

ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: SINGING THE THEATRICAL MONOLOGUE:
A MUSICIAN'S PERSPECTIVE

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This performance dissertation focuses on vocal literature for soprano composed to the text of a monologue. The composer either excerpted the monologue text from a play or set a monologue written by a playwright for a specific actor. The purpose of the project is to examine vocal works that lend themselves to minimal staging, thereby creating a more theatrical recital presentation that differs from the usual vocal recital.

The ensuing paper details three performances in Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center:

1) the operatic presentation of Dominick Argento's opera *Miss Havisham's Fire* (focusing specifically on the Epilogue), performed by the Maryland Opera Studio in the Kay Theatre, April 21-29, 2012;

2) a recital performed on September 7, 2012 in the Gildenhorn Recital Hall featuring: *Banquo's Buried* by Alison Bauld, *La dame de Monte-Carlo* by Francis Poulenc, *Lady Macbeth* by Thomas Pasatieri, and *Night Flight to San Francisco* by Ricky Ian Gordon;

3) a recital performed in the Leah M. Smith Lecture Hall on March 30, 2013, featuring: *The Italian Lesson* by Lee Hoiby, *Queen Margaret: She-Wolf of France* by Alison Bauld, and *Final Monologue from "Master Class"* by Jake Heggie.

Each chapter examines the literary and historical aspects of the work as well as basic compositional elements used by the composer when setting the text. Composer comparisons and performance observations conclude this project. The University of Maryland library system contains DVD and audio recordings of all performances.

SINGING THE THEATRICAL MONOLOGUE:
A MUSICIAN'S PERSPECTIVE

By

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INTRODUCTION

“To be or not to be,” “I can smell the sea-air,” “Well, I wasn’t in the mood to play bridge,” and “How strange everything really is!” launch an actor into the recitation of a famous monologue, inviting the audience into the psyche of that character’s soul. The theatrical monologue is the beginning of any actor’s initial training and the subsequent audition staple throughout his career. Actor/Teacher Uta Hagen defines the monologue as:

the character talking to himself out loud, or to absent characters, or to objects surrounding him at a given time in a given place for a specific reason at the moment of crisis...a monologue will always be words representing the character’s thoughts or a part of his thoughts.¹

Equally, “Porgi amor,” “O mio babbino caro,” “Nessun dorma,” and “Ritorna vincitor” begin beloved arias that the operatic singer has prepared years to deliver to send a chill down the opera patron’s spine. The action stops as the singer expresses herself, exposing the character’s next inner layer, and offering her beautiful vocal gift to the admiring crowd. Opera director Mark Clark defines the aria as:

The synthesis of the composer and librettist’s intent for a character—a highly charged dramatic or comic moment that can only be expressed musically...deal[ing] with inner and outer conflict, obstacles of every kind, and deep-seated, passionate desires.²

Both authors give us similar definitions for the solo moment, both theatrical, both allowing the character to unfold her piece of the story. In straight theatre and in operatic

¹ Uta Hagen, *Respect for Acting, with Haskel Frankel*, (NY: Wiley Publishing, Inc., 1973), 119.

² Mark Ross Clark, *Singing, Acting, and Movement in Opera: a Guide to Singer-getics*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), 1.

theatre, the character may be alone or speaking to one or more people on stage. The actor or singer usually performs with others in an ensemble situation of a play, musical, opera or operetta. In theatre, one rarely performs without at least one other person in the cast, unless a producer mounts a one-man or one-woman show. Only the bravest of the brave takes on the solo acting “recital” or one-person show.

Author Michael Kearns states that so few solo shows premiere because they are “a four-letter word: w-o-r-k.” The writer/producer, who may also be the performer, will spend hundreds of hours in preparation, rehearsal, re-writes, public relations, and travel for a small, possibly unknown event.³ English actor Roy Dotrice, who played one-man shows featuring Churchill and Lincoln, confesses that “Acting solo is ‘the ultimate in egotism...you require an exceedingly large ego to stand up there and think you can hold an audience’s attention for a couple of hours. But there’s nothing I know that’s more satisfying...It’s just you out there—no one else.’”⁴ The financial burden can be a deterrent, but as actor John Gielgud, who toured extensively with his Shakespeare recital *Ages of Man*, stated bluntly, “If you have anything to sell—talent or merchandise—there is always someone to buy it.”⁵ Mounting the one-person show can “become a hedge against unemployment, a do-it-yourself pension plan and a ticket out of the rut,” as author Jordan Young reports in *Acting Solo: The Art of One-Man Shows*.⁶

³ Michael Kearns, *The Solo Performer’s Journey: From the Page to the Stage*, (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Drama, 2005), viii.

⁴ Jordan R. Young, *Acting Solo: The Art of One-Man Shows*, (Beverly Hills, CA: Moonstone Press, 1989), 23.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 23.

⁶ Young, *Acting Solo: The Art of One-Man Shows*, 22.

However, in the classical vocal field, one expects to sing both solo vocal recitals (with only a collaborative pianist accompanying), as well as solo works performed with some form of instrumental accompaniment, throughout one's career. The training for an undergraduate and graduate singer demands a one-person show—the vocal recital—as the culminating point. As she delivers each solo piece, she has an advantage over the actor: the accompanying music. The expert composer uses musical elements in the accompaniment to suggest the subtext and enhance the emotional mood. Sadly, the actor does not have this advantage. Yet even with time-tested music, the traditional vocal recital no longer draws crowds.

So as the traditional vocal recital appears to wane in audience interest, especially in America, what is an aging, classically trained soprano with a flair for the dramatic (not expecting employment from any opera company any time soon) to do? Working up a theatrically based “show” of vocal works seemed a logical path. This research started with larger works that could function as the entire evening. Generally called a monodrama, there are a few famous ones, such as Poulenc's *La voix humaine* or Schoenberg's *Erwartung*. The exploration finally narrowed to vocal works for soprano composed to the text of a monologue, either excerpted from a play or written by a playwright for a specific actor.

A good “script” sparks the composer's theatrical muse to use all of his or her best compositional techniques when setting any text to music. Each composer presented in this dissertation melds words and music expertly allowing the singer and pianist opportunity to create a moment of dramatic inspiration for each work. Leon Major states,

“Together, musical and acting clues provide the foundation for creating characters on the stage.”⁷

⁷ Leon Major with Michael Laing, *The Empty Voice: Acting Opera*, (Milwaukee, WI: Amadeus Press, an Imprint of Hal Leonard Corporation, 2011), xvi.

CHAPTER I: SINGING THE THEATRICAL MONOLOGUE: A MUSICIAN'S PERSPECTIVE, PART 1

Miss Havisham's Wedding Night

During April 2012, the voice/opera division of the University of Maryland, in conjunction with the School of Music and Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center, presented "The Art of Argento: A Celebration of the Composer's Work," a retrospective of the music of American composer Dominick Argento. Faculty, students, staff, and guest artists presented all of his major song cycles, two world premieres, and the celebration culminated in three of his operas, including *Miss Havisham's Fire* (*Havisham*). Soprano Linda Mabbs, Professor of Voice, sang the tour-de-force leading role, which ends with an extended Epilogue. Discussion will center on this Epilogue as a potential theatrical monologue or monodrama for soprano.⁸

Havisham History

In 1977, Beverly Sills and Julius Rudel commissioned Argento to write an opera for the New York City Opera, both as her swan song from performing and for his last appearance as director. At the time, John Olon-Scrymgeour had only written the libretto (called *Miss Havisham's Wedding Night*) as a short monodrama for solo soprano based on the character of Miss Havisham from the Dickens novel *Great Expectations*. Argento liked the concept of expanding it to a full opera, pitched the idea to Sills and *Havisham* was born. Unfortunately, due to health reasons, Sills had to abandon singing the premiere specifically designed for her.⁹ *Havisham* premiered at City Opera in March

⁸ This author performed the role of Grace-Helen "Nanny" Broome in this production.

⁹ Jammieca D. Mott, "A Performer's Analysis of Dominick Argento's *Miss Havisham's Wedding Night*." DMA diss., University of North Texas, 2010. In ProQuest Dissertations and Theses, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/748996026?accountid=14696> (accessed March 6, 2012), 53.

1979. Originally, Argento intended that Sills sing both the young and old Havisham (the story unfolds in a series of flashbacks of Havisham). However, for the premiere, soprano Rita Shane sang the lead role as the older Havisham, and Gianna Rolandi, as the young Havisham.¹⁰ Although some reviews hailed the opera as a hearty success, the *New York Times* proclaimed it a failure, largely due to the length. As Argento reported to Jammieca Mott in an interview, “It was too big—too many scenes. I took Sills to heart when she said she wanted to feel ‘rung out like a rag.’ If Sills would have done it, it would have been well custom designed for her voice.”¹¹ Yet, Argento considers *Havisham* his favorite opera. He writes, “*Miss Havisham’s Fire* was the biggest failure of my career, and no other failure before or since has hurt nearly as much.”¹²

In an attempt to resurrect his failed work, Argento returned first to the thirty-minute epilogue, originally conceived as a separate work, *Miss Havisham’s Wedding Night*. He reduced the large orchestra to chamber size and reinstated the lines of text cut for the full opera, writing new music for them. He found that this monodrama worked as an effective theatre piece, and that it made a perfect double-bill with his monodrama for baritone, *A Water Bird Talk*. Both deal with failed marriage and share a similar orchestration. The re-worked monodrama premiered in May 1981 at the Guthrie Theatre in Minneapolis, with soprano Rita Shane returning to the role of Havisham.¹³

¹⁰ Dominick Argento, *Catalogue Raisonné As Memoir: A Composer’s Life*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), 91-92.

¹¹ Mott, “A Performer’s Analysis of Dominick Argento’s *Miss Havisham’s Wedding Night*,” 55.

¹² Argento, *Catalogue Raisonné As Memoir: A Composer’s Life*, 91-93.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 101-102.

Soprano Linda Mabbs recorded the monodrama in 1997 for Koch Classics as a duet recording with Baritone John Shirley-Quirk singing *A Water Bird Talk*. They had performed the two monologues at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC and, as Mabbs writes in an email, “we thought it would be an excellent National Endowment for the Arts project. After a lot of work and help from others, we received NEA funding and recorded the Argento companions.”¹⁴ This recording of the monodrama remains the only one commercially available.

Havisham Text

Great Expectations tells the story of blacksmith apprentice Pip and his rise in society through, what he thinks, is his association with the mysterious recluse, Aurelia Havisham. Despite her minimal appearances, Havisham’s presence pervades the novel and, ultimately she and her adopted daughter Estella change Pip’s life course. Olon-Scrymgeour took the descriptions of Havisham from Chapters VIII and XXII,¹⁵ and adapted them into a libretto for a classic stand-alone mad scene. The score sets the scene at “Satis House, Essex, England c.1850; Miss Havisham’s dressing room.”¹⁶ The composer writes in the preface of the score:

On the morning of her wedding day, Miss Havisham was dressing for the ceremony when a note arrived from the groom-to-be, jilting her; she smashed the clocks, blocked out the light and vowed never to leave her rooms or remove her bridal attire—complete except for the one shoe still lacking when the note was delivered. That melodramatic scene is found, of course, in Dickens’ *Great Expectations*, and is one of the classic examples of the *folle d’amour*

¹⁴ Linda Mabbs, e-mail message to author, April 2, 2013.

¹⁵ Charles Dickens, *Great Expectations: A Norton Critical Edition*, ed. Edgar Rosenberg, (NY: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1999), 49-52, 140-143.

¹⁶ Argento, *Catalogue Raisonné As Memoir: A Composer’s Life*, 4.

so prevalent in 19th century literature and enshrined in operas by Donizetti and Bellini.

Miss Havisham's Wedding Night grows out of that tradition and concerns itself with the consequences of her impetuous decision and how her solitary nights—endlessly repeated over a period of decades—were spent: vascillating between boredom and despair, madness and self-ridicule, reliving the traumatic moment, receiving imaginary visitors, and delivering an appeal or a tirade to the faithless and long-departed suitor.¹⁷

Although Olon-Scrymgeour did not extract this monologue from a play, the text could withstand a spoken delivery. He wrote it, as most librettists do, for a theatrical purpose, with no obvious rhyme scheme. Argento writes in an email interview, “A good libretto these days ought to sound like a play. Besides, I'm not happy with verse.”¹⁸ The score contains detailed stage directions for Havisham’s activities and consists of five sections:

- 1) An introduction of character, seemingly sane
- 2) Reliving the fateful wedding morning with a “visitation” by Grace-Helen “Nanny” Broome, her former governess,
- 3) A short transition back into reality
- 4) A command “visitation” from Matthew Compeyson, her would-be groom
- 5) The denouement of the evening ritual that ends with Estella at morning tea; character back to apparent sanity

Havisham slips from stability to instability and back, speaking to herself, Nanny, Father, Matthew, “Them,” as well as the chambermaid and Estella. Fortified by brandy and her obsessive will, she participates physically by acting out the fateful morning’s scene. She then collapses into normal morning tea to “teach” Estella the next lesson about men, rung out as Sills wanted. She has crossed the fine line of reality versus fantasy, making this a challenging scene for any actor. Speaking from intimate work with the musical setting of the text, Mabbs hesitates about the premise that this libretto could be a

¹⁷ Argento, *Catalogue Raisonné As Memoir: A Composer's Life*, 3.

¹⁸ Argento, e-mail message to author, May 3, 2012.

spoken monodrama. “To my mind, the music is what makes it. I suppose it could be done, but I’d always miss the music. It’s rather like having Mozart’s Don Giovanni speak instead of sing. It could work, but the da Ponte [libretto] is not as effective spoken as sung.”¹⁹

As stated in the Introduction, singers do get the added advantage of music to help with interpretation, which enhances the theatrical subtext. Just like his fellow composers whose works we discuss below, Argento focuses on character development, accurate word setting, and the underlying emotional intention. In an interview with Jammieca Mott, Argento says, “I feel very strongly about words... The weight of words and syllables/subtext is important. One must explore those things and reflect it in the music.”²⁰ To illustrate Havisham’s constant lapses from madness to present, both Olon-Scrymegeour and Argento wrote words and music in a rhapsodic, rather than structured, poetic form. Moods, thoughts and feelings constantly change in the libretto bringing a spontaneous believability to the emotionally unstable Havisham. Argento illustrates this by constantly changing tonality, layering tonalities, using recurring rhythmic motives, and writing numerous shades of color in the orchestra.²¹ He develops all through both passages of recitative and flexible, lyrical lines, which often soar into the highest soprano range. He decorates key words, such as “queen,” “open,” “up,” “good,” and “grand,” with turns, mordents and scalar passages that nod to the baroque and bel canto literature Beverly Sills was so famous for championing. When asked about writing music, especially for Havisham, that allows the singer to really show her full vocal capabilities

¹⁹ Linda Mabbs, e-mail message to author, April 2, 2013.

²⁰ Mott, “A Performer’s Analysis of Dominick Argento’s *Miss Havisham’s Wedding Night*,” 53.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 6-7.

as in bel canto literature, he writes, “I too love 'beautiful singing' and have often said I write to flatter the voice, but only when it works dramatically, not show-off stuff.”²²

When asked how long it took to learn this monodrama, Mabbs replied, “It took me about three months to perfect it to the point that I was happy enough to record it...It was wonderful to return to the monologue after it had stewed in my mind for several years. I think my performance of it in the opera was aided so much by that time away from it.” She reveals that the hardest part was learning the pitches, and at the end of the evening after singing the full opera, she was “exhilarated.”²³ In her dissertation on this epilogue, Jammieca Mott writes,

Recurrent motivic devices are prevalent throughout the piece. They serve to establish the form of the work, to strengthen the dramatic integration, and to unify the piece musically....Argento creates a majestic imagery through the text and orchestra. The presence of recitative, pedal points and woodwinds allows the singer to communicate the drama of the scene effectively.... Argento creates seamless transitions between recitative and aria, or arioso, a characteristic similar to the vocal writing of late romantic opera.²⁴

²² Argento, e-mail message to author, May 3, 2012.

²³ Linda Mabbs, e-mail message to author, April 2, 2013.

²⁴ Mott, “A Performer’s Analysis of Dominick Argento’s *Miss Havisham’s Wedding Night*,” 8-9.

CHAPTER II: SINGING THE THEATRICAL MONOLOGUE: A MUSICIAN'S PERSPECTIVE, PART 2

Singing the Theatrical Monologue, Part 2, performed on September 7, 2012 in the Gildenhorn Recital Hall, Clarice Smith Center for the Performing Arts, University of Maryland, pays homage to the “traditional” theatrical performances of great monologists, such as Ruth Draper, Joyce Grenfell, Hal Holbrook, and Pat Carroll. These musical monologue settings, either excerpted from a play or written by a playwright for a specific actor, use only the simplest of staging and props, with no multi-media to distract from the communication. Alison Bauld’s setting of Lady Macbeth’s sleepwalking monologue compares with a more extended Lady Macbeth scene by Thomas Pasatieri. In between them, Francis Poulenc’s paean to the gamblers of Monte-Carlo breaks the deadly mood, and Ricky Ian Gordon’s affirms the human spirit in a monologue by Tony Kushner.

Banquo’s Buried

Since he was living and writing at the Globe Theatre, the influence of English playwright William Shakespeare (1564-1616) has been pervasive throughout the world in all the arts, as well as numerous aspects of daily life. Except for, *perhaps*, religious writers such as those assembled in the Bible, the Koran, and the writings of the Buddha, no one writer has been studied, quoted, performed, reshaped, rephrased, and celebrated in every way imaginable as much as has William Shakespeare. In 1991, Oxford University Press published *A Shakespeare Music Catalogue*, a five-volume compendium of music composed up to December 31, 1987, to every line or poem Shakespeare wrote. The editors, Bryan N. S. Gooch, David Thatcher, and Odean Long, compiled over 20,000 listings of musical works either based on Shakespearean texts or written for a production.

As a quick review of the plot, Macbeth, a Scottish thane (or lord) of Glamis about the year 1040, consorts with a coven of witches, who predict that he will become King of Scotland. Therefore, he and his wife, Lady Macbeth, plot to assassinate Duncan, the current King of Scotland, along with several kinsmen, to gain the crown. Despite attaining the pinnacle of the Scottish throne, both Lord and Lady Macbeth lose not only peaceful nights of sleep, but they lose their closest advisors, their relationship, and ultimately their lives. Among theatre personnel, *Macbeth* has a cursed history, and many will not even speak the name “Macbeth,” but refer to it as “That Play.” This is likely because so many productions have been fraught with bad circumstances, and partly because of the influence of witchcraft.²⁵

The University of New South Wales commissioned *Banquo’s Buried: A Song for Soprano and Piano* by Australian composer Alison Bauld in 1982. It received its London debut in 1985, and Novello published it in 1989.²⁶ In examining how Bauld has set this monologue musically, one should note that besides her degrees in piano and composition, she studied drama at the National Institute of the Dramatic Arts in Australia, and worked as an actor in her youth. As Joyce Andrews reports, “What makes Bauld’s settings unique is her uncanny ability to meld the voice with the text in a dramatic fashion, often demanding a theatrical delivery from the performer,”²⁷ a reflection of her past training and experience. Bauld sets the texts of her vocal

²⁵ Alexander Leggatt, ed., *Macbeth: A Sourcebook*, (Oxon, England: Routledge, 2006), 1-2.

²⁶ Alison Bauld, *Banquo’s Buried: A Song for Soprano and Piano*, (London: Novello & Company, Ltd., 1989), Composer’s Note.

²⁷ Joyce Andrews, “Composer Alison Bauld and the Dramatic Element in her Settings of Shakespeare for Voice,” *Journal of Singing* 60, no. 1 (September/October 2003), 39.

compositions almost exclusively from Shakespeare including scenes from *Henry VI, Part 3*, *Othello*, *Richard III*, and *Merchant of Venice*.²⁸

Unlike Pasatieri's *Lady Macbeth*, discussed below, Bauld has set the sleepwalking monologue verbatim as a continuous monologue, only repeating the ending line. Bauld uses vocal and rhythmic compositional techniques to approximate speech delivery and highlight the underlying emotional mood she wants for the character in each moment of the work. The singer needs to start with hearing the sound of the voice speaking the text in order to sing it as written (a procedure beneficial for all vocal texts, not just theatrical monologue texts). Her setting incorporates angular vocal lines with displaced intervals at the octave, some spoken phrases notated as *Sprechstimme* (literally "speaking voice") which either melt into sung phrases, or quickly move back and forth between spoken and "sung" speech. For example, Bauld notates the opening line "Yet here's a spot" as half sung, half spoken; by the end of the page, Lady Macbeth's proclamation "why then, 'tis time to do't" is spoken with an approximate speech level indicated in the middle register.²⁹ She especially uses these sung-versus-spoken techniques when Lady "speaks" to her husband. Bauld specifically notes how to perform various phrases, with directions like "low, rapid whisper," "stagger rhythmically," and "free to spread, pause, stretch." She gives asterisks with notes on the notations, such as "gliss. (approx.) to note area on stave" and "without specific pitch, but lowest comfortable note."³⁰ These kinds of markings indicate that dramatic delivery based on

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Bauld, *Banquo's Buried*, 2

³⁰ Ibid., 3, 5, 7.

the speaking voice is the key element. As Ms. Bauld states in her Composer's Notes in the score:

The piece was conceived for all sopranos who enjoy a sense of theatre. The treatment owes a little to the composer's memory of a powerful and idiosyncratic performance of the role by Dame Sybil Thorndike. The manner was operatic and perhaps, even then, unfashionable, but there was a 'go-for-broke' spirit which made sense of the tragedy.³¹

The piano accompaniment functions as a true collaborative partner setting up each quick change with harmonic techniques such as dissonant chords containing half- and whole-step clusters, and clashing half-step relationships between the piano and the vocal line to illustrate the inner conflict of Lady Macbeth. For example, Bauld repeats arpeggiated figures to denote the wringing and washing of bloody hands, heavy chords for discovery and horror of past actions, and repeated melodies and lines of text to highlight a phrase or bring a climax to fruition emotionally. Bauld tends to incorporate some kind of lyrical melody in her pieces, so that despite the extended chord structures and vocal techniques, there are moments of melodic calm. Arguably, her first "melody" is during the line: "All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand. Oh! Oh! Oh!" (Pusatieri also has composed one of his most beautiful moments using this line.) Bauld appears to have an affinity for repetition in threes during a more lyrical section, as she repeats the line three times: "Come give me your hand. What's done cannot be undone. To bed, to bed." She indicates a slightly different dynamic marking for each repetition, along with subtly varied rhythms at the outset of the first "come," to heighten the emotional pitch and show the character attempting to persuade Macbeth. With her use of speech-oriented compositional techniques, as well as her dissonant contrasts

³¹ Bauld, *Banquo's Buried*, Composer's Notes.

melodically and harmonically, Bauld has set a complete theatrical moment for any soprano and pianist.

La dame de Monte-Carlo

In April 1961, Francis Poulenc (1899-1963) composed *La dame de Monte-Carlo*, a monologue for soprano and orchestra, setting a text by his long-time friend and collaborator, Jean Cocteau (also 1899-1963). Famous in artistic circles as a poet, novelist, dramatist, playwright, designer, artist and filmmaker, Cocteau wrote the monologue in the early 1930's for French singer-actress, Marianne Oswald (1903-1985). He patterned "La dame" after the famous courtesan La Belle Otero (née Agustina Otero Iglesias of Valga, Spain). Otero attained international fame as a "companion" to members of the royalty, including Prince Albert I of Monaco, King Edward VII of the United Kingdom, the kings of Serbia and Spain, as well as the Russian Grand Dukes Peter and Nicholas. By the time she "retired" in the 1950's, she had accumulated enormous wealth equivalent to \$360 million today. Sadly, she never learned to curb her gambling appetite and lost her entire fortune at the tables in Monte-Carlo. She died in April 1965 at the age of 96 living in an impoverished one-room apartment in the Hotel Novelty in Nice, France--nearly as poor as when she was born.³²

In mid-March 1961 during a visit to Cannes, Poulenc bought *Théâtre de Poche*, Cocteau's collection of monologues for character study, which includes "La dame." In his diary entry of April 3, 1961, Poulenc writes:

This monologue delighted me because it brought back to me the years 1923-1925 when I lived, together with Auric, in Monte

³² Arthur H. Lewis, *La Belle Otero*, (NY:Trident Press, 1967), 2-7.

Carlo....I have often enough seen at close quarters those old wrecks of women, light-fingered ladies of the gaming tables. In all honesty I must admit that Auric and I even came across them at the pawnshop where our imprudent youth led us once or twice.³³

Poulenc composed the work for his favorite actor-singer, Denise Duval. She premiered the piece in Monte-Carlo in November 1961, and gave the Parisian debut in December 1961.³⁴ Poulenc obviously respected both her acting and musical instincts. In an interview for the October 2009 issue of *Opera News*, she tells Stephen Mudge that Poulenc changed the ending of “La dame” at her suggestion. “It ended ‘Monte Carlo’....boom, boom, boom [three final chords]. I said, ‘Poupoule [the diva’s pet name for the composer], you can’t end like that, you must cut the last two chords.’ He protested, but as it was the dress rehearsal, we tried it, and he recognized it was a better ending.”³⁵ The chosen ending is a quick sixteenth note pianissimo chord, as “La dame” jumps into the Mediterranean. Of the work’s compositional structure, Poulenc wrote in his diary entry of April 3, 1961:

Conceived for a soprano voice and orchestra, this monologue presented a major difficulty: how to escape monotony while conserving an immutable rhythm. That is why I have tried to give a different colour to each verse of the poem. Sadness, pride, lyricism, violence and sarcasm. In the end miserable tenderness, anguish and splash into the sea....[it] should be sung like the prayer of Tosca! Yes, certainly!³⁶

³³ Francis Poulenc, *Diary of My Songs [Journal de mes mélodies]*, with a translation by Winifred Radford, (London: Victor Gollancz, Ltd., 1989), 111.

³⁴ Carl B. Schmidt, *The Music of Francis Poulenc (1899-1963)*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 499.

³⁵ Stephen Mudge, “Denise Duval,” *Opera News*, October 2009, 13.

³⁶ Francis Poulenc, *Diary of My Songs*, 113.

As with all vocal music of Poulenc, the key to “escaping the monotony” lies in following exactly the dynamic and tempi markings he has indicated throughout any work. Along with his fellow composers of the time, Poulenc religiously adhered to the unstressed flow of French, heavy only on the last tonic syllable of any phrase.³⁷ The words of “La dame” remain the prominent feature, allowing the character to tell her story. His accompaniment keeps a constant quarter or eighth-note rhythm, which can move with the desired speed of the language. His changing harmonic colors build the story’s tension to the inevitable conclusion.

Lady Macbeth

Often called “The American Puccini,” composer Thomas Pasatieri (b. 1945) has always written beautiful, tonal melodies that highlight the voice. Since his student days in the 1960’s at Juilliard and Aspen Schools of Music, he has championed traditional functional harmony. His fellow composers, on the other hand, were experimenting with composition techniques, such as serialism, minimalism, atonality, dodecophony, and chance music. He writes music reminiscent of the “bel canto” era, showing off what the voice can do at its best. After spending twenty years as a vocal coach, opera director and opera composer, he moved to Hollywood, composing and orchestrating for numerous film and television projects. In the last ten years, he has returned to “serious” composition, even performing his own piano concerto with the Spanish Symphony.³⁸ For

³⁷ Thomas Grubb, *Singing in French: A Manual of French Diction and French Vocal Repertoire*, (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Group/Thomson Learning, 1979), 16.

³⁸ Beth Bauer, “Twentieth-Century American Composer, Thomas Pasatieri: An Examination of Style as Illustrated by the Works Set to the Text of American Poet Kit van Cleave.” DMA diss., Ohio State University, 1996. In ProQuest Dissertations and Theses, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/304288650?accountid=14696> (accessed July 8, 2012), 1-3.

the voice, he has written several “monodramas” for solo soprano, including *Before Breakfast*, *The Daughter of Capulet*, and *Lady Macbeth*. Pasatieri composed *Lady Macbeth* for soprano Lauren Flanigan, who premiered the work in 2008.

Pasatieri creates a twenty-minute scene by piecing together parts of Lady Macbeth’s speeches throughout Shakespeare’s play, which are both solo monologues and bits of dialogue she speaks to Macbeth. He reverses the scene order in one section, apparently for smoother theatrical flow. In place of the original dialogue, he writes short, musical interludes to allow for theatrical transitions. As Lady Macbeth contemplates her husband’s evil deed, Pasatieri writes some of his most playful and depictive music. Borrowing from baroque and bel canto operatic traditions as Argento does in *Havisham*, he uses decorative coloratura to express various words, such as “fire,” “gives,” “open,” and “mock.” This writing exudes the biting moment of mockery Lady Macbeth enjoys as she thinks about the night’s deeds. Coloratura passages such as these, which are so prominent in vocal works of the seventeenth through nineteenth centuries, occur infrequently in contemporary vocal writing. Pasatieri and Argento are among the few contemporary composers to include these kinds of figures throughout their vocal works.³⁹ Singers enjoy singing music with these traditional conventions, as it feels “right” in the voice. In an interview with Beth Bauer in July 1995, Pasatieri states:

I started writing music that was grateful to sing, because when I studied, I studied not only composition, but I used to go to the classes of the voice teachers, to the individual lessons and listen...I always worked with singers and my friends were singers, so it was natural for me to want to write for the voice.⁴⁰

³⁹ Albeit, almost all of the compositions sung in these two recitals have at least one passage of vocal melisma in the bel canto style.

⁴⁰ Beth Bauer, “Twentieth-Century American Composer, Thomas Pasatieri,” 15.

Pasatieri vs Bauld

Throughout the monodrama, Pasatieri certainly has dissonant passages, but they are generally shifting tonalities of color, rather than the bolder harmonic clashes and extended speech effects that Bauld favors. Pasatieri uses the operatic convention of recitative for Lady Macbeth's spoken dialogue to her husband. While the voice is often alone in the recitative sections, the vocal lines lend themselves more to singing than speaking.

During the final sleepwalking scene, his writing is largely accompanied recitative, and he sets rather subtle key shifts in his harmonic language for each change of Lady Macbeth's dream thoughts. Such subtle musical changes require the soprano-actress to show character thought changes more from a textual standpoint than a musical one. He leaves out the text sequences of "the Thane of Fife" and "wash your hands.....Banquo's buried..." He does not employ any speaking in the piece, as Bauld does. From a performance standpoint, one might miss these phrases, but luckily, Pasatieri has written a musical transition to allow the soprano to use the missing lines as subtext. His final page reaches a quiet denouement as Lady Macbeth implores her husband to take her hand and come to bed. Like Bauld, he writes one of the most beautiful singing lines for "all the perfumes of Arabia." He effectively works the same tuneful, syncopated figure into various parts of the score especially throughout the first scene, as well as during Lady Macbeth's invocation of the spirits and in the transition when Macbeth leaves to kill Duncan.

The contrasts between the Bauld and the Pasatieri settings are quite striking. These two composers were born within one year of each other, yet they have chosen

vastly different compositional languages. One has to ask which is more effective in capturing the essence of the character of Lady Macbeth. It depends on one's perspective. The actress may chose Bauld, as she gives very direct subtext to the writing through the ebb and flow of dissonance to consonance, which is desired in the theatre. Whereas the singer may be happier with the Pasatieri as his traditional tonalities, melodic lines, and coloratura allow the operatically trained voice to really sing. One could argue his piece is "too pretty" for such a dark character as Lady Macbeth, and one does have to work to find the darker qualities easily found in Bauld's depiction. However, both settings offer the singing-actress and her audience intense and rewarding musical and theatrical moments.

Night Flight to San Francisco: Harper's Monologue

American composer Ricky Ian Gordon sets *Night Flight to San Francisco* to the Act V, Scene 10 monologue of Harper Pitt from *Angels in America Part Two: Perestroika* by playwright Tony Kushner. In his Program Note for the score of *Night Flight*, Gordon writes of the personal experience of losing his partner to AIDS, which eventually resulted in writing his first opera *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, premiered by Houston Grand Opera. When asked what he wanted to do next, he writes that he "wanted to work with Tony Kushner. No other play in my own personal history had such a profound effect on me as his "Angels in America" in terms of the confluence of my life's events and that content of the play."⁴¹ In 1999, Gordon eventually collaborated with

⁴¹ Ricky Ian Gordon, *Night Flight to San Francisco: Harper's Monologue from "Angels in America" for Soprano and Piano*, (Bryn Mawr: Theodore Presser Company, 2011), 2.

Kushner for an evening of “Words Spoken/Words Sung,” in which they performed from their own works. Gordon gleefully writes, “We even read scenes together from his plays...I ACTED with Tony Kushner! To surprise Tony that night, I set Harper’s final monologue to music for “Angels in America” which Angelina Réaux sang that night.”⁴² Later that year, Gordon gave a copy of *Night Flight* to soprano Renée Fleming, and she included it in a year 2000 concert at Lincoln Center called “Premieres” that she sang with pianist Richard Bado.

Set in 1985 New York, *Angels in America* features a small cross-section of the gay community enjoying more freedom to “come out,” while coping with the ravages of the AIDS epidemic. Joe and Harper Pitt, a conservative Mormon couple, have moved from Utah to New York. Joe has taken a job with his mentor, famous (or infamous) McCarthyist lawyer Roy Cohn. As Joe experiments with his homosexuality, unhappy Harper sinks deeper into her Valium-induced hallucinations. At the very end of the play, she opts to leave Joe, and departs New York on a red eye to San Francisco. In this monologue, she relates a dream to her seatmate that she had of flying to the rim of the disintegrating ozone.⁴³

Throughout all his vocal music, Gordon’s compositional style lends itself easily to the theatre, both in the musical figures and in the shape of the vocal lines as they depict speech. He offers musical motives and gestures that suggest both the thinking subtext of the character, and the dream she unfolds, such as the plane leaping the tropopause and the souls rising and spinning. His opening and closing measures feature a descending fifth

⁴² Ricky Ian Gordon, *Night Flight to San Francisco*, 2.

⁴³ Tony Kushner, *Angels in America, Part Two: Perestroika*, (NY: Theatre Communications Group, Inc., 1994), 144.

followed by a syncopated figure, which set the “reflective” mood of his tempo indication: “Reflective, freely.” After she finishes describing her dream, Gordon gives Harper nearly a page of interlude as he develops previous motivic patterns. For most singers, this very long interlude can seem an eternity, but when asked about it in a telephone interview on August 21, 2012, Gordon said, “It is a singer’s job to be transparent and embody the text. A person must reflect before she says the ending.”⁴⁴ He finally brings her back to reality with calmer block chords, as she attempts to explain her interpretation of the dream, and her belief that progress is painful in this world. The opening motivic figure allows Harper to finish her conversation full circle with a tentative, almost polite, affirmation of her belief.

Gordon revealed that he chose Harper’s monologue, because “Tony took someone standing outside, who is hurt, rejected sexually, and yet she has a dream of the entire universe healing...she is suddenly the voice of passion and empathy. Tony turns the hurt [of all the characters] to a universal theme and unites them all.”⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Ricky Ian Gordon, telephone interview with author, August 21, 2012.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

CHAPTER III: SINGING THE THEATRICAL MONOLOGUE: A MUSICIAN'S PERSPECTIVE, PART 3

The third presentation of *Singing the Theatrical Monologue* again paid homage to the “traditional” theatrical performances of great monologists with three works by Lee Hoiby, Alison Bauld, and Jake Heggie.

The Italian Lesson

In January 1982, American composer Lee Hoiby finished *The Italian Lesson: A Musical Monolog* [sic]. Hoiby had already won acclaim for his songs and his early operas *The Scarf*, *Natalia Petrovna*, and *Summer and Smoke*. Brian Kellow reports in an *Opera News* interview that Hoiby's friends had been urging him to consider the classic Ruth Draper monologue since the 1970's. He hesitated and confessed, "I just wrote it off as a possibility... I said no way would I ever go near it, because it depended so much on Ruth Draper's own inflections. She was a great performer, the Lily Tomlin of her day."⁴⁶

Current theatre audiences may not recognize the name Ruth Draper (1884-1956), but the American monologist had a career spanning more than four decades from 1910 to the night of her death in 1956. As a child growing up in a privileged home in New York City, Draper would devise little skits and entertainments for family and friends. As an adult, she wrote and performed monologues based on people she had observed closely, such as her German nanny, a Jewish tailor, and high society women she met through her family connections. She would perform at dinner parties, schools, and club events,

⁴⁶ Brian Kellow, "Jean Stapleton stars in Lee Hoiby's musical monologues THE ITALIAN LESSON and BON APPÉTIT!" *Opera News*, September 1991, http://www.operanews.com/Opera_News_Magazine/Archive/1991/9/Features/Double_Recipe.Html (accessed December 28, 2012), online.

finally deciding to brave it as a solo performer in theatrical venues after encouragement from her mentors: pianist Ignacy Paderewski and writer Henry James. As reviewer Richard Hornsby says, Ruth Draper was “one of America's greatest actors and writers [who] never appeared in a stage play or film, and never published a word....[she] performed nonstop for over four decades on every inhabited continent, often in front of royalty, to unflinching acclaim. For her Broadway shows, the stagehands, who usually spend most of their time playing cards or doing crossword puzzles, would watch spellbound night after night.”⁴⁷

Draper would appear on a nearly bare stage, perhaps only with a chair or table.

As biographer Morton Zabel reports, she was

simply garbed or scantily disguised, perhaps equipped with a peignoir, a dustcoat, or an evening cloak, sometimes with an odd hat, hand-bag, lorgnette, or umbrella, or most characteristically with one of the shawls that became her particular insignia: a peasant's cowl, a Scottish paisley, a darned or knitted shoulder-cloth, a mantilla, a swaddling-cloth for a child—scarves of adroit and magical evocation. For that brief moment the figure was obviously and perilously alone on the empty boards. But in a flash the solitary woman was transformed into someone else—a young bride, a New York matron, an Irish country woman, a breathless débutante, a Balkan peasant, a tourist in Italy. ... a few more moments and the scene began to fill with people; a background became all but visible; an atmosphere filled the air—of excitement, of teeming domesticity, of distracting action, of solitude or forlorn desolation. All these were fixed and held in the mind's eye for ten minutes, twenty minutes, or half an hour, while the performer surrendered herself to the character and world she concentrated in her voice, words, and gestures. Presently the words ended; the figure disappeared; and until another took its place the theatre was left to reverberate with the glimpse of life and destiny that had been made real. Only then was the spectator reminded that everything he had felt, heard, and “seen” was the creation of a single person, a single voice

⁴⁷ Richard Hornsby, “Ruth Draper,” *The Hudson Review* 55, no. 1 (Spring 2002), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3852862> (accessed December 26, 2012), 123.

and body, and of the fewest aids to illusion he was likely to witness in a lifetime of theatre-going.⁴⁸

The Italian Lesson became one of Ruth Draper's "classic" monologues, and one she repeated often throughout her career. Hoiby separated the monologue into ten scenes, which, if performed in total, occur in the course of about forty-five minutes in the very busy life of Mrs. Clancy, a wealthy, well-connected Manhattan matron. She attempts to squeeze in an Italian lesson with the "Signorina" as she juggles phone calls, children, household staff, and secretary. Hoiby reports to Kellow that he started with the section where Mrs. Clancy dictates the evening menu to Jane the cook. "I wrote it in about six minutes. It just flew off the end of the pencil. Right away, Bill Bolcom and Joan Morris did it out at the Aspen Festival, and the audience loved it. I went on and set the rest of it, little by little. There were no blocks -- it went rather easily."⁴⁹

As Hoiby looked for stage performance possibilities, conductor "John Mauceri came along and said, 'Send it to Jean Stapleton. She's a singer.' And she loved it."⁵⁰ Famous for her portrayal of Edith Bunker in the hit TV series, *All in the Family*, Jean Stapleton actually spent more time in Broadway musicals than in straight plays.⁵¹ She embraced the project. Hoiby wrote his one-act opera *Bon Appetit!*, after a Julia Child TV presentation, to extend the evening. Stapleton took the double-bill on the road to "Des Moines, Los Angeles, Baltimore and Washington's Kennedy Center" finally opening on

⁴⁸ Morton Dauwen Zabel, *The Art of Ruth Draper: Her Dramas and Characters, with a memoir*, (NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1960), 6.

⁴⁹ Brian Kellow, "Jean Stapleton stars in Lee Hoiby's musical monologues THE ITALIAN LESSON and BON APPÉTIT!," online.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

September 16, 1991 off- Broadway in “New York for a six-week engagement at Classic Stage Company on East Thirteenth Street.”⁵²

Hoiby’s music allows the drama to unfold through the vehicle of the words. He chose his texts carefully, usually with the assistance of his partner and collaborator Mark Shulgasser. He reported that he did not approach a text with a pre-conceived notion about the form, but rather let the form develop from the text.⁵³ Hoiby’s most influential teacher and mentor was Gian Carlo Menotti, who stressed counterpoint throughout his training. As John Rice observes, “Hoiby’s stress on counterpoint in a tonal context is reinforced by his music’s rhythmic vitality. Ostinatos, the rhythmical breaking up of chords, metric variation, and the occasional use of duple against triple create an energetic and continuous sense of forward motion.” Hoiby is “a master at executing the text rhythmically into the contours and durations of the language, [and he] achieves an expression of the text in a disarmingly simple and straightforward way.”⁵⁴ For *The Italian Lesson*, Hoiby obviously was familiar with Draper’s performances, and wanted to achieve a sense of her vocal inflection and speech pacing in his music. In the preface of the vocal score, Hoiby writes:

In composing this work, I have tried to follow Ruth Draper’s recorded reading as my guide to rhythm, pitch and inflection. Where I depart is where her own inherent music invites it. Passages marked “recit.” Should be sung quite freely, using speech as a guide. Pitches are often less important than expression and rhythm. . . . I urge any prospective performer of this work to listen closely to her

⁵² Brian Kellow, “Jean Stapleton stars in Lee Hoiby’s musical monologues THE ITALIAN LESSON and BON APPÉTIT!” online.

⁵³ John Robin Rice, “The Songs of Lee Hoiby.” DMA diss., University of Cincinnati, 1993. In ProQuest dissertation and Theses, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/304032445?accountid=1469> (accessed December 26, 2012), 17.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 13.

original recording...and to use it as a guide; the singer may discover new suppleness in her style.⁵⁵

Each of the ten sections presents its own musical individuality (expressed through textual rhythm, melodic line, and piano accompaniment) to match both the conversational pace, personality and relationship Mrs. Clancy has when speaking to that person. In the Scene Summary of the eight scenes presented, discussion focuses on each momentary “plot,” and how the musical elements support and illustrate the characters of that moment. Draper’s character delineation and Hoiby’s scene organization easily lend themselves to the performer catering this work to her own dramatic instincts.

The Italian Lesson Scene Summary

I. Signorina

Wealthy Manhattan socialite Mrs. Clancy hires a young Italian woman to give her Italian lessons. As Mrs. Clancy claims to “care more for this than for anything I do,” and that she has “always kept up her Italian,” she is thrilled to finally be reading and translating Dante’s “Inferno.” With a mediocre Italian accent, she manages to read and translate the first sentence, but she keeps interrupting the lesson to philosophize about Dante, Virgil and Shakespeare. She realizes she must tell Jane the cook what to fix for the evening dinner party. She stops the lesson, and her three children enter the room playing.

As throughout most of this opera, Hoiby moves easily here between a “singing” vocal line and a conversational vocal line. He fills out the accompaniment with broken, block, or arpeggiated chords under the more lyrical vocal lines, and he uses a rolled or held chord or pitch during the more “spoken” vocal lines. He repeats the one Italian sentence Mrs. Clancy manages to speak as a transitional phrase between the first five scenes. After each interruption, Mrs. Clancy comes back to “run through” her “beautiful lines again.” Hoiby sets this sentence with an Italianate flavor using mainly homophonic block chords, allowing Mrs. Clancy to become more and more rhapsodic throughout the scenes.

II. Mabel Norton

Not performed.

⁵⁵ Lee Hoiby, *The Italian Lesson: A Musical Monolog for high or medium voice and chamber orchestra after Ruth Draper*, (NY: Rock Valley Music, Co., 1984), Preface.

III. Jane

Jane the cook enters and Mrs. Clancy discusses the menu for that evening's dinner party. Her husband calls wanting his golf paraphernalia sent on the afternoon train. The children interrupt, and eventually Mrs. Clancy finalizes the evening menu with Jane.

For the conversation with Jane, Hoiby establishes a quick, no-nonsense triplet figure between the bass and treble of the piano, using a ground bass-like melody in the left hand. He varies the tonality, meter and rhythmic patterns when she gets excited trying to re-create a French recipe. He offers a high-pitched tremolo every time the phone rings, and switches to sparse, open chords to denote Mrs. Clancy's bored, listlessness when speaking to her husband, and constantly changing meters and rhythms when dealing with the children. In the first five scenes, both the children and her Italian sentence for the Signorina function as consistent scene transitions with similar music and rhythmic relationships each time.

IV. Miss Pounder

Mrs. Clancy tries to settle into her Italian lesson. She receives a return call from her son's math teacher, Miss Pounder. They discuss Billy's math issues, and Mrs. Clancy decides they will "just give up mathematics" for the time. As she starts reading her Italian sentence again, the children burst into the room.

Hoiby sets a contentious, driving half measure triplet figure, mostly in the right hand, against bursts of short chromatic runs in the bass. Using continuous chromaticism, he achieves an edgy uncomfortable atmosphere one might have in a discussion with a child's teacher, which builds the triplet figure to a climax as Mrs. Clancy decides Billy's current fate in math.

V. Puppy

The children interrupt yet again, bringing their long-awaited new puppy to show Mrs. Clancy. She decides they will name him "Dante" ("Dan for short") because "he came in the middle of [her] Dante lesson." Trying one more time to read her Italian, she suddenly realizes the hour is late, makes another appointment for a "nice long, quiet lesson," and bids goodbye to the Signorina. Calling for her personal attendant Marie, she gears up to full command mode, as she must leave in "fifteen minutes."

As Mrs. Clancy explains the puppy's arrival to the Signorina, Hoiby writes constant trills, first passing from one hand to the other, then together, establishing a nervous, apologetic mood. Commands to the children have sweeping arpeggios of sixteenth-note figures, as she tries to hurry the situation. Halting block chords stop her as she admires the puppy, and open chords underscore speech-oriented recitative. With one last repetition of the Italian sentence, the accompaniment varies between quieter "romantic" lines (as Mrs. Clancy tells the Signorina how much she loves her Italian

lessons) and quicker, short rhythmic patterns as she shores up the next lesson time. Hoiby uses a fast triplet figure as she calls for the Marie, which denotes her urgency to get out of the house.

VI. Count Bluffsky

Not performed.

VII. Miss Swift

As Mrs. Clancy starts her final primping, her secretary Miss Swift enters. The first order of business is to find some “men for the opera on Monday.” She takes a call from her friend, Camilla.

Hoiby sets a steady, more deliberate half-note feel with a continuous eighth-note figure in the right hand off a constant bass beat. This rhythmic pattern gives the feeling of thinking and churning something over while trying to make a decision. The constancy gives the feeling that Miss Swift brings a steady presence midst the Clancy whirlwind.

VIII. Camilla

Friend Camilla calls to chat. Mrs. Clancy decides she can squeeze in lunch with Camilla at 1p.m.

“Camilla” has a nearly constant sixteenth-note arpeggio moving throughout the conversation. The rhythmic energy suggests the quick level of chatter and quick decisions of a busy woman and a “busy-body.”

IX. Miss Swift, cont.

Mrs. Clancy continues with her requests for Miss Swift, which include organizing charitable committees, sending donations, and giving away concert tickets. She then alternates commands between Marie and Miss Swift, taking a “business” call in the mid-command. She sends them both out of the room on errands.

Hoiby returns to the same half-note rhythm for *Miss Swift, cont.* As Mrs. Clancy stops to think and listen to Miss Swift’s responses, he reduces the accompaniment to short little bursts in the piano. These quick figures start to develop, but are cut off by Mrs. Clancy’s continuing commands, just as are her employees. Most of her speaking is quick recitative.

X. The Lover

Alone at last, Mrs. Clancy’s tone gets attentive, and even sexy. Her conversation and mood sound like that of a teenage girl, as she makes plans to see her companion. She gives her final commands to her employees before departing.

Hoiby writes his paean to Wagner in this scene, with constantly shifting tonalities during the lover's call. This harmonic structure offers the typical Wagnerian constant longing for resolution saturated with underlying, unreleased passion. At the end of Mrs. Clancy's "goodbye," we finally have a resolved cadence, albeit in a minor key. Hoiby quickly shifts the pace into a major tonality for her last commands to Miss Swift and Marie, leaving the house with the feeling of a well-spent morning.

Queen Margaret: She-Wolf of France

In 2003, soprano Helen Noonan commissioned *Queen Margaret: She-Wolf of France, a dramatic scena for soprano and piano* by Australian composer Alison Bauld. The text is from Act I, Scene IV of Shakespeare's *Henry VI, Part III*. Shakespeare's tetralogy of Henry VI plays are among his earliest works produced, and they remain some of his least performed plays. They make up the eight history plays, along with *Richard II*, *Henry IV parts I and II*, *Henry V*, and *Richard III*.⁵⁶ Shakespeare's histories stretch from 1376 at the end of the Hundred Years War with France through the monarchical civil unrest of the Wars of the Roses. The houses of Lancaster and York fought for the monarchy and carried, respectively, the emblem of a red or white rose. Lancastrian descendant Henry Tudor (i.e., Henry VII) finally ended this civil contention by killing Richard III and marrying Elizabeth York, bringing the two families together on the throne.⁵⁷ The character of Queen Margaret is one of two characters to appear throughout the *Henry VI* tetralogy and *Richard III*. Margaret of Anjou, daughter of King René I and cousin of French King Charles, appears at the end of *I Henry VI* as a prisoner of the Earl of Suffolk. As part of the truce with France, Suffolk arranges for her to

⁵⁶ Michael Hattaway, ed. *The Third Part of King Henry VI*, (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 4.

⁵⁷ Barbara A. Mowat and Paul Werstine, eds., "Authorship of *Henry VI, Part 3*," in *Henry VI, Part 3*, by William Shakespeare, The Folger Shakespeare Library edition. (NY: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 2009), 272-273.

become the queen consort for King Henry VI, plotting eventually to make her his mistress.⁵⁸

Historically, Queen Margaret assumed some of the public “kingly duties” of her husband, such as creating a network of followers and rallying troops behind her cause. Royal scholars regard Henry VI “as a pious weakling lacking the qualities of heroic masculinity,”⁵⁹ and compare him negatively through the tetralogy to his famous father, Henry V, who conquered France. The final straw for Queen Margaret happens at the beginning of *3 Henry VI*, when Henry promises Richard, Duke of York the throne if he can remain king until his death, thereby shutting out his own son, rightful heir Prince Edward. Outraged at Henry’s cowardice, Margaret mounts her own army, captures the Duke, and enjoys creating a last anguishing moment for Richard before she and her knights kill him.⁶⁰

As noted in the discussion of *Banquo’s Buried*, Bauld’s dramatic training heavily influences both her composing and choice of text. She uses vocal and rhythmic compositional techniques to approximate speech delivery and highlight the underlying emotional mood she wants for the character in each moment. Her setting incorporates angular vocal lines with displaced intervals at the octave, and some spoken phrases notated as *Sprechstimme*, that either melt into sung phrases, or quickly move back and forth between spoken and “sung” speech. Bauld specifically notates how to perform various phrases, with directions such as “roughly, no specified pitch,” “Like a cuckoo,”

⁵⁸ Thomas A Pendleton, *Henry VI: Critical Essays*, (NY: Routledge, 2001), 81.

⁵⁹ Randall Martin, “Henry VI, Part 3: A Modern Perspective,” in *Henry VI, Part 3*, by William Shakespeare, The Folger Shakespeare Library edition, Barbara A. Mowat and Paul Werstine, eds., (NY: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 2009), 280.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 280-281.

and “free, Monteverdian shake.”⁶¹ These markings indicate that dramatic delivery, based in the speaking voice, is the key element.

The piano functions as a collaborative partner conveying the intense underlying energy the Queen generates as she taunts her apprehended “prey” by using a repetitive sixteenth triplet figure (largely based on F#) in the right hand off a constant eighth-note arpeggiation in the bass. Bauld returns to these figures throughout the monologue in various octaves of the piano between vocal lines. This effect heightens the emotion and allows the Queen to revel in her “catch” and elongate the moments before she has her knights kill the Duke of York. Many of the vocal lines are unaccompanied between these bursts from the piano. Several times, Bauld initiates a rolled chord, either up or down with indicating arrow, and instructs to imitate “the sound of crotales.”⁶² Crotales, also called ancient cymbals, are small, flat disks played with mallets giving a similar sound to that of finger cymbals.⁶³ Surprisingly, for the word “lament,” Bauld writes a Monteverdian trill, a prominent vocal ornament during the early seventeenth century,⁶⁴ as well as quick sixteenth and thirty-second note turns for the words “grieve” and “heir.” These vocal ornaments not only give a compositional “nod” to the historical period (more to Shakespeare’s time than the Queen’s time), but they also give a moment of vocal “relief” to the singer and ironic levity for the audience.

⁶¹ Alison Bauld, *Queen Margaret: “She-Wolf of France” for soprano and piano*, (New South Wales, Australia: Australian Music Centre, 2003), 5, 6, 8.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 15.

⁶³ Don Randal, ed. *The New Harvard Dictionary of Music*, (Cambridge, MA: The Belnap Press of Harvard University Press, 1986), 216.

⁶⁴ Martha Elliott, *Singing in Style: A Guide to Vocal Performance Practices*, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), 22-25.

Besides the repeated arpeggiated figures, Bauld uses extended chromatic chords containing half- and whole-step clusters as supportive harmony to the voice, either as a single chord under a recitative-like passage, or as chord progression to flavor the emotion of the moment. With certain vocal lines, she offers a motivic figure to heighten the drama. For example, in both lines when the Queen speaks about the Duke taking King Henry's chair or crown, she underscores with a slow sixteenth figure composed of open-major sevenths, alternating between the left and right hands. These give the feeling of plunging a dagger into the heart of her captive, as the lines are the crux of her anger toward the Duke. She inserts a short dance-like interlude in two places using a five against four rhythmic pattern largely on F# between the taunting repetitions of "Ay marry sir, now looks he like a king."⁶⁵ They convey a drunken, swaggering out-of-control quality as the Queen brings her revenge to fruition.

As in *Banquo's Buried*, Bauld's setting of the Lady Macbeth sleepwalking scene discussed above, she repeats lines for emphasis as Queen Margaret winds up her rampage. She repeats "Stamp, rave and fret that I may sing and dance" twice.⁶⁶ She repeats "Ay marry sir, now looks he like a king. Ay this is he that took King Henry's chair and this is he was his adopted heir" three times. Both seemingly extend her glee at having the Duke in her grasp. She switches between speech and song, writing a different musical line for each repetition, using the turn ornament and a passage with elongated rhythms over a sparse, almost tonal accompaniment that constantly changes meter between 4/8 and 5/8. The latter repetition is very effective, like a slow moving animal circling its prey for the kill. Bauld responded in an email August 20, 2012 to a question

⁶⁵ Alison Bauld, *Queen Margaret*, 12, 15.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 10, 12.

about the significance of repeating lines three times and using lyrical singing lines for the repetitions:

The number three has no greater significance than it is more likely to linger in the minds of the listener more effectively than two... any more than three times might irritate that listener and subvert the value of recurrence. I see and hear leitmotivic development in a theatrical way. Is that why I want an idea to recur? On a technical level, yes....The moments of tonal lyricism that pop into the mouths of [Queen Margaret] and [Lady Macbeth] are deliberate attempts to seduce the minds of the listener with the sensuality of nostalgia or something akin to a pearl in an oyster.⁶⁷

Final Monologue from *Master Class*

In the 1940's, 50's and 60's, soprano Maria Callas gained worldwide fame and notoriety for her unusual vocal timbre, theatrical skill and diva temperament. Opera fans both loved and hated her for bringing a new approach to "tried and true" opera roles. After a hiatus for both vocal and personal troubles, she accepted an invitation to teach a series of public master classes at the Juilliard School of Music in New York called "The Lyric Tradition." Over a twelve-week period, from October 1971 to March 1972, she listened to twenty-five singers deliver arias and scenes of standard operatic repertoire from Mozart to Puccini. With surgical precision, she showed the students how to dissect a score to obtain the deepest drama possible within the musical framework.⁶⁸ The audience included the famous directors, singers, and conductors, as well as students, paparazzi and ardent fans. Playwright Terrance McNally audited her master classes at Juilliard, and saw her in performance over twenty-five times. He spent any money made

⁶⁷ Alison Bauld, e-mail message to the author, August 20, 2012.

⁶⁸ John Ardoin, *Callas at Juilliard: The Master Classes*, reprint. Portland, (OR:Amadeus Press, 1998), xv.

as a teenage bus boy on opera recordings. Like many others, Callas caught him in her spell, as he writes, “Listening to Callas is not a passive experience.”⁶⁹ In 1995, McNally evoked the theatrical Juilliard Callas in *Master Class*, which premiered on Broadway winning the top Tony awards.

American Jake Heggie composed the **Final Monologue from *Master Class*** in 2007 for “the celebration of the Merola Opera Program 50th Anniversary in honor of the late James Schwabacher.”⁷⁰ He set the McNally words verbatim, and gives the singer beautiful, lyrical singing lines, much like those Callas was famous for delivering. Like Hoiby, he uses two against three rhythms throughout the piece to depict the underlying inner conflict of the character. Keys and tempi change with her thoughts and mood swings. Callas shines throughout the piece as a strong teacher and mentor to the next generation, as she does in the play itself. Biographer John Ardoin says, “*Master Class*, however, is Callas on Callas. McNally puts her center stage, takes us into her mind, and makes us privy to her needs, her fears and her dreams.”⁷¹ Heggie manages to capture *this* Callas musically in his *Final Monologue*.

⁶⁹ John Ardoin, *Callas at Juilliard*, 157-159.

⁷⁰ Jake Heggie, *Final Monologue from “Master Class.”* NY: Bent Pen Music, Inc., 2007, Preface.

⁷¹ John Ardoin, *Callas at Juilliard*, 158.

CONCLUSION

Composer Comparisons

The singing actor has an advantage over the speaking actor because the addition of music to the spoken word provides a subtle subtext of color and extended harmony that can enhance suggested moods and emotions. All of these composers have written successfully for the operatic stage and interestingly, Bauld is a trained actor. Each of them uses rhythmic and motivic devices, tonal colors, and harmonic structures in their writing that exhibits innate instincts about the theatre. Their compositions approximate speech rhythms especially in passages more akin to recitative, but also within a more elongated singing line. Bauld and Hoiby insert spoken words. Bauld and Argento employ the most “contemporary” compositional techniques, including twelve-tone rows and dissonant keys. All but Poulenc write at least one melismatic passage for vocal display. By choosing specific harmonic colors, each composer sensitively sets the mood and deftly shifts the thought process of his or her character to imitate the rhythmic pattern and cadence of a spoken vocal line. Happily, each of these composers’ oeuvres contains other works to cater to the theatrical taste of any singing actor. See Appendix IV for a list of these and other selected repertoire from this genre.

Performance Considerations

A number of considerations arise for any singer interested in pursuing a performance of the vocal monologue. She needs a solid vocal technique from top to bottom, ranging from C6 to F4 (i.e. two and half octaves). She needs an ease in executing complex rhythms and pitch relationships, and an understanding of the challenges of articulation and clear diction needed for theatrical delivery. She needs a

gifted collaborative pianist, who understands and appreciates theatrical nuance as well as a voice teacher, a vocal coach and, if possible, a dramatic coach or stage director.

Once the singer has decided to present this kind of program, she must schedule enough practice time for both singing and staging, just as in opera. This is especially important if the pitch and rhythmic structures are complex. Striving for beauty of tone while practicing the singing lines, as well as using the best vocal technique possible, preserves the singer's vocal and physical stamina. In works such as Bauld's and Hoiby's, a zealous singer with a penchant for drama can easily fall into practicing with forced phonation that can tire the voice. As this repertoire draws its texts from theatrical monologues, the singer's interpretation will benefit from practicing the text aloud for flow of vocal line and language inflection.⁷² Listen to, and/or, view any recordings available, especially any that are of a spoken theatrical performance. Read each play and research the historical background of both the play and the playwright. Research the composer's background, and listen to some other works by the composer for comparison. Once the music is learned and the background research finished, the singer should be able to stage each work herself or work with a director. Walking the blocking whenever possible, even with a practice recording when the pianist is not present, helps solidify the interpretation and can generate new staging ideas. Continually aiming for clarity of intention for every move made and for every phrase sung is an obvious theatrical necessity. Once the singer feels comfortable with the scenes, she might consider singing them for a small audience and consider any response offered.

The repertoire performed in this dissertation offers a unique opportunity for any experienced soprano to offer the singing equivalent of the theatrical one-woman show.

⁷² Obviously, any song or aria preparation benefits from this practice.

As this exploration of *Singing the Theatrical Monologue* concludes, one must acknowledge the art of live performance. The greatest theatrical actors and singing actors use this skill of giving one's self both physically and vocally to the moment to ignite passion during a live performance. Nothing else compares to it. They become the living illusion of each audience member. That audience member can draw the actor's moments of pain, laughter, sorrow, anger, and love into him/her self for healing and inspiration. One simply cannot obtain the same kind of experience in the movie theater or in front of a computer or TV. As Henry James writes regarding the great stage actors of the past: "they alone were the scene."⁷³ This ultimate level of one-on-one communication inspires the composer to compose for the solo singer and, in turn, fires the imagination of the brave singer to flex his or her skills and bear, or appear to bare, all with little else on the "bare" stage.

⁷³ Morton Dauwen Zabel, *The Art of Ruth Draper*, 7.

APPENDIX I
Program Listing for
DVD #1: Singing the Theatrical Monologue, Part 1

Maryland Opera Studio archive DVD of:
Miss Havisham's Fire, an opera by Dominick Argento
Recorded in April 2012 in the Ian & Jack Kay Theatre
Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center

PROGRAM:

CLARICE SMITH PERFORMING ARTS CENTER,
UMD SCHOOL OF MUSIC AND MARYLAND OPERA STUDIO
PRESENTS

Miss Havisham's Fire
An Opera in Two Acts
Composed by Dominick Argento
Libretto by John Olon-Scrymgeour after
Dickens' *Great Expectations*

Performed in English with titles
Saturday, April 21, 2012. 7:30PM
Wednesday, April 25, 2012. 7:30PM
Friday, April 27, 2012. 7:30PM
Sunday, April 29, 2012. 3:00PM
Ian & Jack Kay Theatre

Cast: In Order of Vocal Appearance

Philip Pirrip, known as Pip: Alex DeSocio
Aurelia Havisham: Linda Mabbs
Coroner: Andrew Adelsberger
Jaggers: Jarrod Lee
Grace-Helen Broome, called Nanny: Deborah Thurlow
Sarah Pocket: Monica Soto-Gil
Camilla Pocket: Mandy Brown
Georgiana Pocket: Ashley Briggs
Raymond Pocket: Jason Lee
Estella Drummle: Ilene Pabon
Young Aurelia: Emily Kate Naydeck
First Maidservant: Lauren-Rose King
Second Maidservant: Amanda Fink
Young Nanny: CarrieAnne Winter
Orlick: Andrew Pardini

Young Estella: Carolyn Brent
Pumblechook (Uncle to Pip): Andrew Pardini
Young Pip: Teresa Ferarra
First Woman: Amber Schwarzrock
Second Woman: Jazmin Black
First Man: Jason Lee
Second Man: Matt Moeller
Third Man: Michael Dane
Bentley Drummle: Patrick Cook

Chorus:

Jazmin Black, Christine Browne-Munz, David Burkey, Jack Colver, Michael Dane, Amanda Fink, Rebecca Goldstein, Caitlin Gompf, Carlos Howard, Wes Hunter, Samual Keeler, Lauren-Rose King, Karen Lackey, Anna Mendham, Matt Moeller, Emily Kate Naydeck, Andrew Pardini, Erin Passmore, Caitlin Redding, Yoni Rose, Amber Schwarzrock, Zain Shriff, Rebecca Vanover

Covers:

Colleen Daly (Aurelia Havisham), Emily Kate Naydeck (Young Aurelia, Young Nanny), Amanda Fink (Estelle), Matt Moeller (Pip, Orlick), Yoni Rose (Bentley Brummle), Andrew Pardini (Coroner), Erin Passmore (Sarah)

Performed by arrangement with Boosey & Hawkes, Inc.,
publisher and copyright owner.
Costumes Supplied by Malabar Limited, Toronto

Conductor: Timothy Long
Director: Leon Major
Scenic Designer: James Kronzer
Costume Designer: David O. Roberts
Lighting Designer: Brian MacDevitt
Associate Lighting Designer: Jedidiah Roe
Wig & Make-up Designer: Jeanne DiBattista
Associate Wig & Make-up Designer: Brittany Graham
Assistant Director: Brian Clay Luedloff
Choreographer/Movement Coach: Alcine Wiltz
Chorus Master: Dusty Francis
Backstage Conductors: Paul Heins, Dusty Francis
Principal Coach: Justina Lee
Rehearsal Pianist: Bu Kyung Shin
Chorus Pianist: Hsiang-Ling Hsiao
Production Stage Manager: Ashley Pollard

Running time approximately 2 hours, 30 minutes with one 20-minute intermission.

APPENDIX II
Program Listing for
CD and DVD #2: Singing the Theatrical Monologue, Part 2

THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND SCHOOL OF MUSIC
Presents

Deborah Thurlow, Soprano
Harmony Yang, Piano

September 7, 2012. 8pm
Gildenhorn Recital Hall
Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center

PROGRAM:

Banquo's Buried (from Macbeth, by William Shakespeare)	Alison Bauld (b. 1944)
La dame de Monte Carlo (text by Jean Cocteau)	Francis Poulenc (1899-1963)
Lady Macbeth (from Macbeth, by William Shakespeare)	Thomas Pasatieri (b. 1945)
Night Flight to San Francisco (Harper's Monologue from <i>Angels in America</i> by Terrance McNally)	Ricky Ian Gordon (b. 1956)

APPENDIX III
Program Listing for
CD and DVD #3: Singing the Theatrical Monologue, Part 3

THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND SCHOOL OF MUSIC
Presents

Deborah Thurlow, Soprano
Harmony Yang, Piano

March 30, 2013. 8pm
Leah M. Smith Lecture Hall
Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center

PROGRAM:

The Italian Lesson (text adapted from Ruth Draper)	Lee Hoiby (1926-1911)
Queen Margaret, She-Wolf of France (from <i>Henry VI, part 3</i> by William Shakespeare)	Alison Bauld (b. 1944)
Final Monologue from <i>Master Class</i> (from <i>Master Class</i> by Terrence McNally)	Jake Heggie (b. 1961)

APPENDIX IV EMAIL AND PHONE INTERVIEWS

Email Interview with Soprano Linda Mabbs, April 2, 2013:

1. Do you know if Argento wrote the music to the Epilogue first when he got the “green light” for the Havisham project from Sills ---since the epilogue existed already as a libretto?

I don't know but I'll contact him and ask him...

2. Could you see this epilogue libretto performed (a la Ruth Draper) as a spoken monologue?

Not really. To my mind, the music is what makes it. I suppose it could be done but I'd always miss the music. It's rather like having Mozart's Don Giovanni speak instead of sing. It could work, but the da Ponte [libretto] is not as effective spoken as sung.

3. How did you get involved with the CD project to record it?

John Shirley-Quirk, his wife Sara and I performed the two monologues at the KC and we thought it would be an excellent National Endowment for the Arts project. After a lot of work and help from others, we got NEA funding and recorded the Argento Companions.

4. How long did it take you to learn the Wedding Night piece for the CD?

It took me about 3 months to perfect it to the point that I was happy enough to record it. I still think I could have done it better...but that is how it always is. It was wonderful to return to the monologue after it had stewed in my mind for several years. I think my performance of it in the opera was aided so much by that time away from it.

5. Had you performed other Argento works prior to the CD (I am assuming so...), if so what?

Yes, the Elizabethan Songs (both with piano and with ensemble) and sections of Diary of [Virginia Woolf]. I was also involved with the world premiere of Valentino. I got to know Dominic after the [Kennedy Center] performance of Miss H Wedding night.

6. Have you ever performed the epilogue as a stand-alone work apart from the CD or the opera? Do you think it would work just as well/better with the revised cuts taken in the operatic form?

Better with SOME of the cuts though I missed some of what he was forced to cut too. Yes, I've performed it several times and have tried to push it for some festival performances too.

7. What was the hardest thing to learn or to convey in this work?

the pitches....

8. Had you seen the opera performed before our production?

no

9. Could you see yourself doing both old/young Havisham as was intended for Sills?

Yes, absolutely. That was done because I wanted more student involvement in the opera.

10. Were you “wrung out like a rag” by the end, such as Sills wanted to be?

I was exhilarated!

Email Interview with composer Alison Bauld, August 20, 2012:

Author’s questions:

I do have a few questions for you. In re-working and re-thinking the piece, I am particularly interested in your concept of the piano gestures and how best to theatrically play them on stage. I am not speaking about trying to put a physical gesture with every piano lick by any means, but I would like to know what you may have been envisioning acting-wise with the repetitive gestures which start on the first page. What do they represent for you? For example, the trills, the 32nd note lick in the bass which recurs in mm3, 6, 34, 37, etc.; the heavy forte chords starting in mm 7 – 14, which recur especially throughout the interludes on the last 3 pages; the arpeggios on pg 2 mm 19-20, which also recur. I am struggling with what kinds of gestures, subtext, thoughts to settle on for my performance. I would love to know what you, as an actress also, were envisioning. Obviously, I can (and will) find ways of being on stage that will work, but I would love some coaching/suggestions from you, the composer.

Does your Lady M come in with a candle? When the piano repeats the opening musical gestures on pgs 8-10, do you envision Lady performing the same gestures each time to the same music? Obviously, gesture repetition is spoken about in the play by the Gentle-Waiting Woman to the Doctor. I hope these questions do not sound like I am lacking in creativity, however I do like to research as thoroughly as possible, so your original visions of the character and subtexts and gestures would definitely shed some light, and assist me in finalizing my performance choices.

One other curiosity is that in studying Banquo and Queen Margaret (which I really do love, by the way), I see you have inserted in both pieces a “lyrical” section, if you will,

which basically repeats 3 times, with some development. In Banquo, it is the ending “Come, give me your hand” and in Marg it is “Ay, now looks he like a king” part. Is this a conscious decision to repeat a section like this 3 times? Is 3 significant for you? Forgive me, I have not compared these 2 works with any of your others in this analytical vein—it is just a curiosity to me that I observed in these 2 pieces. Largely because you faithfully set the text to the end of the monologue, but yet you repeat a part 3 times which you have set in a more “singing” or “lyrical” manner than in other sections of the works.

Ms. Bauld’s Reply:

Dear Deborah,

I’ll try to answer your questions immediately because that way I am less likely to put your very thoughtful email to one side... a fatal tendency...

Without a score of Banquo to hand I am relying on my own fragile memory, but, I will try to answer your questions on repetition: the number three has no greater significance than it is more likely to linger in the minds of the listener more effectively than two and any more than three times might irritate that listener and subvert the value of recurrence. I see and hear leitmotivic development in a theatrical way. Is that why I want an idea to recur? On a technical level, yes. More specifically, in lady mac's case, it is because I see her as plagued by some overwhelming sense of guilt and her loopy, obsessive ruminations are the first signs of her dementia... it's as if she has forgotten that she has said Come, give me your hand in the first place, and each time she says it again, it is as if she is saying it for the first time. She is not beset by doubt in a straightforward way... it is I am sure, some distorted sense of remorse and if she has a moment of lucidity where she recognises what she has done - eg, when she is confronted by the blood on her own hands, she has to punish herself - or escape from herself- by jumping off the parapet... so for me, she is not an obvious psychopath but more a wretched creature who is the victim of her own greedy ambition and her shrewish domination of a weak, unsatisfying husband.

The trills in the piano part are an example perhaps of mickey-mousing - you know the sort of technique that has the trombone slide illustrate Mickey slipping on a banana skin - so the trills are castellations on the ramparts and turrets of Scottish castles...at least I see them as a legitimate, decorative, musical equivalent ... just as the octave chimes when lady mac sings one, two, three, tis time to do it, are the aural hallucinations of time passing inside her sad, dementing head.

Hope this helps in some way. I am very grateful to you for taking the time and trouble to present these songs at Maryland and am touched that you are championing Queen Margaret... my favourite possibly.... and yes, the moments of tonal lyricism that pop into

the mouths of QM and LM are deliberate attempts to seduce the minds of the listener with the sensuality of nostalgia or something akin to a pearl in an oyster? Well that's me being jokey so don't take that metaphor too seriously! You might like to google Alison Bauld on Shakespeare, which sounds a touch grandiose I know, but this should show up on the internet as a transcription from a radio interview I did on The Music Show for the Australian broadcasting Commission in about 2006. I seem to remember I talked about lady M and Q Margaret then.... Also, have you heard the NMC recordings of Lady Anne from Richard 3rd in a CD called Jane Manning Sings or more recently, Titania's Song in the first disc of the NMC Song Book? You'll pick up a thread of sound if you google my name within the NMC url.

Email Interview with Dominick Argento, May 3, 2012:

If I am not mistaken, you wrote the ending Epilogue first as an extended piece for Beverly Sills? (Fortunately, B&H does publish it, which I have in my collection.)

INCORRECT. ONLY THE LIBRETTO OF 'WEDDING NIGHT' WAS FINISHED BUT THE MUSIC HADN'T YET BEEN STARTED. WHEN SILLS LEARNED ABOUT THE INTENDED MONODRAMA SHE ASKED IF A FULL-LENGTH COULD BE MADE OF THE CHARACTER, SO 'FIRE' WAS WRITTEN FIRST.

Did you always intend to expand this monologue into an opera? If not, when did you decide to do so?

NO, 'FIRE' WAS FINISHED FIRST. THE MONODRAMA IS AN EXPANSION OF ITS CLOSING SCENE.

Did you start your monologue with the libretto?

DON'T UNDERSTAND THAT QUESTION. IF YOU MEAN WAS THE MONODRAMA LIBRETTO WRITTEN FIRST, IT WAS.

Did you have any input into the direction the librettist took---or was that your idea? Did you both discuss what characters should be featured?

IT WAS MOSTLY THE LIBRETTIST'S IDEAS ORIGINALLY. BUT I DID THE REVISION MYSELF.

When you were first writing the ending monologue, did your wife get involved at all by singing any of it? Did she assist you with thinking about the dramatics of anyone physically performing the monologue which may have influenced how you set a phrase?

YES MY WIFE HELPED EVERY STEP OF THE WAY AND IN EVERY WAY.

Do you have any opinion (or perhaps your librettist did!) as to whether Miss Havisham performed this “enrobing” ritual daily?

WE NEVER DISCUSSED IT. I JUST ASSUMED IT WAS A DAILY ROUTINE.

By the way, I really love how you took so many musical lines and themes of the monologue and put them into the wedding day scene for Young Havisham, and of course, other portions of the opera.

THANK YOU. THAT IS SIMPLY OPERATIC TECHNIQUE.

The book, “Great Expectations,” does not mention Nanny Broome, did you or Mr. Olon-Scrymegeour decide there should be an old governess around? What about the character of Nanny Broome made her an important (albeit small) part to put in the opera?

SHE WAS INVENTED IN ORDER TO HAVE SOMEONE ON HAND WHO COULD PROVIDE THE JILTING DETAILS AT THE INQUEST. OBVIOUSLY, A RICH MAN'S DAUGHTER IN THOSE DAYS HAD A NANNY.

This libretto almost sounds like it was originally written to be spoken and not conceived as a music theatre piece? Did the librettist actually write any of this to be a spoken play vs an opera libretto?

NO. A GOOD LIBRETTO THESE DAYS OUGHT TO SOUND LIKE A PLAY. BESIDES, I'M NOT HAPPY WITH VERSE.

What is your concept of Nanny's age vs Havisham? I had a lengthy discussion with the costume shop when I was being fitted for the costume over that issue. They thought Nanny should have had a cane, but Leon did not want 2 caned ladies on stage!

I SAW HER AS ABOUT EARLY OR MID SEVENTIES BUT NOT DECREPIT.

How did you like Leon's direction of having the Inquest characters on stage all time (except at the very end)? Did it work with your concept of the story? Did anything interfere with the music or telling the story as you thought it should be told?

NO. THE ORIGINAL LIBRETTO EVEN SUGGESTS THE SIMULTANEITY OF PAST AND PRESENT, SO LEON WAS BEING FAITHFUL TO OUR INTENTION.

Your writing is so very refreshing in that I equate the vocal lines with bel canto. There seem to be no composers who really “get” that singers love to show off the voice and have fun with movement in the lines. Can you speak to your concept on the “bel canto” characteristic in your vocal writing? Especially for Miss Havisham?

I TOO LOVE 'BEAUTIFUL SINGING' AND HAVE OFTEN SAID I WRITE TO FLATTER THE VOICE BUT ONLY WHEN IT WORKS DRAMATICALLY, NOT SHOW-OFF STUFF. THE ASPERN PAPERS, WHICH I MADE INTO AN OPERA ABOUT OPERA SINGERS IN THAT BEL CANTO ERA IS A CASE IN POINT.

Is there anything that occurs for you that would be pertinent/interesting to my discussion on this ending Epilogue as a theatrical monologue set to music?

WELL, THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT IT IS: A THEATRICAL MONOLOGUE SET TO MUSIC. 'A WATER BIRD TALK' IS PRECISELY THE SAME THING. SO, FOR THAT MATTER, IS 'CASA GUIDI,' 'ANDREE EXPEDITION,' VIRGINIA WOOLF,' ETC. THAT'S WHAT I LOVE TO DO.

Mr. Argento, If you are able to answer any of these questions, I truly appreciate your time and effort on my behalf. If you would like me to forward you the document once it is approved, I am happy to do so.

Again, it was a joy to sing your music and be part of The Art of Argento.
Happy Spring!

SORRY I NEVER REALLY GOT TO SPEAK TO YOU. I ENJOYED YOUR WORK IN 'FIRE.' YOU WERE A FINE NANNY BROOME.

Phone Interview with Ricky Ian Gordon, August 21, 2012, transcribed from author's notes of Gordon's conversation based on emailed questions below:

1. Were you musically/dramatically inspired by a particular actress's depiction of Harper? Or is your composition more from your own internal interpretation of Harper at this point in the play?

Tony wrote the play for the AIDS crisis, as he was one of the people horribly affected. The play spoke to me; I felt like I was in the play. He was very moved by the piece when he heard it.

2. Of course we see your lovely development of the various rhythmic and motivic figures throughout the work, are there certain visions and reactions for Harper that you would want to be conveyed in a performance---I think especially of the interlude on pg 11 after "and was repaired." This is a tough place for the singer to carry dramatically, especially when one does not have an orchestra to take over (sorry to miss Fleming's performances this past spring....). Obviously, my fine pianist will do her part, but this is a "struggle page" for any singer. Any insight from you would be helpful!

The singer's job is to be transparent and embody the character. Therefore, the character must reflect before she says the end. Renée Fleming stood and cried during this interlude at the premiere. It should be a great thing to be transparent. The monologue asks for death and presence to the matter. The composer must

create a world from the first note of a piece, and the singer gets to go the distance in this world the composer created. The composer's job is to create the proper space for the singer to be in.

3. I find it interesting that you chose THIS monologue to set from a play, which obviously impacted you (as stated in your own Program Note on pg 2 of the published score). Why not one of Prior's or Louis's monologues? Why the "jilted" Mormon wife, rather than the gay man (sorry to be blunt...)?

Tony took someone standing outside (Harper). She is hurt, rejected sexually and yet she has a dream of the entire universe healing—souls rising. She is suddenly the voice of passion and empathy. Tony turns the hurt into a universal hurt and united them all.

4. Any plans to record this with anyone in any professional capacity in the near future?? I looked hard and could find NO recording, nothing on You Tube, sorry to say. Of course, the score was just released this past fall, so only those who went to Fleming's 2000 concert or your performance of it would have heard it.

Yes, I've written a companion piece from Harper's monologue on the Antarctic—"I Feel Better."

APPENDIX V
Selected Monologue and Monodrama Repertoire
For the Female Voice

The following list of repertoire is a selection of works written for the female voice that the composer has designated as either “monologue” or “monodrama.” These compositions reflect the overall genre discussed in this dissertation project, and are relatively easy to obtain.

Adams, David:

Being Divinely, a dramatic, universal monologue for soprano,
percussion and strings
(text by composer)
Score available from the Australian Music Centre

Argento, Dominick:

Miss Havisham’s Wedding Night, for soprano
Opera in One Act with libretto by John Olon-Scrymgeour (after Dickens)
Score available from Boosey & Hawkes, Inc.

Bauld, Alison:

Banquo’s Buried, a song for soprano and piano
(from *Macbeth*, by William Shakespeare)
Score available from Novello

Death of Cleopatra, for high mezzo and piano
(text from *Antony and Cleopatra* by William Shakespeare)
Facsimile score available from the Australian Music Centre

Portia: “Confess and Love,” a song for soprano and piano
(text from *Merchant of Venice* by William Shakespeare)
Score available from Novello

Queen Margaret: She-Wolf of France, for soprano and piano
(from *Henry VI, part 3* by William Shakespeare)
Facsimile score available from the Australian Music Centre

Two Shakespeare Songs, for voice and piano
[The two songs are: *Cock-A-Doodle-Do*, from *The Tempest*
and *The Witches’ Song*, from *Macbeth*, both by William Shakespeare]
Score available from Novello

Beckwith, John:

Stacey, for soprano and piano
(text adapted from Margaret Laurence)
Score available from the Canadian Music Centre

Bolcom, William:

Medusa, monodrama for dramatic soprano and string orchestra
(text by Arnold Weinstein)
Score on rental from Theodore Presser, Co.

Britten, Benjamin:

Phaedra, a dramatic cantata for mezzo-soprano and small orchestra*
(text by Robert Lowell after Jean Racine)
Score available from Faber Music Co.

*Note: although not categorized as a "monodrama," the text is the same as that used by Maxwell Davies and is in every sense a monodrama

Eichelberger Ivey, Jean:

Testament of Eve, monodrama for mezzo-soprano, orchestra, and tape
(text by the composer)
Score available on rental from Carl Fischer Music

Floyd, Carlisle:

Flower and Hawk, a monodrama for soprano and orchestra
(text by composer on Queen Eleanor of Aquitaine)
Score is rental from Boosey & Hawkes, Inc.

Gordon, Ricky Ian:

Night Flight to San Francisco, for soprano and piano
(Harper's Monologue from *Angels in America* by Terrence McNally)
Score available from Theodore Presser, Co.

Orpheus and Euridice, a Song Cycle in Two Acts for Soprano, Clarinet in B flat,
and Piano (also listed as an opera on Gordon's website)
(text by Ricky Ian Gordon after the Orpheus legend)
Score available from Theodore Presser, Co.

Final Monologue from "Master Class," for soprano or lyric mezzo and piano
(from *Master Class* by Terrence McNally)
Score available from Bill Holab Music

Hoiby, Lee:

Bon Appetit!, a musical monologue for mezzo-soprano and chamber ensemble
(text by Julia Child, adapted by Mark Schulgasser)
Score available from G. Schirmer

A Church in Italy (The English Painter), a musical monologue
for voice and chamber orchestra
(text by Ruth Draper)
Score pending publication

The Italian Lesson: A Musical Monolog,
for high or medium voice and chamber orchestra
(text adapted from Ruth Draper)
Score on hire through Schott Music currently; score for sale in preparation

Holliger, Heinz:

Not I, a monodrama for soprano and tape
(text by Samuel Beckett)
Score on hire through Schott Music

Lehmann, Liza:

The Eternal Feminine: a musical monologue, for soprano and piano
(text by Lillian Eldée)
Score available from Recital Publications

Maconchy, Elizabeth:

Ariadne, a dramatic monologue for soprano and orchestra
(text by C. Day Lewis)
Score available from Hal Leonard Corporation/Music Sales

Maxwell Davies, Peter:

The Medium, a monodrama for mezzo-soprano and piano
(text by the composer)
Score available from Boosey & Hawkes, Inc.

McKay, Neil:

Patterns, a monodrama for mezzo-soprano and piano
(text by Amy Lowell)
Score available from Leyerle Publications

Pasatieri, Thomas:

Before Breakfast, opera in one act for soprano or mezzo
(Libretto adapted by Frank Corsaro after the play by Eugene O'Neill)
Score available from Theodore Presser, Co.

The Daughter of Capulet for voice and piano
(text adapted from Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*)
Score available from Theodore Presser, Co.

Lady Macbeth, for soprano and piano
(from *Macbeth*, by William Shakespeare)
Score available from Theodore Presser, Co.

Poulenc, Francis:

La dame de Monte-Carlo, monologue pour soprano et orchestre
(text by Jean Cocteau)
Score available from Ricordi

La voix humaine, tragédie lyrique en un acte
(text by Jean Cocteau)
Score available from Ricordi

Rochberg, George:

Phaedra, a monodrama for mezzo-soprano and orchestra
(text by Robert Lowell after Jean Racine)
Score available from Theodore Presser, Co.

Schoenberg, Arnold:

Erwartung, a monodram in one act for soprano and string quartet
(text by Marie Frischauf)
Score available from Belmont Publishing

Tavener, John:

The Immurement of Antigone, a monodrama for dramatic soprano or
mezzo-soprano and orchestra
(text by Gerard McLarnon)
Score available from Hal Leonard Corp/Music Sales

Viñao, Alejandro:

The Baghdad Monologue, music theatre piece for soprano and computer
(text by the composer)
Score and computer file available from the composer

Vercoe, Elizabeth:

Herstory III: Jehanne de Lorraine (Joan of Arc), for soprano and piano
(text by the composer)
Score available from Arsis Press

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CURRICULUM VITAE

Soprano Deborah Ann Thurlow has thirty years of performing, teaching, directing and producing experience. She has performed in opera, theatre, oratorio and chamber recital, with organizations such as Maryland Opera Studio, the Light Opera Company of Southern Maryland, The Forgotten Opera Company, The Washington Savoyards, Interact Theatre Company, Eldbrooke Players, and Opera Theatre of Northern Virginia. Her opera roles include Nanny Broome (*Miss Havisham's Fire*), Hanna (*The Merry Widow*), Marietta (*Naughty Marietta*), Doreen (*Tartuffe*), Saphir (*Patience*), Pamina, First Lady, and Papagena (*The Magic Flute*), Josephine (*HMS Pinafore*), Kate and Mabel (*Pirates of Penzance*), Pitti-Sing (*Mikado*), Pertelote (*Chanticleer*), Pauline (*The Toy Shop*), and Destino (*La Calisto*). Active in concert, Ms. Thurlow has performed with the Friday Morning Music Club Chorale and Orchestra, McLean Choral Society, Columbia Collegiate Chorale and the New England Youth Ensemble. An active recitalist, Thurlow has performed at the Chevy Chase Women's Club, Anderson House, Britten-Pears School for Advanced Musical Studies in Aldeburgh, England, Strathmore Hall, the Corcoran Gallery of Art, the Folger Theatre, Dumbarton House, Baltimore's Bau House, Hood College, Old Town Hall of Fairfax, Charles Sumner Museum, and for the Sligo Music Club and Music of Mapleview Chamber Festival. She has premiered works by composers Ron Warren, Winifred Hyson, Alan Newhouse and Elaine Erickson. In 1998, she was finalist in the National Association of Teachers of Singing Artist Award Competition for the Mid-Atlantic Region.

Thurlow has taught applied voice and vocal related courses at Washington Adventist University (WAU) in Takoma Park, MD, since 1989. She is the Director of the WAU Performance Workshop, and she has directed and conducted eighteen musical and operatic productions. She assisted the university President and the Alumni Association with the presentation for the One Hundred Year Anniversary of the University in 2005, and produced two presentations to the university constituents for the President in 2006-7. In 2002, WAU President Randal Wisbey awarded her the first President's Award for Outstanding Service to the University for her leading the refurbishment of the music building.

Thurlow is the Vice President and co-owner of The Musical Source, Inc., Washington's premier sheet music retailer, and is the company's expert in vocal sheet music. She also serves the vocal community as treasurer for MD/DC National Association of Teachers of Singing. She is Soloist for Sixth Church, Christ Scientist, Washington, DC. Thurlow is a performing member of the Friday Morning Music Club and participates yearly in various FMMC concerts. She has received extensive training and coaching in various stage arts, including voice, diction, acting, movement and ballroom dance styles.