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Scholarly Program Notes

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SCHOLARLY PROGRAM NOTES

by

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B.A., Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts, 2005

A Research Paper

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
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SCHOLARLY PROGRAM NOTES

By

Yun Xin Lee

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for the Degree of

Master of Music

in the field of Collaborative Piano

Approved by:

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MAJOR PROFESSOR: Dr. Paul Transue

This document is a compilation of biographical and musical information that serves to inform the audience about the music presented at the graduate recital of Ms. Yun Xin Lee. The works discussed will include the Cantata BWV 82 by Johann Sebastian Bach, the six songs from *Ariette oubliées* by Claude Debussy; *Kennst du das Land* from Mignon by Ludwig van Beethoven, Franz Schubert, Robert Schumann, Franz Liszt and Hugo Wolf; and *La Bonne Cuisine* by Leonard Bernstein.

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CHAPTER 1

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685-1750)

Johann Sebastian Bach was born March 21, 1685 in Eisenach and died in July 28, 1750 in Leipzig. Born into a family of musicians, who for many generations served the towns, courts and churches of Germany with their musical gifts, Sebastian was a naturally gifted master in polyphonic writing, organ playing, improvisation, clavier playing and taking simple musical ideas and crafting them into the most skilled artistry. Besides being known for his technical genius, his music was also known for deep meaning in its spiritual contents.

Sebastian first learned the violin from his father, who was a musician of the court and town, and later picked up other string instruments too. Sebastian's first encounter with hearing and touching the organ at St. George's church in Eisenach was when his father's cousin, Christoph Bach, was a town organist and court harpsichordist there. Known as an expressive, brilliant composer to Sebastian, he greatly inspired Bach in the art of composing as well as organ and harpsichord playing.

Around the age of eight, Sebastian was enrolled into the Latin school's *quinta*, which began his formal learning. The teachings were centered on the Gospels, Bible history, hymnal and Luther's Catechism (these being their most important learning texts) and learning how to write and read in German and Latin. This began his cognizance of Luther's idea of knowledge. Sebastian was intelligent and showed an extraordinarily profound understanding of subjects at this tender age. After both parents died in 1694—1695, Sebastian stopped school and, together

with his older brother Johann Jacob, went to Ohrdruf to be with their eldest brother, Johann Christoph, who took care of them.¹

An organist himself at St. Michael, Christoph became Sebastian's only teacher, and laid a strong foundation for Sebastian's keyboard skills while he was in St. Michael's School. It was during this period that Sebastian learned and became very well versed in liturgical plainsong, polyphonic music, large collections of sacred poetry and tunes, Latin and German motets from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and concerted repertoires with the accompaniments of obbligato instruments.² At that time, Johann Christoph was studying in Erfurt with Pachelbel, who was very knowledgeable in the art of preludes, fugues, fantasias, capriccios, dance suites and chorale elaborations. Johann Christoph was also exposed to clavier music written by other composers such as Jakob, Froberger, and Johann Caspar Kerll. Sebastian loved music to an extent that he not only fully acquired complete knowledge and skill of all the pieces his brother let him learn, he would also compose his own melodies and exercises. He had obtained a forbidden copy from Christoph of a book of clavier pieces, without letting his brother know, and secretly copied it at night by moonlight.³

At age twelve, Sebastian studied theology under the cantor Elias Herder, who inspired him to combine music and theology. This phase of his early education eventually led to the composition of some of his masterpieces, including the *St. Matthew Passion*, the *Mass in B minor*, *The Brandenburg Concertos*, the *Magnificat*, the *Passacaglia* and *The Well-Tempered Clavier*.

¹ Jan Chiapisso, *Bach's world* (United States of America: Indiana University Press, 1968), 10-11.

² Christoph Wolff, *Johann Sebastian Bach: the learned musician* (New York: W.W.Norton and Company, 2000), 43.

³ *Ibid*, 45.

In the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, the genre cantata was as popular as operas and oratorios. Due to the rising effect of Martin Luther's theology, besides having sermons proclaiming God's words in churches, more songs were needed for the congregation to proclaim and respond to their Christian faith. According to Carl Philipp Emanuel, Sebastian composed five complete sets of sacred cantatas.⁴ Among his cantatas are those that reveal the longing for death on the earth but are filled with the desire and joy to unite with Jesus Christ after life. This is reflected in *Ich habe genug*, composed in the Leipzig cycle III (1725-7).⁵

Ich habe genug (I have enough), BWV 82, church cantata, was composed in Leipzig in 1727 for the Feast *Mariae Reinigung* (Purification of Mary) and was first performed at the Thomaskirche on February 2, 1727. It illustrates the story of Simeon, who contentedly embraces his death after having encountered the infant Jesus in the temple.⁶ It also states that now that Jesus the Savior has appeared, believers long to unite with Him in sweet peace, away from the world and their flesh. Among all the Purification texts, this is perhaps the one that most signifies the "mystical yearning for the afterlife".⁷

This is a modest work scored for a bass solo, oboe, two violins, viola, and basso continuo in five movements (Table 1).

⁴ Jan Chiapisso, *Bach's world* (United States of America: Indiana University Press, 1968), 209.

⁵ Alfred Dürr, *The cantatas of J.S. Bach with their librettos in German-English parallel text, revised and translated by Richard D.P. Jones* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 36

⁶ Bettina Varwig, *Death and Life in J.S. Bach's Cantata Ich habe genug (BWV 82) from Journal of the Royal Musical Association, Vol. 135, no. 2*, (published online on November 25, 2010), 320
<http://www.informaworld.com>

⁷ Alfred Dürr, *The cantatas of J.S. Bach with their librettos in German-English parallel text, revised and translated by Richard D.P. Jones* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 663.

Table 1

Aria	<i>Ich habe genug</i>
Recitative	<i>Ich habe genug</i>
Aria	<i>Schlummert ein, ihr matten Augen</i>
Recitative	<i>Mein Gott! wenn kömmt das schöne: Nun!</i>
Aria	<i>Ich freue mich auf meinen Tod</i>

The opening of the first aria, in 3/8 time, begins with the oboe carrying a moving melody, the main motif A, made of an upward leap of a sixth, accompanied by agitated strings in minor thirds with a short- short- long rhythm motif. The motif A is then passed to the bass line (Figure 1).

Figure 1



It is interesting to note that Sebastian chooses the oboe, rather than flute or horn or trumpet, to suggest that the dark and mysterious timbre to signify longing and sorrow. This work greatly demonstrates how Bach cleverly strings little motifs together to unify the harmony and structure, as well as the emotions and meditation of the listeners. The first aria is in a simple A (mm.1- 107), B (mm. 108-149), B' (mm. 150- 208) form. It begins in the key of C minor (mm.1- 75) changing to G minor (mm.76 – 134), then F minor (mm.135- 175), finally returning to C minor (mm.176-208). Other than the key changes, Bach did not make many changes to the form of the music even though Section B uses a different text. Overall, it is a challenge to refrain from

monotonous, beat-driven, playing. It is important always to understand the overall harmonic structure and melodic line and always keep the inner counter lines moving.

The recitative that follows is an afterthought to the aria as it begins with *Ich habe genug*. Unlike the lyrical aria, it is a *secco* (dry) recitative, with the sung text bringing out the natural inflections of speech. It is accompanied by a sustained bass line (i.e. cello) and improvised figured bass chords from the keyboard instrument. The accompaniment enables the singer to achieve a beautifully expressive melody without a consistent tempo. It is important that the congregation can hear the words clearly in order to respond to the “message” in their personal way.

Followed by the melodious, well-known *da capo* aria without the oboe, the cantata now transcends into a calm and peaceful *slumber*, having the spirit of resting in the Lord. It is set in common time with a pedal point bass line, long held notes and a syncopated sigh motif in the melody, first heard in the strings, then in the vocal bass. A *fermata* (pause) at each of the cadences suggests the end of an idea and, literally, a “rest” from the world to Heaven. As in madrigals, text painting is employed in a descending scale pattern for the words “fall asleep, you weary eyes, close softly and pleasantly”.

A second recitative follows, exclaiming “My Lord, when will I leave this place?”. This sits in the high register for the bass, preparing for the joyous ending of the last aria, marked *vivace* for the first time. To suggest an outburst of joy while awaiting the Lord, Sebastian uses a rapid sixteenth ascending scale pattern in most of his instrumental writing, descending scale patterns in sequences, slurred, un-slurred, and staccato articulations, and the bright and lively sound of the oboe, vividly capturing the mood. He also uses the famous *Picardy third*, altering

the final cadence to C major for an ending suggesting a joyous and fulfilling unification of the spirit with the Lord.

Arie

Ich habe genug,
 Ich habe den Heiland, das Hoffen der
 Frommen,
 Auf meine begierigen Arme
 genommen;
 Ich habe genug!
 Ich hab ihn erblickt,
 Mein Glaube hat Jesum ans Herze
 gedrückt;
 Nun wünsch ich, noch heute mit
 Freuden
 Von hinnen zu scheiden.

Rezitativ

Ich habe genug.
 Mein Trost ist nur allein,
 Daß Jesus mein und ich sein eigen
 möchte sein.
 Im Glauben halt ich ihn,
 Da seh ich auch mit Simeon
 Die Freude jenes Lebens schon.
 Laßt uns mit diesem Manne ziehn!
 Ach! möchte mich von meines Leibes
 Ketten
 Der Herr erretten;
 Ach! wäre doch mein Abschied hier,
 Mit Freuden sagt ich, Welt, zu dir:
 Ich habe genug.

Arie

Schlummert ein, ihr matten Augen,
 Fallet sanft und selig zu!
 Welt, ich bleibe nicht
 mehr hier,
 Hab ich doch kein Teil an dir,
 Das der Seele könnte taugen.
 Hier muß ich das Elend bauen,
 Aber dort, dort werd ich schauen
 Süßen Friede, stille Ruh.

Aria

I have enough,
 I have taken the Savior, the hope of the
 righteous,
 into my eager
 arms;
 I have enough!
 I have beheld Him,
 my faith has pressed Jesus to my
 heart;
 now I wish, even today
 with joy
 to depart from here.

Recitativo

I have enough.
 My comfort is this alone,
 that Jesus might be mine and I
 His own.
 In faith I hold Him,
 there I see, along with Simeon,
 already the joy of the other life.
 Let us go with this man!
 Ah! if only the Lord might
 rescue me
 from the chains of my body;
 Ah! were only my departure here,
 with joy I would say, world, to you:
 I have enough.

Aria

Fall asleep, you weary eyes,
 close softly and pleasantly!
 World, I will not remain here any
 longer,
 I own no part of you
 that could matter to my soul.
 Here I must build up misery,
 but there, there I will see
 sweet peace, quiet rest.

Rezitativ

Mein Gott! wenn kömmt das schöne: Nun!
 Da ich im Friede fahren werde
 Und in dem Sande kühler Erde
 Und dort bei dir im Schoße ruhn?
 Der Abschied ist gemacht,
 Welt, gute Nacht!

Arie

Ich freue mich auf meinen Tod,
 Ach, hätt' er sich schon eingefunden.
 Da entkomm ich aller Not,
 Die mich noch auf der Welt
 gebunden.

Recitative

My God! When will the lovely 'now!' come,
 when I will journey into peace
 and into the cool soil of earth,
 and there, near You, rest in Your lap?
 My farewells are made,
 world, good night!

Aria

I delight in my death,
 ah, if it were only present already!
 Then I will emerge from all the
 suffering
 that still binds me to the world.

English translation by Pamela Dellal⁸

⁸ Translation from Emmanuel Music
http://www.emmanuelmusic.org/notes_translations/translations_cantata/t_bwv082.htm

CHAPTER 2

CLAUDE (ACHILLE-) DEBUSSY (1862-1918)

Claude, (Achille-) Debussy was born August 22, 1862 in St. Germain-en-Laye and died March 25, 1918 in Paris. Debussy is ranked as one of the greatest Impressionist composers, of equal status with masters of other periods such as Bach and Mozart. Though his music is profoundly charming and beautiful, it is also profoundly complex and exotic. Even scholarly musicians need to study Debussy's musical language in order to fully understand it.

From his youth, Debussy could hear music in different shades and tones than other people, perhaps explaining why he could produce a new sound with just two instruments playing together as in *La Mer*.⁹ Debussy composed many works in a wide range of genres, from string quartets, operas, piano compositions and symphonies to songs for voice and piano. Debussy's songs aimed to express an emotional mental state that was considered very different or strange from the Classical form.¹⁰

Debussy had piano lessons with Jena Cerutti at the age of seven, and later it was Madame Antoinette-Flore Mauté de Fleurville who was tremendously helpful in preparing him for the entrance exam for the Paris Conservatory. Debussy enrolled in the Paris Conservatory in 1872 or 1873. There he studied with Albert Lavignac, Antoine Marmontel, E.Durand, Paul Vidal and Ernest Guirand. His teachers recognized his musical talents but since he did not conform to basic Western harmony, theory and forms, they considered him musically strange. His compositions were often criticized by teachers and were considered too "new" for his time. In his early works,

⁹ Piet Ketting, *Claude-Achille Debussy* translated from the Dutch by W.A.G. Doyle-Davidson, Symphonia Books: a series of contributions to the history of music. (Stockholm: Continental Book Company A.B., 194-), 32-33.

¹⁰ Christopher Peacocke, "What makes a piece of music Romantic?" (University College London, May 13 2013), <https://blogs.ucl.ac.uk/events/2013/05/13/what-makes-a-piece-of-music-romantic/> (accessed April 20, 2014)

Debussy used: parallel fourths and fifths (e.g. *Nuages* (1899)); whole-tone scales; extended harmonies such as chords with added seconds, sixths, elevenths and sixteenths; modality, pentatonic scales, bitonality; and dissonances to create and evoke emotive responses.

At the age of twenty-two, he won the *Prix de Rome* with his cantata, *L'enfant prodigue*. That financed his two-year studies at Villa Medici, Rome. During this period, he studied and loved the German composer Richard Wagner's works, especially his opera *Tristan und Isolde*, so much so that he wanted to escape Wagner's musical spell for fear that he would lose his own unique voice. So around 1898, he wrote his own opera based on Maeterlinck's *Pelléas et Mélisande*, which displays his own unique ideas.

After returning to Paris in 1887, Debussy began in earnest to pursue his personal aesthetic in music. It was during this bohemian lifestyle that he happened to be at the right period in history where great artists in all fields were seeking and exploring ideas from the other arts. Debussy was involved in literary circles that included great Symbolist poets such as Pierre Louÿs, Paul Verlaine and Stéphane Mallarmé, scholars, critics, novelists, painters and also great musicians and composers such as Massenet, Gounod, Saint-Saëns and Fauré. The works had such a great impact on Debussy, and during this period he composed some of his best works such as the piano solo *La fille aux cheveux de lin* (1881), and the mélodies *Clair de lune* (1882), *Fantoches* (1882) and *Mandoline* (1882).

Debussy first heard *La Princesse Endormie* in Russia and was deeply captivated by the dissonances of the song that he used it in all his compositions afterwards. In 1889, Debussy was introduced to the sounds of the Middle and Far East by Javanese Gamelan music at the Paris Exhibition. This opened up new horizons, with new Oriental exotic and modal scales and sounds,

less structured forms, and rhythms that he employed in his many piano pieces. Debussy was a perfectionist who often rewrote an entire composition even after he had completed it.¹¹ During 1890-1915, Debussy and his music became more established and well known, and, all in all, he championed French music.

Debussy was interested in exploring the possibilities of combining both the aesthetic and the rhythm of music and poem and thus a new style was conceived. Great masters such as Chopin, Liszt, Wagner, and Mussorgsky had already blazed a pathway for Debussy, enabling him to pursue a new musical freedom in his use of structure, harmony, and accompaniment- a style very different from others. Debussy wrote eighty-five songs (some are incomplete), and, like Hugo Wolf, Debussy's songs for voice and piano are considered the cream of the crop among all his works and the best representation of his style. His brilliant setting of French texts, with their irregular ebb and flow is reflected in his first important set of *mélodies*, *Ariettes oubliées* (Forgotten Airs).

The six *Ariettes oubliées* were composed between 1885 and 1887. Three are taken from *Romances sans paroles*, two from *Aquarelles* and one from *Paysages belges*. The work is dedicated to Mary Garden. The original title *Ariettes* was change to *Ariettes oubliées* fifteen years after its first publication. Both *Cinq Poèmes de Baudelaire* and *Ariettes oubliées* are considered the seminal works of the early period of Debussy's career.¹² Debussy was very selective in his choice of the poetry that inspired his songs. The poets were usually either his peers, or others known for their good aesthetic value. Paul Verlaine was one of Debussy's favorite poets, and Debussy composed sixteen songs based on his poems.

¹¹ Piet Ketting, *Claude-Achille Debussy* translated from the Dutch by W.A.G. Doyle-Davidson, Symphonia Books: a series of contributions to the history of music. (Stockholm: Continental Book Company A.B., 194-), 29.

¹² Carol Kimball, *Song: A Guide to Art Song Style and Literature* (Milwaukee: Hal Leonard, 2005), 190, 192.

As a Frenchman, Debussy absolutely respected the beauty of the French language and how it should sound. Unlike English or German, French is not heavily accented. Thus, Debussy's music and French music in general contains fewer dramatic climaxes and, unlike Beethoven or Brahms, his music is gentle, often beginning and ending quietly.¹³ Because there are no diphthongs in French, and many uses of "liaisons", the language is very fluid. Debussy illustrates this well in the second song, *Il pleure dans mon cœur*, where there is no clear beginning or end to the music. Rather, the song seems to fade in and fade out as if the music is continuing. Debussy clearly provided many detailed dynamic markings and thus it is a challenge for the performers to follow exactly how Debussy had marked his music. Both singer and pianist share the responsibility of interpreting the song. The role of the pianist is no less than that of the singer, and is very important in setting the mood and atmosphere of the poems. The music has to be "impressionist" first, introduced by the piano, and then joined by the voice. As Debussy desired to have many different shades and lights of colors in his compositions, the pianist may need to think about how to "orchestrate" the accompaniment.

The poem of *C'est l'extase* suggests the theme of love and nature: the unity of two souls into one with nature. The poem starts with a subjective appearance imaginary, gradually emerging and developing to an indefinite and personal "humble anthem". This song is through-composed, and the structure of the poem is significantly marked in groups of three. There are three stanzas, three rhymed lines in each stanza; the division of each sestet into two tercets marked by rhyme and syllabic rhythm, three main images for each stanza, and a trimeter (3/8

¹³ Victor Lederer, *Debussy: The Quiet Revolutionary* (New York: Amadeus Press, 2007), 1.

time).¹⁴

Debussy did not use long, sustained dramatic melodic climaxes like Wagner, but he did have a wide dynamic range, *ppp* being the softest and *mf* being the loudest. He uses recurring melodic motives full of chromatics to connect stanzas and also to gradually intensify the emotions. He uses basic rhythmic forms, such as an eighth-note followed by four sixteenth-notes or an eighth-note followed by a quarter-note, and vice versa, in the accompaniment to unify the song.¹⁵ By using two-note slurs and the placement of weak-to-strong pulses, he allows the performer to explore the possible articulations and dynamics needed to create the warm and intimate atmosphere.

Marked *lent et caressant* (slow and caressing), Debussy set the active awakening atmosphere in the first ten measures of Section A with a tonal motif A of a low dominant chord in the key of E major and followed by a descending scale of octaves and dominant major ninth chords. The distinct sound of the dominant major ninth chord unifies the whole song and exemplifies Debussy's impressionist voice. Debussy has the piano first introduce the mood with a lyrical melody made up of small intervals. (Figure 2)

Figure 2

The image shows a musical score for a vocal piece. The top staff is labeled 'CHANT.' and contains a vocal line with lyrics: 'C'est l'ex - ta - se langou - reu - se'. Above the vocal line, there is a tempo marking 'Lent et caressant.' and a dynamic marking 'pp'. The bottom staff is labeled 'PIANO' and contains a piano accompaniment. The piano part begins with a low dominant chord and a descending scale of octaves. The dynamics are marked 'pp' and 'p'. The score is in E major and 3/4 time.

In Section B (mm.11-19), a new performance indication, *un poco mosso*, and rhythm is

¹⁴ Wallace Berry, *Musical Structure and Performance* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1989), 150.

¹⁵ Arthur B. Wenk, *Claude Debussy and the Poets* (London: University of California Press, Ltd., 1976), 46.

introduced (Figure 3) to suggest the movement of trembling trees and the wind. It returns to motif A in m.18. Debussy makes good use of sudden tempo changes at m.17 toward cadential points further suggesting a change of mood and preparing to return to motif A. To further enhance the text by delaying the release of the musical tension, he has the piano double the vocal melody, repeating notes over a constant rhythm.

Figure 3

Un poco mosso.
 C'est tous les fris-sons des bois Par - mi l'étreinte des bri - ses C'est, vers les ra...

In Section C of stanza two (mm.20-33), yet another new rhythm (Figure 4a) and a new motif B (Figure 4b) are introduced as well as a good amount of dynamic intensity, indicated by diminuendo markings appearing more. The main motif is intensified here by expanding the intervals, changing the metric accent at the octave leap, setting the melodic line of the voice in contrary motion to the piano, and introducing dissonance on weak beats and chords to reach a climax at “*et la tienne*” in the last section (mm.34-52).

Figure 4a

O le frère et...

Figure 4b

a tempo.
 re...

The sigh motif C, a descending whole tone is heard predominantly in the piano's right hand at m.36, symbolizing the state of longing or anguish as it softly fades away at the end.

C'est l'extase

C'est l'extase langoureuse,
C'est la fatigue amoureuse,
C'est tous les frissons des bois
Parmi l'étreinte des brises,
C'est vers les ramures grises
Le chœur des petites voix.

O le frêle et frais murmure !
Cela gazouille et susurre,
Cela ressemble au [cri]¹ doux
Que l'herbe agitée expire. . .
Tu dirais, sous l'eau qui
vire,
Le roulis sourd des cailloux.

Cette âme qui se lamente
[En]² cette plainte dormante
C'est la nôtre, n'est-ce pas ?
La mienne, dis, et la tienne,
Dont s'exhale l'humble antienne
Par ce tiède soir, tout bas ?

It is ecstasy

It is languorous ecstasy,
It is loving lassitude,
It is all the tremors of the woods
In the embrace of the breezes,
It is, in the grey branches,
The choir of the tiny voices.

O the frail, fresh murmuring!
That twittering and whispering
Is like the sweet cry
Breathed out by the ruffled grass. . .
You would say, beneath the swirling
waters,
The muted rolling of the pebbles.

This soul which mourns
In the subdued lamentation,
It is ours, is it not?
Mine, say, and yours,
Breathing a humble anthem
In the warm evening, very softly?

English translation by Winifred Radford¹⁶

The poem of *Il pleure dans mon cœur* suggests the poet was weeping in his heart as he listened to the falling rain. According to Arthur B. Wenk, the poet was perhaps betrayed and badly hurt emotionally, without a good reason, by either his lover or a friend.¹⁷ Verlaine cleverly set the same dark vowels and same alliteration for the word *pleuvoir* (to rain) and *pleurer* (to cry).

¹⁶ Pierre Bernac, *The Interpretation of French Song* (London: Kahn & Averill, 1997), 164.

¹⁷ Arthur B. Wenk, *Claude Debussy and the Poets* (London: University of California Press, Ltd., 1976), 59.

Debussy sets this music primarily in G-sharp minor to express the feelings of languor, restlessness and ennui. Since his youth, Debussy particularly loved nature - especially the sea. Thus, in this song, he deftly depicts the fluidity of the water. He unifies the song with muted sixteenth- notes played in thirds throughout the whole song to symbolize the monotonous falling rain and by using whole tone melody and descending chromatics (Figure 5), first heard in the left hand in m.3 that embodies the sad and restless situation of the poet's heart. Upon the words “*Quelle est cette langueur, Qui pénètre mon cœur?*”, at m.11, Debussy moves into A major, the Neapolitan of G-sharp minor, to suggest the unsettling question, and the harmony returns to G-sharp minor in m.19.¹⁸

Figure 5

The image shows a musical score for a piano and voice. The piano part is in G-sharp minor, marked 'Allegro non tanto' and 'PIANO. PP con sordine.'. It features a steady stream of sixteenth notes in thirds. The vocal line is marked 'triste et monotone.' and 'P', with the lyrics 'Il pleu - - - re dans mon'. The score is in 3/4 time and consists of two systems of staves.

The section on the text “*Quoi! nulle trahison?*” at m. 47 is a new idea written like a recitative, *ad libitum*, with a much slower tempo while marked *p* and with a new descending minor second “sighing” motif to replace the sixteenth-notes (Figure 6), perhaps suggesting that there is no more point in trying to find an answer to the question.

¹⁸ Arthur B. Wenk, *Claude Debussy and the Poets* (London: University of California Press, Ltd., 1976), 60.

Figure 6



However upon realizing there is no reasonable answer to the question, nature consumes his situation as the rain motif recurs, gradually reestablishing the first tempo of the song. The voice sings his sorrow “my heart feels so much pain!” for the last time, with the music gradually slowing down to create a last dramatic moment before ending the song with the rain motif gradually getting softer without slowing down.

Il pleure dans mon cœur

Il pleure dans mon cœur
Comme il pleut sur la ville,
Quelle est cette langueur
Qui pénètre mon cœur?

Ô bruit doux de la pluie,
Par terre et sur les toits!
Pour un cœur qui s'ennuie,
Ô le bruit de la pluie!

Il pleure sans raison
Dans ce cœur qui s'écœure.
Quoi! nulle trahison?
Ce deuil est sans raison.

Tears fall in my heart

Tears fall in my heart
like rain upon the town,
what is this languor
that pervades my heart?

O gentle sound of the rain
on the ground and on the roofs!
For a listless heart,
O the sound of the rain!

Tears fall without reason
in this sickened heart.
What! No perfidy?
This sorrow has no cause.

C'est bien la pire peine
De ne savoir pourquoi,
Sans amour et sans haine,
Mon cœur a tant de peine.

Indeed it is the worst pain
not to know why,
without love and without hate,
my heart feels so much pain!

English translation by Winifred Radford¹⁹

L'ombre des arbres was inspired by a quotation from Rostand's *Cyrano de Bergerac*:

“The nightingale sits on a branch of a tall tree thinking she is drowning in her reflection in the water beneath.” The poet likewise, lamenting in the high branches of the tree, has his hopes drowned as he sees his reflection in the pale landscape.²⁰

Verlaine in turn constructed a poem where object, symbol and image come together as one. The whole poem talks about reflections. In the first stanza, Verlaine shows reflections of water and air: the reflection of trees in the water, the shadow of the smoke that vanishes. Mirroring the first stanza, the second stanza talks about how the pale traveler realizes the reality of his “drowned” hope that is reflected like finding the trees in the reflection in the water.²¹

Debussy also incorporated many musical ideas to suggest reflections in the poem. Dissonances such as tritones, drawn from the dominant seventh chords, serve as the basic structure in this song. They are first introduced in the first two measures of the melody line as well as in the harmonic progression. Tritones serve as a very good idea to suggest mirroring because the interval directly maps into itself when inverted i.e. E-sharp to B and B to E-sharp. This is used in both the piano and the vocal part (Figure 7).

¹⁹ Pierre Bernac, *The Interpretation of French Song* (London: Kahn & Averill, 1997), 164.

²⁰ Carol Kimball, *Song: A Guide to Art Song Style and Literature* (Milwaukee: Hal Leonard, 2005), 193.

²¹ Arthur B. Wenk, *Claude Debussy and the Poets* (London: University of California Press, Ltd., 1976), 106-107.

Perhaps the bright instrumental colors and sharp rhythms of Spanish songs and dance inspired Debussy,²⁶ as the music begins with a very loud *ff* and bright trill in 2/4 time as an exciting call to everyone to come to the fair. After two measures of a trill in the left hand, the melody enters strongly in intervals of fourths and sevenths in the right hand. Triplets followed by duplets in the right-hand rhythm - from a single note to awkward chords played in a different register of the piano - perfectly builds the anticipation of riding on the wooden horses. The accompaniment pattern of spinning arpeggios, with the repeated rhythm and melodic figures, goes through different harmonies but always comes back to the original chords, suggesting the rotation of the merry-go-round always returning to the starting point.

The first stanza describes the different sounds of the instruments played in the carousel. To create the illusion of dizziness or to imitate the up and down motion of the wooden horses, chromatic chords moving up and down are frequently used. In the second and third stanzas, Debussy sets forth the same except in different keys, and there are slight differences in the melodic rhythm when depicting different characters in the second stanza.

In *Chevaux de bois*, the word *tournez* appears seventeen times. To unify the poem, Verlaine made use of the *ou* sound in the words such as *tours*, *souvent*, *autour* and *filou*.

Debussy composed this song around 1885 and this masterpiece was greatly received by his friends in Rome.²⁷ This style of Debussy is unique when compared to the other five songs in this set. It has a wide dynamic range from *ff* to *ppp*, triadic chords to mark a strong sense of the main beat, and a lot of accents.

²⁶ Victor Lederer, *Debussy: The Quiet Revolutionary* (New York: Amadeus Press, 2007), 4

²⁷ Oscar Thompson, *Debussy, Man and Artist* (New York: Dover Publications, 1937, 1967), 290.

Chromaticism is heavily used in the vocal melody in the fourth stanza, and it is used in the sixth stanza with the words “*La nuit qui tombe et chasse la troupe De gais buveurs, que leur soif affame*”. At the words “*Et dépêchez, chevaux de leur âme, Déjà voici que sonne à la soupe, La nuit qui tombe et chasse la troupe, De gais buveurs, que leur soif affame*” the music enters into the remote key of B-flat major, gradually slows down, and features darker tone colors as the night approaches. In the final stanza, which is a refrain of the beginning, the melody returns to E major but with an extended section on D-sharp and F before finishing in the tonic key again.²⁸

Chevaux de bois

Tournez, tournez, bons chevaux de bois,
Tournez cent tours, tournez mille tours;
Tournez souvent, et tournez toujours,
Tournez, tournez au son des hautbois.

L'enfant tout rouge et la mère blanche,
Le gars en noir et la fille en rose,
L'une à la chose et l'autre à la pose,
Chacun se paie un sou de dimanche.

Tournez, tournez, chevaux de leur cœur,
Tandis qu'autour de tous vos tournois
Clignote l'œil du filou surnois.
Tournez au son du piston vainqueur!

C'est étonnant comme ça vous soûle,
D'aller ainsi dans ce cirque bête,
Rien dans le ventre et mal dans la tête,
Du mal en masse et du bien en foule.

Tournez dadas, sans qu'il soit besoin
D'user jamais de nuls éperons
Pour commander à vos galops ronds,
Tournez, tournez, sans espoir d foin.
Et dépêchez, chevaux de leur âme,
Déjà voici que sonne à la soupe

Merry-go-round

Turn, turn, fine merry-go-round,
Turn a hundred times, turn a thousand times,
Turn often and go on turning,
Turn, Turn to the sound of the oboes.

The rubicund child and the pale mother,
The lad in the black and the girl in pink,
The one down to earth, the other showing off,
Each one has his Sunday pennyworth.

Turn, turn, merry-go-round of their hearts,
While around all your whirling
Squints the eye of the crafty pickpocket,
Turn to the sound of the triumphant cornet.

It is astonishing how intoxicating it is
To ride thus in this stupid circle,
With a sinking stomach and an aching head,
Heaps of discomfort and plenty of fun.

Turn, gee-gees, without any need
Ever to use spurs,
To keep you at the gallop,
Turn, turn, without hope of hay.
And hurry, horses of their souls,
Already the supper bell is ringing,

²⁸ Arthur B. Wenk, *Claude Debussy and the Poets* (London: University of California Press, Ltd., 1976), 114-115.

La nuit qui tombe et chasse la troupe
De gais buveurs, que leur soif affame.

Night falls and chases away the troop
Of gay drinkers famished by their thirst.

Tournez, tournez! Le ciel en velours
D'astres en or se vêt lentement,
L'église tinte un glas tristement.
Tournez au son joyeux des tambours,
tournez.

Turn, turn! The velvet sky is slowly
pricked with golden stars,
The church bell tolls a mournful knell,
Turn to merry beating of the drums
Turn.

English translation by Winifred Radford²⁹

Verlaine gave English titles to some of his poems: one of them is *Green* and the other is *Spleen*. They are subtitled as “*Aquarelles*” which mean Watercolors. Debussy understood that Verlaine always saw his poems in terms of music and not as paintings. As he once said “*De la musique avant toute chose, Pas la Couleur, rien que la Nuance!*” (Music before all else, No Color, nothing but Nuance!).³⁰

This poem reflects the affection of a passionate youth for his new love and his wish to “repose” beside her. Debussy set this song in ternary form, A (mm1-23), B (mm.24- 39) and A’ (mm. 40- 58). The song is set in the key of G-flat major but starts in A-flat minor, the supertonic chord for nineteen measures before the stable tonic chord finally arrives in m.20. In 6/8 time, the piano opens with strong open fifths in octave leaps in the right hand marked “*joyusement animé*” (lively and happy) played against duple time in the left hand with a chromatic tune suggesting the emotional eagerness and breathlessness of the young lover in the early morning trying to win her love with his gifts of nature. The youth presents his heart to his lover in the next text “*Et puis voici mon cœur, qui ne bat que pour vous.*”

²⁹ Pierre Bernac, *The Interpretation of French Song* (London: Kahn & Averill, 1997), 164.

³⁰ Barbara Meister, *Nineteenth-Century French Song* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1998), 318.

Upon the words “*Ne le déchirez pas avec vos deux. . .*” in m. 13, Debussy ingeniously interrupts with German sixth chords, and secondary chord progressions filled with chromatic harmony. The rhythm gradually becomes less active – almost coming to a standstill - at the words “*Et qu’à vos yeux si beaux l’humble present soit doux. . .*”, to contrast the shyness of the youth in confessing to her and presenting his heart and passionate desire for her love³¹

Though the last Section A’ is a recapitulation of the first A section, it is marked *Andantino* and *Plus lent* which is slower than the beginning tempo. The music may be the same but the mood is entirely different. The final six measures gradually get slower and quieter with many repeated duple eighth-notes in the voice to suggest that the youth has finally reclined in his lover’s embrace.

Green

Voici des fruits, des fleurs, des
feuilles et des branches,
Et puis voici mon cœur, qui ne bat
que pour vous.
Ne le déchirez pas avec vos deux
mains blanches,
Et qu’à vos yeux si beaux l’humble
present soit doux.
J’arrive tout couvert encore de rosée
Que le vent du matin vient glacer à
mon front.
Souffrez que ma fatigue, à vos pieds
reposée,
Rêve des chers instants qui la
délasseront.

Sur votre jeune sein laisser rouler ma tête,
Toute sonore encore de vos derniers
baisers;
Laissez-la s’apaiser de la bonne tempête,

Green

Here are fruits, flowers, leaves and
branches,
And here too is my heart that beats
only for you.
Do not destroy it with your two
White hands,
And to your lovely eyes may the
Humble gift seem sweet.
I come still covered with dew
That the morning breeze has chilled
on my brow.
Let my weariness, resting at your
feet,
dream of dear moments which will bring
repose.

On your young breast let me rest my head,
still ringing with your last
Kisses;
let it be appeased after the good tempest,

³¹ Arthur B. Wenk, *Claude Debussy and the Poets* (London: University of California Press, Ltd., 1976), 53-54.

Et que je dorme un peu puisque vous reposez. that I may sleep a little as you rest.

English translation by Winifred Radford³²

Spleen, also known as *Aquarelles II*, is defined as ill temper, vexation, resentment or spite, and these strong feelings of hostility are greatly reflected both in the text and the music. Verlaine had a new way to arrange this poem. He chose to separate the couplets by setting the first and third in *imparfait* (the imperfect tense), and the second and fourth in the present tense.³³ This poem describes the poet as fearful that he is unworthy of everything except his beloved.

The song begins slowly with a single melody in the piano, the use of tritone intervals, and later the voice line joins with repeated notes and minimum rhythmic change, as if talking to himself, to portray instability and his weary state of mind. Unexpected Neapolitan chords, tritones, a prolonged dominant ninth chord and prolonged rhythms in the second phrase are used to create tension and unsettlement. The melody is constantly heard with varied rhythms and texture.

At “*Je crains toujours, ce qu’est d’attendre!*”, the music becomes faster, louder, and has more dissonance and chromatically anxious chords that lead to the final big climax on the B-flat before ending with the first melody of sorrow and bitterness and a final exclamation “*hélas!*”.

³² Pierre Bernac, *The Interpretation of French Song* (London: Kahn & Averill, 1997), 164.

³³ Arthur B. Wenk, *Claude Debussy and the Poets* (London: University of California Press, Ltd., 1976), 116.

Spleen

Les roses étaient toutes rouges,
 Et les lierres étaient tout noirs.
 Chère, pur peu que tut e bouges,
 Renaissent tous mes désespoirs.

Le ciel était trop bleu, trop tendre,
 La mer trop verte et l'air trop doux.
 Je crains toujours, ce qu'est
 d'attendre!
 Quelque fuite atroce de vous.

Du houx à la feuille vernie
 Et du luisant buis, je suis las,
 Et de la campagne infinie,
 Et de tout, fors de vous, hélas!

Spleen

The roses were all red,
 and the ivy quite black.
 Dearest, if you so much as move
 all my despair returns.

The sky was too blue, too tender,
 the sea too green and the air too soft.
 Always I fear, such is the consequence
 Of waiting!
 some pitiless abandonment by you.

Of the holly with its glossy leaves
 and of the shining box tree, I am weary,
 and of the boundless countryside,
 and of everything but you, alas!

English translation by Winifred Radford³⁴

³⁴ Pierre Bernac, *The Interpretation of French Song* (London: Kahn & Averill, 1997), 164.

CHAPTER 3

KENNST DU DAS LAND (DO YOU KNOW THE LAND) FROM MIGNON

The story of Mignon, taken from Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's great novel *Wilhelm Meistes Lehrjahre* as well as one of his most influential pieces of poetry, *Mignon*, has captivated the interest of many composers to set it to music. *Kennst du das Land* (Do you know the Land), also known as Mignon's song, tells about Mignon, who is a twelve or thirteen year old child with a very unusual mannerism. She is quiet and only answers certain questions with a mix of French, German and Italian. Not much about her past is revealed until she sings the song *Kennst du das Land* to Wilhelm Meister.³⁵

In the first stanza of the song, she recalls her homeland of Italy, filled with lemon blossoms and gentle wind. In the second stanza she tells of a house with marble statues staring at her, asking, "What have they done to you, poor child?", she reveals that she was kidnapped, taken to Germany, abused and then enslaved to the manager of the acting troupe to sing, dance and entertain. In the last stanza, she fearfully recalls this horrible journey and how she longs for protection and tenderness. The three words "love", "protector" and "father" that end the first, second and third stanza respectively, suggest that she is referring to either Wilhelm Meister or God to save her from this misery. In the end, Wilhelm Meister pays the price for her freedom after learning of her terrible fate. Goethe said of *Mignon* that he began each verse with great solemnity and stateliness to suggest her desire to convey something great or important. As the singing becomes gloomier in the third stanza, it reflects the mystery and the yearning of her

³⁵ Carrie Rivera, *A comparison of Robert Schumann's and Hugo Wolf's settings of Goethe's Mignon Lieder* (Muncie, IN: Ball State University, 2012), 2.

heart.³⁶ The challenge of this song is not only to externalize Mignon's inner state but also to invite the audience to share and recognize her experience in their own personal way.

It is very interesting to find such a significant number of great composers of different musical periods who demonstrate their own unique style of writing in depicting the mixed feelings in this song, which is found in the novel in the form of a German *lied*. Musical luminaries, such as Ludwig van Beethoven, a German (1770-1827), Franz Schubert, an Austrian (1797-1828), Robert Schumann, a German (1810-1856), Franz Liszt, a Hungarian (1811-1886), and Hugo Wolf, an Austrian (1860-1903) have all set the text, often with great similarity.

Beethoven's nine symphonies and his piano works are generally considered as his masterworks, but few of his vocal songs are well known. All in all, Beethoven composed approximately sixty-six songs, fifty-nine of which used German texts. *Kennst du das land* is considered to be one of his best works because of its simple musical structure and strong tonal harmonic language. It is set in strophic form - the melody and the harmonic music structure stay the same for each verse except for small differences in terms of dynamic or accompaniment. It is set in the key of A major and progresses to the dominant in the A section (mm.1- 17). This section is in 2/4 time and changes to 6/8 time in the B section (mm.18- 32), remaining in the tonic key. Beethoven maintained the exact text and used very simple rhythms as the main rhythmic pattern in the voice. It is very clear that Beethoven emphasized the text and not the music, as the right hand in the piano part is mostly in unison with the voice so that the text can be clearly heard. Beethoven had an ingenious idea of transitioning from 2/4 time to 6/8 time by having the left hand in the piano part play triplets in 2/4 time and later to play three eighth-notes

³⁶ Eric Sams, *The songs of Hugo Wolf* (Great Britain: Butler and Tanner, 1961), 124.

in groups of two in 6/8 time. This simply yet brilliantly unites the whole song and perfectly reflects Mignon's inner complex emotions.

Beethoven's influences and musical signature on the two great Romantic masters in song writing who followed him, Schubert and Schumann, are greatly reflected in their compositions based on Mignon's song, especially Schubert's. Both Schubert and Schumann use triplets to unify their songs, as did Beethoven. Other than Schumann adding a piano postlude in his composition, both used Beethoven's idea of simple accompaniment in the slow A section, as well as a fast triplet rhythm in the B section. Like Beethoven, Schubert sets the song in A major and ends on the dominant at the end of Section A, with Section B marked *etwas geschwinder* (somewhat faster). Beethoven marked his *geschwinder!* (faster). Both Beethoven and Schumann chose strophic form to the song.

That is was composed in 1815, only five years after Beethoven's composition, explains the obvious influences Beethoven had on Schubert's version. Schubert's arrangement, however, is more intricate.³⁷ Schubert writes it in modified strophic form. He explores new harmonic changes by adding in a French sixth chord to the dominant as an ending cadence for section A. He employs successive chromatic chords, moving from an E major chord to an E major dominant chord and modulating to D major and back to A major again in Section B. However, in the first seven measures of the third stanza, the music changes to A minor depicting a dark and fearful mood with a sudden shift to a strong F major upon the words, "*In Höhlen wohnt der Drachen alte Brut,*" suggesting a recollection of Mignon's memory and also to transition into the question, "*kennst du ihn wohl?*"

³⁷ Jack M. Stein, "Musical Settings of the Songs from *Wilhelm Meister*," *Comparative Literature* 22, no. 2 (Spring, 1970): 134.

Interestingly, both Schubert and Schumann repeat the phrase beginning with *Dahin!* with Schubert adding four more cries of *Dahin* before ending Section B in each stanza. Both use unsettled chromatics to portray suffering and longing. This compositional style helped pave the way for Liszt and Wolf, who later, in their hands, were able to reach a higher and more intricate level of composition.

There are differences between Schubert's and Schumann's compositions as well, such as the overall tempo and dynamics. Schubert marked the A section *mässig* and the B section *etwas geschwinder* - resulting in two very different sections in character. Schubert also starts the song in a gentle, soft, and yearning A major and ends with a loud and bright tonic chord that signifies Mignon's desperation and urgency for hope. Schumann, however, does not have two sections but treats each stanza as a whole. Thus the tempo for each stanza is stable and does not abruptly change, and each verse then dies away towards the end. Schumann sets his in G minor, unlike Beethoven and Schubert, whose settings are in A major. Also, Schumann uses the first four measures of the prelude, featuring a descending chromatic line that begins and ends on the tonic, to serve as the transition between each stanza. The postlude includes a combination of the piano themes and the vocal themes. The song ends in a very inward, reflective, romantic mood, which is unlike the setting of either Beethoven or Schubert.

Franz Liszt was very well known for writing songs and composed eighty-two in his life; however, Liszt has been criticized for having his music be more important than the text and even having wrong syllabic stress.³⁸ Charles Osbourne once said, "If Liszt has one consistent fault as a

³⁸ Christopher Headington, "The Songs," in *Franz Liszt: The Man and His Music*, ed. Alan Walker (London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1970), 223.

composer of songs it is that he sometimes tends to be over emphatic, over elaborate, and unsubtle in his response to a poem.”³⁹

The issue of syllabic stress can be seen in the first version of this song where he places the word *du* on the downbeat of the initial question. Liszt later revised it so that the word *Kennst* was lengthened and tied over to the downbeat and the word *du* fell on the weak beat.⁴⁰ There were also awkward pauses after short phrases. Within the first section of the first stanza he included three pauses before ending the slow section with “*Kennst du es wohl*” repeated three times.

In the next section of the first stanza, an eighth-note downbeat in the left hand mirrors the marking of *bewegter* (moving quickly, rushed, agitated); and yet the broken chord in the right hand suggests *dolce* (sweetly) with the soft pedal throughout. Two measures of music serve as a transition before the start of the second stanza, using the same idea as Schumann did. Interestingly, although the harmonic structure is the same, there are differences in the second and third stanzas with some variation in the piano accompaniment.

Liszt differs from the previously discussed composers in his treatment of the third stanza as he does not completely follow the exact word order in the poem. He places *Kennst du das Land*, *Kennst du das Haus* and *Kennst du das Berg* in between the repeated *Kennst du ihn wohl*, as if to demand an answer or a response from the listener (or Wilhelm Meister!). He repeats the word *Dahin* three times instead of two in every stanza and uses rhythms of short – long value (Figure 10) to suggest the urgent cry of Mignon’s desperation. At the end, there is a big climax

³⁹ Ben Arnold, “*Songs and Melodramas*,” in *The Liszt Companion*, ed. Ben Arnold (Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 2002), 406.

⁴⁰ Christopher Headington, “*The Songs*,” in *Franz Liszt: The Man and His Music* ed. Alan Walker (London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1970), 226.

of four measures before *Geliebter, dahin!*, afterwards gradually dying away to *ppp* in the beautiful melodious piano postlude.

Figure 10

The image shows a musical score for Hugo Wolf's setting of the song 'Kennst du das Land'. It consists of four staves. The top staff is the vocal line, with lyrics: 'Da - hin, da - hin, da - hin geht un - ser Weg, — o Va - ter, laß uns ziehn! Da - hin, da - hin, da -'. The second and third staves are the piano accompaniment. The second staff has markings 'etwas langsamer', 'pp', and 'una corda'. The third staff has markings 'dolce' and 'una corda'. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. At the bottom right, it is marked 'F. L. VII 31.'

Hugo Wolf's setting of this song, compared to the previous composers, is, in my opinion, the best, the most intense, the most dramatic, and most operatic. A wide range of dynamics (from *ppp* to *ff*), five bold key changes, meter changes, fragmentary vocal phrasing, large intervallic leaps yet painfully beautiful melodies from slow, expressive, and passionate moments to brisk and lively expression markings. All these were Wolf's "marvelous achievements on the small scale of the song: a composer who could realize the same formal perfection in the symphony or the opera would be the greatest master of musical form that the world had ever seen."⁴¹

Wolf composed *Kennst du das Land* on December 17, 1888. Unlike any of the composers previously discussed, he understood the poem perfectly and shows it in his modifications from stanza to stanza. He orchestrated this song as well. All three stanzas have different and beautiful

⁴¹ Eric Sams, *The songs of Hugo Wolf* (Great Britain: Butler and Tanner, 1961), xviii.

melodies, harmonies and accompaniment—from syncopated rhythms to triplets to tremolos, which steadily build up the exalted and ecstatic mood in the third stanza. In the third stanza, Wolf has a completely different accompaniment to create a frantic and restless character. To unify the song, Wolf uses the same piano prelude of the lingering melody introduced before each stanza, he keeps the same music for Section B, and he ends the song with the recollection of the motif from the piano prelude. Wolf ingeniously writes the piano part like an orchestral reduction: counter-melodies can be heard clearly in the piano part as the voice sings, and thus he creates a four-layer texture in the accompaniment. This makes it very challenging for both the pianist and the singer to present this *lied* as if it is in an opera setting. Delayed rhythms and altered chords in octaves or big chords very much reflect Wolf's greatest musical influence, Richard Wagner, and, indeed, Wolf best represents Wagnerism in his songs for voice and piano.

Kennst du das Land

Kennst du das Land, wo die Zitronen
blühn,
Im dunkeln Laub die Gold-Orangen
glühn,
Ein sanfter Wind vom blauen Himmel
weht,
Die Myrte still und hoch der Lorbeer
steht?
Kennst du es wohl?

Dahin! dahin

Möcht ich mit dir, o mein Geliebter,
zieh'n.

Kennst du das Haus? Auf Säulen ruht sein
Dach.
Es glänzt der Saal, es schimmert das
Gemach,
Und Marmorbilder stehn und sehn mich
an:

Do you know the land

Do you know the land, where the lemons
blossom,
The oranges glow golden amongst dark
leaves,
A gentle wind blows from the blue
sky,
The myrtle stands silent, and the laurel
tall,
Do you know it well?

There! there

Would I go with you, my love.
go

Do you know the house? On pillars rests its
roof.
Its hall gleams, its apartment
shimmers,
And marble statues stand and gaze at
me:

Was hat man dir, du armes Kind, getan?
Kennst du es wohl?

Dahin! dahin

Möcht ich mit dir, o mein Beschützer,
ziehn.

What have they done to you, poor child?
Do you know it well?

There! there

Would I go with you, my protector.
go

Kennst du den Berg und seinen
Wolkensteg?
Das Maultier sucht im Nebel seinen Weg,
In Höhlen wohnt der Drachen alte
Brut,
Es stürzt der Fels und über ihn die Flut!
Kennst du ihn wohl?

Dahin! dahin

Geht unser Weg! O Vater, laß uns ziehn!

Do you know the mountain and its cloudy
path?

The mule seeks its way in the mist,
In caves the ancient brood of dragons
dwells,

The rock falls sheer, and over it, the flood,
Do you know it well?

There! there

Lies our way! Oh father, let us go!

English translation by George Bird and Richard Stokes⁴²

⁴² Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, *The Fischer-Dieskau book of Lieder* (New York: Limelight edition, 1998), 270-271.

CHAPTER 4

LEONARD BERNSTEIN (1918-1990)

Leonard Bernstein was born August 25, 1918 in Lawrence, Massachusetts and died October 14, 1990 in New York City. He grew up as an American having Jewish heritage. At the age of ten, when his family first had a piano in the house, he became very obsessed with playing music, and he never stopped learning about it. "I am a fanatic music lover. I can't live one day without hearing music, playing it, studying it, or thinking about it."⁴³ At the age of fourteen, he had piano lessons with Helen Coats, who shared everything she knew about music, and thus Bernstein's appetite for music learning increased. Music was so exciting to Bernstein that he would spend hours and hours reading musical scores, listening to good concerts and singing opera parts with his sister, Shirley. As a teenager, he aspired to be a rabbi and later he did become one. He became very influential as a music educator and commentator; especially in his Young People's Concerts on network television where he would always engage his audience to do something with him. He was one of the few Americans to educate the next generation on classical music.

He was a student at Boston Latin School, Harvard and the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. In Harvard (1935-9), he studied with Walter Piston and Edward Burlingame Hill, and, later in life, he came to know others such as Heinrich Gebhard, David Prall, Dimitri Mitropoulos, Aaron Copland, Marc Blitzstein, William Schuman and Roy Harris. These friendships brought along many golden opportunities for him to demonstrate his natural talents and skills as a pianist and composer, and, later, to discover his real interest, which was

⁴³ Leonard Bernstein, *Leonard Bernstein: The Infinite Variety of Music* (United States of America: Amadeus Press, 2007), 10.

conducting. In the musical *The Cradle Will Rock*, by Marc Blitzstein, Bernstein took the role of the director from the piano for the entire production at Harvard after the production was banned in Boston. He used his influences as a musician and performer to defend the oppressed, victims of AIDS, and as a loyal “musician- soldier” in war times.⁴⁴ The audience loved him for his talents and this recognition inspired him: to search for “one of the most mysterious and deeply moving experiences you can have”.⁴⁵

In 1942, Artur Rodzinski approached Bernstein to be the assistant conductor of the New York Philharmonic and he was then put in charge of the conducting faculty at Tanglewood in 1951, after the dismissal of Koussevitzky. In 1953 Bernstein was given the honor of being the first American to conduct Maria Callas in Cherubini’s opera *Medea* at Milan’s Teatro alla Scala.⁴⁶

Bernstein had a deep love of all genres, from contemporary pop music, such as the Beatles and Elvis, to African war chants and Balinese gamelan. He wrote many jazz pieces, operas, incidental music, revues, and in particular Broadway musical theatre songs. He once commented that he had “a deep suspicion that every work I write, for whatever medium, is really theatre music in some way.”⁴⁷ Grounded in his strong belief and faith in Judaism, he was greatly influenced by jazz and Latin American rhythms. With this knowledge, he added the right touch to have these different elements of music come together in a composition. These trademarks can

⁴⁴ Jack Gottlieb, *Leonard Bernstein: A Jewish Legacy* from *Bernstein: The best of all possible worlds*. September 24 to December 13, 2008. <http://www.carnegiehall.org/bernstein/leonardbernstein/faith.aspx> (accessed April 20, 2014).

⁴⁵ David Ewen, *Leonard Bernstein* (United States and Canada: Bantam Books, 1960), 23.

⁴⁶ Paul R. Laird, *Leonard Bernstein: A Guide to Research* (Great Britain. New York: Routledge, 2002), 4.

⁴⁷ David Gow, *Leonard Bernstein: Musician of Many Talents* from *The Musical Times*, Vol. 101, No. 1409 (Jul., 1960), 427-429. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/951009>. Published by Musical Times Publications Ltd.

be found among his famous works such as *West Side Story* (1957), *Jeremiah* (1943), *Fancy Free* (1944) and *Trouble in Tahiti* (1952).

“Few things delighted him more than discussing philosophy with philosophers . . . and even cooking with chefs.”⁴⁸ Composers are often inspired by poetry or art, but Bernstein was inspired by French recipes! In 1947, he took four of Emile Dutoit’s recipes from *La Bonne Cuisine –Manuel économique et pratique (ville et campagne)*, published in 1899, and composed a song cycle of four songs. The recipes were originally written in French and Bernstein had them translated to English. It was dedicated to Jennie Tourel (1900-1973), a mezzo-soprano who had worked closely with Bernstein, and was first performed on October 1st, 1948 in New York.⁴⁹

These four songs highly express Bernstein’s good sense of humor and dazzling wit through his choice of rhythms and the harmonies in the piano part to match the vernacular elements of English language. Each of these short songs can easily be used as a stand-alone song. They are all tonal and mostly in the simple form of a patter song, where rapid words are to be sung in the shortest time possible. The challenge for the singer is to have good diction and good dramatic skill in order to express the humor behind these songs despite the high notes. There are places in these songs that are similar to recitatives in which the slightest change in the rhythm of the words can provide great humor and amusement to the listener- as in *Plum Pudding*. Another way of writing to create a visual effect to the words can be seen in *Civet à Toute Vitesse* where the music changes to rapid sixteenth-notes running in half-tones to create the sensation of boiling water, and even adding the slightest dynamic expression.

⁴⁸ David Ewen, *Leonard Bernstein* (United States and Canada: Bantam Books, 1960), 72

⁴⁹ John Briggs, *Leonard Bernstein: The Man, His Work, and His World* (United States of America: The World Publishing Company, 1961), 114.

Plum Pudding

This recipe can be found in the English Dishes section.

Feed 18-20 people.⁵⁰

Bernstein adapted the words from the complete recipe “*Mets Anglais*” (English Dishes). He set this text to a wildly excited yet controlled state by having the piano keep a constant tempo from the beginning to the end. There are basically two main sections of musical development. It starts in E minor, in common time, marked *piano*. There are very short detached octaves played in the piano part as well as a line of eighth-notes based on a tonic triad with a dissonance of the fourth note of the scale added. This is a distinct style in Bernstein’s harmonic writing. The melody, mainly made up of five notes, is then heard in the voice part. Bernstein liked to have groups of two and three eighth notes in irregular groupings, and in this song we can see that the melody is arranged in such a way that the first note of the three-note motive always falls on a different beat. Thus it creates a very subtle syncopation.

This pattern switches at m.6; the meter changes from common time to 2/4 time for only a bar and then back to common time. This is an example of one of Bernstein’s writing trademarks: to have different, alternating meters. This sudden change happens five times within this short piece and it punctuates very loudly (*sffz*) the end or the start of the next instruction. This demonstrates how skillful Bernstein was in setting the English language to rhythms to sound like

⁵⁰ Emile Dumont, *Emile Dumont’s French Recipes as Leonard Bernstein Lyrics~ La Bonne Cuisine Française* from *Food and Wine Maven*, published Thursday March 28 2013. <http://foodandwinemavens.blogspot.com/2013/03/emile.dumont-leonard.bernstein-la.bonne.cuisine.francaise.Manuel.economique.html> (accessed April 4, 2014).

a recitative. There are bracketed words such as “Be sure they are juicy”(Figure 11) and also in mm. 15-19 which were the personal, witty comments from Bernstein.

Figure 11

Allegro molto; matematico ♩ = 192
mp, preciso e senza espressione (rather grimly)

Deux cents cin-quant-te gram-mes de rai -
 Now first you take e - lev - en pounds of

sins de Ma - la - ga, deux cents cin - quan - te gramm' de rai - sins de Co -
 jui - cy Con - cord grapes com - bined with e - qual parts of ex - tra fine To -

(with sudden color)

rinthe; (Rai - sins _____ de Co - rin - the); _____
 kays. (Be sure _____ they are jui - cy); _____

p *legatissimo*

Detailed description: The image shows a musical score for a vocal and piano piece. It consists of three systems. The first system is in 2/4 time, marked 'Allegro molto; matematico' with a tempo of 192. The tempo is marked 'mp, preciso e senza espressione (rather grimly)'. The vocal line has lyrics: 'Deux cents cin-quant-te gram-mes de rai - Now first you take e - lev - en pounds of'. The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note pattern in the right hand and a similar pattern in the left hand. The second system continues the vocal line with lyrics: 'sins de Ma - la - ga, deux cents cin - quan - te gramm' de rai - sins de Co - jui - cy Con - cord grapes com - bined with e - qual parts of ex - tra fine To -'. The piano accompaniment continues with the same rhythmic pattern. The third system is marked '(with sudden color)' and changes to 3/2 time. The vocal line has lyrics: 'rinthe; (Rai - sins _____ de Co - rin - the); _____ kays. (Be sure _____ they are jui - cy); _____'. The piano accompaniment is marked '*p* *legatissimo*' and features a more complex rhythmic pattern with sixteenth notes.

To give it a little twist and excitement, Bernstein changes from 2/4 meter to 3/2 meter (instead of to common time) with a modulation to D-flat major but omitting the most stabilizing notes: the tonic and dominant note of the scale. For further variety, he has the articulation in the piano part marked *non legato* instead of *legatissimo*, and he has both the voice and the piano in unison. This sensation reaches a climax when it modulates into E major at m.26 with a *crescendo*

into a *forte* and immediately drops to *pianissimo* with the same treatment of rhythm and texture as the beginning, and finally ends very softly with “. . . with half a tea-spoonful of table salt.”

Queues de Bœuf (Ox-Tails)

This recipe can be found in the beef section.

A string of active and smooth chromatics trickling down in the right hand piano part immediately sets us up for a nice thick, warm and delicious bowl of Ox-Tails! Bernstein basically set this song into two sections: 6/8 and 3/4 meter which once again change from groupings of two into groupings of three, giving it a syncopated, light, jazzy feel. Because of the heavy chromatics, it is highly atonal, and these dissonances communicate doubt on his comments “Are you too proud to serve your friends ox-tail stew?” He makes heavy use of broken arpeggios with chromatic scales, scale-like passages in contrary motion with a wide range of articulations, from slurs to staccatos, which paint the words in an interesting manner.

Tavouk Gueunksis (Tavouk Gueunksis)

This recipe can be found in the Turkish Pastry and Sweets section.

This song starts by commenting it is “so Oriental” because Tavouk is a Turkish delight: pudding with chicken. Throughout the whole song, Bernstein infuses the rhythm and feel of the *tambour* (drum) by having the accompaniment played in the style of “*alla turca*” (Turkish March), which has a lively tempo. The grace note in the right hand is a common characteristic

and maybe an imitation of the sound of a piccolo or the *zurna* (shawm) both of which are found in Ottoman Janissary music. (Figure 12)

Figure 12

Allegretto alla Turca ♩ = 100

mf

Fait' bou-illir u - ne poul';
Put a chick - en to boil,

mf, brittle *mp*

Civet à toute vitesse (Rabbit at top speed)

This recipe can be found in the Game section.

As the title of this song suggests, true indeed, it is set in the fastest tempo *presto*. In addition, it has the greatest variety of rhythmic writing among the four songs because you have to serve your unexpected guest with a rabbit stew! It is very challenging for the singer to meticulously enunciate every word clearly. Bernstein “spiced” up the song by adding comments such as “breathlessly” and “forgetting the haste” to the music. He uses thirty-second notes in a tremolo effect within the 4/8 meter to word paint “boil it up . . .” and “on the very hottest fire” with a loud crescendo in the piano part (Figure 13).

Figure 13

mp (forgetting the haste) (remembering same) *f*
 un lit - re et de - mi de vin rou - ge. Fait' bou - illir à
 a bot - tle and a half of rich cla - ret. *a tempo* Boil it up, don't
 (poco rall.) *mf* *mp* *f* *p*

This is followed by strange staccato broken-chord progressions such as A major to D minor and with sixteenth-notes becoming syncopated (Figure 14). To show the haste of the cook, he adds lots of *crescendo* markings within the bar and speeds up the music toward the end to intensify the cooking flame. Finally, a pleasant surprise ends the hurry with a slowed-down, two-note interval of a major sixth to imitate the sound of a bell being pressed by the chef in the kitchen to indicate the dish is ready to be served to the customer.

Figure 14

misterioso *f* *p*
 de moi-tié, ap - pro - chez un pa - pier en - flam - mé, de ma -
 was be - fore. Then you care - ful - ly ap - ply a flame, as they

Interestingly, Bernstein left out two ingredients of the original recipe in this song: *muscade* (nutmeg) and *un verre d'eau-de-vie* (a glass of brandy), perhaps a personal preference.⁵¹

⁵¹ Leonard Bernstein, *Leonard Bernstein art songs and arias, 29 selections for high voice*. Edited by Richard Walters. (London: Boosey & Hawkes, 2007).

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