

ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: SEE IT TO BE IT
 ART SONGS BY AMERICAN WOMEN
 COMPOSERS

 Jennifer Piazza-Pick, Doctor of Musical Arts in
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This dissertation is a short survey of art songs by American women composers from the latter part of the nineteenth century to the present. Interest in women composers is not new, yet equality has not been achieved. Concerts and recitals featuring women composers are often used as tokens to show that an organization is being inclusive. Instead, true inclusivity would regularly showcase male and female composers equally.

The repertoire performed in these three recitals is not only appropriate for a professional singer but includes selections that can be sung by beginners and intermediate singers as well. The repertoire was carefully selected for texts and composition worthy of a place on any recital, regardless of difficulty. The goal was to

contribute to the expansion and diversification of the standard vocal repertoire that is often assigned in university music programs.

The first recital contains four important early American women composers: Amy Beach, Florence Price, Mary Howe, and Margaret Bonds. The second recital contained music by women in the twentieth century. Some of the women in this recital were born in the 1900s, but are still composing today, so repertoire was chosen that had been written in the twentieth century. Music written in the twenty-first century was the focus of the final recital.

Singers begin their vocal study using art songs, yet the standard repertoire that is assigned is almost exclusively written by men. In order to diversify the repertoire, there is a need for research into art songs by women for our students. These recitals offer a starting point for teachers and performers to work toward compositional equality in art song.

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ART SONGS BY AMERICAN WOMEN COMPOSERS

by

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Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the
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Preface

After I returned to the U.S. from Germany, I found myself pulled into the world of American song. One of the people who guided me in this direction was Dr. Ruth Friedberg, author of *American Art Song and American Poetry*. A conversation with her just prior to my enrollment at the University of Maryland sparked my interest in researching American composers who set foreign language texts. The first two composers whom I found were Amy Beach and Mary Howe. It was then that I realized that that my interests actually lay with women composers, which has been a focus of my research for the last two years. By presenting art songs by American women composers, I hope to expand the standard art song repertoire to include more diverse composers, encourage other singers and educators to program their excellent works, and inspire future American women composers to write music in all genres.

Dedication

To all of the women in music, especially my students. One day when you wake up,
you will find that you have become a forest.

Acknowledgements

It takes a village to guide a dissertation. Thank you to Dr. Ruth Friedberg for inspiring this idea. Dr. Jennifer Cable helped me to feel free to dive deep into my research. Dr. Matthew Hoch provided guidance on resources and festivals. Dr. Ethel Haughton and Dr. Karen Savage at Virginia State University introduced me to Undine Smith Moore's works, as well as other African-American composers, and I am grateful to count them as colleagues and friends. Dr. Margaret McGillivray and Joanne Alme have been my cheerleaders and I certainly needed that. Ying-Shan Su was ready to play any and all repertoire, and I couldn't ask for a better collaborator. Juliana Franco, Sequina DuBose, Teri Bickham, Aaron Paige, and Rolfe Daus were colleagues who provided an environment that allowed curiosity and questioning. Dr. Natalie Groom provided fire and excitement about women composers as we collaborated on other projects. Professor Linda Mabbs believed in me from the beginning and made sure that all of my ducks were in a row. And Martha Randall was the biggest inspiration of them all. She saved my voice and my soul at a critical point. If I can be half the teacher she is, I will feel successful.

But without the love and support of Kevin Pick, I would never have allowed myself to imagine that I could do this. It will be marvelous to be Chief and Doctor.

Table of Contents

Preface.....	v
Dedication.....	vi
Acknowledgements.....	vii
Table of Contents.....	viii
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	1
Chapter 2: Recital #1: Our Foremothers.....	4
Chapter 3: Recital #2: Evolving.....	17
Chapter 4: Recital #3: Now.....	32
Chapter 5: Conclusion.....	47
Appendix A: Recital Program #1.....	50
Appendix B: Recital Program #2.....	59
Appendix C: Recital program #3.....	72
Bibliography.....	86

Chapter 1

Introduction

Women composers have long been underrepresented in the musical canon. Although there have been women composers as far back as Hildegard von Bingen in the twelfth century, “Historically, women composers have been dependent upon their access to the social, cultural, economic, and educational conditions that make creative work (and recognition of that work) possible.”¹ Because composition has long been considered a man’s field, women’s work has often been minimized or forgotten. With lack of access to higher musical education, publishers, and public performances of works, as well as the long-held cultural attitudes about a woman’s place in society, many compositions by women have been brushed aside because “A woman seldom writes good music, never great music.”² Because of these cultural and social attitudes, women composers typically have written in smaller forms like keyboard works and art songs. Unfortunately, many people look down on these genres because they are not large-scale works like operas or symphonies.

In the United States in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, there has been more access to education and a slow change in cultural and social attitudes about women composers. Many women composers have received accolades for their symphonies and operas, yet they are still fighting sexism. During her keynote address

¹ Sarah Wallin Huff, “Notes from my Women Composer’s Lecture,” March 19, 2017, accessed August 30, 2019, <https://sarahwallinhuff.com/2017/03/19/notes-from-my-women-composers-lecture/>.

² H.R. Hawed as quoted in Christine Ammer, *Unsung: A History of Women in American Music* (Portland: Amadeus, 2001), 94.

at the inaugural Darkwater Women in Music Festival in March of 2019, composer Elena Ruehr noted that fewer women study composition, and she related stories of her own fight against sexism, particularly during her doctoral work. Musical Theater composer Jeanine Tesori noted: “For girls, you have to see it to be it.”³ Sadly, female composers rarely see works by other women in standard musical programming. There has been some hope for representation in the canon, though, with women winning the Pulitzer Prize in Music in 1983, 1999, 2010, 2013, 2015, and 2019 (Ellen Taaffe Zwilich, Melinda Wagner, Jennifer Higdon, Caroline Shaw, Julia Wolfe, and Ellen Reid, respectively.)⁴ In addition, established women composers want to provide mentorship to their younger colleagues and future composers. Composers Missy Mazzoli and Ellen Reid founded Luna Composition Lab, specifically to mentor female high school composers.⁵ Among American women composers, one can trace this concept of mentorship back to Amy Beach, who was affectionately known as “Aunt Amy” to many composers, including Mary Howe.

Whether due to cultural attitudes or personal leanings, art songs have long been a favorite genre for women composers. There are many American women who have written great art songs, and this tradition continues today. The women represented in this dissertation have many awards and accolades among them, yet most of them are not a part of standard programming. Shining a light on the beautiful

³ Jeanine Tesori in Adam Hetrick, “For Girls, You Have to See It to Be It: The Historic and Powerful *Fun Home* Tony Acceptance Speeches You Didn’t See on TV,” *Playbill*, June 8, 2015. <https://www.playbill.com/article/for-girls-you-have-to-see-it-to-be-it-the-historic-and-powerful-fun-home-tony-acceptance-speeches-you-didnt-see-on-tv-com-350817>.

⁴ “Prize Winners: Music,” The Pulitzer Prizers, accessed August 30, 2019, <https://www.pulitzer.org/prize-winners-by-category/225>.

⁵ Luna Composition Lab, “Face the Music: Luna Composition Lab,” Kaufman Music Center, accessed August 15, 2019. <https://www.kaufmanmusiccenter.org/ftm/luna-lab/>.

and interesting songs of American women will showcase their contributions to musical growth and change.

In selecting repertoire for these recitals, I began with names that are familiar: Amy Beach and Florence Price. Because these women influenced other American women composers, I was able to quickly assemble a list of possible composers to research. Finding living American women composers was an easier task because of social media. Facebook groups that address American song abound, and there are many musicians who are willing to recommend their favorite composers.

After compiling a list of composers, I started to review repertoire. It was important to me that each recital had songs of varying difficulty without sacrificing quality. Although I am personally able to sing atonal works, I wanted to be certain that the songs that I chose could be used by a variety of singers. Finding repertoire that I can assign to students was important in this research. Therefore, each recital contains repertoire for singers who are beginning, intermediate, or advanced professionals. Each song selected makes an excellent addition to the traditional vocal canon.

Chapter 2

Recital #1: Our Foremothers

In considering the first recital, I wanted to showcase some of the American women who first had national and international success as composers. They were not only known for their art songs, but also for their symphonies and other large-scale works. Amy Beach and Florence Price were popular composers in their time and they also had considerable influence on other female composers, such as Mary Howe and Margaret Bonds. This was presented as a lecture recital in order to introduce the topic and to emphasize the influence these women had on future women composers.

Amy Beach

Considered to be one of the first important American woman composers, Amy Marcy Cheney was born in Henniker, NH on September 5, 1867. The only child of Charles Abbott Cheney and Clara Imogene Cheney, she had perfect pitch and was sensitive to keys.⁶ By the age of two, she could harmonize her mother's melodies.⁷ At age four, she was composing her own songs. As a pianist, Beach began a concert career and received excellent reviews. At age 18, she was a soloist with the Boston Symphony. Despite her success and promising career, she chose to retire from performance when she married Dr. Henry Harris Aubrey Beach in December 1885.

⁶ Susan Mardinly, "Amy Beach: Muse, Conscience, and Society," *Journal of Singing* 70, no. 5 (May/June 2014): 527.

⁷ Mary Katherine Kelton, "The Songs of Mrs. H.H.A. Beach" (DMA diss., The University of Texas at Austin, 1992), 4.

He was a Boston surgeon and amateur musician a few months older than her father. He encouraged her to compose, but not perform.⁸ Beach trained in composition by studying well-known male composers of the past. She transcribed the works of Bach, Beethoven, Brahms, and Wagner, and translated a Berlioz treatise from the original French. Her first large work was *Mass* in 1892, which was premiered by the prestigious Handel and Haydn Society in Boston. The Boston Symphony performed her *Gaelic Symphony* in 1896.⁹ It is noteworthy that these two important musical organizations found her work to be worthy of programming, especially in a time when women were not thought to be able to compose large scale works like symphonies and operas. After the death of her husband in 1910 and her mother in 1911, Beach decided to resume her performance career. She went to Europe and undertook a concert tour of Germany. Not only did she reestablish her concert career, she also had her works performed in major German cities. Her songs were promoted by major artists in German and Italian opera houses.¹⁰

She began to encourage and mentor younger women composers and became known as “Aunt Amy” to many, including Mary Howe.¹¹ She was cofounder and first president of the Society of Women Composers, and was also a leader in the Music Teachers National Association and the Music Educators National Conference. Beach was also a member of the New York Composers Forum through the New Deal, as well as a part of a season of concerts in the summer of 1939 as part of the World’s

⁸ Ammer, *Unsung*, 97.

⁹ Ammer, *Unsung*, 99.

¹⁰ Mardinly, “Amy Beach,” 535.

¹¹ Ammer, *Unsung*, 101.

Fair on WNYC radio.¹² She retired due to heart disease in 1940, and she died in New York, NY on December 27, 1944. She was a popular composer in her lifetime, causing the organization of Amy Beach Clubs throughout the country by her many admirers, particularly in New England.¹³

Beach's songs are sometimes considered sentimental, but she has a gift for melody.¹⁴ She was considered part of the Second New England School, a group of significant New England composers composing in a late Romantic style, which included John Knowles Paine, George Whitefield Chadwick, Horatio Parker, Arthur Foote, and Edward MacDowell. According to Adrienne Fried Block, Beach's biographer, "Her colleagues in the New England School believed she was the most gifted composer of the group."¹⁵ Although Beach's style changed little, one can hear the influence of Brahms, Liszt, and Wagner. She wrote 99 songs in English, 11 songs in German, and 7 songs in French.¹⁶ Adrienne Block states: "Beach claims that song writing was recreation for her; when she felt herself going stale while working on a larger piece, she would stop and finish the day's work by writing a song."¹⁷ Although she could write songs quickly, she often spent a long time with the poem, memorizing and repeating the text in her mind.¹⁸ Her songs are known for their lyrical melodies,

¹² Program from New York World's Fair, October 19, 1939, Records of the Works Progress Administration: Records of the Federal Music Project, The National Archives at College Park, Maryland, College Park, MD.

¹³ Diane Peacock Jezik, *Women Composers: The Lost Tradition Foun*, (New York: The Feminist Press, 1988), 149.

¹⁴ Jezik, *Women Composers*, 152.

¹⁵ Elizabeth Ann Sears, "The Art Song in Boston, 1880–1914," (PhD diss., The Catholic University of America, 1993), 116.

¹⁶ Kelton, "The Songs of Mrs. H.H.A. Beach," 85.

¹⁷ Adrienne Fried Block, *Amy Beach, Passionate Victorian, The Life and Work of an American Composer 1867–1944* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 146.

¹⁸ Block, *Amy Beach*, 147.

attention to text, setting of mood with intensity, and the virtuosity and inventiveness of the piano.

Amy Beach is often referred to as “Mrs. H.H.A. Beach,” but Adrienne Fried Block notes that after her husband’s death, she attempted to be known as “Amy Beach.” Unfortunately, she was so well-known by her husband’s name that people wondered if “Amy Beach” was Mrs. H.H.A. Beach’s daughter, so she continued to use his name for her compositions. Yet she left money to the MacDowell colony for the “Amy Beach fund” and the nameplate on her desk stated her name as “Amy Beach,” which leads one to suspect that she wanted to be known by her own name.¹⁹

Unlike her well-known *Three Browning Songs*, the three songs on this program do not feature long phrases nor pitches above G5, making them all ideal for undergraduates. *Ecstasy*, op. 19, no. 2, was written 1891 and sets Beach’s own text. This two-verse song was popular in her time, and Beach also created a version with violin obbligato. The phrases are no longer than three measures, which allows a younger singer to work on breath flow with success. The range is from C4–G5, but the tessitura is between Ab4–Eb5, giving a soprano the opportunity to stay in a comfortable register for most of the song. Op. 76, no. 2, *The Lotos Isles*, features text by Alfred, Lord Tennyson. With a range of Eb4–Gb5, its tessitura is lower than the other two songs in this set, staying mostly between F4–C4. Due to this lower tessitura, it could also be used for mezzo sopranos, as well as young sopranos with larger voices. Some of the phrases are four to five measures long, which gives a young singer the chance to work on breath control, but in a comfortable register. Set

¹⁹ Block, *Amy Beach*, xii.

to text by Dr. Beach, *Empress of Night*, op. 2, no. 3 also has two verses like *Ecstasy*. With short, two measure phrases, breath would not be an issue for a beginning singer. With a range of F#4–G5, the tessitura sits comfortably between G4–D5. Each verse ends with G5 in the antepenultimate measure, allowing a young soprano the opportunity to soar into the upper part of the voice without the need to remain there.

Florence Price

Another important early American woman composer was Florence Price. This American organist, pianist, lecturer, and composer was born on April 9, 1887 in Little Rock, AR. Her early training was with her mother, who was an accomplished musician. While at the New England Conservatory of Music, Price studied counterpoint and composition with Beach's teacher, George Chadwick of the New England School.²⁰ Price graduated from the Conservatory with degrees in piano pedagogy and organ performance with honors, an artist's diploma, and a teaching certificate in 1907. She was on a career path to become a university teacher, and became head of Atlanta's Clark University, but gave it up when she married lawyer Thomas J. Price in 1912 in Little Rock. After a series of racial incidents, the family moved to Chicago, where she had further studies with organist and composer Leo Sowerby. She became well-known in Chicago as an organist and pianist and was a soloist with Chicago Symphony. In 1928, G. Schirmer started to publish a few of her works. Her Symphony in E minor was premiered by the Chicago Symphony at the

²⁰ Rae Linda Brown, "Price [Smith], Florence Bea(trice)," *Grove Music Online*, 2001, accessed September 2, 2019, <https://doi-org.proxy-um.researchport.umd.edu/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.48286>.

Chicago World's Fair in 1933, which marked the first time a major orchestra performed a work by an African American woman.²¹

Price was also known as a teacher. Her student, Margaret Bonds, is another important American composer. The two women became friends and both received recognition for their works and performances in their lifetimes. Price's songs were performed by major artists like Leontyne Price and Marian Anderson, who performed *My Soul's Been Anchored in the Lord* at the famous Lincoln Memorial Concert of 1939.²² Unfortunately, after her death in 1953, her music was neglected until Willis Patterson's *Art Songs by Black American Composers* brought her songs to national attention in the 1980s. Currently, her papers can be found at the University of Arkansas, where they held a festival to her in February 2018. Even more interest in her was spawned when boxes of her manuscripts were found in a house in Chicago just a few years ago. G. Schirmer reacquired her catalogue, and because of this, her Symphony no. 4 was premiered in recording in January of 2019. A festival dedicated to her will occur at the University of Maryland, College Park in August 2020.

Her songs are known for their beautiful melodies and expressive harmonies. As part of the Harlem Renaissance movement, she blended classical ideas from her study of European art music with the spirituals, blues, and jazz of her childhood. With text by Langston Hughes, *Bewilderment* has the feeling of a spiritual. The phrases are rarely more than three measures and the melody simple, making this accessible to an undergraduate. The range is D4–G5 with a tessitura of F4–D5, allowing a young

²¹ Brown, "Price, Florence."

soprano to work on her middle register. *Hold Fast to Dreams* sets another Langston Hughes poem. The song features long held notes in the voice with moving, arpeggiated figures in the piano. Although the phrases only two or three measures long, the singer must sing many whole notes. For a young singer, it might be difficult to keep the breath moving through these held pitches. Paul Laurence Dunbar's text is set to a beautiful melody in *Sympathy*. Phrases are again relatively short at two measures, making breath less of a concern for an undergraduate singer. The middle section has some tonal instability and might be more easily learned by an undergraduate at the end of her degree. The song ends with a B5 on a fermata, making it an excellent choice to end a set of Price songs. If a teacher wanted to assign this to a lower-voiced singer, it is also available in a low key.

Mary Howe

Born on April 4, 1882 in Richmond, VA, Mary Wortham Carlisle was the daughter of Calderon Carlisle and Kate Thomas Carlisle. Mr. Carlisle was a well-known international lawyer who was fluent in French, Spanish, and English.²³ Mrs. Carlisle was a trained singer, having studied with a Metropolitan Opera baritone, and she often sang in local Richmond churches. Both parents were interested in music, and they trained Mary in voice and piano. In 1904, she began piano studies at the Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore, MD. As a pianist, she formed a piano-duo with Anne Hull, which gave concerts with the Cleveland Symphony, the National

²³Sandra Clemmons McClain, "The Solo Vocal Repertoire of Mary Carlisle Howe with Stylistic and Interpretive Analysis of Selected Works," EdD diss., Teachers College, Columbia University, 1992), 17.

Symphony, and even went on a tour of Russia. In 1912, she married her brother's law partner, Walter Bruce Howe. The two had three children, which is when she turned her focus more toward composition, although she did continue to perform.²⁴

A mother of three, Mary Howe returned to the Peabody Conservatory to study composition with Gustav Strube at age 40 and graduated with a degree in composition in 1922. Howe continued performing with Anne Hull while composing and became a musical activist. Her friend, Carl Engel, was chief of the music division at the Library of Congress. With his help, she organized the first Coolidge Festival in Washington in 1924 at the Freer Gallery, modeled after Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge's Festival of Chamber Music, which Howe had attended in Pittsfield, MA. She also started the Chamber Music Society of Washington that eventually became the Friends of Music of the Library of Congress.²⁵ In the early 1920s, Amy Beach befriended Howe. In 1925, the two were among several composers to found the Society for American Women Composers. Amy Beach and Ethel Glenn Hier sponsored Howe to attend the MacDowell Colony in the summers from 1927–1947. Howe did not like being away from her family duties for long, so she would only attend for a few weeks each summer. In 1930, the principal cellist of the Philadelphia Orchestra, Hans Kindler, asked her to help him raise money to begin an orchestra in Washington, D.C. Howe raised \$40,000 to help found the National Symphony. She and her husband spent many years on the board of directors.²⁶ During this time, she became a member of the Washington Composers Club and the American Composers Alliance.

²⁴ McClain, "Solo Vocal Repertoire of Mary Carlisle Howe," 20.

²⁵ Ammer, *Unsung*, 142.

²⁶ Ammer, *Unsung*, 143.

On a trip to France in 1933, she studied composition informally with Nadia Boulanger. The two became friends and had many visits together.²⁷ A recital of Howe's solo vocal work was presented in 1939 at Washington's Phillips Memorial Gallery, featuring her settings of Rilke, Wylie, and others.²⁸ She was one of many composers who took part in the New York Composers' Forum, part of the Works Progress Administration and the New Deal.²⁹ After her husband's death in 1954, Howe continued to work. She became good friends with composer Celius Dougherty, who often accompanied singers performing Howe's songs. She received an honorary doctorate from George Washington University in 1961. In 1962, her friends and admirers surprised her with a concert of her works for her 80th birthday. She died at her home in Washington, D.C. in 1964 at the age of 82. When told of her death, the conductor of the National Symphony, Howard Mitchell, said, "The world of music has just lost one of its greatest citizens."³⁰

In a critique of Mary Howe's songs, Glenn Dillard Gunn of the *Washington, D.C. Times-Herald* said in 1959, "Mary Howe's gifts are notable for frank and expressive melody which in her songs she fits deftly to texts chosen with fine feeling for their literary values."³¹ Her songs are known for their "musical imagination, skill in matching text with musical thought, expressive rhythmic sense, and subtle

²⁷ Dorothy Indenbaum, "Mary Howe: Composer, Pianist and Music Activist" (PhD diss., New York University, 1993), 135.

²⁸ Ammer, *Unsung*, 144.

²⁹ Melissa J DeGraaf, "'Never Call Us Lady Composers': Gendered Reception in the New York Composers' Forum, 1935–1940," *American Music* 26, no. 3 (Fall 2008): 301.

³⁰ Howard Mitchell as quoted in "Composer Mary Howe, 82; National Symphony Founder," *The Washington Post, Times Herald*, September 16, 1964.

³¹ Glenn Dillard Gunn as quoted in Mary Howe, *Jottings* (Washington, D.C., Independently published, 1959), 170.

phrasing.”³² She wrote in different musical styles and in different languages, including English, French, German, and Spanish. She was known for her ability to set text and her text choices, which came from her interest in well-known contemporary writers and major literary figures.³³ Sometimes, she even set her own poetry, and often used a pseudonym. The *New York World-Telegram and Sun* said of Mary Howe’s art songs, “Mary Howe has found the time to compose some of the most sensitive vocal music of the American repertory. Her tastes in poetry have always been high, Euripides, Donne, Shelley, Hugo, Beaudelaire, Goethe, Rilke, Shakespeare, and the Bible. Her settings showed the same set of ideals in care and reverence.”³⁴ Her German songs have a romanticism that echoes the harmony, moods, and expansiveness of Brahms and Richard Strauss. They are tonal but have chromaticism to express the text and moods.³⁵ Soprano Katherine Hansel, who often sang Howe’s songs, said “...and when she set German poems, they sound like Lieder, not like an American composer writing to German verse.”³⁶ Mary Howe was quite clear that she did not have just one compositional style. In an article in the *Washington Post*, she said she had “...one foot in the future and one foot in the past....If I want to use dissonance, I use dissonance. If I want to express feeling, I express feeling. I write what I want to write.”³⁷ Like Beach and Price, Howe was a

³² Indenbaum, “Mary Howe,” 6.

³³ McClain, “The solo vocal repertoire of Mary Carlisle Howe,” 11.

³⁴ *New York World-Telegram and Sun* as quoted in Howe, *Jottings*, 170.

³⁵ McClain, “The solo vocal repertoire of Mary Carlisle Howe,” 154.

³⁶ Indenbaum, “Mary Howe,” 211.

³⁷ Mary Howe as quoted in Estelle Sharpe, “Mary Howe, Independent Composer,” *The Washington Post*, December 26, 1952.

well-known composer in her time. Unfortunately, her music is not often performed today.

Howe's setting of Elinor Wylie's *Little Elegy* from 1934 and *When I Died in Berners Street* from 1936 are described by musicologist Ruth Friedberg as "...among Mary Howe's finest works and demonstrate that unmistakable affinity of composer for poet which is all too rarely encountered in the song medium."³⁸ Howe created two versions of *Little Elegy*: one with piano and one with string quartet. This song by Howe would make an interesting comparison to the more familiar setting of the text by John Duke that can be found in the standard anthology *First Book of Soprano Solos*. Howe's phrases are often three measures long, but in a slow tempo, which could be difficult for a beginning singer. In particular, the text "or anything be kind, or fair" could prove a challenge because the phrase ascends to an E5 that is held for seven beats. *When I Died in Berners Street* is an interesting mini-drama. Each section of the text features a different musical style. Although multi-sectional songs have become more popular in the twenty-first century, it is rarely found in the early twentieth century. Howe's ability to transition between styles to match the changing text makes clear her personal assertion that she writes what she wants to write. This song is better sung by a more intermediate to advanced singer who is able to fully embrace the drama.

³⁸ Robin Fischer and Ruth C. Friedberg, *American Art Song and American Poetry*, 2nd ed. (Lanham: The Scarecrow Press, 2012), 85.

Margaret Bonds

Margaret Bonds was born in Chicago in 1913. Her mother had a home that welcomed African American artists, composers, and writers, including her private music teacher, Florence Price.³⁹ She received both her Bachelor of Music and Master of Music degrees at Northwestern University, with additional studies at the Juilliard School. After her education at Northwestern, she spent time writing music for the Glenn Miller Orchestra. Her compositions were performed by important jazz musicians like Woody Herman and Louis Armstrong. In 1933, she was the first African-American soloist with the Chicago Symphony, playing Price's Piano Concerto at the World's Fair. Although she married Lawrence Richardson in New York in 1940, she kept her maiden name—Bonds—for her entire life. She died in 1972.⁴⁰

The majority of Bonds' work is vocal music. One can hear the influence of jazz and spirituals, as well as of cultural themes of the time, including the work of Price and the Harlem Renaissance. One of her most lasting collaborations was with poet Langston Hughes. She not only set his poems to music, but also created some theatrical adaptations of his work. During the 1960's, some of her spiritual arrangements were commissioned by famous soprano Leontyne Price.

Songs of the Seasons was not originally written as a set of songs, though they all use text by Langston Hughes. Bonds wrote *Poème d'Automne* in 1934 and *Winter Moon* in 1936. When tenor Lawrence Watson commissioned her to write a song cycle

³⁹ Barbara Garvey Jackson, "Bonds [néé Smith], Margaret Allison [Jeannette]," *Grove Music Online*, 2001, accessed September 2, 2019, <https://doi-org.proxy-um.researchport.umd.edu/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.47168>

⁴⁰ Jackson, "Bonds, Margaret Allison."

in 1955, she wrote the other two songs.⁴¹ Elements of jazz are particularly noteworthy in this cycle. One can hear syncopation, modal melodies, blues inflections, and polyrhythms between the voice and the piano.

Young Love in Spring has three verses that move quickly between low and high registers of the voice. One can hear the blue notes in the melody, reflecting Bonds' jazz background. Jazz influence also features prominently in *Poème d'Automne*. There is a recitative-like passage in the middle that could prove difficult for a younger singer. The sparse piano part for *Winter Moon* requires the singer to maintain forward momentum in the phrases without the help of her collaborator. *Summer Storm* features rapidly delivered text, which could be difficult for a younger singer to manage with ease. In addition, there are moments when the singer is low in the voice and the piano is thickly textured, creating possible problems with balance. These songs are best sung by an advanced singer. Currently, *Songs of the Seasons* is not published. I hope that by discussing and performing these songs, awareness is brought to this repertoire and hopefully lead to their eventual publication.

⁴¹ Alethea N. Kilgore, "The Life and Solo Vocal Works of Margaret Allison Bonds (1913–1972)" (DMA diss., Florida State University, 2013), 91.

Chapter 3

Recital #2: Evolving

The repertoire in this recital was composed in the twentieth century. Some of the composers represented are still composing today in the twenty-first century, but compositions from the current century were saved for the final recital. As previously stated, an emphasis was placed on finding works that were not only appropriate for a professional soprano, but also works that could be assigned to students at various levels.

Elinor Remick Warren

American composer and pianist Elinor Remick Warren (1900–1991) spent most of her life in Los Angeles, CA. She started piano lessons at age 5 and began studying composition in high school. She spent a year at Mills College before moving to New York City in 1920 to study with Frank LaForge and Clarence Dickinson. She had private study with Arnold Schoenberg and Nadia Boulanger and was encouraged in her early works by George Enescu. Her first publicly published composition was *A Song of June* in 1919.⁴²

Warren performed her own works as a piano soloist with many orchestras, including the Los Angeles Philharmonic and the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra. Because of her studies in New York with LaForge, she became a well-known collaborative

⁴² Virginia Bortin, “Warren, Elinor Remick,” *Grove Music Online*, 2001, accessed October 15, 2019, <https://doi-org.proxy-um.researchport.umd.edu/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.45243>.

pianist, touring the United States with singers like Lawrence Tibbett, Lucrezia Borgi, Kirsten Flagstad, and Eileen Farrell.⁴³ Named Woman of the Year in Music in 1955 by the *Los Angeles Times*, her international reputation as a composer was solidified when the Los Angeles Philharmonic premiered *The Legend of King Arthur*.⁴⁴ It was rare for a woman during this time to write such a large-scale work, let alone receive international attention for this achievement. She received an honorary doctorate from Occidental College in 1960 and was one of the composers chosen to participate in the first Los Angeles International Music Festival in 1961, along with Igor Stravinsky.

Warren's works are characterized by the highly expressive and emotional tonality of nineteenth century Romanticism and beauty of nature is a common theme. In her book *Unsung: A History of Women in American Music*, Christine Ammer describes her as "the only woman among the group of prominent American neo-romanticists that includes Howard Hanson, Samuel Barber, and Gian Carlo Menotti."⁴⁵ She wrote over 200 works for orchestra, chorus, voice, piano, and chamber ensemble. Warren remained active as a musician and composer until her death in 1991.⁴⁶ Internationally-known baritone Thomas Hampson has championed her work. In 2000, he joined together with the Elinor Remick Warren Society and the Library of Congress to hold a Centenary Celebration of her with lectures, symposiums, and recitals, including a master class in collaborative piano by pianist Craig Rutenberg at the University of Maryland.

⁴³ Bortin, "Warren, Elinor Remick."

⁴⁴ Bortin, "Warren, Elinor Remick."

⁴⁵ Ammer, *Unsung*, 163.

⁴⁶ Bortin, "Warren, Elinor Remick."

Warren's setting of Walt Whitman's text in *We Two* is incredibly Romantic. One sees many changes in tempi, which require significant rehearsal time between singer and pianist. The voice part has long, high phrases that will use significant breath energy. With a range of E4–A5, the voice is regularly called upon to hold notes in the soprano passaggio (D5–G5) for four to eight counts at the end of a phrase. The piano part is thick with significant use of sweeping arpeggios and widely spaced chords, sometimes making balance an issue when the soprano is in her mid-range. Because of the breath control required, the regular changes in tempo, and the thick piano texture, this song is better suited to an intermediate to advanced student.

Snow Towards Evening could be used for an advanced undergraduate. A short song using Melville Cane text, the vocal phrases are typically two measures long and the melody uses mainly step-wise motion, making it more accessible to beginner singers. The range is F4–Ab5, but the tessitura remains comfortably between G4–Eb5. Although most singers are familiar with the setting of Dante Gabriel Rossetti's *Silent Noon* by Ralph Vaughan Williams, Warren also creates a beautiful song from this beloved text. More Romantic than the Vaughan Williams, Warren's setting would be accessible to an intermediate level singer. With a range of E4–Ab5, the singer's phrases are typically two measures long. There are many places with tempo changes, so again, the singer would need enough rehearsal time with a pianist to make them fluid. If the final Ab5 cannot be easily sung *piano*, the soprano may choose F5 in its place.

Undine Smith Moore

Born in Jarratt, VA, Undine Smith Moore (1904–1989) lived most of her life in Petersburg, VA. The granddaughter of slaves, she began piano lessons at age seven. She was the first graduate of Fisk University to receive a scholarship to Juilliard. Moore also trained at Columbia University Teacher’s College, and later devoted more than 40 years of her life to teaching at Virginia State University, where she co-founded and co-directed the university’s Black Music Center.⁴⁷ Among her many awards are the National Association of Negro Musicians Distinguished Achievement Award in 1975, the Virginia Governor’s Award in the Arts in 1985, and a Candace Award from the National Coalition of 100 Black Women in 1984. In 1972, she was awarded an honorary Doctor of Music degree by Virginia State University and was named music laureate of Virginia in 1977.⁴⁸ Known as the Dean of Black Women Composers, she described herself as “a teacher who composes, not simply a composer who teaches.”⁴⁹

Moore is best known for her choral works. Her music is highly influenced by Romanticism and spirituals, and her most well-known works are for choir and vocal solo. Moore’s *Scenes from the Life of a Martyr* on the life of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was a nominee for the Pulitzer Prize in 1982. In 2017, a historical marker to her

⁴⁷ Olivia Mattis, “Moore, Undine Smith,” *Grove Music Online*, 2001, accessed October 15, 2019, <https://doi-org.proxy-um.researchport.umd.edu/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.47040>.

⁴⁸ Meghan Hill, “Undine Smith Moore,” August 25, 2017, accessed February 28, 2020, <https://www.musicbyblackcomposers.org/2017/08/25/undine-smith-moore/>.

⁴⁹ Kayla Hill, “Undine Smith Moore,” accessed October 25, 2019, <https://songofamerica.net/composer/moore-undine-smith/>.

was dedicated in Petersburg, VA, due largely to the efforts of her Virginia State University colleague and former student, Dr. Ethel Haughton.⁵⁰

Moore often wrote music for her students at Virginia State University. *I Am in Doubt* and *Lyric for Truelove* were written in 1975 for the senior recital of Carolyn Kizzie at Virginia State College, which was the previous name of Virginia State University. Thus, these songs are accessible to an advanced undergraduate. Both songs use text by Florence Hynes Willeté. *I Am in Doubt* has a feeling of freedom in the rhythm and tempo, which is accomplished in many ways. First, the first four measures have static, half note chords in the piano. Next, the singer has repeated notes in a recitative-manner in the middle of the song. Finally, in the last six measures, the piano is holding chords that are a minimum of four beats, allowing the singer to adjust the tempo at her will. These moments require the singer to have an intimate knowledge of the flow of text so that she avoids sounding choppy. The song is short but does encompass a wide range between E4–A5. Phrases are short, typically about two measures, allowing for the singer to breathe at regular intervals.

The syllabic setting of *Lyric for Truelove* also needs a focus on text stress, especially with many repeated notes. This song has a much higher tessitura than *I Am in Doubt*, lying mostly between B4–F#5, but the range is F#4–Bb5. This song is challenging with the collaborative pianist because the soprano is often singing eighth notes in compound meter while the pianist is subdividing by eight or nine, or even subdividing a measure by 21. Although Moore intended this for a senior college

⁵⁰ Ethel Haughton, email with the author, March 27, 2019.

recital, the undergraduate soprano should be advanced in order to successfully perform this piece.

Margaret Garwood

Born in Haddonfield, NJ, Margaret Garwood (1927–2015) is best known for her opera *The Scarlet Letter*, which premiered in Philadelphia in 2010. Garwood's piano training began at age six and she was a serious pianist. She taught piano for many years, but didn't actually start composing until 1960, at the age of 33. In 1950, she began playing for a local opera company in Philadelphia and eventually married the composer and director, Romeo Cascarino.⁵¹ Although she became interested in composing because of him, she didn't find a composition mentor until she met Miriam Gideon.⁵² Her first compositions were songs, including a cycle of poems by e. e. cummings entitled *lovesongs*, which was performed at Carnegie Hall in 1964. One of her biggest champions was Donald Chittum, whom she met while teaching at the University of Arts in Philadelphia. Dr. Chittum would become her third husband and he encouraged her work in composition. Garwood was the recipient of three grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and five fellowships from the MacDowell Colony, where she was named a Norton Stevens Fellow. She received awards from the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (ASCAP), the American Music Center, and the National Federation of Music Clubs. With so many

⁵¹ Anne Christopherson, "The Cliff's Edge (Songs of a Psychotic) by Margaret Garwood: An Exploration" (DMA diss., The Ohio State University, 2004), 6.

⁵² Christopherson, "The Cliff's Edge," 7.

awards and accolades, as well as a highly successful opera, her music should be better known.

The texts for *The Cliff's Edge: Songs of a Psychotic* were taken from a volume of poetry of the same name by Eithne Tabor, a woman who was committed to a mental hospital at age eighteen. Garwood got permission from the publisher to set the poetry and wrote the cycle in 1970, but she didn't meet Tabor until 1978. At that time, Tabor was in a Halfway House connected to a psychiatric hospital in Washington, where Garwood was able to play these songs for her.⁵³ There are five songs in the cycle: *Schizophrenia*, *Hebephrenia*, *Loneliness*, *Breakdown*, and *Asylum*. The poetry deals with the experience of mental illness from a personal and intimate point of view and "...Garwood's music refrains from sensationalizing her affliction."⁵⁴ It is rare to find music that deals with such a turbulent subject, which would make this difficult for a less experienced singer.

Not only is the subject matter intense and difficult to perform, this cycle is also tonally and rhythmically difficult. Throughout each song, the meter is regularly changing. *Schizophrenia* has many instances where the piano plays a rolled chord on an off-beat, which could cause the singer to lose the feeling of the pulse. Garwood often creates dissonance between the voice and piano with ever shifting accidentals within each measure.

Hebephrenia sounds like a demented waltz. In triple meter, the piano creates a typical waltz feeling, but the pitches are full of dissonances. The use of tritones and

⁵³ Margaret Garwood, *The cliff's edge: (Songs of a Psychotic)*. (Songflower Press; Bryn Mawr, PA: Hildegard Pub. Co., 1989).

⁵⁴ Christopherson, "The Cliff's Edge," 1.

constantly changing accidentals creates an unsettled quality to the music that matches the poetry but makes maintaining the pitches of the vocal line difficult. *Loneliness* also continues the use of dissonance and is even more difficult rhythmically with a short section in 7/8, 5/8, and 4/8.

The longest and most musically difficult movement is *Breakdown*. The soprano should be extra sensitive to this text as the poet struggles with losing control. There are many large leaps in the voice to express the outbursts in the text. There is a section in 5/8 and which is full of dissonances between the voice and piano. This movement segues without pause into *Asylum*. This final song begins with changing meter in each of the first four measures but remains in 4/4 after measure 4. Dissonance still occurs, but less in this movement than in the others as the poet reflects on what has brought her to this place. Considering the musical challenges as well as the seriousness of the subject matter, this cycle is best performed by a professional singer.

Jacqueline Hairston

Pianist, composer, and arranger Jacqueline Hairston (b. 1938) was born in Charlotte, NC. After graduating as valedictorian from her high school, she went on to study at Howard University, the Juilliard School of Music, and Columbia University. Hairston has taught at Johnson C. Smith University, Oakland 's New School for the Arts and the University of California, Berkeley's Young Musicians' Program.⁵⁵ She is

⁵⁵ African American Art Song Alliance, "Composers: Jacqueline Hairston," The African American Art Song Alliance, Access date but it can't be November 2019, <https://www.darryltaylor.com/alliance/composers/jacqueline-hairston>.

the composer/arranger of several spirituals for Kathleen Battle's Underground Railroad concerts and has also arranged spirituals for Denyce Graves. She served as the first female composer-in-residence for the Negro Spiritual Scholarship Foundation.⁵⁶ Hairston's works have been recorded by the London Symphony and the Columbia Symphony Orchestras. Known for her work on the African Diaspora and spirituals, she has been a sought-after lecturer.

Although many singers know the spiritual *Nobody Knows the Trouble I See* because of the arrangement by H.T. Burleigh, this version would make an excellent recital choice. The melody requires comfort with control of breath for some of the longer phrases, thus requiring a more advanced singer. This is especially necessary in moments where the voice is directed not to breathe between phrases as it leaps an octave and a second. The range of the piece is Db4-B5 with the ending providing an opportunity for the soprano to stay on a G5 or to show off her B5. There is also a medium voice version available.

Emma Lou Diemer

Keyboardist, educator, and composer Emma Lou Diemer (b. 1927) has written works for orchestra, chamber ensemble, keyboard, choir, and solo voice for schools, churches, and professional organizations. Ruth Friedberg, noted expert on American song, notes that she "...began to write music at the age of six and never doubted that

⁵⁶ Margaret R. Simmons and Jeanine Wagner, *A New Anthology of Art Songs by African American Composers* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2004), 196.

she was destined to be a composer.”⁵⁷ Born in Kansas City, MO, Diemer is a graduate of the Eastman School of Music and Yale University, where she studied counterpoint with Paul Hindemith. A Fulbright fellowship allowed her to study piano and composition at the Royal Conservatory in Brussels. She also studied at composition at Tanglewood and completed a PhD in composition at Eastman.

Diemer was composer-in-residence in the Arlington, VA schools under the Ford Foundation Young Composers Project, and taught composition and theory at the University of Maryland from 1965–70. After moving to the west coast to teach composition and theory at the University of California, Santa Barbara, she was instrumental in founding the electronic and computer music program there.⁵⁸ Diemer maintained an active career as a keyboardist as well, with concerts at Washington National Cathedral, St. Mary's Cathedral and Grace Cathedral in San Francisco, and Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels in Los Angeles. A longtime church musician, Diemer has a large catalogue of organ works, as well as sacred vocal solos.

Diemer's setting of Shakespeare's *Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer's Day* from 1972 offers a flowing piano part under a melody that spans D4–G5. Diemer sets much of the text on moving eighth notes that are interrupted with a quarter note tied to an eighth, which causes the need for extra attention to be paid to word stress so that it does not become choppy or disjointed. It could be sung by an advanced undergraduate or a master's student. From 1996, Diemer's setting of Dorothy Parker's *One Perfect Rose* has a musical theater feeling to it, which begins from the

⁵⁷ Friedberg, *American Art Song*, 320.

⁵⁸ Emma Lou Diemer, “Biography,” *Emma Lou Diemer: Composer, Keyboard Performer*, accessed November 1, 2019, <https://www.emmaloudiemermusic.com/page/page/6385944.htm>.

first measure with the fast-moving block chords in eight notes. This humorous text portrays a person who is disappointed in always receiving perfect roses instead of a limousine. The melodic phrases often begin with an upward leap followed by a stepwise descent. With a range of D4–F5, it would make an excellent choice for a beginning singer.

Libby Larsen

Born in Wilmington, DE, Grammy award-winning composer Libby Larsen (b. 1950) is one of America's most performed living composers. She has a catalogue of over 500 works including vocal and chamber music, orchestral works, and over 15 operas. The first woman to serve as a resident composer with a major orchestra, she has held residencies with the California Institute of the Arts, the Arnold Schoenberg Institute, the Philadelphia School of the Arts, the Cincinnati Conservatory, the Minnesota Orchestra, and more.⁵⁹ Larsen was the Harissios Papamarkou Chair in Education at the Library of Congress and received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. An advocate of the music and musicians of our time, she co-founded the Minnesota Composers Forum, now the American Composers Forum in 1973, which has been an advocate for composers in American arts.⁶⁰ Like her primary teacher, Dominick Argento, she often sets prose instead of poetry for her art songs.

⁵⁹ Libby Larsen, "About," *Libby Larsen*, 2020, accessed November 1, 2019. https://libbylarsen.com/as_about.

⁶⁰ Libby Larsen, "Full Biography," *Libby Larsen*, 2020, accessed February 24, 2020. <https://libbylarsen.com/index.php?contentID=243>.

Margaret Songs are sung by the character Margaret Elliot in Larsen's chamber opera *Eric Hermannson's Soul*, based on a short story by Willa Cather. In *Bright Rails*, we hear the train in the piano right from the beginning while Margaret sings of going home. This train pattern continues in 9/8 as the soprano moves forward mostly in dotted quarter notes. The vocal phrases are not long but need to be smooth against the rollicking train in the piano. In comparison to the other songs in this cycle, this song has a narrow range of G \flat 4-G5. The melodic line is mostly stepwise and there are no leaps greater than a P4.

In *So Little There*, the great plains of Nebraska have changed Margaret's perspective after growing up in New York. Larsen begins this song with a recitative section. Larsen incorporates two more recitative-like sections in this song, as well. The melodic line is more disjunct than the previous song and has wider range of E \flat 4-A \flat 5. Rhythm could also prove difficult as the melody shifts between subdivisions of three and four. This song would be better suited to an intermediate or advanced singer.

Finally, Margaret expresses the rapture of her encounter with Eric Hermannson in *Beneath the Hawthorne Tree*.⁶¹ Larsen uses almost constant moving sixteenth notes in the piano in 6/8 time to set the scene painted in the text of a dreamy spring day. The song has the most disjunct melody of the three and it often spans a seventh in three notes. There are also moments when the voice must sing in duplets over the 6/8 piano. Because of the disjunct melody lines, recitative sections, and

⁶¹ Libby Larsen, *Margaret Songs* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

rhythmic patterns, this cycle is best sung by a singer who is at least at the master's level.

Lori Laitman

Lori Laitman (b. 1955) has composed multiple operas and choral works, and over 250 songs with texts by classical and contemporary poets, including those who perished in the Holocaust. Her music is performed throughout the world and has generated substantial critical acclaim, such as *Fanfare Magazine* calling her “one of the most talented and intriguing of living composers.”⁶² Laitman regularly receives commissions from prestigious organizations such as the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Music of Remembrance, Washington Master Chorale, and the Eastman School of Music. Her opera *The Scarlet Letter* was named a Critic's Choice by Opera News and one of the top five CDs of 2018 by *Fanfare Magazine*. A graduate of Yale University, Laitman was the recipient of The Yale School of Music's Ian Mininberg Alumni Award for Distinguished Service in May 2018.⁶³

Days and Nights was written for soprano Melissa Coombs, whom Laitman met through composer Richard Hundley. It was Laitman's first entry into the National Association of Teachers of Singing Art Song Competition, which she now sponsors. *Along With Me* was written for Coombs' tenth wedding anniversary with text by Robert Browning. This song employs significant melodic repetition with a hymn-like section at the text “Trust God.” Although there are meter changes throughout the

⁶² Lori Laitman, “About Lori: Biography,” *Lori Laitman: Composer*, 2012, accessed October 26, 2019, <http://artsongs.com/biography/>.

⁶³ Lori Laitman, “About Lori: Abbreviated Biography,” *Lori Laitman: Composer*, 2012, accessed February 24, 2020, <http://artsongs.com/abbreviated-biographies/>.

song, the quarter note remains constant, making it accessible to singers who are still developing their musicality. The triple dedication for *They Might Not Need Me* stems from another soprano, Lauren Wagner, who suggested that Laitman write a tango, which is the style of this song. A setting of Emily Dickinson poetry, the melodic line often employs stepwise motion until the poetry starts its repetition of “they might not need me.” At this point, the leaping in the melody echoes the desperation in the text.

Regarding *The Night Has a Thousand Eyes*, Laitman says “I just found the poem in an anthology I had and its simplicity appealed to me.”⁶⁴ Laitman has written the song in two verses to match the similarity of the two verses in the poetry by Francis W. Bourdillon. With a melody spanning F4–Bb5, the highest pitch needs to begin *piano* and then crescendo, which might be difficult for a beginning singer. The intricate piano hand crossing in the middle section of *Over the Fence* was inspired by eighteenth century composer Jean-Phillippe Rameau’s *Pièces de Clavecin*.⁶⁵ Another Emily Dickinson poem, the melody line moves between eighth notes and triplets. In parts of the melody, Laitman also employs syncopation coupled with a leap of a M6. This musical concept returns again as the singer sings about God climbing the fence. Because this song has a difficult piano part in addition to a somewhat complicated melody, it might be better suited to an advanced undergraduate.

The simplicity of *Song* implies a folk song.⁶⁶ A setting of text by Christina Rossetti, the melody contains significant stepwise motion with the leaps being a P5 or smaller. The almost constant motion in the piano will help propel the vocal phrases

⁶⁴ Lori Laitman, author, October 20, 2019.

⁶⁵ Lori Laitman, *Days and Nights* (Enchanted Knickers Music, 1994).

⁶⁶ Laitman, *Days and Nights*.

forward. For *Wild Nights*, Coombs suggested the B5 in measure 19 and famous soprano Phyllis Bryn-Julson suggested the final move to B♭5 at the end.⁶⁷ This allows a soprano to truly show off at the end of a performance. Laitman says this setting of Emily Dickinson's poem was "just fun to write."⁶⁸ The opening melody moves with glissandi from A5 to A♭4, a motive which returns in different forms throughout the song. The middle section is calmer during the text when the heart is in port, but soon it builds back to the large leaps of an octave or more. The songs in this cycle are beautifully written and accessible to intermediate to advanced sopranos.

⁶⁷ Laitman, *Days and Nights*.

⁶⁸ Laitman, email to the author, October 20, 2019.

Chapter 4

Recital #3: Now

All of the music represented in this final recital was written after the year 2000. The repertoire selected was by living American women that was written in the last 20 years. The difficulty level in these songs ranges from beginner through professional, allowing sopranos of all ability levels the opportunity to find contemporary art songs for performance. Voice teachers are often criticized for rarely assigning contemporary literature to their students, yet much of the vocal writing by contemporary composers is musically difficult; thus it was important to me that I find repertoire for all ability levels. It is encouraging to see more women composers in the twenty-first century composing in large-scale genres like symphonies and operas while still paying attention to art songs.

Rosephanye Dunn Powell

Rosephanye Dunn Powell (b. 1962) has been hailed as one of America's premier women composers of choral music. Dr. Powell is regularly commissioned to compose for choruses of various levels around the country. Her works have been conducted and premiered by renowned choral conductors such as Anton Armstrong, Bob Chilcott, and André Thomas. Her compositions are in great demand at choral festivals around the country, frequently appearing on the regional and national conventions of the American Choral Directors Association, as well as Honor Choir

festivals.⁶⁹ An accomplished singer and voice professor at Auburn University, Dr. Powell's research has focused on the art of the African-American spiritual, the art songs of William Grant Still, and voice care concerns for voice professionals. She travels extensively presenting lectures, song demonstrations, and serving as a workshop clinician, conductor, and adjudicator.⁷⁰ Although she is well-known in the choral world, she has also written art songs which are beautiful and worthy of performance.

Miss Wheatley's Garden is named for America's first published African American poet, Phillis Wheatley.⁷¹ A slave of John and Susanna Wheatley, they taught Phillis to read and write. Her book, *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral*, was the first volume of poetry to be published by an African American woman.⁷² Wheatley's popularity brought her freedom from slavery in 1773. Although none of the poetry in *Miss Wheatley's Garden* is written by Wheatley, Powell explains her choice to name it after this particular poet: "...[the composer] thought it befitting to title the work *Miss Wheatley's Garden* in honor of Phyllis Wheatley's works which are the garden in which many generations of African-American women poets have blossomed."⁷³

⁶⁹ Rosephanye Powell, "Biography," *Rosephanye Powell: Composer, Educator, Performer, Conductor*, 2019, accessed December 26, 2019, <http://rosephanyepowell.com/biography/>.

⁷⁰ Powell, "Biography."

⁷¹ Rosephanye Powell, "Art Songs," *Rosephanye Powell: Composer, Educator, Performer, Conductor*, 2019, accessed December 26, 2019, <http://rosephanyepowell.com/compositions/publishers/>.

⁷² Powell, "Art Songs."

⁷³ Powell, "Art Songs."

Written in 2015, the beautiful songs in *Miss Wheatley's Garden* are tonal, with lovely phrasing. They would be an excellent addition to an undergraduate's repertoire list, as they are expressive and within a comfortable range for any soprano. The melodic lines are often stepwise or with small leaps. Powell keeps the tessitura of these songs in the middle voice and the phrases short, making them accessible to beginning singers. *I Want to Die While You Love Me* uses poetry by Georgia Douglass Johnson, who was a member of the Harlem Renaissance movement and wrote four collections of poetry, a newspaper column, and plays. The range is E4–A5, with the tessitura lying between G#4–C#5, which should be comfortable for most young sopranos. In triple meter, the maximum phrase length is three measures, allowing the soprano to think about breath control without worry. The single A5 is at the end of the piece on a fermata. Because it is preceded by a brief eighth-note pick up on E5, it allows the singer enough preparation to comfortably sing into the upper register with ease.

Powell sets poetry by Baltimore poet Frances Ellen Watkins Harper for *Songs for the People*. Harper was a journalist, fiction writer, poet, and activist. In 4/4 time, the music has a stirring quality that matches the call to unity in the poetry. With a range of F#4–G5 and a tessitura of F#4–D#5, this is also easily accessible to a young soprano. Phrase length in this song is typically two measures long, allowing the singer to feel comfortable with the breath. The text and music from the opening repeats at the end of the piece, but up a half-step, allowing the soprano to end on G5 as she finishes her call to peace and unity.

Cherise Leiter

Born in Florida, Cherise Leiter (b. 1972) is currently Associate Professor at Metropolitan State College of Denver, where she teaches music theory and composition. An active composer whose output includes works for choir, piano, voice, carillon, orchestra, and assorted chamber ensembles, she was Colorado State Music Teachers Association's 2004 commissioned composer. Leiter was a finalist in the Ithaca College 25th Annual Choral Composition Contest and in the Outside the Bach's Competition, and she won the Braintree/Nashoba Valley Chorale choral competition and the Ars Nova Composition Competition. Her cycle *Love Letters from a War* was a vocal winner in the Boston Metro Opera call and also received an Honorable Mention from the 2010 NATS competition.⁷⁴ She has been a featured composer at the New Music Symposium in Colorado Springs, Aspen Composer's Conference, the Women Composers Festival of Hartford, the Atlantic Center for the Arts, Brush Creek Foundation for the Arts, among others.⁷⁵ With all of these accolades, it is a wonder that her work is not better known.

Prelude is a love song to words and text. Leiter's mother was a librarian and she always loved books and words, which explains why Josephine Preston Peabody's poem about words spoke deeply to the composer.⁷⁶ The comparison of words and birds figures prominently in the text as the writer wishes the words would stay on her fingers and sing like a bird. The extended harmonies and occasional blue notes are a

⁷⁴ Cherise D. Leiter, "Biography," *Cherise D. Leiter, Composer*, 2012, accessed March 17, 2020, <https://www.cherisedleiter.com/resume>.

⁷⁵ Leiter, "Biography."

⁷⁶ Cherise D. Leiter, email to the author, January 15, 2020.

nod to the ballads found in the Great American Songbook. There is also a brief quote in the piano at the very end from the hymn “How Can I Keep from Singing.”⁷⁷

Prelude was created alongside another female composer colleague, Leanna Kirchoff, who set the same text. The two composers composed the songs as an experiment where they were in matching rooms and had one day to set the text. In between composing sessions, they did not speak about their work. Once the songs were composed, they recorded them with the same soprano and noted the similarities and differences. They both chose to feature the word “words” prominently, repeating it more often than found in the original poem. When they encountered differences in the settings, the composers found that these were hallmarks of their personal compositional styles. These and other findings were presented at the Music By Women conference in Columbus, Mississippi in 2018.⁷⁸

Although a short song, there are a few tricky moments for a singer who has trouble maintaining pitch while in dissonance with the bass line, or who is uncomfortable with her low register. Because of its inspiration from the Great American Songbook, the performance of *Prelude* is strengthened if the performer has some experience with jazz or blues singing.

Jocelyn Hagen

Jocelyn Hagen (b. 1980) is a pioneer in the field of composition, pushing the expectations of musicians and audiences with large-scale multimedia works, electro-

⁷⁷ Cherise D. Leiter, email to the author, January 15, 2020.

⁷⁸ Cherise D. Leiter, email to the author, January 15, 2020.

acoustic music, dance, opera, and publishing. The majority of her compositions are for the voice. Her melodic music is texturally complex, rich in color and deeply heartfelt.⁷⁹ Hagen describes her process of composing for choir, orchestra, and film simultaneously in a Tedx Talk given at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, available on YouTube. *Test Pilot*, her dance-opera collaboration with choreographer Penelope Freeh, received the 2017 American Prize in the musical theater/opera division as well as a Sage Award for “Outstanding Design.” Hagen was a student of Judith Lang Zaimont, another well-known American female composer.⁸⁰ She holds degrees in theory, composition, and vocal music education from St. Olaf College and a master’s degree in composition from the University of Minnesota.⁸¹ Her compositions are well-known by singers for their beautiful melodies.

Kiss was commissioned by a consortium of twenty sopranos in 2013. As Eileen Stempel notes, Hagen wanted to create a model to facilitate the commissioning of new works by singers.⁸² By finding a group of singers instead of a single person, more singers are able to afford to commission a new work. Stempel describes *Kiss* as “...melodically driven, boldly beautiful, intricately crafted and intimate, and Hagen’s gift of seamlessly melding the voice with the piano is richly evidenced in this cycle.”⁸³ The text and music in this cycle is incredibly sensuous. Hagen says “...I don’t think there is enough sexy music written by women.”⁸⁴

⁷⁹ Jocelyn Hagen, “about,” *Jocelyn Hagen: composer. performer*, 2020, accessed March 17, 2020, <https://www.jocelynhagen.com/about/>.

⁸⁰ Hagen, “about.”

⁸¹ Eileen Stempel, “Commissioning Consortium: Jocelyn Hagen’s Song Cycle *Kiss*,” *Journal of Singing* vol 73, no. 3, (January/February 2017): 251.

⁸² Stempel, “Hagen’s Song Cycle *Kiss*,” 251.

⁸³ Stempel, “Hagen’s Song Cycle *Kiss*,” 252.

⁸⁴ Jocelyn Hagen, email to the author, January 22, 2020.

Using the text of Julia Klatt Singer, *In the Dreamed of Places* creates an atmosphere of floating through another world. The piano part contributes to this quality with constantly moving eighth notes in compound meter. The range is C4–A5 with a tessitura of F4–F5. The melody moves in step wise motion, punctuated by large leaps. Another musical difficulty comes when the singer is singing in subdivisions of two over the piano’s subdivisions in three. This requires the soprano to have a beautiful legato that does not emphasize these rhythmic differences.

The overt sexiness of *How to Bone a Fish* needs a soprano who is unafraid of sharing her sexuality with an audience. With a range from D4–A5, the melodic line is full of leaps. The text is syllabically set and like the previous piece, needs to have extra attention paid to legato singing so as not to become choppy. The piano part is rhythmically driven at the beginning, moving from constant eighth notes into triplets, which can help the singer continue moving her phrases forward. Beginning in measure 93, the piano plays only one chord per measure, so the singer must be fully in charge of the time and phrasing. Because of the challenges of legato, large leaps, and overt sexiness in the text, these songs are best performed by a soprano who is at least at the master’s level.

Juliana Hall

Juliana Hall (b. 1958) has been hailed as “one of our country’s most able and prolific art song composers” by the *Journal of Singing*.⁸⁵ She began formal

⁸⁵ New Music USA, “Juliana Hall,” NewMusic USA, accessed December 26, 2019, <https://www.newmusicusa.org/profile/composerjulianahall/>.

composition studies as a 26-year-old graduate student majoring in piano performance at the Yale School of Music and completed her master's degree in composition with Dominick Argento at the University of Minnesota. Hall's compositional focus has been on art song, and has been championed by many well-known singers, including Brian Asawa, Stephanie Blythe, Molly Fillmore, David Malis, Dawn Upshaw, and Kitty Whately. She received SongFest's 2017 Sorel Commission and was the Fall Island Vocal Arts Seminar's 2018 Guest Composer. Hall's music has been heard in some of the world's most prestigious concert halls, including, the Library of Congress, Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall, and Lincoln Center. Performances of her works at music festivals around the world include Norfolk Chamber Music, Ojai Music, Orvieto Musica, and Sparks & Wiry Cries' songSLAM Festivals, as well as the London Festival of American Music, Schumannfest Düsseldorf, and Tanglewood. Hall's music has been broadcast over the BBC and NPR radio networks.⁸⁶ With all of these accolades, it is not a surprise that Hall is a prominent name in American song composition.

Premiered as part of Calliope's Call's 2019 concert series by soprano Laura Dixon Strickling, Hall worked closely with librettist and soprano Caitlin Vincent when setting this monodrama for unaccompanied soprano. Vincent and Hall had been in contact since 2013, and in 2016, Vincent approached Hall to create a piece from her text.⁸⁷ Vincent already had an idea about how she would want the text to be presented. About her concept, Vincent wrote:

⁸⁶ Juliana Hall, personal correspondence with the author, January 15, 2020.

⁸⁷ Juliana Hall, Interview by Calliope's Call Team, Boston, April 2019, Calliope's Call, Accessed February 22, 2020, <https://mailchi.mp/94577e6e55a6/calliopes-calling-qa-with-composer-juliana-hall-part-one>.

The piece is titled 'Sentiment,' and I initially conceived it for female voice and piano. The general premise is emotions but also about the version of ourselves we try to present to the world. Each song leads into the next: giddy happiness followed by the inevitable plunge into depression, then anger and embarrassment for revealing too much to the audience, remorse for lashing out, and finally a plea for the world to see only the singer's 'best' side.⁸⁸

As Hall worked on the piece, she decided that the drama would be better delivered if the work was for soprano alone.⁸⁹ Each movement is labeled *attacca* at the end, requiring the soprano to move directly into the next movement so that the emotional content remains unbroken.

In order to maintain the drama, Hall instructs that this piece should always be performed from memory. This is quite difficult, given that there are no collaborating instruments and the work is musically difficult. Although a soprano does not need perfect pitch to sing this monodrama, a strong sense of relative pitch and comfort with intervallic relationships is important. With a range spanning B3-C#6, the singer will be required to sing many tritones and leaps of more than an octave. Within a phrase, she might span an octave and a fifth. The first two movements, *Prologue* and *Joy*, are light and fun as the singer welcomes the audience and shares her happiness at being together. The soprano takes a dark turn with *Sorrow* and *Anger* as she accuses the audience of judging her. These two movements are the most difficult with each phrase in a seemingly different tonality. Hall uses leaps of tritones and sevenths often in these two movements. In *Remorse*, the singer apologizes for her outburst and in the *Epilogue* she asks that people only see her best features. With difficult intervals, ever-

⁸⁸ Hall, Interview.

⁸⁹ Hall, Interview.

evolving emotional content, and by virtue of having no collaborating instruments, this piece is best sung by a professional singer with a strong sense of pitch and dramatic prowess.

Dale Trumbore

Dale Trumbore (b. 1987) is a Los Angeles-based composer and writer whose music has been praised by *The New York Times* for its “soaring melodies and beguiling harmonies.”⁹⁰ Trumbore's compositions have been performed by ensembles including the American Contemporary Music Ensemble (ACME), Los Angeles Master Chorale, Los Angeles Children's Chorus, Pacific Chorale, Pasadena Symphony, and VocalEssence. Choral Arts Initiative’s debut album of her choral works, *How to Go On*, debuted at #6 on Billboard’s Traditional Classical Chart.⁹¹ For a composer in her 30s, Trumbore has shown that she is already a force with which to be reckoned in the classical music world. Trumbore holds a dual degree in Music Composition and English from the University of Maryland and a Master of Music degree in Composition from the University of Southern California.⁹² Because of her connection to the University of Maryland, it was important that her work be included in this dissertation.

As a composer who works frequently with words, Trumbore sets poems, prose, and other text by living writers to music. She has written extensively about working through creative blocks and establishing a career in music in essays for

⁹⁰ Dale Trumbore, “About,” *daletrumbore*, 2019, accessed February 22, 2020, <https://www.daletrumbore.com/about>.

⁹¹ Trumbore, “About,”

⁹² Trumbore, “About.”

21CM, *Cantate Magazine*, the Center for New Music, and NewMusicBox. Her first book, *Staying Composed: Overcoming Anxiety and Self-Doubt Within a Creative Life*, was released in 2019.⁹³ Trumbore's work in this area has helped many young musicians as they navigate the complexities of a life in music.

Sunbeam Blues was written for Trumbore's senior composition recital at the University of Maryland. Poet Julie Kane is her aunt and godmother.⁹⁴ This blues-inspired piece would work well for an undergraduate who has some experience in nonclassical styles such as the blues or jazz because the melody consistently uses syncopated rhythms. The composer also asks the singer to swing the eighth notes. With a range from D4–Bb, *Sunbeam Blues* stays mostly between F4–D5. There is only one moment in measure 36 where the voice jumps to the high Bb. This piece is straightforward to sing but does require stylistic knowledge of the blues to make a performance successful.

Melissa Dunphy

Born and raised in Australia, Melissa Dunphy (b. 1980) immigrated to the United States in 2003 and has since become an award-winning and acclaimed composer specializing in vocal, political, and theatrical music. Her career was launched by her large-scale choral work, *Gonzales Cantata*, which was featured in *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Atlantic*, *Harper's Magazine*, *National Review*, *Comedy Central*, and on MSNBC's *The Rachel Maddow Show*, where host

⁹³ Dale Trumbore, *Staying Composed: Overcoming Anxiety and Self-Doubt Within a Creative Life*, Independently Published, 2019.

⁹⁴ Dale Trumbore, personal correspondence with the author, January 16, 2020.

Rachel Maddow called it "the coolest thing you've ever seen on this show."⁹⁵ It is interesting to see a classical composer getting national recognition on news programs and magazine's that are not music-related. Dunphy's first song cycle, *Tesla's Pigeon*, won first place in the 2012 NATS Art Song Composition Award, and has been recognized with a Spirit of Tesla award by the Tesla Science Foundation.⁹⁶ Dunphy studied at the University of Pennsylvania and West Chester University and currently teaches composition at Rutgers University. She is not only recognized as a composer, but also as an actress and singer, which explains her affinity for writing for the voice.

Dunphy was commissioned by Dr. Carol Lines at McNeese University to write three songs to be premiered by three senior sopranos in 2018, which became *Four Poems of Nikita Gill*. Each of the four songs tells a different story about some kind of recovery. Dunphy says "I really admire the poetry of Nikita Gill, a British-Indian writer who got her start online but has since published several collections of poetry, and I think her poems are especially empowering and validating for women."⁹⁷ *Four Poems of Nikita Gill* are accessible for undergraduate singers and professionals alike, and the modern texts are especially appealing for women.

The second movement, *From the Ashes She Became*, equates a woman to a phoenix rising from the ashes: she was water that became desert that turned into a fire. The vocal range is C#4-A5, but the vocal line lies primarily between G#4-D5, making it comfortable for most sopranos. Some of the phrases are four measures long

⁹⁵ Melissa Dunphy, "About," *Melissa Dunphy: Composer*, Mormolyke Press, accessed February 22, 2020, <http://www.melissadunphy.com/about.php>.

⁹⁶ Dunphy, "About."

⁹⁷ Melissa Dunphy, personal correspondence with the author, January 16, 2020.

but could easily be divided into two shorter phrases for a less-experienced singer. The repeated, wide-spaced chords in the piano that start the piece serve as a unifying device and creates a feeling of strength. *You Have Become a Forest* is the third movement with another empowering theme: pride in the person you have become. The range is much wider in this piece, stretching from C#4–C#6, although the C#6 can alternatively be sung as an A5. The tessitura is also higher, sitting between A4–E5, making this more appropriate for a high soprano.

Because Dunphy wrote *Four Poems of Nikita Gill* for three different undergraduate sopranos, this cycle of songs could be an interesting selection for a joint recital by three sopranos. The final movement, *Me, Too*, is for soprano trio, which allows all three singers to sing together.

Clarice Assad

A powerful communicator renowned for her musical scope and versatility, Brazilian-American Clarice Assad (b. 1978) is a significant artistic voice in the classical, world music, pop and jazz genres, and is renowned for her evocative colors, rich textures, and diverse stylistic range.⁹⁸ She comes from a Brazilian musical dynasty: her father, uncle, and aunt are all famous guitarists and composers. Assad studied at Berklee College of Music, Roosevelt University, and University of Michigan. Her first major commission was a violin concerto for violinist Nadja Solerno-Sonnenberg in 2004. A prolific Grammy nominated composer with over 70

⁹⁸ Clarice Assad, "About Clarice Assad," *Clarice Assad*, 2020, accessed December 26, 2019, <https://clariceassad.com/clarice/>.

works to her credit, her work has been commissioned by internationally renowned organizations, festivals and artists. She is known as a pianist and inventive vocalist. Her award-winning Voxploration Series on music education, creation, songwriting, and improvisation has been presented throughout the United States, Brazil, Europe and the Middle East.⁹⁹ Assad is an exciting composer whose repertoire is known in nonclassical genres and deserves the opportunity to be explored by classical singers.

Written in 2008, *Confessions* is a song cycle that combines cabaret and musical theater with hints of jazz and South American music.¹⁰⁰ Originally written for soprano and piano trio, there is also a version for soprano and piano only. The songs deal with issues experienced by many women in our modern-day society like binge eating and the quest for eternal beauty. About *Confessions*, Assad writes the following:

The songs depict a character who exposes her deepest, most hidden emotions and feelings to the world. ‘Turn back the clock’ is a funny yet frustrated reaction to the idea that women should look perfect, young, and thin at all costs. Written in the French impressionist style, ‘What will they think’ deals with deep insecurity, followed by a dream sequence in which the character fantasizes she is someone else but awakes to the reality of her world. ‘Fixation’ is a comical account of guilty pleasures and lack of self-control.¹⁰¹

With modern texts by Catherine Maxymuk, Naomi Major, and Alissa McLaughlin, these words resonate with the twenty-first century woman. Because of the humorous bent and contemporary feel, this set of songs makes an excellent ending to a recital. *Turn Back the Clock*, the singer bemoans the emphasis of modern society

⁹⁹ Clarice Assad, “About Clarice Assad,” *Clarice Assad*, 2020, accessed December 26, 2019, <https://clariceassad.com/clarice/>.

¹⁰⁰ Clarice Assad, “Confessions,” *Clarice Assad*, 2020, accessed March 17, 2020, <https://clariceassad.com/confessions/>.

¹⁰¹ Assad, “Confessions.”

on remaining young and thin as a woman ages. Assad asks for swing in the rhythm and regularly uses syncopation in the melody, giving the song a jazz feel. She also incorporates boogie woogie in the piano. The range is F#4–Bb5, but the tessitura stays between G4–G5. Wondering what others are thinking is the theme of *What Will They Think*. One of the challenges in this song is singing triplets while the piano is playing in a duple subdivision. Another is the extended section of mixed meter. The final song, *Fixation*, is a tango that explores the sopranos need for ice cream. Although the range is E4–B5, the song lies primarily between E4–E5, making it sometimes difficult for a soprano to cut through the thick texture in the piano. The humorous text and the flair in the style make this an exciting ending to a recital.

One of the biggest challenges of this cycle is balance. The piano reduction version is especially thick while the voice is often in a middle to low register, betraying Assad's affinity for nonclassical styles that use a microphone. The reduction is also quite difficult, which requires a pianist with excellent technique. Because of the humorous nature and influence of nonclassical genres, the singer should have experience with nonclassical styles as well as classical singing, and should be extremely expressive.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

The inclusion of American women composers on concert programs is certainly not a new concept; yet even in the twenty-first century, one cannot find equality between the sexes in classical programming. Hollywood composer Maria Newman comes from a family of famous movie composers, including her father, Alfred Newman. In an interview, she said, “I was also worried that a woman would not be taken seriously as a composer.”¹⁰² She decided to compose under a pseudonym, M. Louis Parker, a name which was inspired by her great-grandmother. Only after her compositions became popular and people started asking questions about “M. Louis Parker” did she begin to use her real name. This is reminiscent of Fanny Mendelssohn-Hensel in the nineteenth century, who felt she needed to publish under her brother’s name.

When women are featured on classical programs, it is typically on a concert program that features all women. Although this kind of programming is important, these concerts run the risk of tokenism. Celebrating women composers is important, but equality cannot happen when concerts showcase women composers as a rarity. Every recital and concert should be balanced and include music by women.

Creating gender equity in classical music programming is a monumental task that no one person can undertake alone. It will take the work of many to diversify

¹⁰² Maria Newman as quoted in Pam Linn, “Composing a Life in Serious Music,” *The Malibu Times*, January 5, 2005.

standard repertoire, and fortunately, musicians are up to the challenge. The Institute for Composer Diversity, International Alliance of Women in Music, and Women In Music are three organizations that are committed to the work of gender equity in music. Festivals and conferences like those organized by the Boulanger Initiative, Music by Women Festival, Darkwater Women in Music, Women Composers Festival of Hartford, and Women in Music: A Powerful Force at Ball State University are celebrating music by women. One of the challenges they face is that most of these events happen in March to coincide with Women's History Month. This creates difficulty for musicians with an interest in this topic because they often overlap with each other. Future conferences, festivals, and events should consider dates throughout the calendar year so that music by women becomes a part of the regular fabric of musical life. Although having a month dedicated to equity for women is important, equality cannot truly happen until there are performances of women composers throughout the year.

Voice teachers are in a unique position to diversify the standard canon. By assigning music by women composers to students, young singers learn from the beginning that this music is worthy of being performed. Teaching future professionals to look at music beyond what has been traditionally learned will help to expand the standard repertoire. I am happy to do my part by performing music by women and assigning their songs to my students. I hope that all readers will feel inspired to do the same.

Appendix A



PRESENTS

See It to Be It
Our Foremothers

Jennifer Piazza-Pick, Soprano

Ying-Shan Su, Piano

SEPTEMBER 28, 2019, 8:00PM

GILDENHORN RECITAL HALL

Our Foremothers

Ecstasy
The Lotos Isles
Empress of Night

Amy Beach
(1867-1944)

Bewilderment
Hold Fast to Dream
Sympathy

Florence Price
(1887-1953)

Intermission

Little Elegy
When I Died in Berners Street
(A Strange Story)

Mary Howe
(1882-1964)

Songs of the Seasons
 Young Love in Spring
 Poème d'Automne
 Winter Moon
 Summer Storm

Margaret Bonds
(1913-1972)

Program Notes and Texts

The title of these recitals comes from a quote by musical theater composer Jeanine Tesori, who said in an interview: “For girls, you have to see it to be it.”¹⁰³ With this dissertation, I hope to inspire singers and teachers to program music by women composers, as well as to encourage more women to embrace their compositional gifts.

Amy Beach (1867-1944) Considered to be one of the first great female composers in the US, Amy Marcy Cheney was born in Henniker, NH. She was a musical prodigy with perfect pitch who studied piano, and became fluent in German and French. Beach began a concert career as a pianist and received excellent reviews. At age 18, she was a soloist with the Boston Symphony. Despite her success and promising career, she chose to retire from performance when she married Dr. Henry Harris Aubrey Beach in December of 1885, who encouraged her to compose instead of perform. She trained as a composer by studying the masters. She had many successes in large-scale genres, including the Boston Symphony’s performance of her *Gaelic Symphony* in 1896. After the deaths of her husband and mother, she undertook a concert tour of Germany, where many major European singers performed her songs. When Beach returned to the US, she encouraged many younger female composers like Mary Howe, who called her “Aunt Amy.” She co-founded the Society of Women Composers, and was also a leader in the Music Teachers National Association and the Music Educators National Conference. Beach was a member of the New York Composers Forum through the New Deal. She was such a popular composer in her lifetime that Amy Beach Clubs were founded throughout the country. Although her songs are often considered sentimental, she is known for writing beautiful melodies and challenging piano lines. She wrote songs in English, French, and German.

Ecstasy (text by Amy Beach; Op. 19, no. 2, written 1891)

Only to dream among the fading flowers,
Only to glide along the tranquil sea;
Ah dearest, dearest, have we not together
One long, bright day of love, so glad and free?

Only to rest through life, in storm and sunshine,
Safe in thy breast, where sorrow dare not fly;
Ah dearest, dearest, thus in sweetest rapture
With thee to live, with thee at last to die!

¹⁰³ Jeanine Tesori in Adam Hetrick, “For Girls, You Have to See It to Be It: The Historic and Powerful *Fun Home* Tony Acceptance Speeches You Didn’t See on TV,” *Playbill*, June 8, 2015. <https://www.playbill.com/article/for-girls-you-have-to-see-it-to-be-it-the-historic-and-powerful-fun-home-tony-acceptance-speeches-you-didnt-see-on-tv-com-350817>.

The Lotos Isles (text by Lord Alfred Tennyson; Op. 72, no. 2, written 1914)

There is sweet music here that softer falls
Than petals from sweet roses on the grass,
Or night-dews on still waters between walls
Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming pass;
Music that gentlier on the spirit lies,
Than tir'd eyelids upon tir'd eyes;
Music that brings sweet sleep down from the blissful skies.
Here are cool mosses deep,
And thro' the moss the ivies creep,
And in the stream the long-leaved flowers weep,
And from the craggy ledge the poppy hangs in sleep.

Empress of Night (text by Dr. H.H.A. Beach; Op. 2, no. 3, written 1891)

Out of the darkness,
Radiant with light,
Shineth her Brightness,
Empress of Night.

As granules of gold,
From her lofty height,
Or cataract bold
(Amazing sight!)

Falleth her jewels
On ev'ry side,
Lighting the joybells,
Of Christmastide.

Piercing the tree boughs
That wave in the breeze,
Painting their shadows
Among dead leaves;

Kissing the sea foam
That flies in the air,
When tossed from its home
In waves so fair;

Silv'ring all clouds
That darken her way,
As she lifts the shrouds,
Of breaking day.

Florence Price (1887-1953) American organist, pianist, lecturer, educator, and composer Florence Price studied with George Chadwick at the New England Conservatory. She was on a career track as a university teacher but gave it up when she married lawyer Thomas J. Price in 1912. After a series of racial incidents, the couple moved to Chicago, where she had further studies with Leo Sowersby. She became known as a pianist and organist, even soloing with the Chicago Symphony. She was the first African-American woman to have a work performed by a major symphony in Chicago in 1933. Price was also known as a teacher and was the teacher of Margaret Bonds.

As part of the Harlem Renaissance movement, she blended classical ideas from her study of European art music with the spirituals, blues, and jazz of her childhood. Price's songs have been performed by famous singers like Leontyne Price and Marian Anderson. Her setting of *My Soul's Been Anchored in the Lord* was performed by Anderson at the famous Lincoln Memorial concert of 1939. Today, her works are gaining more recognition after boxes of her manuscripts were found in a house in Chicago.

Bewilderment (text by Langston Hughes)

I ask you this:
Which way to go?
I ask you this:
Which sin to bear?
Which crown to put
Upon my hair?
I do not know,
Lord God,
I do not know.

Hold Fast to Dreams (text by Langston Hughes; written 1945)

Hold fast to dreams
For if dreams die
Life is a broken-winged bird
That cannot fly.

Hold fast to dreams
For when dreams go
Life is a barren field
Frozen with snow.

Sympathy (text by Paul Laurence Dunbar)

I know what the caged bird feels, alas!
When the sun is bright on the upland slopes;
When the wind stirs soft through the springing grass,
And the river flows like a stream of glass;
When the first bird sings and the first bud opes,

And the faint perfume from its chalice steals —
I know what the caged bird feels!

I know why the caged bird beats his wing
Till its blood is red on the cruel bars;
For he must fly back to his perch and cling
When he fain would be on the bough a-swing;
And a pain still throbs in the old, old scars
And they pulse again with a keener sting —
I know why he beats his wing!

I know why the caged bird sings, ah me,
When his wing is bruised and his bosom sore,—
When he beats his bars and he would be free;
It is not a carol of joy or glee,
But a prayer that he sends from his heart's deep core,
But a plea, that upward to Heaven he flings —
I know why the caged bird sings!

Mary Howe (1882-1964) Composer and pianist Mary Howe lived most of her life in Washington, D.C. She had some studies at the Peabody Conservatory, but didn't initially finish her degree. As a pianist, she gave concerts with the Cleveland Symphony, the National Symphony, and even went on a tour of Russia. In 1912, she married her brother's law partner, Walter Bruce Howe. The two had three children, which is when she turned her focus more toward composition. Mary Howe returned to the Peabody Conservatory to study composition and at age 40, graduated with a degree in composition. She spent summers at the MacDowell Colony after encouragement from Amy Beach. After being approached by Hans Kindler, she helped raise \$40,000 to start the National Symphony, and she remained a longtime board member.

Howe wrote in different styles and languages, including English, French, German, and Spanish. She was known for her ability to set text and her text choices, which came from her interest in well-known contemporary writers and big literary figures. Howe and poet Elinor Wylie knew each other as young teens in Washington, D.C., and likely crossed paths as adults at the MacDowell Colony. Written in 1934 and 1936, *Little Elegy* and *When I Died in Berners Street* capture Howe's affinity for Wylie's work. While the first song is compressed and to the point, the second has a harmonic language that one often finds in music of the 21st century.

Little Elegy (text by Elinor Wylie; written 1934)

Withouten you
No rose can grow;
No leaf be green
If never seen
Your sweetest face;
No bird have grace

Or power to sing;
Or anything
Be kind, or fair,
And you nowhere.

When I Died in Berners Street (A Strange Story)
(text by Elinor Wylie; written 1936)

When I died in Berners Street
I remember well
That I had lights at head and feet
And a passing bell.

[But] when I died in Houndsditch
There came to lay me out
A washerwoman and a witch;
The rats ran about.

When I died in Holburn
In an old house and tall
I know the tapestry was torn
And hanging from the wall.

When I died in Marylebone
I was saying my prayers;
There I died all alone
Up four flights of stairs.
[But] when I died near Lincoln's Inn
The small gold I had
Surrounded me with kith and kin;
I died stark mad.

When I died in Bloomsbury
In the bend of your arm,
At the end I died merry
And comforted and warm.

Margaret Bonds (1913-1972) Born in Chicago, Margaret Bonds' mother had a home that welcomed African-American artists, composers, and writers, including her high school private music teacher, Florence Price. After her education at Northwestern University, she spent time writing music for the Glenn Miller Orchestra. Her compositions were performed by jazz greats like Woody Herman and Louis Armstrong. In 1933, she was the first African-American soloist with the Chicago Symphony, playing Price's Piano Concerto at the World's Fair. Although she married Lawrence Richardson in New York in 1940, she kept her mother's maiden name "Bonds" for her entire life.

The majority of Bonds' work is vocal music. One can hear the influence of jazz and spirituals, as well as the influence of cultural themes of the time. One of her most lasting collaborations was with poet Langston Hughes. *Songs of the Seasons* was not originally written as a set of songs. Bonds wrote *Poème d'Automne* in 1934 and *Winter Moon* in 1936. When tenor Lawrence Watson commissioned her to write a song cycle in 1955, she wrote the other two songs. Elements of jazz are particularly noteworthy in this cycle. One can hear syncopation, modal melodies, blues inflections, and polyrhythms between the voice and the piano. I am grateful to Dr. Louise Toppin for the use of her scores for this song cycle.

Songs of the Seasons (text by Langston Hughes)

Young Love in Spring (written 1955)

When the March winds roar like a lion,
And the last little snowflakes drift down
From a half dreary, half starry April sky,
And then lovely May rolls around,
And I walk with you down a country lane,
We know that spring has come again.

When the rising sun laughs at the dawn,
And the scent of the soil's warm and sweet,
And the little green sprouts peep out of the Earth
And grow upward, the sunshine to greet.
And we find a violet along the way,
We know that spring has come to stay.
Spring has come our way.

When I look at you in the haze,
Of the twilight's last lingering glow,
From the half dusky, half starry evening sky,
And sweet scented winds gently blow,
And our dreams, like birds heading homeward soar,
We know that spring has come once more.

Poème d'Automne (written 1934)

The autumn leaves
Are too heavy with color.
The slender trees
On the Vulcan Road
Are dressed in scarlet and gold
Like young courtesans
Waiting for their lovers.
But soon
The winter winds
Will strip their bodies bare
And then

The sharp, sleet-stung
Caresses of cold
Will be their only
Love.

Winter Moon (written 1936)

How thin and sharp is the moon tonight!
How thin and sharp and ghostly white
Is the slim curved crook of the moon tonight!

Summer Storm (written 1955)

Thunder, July thunder,
And the wonder of lightning in the sky.
And a sudden gale that shakes the blossoms down
In perfumed splendor to the grassy ground.

Thunder, July thunder,
And the wonder in my heart that I have found you,
Wonderful you beneath the blossoms gay,
In the perfumed splendor of a July day.

With the wonder of summer lightning in the sky,
And a sudden gale that shakes the blossoms down,
Like confetti in your hair, like confetti on the ground,
perfumed confetti drifting down
On the sweet and wonderful summer earth.

There pillowed on the grass in the orchard shade
I kissed you and kissed you and kissed you
Till a sudden gale shook the blossoms down,
confetti in your hair, confetti on the ground,
And then the soft, sweet rain came down.

We run down the road in the dust of July,
We are happy for the rain, clean and cool from on high,
In the dust, hand in hand, in the dust of July,
Hand in hand, you and I,
You and I, in July.

Thunder, July thunder,
in my heart, the wonder of love.
Thunder, wonder in our eyes.
The wonder of being in love, we two.
The wonder of being in love
With you

Appendix B



PRESENTS

See It to Be It
Evolving

Jennifer Piazza-Pick, Soprano

Ying-Shan Su, Piano

NOVEMBER 16, 2019, 5:00PM

GILDENHORN RECITAL HALL

Evolving

We Two Snow Towards Evening Silent Noon	Elinor Remick Warren (1900-1991)
I Am in Doubt Lyric for Truelove	Undine Smith Moore (1904-1989)
The Cliff's Edge: Songs of a Psychotic 1. Schizophrenia 2. Hebephrenia 3. Panic 4. Breakdown 5. Asylum	Margaret Garwood (1927-2015)
Nobody Knows the Trouble I See	Jacqueline Hairston (b. 1938)

Intermission

Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer's Day? One Perfect Rose	Emma Lou Diemer (b. 1927)
Margaret Songs 1. Bright Rails 2. So Little 3. Beneath the Hawthorne Tree	Libby Larsen (b. 1950)
Days and Nights 1. Along with Me 2. They Might Not Need Me 3. The Night Has a Thousand Eyes 4. Over the Fence 5. Song 6. Wild Nights	Lori Laitman (b. 1955)

Program Notes and Texts

The title of these recitals comes from a quote by musical theater composer Jeanine Tesori, who said in an interview: “For girls, you have to see it to be it.”¹⁰⁴ With this dissertation, I hope to inspire singers and teachers to program music by women composers, as well as to encourage more women to embrace their compositional gifts.

American composer and pianist **Elinor Remick Warren** (1900-1991) spent most of her life in Los Angeles. She had private study with Arnold Schönberg and Nadia Boulanger and was encouraged in her early works by George Enescu. Her first publicly published composition was *A Song of June* in 1918. Because of her studies in New York with Frank LaForge, she toured the US as a pianist, accompanying singers like Lawrence Tibbett, Lucrezia Borgi, Kirsten Flagstad, and Eileen Farrell. Named Woman of the Year in Music in 1955 by the *LA Times*, her international reputation as a composer was solidified when the Los Angeles Philharmonic premiered *The Legend of King Arthur*. Her works are characterized by the highly expressive and emotional tonality of 19th century Romanticism, and beauty of nature is a common theme. Christine Ammer describes her as “the only woman among the group of prominent American neo-classicists that includes Howard Hanson, Samuel Barber, and Gian Carlo Menotti.”¹⁰⁵ She wrote over 200 works for orchestra, chorus, voice, piano, and chamber ensemble. Warren remained active as a musician and composer until her death in 1991. In 2000, the Elinor Remick Warren Society and the Library of Congress held a Centenary Celebration for her with lectures, symposiums, and recitals, including a master class in accompanying by pianist Craig Rutenberg at the University of Maryland.

We Two (1946, text by Walt Whitman)

Shine! Shine! Shine!
Pour down your warmth, great sun!
While we bask — we two together.
Two together!
Winds blow South or winds blow North,
Day come white, or night come black,
Home or rivers and mountains from home,
Singing all [the] time, minding no time,
While we two keep together.

¹⁰⁴ Jeanine Tesori in Adam Hetrick, “For Girls, You Have to See It to Be It: The Historic and Powerful *Fun Home* Tony Acceptance Speeches You Didn’t See on TV,” *Playbill*, June 8, 2015. <https://www.playbill.com/article/for-girls-you-have-to-see-it-to-be-it-the-historic-and-powerful-fun-home-tony-acceptance-speeches-you-didnt-see-on-tv-com-350817>.

¹⁰⁵ Christine Ammer, *Unsung: A History of Women in American Music*, Century Ed. (edited, Portland, OR: Amadeus, 2001), 163.

Snow Towards Evening (1937, text by Melville Henry Cane)

Suddenly the sky turned gray,
The day,
Which had been bitter and chill,
Grew soft and still.
Quietly
From some invisible blossoming tree
Millions of petals cool and white
Drifted and blew,
Lifted and flew,
Fell with the falling night.

Silent Noon (1928, text by Dante Gabriel Rossetti)

Your hands lie open in the long fresh grass,—
The finger-points look through like rosy blooms:
Your eyes smile peace. The pasture gleams and glooms
'Neath billowing skies that scatter and amass.
All round our nest, far as the eye can pass,
Are golden kingcup fields with silver edge
[Where the cow-parsley skirts the hawthorn-hedge.]
'Tis visible silence, still as the hour-glass.

Deep in the sun-searched growths the dragon-fly
Hangs like a blue thread loosened from the sky:—
So this wing'd hour is dropt to us from above.
Oh! clasp we to our hearts, for deathless dower,
This close-companioned inarticulate hour
When twofold silence was the song of love.

Born in Virginia, **Undine Smith Moore** (1904-1989) lived most of her life in Petersburg, VA. A graduate of Fisk University and Columbia University Teacher's College, she devoted more than 40 years of her life to teaching at Virginia State University in Petersburg, VA, where she co-founded and co-directed the university's Black Music Center. Known as the Dean of Black Women Composers, she described herself as "a teacher who composes, not simply a composer who teaches."¹⁰⁶ Her music is highly influenced by Romanticism and spirituals, and her most well-known works are for choir and vocal solo. Moore's *Scenes from the Life of a Martyr* on the life of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was a nominee for the Pulitzer Prize in 1982. In 2017, a historical marker to her was dedicated in Petersburg. These two songs were written in 1975 for the senior recital of Carolyn Kizzie at Virginia State College.

¹⁰⁶ Kayla Hill, "Undine Smith Moore," accessed October 25, 2019, <https://songofamerica.net/composer/moore-undine-smith/>.

I Am in Doubt (1975, text by Florence Hynes Willeté)

I'll love you until stars fall.
Can it be so sure, so lasting as my heart demands
of one whose slightest touch upon my hands
is like the wind inside an aspen tree?
I am in doubt of this frail thing,
I hold so sworn to constancy,
And this is why, why,
Too often I have watched a burnt blue sky
Where slipping stars spilled scarlet
and grew cold.

Lyric for Truelove (1975, text by Florence Hynes Willeté)

True love! True love, arise for our trysting.
A young-scented wind hastens by to remind us,
The season is on us, the hour is right.
Oh, do you remember an April behind us,
Where dogwood twined gentle and white?
Your voice was a singing bird caught in the branches,
Your hair a bright river that curved as it fell.
And silky your eyelids were, cool as the blossoms,
Your mouth for my thirst was a well.
True love! True love, arise for our trysting.
Leave your throat bare and your long hair undone.
We will cling to each other where wild boughs are misting
And shake out our dreams in the sun!

Margaret Garwood (1927-2015) is best known for her opera *The Scarlet Letter*, which premiered in Philadelphia in 2010. She taught piano for many years, but didn't start composing until 1960, at the age of 33. Her first compositions were songs, including a cycle of poems by e. e. cummings entitled *lovesongs*, which was performed at Carnegie Hall in 1964. Garwood was the recipient of three grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and five fellowships from the MacDowell Colony, where she was named a Norton Stevens Fellow. She received awards from the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (ASCAP), the American Music Center, and the National Federation of Music Clubs. Her music has been described as "lyrical and accessible."

The texts for *The Cliff's Edge: Songs of a Psychotic* were taken from a volume of poetry of the same name by Eithne Tabor, a woman who was committed to a mental hospital at age 18. Garwood got permission from the publisher to set the poetry but didn't meet Tabor until 1978. At that time, Tabor was in a Halfway House connected to a psychiatric hospital in Washington, where Garwood was able to play these songs for her.

The Cliff's Edge: Songs of a Psychotic (1970, text by Eithne Tabor)

Schizophrenia (O thou twin blossoming rose!)

O thou twin blossoming rose!
What seeds of the unreal produced thee?
And what the fatal germ, sending thy roots,
Thy reaching rambling stem on the strange, twisted path
Of this, thy life?
Aye, 'mongst thine interfolded petals, 'ere they had burst to bloom,
Aye, 'mongst thine interfolded petals, the golden heart
Already lay blasted.
Before the sun had crimson'd thee
thou had'st born not a lovely flower
but a thorn.

Hebephrenia (The child in the sunlight dancing)

The child in the sunlight dancing,
Plays with the tenuous beams
Life with stern step advancing
Breaks not her web of dreams.
Laughter, a silver fountain,
Leaps with her to the light,
Oh, child of the mist-veiled mountain,
Know you not it is night?

Loneliness (And is there anyone at all?)

And is there anyone at all?
I am knocking at the oaken door...
And will it open, open never no more.
I am calling to you don't you hear?
I am calling and is there anyone near?
And does this empty silence does it have to be
And is there no one there at all to answer me?
I do not know the road
I fear to fall
And is there anyone at all?

Breakdown (This is how it starts)

This is how it starts...
Something you knew or once had known—
Some beast deep-kenneled in your soul
Bays at the moon—
Leaps the full length of its chain
And falls back beaten.
The thing is done.
You carry on.

This is how it goes on...
The struggle waxes
Till night and day are filled
With that wild, hideous howling
And control is slipping, is nearly gone
Still, you go on.

This is how it ends...
The weak link snaps at last.
The wild thing freed
Leaps at your guardless throat.
This is how it ends,
You wake up beating at a padlocked door.
There is no more.

Asylum (And with what silence)

And with what silence and what song
And with what tears and with what laughter
And what hopes and with what fears
And with what labour
Not of hands but broken hearts
And with what woundings
By what arrow and by what darts
By what grey banks and swampy shallows
By what streams deep running dark-depted
Were you built
Prison of lost dreams.

Pianist, composer, and arranger **Jacqueline Hairston** (b. 1938) studied at the Juilliard School of Music, Howard University, and Columbia University. She is the composer/arranger of several spirituals for Kathleen Battle's Underground Railroad concerts and has also arranged spirituals for Denyce Graves. Hairston's works have been recorded by the London Symphony and the Columbia Symphony Orchestras. A prolific educator, she has taught at Oakland 's New School for the Arts and the University of California, Berkeley's Young Musicians' Program. The dedication for this spiritual is "Expressly for Jennifer Cable," who is Coordinator of Vocal Studies at the University of Richmond.

Nobody Knows the Trouble I See Lord

Nobody knows the trouble I see Lord,
Nobody knows the trouble I see.
Nobody knows the trouble I see Lord.
Nobody knows but Jesus.

Brother will-a you pray for me;
Sisters will you pray for me;
Mothers will you pray for me;
And help me to drive ole Satan away.

Blessed is the King of Hosts
Who comes in the name of the Lord.
He'll bring Peace and Glory
And help me to drive ole Satan away.
Oh Good Glory Hallelujah!

Keyboardist, educator, and composer **Emma Lou Diemer** (b. 1927) has written works for orchestra, chamber ensemble, keyboard, choir, and solo voice for schools, churches, and professional organizations. Diemer is a graduate of the Eastman School of Music and Yale University, where she studied with Paul Hindemith. She was composer-in-residence in the Arlington, VA schools under the Ford Foundation Young Composers Project, and was on the faculty of the University of Maryland where she taught composition and theory from 1965-70. After moving to the west coast to teach composition and theory at the University of California, Santa Barbara, she was instrumental in founding the electronic/computer music program there. Diemer has maintained an active career as a keyboardist, having given concerts at Washington National Cathedral, St. Mary's Cathedral and Grace Cathedral in San Francisco, and Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels in Los Angeles.

Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer's Day? (1972, text Shakespeare)

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate.
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date.
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimmed;
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance, or nature's changing course, untrimmed;
But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st,
Nor shall death brag thou wand'rest in his shade,
When in eternal lines to Time thou grow'st.
So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

One Perfect Rose (1996, text by Dorothy Parker)

A single flow'r he sent me, since we met.
All tenderly his messenger he chose;
Deep-hearted, pure, with scented dew still wet -

One perfect rose.

I knew the language of the floweret;
'My fragile leaves,' it said, 'his heart enclose.'
Love long has taken for his amulet
One perfect rose.

Why is it no one ever sent me yet
One perfect limousine, do you suppose?
Ah no, it's always just my luck to get
One perfect rose.

Grammy award-winning composer **Libby Larsen** (b. 1950) is one of America's most performed living composers. She has a catalogue of over 500 works including vocal and chamber music, orchestral works, and over 15 operas. The first woman to serve as a resident composer with a major orchestra, she has held residencies with the California Institute of the Arts, the Arnold Schoenberg Institute, the Philadelphia School of the Arts, the Cincinnati Conservatory, the Minnesota Orchestra, and more. Larsen was the Harissios Papamarkou Chair in Education at the Library of Congress and received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. An advocate of the music and musicians of our time, she co-founded the Minnesota Composers Forum, now the American Composers Forum. Like her primary teacher, Dominick Argento, she favors setting prose instead of poetry for her art songs.

These three songs are sung by Margaret Elliot in Larsen's chamber opera *Eric Hermannson's Soul*, based on a short story by Willa Cather. In *Bright Rails*, we hear the train in the piano while Margaret sings of going home. The great plains of Nebraska have changed her perspective after growing up in New York in *So Little There*. Finally, she expresses the rapture of her encounter with Eric Hermannson in *Beneath the Hawthorne Tree*.

Margaret Songs (1996, text by Willa Cather)

Bright Rails (from *Going Home*)

How smoothly the train runs beyond the Missouri;
Even in my sleep I know when I have crossed the river.
[The wheels turn as if they were glad to go;]
They run like running water
Like Youth, running away...
They spin [bright] along the bright rails
Singing and humming,
Singing and humming,
They run remembering
They run rejoicing,
As if they too were going home.

So Little There (from *Eric Hermansson's Soul*)

I haven't been so happy since we were children together
Discovering the ruins of Troy
And here we are! Just like when we were children,
Together! Away from New York City and its endless details.
So many small things in the city!
Teas and dances.
Invitations.
Thank you notes.
Gloves and gossip.
Small things.
Oh it all is so little there!
Minutes filled to the brim with detail.
Hours enslaved by fashion.
Days, months and years—
A calendar of manners. Always manners!
The wind has swept all that away.
Here at the edge of the world, when I lift my foot
I feel I could step through the sunset into heaven.
Artists in the galleries of New York portend to paint the mystery of clouds
Writers and poets have only words to tell us about the light of dawn and dusk,
The smell of May,
The sound of summer,
The silence of snow.
Actors and singers play the stage.
They make believe that love finds itself in words,
--I used to think it natural that two minds could love,
Even if the hearts do not.
When everything else is so small,
Why should I expect love to be great!

Beneath the Hawthorne Tree (from *The Hawthorne Tree*)

Across the shimmering meadows—
Ah, when he came to me!
In the spring-time,
In the night-time,
In the starlight,
Beneath the hawthorne tree.

Up from the misty marshland—
Ah, when he climbed to me!
To my white bower,
To my sweet rest,
To my warm breast,
Beneath the hawthorn tree.

Ask me of what the birds sang,
High in the hawthorn tree;
What the breeze tells,
What the rose smells,
What the stars shine—
Not what he said to me!

Lori Laitman (b. 1955) has composed multiple operas and choral works, and over 250 songs with texts by classical and contemporary poets, including those who perished in the Holocaust. Her music is performed in the US and internationally and has generated substantial critical acclaim. Laitman regularly receives commissions from prestigious organizations such as the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Music of Remembrance, Washington Master Chorale, and the Eastman School of Music. This cycle was written for soprano Melissa Coombs, whom Laitman met through composer Richard Hundley. It was Laitman's first entry into the NATS Art Song Competition, which she now sponsors. *Along With Me* was written for Coombs' 10th wedding anniversary. The triple dedication *They Might Not Need Me* stems from Lauren Wagner's suggestion that Laitman write a tango. Fred Weldy, the third dedicatee, was Wagner's pianist. Regarding *The Night Has a Thousand Eyes*, Laitman says "I just found the poem in an anthology I had and its simplicity appealed to me."¹⁰⁷ The intricate piano hand crossing in the middle section of *Over the Fence* was inspired by Rameau's *Pièces de Clavecin*. The simplicity of *Song* implies a folk song. For *Wild Nights*, Coombs suggested the high B in measure 19 and Phyllis Bryn-Julson suggested the final move to b-flat at the end. Laitman says this song was "just fun to write."

Days and Nights (1995)

Along With Me (text by Robert Browning)

Grow old along with me!
The best is yet to be,
The last of life, for which the first was made:
Our times are in His hand
Who saith "A whole I planned—
Youth shows but half; trust God: see all, nor be afraid!"

They Might Not Need Me (text by Emily Dickinson)

They might not need me—yet they might—
I'll let my Heart be just in sight—
A smile so small as mine might be
Precisely their necessity—

¹⁰⁷ Lori Laitman, email to the author, October 20, 2019.

The Night Has a Thousand Eyes (text by Francis W. Bourdillon)

The night has a thousand eyes,
And the day but one;
Yet the light of the bright world dies
With the dying sun.

The mind has a thousand eyes,
And the heart but one;
Yet the light of a whole life dies
When love is done.

Over the Fence (text Emily Dickinson)

Over the fence—
Strawberries—grow—
Over the fence—
I could climb—if I tried, I know—
Berries are nice!

But—if I stained my Apron—
God would certainly scold!
Oh, dear,—I guess if He were a Boy—
He'd—climb—if He could!

Song (text by Christina Rossetti)

When I am dead, my dearest,
Sing no sad songs for me;
Plant thou no roses at my head,
Nor shady cypress tree:

Be the green grass above me
With showers and dewdrops wet;
And if thou wilt, remember,
And if thou wilt, forget.

And dreaming through the twilight
That doth not rise nor set,
Haply I may remember,
And haply may forget.

I shall not see the shadows,
I shall not feel the rain;
I shall not hear the nightingale
Sing on, as if in pain:

Wild Nights (text by Emily Dickinson)

Wild nights—Wild nights!

Were I with thee

Wild nights should be

Our luxury!

Futile— the winds—

To a Heart in port—

Done with the Compass—

Done with the Chart!

Rowing in Eden—

Ah, the Sea!

Might I but moor—Tonight—

In Thee!

Appendix C



PRESENTS

See It to Be It
Now

Jennifer Piazza-Pick, Soprano

Ying-Shan Su, Piano

FEBRUARY 29, 2020, 8:00PM

GILDENHORN RECITAL HALL

Now

from <i>Miss Wheatley's Garden</i> I Want to Die While You Love Me Songs for the People	Rosephanye Powell (b. 1962)
Prelude	Cherise D. Leiter (b. 1972)
from <i>Kiss</i> I. In the Dreamed of Places II. How to Bone a Fish	Jocelyn Hagen (b. 1980)
Sentiment I. Prologue II. Joy III. Sorrow IV. Anger V. Remorse VI. Epilogue	Juliana Hall (b. 1958)

Intermission

Sunbeam Blues	Dale Trumbore (b. 1987)
from <i>Four Poems of Nikita Gill</i> II. From the Ashes She Became III. You Have Become a Forest	Melissa Dunphy (b. 1980)
Confessions I. Turn Back the Clock II. What Will They Think? III. Fixation	Clarice Assad (b. 1978)

Program Notes and Texts

The title of these recitals comes from a quote by musical theater composer Jeanine Tesori, who said in an interview: “For girls, you have to see it to be it.”¹⁰⁸ I hope to inspire singers and teachers to program music by women composers, as well as to encourage more women to embrace their compositional gifts.

Rosephanye Dunn Powell has been hailed as one of America’s premier composers of choral music. Her compositions are in great demand around the country, frequently appearing at the conventions of the American Choral Directors Association. An accomplished singer and voice professor at Auburn University, Dr. Powell’s research has focused on the art of the African-American spiritual, the art songs of William Grant Still, and voice care concerns for voice professionals.¹⁰⁹

Miss Wheatley’s Garden is named for America’s first black poet, Phillis Wheatley.¹¹⁰ Wheatley was brought to America from Senegal and became a slave. Her poetic gift was championed by her owners and their daughter Mary, who taught her to read and write. Her book, “Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral,” was the first book to be published by a black American. Miss Wheatley’s popularity brought her freedom from slavery in 1773. “Because of these accomplishments, [the composer] thought it befitting to title the work *Miss Wheatley’s Garden* in honor of Phyllis Wheatley’s works which are the garden in which many generations of African-American women poets have blossomed.”¹¹¹ Georgia Douglass Johnson was a member of the Harlem Renaissance movement and wrote four collections of poetry, a newspaper column, and plays. Baltimore poet Frances Ellen Watkins Harper was a journalist, fiction writer, poet, and activist.

Miss Wheatley’s Garden (2015)

I Want to Die While You Love Me (text by Georgia Douglass Johnson)

I want to die while you love me,
While yet you hold me fair,
While laughter lies upon my lips
And lights are in my hair.

I want to die while you love me,
And bear to that still bed,
Your kisses turbulent, unspent

¹⁰⁸ Jeanine Tesori in Adam Hetrick, “For Girls, You Have to See It to Be It: The Historic and Powerful *Fun Home* Tony Acceptance Speeches You Didn’t See on TV,” *Playbill*, June 8, 2015. <https://www.playbill.com/article/for-girls-you-have-to-see-it-to-be-it-the-historic-and-powerful-fun-home-tony-acceptance-speeches-you-didnt-see-on-tv-com-350817>.

¹⁰⁹ Rosephanye Powell, “Biography,” *Rosephanye Powell: Composer, Educator, Performer, Conductor*, 2019, accessed December 26, 2019, <http://rosephanyepowell.com/biography/>.

¹¹⁰ Rosephanye Powell, “Art Songs,” *Rosephanye Powell: Composer, Educator, Performer, Conductor*, 2019, accessed December 26, 2019, <http://rosephanyepowell.com/compositions/publishers/>.

¹¹¹ Powell, “Art Songs.”

To warm me when I'm dead.

I want to die while you love me
Oh, who would care to live
Till love has nothing more to ask
And nothing more to give?

I want to die while you love me
And never, never see
The glory of this perfect day
Grow dim or cease to be!

Songs for the People (text by Frances Ellen Watkins Harper)

Let me make the songs for the people,
Songs for the old and young;
Songs to stir like a battle-cry
Wherever they are sung.

Let me make the songs for the weary,
Amid life's fever and fret,
Till hearts shall relax their tension,
And careworn brows forget.

Not for the clashing of sabres,
For carnage nor for strife;
But songs to thrill the hearts of men
With more abundant life.

Let me sing for little children,
Before their footsteps stray,
Sweet anthems of love and duty,
To float o'er life's highway.

Our world, so worn and weary,
Needs music, pure and strong,
To hush the jangle and discords
Of sorrow, pain, and wrong.

Music to soothe all its sorrow,
Till war and crime shall cease;
And the hearts of men grown tender
Girdle the world with peace.

Born in Florida, **Cherise Leiter** is currently Associate Professor at Metropolitan State College of Denver, where she teaches music theory and composition. An active composer whose output includes works for choir, piano, voice, carillon, orchestra,

and assorted chamber ensembles, she was CSMTA's 2004 commissioned composer. She was a finalist in the Ithaca College 25th Annual Choral Composition Contest and won the Braintree/Nashoba Valley Chorale choral competition and the Ars Nova Composition Competition. Her cycle *Love Letters from a War* was a vocal winner in the Boston Metro Opera call and received an Honorable Mention from the 2010 NATS competition.¹¹²

Prelude is a love song to words. The extended harmonies and occasional 'blue' notes are a nod to the wonderful ballads found in the Great American Songbook. There is a brief quote in the piano at the very end from the hymn "How Can I Keep from Singing" with the obligatory 'blue' note.¹¹³ This song was created along with another female composer colleague, Leanna Kirchoff, who set the same text. The two composers composed the songs as an experiment where they were in matching rooms and had 1 day to set the text.

Prelude (2012, text by Josephine Preston Peabody)

WORDS, words,
Ye are like birds.
Would I might fold you,
In my hands hold you
Till ye were warm and your feathers a-flutter;
Till, in your throats,
Tremulous notes
Foretold the songs ye would utter.

Words, words,
Ye are all birds!
Would ye might linger
Here on my finger,
Till I kissed each, and then sent you a-winging
Wild, perfect flight,
Through morn to night,
Singing and singing and singing!

Jocelyn Hagen is a pioneer in the field of composition, pushing the expectations of musicians and audiences with large-scale multimedia works, electro-acoustic music, dance, opera, and publishing. The majority of her compositions are for the voice. Hagen describes her process of composing for choir, orchestra and film simultaneously in a Tedx Talk given at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, now available on YouTube. Hagen was a student of Judith Lang Zaimont.¹¹⁴ *Kiss* was commissioned by a consortium of twenty sopranos in 2013. As described by Eileen Stempel: "The music is melodically driven, boldly beautiful, intricately

¹¹² Cherise D. Leiter, "Biography," *Cherise D. Leiter, Composer*, 2012, accessed December 26, 2019, <https://www.cherisedleiter.com/resume>.

¹¹³ Cherise D. Leiter, email to the author, January 15, 2020.

¹¹⁴ Jocelyn Hagen, "about," *Jocelyn Hagen: composer. performer*, 2020, accessed December 26, 2019, <https://www.jocelynhagen.com/about/>.

crafted and intimate, and Hagen's gift of seamlessly melding the voice with the piano is richly evidenced in this cycle."¹¹⁵ Speaking about the sensuous nature of this music, Hagen says "...I don't think there is enough sexy music written by women."¹¹⁶

Kiss (2013, text by Julia Klatt Singer)

In the Dreamed of Places

At the end of the dock, the rowboat, tied,
A familiar rope, a simple knot
As easy to loose as a kiss from my lips,
As easy to sail as the stars in this night sky.
In the dreamed of places, there is always you,
This boat of longing, the steady hum of a song not yet written,
A world, just beyond tomorrow.
In the dreamed of places, we sleep,
Our bodies fragrant and sweet.
Once I was so poor;
I thought a butter and sugar sandwich was decadence.
Once I was so young
I thought the world only spoke in rhyme,
Spun like a record, played the same song,
Over and over until I knew my heart,
Knew by heart the map to love.
Trace a shadow onto skin, let night fall dense and deep,
Like this dream we now begin.

How to Bone a Fish

My skin sensed you first.
Felt the ripple of air your body made, walking.
I swam toward you down the hallway
made of sunlight and polished wood.
You are far enough away that I can see you walking.
See how your shoe hits the floor firmly
Yet lingers, sole to wood, before touching air again.
I see how your hips tilt with each stride
how they carry you closer now.
I follow the row of buttons on your shirt
(cream colored, four holes each) to your throat.
You are talking to a colleague.
You are talking about music.
The importance of adagio.
The slow movement of things.
I cannot look at your lips. Your mouth.
For I would want you to devour me.

¹¹⁵ Eileen Stempel, "Commissioning Consortium: Jocelyn Hagen's Song Cycle *Kiss*", *Journals of Singing* vol 73, no. 3, (January/February 2017): 252.

¹¹⁶ Jocelyn Hagen, email to the author, January 22, 2020.

I would let you devour me.
Your eyes now. On me.
Unblinking. Unswerving.
My bones, soft as a fish's bones,
My flesh as sweet to eat.

Juliana Hall has been hailed as "one of our country's most able and prolific art song composers" (NATS Journal of Singing). Hall began formal composition studies as a 26-year-old graduate student majoring in piano performance at the Yale School of Music and did her master's degree with Dominick Argento at the University of Minnesota. Performances of her works at music festivals around the world include Norfolk Chamber Music, Ojai Music, Orvieto Musica, and Sparks & Wiry Cries' songSLAM Festivals, as well as the London Festival of American Music, Schumannfest Düsseldorf, and Tanglewood. Hall's music has been broadcast over the BBC and NPR radio networks.

Premiered in 2019 by soprano Laura Dixon Strickling, Hall worked closely with librettist and soprano Caitlin Vincent when setting this monodrama for unaccompanied soprano.

Sentiment (2019, text by Caitlin Vincent)

Prologue

Hello!
Good morning!
Good evening!
Buongiorno!
Bonjour!
Salutations!
I like your shirt.
I like your shoes.
I like your eyes...your ears...your nose...
"Head, shoulders, knees, and toes."
I like everything about you.
But most of all,
I like that you're here.
I like...no, I love that you're here.
All of us.
Together.

Joy

My heart is full of champagne.
Full of bubbles.
And rose-colored clouds.
I'm giddy.
Ecstatic!
Over the moon.
Can't even tell you why.

Maybe that kiss.
The sandwich at lunch.
Maybe the sky.
Maybe the sun.
The baby I saw on the street.
Or maybe, nothing.

Nothing.
But a lucky, happy day.
Who knows?
Who cares?
My soul is open to the world.
Warm with sheer delight.
I wish I could feel this way forever.

Sorrow

I weep.
I cry.
Because sad things are sad.
Sad things.
Sad, sadder, saddest things.
An empty house.
A blue afternoon.
A pile of unfolded laundry.
A lonely teddy bear.
Can you hear me?
Calling into the void?
Sometimes I wonder...should I get up at all?
Another tree falls in the forest.
Alone. Forgotten.
I weep.
I cry.
Because sad things are sad.
Sad things are sad.

Anger

What are you looking at?
You.
All of you.
Staring.
Judging.
Accusing with your eyes.
I don't care what you think.
What you think or what you say.
You don't know me.
Who I am.

My hopes, my fears.
You know nothing!
Nothing but your small, petty world.
Your notions and illusions.
I despise you.
All of you.
Looking.
Staring.
Judging.
Mind your own damn business!

Remorse

Oh.
You're...still here.
I'm sorry,
For the ourburst.
For the lapse in calm.
It wasn't me.
Someone else wearing my skin.
Angry and bitter and sad.
The girl I lock away.
The girl I try to control.
Contain.
Polish and coif.

So no one can find her.
So no one will see her.
See her.
And see me.
Please.
Forget it.
Forget her.
You'll forget...
Won't you?

Epilogue

Only see my smile.
Only hear my laugh.
Only meet the self I edit for the world.
The best bits.
The bright bits.
I'll save the rest...for later.

Dale Trumbore is a Los Angeles-based composer and writer whose compositions have been performed widely throughout the world by ensembles including the American Contemporary Music Ensemble (ACME), Los Angeles Master Chorale,

and Pasadena Symphony. She has written extensively about working through creative blocks and establishing a career in music in essays for 21CM, *Cantate Magazine*, the Center for New Music, and NewMusicBox. Her first book, *Staying Composed: Overcoming Anxiety and Self-Doubt Within a Creative Life*, was released this year.¹¹⁷ *Sunbeam Blues* was written for Trumbore's senior composition recital at the University of Maryland. Poet Julie Kane is her aunt and godmother.¹¹⁸

Sunbeam Blues (2009, text by Julie Kane)

Sunbeam pourin' in the window
When my baby wakes and shaves.
Sunbeam pourin' in the window
When my baby wakes and shaves.
And it waits by my baby's chair
Like a dog at a grave.

Sunbeam fallin' on his shoulder
As he reads the want ads through.
He sits in that stick of sunbeam
And he reads the want ads through.
He's been lookin' for work six weeks
In the same blue suit.

My baby feels as restless
As the dust in that patch of sun.
He's dancin' his way to nowhere
Just like the dust in that patch of sun.
He's tired of takin' my money
And he wants to give me some.

I said, if them bosses were women
Well, I know just what they'd do.
If all of them bosses was women, baby
I'm sure of what they'd do.
Any woman with two good eyes
Would sure pick you.

Sunbeam pourin' in the window
It shines on the rug all day.
My baby's all out of dreams now.
He just sits in the sun all day
And the smoke from his cigarettes
Stains that sunbeam gray.

¹¹⁷ Dale Trumbore, "About," *daletrumbore*, 2019, accessed December 26, 2019, <https://www.daletrumbore.com/about>.

¹¹⁸ Dale Trumbore, personal correspondence with the author, January 16, 2020.

Born and raised in Australia, **Melissa Dunphy** immigrated to the United States in 2003 and has since become an award-winning and acclaimed composer specializing in vocal, political, and theatrical music. She first came to national attention in 2009 when her large-scale choral work, *Gonzales Cantata*, was featured in many prominent publications and on MSNBC's *The Rachel Maddow Show*, where host Rachel Maddow called it "the coolest thing you've ever seen on this show." Dunphy's first song cycle *Tesla's Pigeon* won first place in the 2012 NATS Art Song Composition Award and has been recognized with a Spirit of Tesla award by the Tesla Science Foundation and the American Prize.¹¹⁹

Dunphy was commissioned by Dr. Carol Lines at McNeese University to write three songs to be premiered by three senior students, which was the start *Four Poems of Nikita Gill*. Each song tells a different story about some kind of recovery.¹²⁰

Four Poems of Nikita Gill (2018, text by Nikita Gill)

From the Ashes She Became

Before she became fire, she was water.
Quenching the thirst of every dying creature.
She gave and she gave
until she turned from sea to desert.
But instead of dying of the heat,
the sadness, the heartache,
she took all of her pain
and from her own ashes became fire.

You Have Become a Forest

One day when you wake up, you will find that you have become a forest. You have grown roots and found strength in them that no one thought you had. You have become stronger and more beautiful, full of life giving qualities. You have learned to take all the negativity around you and turn it into oxygen for easy breathing. A host of wild creatures lives inside you and you call them stories. A variety of beautiful birds rest inside your mind and you call them memories. You have become an incredible self-sustaining thing of epic proportions. And you should be so proud of yourself, of how far you have come from the seeds of who you used to be.

A powerful communicator renowned for her musical scope and versatility, Brazilian-American **Clarice Assad** is a significant artistic voice in the classical, world music, pop and jazz genres. A prolific Grammy nominated composer, with over 70 works to her credit, her work has been commissioned by internationally renowned organizations, festivals and artists. As an innovator, her award-winning Voxploration

¹¹⁹ Melissa Dunphy, "About," *Melissa Dunphy: Composer*, Mormolyke Press, accessed December 26, 2019, <http://www.melissadunphy.com/about.php>.

¹²⁰ Melissa Dunphy, personal correspondence with the author, January 16, 2020.

Series on music education, creation, songwriting, and improvisation has been presented throughout the United States, Brazil, Europe and the Middle East.¹²¹ *Confessions* is a humorous cross over project between cabaret and musical theater with hints of jazz and South American music. The songs deal with issues experienced by many women in our modern-day society.¹²²

Confessions (2008)

Turn Back the Clock (text by Catherine Maxymuk)

I cannot believe my eyes, Is this some sort of joke?
Perhaps I'm in the twilight zone, perhaps my mirror broke!
This isn't me, it cannot be, the girl I'm looking at.
I'm ultra thin, I'm bones and skin, Is that a lump of fat?
Wasn't it just yesterday my calendar replete
With guys who plea on bended knee for us to simply meet.
But now I spend my nights at home, repress my appetite
I starve myself, wake up alone, and still have cellulite!
Hide our imperfections, trying to fit in.
Why can't we accept it? Ladies, we can never win.

I'd like to have a chat with Eve, to tell her once or twice,
Of all the women since her time and how we've paid the price!
If only she had known back then what history would reveal,
I'm sure she would have fought for us and struck a better deal!
No matter how we women try to make ourselves look great
Admitting while we start to cry "I'll never get a date!"
So then my dear, it's crystal clear, it's simply understood
Society says, "Turn back the clock!" as if we really could!

What Will They Think? (text by Naomi Major)

What will they think if I say the wrong thing?
What will they think if I'm laughing too loud and don't know?
Oh, how I wish I didn't care so.
What will they think, I always wonder what will they think,
if I am wearing the wrong dress, if I arrive at the wrong time,
If I am not in the right place or if I shouldn't go at all?
I look at myself and say what will they think.
Oh, how I wish I could be someone else, somebody nothing like me.
A someone with a gleam in their eye.
When she walks in the room, everyone sighs.
Sometimes I think if I was not afraid then I could have a chance.
In my head my lipstick is red, laugh too loud and never care.

¹²¹ Clarice Assad, "About Clarice Assad," *Clarice Assad*, 2020, accessed December 26, 2019, <https://clariceassad.com/clarice/>.

¹²² Clarice Assad, "Confessions," *Clarice Assad*, 2020, accessed December 26, 2019, <https://clariceassad.com/clarice/>.

I wear feathers in my hair.
In my head I have a king size bed.
Kiss men on the sly in the blink of an eye.
In my head I am high spirited.
I speak my mind, won't tow the line,
My heels are high, I can kiss the sky.
But I wake up and wonder what will they...
I wake up and...

Fixation (text by Alissa McLaughlan)

I cannot decide if I want cake or pie.
I guess I'll just have both.
And then I will need to have something with lots of salt.
Oh these cravings of mine taunt me, making my mind possessed!!
There are so many sinful things to eat!
There is nothing I crave more than my ice cream.
Coffee flavored, nuts, pistachio are always in my dreams.
Even when it's cold out sorbet's not a chore.
I don't care how full I get, there's always room for more.
Until that feeling of guilt infects my peace,
Then my strenuous exercise will drastically increase.
Aerobics, yoga, and machines
Surely eliminate the endless pints I have consumed!
I will skip a day of work for homemade cake or pie.
Devil's food or flaky apple go from stove to mouth.
Sweets are meant to share but I don't ever care,
At my local bakery I have my own affair.
Never fully satisfied I always go for more,
But then I hear that nagging voice I totally deplore
I try to block it out but it's so hard to do,
When the proof of all your crimes are all in front of you.
I feel so melancholy, my cravings run my life.
Such seductive treats that I cannot resist!
Do you know how it feels to eat so much ice cream?
Of course the flavor I can't find *is* the one I need!
No matter how late at night I'll search for you, *my love*.
I don't care how full I get, there's always room for more.
Aerobics, yoga, and machines I assume will surely eliminate
The endless pints I have consumed!
Endless pints...endless flavors of endless ice cream I have consumed!

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Trumbore's new book not only delves into issues that all musicians face, but also provides an insight into her work.

