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CULMINATING PROJECT:
ANALYSIS AND CHALLENGES OF MY RECITAL

By
JAMES RUFFIN

A RECITAL PAPER

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Music in Vocal Performance
in the School of Music
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Submitted by James Ruffin in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Music in Vocal Performance.

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Franz Joseph Haydn

“Tergi i vezzosi rai”

Haydn was born on March 31, 1732 in Rohrau, Austria. He is seen as one of the important composers in the evolution of classical music in the eighteenth century. In *Haydn: His Life and Music*, Robins Landon discusses Haydn’s popularity and how his music reached multiple nations around Europe, from Seville to St. Petersburg and Budapest to Stockholm. It was believed that Haydn’s popularity was “the result of a deep-seated conviction, of supra-national dimensions, on the part of the public, that Haydn’s language was their language” (Landon 1988, 11). Even with this popularity, his early compositions did not gain much attraction, yet they laid the groundwork for his great career. In this chapter, I will focus on “Tergi i vezzosi rai,” an aria from Haydn’s *Acis and Galatea*, and his early musical developments in Italian opera.

Haydn’s opera career began when he was hired as the Kapellmeister of the Esterházy Court in 1761, a time when Italian opera was becoming popular again in Austria. Haydn only composed four operas during his early years at the court. Even though his experience with Italian opera was limited, his familiarity with Viennese *Singspiel* helped him develop his style of composing Italian opera. *Singspiel* is a mix of spoken dialogue and musical numbers, and the plots consisted of magic and earthy humor. These *Singspiele* were performed regularly at the Kärntnertortheater, a theater close to where Haydn was born. The qualities of this German comedy would become a

great influence in Haydn's Italian operas, including his version of the Greek myth of Acis and Galatea, *Acide e Galatea*.

Acide e Galatea is based on the Greek myth of Acis and Galatea and was composed in 1763, then revised in 1773. Unfortunately, most of the music from both versions of this opera have not survived to this day, but three musical numbers from both versions are used for evidence of this opera. One of them is the aria "Tergi i vezzosi rai." This aria comes from the penultimate scene of the opera and is sung by the character Nettuno, or Neptune, the Roman god of the sea. In this scene, Nettuno sings to Galatea after she asks the gods to return Acide to her. This aria is recognized as joyful as Nettuno sings phrases of "Tergi i vezzosi rai" ["Dry your lovely eyes] and "preparati a goder," ["Prepare to rejoice"].

Patricia Anne Debly describes how Haydn altered Italian opera in four ways. First, he added additional parts to the orchestration, mainly oboes and horns. Second, he cut out sections of melodic repetitiveness. Third, he tried to limit the amount of empty coloratura; lastly, he accelerated the tempo (Debly 1993, 35-36). All of these qualities can be heard when comparing the two versions of *Acide e Galatea*, specifically in "Tergi i vezzosi rai."

In the revised aria, there is a change in tempo and meter. The tempo goes from allegro moderato to allegro and the meter changes to quadruple from triple. Haydn put two more bassoon parts in the orchestra and replaced the flute parts with oboes. Another big difference in the revised aria is that the composition is set for a bass voice instead of alto as in the first version. Debly explains that the reason for the voice change was

because Eleonora Jâger, who played Tetina in the first version, was already fifty years old and they could not find another alto to replace her (Debly 1993, 33-34).

Many of Haydn's musical ideas in this piece showcased his great knowledge of Italian opera. One example is when Nettuno sings the words "Il tuo martir consola," which means "to console your anguish." Here Haydn "creates the sentiment of anguish" by placing "chromatic appoggiaturas on the note A, one after the other (B flat and Gsharp)" (Debly 1993, 42). Haydn also had a way of using the orchestra to represent what the singer is portraying in the vocal line. In the music, there is a musical "sigh" that is first represented by the vocal line; when it repeats, Haydn has the first violins play a three note figure off the beat, the second violins play a slower three-note figure, and the bassoons help by descending slowly in a stepwise motion. With these musical ideas and styles within the piece, Haydn produces marvelous text-painting throughout the aria.

The aria is in ABA form with the first A section starting in C major. The aria starts out triumphantly as Nettuno encourages Acide to be joyful after Galatea is brought back as a river god. The music changes in this section when Nettuno sings "Hai sospirato assai" in m. 50. This is the "sigh" that comes in the music as Nettuno is saying that "you have sighed enough." The B section is set in E minor and perfectly represents the text in this section. Nettuno reflects on the grief and pain that Acide has had to go through with her love for Galatea as he repeats the phrase "Tutto finor fu pena" meaning "until now all was grief." He then assures her that everything will be better, saying "Tutto or sarà piacer," at the end of the section. Below is the Italian text with translations.

Tergi i vezzosi rai
Il tuo martir consola
Hai sospirato assai
Preparati a goder
Or sempre alfin serena
Sarà per te la sorte
Tutto finor fu pena
Tutto or sarà piacer

Dry your lovely eyes
Console your anguish
You have sighed enough
Prepare to rejoice
Now at last fate
Will forever smile on you
Until now all was grief
Now all will be pleasure

There are many challenges that this difficult aria presents to the performer. For example, Haydn included numerous intervallic leaps that are an octave or greater. Major intervallic leaps can result in the problem of finding, or centering the pitches. Also, it can be difficult to switch from chest voice in the lower register to a lighter—or headier, voice—in the higher register, and vice versa. The melismas in this song present a great challenge as well. There is the fast tempo, which must stay intact throughout each melisma while also keeping the melismas smooth and legato when the singer is articulating the notes. Also, the singer must think about breath management and find ways to keep the breath moving fast enough to get to the end of the melisma. With all of these technical aspects to think about, the singer must also think about the expressive side of the music and how he will represent the character while focusing on the technical challenges of this aria.

Francis Poulenc

Le Travail du Peintre

Francis Poulenc was introduced to music at an early age and started piano lessons at the age of six. His career took off as he started to mature more in his musical career. He started experimenting with solo songs during the years 1932-1945, composing works like *Tel jour, telle nuit* and *Cinq poemes*. His sudden interest in vocal solo composition was inspired by two men: Pierre Bernac and Paul Éluard. Bernac was a famous classical singer at the time and the two met in 1926. They both “felt a similarity of spirit and a complementary approach to the performance of art songs” (Daniel 1982, 36). They became friends as they traveled the world as a pianist-singer duo, performing pieces by composers such as Schumann, Wolf, Ravel, and Debussy. They also shared a love for Éluard’s poetry.

Paul Éluard was a poet who played a major role in the surrealist movement during the 1920s. This movement focused on the writer’s attention to the subconscious and how to express that in different forms. Even though the WWII put an end to this movement, Éluard was recognized for his outstanding portrayal of surrealism in his poetry, as he “found a simpler language” that dealt with more “intimate emotions” while still maintaining the “dream imagery” and the juxtapositions of surrealism (Daniel 1982, 38). Poulenc first met Éluard in 1916 when the composer had the opportunity to hear Éluard perform some of his poems. It took him nearly twenty years to set his music to

poems, but he finally did in 1935 when he composed *Cinq poemes*. This relationship would inspire Poulenc to compose some great song cycles throughout his career, including *Le Travail du Peintre*.

Le Travail du Peintre was the last major song cycle of Poulenc's career. Even though it is not one of his more popular sets, it shows his great creativity in composing music. This was also the first work composed after Poulenc's opera *Dialogues des Carmélites* and the listener can hear similar motives from the opera in the opening motive of the cycle. Poulenc's love for the visual arts was the basis for *Le Travail du Peintre* and he was specifically interested in painting. He said "I have been passionately in love with painting. I owe to it as many profound joys as I owe to music" (Daniel 1982, 51).

Le Travail du Peintre is a cycle of settings of Éluard's *Voir* and it is about seven different painters that Poulenc admired: Pablo Picasso, Marc Chagall, Georges Braque, Juan Gris, Paul Klee, Joan Miró, and Jacques Villon. Poulenc uses different rhythms, dynamics, and musical styles to show how he sees the artistic styles of each painters. In "Pablo Picasso," Poulenc uses this music to show off the pride that Picasso took in his work, saying that "it takes on a tone of pride well suited for the subject" (Poulenc 1985, 101). One aspect that contributes to this prideful tone is that, for the most part, the song alternates between the dynamics of *f*(forte) and *ff*(fortissimo), and another is that the song is in C major. Yet, even with these aspects, this song is not necessarily a happy one. Poulenc said that the song had a "lofty tone" because of "the progress of the prosody with its long run-on lines" (Poulenc 1985, 103).

The next song in the set is "Marc Chagall." Poulenc describes this song as a "rambling scherzo" as "Strange objects pass in the sky. A poetic somersault brings us

back to the human being” (Poulenc 1985, 103). The tempo is *molto prestissimo* as Poulenc alternates between dynamics throughout the song. Bernac describes how dynamics should be used in certain sections of the song, saying that at the phrase “Un couple le premier reflet,” the dynamic should be *f* to prepare us for “the final *subito pp* which must be a little mysterious, very soft, and poetic, and above all without *rallentando*” (Bernac 1977, 118).

“George Braque” is the next song in this set. Poulenc saw this song as “the most subtle” and “the most detailed” of all the songs. Poulenc did think the song was “too mannered,” but that is how he saw George Braque as a painter. Poulenc said that this song “must be accompanied with precision and, above all, from the beginning a *tempo* must be taken that is not too slow” (Poulenc 1985, 103). Another important consideration for this song is to make “sufficient contrast between the first part inspired by Braque’s numerous flights of birds, and the second part full of human tenderness” (Bernac 1977, 120).

The fourth song in this set is “Juan Gris.” Poulenc wrote this song years before he composed the rest of the cycle. Poulenc had great respect and admiration for Gris, saying that he has always “greatly admired this painter and very much liked him as a man” (Bernac 1977, 120). Poulenc describes the song as “serious and poignantly melancholy” and his use of pedal plays an important role in that regard (Bernac 1977, 120). In certain sections throughout the piece, the listener can observe the contrasts in dynamics and expressions within it. For example, at the words “De jour merci de nuit prends grande,” it ranges from *p* to *mf* and then back to *p*, all in that short period of time.

“Paul Klee” is the next song in this set, and it is the shortest piece within the set. Poulenc’s reasoning for this song is quite amusing. He said, “I needed a *presto* here. It is a dry song that must go with a bang” (Poulenc 1985, 103). This song is just a “song of transition between the preceding one and that which follows—genuinely part of the cycle” (Bernac 1977, 122). The tempo is *implacablement vite*, or implacably fast, with dynamics either *f* or *ff*.

The next song in this set is “Joan Miró.” Poulenc describes this as the song that is “most difficult to interpret.” The difficulty comes from musical aspects like the “sudden passing from a strident outburst to softness and lyricism on the words “les libellules des raisins”” or the *molto rallentando* on “que je dissipe d’un geste” (Poulenc 1985, 103). Along with these aspects, there are the many changes of tempo in this song that make this song quite unexplainable to audiences. Yet, Poulenc believed that no matter what, this song “must be felt” in order for it to be successful.

The last song in the set is “Jacques Villon.” This was Poulenc’s favorite song alongside “Juan Gris.” He described the words “l’aube, l’horizon, l’eau, l’oiseau, l’homme, l’amour” as “human relief to this severe and violent poem” (Poulenc 1985, 105). The dynamics do not change much in this song, staying in the *f* to *ff* range throughout. The only phrase that is an exception is “l’homme, l’amour,” as it softens to a *p*(piano) as “love replaces hate” in that instance and brings a more positive outlook on the world.

There are various challenges that are present within each song of this set. One challenge is the preponderance of wide and disjunct intervals that must be navigated. This can be seen in “Joan Miró,” in which the performer has a major seventh interval from an

F3 up to E4. It does sound beautiful once perfected, but it takes a lot of work to keep the vibrato consistent in the lower voice going to the high voice. Another challenge of “Le Travail du Peintre” is that the tessitura is quite high, as there are many Fs and Es that are sung throughout this set. A more subtle challenge for the singer of this set is the interpretation of the poetry. There are many recurring themes within the set, but then there are songs like “Paul Klee” about which even Poulenc said he just put the song there with the sole intention of bringing a fast pace to the set, so it is difficult to express the emotions of that song. Yet even though these songs are quite difficult, the challenges are part of what make this cycle so beautiful.

Johannes Brahms

Lieder

The next set is comprised of *Lieder* by the great German composer Johannes Brahms (1833-1897). Brahms composed close to two hundred songs for solo voice, along with a plethora of compositions for different genres of music. Brahms's musical influences came from folk songs and poetry, along with the influence of the Romantic Period, which was prevalent during the nineteenth century, and he sought to incorporate those elements into his music as a means of expression.

The four songs in this set are “An die Tauben,” “Sonntag,” “Wie bist du meine Königin,” and “Die Mainacht.” In these songs, Brahms relied on folk influences— along with the elements of nature—to create this outstanding collection of songs. Whether it was the doves carrying the message for the lover in “An die Tauben” or the lover’s walk through the May night in “Die Mainacht,” Brahms created four pieces that accentuated some of his best musical qualities. In this chapter, I will analyze each song, breaking down musical aspects like poetic interpretation and rhythm while presenting some challenges that are present in each song.

The first piece is “An die Tauben” from Brahms’s *Lieder und Gesänge*, Op. 63. In *A Guide to the Solo Songs of Johannes Brahms*, Lucien Stark describes the song as a “joyous setting of such simplicity and naturalness that it almost seems to evolve on the spot” (Stark 1995, 194). In this piece, the piano accompaniment plays a significant role

as it creates pictures of the doves flying away to tell the message of love. Stark states that “Unity is provided by the accompaniment’s constant triplets, which flutter, dance, or daydream as the text requires” (Stark 1995, 194)

Even though this song is generally joyous, it is also a cry for love or help as the lover is in a dark state of mind. The listener can observe that with phrases like “Suche ihn im Reich der Toten, Liebchen, oder komme schnell” [seek him in the realm of the dead, sweetheart, or come quickly!]. One can also hear shifts in the music that express the depressive mood of the lover. Stanza four is where the lover starts to question if his love will return to him and if the sun will ever reappear to him. In this stanza, Stark describes how the setting at this point changes between “tender subdominant and dreamy submediant.” He also points out mm. 50-51, in which the harmonies are over a pedal point on the dominant of the submediant. This was seen as “a symbol of the sun’s long absence” (Stark 1995, 195).

“Sonntag,” from *Fünf Lieder*, op 47, is one of Brahms’s simpler, yet more charming songs of his repertoire. In this piece, the lover is admiring his sweetheart on a Sunday morning, and he is filled with joy and excitement as he wishes to God that he could be with her on that day. Brahms’s folk poem influences are quite evident in this piece, and Stark states that the “folk quality derives from the regular four-measure phrase structure and the highly original accompaniment” (Stark 1995, 128). Also, Stark takes notice of a memorable aspect of the piece, which was the repetition of the phrase “Wollte Gott, ich wär' heute bei ihr!” [Would to God, Would to God, I were with her today!] at the end of each stanza. He noted that even though it is “one of the most memorable aspects of the song,” that repeated phrase was not in the early printings of the first

edition. Brahms had to pencil it in and make sure that it was included in later printings of the piece (Stark 1995, 128).

The third song of this set, and probably one of Brahms's more famous vocal pieces, is "Wie bist du meine Königin," which comes from his *9 Lieder und Gesänge*, op. 32. In *Brahms: The Vocal Music*, A. Craig Bell showers great praise for this song, saying that "this song has sung itself into the world's heart as one of the greatest love songs" (Bell 1996, 56). In this piece, the lover highlights the qualities of his love and tells of the risks that he would take to acquire her love. Brahms did a masterful job of allowing the melody and the accompaniment to work hand in hand to make this beautiful love song. Bell states that "the melody breathes warmth and tenderness like a caress," and the accompaniment is filled with "subtleties that enrich it" (Bell 1996, 56). Also, Bell describes how the accompaniment catches the nuances of the poem, as the author references the darker harmonies and dissonances starting at the third stanza "Durch tote Wüsten wandle hin," [Wonder through arid deserts] and the turn to minor at "Todesqual die Brust" [Pain of death rages through my breast] toward the end of the song. The third stanza is the outlier of the four stanzas, as it starts in the tonic minor and then winds up in the key of the Neapolitan chord, but it makes its return back to the tonic key at the final "wonnevol" of the stanza.

The last song of this set is Brahms's "Die Mainacht" from his Op. 43 and is another popular example. In this song, the lover takes a gloomy walk at night and finds nothing that can make him happy. Stark describes the atmosphere of this song as a "tranquil night scene shadowed by the poet's melancholy" (Stark 1995, 113). The music and structure of this song perfectly portrays this scene of nature. First, there is the

A B A form, in which the second stanza starting with “Überhüllet vom Laub” is the contrasting stanza. It starts off in B major to give an image of “conjugal happiness” as he describes the lovely doves cooing together, but it ends in E-flat minor, which Stark describes as a “dark” key for Brahms. This then sets up the climax of the second stanza, “und die einsame Träne rinnt.” Stark describes it as a “glorious five-measure soaring and falling phrase with a half-step dissonance on ‘Träne’” (Stark 1995, 114).

Even though these songs are beautiful and frequently performed, they do present challenges of which singers must be aware. The poetic interpretation is one of the most important aspects of Brahms’s music. Because Brahms chose such beautiful poetry for these songs, the performer should devote a great deal of attention to this aspect of his songs. Once you know the text, you can bring out the sadness and loneliness in “Die Mainacht” or the happiness and excitement in “Sonntag.” Also, with interpretation comes the challenge of repeating phrases. The problem does not come in how to sing the repeated phrase, but how to express it differently from the first time. With phrases or words like “wonnevoll” or “Wollte Gott, ich wär' heute bei ihr!” the singer should avoid singing the repeated phrase the same way as the first time it was sung.

Performers must always find different ways of expressing repeated phrases to keep the audience engaged and to emphasize the composer’s intent with this repetition. The vocal challenges are not as difficult as they were in the French set, as it stays in a more comfortable range for the baritone voice. There are a few long phrases within these songs that do not give any opportunity for breath; for example, the two particularly long phrases in “Die Mainacht,” (“Und die einsame Träne rinnt”). No matter the various

challenges, these songs are quite beautiful, and if sung and expressed correctly, have the potential to touch an entire audience.

Samuel Barber

Three Songs, Op.45

In this chapter, I will discuss Samuel Barber's *Three Songs, Op. 45*. Samuel Barber, an American composer, was known for composing in a variety of genres, including instrumental music, operas, and musicals. His love for composing became evident when he wrote his mom a letter expressing his passion for composing and nothing else. In Barbara Heyman's book *Samuel Barber: The Composer and His Music*, she talks about his approach to music during the times of the Great Depression and World War II. While other composers used jazz and popular music to entertain the people, Barber went on a path "marked by a vocally inspired lyricism and a commitment to the tonal language and many of the forms of the late nineteenth-century music" (Heyman 1992, 3). His compositions drew many famous singers to perform his music, such as Leontyne Price and Eleanor Steber.

Barber's *Three Songs, Op. 45* was completed in August of 1972. Barber specifically wrote these songs for Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, a baritone Barber admired ever since he first heard him in 1953 (Heyman 1992, 489). Even though he completed the work in 1972, it was not performed until April of 1974. The three songs in this set are "Now I Have Fed and Eaten Up the Rose," "A Green Lowland of Pianos," and "O Boundless, Boundless Evening." This set highlights a few of Barber's compositional strengths, including his lyricism. In her dissertation *The Piano Music of Samuel Barber*,

Susan Blinderman Carter writes that Barber's work in lyricism is "the most arresting" of his musical qualities (1980). The listener can hear this in many instances throughout the set as Barber uses his skills to draw the audience into his world. Whether it is the adoration of a beautiful evening or seeing pianos in a lovely green field, Barber uses the melody and lyrics to invite the audience to step into the setting.

The first song of the set is "Now have I fed and eaten up the rose." References like the rose in the "stiff-cold hand" or the prayer of completion at the end indicate that death is the prominent theme of this poem. Heyman explains that the morbid text is intensified by "obsessive repetitions in the piano part, where the unrelenting reiteration of a four-note motive introduced in the first two measures seems to gain momentum in the ornamented upbeat" (Heyman 1992, 489). Even as the first two measures have a hastened pace going into m. 3, the introduction of the minor key (A minor) intensifies the theme of death in this song. Heyman also explains the metaphor behind the eating of the rose, saying that it is "a symbol of depletion of the source of creative energy" (Heyman 1992, 489).

The second song in this set, "A Green Lowland of Pianos," showcases the various styles and techniques that Barber uses in his piano writing. Damon B. Stevens notes in his dissertation that it was Barber's "eclecticism" that made him an ideal composer for piano music, and I believe these same eclectic qualities can be heard in "A Green Lowland of Pianos." This song provides a different mood than the previous song as it is a lighthearted and joyful song. Set in the key of A minor, Barber saw this poem as "funny" as Heyman states that "it presents a ludicrous fusion of pianos and cows: 'a herd of black pianos'" (Heyman 1992 490). According to Heyman, the piano plays a specific role in

making these surreal images come to life in the text. She points out instances in which the piano has a specific task to emphasize a certain word or phrase: “glissandos in tandem on the word *pianos*; double trills on the word *gurgle*; luxuriously arpeggiated seventh-chords following the phrase *chords of rapture*; and the interruption of an ingratiating waltz rhythm by an elongated stress on the first syllable of the word moonish, suggesting the mooing of cows” (Heyman 1992, 491).

Heyman describes the third song in the set “O Boundless, Boundless Evening” as the most “lyrical and romantic of the set” (Heyman 1992,492). In it, Barber created a wonderful picture of evening as day becomes night. The slower pace and the vocal line, which Heyman describes as “expansive and diatonic” against the piano part, are two key factors that make this song a masterpiece. Heyman also described how this song was a symbol of completion between the first song and this song. As mentioned previously, the first song represents depletion of life and creative energy. Yet, with this song, phrases like “Soon the glow of long hills on the skyline will be gone” is symbolic for the completion of life and the eventual death (Heyman 1992, 489).

There was a lot of preparation required to learn this set because of the many challenges involved. Rhythms and entrances were a big challenge, specifically in the second song. Between the dotted triplets and the quick entrances, I spent more time counting and learning the rhythm of this piece than anything else. Phrasing was another challenge in this set, as there were many long phrases within these songs. This is easily observed in the first song with the phrase “that I should ever feed...live-man’s land.” Even though it is only four bars, it takes a lot of breath to complete that phrase in one or even two breaths, and this is true for many other phrases in “O Boundless, Boundless

Evening,” as well. Despite these challenges, this set has an abundance of beautiful moments in it that capture the musical genius of Samuel Barber and it is truly a pleasure to perform.

John Musto

Shadow of the Blues

The final set of this recital is John Musto's *Shadow of the Blues*. Musto is an American composer known for his wide variety of genres, including opera, concerto, orchestra works, choral works, and art song. Even though he has composed a lot of classical music, his diversity of style is influenced by genres like jazz, ragtime, and the blues. He has been a recipient of two Emmy awards, two CINE awards, and he was a Pulitzer Prize finalist. He is currently on the piano faculty at the CUNY Graduate Center in New York (John Musto, n.d.).

Shadow of the Blues was composed in 1986 and is made up of settings of poems by Langston Hughes. According to Daniel Hunter-Holly, Musto once spoke about the poems he set in this collection, saying that "I remember seeing them and actually thinking they were song lyrics, not poems" (Hunter-Holly 2007, 17-18). It is well-known that Hughes's works shed a light on Black America and explore racism, adversity, and black beauty. Yet, he also had a background as a lyricist, writing text for composers like Kurt Weill, William Grant Still, and Margaret Bonds. Musto took his poetry and blended it with jazz and classical influences to create some unique and beautiful music in *Shadow of the Blues*. In this chapter, I will analyze the poetry and music of this set and describe the challenges of learning and interpreting this music.

The first song of the set, “Silhouette,” spins the topic of lynching into a satirical story, as there are several elements in the poem that contribute to that. One example is how Hughes used “dark of the moon” even though people recognize the moon for its light in the darkness. Hunter-Holly suggests that this was because it brought attention to the fact that the people responsible for lynching did not want to be seen (Hunter-Holly 2007, 19). I am speculating that this is why Musto brought attention to that phrase by composing it as a triplet every time it occurred in the song.

Another observation of the poetry is at the end, where it speaks of how America (Dixie) protects the white woman and tells them to “be good.” In the music, on the first “be good,” the vocalist starts on the highest note and continues to descend until the end of the song, and the piano part is just as it was in the beginning with its descending syncopated rhythm. Yet, Musto adds a third “be good,” where the piano parts ascends instead of descends. This brought a more questioning quality to the end of the song, which may have been the intent. Hunter-Holly suggests that the repetition of “be good” could imply that white women are guilty of seducing Black men or making up stories against them as well (Hunter-Holly 2007, 19).

The second song of the set is “Litany.” The song was originally called “Prayer,” but Musto said that he did not see this song as religious. It was directed to the audience, as it asks them to have pity and love for those people who are not as fortunate as they are. There are many musical elements that make this song unique and beautiful. There is the introduction, which is longer than “Silhouette.” The voice is not heard until m. 14. Musto also brings attention to specific phrases by using different rhythmic patterns. There is the short, syncopated rhythm in which he describes “the sick, the depraved, the desperate, the

tired.” Note the triplet pattern within the phrase “All the scum of our weary city.” He puts the highest note in the song on the word “love” in the phrase “arms of your love” and it is *forte*, as if this is the last cry for help for those who are sick and depraved. Also, it is interesting how Musto ends in the major key, yet it is on a phrase like “those who expect no love from above,” as if he is trying to bring some semblance of hope for the sick and depraved.

The last song of the set is “Could be,” which is the song most clearly influenced by jazz and blues idioms. The locations within this poem show how influenced this poem is by jazz and blues. Hastings Street in Detroit, Lenox Avenue in Harlem, 18th and Vine in Kansas City, 5th and Mound in Columbus, Ohio, and Rampart in New Orleans are all famous jazz locations in the United States. The rhythm in this song is quite complex, as Musto states that he was trying to bring more of the swing quality into his writing (Hunter-Holly 2007, 32). Also, Musto uses the lowered third and fifth in the vocal part quite frequently in this song, which are closely associated to the blues genre. The rhythm and tonality stay consistent throughout the song except for a few places. One is the stanza starting with “Could be you love me” and ending with “Like as not you won’t,” as the vocal line becomes syncopated against the accompaniment. Another instance is at the end where the rhythm slows down as Musto highlights the word “dreary” by taking the piano away from a tonal center and having the performer sing a G5, which further emphasizes the blues style of this song.

There are many challenges involved in performing this set, especially with regard to the rhythm. Each song has its unique rhythms and phrases that take a long time to learn and sing correctly. As stated in the last chapter, count singing is a reliable practice option

for challenges like these. Slowing down and making sure that each rhythm is perfectly sung is critical for this challenging music, and indeed with songs in general. Another challenge in this set was incorporating the blues and jazz influences in my voice while maintaining my healthy, classical vocal technique. In the song “Could be,” there are many times where I want to switch into the blues and jazz style vocally, but I had to remember to stay full and technically sound throughout. Yet, there were instances in the song that required me to switch my voice to a blues style. There was a falsetto note on both “dreary” and “you” in the last phrase of “Could be,” which required me to practice using my falsetto a lot more. This set presents a satiric, yet powerful message that highlights issues that are prevalent in America, and in order for the message to resonate with the audience, it is important that the singer has the vocal and rhythmic challenges under control. This set has the power to keep an audience’s attention and move them to an emotional level that they probably did not think they could reach.

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