sources du rêve!

Under the water of a dream which rises
My soul is afraid, my soul is afraid.
And the moon shining in my heart
Plunges into the depths of my dreams!

Sous l'ennui morne des roseaux
Seul le reflet profonde des choses,
Des lys, des palmes et des roses
Pleurent encore au fond des eaux.

Under the gloomy ennui of the reeds,
Only the intense reflection of things,
The lilies, the palms and the roses
Still weep at the heart of the waters.

Les fleurs s'effeuillent une à une
Sur let reflet du firmament.
Pour descendre, éternellement
Sous l'eau du songe et dans la lune.

The flowers shed their petals one by one
Lit by the reflection from the heavens,
And descending, reflect in
The flood of dreams and the moonlight.¹⁸

PERFORMANCE REFLECTION

The challenge of this song was to sing independently from the accompaniment. Sometimes to my ear it felt like I was singing wrong notes because they were clashing with what was in the piano. The music looks deceptively easy to sing and perform. At first, I did not really like this song. It did not flow like I thought it should. However, with more practice and study I really ended up enjoying singing it, especially after really reflecting on the text and really focusing on singing in my lower register.

¹⁸ Kimbal, C. (Ed.). (2004). *Women Composers A Heritage of Song*. Hal Leonard.

CHAPTER IV

PAULINE VIARDOT

Pauline Viardot(1821-1910) was an extremely influential musician and composer of her time. She was a well-known mezzo-soprano as well as a composer and came from a tremendously musical family. She was fluent in English, French, Spanish, and Italian. She moved around a lot at a young age and lived in Paris, Mexico, New York, and London, although she was born and died in Paris.¹⁹ Her father, Manuel Garcia, was one of Rossini's favorite tenors. Not only was she famous for her own talents, but she was associated with many famous composers at the time. For example, she studied piano with Liszt, and composers like Chopin and Saint-Saëns were her accompanists when she sang. She was influential in starting the careers of Gounod, Saint-Saëns, Fauré and Massenet. Viardot wrote over 100 songs, 90 of which were published during her lifetime. She was one of the few composers living in Paris that wrote in a wide variety of national styles and languages. Clara Shumann once said, "She is the most gifted woman I have ever met in my life".²⁰

¹⁹ Pauline Viardot-Garcia (1821-1910)" (PDF). Hildegard.com. Retrieved 2023-02-11.

²⁰ Kimbal, C. (Ed.). (2004). *Women Composers A Heritage of Song*. Hal Leonard.

FLEUR DESSÉCHÉE

Fleur desséchée (pressed flower) is the first song of twelve in *Douze mélodies sur des poésies russes* which originally were published in Russian in 1866 and was then later translated to French by Louis Pomey. This song is in ABA¹ form and is in E-flat major. The voice sings the melody alone for this song, not being doubled in the piano at any time. The accompaniment is very sparse in the A section, playing only a single note or chord. In the B section, the tempo changes from *Andante mosso* to *animato*. The piano plays constant 8th notes giving the feeling of moving forward as the vocal line grows in dynamics and range. The A¹ section is very much the same as A with the tempo and dynamics, but the piano accompaniment becomes a little denser with a chord on beat one instead of a single note.

Fleur desséchée

Text by: Alexandre Pushkin

Dans ce vieux livre l'on t'oublie,
Fleur sans parfum et sans couleur,
Mais une étrange reverie,
Quand je te vois, emplît mon cœur.

Quel jour, quel lieu te virent naître?
Quel fut ton sort? Qui t'arracha?
Qui sait? Je les connus peut-être,
Ceux dont l'amour te conserva!

Rappelais-tu, rose flétrie,
La première heure ou les adieux?
Les entretiens dans la prairie
Ou dans le bois silencieux?

Pressed Flower

In this old book you have been forgotten
Flower without scent or color
But a strange reverie
Fills my heart when I see you.

What day, what place witnessed your birth?
What was your destiny? Who picked you?
Who knows? Perhaps I knew
Those whose love preserved you!

Faded rose, do you recall
The first hours or the farewells?
The conversations in the meadow
Or in the silent wood?

Vit-il encore? Existe-t-elle?
A quels rameaux flottent leurs nids!
Ou comme toi, qui fus si belle,
Leurs fronts charmants sont-ils flétris?

Is he still living? Does she exist?
On which branches do their nests sway?
Or like you, who were so lovely,
Are their charming looks withered?²¹

HAI LULI

Hai Luli was originally composed in G minor, however, I sang it in E minor for my recital. It is the fourth song in the collection *Six Mélodies et une Havanaise variées à 2 voix*, but was also published separately because it was the most popular.²² The text by Xavier de Maistre was taken from his novel *Prisonniers du Caucase*. There are three stanzas or verses to this song. The melody is the same for each except for some rhythmical changes. However, the “Hai Luli” section of each stanza rises in pitch each time, with the highest being at the very end. The piano accompaniment consisting of moving sixteenth notes is imitating the spinning of her wool while she waits for her love to come. The piano part becomes more detached in the third verse with sixteenth notes being played in the right hand when she is talking about her lover being unfaithful and that he is not coming back. The song ends though with the smooth flowing sixteenth notes under the legato “Hai Luli” realizing what would the point of life be without a lover “A quoi bon vivre sans ami?”

²¹ Kimbal, C. (Ed.). (2004). *Women Composers A Heritage of Song*. Hal Leonard.

²² Patricia Adkins Chiti, ed. *Songs and Duets of Garcia, Malibran and Viardot* (United States: Alfred Publishing Co., Inc., 1997), 54.

Haï luli

Text by: Xavier de Maistre

Je suis triste, je m'inquiète,
je ne sais plus que devenir.
Mon bon ami devait venir,
et je l'attends ici seulette.
Haï luli! Haï luli!
Où donc peut être mon ami?

I am sad, I am anxious,
I no longer know what's to become of me.
My lover was to have come,
And I wait for him here alone.
Hai luli, hai luli,
How sad it is without my lover!

Je m'assieds pour filer ma laine,
le fil se casse dans ma main ...
Allons, je filerai demain;
aujourd'hui je suis trop en peine!
Haï luli! Haï luli!
Qu'il fait triste sans son ami!

I sit down to spin my wool,
The thread snaps in my hand:
Well then! I shall spin tomorrow,
Today I am too upset.
Hai luli, hai luli,
Where can my lover be?

Ah! s'il est vrai qu'il soit volage,
s'il doit un jour m'abandonner,
le village n'a qu'à brûler,
et moi-même avec le village!
Haï luli! Haï luli!
A quoi bon vivre sans ami?

Ah! If it's true that he's unfaithful,
And will one day abandon me,
Then let the village burn
And me too along with the village!
Hai luli, hai luli,
What point is there in living without a lover?²³

LES FILLES DE CADIX

Les Filles de Cadix shows off Viardot's Spanish heritage. She only set the first two verses of this poem by Alfred de Musset to music. Other popular settings of this text were done by composers Léo Delibes and Gabriel Pierné. This is a song about the very confident girls of Cadix. They are coming from a bullfight and are having a good time dancing and talking to neighbors. They want people to notice how good they look “Dites-moi, voisin Si j'ai bonne mine”(Tell me, neighbor, if I look good”). This song is

²³IPA Source. Retrieved January 18, 2023, from <https://www.ipasource.com>

in F major and is in ABAB form with A sounding like the verse and B sounding like the chorus, although the text changes slightly the second time through. The piano is very consistent throughout, playing mostly moving eighth notes. The singer sings the melody alone over the accompaniment and in the B section, sings “Les filles de Cadix” a cappella which I think puts an extra emphasis on the text “The girls of Cadix”

Les Filles de Cadix

The girls of Cadiz

Text by: Alfred de Musset

Nous venions de voir la taureau,
Trois garçons, trois fillettes,
Sur la pelouse il faisait beau,
Et nous dansions un bolero
Au son des castagnettes.
‘Dites-moi, voisin,
Si j’ai bonne mine,
Et si ma basquine
Va bien, ce martin
Vous me trouvez la taille fine?...
Ah! Ah!
Les filles de Cadiz aiment assez cela.’

We had just seen the bullfight,
Three boys, three girls
It was bright on the square
And we danced a bolero
To the sound of castanets.
‘Tell me, neighbor,
if I look good
And if my skirt
Looks nice on me this morning.
Do you find my waist slender?...
Ah! Ah!
The girls of Cadiz rather like that.’

Et nous dansions un bolero,
Un soir c’était Dimanche.
Vers nous s’en vint un hidalgo
Cousu d’or, la plume au chapeau,
Et le poing sur la hanche:
‘Si tu veux de moi,
Brune au doux sourire,
Tu n’as qu’à le dire,
Cet or est à toi.
– Passez votre hemin, beau sire.
Ah! Ah!
Les filles de Cadiz n’entendent pas cela.’

And we danced the bolero
One evening, it was Sunday.
A hidalgo came toward us
Clothes of golden thread, a plume in his hat
And, with fist on hip:
‘If you want me,
Dark-haired beauty with the gentle smile,
You’ve only to say so,
And this gold is for you.
Go on your way, fine sir.
Ah! Ah!
The girls of Cadiz don’t listen to such as that.’²⁴

²⁴ Kimbal, C. (Ed.). (2004). *Women Composers A Heritage of Song*. Hal Leonard.

PERFORMANCE REFLECTION

Hai Luli was one of my favorite songs of my recital. I found the text with the music just so easy to understand and deliver. I love how she wrote the “Hai Luli” after every verse as kind of a reflection. Even after the third verse when the text was a little more intense, it went back to the very calm “Hai Luli”. The range of this song was also very easy to sing, and each verse had opportunities to grow.

The most difficult part of learning “Les Filles de Cadix” was the memory! The music and text moved so fast that it was very easy to get words mixed up or tied together. Musically, this song was very easy to put together with the piano. The most difficult part vocally was the jump of the intervals major 9th (C4-D5), minor 10th (C4-E-flat5), and major 10th (C4-E5) in a row on the word Ah! I really enjoyed the storytelling that I got to do in this song. Although the text wasn’t personally relatable, I found it fun to pretend I was a girl of Cadix!

CHAPTER V

CARLISLE FLOYD

Carlisle Floyd(1926-2021) was an American composer who is most well-known for his American operas. He earned his Bachelor's and Master of Music degrees from Syracuse University in piano and composition. He taught at Florida State University from 1947-1976. Floyd was a professor at the University of Houston and was influential in starting their opera program to teach and train young singers about opera performance. One of his first, and most successful operas, *Susannah*, has become one of the most performed operas by an American composer. Typically, his librettos contained themes from the post-Civil War South and rural areas. *Susannah* was premiered by the New York City opera in 1956 and was chosen to be performed at the Brussels World's Fair in 1958. Some of his other successful operas include *Wuthering Heights*, which was premiered at the Santa Fe Opera in 1958, *Of Mice and Men* which was based on the novel by Steinbeck, and his most recent opera *Prince of Players*, which premiered by the Houston Grand Opera in 2016.²⁵

²⁵ *Carlisle Floyd: Biography*. (n.d.). Retrieved April 10, 2023, from <https://www.boosey.com/composer/Carlisle+Floyd?ttype=BIOGRAPHY>

SUSANNAH

The opera *Susannah* is based in Tennessee in a small religious community. The story begins with a church gathering where the church women are jealous of *Susannah* and how her beauty distracts their husbands. They also gossip about how she was raised by her brother, Sam, who was known to be a town drunk. The reverend, Olin Blicht, comes into the gathering and asks *Susannah* to dance. She tells her admirer, Little Bat, about the dance. Little Bat is the son of Mrs. McLean who was among the women gossiping. The next day *Susannah* is bathing naked in the creek by her house and is discovered by the church elders. They believe this behavior is outrageous and do not allow *Susannah* to come to the church dinner that night. She does not understand why. Little Bat tells her that she has been shunned because they saw her bathing in the creek. *Susannah*'s brother, Sam, tells her that she must confess her sins to be accepted back into the church. She goes to the service and when Reverend Blicht calls on her she runs away scared. Blicht goes after *Susannah* to pray with her but finds her home alone and rapes her. The next day Reverend Blicht goes to *Susannah* for forgiveness, but she does not forgive him. She tells her brother Sam what has happened, and he goes to the church to kill Reverend Blicht. The community is outraged and blames *Susannah* for Blicht's death. They come to her house, and she scares them away with a shotgun. She no longer is a part of her church or community and finds herself alone.

AIN'T IT A PRETTY NIGHT

“Ain’t it a Pretty Night” happens early in the opera when she is sitting on the porch one night with her friend, Little Bat, looking out at the mountains and wondering what else is out beyond the world that she knows.

Ain't it a Pretty Night

Text by: Carlisle Floyd

Ain't it a pretty night!
The sky's so dark and velvet-like
And it's all lit up with stars
It's like a great big mirror
Reflectin' fireflies over a pond
Look at all them stars, Little Bat
The longer y'look the more y'see
The sky seems so heavy with stars
That it might fall right down out of heaven
And cover us all up in one big blanket of velvet
All stitched with diamon's
Ain't it a pretty night
Just think, all those stars can all peep down
An' see way beyond where we can:
They can see way beyond them mountains
To Nashville and Asheville and Knoxville
I wonder what it's like out there
Out there beyond them mountains
Where the folks talk nice an' the folks dress nice
Like y'see in the mail order catalogs
I aim to leave this valley some day
An' find out for myself:
To see all the tall buildin's and all the street lights
An' to be one o'them folks myself

I wonder if I'd get lonesome fer the valley though
Fer the sound of crickets an' the smell of pine straw
Fer soft little rabbits an' bloomin' things
An' the mountains turnin' gold in the fall
But I could always come back I get homesick fer the valley
So I'll leave it someday an' see fer myself
Someday I'll leave an' then I'll come back

When I've seen what's beyond them mountains

Ain't it a pretty night
The sky's so heavy with stars tonight
That it could fall right down out of heaven
An' cover us up, and cover us up
In one big blanket of velvet and diamon's

THE TREES ON THE MOUNTAINS

The aria “The Trees On the Mountains” is sung after Susannah goes to the church to confess her sins of bathing in the creek. She becomes afraid and runs home. She feels very alone and betrayed by her church community. This is a song her mother taught her, and she likes to sing it when she is feeling sad. Although the text of this song doesn't necessarily forward the plot of the opera, the text does reflect how alone she is feeling at the time. While it is not a folk song, it has a folksong feeling with the context it is used in this opera and the strophic structure and repetition of the melody.

The Trees on the Mountains

Text by: Carlisle Floyd

The trees on the mountains are cold and bare
The summer jes' vanished an' left them there
Like a false-hearted lover jes' like my own
Who made me love him, then left me alone

The coals on the hearth have turned gray and sere
The blue flame jes' vanished an' left them there
Like a false-hearted lover jes' like my own
Who made me love him, then left me alone

Come back, O summer, come back, blue flame
My heart wants warmin', my baby a name

Come back, O lover, if jes' fer a day
Turn bleak December once more into May

The road up ahead lies lonely an' far
There's darkness around me an' not even a star
To show me the way or lighten my heart
Come back, my lover, I fain would start

The pore baby fox lies all cold in his lair
His mama jes' vanished an' left him there
Like a false-hearted lover jes' like my own
Who made me love him, then left me alone

Come back, O summer, come back, blue flame
My heart wants warmin', my baby a name
Come back, O lover, if jes' fer a day
Turn bleak December once more into May

Come back, O summer, come back, blue flame
My heart wants warmin', my baby a name
Come back, O lover, if jes' fer a day
Turn bleak December once more into May
Come back! Come back! Come back!

PERFORMANCE REFLECTION

I really enjoyed getting to know the opera *Susannah* and the music of Carlisle Floyd. I was unfamiliar with this opera before working toward my recital. I particularly like how these two arias show off the very highest and lowest of the soprano voice and understand why finding a good recording of these arias was difficult. The wide range was one of the most difficult things to master in “The Trees on the Mountains”, especially at the end where each one was to be sung even quieter. I also really enjoyed how dark and sad the aria was and enjoyed trying to portray that feeling. “Aint it a Pretty Night” was a good contrasting aria. It was so hopeful at the beginning with part of the accompaniment foreshadowing what is to come in the opera, especially when singing the words “what’s

beyond them mountains”. The most difficult part of this aria was some of the large interval skips during the con moto section starting with “But I could always come back”. Overall, I really enjoyed these arias and would love to play the role of Susannah someday.

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