

ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: THE VOLUBLE VIOLA: MUSIC FOR VIOLA
INSPIRED BY TEXT AND POETRY

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Arts, 2019

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This project is an exploration of music that draws inspiration from text or works that utilize programmatic themes. The vision for this project comes from Ernest Bloch's Suite 1919 in which the composer created the music with a programmatic element in mind, but made the decision to not include extra-musical material in the title of the work or its movements. Bloch wrote quite eloquently about his extra-musical inspiration in his notes about the piece, but leaves the performer the option of relaying this information to their audience. I was not aware of the program notes Bloch wrote the first time I heard this work. My perception of the music changed after I read Bloch's intended titles for each movement, as well as his written

words about the colorful and evocative scenes he was imagining when writing the piece. The music came alive and moved me in a different way once I knew of Bloch's inspirations. From this experience, I wanted to further my understanding of how a composer uses music to depict non-musical images or scenes when using text as a source, and how these extra-musical elements serve the performance and affect the expressive power of music.

The first program focuses on poetry and literature set to instrumental music, featuring two poetic oboe, viola, and piano trios by August Klughardt and Charles Martin Loeffler, as well as Prokofiev's musical portrait of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*.

Vocal chamber music and the exploration of text as part of the performance is the theme of the second program, including works by Johannes Brahms, Frank Bridge, Charles Martin Loeffler, and Benjamin Britten.

The final program interprets music titled "Fairytale" by Robert Schumann, as well as further examining poetic settings by Vincent Persichetti and Toru Takemitsu.

The recitals were performed on November 2, 2018, February 22, 2019, and April 28, 2019 at the University of Maryland School of Music's Ulrich Recital Hall, and I was assisted by oboist Michael Homme, mezzo-soprano Gabriela Estephanie Solis, clarinetist Dane Clark, and pianist Andrew Welch. The CD's for this dissertation recording project are available on compact discs which can be found in the Digital Repository at the University of Maryland (DRUM).

THE VOLUBLE VIOLA: MUSIC FOR VIOLA INSPIRED BY TEXT AND
POETRY

by

Timothy Joseph MacDuff Jr.

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Introduction

“Whether this [music] will awaken now similar images, to [those] he wanted to draw, in someone who does not know the intention of the composer, I, who read the program before listening, cannot decide. Once the eye has been guided to one point, the ear no longer judges independently.” – Robert Schumann¹

The decision to include programmatic material or text along with the publication of a composition, including titles or notes about the extra-musical material, is an artistic choice. Inclusion of these materials confines or influences the audience’s experience of the music in a way nonexistent in absolute music. The existence of programmatic elements can enhance a listener’s reaction to the music or cause confusion, if they do not understand how the music they are hearing connects to the associated text or subject material.

The success of a composer’s attempt at expressing written words or programmatic elements through music is subjective. Music, literature, and art are all open to interpretation; there can be a myriad of possibilities as to what the artist, the composer, or the author intended. It is worth mentioning that consumers of art and literature may revisit works and acquire a new perspective on their meaning.

Composers employ three basic compositional techniques to express extra-musical subjects: thematic representation, musical imagery, and musical mood. Thematic representation occurs when a character, object, or event is attached to a recognizable musical motif or theme. Richard Wagner is known for using this form of expression in *Der Ring des Nibelungen* through his use of leitmotifs. John Williams,

¹ Alan Brown, *The Aesthetics of Robert Schumann* (Westport: Greenwood Press Publishers, 1968), 161-62.

Hans Zimmer, and Erich Wolfgang Korngold use this technique heavily in film scores. Motives are developed to represent dramatic character arcs.

Musical imagery captures a specific extra-musical idea, either through imitation of a sound, or intervallic direction to highlight a word through text painting. A famous example of this comes from Richard Strauss' *Don Quixote* where he uses the instruments of the orchestra to sound like a herd of sheep through flutter-tonguing in the brass. Another example of musical imagery comes from the final movement of Leoš Janáček's *String Quartet* No. 1 (based Tolstoy's novella *The Kreutzer Sonata*), where the biting and ferocious short viola motive represents a violent stabbing.

Musical mood broadly defines the evocation of certain emotions based on choice of key or harmonic language, tempo indications, and affect. Felix Mendelssohn uses this technique in the Scherzo from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, depicting the mischievous fairies through light sixteenth notes at a brisk tempo in a minor key. Camille Saint-Saëns uses musical mood in the "Tortues" movement from "Carnival of the Animals" by placing Jacques Offenbach's "Galop Infernal" (can-can) in a sluggish tempo to depict the tortoises.

In the following works for viola, I will describe how different composers conjure meanings and interpretations of text and programmatic themes through the versatile voice of the instrument.

Recital Programs

Timothy MacDuff, viola

Andrew Jonathan Welch, piano

Michael Homme, oboe

Recital I: Poems and Literature

November 2nd, 2018, 8:00pm.

Ulrich Recital Hall

Schilflieder, Op. 28.....August Klughardt (1847-1902)

I. Langsam, träumerisch

II. Leidenschaftlich erregt

III. Zart, in ruhiger Bewegung

IV. Feurig

V. Sehr ruhig

Excerpts from Romeo and Juliet.....Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953)

Introduction

(Trans. Vadim Borisovsky)

The Street Awakens

The Young Juliet

Dance of the Knights

Balcony Scene

Death of Juliet

- Intermission -

Two Rhapsodies for Oboe, Viola, and Piano..... Charles Martin Loeffler (1861-1935)

I. L'étang

II. La cornemuse

Timothy MacDuff, viola

Andrew Jonathan Welch, piano
Gabriela Estephanie Solis, mezzo-soprano

Recital II: Text Set in Song

February 22nd, 2019, 8:00pm.
Ulrich Recital Hall

Three Songs for Medium Voice, Viola, and Piano.....Frank Bridge (1879-1941)

- I. Far, far from each other
- II. Where is it that our soul doth go?
- III. Music when soft voices die

Quatre PoèmesCharles Martin Loeffler (1861-1935)
for Mezzo-soprano, Viola, and Piano, Op. 5

- I. La Cloche fêlée
- II. Dansons la gigue!
- III. Le son du cor s'afflige vers les bois
- IV. Sérénade

- Intermission -

Lachrymae, reflections on a song of Dowland.....Benjamin Britten (1913-1976)
for Viola and Piano, Op. 48

Zwei Gesänge.....Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)
for Alto Voice, Viola, and Piano, Op. 91

- I. Gestillte Sehnsucht
- II. Geistliches Wiegenlied

Timothy MacDuff, viola

Andrew Jonathan Welch, piano

Dane Clark, clarinet

Recital III: Poems and Fairytales

April 28th, 2019, 8:00pm.

Ulrich Recital Hall

Märchenerzählungen, Op. 132.....Robert Schumann (1810-1856)

I. Lebhaft, nicht zu schnell

II. Lebhaft und sehr markiert

III. Ruhiges Tempo, mit zartem Ausdruck

IV. Lebhaft, sehr markiert

Infanta Marina, Op. 83.....Vincent Persichetti (1915-1987)

- Intermission -

A String Around Autumn.....Toru Takemitsu (1930-1996)

Märchenbilder, Op. 113.....Robert Schumann (1810-1856)

I. Nicht schnell

II. Lebhaft

III. Rasch

IV. Langsam, mit melancholischem Ausdruck

Chapter 1: Recital I Program Notes

August Klughardt 1847-1902
Schilflieder, Op. 28

Aside from his Wind Quintet Op. 79, August Klughardt's music is not well known among modern audiences. In the style of Late Romantic composers, his music speaks to the depths of human emotions and mankind's inevitable surrender to nature. Born in Köthen, Germany in 1847, Klughardt's talents developed as early as age ten when he began studying theory, piano, and composition. After school, Klughardt held several conducting posts at various courts including Posen, Neustrelitz, Lübeck, and the court in Weimar, where he befriended Franz Liszt. As a conductor and pianist, Klughardt was intimately familiar with compositions by Liszt and Richard Wagner, including his *Der Ring des Nibelungen*.² The New German School, of which Liszt and Wagner were leading proponents, influenced Klughardt's approach to unpredictable and experimental harmonic progressions. Robert Schumann's influence is present in Klughardt's choice of miniature forms. Rhythmically, Klughardt uses syncopations and complexity in the style of Johannes Brahms.

Composed in 1872, the five *Schilflieder* are musical settings of poems by the Austrian poet Nikolaus von Lenau. Stylistically, Lenau is considered a lyrical romantic, and his works include themes of nature and human struggles.³ His poems have been set to music by other composers including Richard Strauss in his tone poem *Don Juan*. Lenau's *Schilflieder* depicts a protagonist moving through different

² John Warrack, "August Klughardt," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., ed. Stanley Sadie, vol. 13 (London: MacMillan, 2001), 682.

³ R. H. Thomas, "Lenau and Beethoven" *Music & Letters* 18, no. 4 (1937), 374-75.

stages of grief after the loss of his beloved. The protagonist of the poem retreats to the shallows of a pond where tall reeds grow as the setting for his emotional journey through loss; the poems portray various times of the night and weather conditions, from stormy to calm and shimmering. This passage of time, the brooding surroundings of night, and the unpredictable weather are symbols of different stages of grief. One very unusual feature of this work is that Klughardt includes the text of the poems in the score; while presumably not meant to be spoken in performance, this directly connects the musical material with specific lines of poetry.

I.

Over there the sun is setting,
weary day sinks into sleep
and the willows hang down low
to the pond, so calm so deep.

And my love is lost forever,
flow, oh tears, which no one heeds,
sad the wind through willows rustles,
weaving through the shivering reeds.
In the depth of desolation

you shine brightly from afar,
while through reeds and rushes brightly
shines the gentle evening star.

The setting of the sun is musically depicted in the first three measures of the work, as the piano line descends a minor ninth into the bass register. The oboe enters, singing a lonely and introspective tune, reiterating the descent of the minor ninth. No longer able to contain his despair, the subject bursts into tears, portrayed by the passionate entrance of the viola in a syncopated melody with a volatile melodic contour.

II.

Waning light, the clouds are scurrying
and the rain falls like a stone,
and the noisy winds cry sadly:
“Pond, where has your starlight flown?”

Seeking the light, extinguished
in the depths, whipped by the storm.
Never more your love will smile
on my heart’s profoundest gloom!

Now fully facing the symptoms of loss and grief, the quiet pond is upset by the wind and rain from dark clouds. The contour of the melody rises and falls with sixteenth note figures in the piano announcing the mighty winds. The extremely virtuosic piano writing, inspired by Franz Liszt, is as relentless as the despair the man feels in his grief.

III.

Oft on secret forest paths
I creep in the evening glow
to the lonely banks of rushes,
darling girl, and think of you.

When the shrubs begin to darken
the reeds tell of mysteries deep,
and a plaintive, whispering voice
tells me I must weep, must weep.

And I fancy I can hear
the gentle music of your voice
while your charming song is sinking
into the pond without a trace.

The third song can be described as the calm before the storm. The man takes a moment in bittersweet remembrance of his dearest. The music gently rocks in a 6/8 meter with an abundance of thirds supporting the melody, eliciting a feeling of warmth. Klughardt depicts the “plaintive, whispering voice” with a light and quick

harmonic minor scale in the piano. The oboe and viola are almost singing a love duet, as if the spirit of his beloved is there in the reeds with him.

IV.

The sun has gone down;
black clouds are drifting,
sultry and anxious
all the winds are fleeing!

Furiously across the sky
pallid lightning sears
and her transient image in the pond appears.

In the stormy light
I seem to see your form
and your loosened hair
blowing in the storm!

In a truly terrifying moment, the man believes he sees the image of his love illuminated by a lighting strike in a rapturous storm. Punctuated rhythms and fast chromatic scales depict streaks of lighting over the pond. The surreal experience of seeing this ghostly image is captured by a powerful melody in the low register of the viola, accompanied by energetic spinning triplets in the piano.

V.

Motionless upon the pond
lies the moonlight's gentle glow,
weaving her pallid roses
into the reed's green wreath below.

Stags, roving on the hills,
look up into the night,
sometimes the dreaming birds
stir in the depths of the reeds.

I drop my tearful gaze;
my soul is pierced to the core

by sweet memories of you,
like a quiet evening prayer.

The storm finally dissipates; the man finds himself once again alone in the peaceful moonlight, with his innermost thoughts of his love. The oboe sings a repeated plaintive falling sixth which contrasts with the opening descending minor ninth of the first song. The development of this melodic interval from dissonant to consonant reflects the protagonist's feelings evolving from loss and grief to acceptance and reconciliation. The man starts to cry, but it is different from his eruption of tears in the first song. A lyrical and passionate B minor melody in the viola, with rapid scale accompaniment in the piano creates a transformation from utter despair to a sense of bittersweet sadness. With one reiteration of the falling sixth from the movement's opening, the work - and Lenau's narrative of pathos - comes to a close.

Sergei Prokofiev 1891-1953

Trans. Vadim Borisovsky 1900-1972
Excerpts from Romeo and Juliet

Sergei Prokofiev stands out among modern Russian composers with a stylistically eclectic oeuvre. Prokofiev uses the classical forms and breaks from them in new and exciting ways. Harmonically, his language is extremely dissonant and chromatic with surprising changes between tonalities, which, while unexpected, remain mostly tonal. It is worth mentioning that Prokofiev endured a political climate encouraging censorship and condemnation of artists who ventured outside of traditional and political ideals.

Prokofiev was commissioned to write the music for this ballet setting of Shakespeare's famous play in 1934 for the Kirov ballet.⁴ Humorously, the original plan for the ballet was to rewrite the tragic ending and allow both main characters to survive so they could dance in the final number.⁵ However, the ending remained true to Shakespeare's dismal finale, and the premiere took place in 1938 in Brno, Czechoslovakia.⁶ Prokofiev was a brilliant orchestrator and included unusual instruments in the score including the tenor saxophone, mandolins, and the viola d'amore. Music from the ballet was extracted by the composer and turned into three suites for symphony orchestra that are regularly performed in modern concert halls.

Vadim Borisovsky, known as the father of the modern Russian school of viola playing, had an impressive career as a founding member of the Beethoven Quartet, with which he played from 1923 until 1964.⁷ Borisovsky's contributions as a violist include teaching at the Moscow Conservatory, compiling catalogues of works written for the viola, writing arrangements and transcriptions for the viola, and recordings as a soloist and with the Beethoven Quartet. His transcriptions are outstanding due to the way he exploits expressive and timbral idioms of the instrument.

Borisovsky arranged various movements from the ballet in 1961 and in 1977. Despite losing the great timbral variety of the orchestral scoring, the piece works well for the viola and piano, a tribute to Borisovsky's imagination and creativity. The viola is often given the melodic material, and the piano fills out the rest of the orchestral

⁴ Claude Samuel, *Prokofiev* (New York: Grossman Publishers, 1971), 135.

⁵ Karen Bennett, "Star-cross'd Lovers: Shakespeare and Prokofiev's 'Pas de deux' in 'Romeo and Juliet'" *The Cambridge Quarterly* 32, no. 4 (2003): 312-313.

⁶ *Ibid*, 313.

⁷ Tully Potter, Stanley Sadie, ed., *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed. vol. 3. Borisovsky, Vadim (London: Macmillan Publishers Limited, 2001), 902.

forces. The writing highlights violistic virtuosity with double-stop passages, artificial harmonics, as well as extremes of the instrument's range.

Unlike the five Schilflieder, the music is not paired with specific passages from a narrative but borrows Shakespeare's characters and events from the play. The music is meant to be performed with a visual narrative being told through dance; however, thanks to the recognizable melodies used to represent characters and events, the narrative is still present without dancers.

The *Introduction* starts with a lyrical phrase beginning with two pick-up eighths leading to the downbeat, filling out the interval of a minor third. This opening gesture, Romeo and Juliet's theme, is like the pages of the storybook opening before the listener's eyes, preparing them for a tale of the impossibility of achieving lasting happiness.⁸ Immediately following the Introduction, the civilians of Verona begin their day in the *The Street Awakens*, depicted by simple phrase structures, chirping harmonics, and a cheerful melody with a narrow registral range set in 2/4.

Prokofiev composes three themes to represent different sides of Juliet: her youthful energy and excitement, a pure innocence, and her curiosity and yearning for something more.⁹ *The Young Juliet* starts with her first theme, musically symbolic of her youthfulness, with rapid scales of mostly diatonic sixteenth notes in C major. Huge facile leaps create the spryness of a young girl and give the music a playful character. Gently rising and falling in four bar groups, Juliet's second theme is simple and has little chromaticism, depicting her purity and naiveté. Juliet's third theme

⁸ Bennett, "Star-cross'd Lovers: Shakespeare and Prokofiev's 'Pas de deux' in 'Romeo and Juliet'", 325-26.

⁹ Ibid, 317-18.

emerges from A-flat major to a strikingly sweet B minor chord. This theme sings out more lyrically and tenderly than Juliet's other themes, and foreshadows her love story.

The enmity between the Capulets and the Montagues is illustrated ferociously in the *Dance of the Knights* by the heavy bass and stubborn dotted rhythms.¹⁰ In the orchestral version, Prokofiev scores the violins in the top of their range for power and overwhelming emotional affect. Borisovsky captures the same power by adding octaves and double-stops in the viola. Romeo's romantically expressive theme emerges, drifting through different keys as if he is dreaming about a world where he is able to openly express his feelings for his new love.¹¹ Romeo's music is followed by an ethereal dance in 3/4 played in artificial harmonics on the viola, representing what was originally flute in the orchestral version. This music could be illuminating the heavenly and intoxicating feelings the couple experiences while in the presence of one another. Next, Juliet's second theme appears again, as if she is unsure how to approach her feelings incited by Romeo's appearance. Both Romeo and Juliet come to their senses with the return of the opening music from this movement, and the reminder that their warring families have decided their fates.

The lyrical melody in the *Balcony Scene* begins simply and timidly, as the nervous lovers come face to face with one another. The melody transforms into a waltz as if the two are dancing with one another. The music blooms into an extremely passionate and sonorous arrival in the spirit of the euphoric bliss of a first and true

¹⁰ Ibid, 321-22.

¹¹ Ibid, 319-20.

love. The hearts of the young lovers soar with octave leaps and the movement closes with magical and shimmering harmonics.

A number of themes from previous movements return in the *Death of Juliet* to create the full story arch. Romeo and Juliet's theme from the introduction is repeated throughout this movement, but is drained of its inviting spirit and replaced by tragedy. The deepest depths of grief come from the reappearance of Juliet's third theme, now in the somber key of C minor, signifying her death.

Charles Martin Loeffler 1861-1935
Two Rhapsodies for Oboe, Viola and Piano

Charles Martin Loeffler's individual style draws its roots from his German birth, formal education in Berlin and Paris, and his decision to become a citizen of the United States.¹² At the age of thirteen, he began studying at the Hochschule für Musik in Berlin with Josef Joachim as his violin teacher. Although he had wonderful instructors at the school, Loeffler felt the environment was conservative and encouraged a focus based in tradition.¹³ His hunger for a modern style lead to his decision to move to Paris, a city he found more pleasing artistically and politically than Berlin.¹⁴ While living in Paris, Loeffler absorbed every part of French culture including works by Symbolist poets like Paul Verlaine, Charles Baudelaire, and Maurice Rollinat. Here he discovered the music of Camille Saint-Saëns, Georges

¹² Ellen Knight, *Charles Martin Loeffler: Music in American Life* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 1.

¹³ Ibid, 17.

¹⁴ Ibid, 18.

Bizet, Vincent d'Indy, and Jules Massenet, and studied composition with Ernest Guiraud, Claude Debussy's teacher.¹⁵

After moving to the United States in 1881, Loeffler was named second concertmaster and soloist of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, a post he held for twenty-one years. Many of his symphonic works received premieres by the BSO, including *Les veillées de l'Ukraine*, *Pagan Poem*, and *La Mort de Tintagiles*.¹⁶ His position with the orchestra gave him opportunities to premiere works as a soloist, collaborate with the top American players, and exposed him to music of great modern composers.

Loeffler preferred fantasy and dark subjects in his music, often embracing morbidity and death. His forms are typically freely structured, with a heavy emphasis on tonal colors. His approach to harmony is completely individualistic, with a mixture of highly chromatic romantic harmonies and borrowings from the French impressionists.

The *Two Rhapsodies* are based on two poems by French symbolist poet Maurice Rollinat. His poetic themes of death and striking imagery appealed to Loeffler. Interestingly, Rollinat was a musician himself and often set his own poems to music.¹⁷

Originally intended to be *Three Rhapsodies for clarinet, voice, viola, and piano*, Loeffler reworked this music in 1901 into the *Two Rhapsodies* after his friend

¹⁵ Ibid, 19-20.

¹⁶ Ibid, 291, 295-96.

¹⁷ Bruce I. Weiner, "Another French Face: Maurice Rollinat's Musical Interpretations of Poe's Poetry." *The Edgar Allan Poe Review* 16, no. 1 (2015): 19-43.

and clarinetist Leon Pourtau passed away.¹⁸ Loeffler dedicates the first rhapsody to his memory, and the second to the oboist who premiered the work, Georges Longy, principal oboe in the Boston Symphony, and founder of the Longy School of Cambridge.

I: The Pool

Full of old fish, blind-stricken long ago,
The pool, under a near sky rumbling dull thunder,
Bares between centuries-old rushes the splashing horror of its gloom.

Over yonder, goblins light up more than one marsh that is black, sinister,
unbearable;
But the pool is revealed in this lonely place
Only by the croaking of consumptive frogs.

Now the moon, piercing at this very moment,
Seems to look here at herself fantastically;
As though, one might say, to see her spectral face.

Her flat nose, the strange vacuity of teeth—
A death's head lighted from within,
About to peer into a dull mirror.

The first poem, *L'étang* (The Pool), is bleak and bizarre in its imagery surrounding a dull pond reflecting the image of a terrifying moon. The gloomy pool is filled with old blind fish and surrounded by “centuries-old” reeds. Rollinat describes the scene as black, sinister, unbearable, and lonely, complete with goblins and “consumptive frogs.” Musically, Loeffler compliments Rollinat’s imagery through thick textures and low, dark registers of both the piano and the viola. An eight-note motive centered on G ripples through all three instruments, bringing the pond to life. The opening viola melody is now set against murky sixteenth notes in the bass of the piano, further depicting the void waters. Loeffler develops the opening melody in the

¹⁸ Knight, *Charles Martin Loeffler: Music in American Life*, 113-14.

style of the late romantics. The oboe introduces a new theme in G-flat major that contrasts with the thick unavoidable darkness of the opening. Here, the music may be reflecting on the third stanza of the poem when the moonlight pierces through the darkness, and the moon uses the reflection of the pool “to look at herself fantastically.” The viola develops the oboe melody before the music dramatically arrives back in C minor, through scalar contrary motion in the piano. The second section, Allegro, begins pizzicato in the viola, emphasizing the off-beats in a way reflective of the “croaking of consumptive frogs.” The music here is lighter and more playful, as if in humorous contrast to the unpleasant images of the poem. Nonetheless, Loeffler includes the “dies irae” motive symbolizing death, played ponticello by the viola. This lighthearted and playful middle section ends abruptly and the dark opening melody returns more concretely, with rolled piano chords, until the end of the rhapsody.

II: The Bagpipe

His bagpipe groaned in the woods
As the wind that belleth;
And never has stag at bay,
Nor willow, nor oar,
Wept as that voice wept.

Those sounds of flute and hautboy
Seemed like the death-rattle of a woman.
Oh! his bagpipe,
Near the cross-roads of the crucifix!

He is dead. But under cold skies,
As soon as night weaves her mesh,
Down deep in my soul,
There is the nook of old fears,
I always hear his bagpipe
Groaning as of yore.

The second poem, *La cornemuse* (The Bagpipe), reflects on the haunting sound of the title instrument, nature, and death. The movement starts with a bold opening statement in the piano, followed by a windy cadenza out of which the bagpipe emerges, imitated by open fifth drones underneath a highly ornamented melody. The mournful cries of the oboe and viola respond to the ghostly groans of the bagpipe. The poet is then brought back to reality by impetuous sixteenth notes, first in the oboe and followed by the viola, before the bellowing bagpipe returns in the oboe, much closer and louder this time than before. The bagpipe motives develop throughout the piece, finding peaceful resolve in the coda.

Chapter 2: Recital II Program Notes

Frank Bridge 1879-1941

Three Songs for Medium Voice, Viola, and Piano

English composer and violist Frank Bridge is remembered as one of the first British modernists with an oeuvre consisting of a hefty contribution to the chamber music genre.¹⁹ Bridge's career illustrates the evolution of early twentieth century interests shifting from the reverent late romantics to the modernist era and Debussy's influences. After graduating from the Royal College of Music, Bridge made his living playing violin and viola in many of London's leading orchestras and string quartets. Bridge first encountered Debussy through the latter's string quartet in 1904.²⁰ As a pronounced pacifist, Bridge was deeply affected by the events and loss of life during World War I, which inspired many of his works.²¹ As his student, Benjamin Britten shared a close relationship with Bridge, and Britten paid homage to his teacher through his *Variations on a theme by Frank Bridge*. Like many composers in the early twentieth century, Bridge benefited from the philanthropy of Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge, who helped bring Bridge's music to the United States.²²

Three Songs for Medium Voice, Viola, and Piano were first performed in 1908 by contralto Ivy Sinclair, violist Audrey ffoulkes-Alston, and Bridge playing piano. The first two songs were completed in 1906 with the final song finished in 1907. The third song is a revision of a song originally for high voice, cello, and piano

¹⁹ Fabian Huss, *The Music of Frank Bridge*, (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2015), 44.

²⁰ Ibid, 11.

²¹ Paul Hindmarsh, "Frank Bridge: Seeds of Discontent" *The Musical Times* 132, no. 1775, (1991): 695-98.

²² Huss, *The Music of Frank Bridge*, 45.

written in 1903. Stylistically, these songs belong to the Romantic era, with highly chromatic harmonies and passionate melodies.

Bridge uses the instruments and voice differently in each song to create varied textures. In the first song, the instruments share the same thematic material, and interact with one another freely. However, in the second song the viola and voice share little thematic material in common, and only overlap during the climax. The third song is unified by the unchanging rhythmic gestures of the piano with both the vocal and viola lines soaring on top.

Matthew Arnold (1822-1888), author of the poem for the first song, was considered to be a bridge between the romantics and the modernists with poems that included nature but also expressed new philosophical ideas.²³ The second song is based on a poem of Heinrich Heine (1797-1856); his lyrical poems were set to lieder by the great composers of the genre, Robert Schumann and Franz Schubert. The poet Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822), who lived a tragically short life, was regarded as the “supreme lyrical voice of England” and was known for the singing-power of his poems.²⁴

The three poems Bridge sets in these songs share a similar theme: death. The poems by Arnold and Shelley reflect on pain and the remembrance of a loved one lost. Heine asks a more existential question about what happens to the human soul once we leave this earth. The interest in death and the despair experienced by those afflicted by loss was a common fascination of artists of the romantic era. Arnold and

²³ William Robbins, "The Poetry of Matthew Arnold" *Mosaic: A Journal for the Interdisciplinary Study of Literature* 13, no. 1 (1979): 111-30.

²⁴ Gertrude Slaughter "Percy Bysshe Shelley 1822-1922" *The North American Review* 216, no. 800 (1922): 67.

Shelley also include images of nature, which was another major theme from the romantic era.

Far, far from each other
Words by Matthew Arnold

Far, far from each other
Our spirits have flown.
And what heart knows another?
Ah! who knows his own?

Blow, ye winds! lift me with you
I come to the wild.
Fold closely, O Nature!
Thine arms round thy child.

Ah, calm me! restore me
And dry up my tears
On thy high mountain platforms,
Where morn first appears.

The first song begins with an introduction by the viola and piano which consists of the main melodic subject in F sharp minor. The viola repeats bits of the longer melodic phrase after the voice like a ghostly presence reaching out to the grieving protagonist, possibly the mother of a deceased child. The viola erupts into passionate rising gestures symbolic of the wind. The mother seeks comfort from nature and as the voice sings “I come to the wild”, the music suddenly arrives in the grand and reverent key of C major, as if the listener is looking out over a vast landscape from a mountaintop. Until this moment, the piano has had constant sixteenths or triplets capturing the relentlessness a mother would feel after losing a child. The motion comes to a stop when the text acknowledges the child is buried in the ground. After this poignant moment, the triplet motor begins again as the viola searches for the home key of F sharp minor. Comforted by nature, the mother seems

to come to terms with the loss of her child as the piece fades away ending in F sharp major.

**Where is it that our soul doth go?
Words by Heinrich Heine**

One thing I'd know,
When we have perished,
Where is it that our soul doth go?
Where, where is the fire that is extinguished?
Where is the wind?
Where is the wind but now did blow?
Where is it? Where is it?
Where is it that our soul doth go?
When we have perished

The piano introduction of the second song in E minor blossoms over a B pedal in the bass leading to the voice entrance, surprisingly in F major. The words of the poem are spaced out in the vocal phrases, adding a sense of reflection and pensiveness. Again, Bridge uses musical imagery to invoke the winds blowing by accenting off-beat entrances in both voice and viola and increasing activity in the piano. One poignant use of text painting is his treatment of the intervals when the voice sings the word “perished”, first a stinging falling fifth and later a descending octave leap. A downward sequence in both the voice and the viola adds a sense of spatially searching for the answer, when the voice asks “Where is it?”

**Music when soft voices die
Words by Percy Bysshe Shelley**

Music, when soft voices die,
Vibrates in the memory;
Odours, when sweet violets sicken,
Live within the sense they quicken.

Rose leaves, when the rose is dead,
Are heaped for the beloved's bed;

And so thy thoughts, when thou art gone,
Love itself shall slumber on.

The third song, in C minor, is composed over a constant, gently flowing gesture in the left hand of the piano. The viola highlights words like “death” or “die” through a somber falling half step and other words like “memory” through pianissimo dynamics to insinuate inner thoughts. The movement ends in C major paralleling the acceptance of loss.

Charles Martin Loeffler 1861-1935

Quatre Poèmes for Mezzo Soprano, Viola, and Piano, Op. 5

Loeffler completed *Quatre Poèmes* three years after his *Two Rhapsodies* for oboe, viola, and piano, which were performed on the first recital of this project. His compositional style did not change dramatically over the three intervening years; both pieces share many of Loeffler’s stylistic trademarks such as decadent subjects, impressionist influences, and complex harmonic structure. Each song has a specific dedicatee, and each is named in the score. Mme. J. Montgomery Sears was a patron and organizer of house concerts featuring Loeffler’s music, as well as the dedicatee of the first song. The second song is dedicated to artist Howard J. Cushing, a friend made during Loeffler’s time at the Tavern Club in Boston, a gathering place for artists and scholars.²⁵ Lifelong friend and violin idol Eugène Ysaÿe received the dedication of the third song. The final song was dedicated to the French pianist Raoul Pugno.

²⁵ Knight, *Charles Martin Loeffler: A Life Apart in American Music*, 61-62.

1. The Cracked Bell

Bitter and sweet it is on these long winter nights
To sit before the fire and watch the smoking log
Beat like a heart; and hear our lost, our mute delights
Call with the carillons that ring out in the fog.

What certitude, what health, sounds from that brazen throat,
In spite of age and rust, alert! O happy bell,
Sending into the dark your clear religious note,
Like an old soldier crying through the night, "All's well!"

I am not thus; my soul is cracked across by care;
Its voice, that once could clang upon this icy air,
Has lost the power, it seems, — comes faintly forth, instead,

As from the rattling throat of a hurt man who lies
Beside a lake of blood, under a heap of dead,
And cannot stir, and in prodigious struggling die

The poem set in the first song, “The Cracked Bell” was written by French poet Charles Baudelaire (1821-1867). In this narrative, a poet finds himself alone on a winter’s night when the sounds of a bell incite a reflective mood. The bell is represented in the music by “bell tones” played by the piano in the opening of the song, and later by ghostly harmonics on the viola. The bell is compared to a venerable soldier standing strong and vigilant, yet the poet asserts that his soul is broken like the cracked bell. The bass line in the piano resembles a militant march with a repeated descending fourth figure to conjure an image of the soldier. The text becomes nightmarish as the soldier is now wounded and beside a pool of blood and heaped corpses. The dreadful image created by the last stanza of poetry is highlighted by an eerie quote of the “dies irae” in a major key, creating a sense of morbidity.

2. Dansons La Gigue!

Let's dance a jig!
I loved, above all, her pretty eyes
Brighter than stars in the skies,
I loved her malicious eyes likewise.

Let's dance a jig!
She for sure, she knew the art
Of breaking a poor lover's heart,
How charmingly she played the part.

Let's dance a jig!
But I find it even better
That kiss of her mouth in flower
Now, in my heart, she's a dead letter.

Let's dance a jig!
I recall, oh I recall
The hours, the words we let fall,
And this the very best of all.
Let's dance a jig!

Paul Verlaine (1844-1896), whose poems are set in the final three songs, was a French poet most known for his association with the Decadent movement and his use of sensuous language and suggestive subtlety.²⁶ The second song, “Dansons La Gigue!”, portrays a lively dance scene set in a compound meter, in which a character reflects on the wonderful time he had dancing with a woman he admires. The music changes from a celebratory jig to reflective and pondering moods depicted by changes in tempo and texture.

3. The sound of the horn wails towards the woods

The sound of the horn wails towards the woods
With an almost orphan sorrow
Which fades away at the foot of the hill
Amid the gusts of the fierce North wind.

The soul of the wolf weeps in that voice

²⁶ Irene Dean Paul, "Paul Verlaine" *Music & Letters* 3, no. 3 (1922): 260-61.

Which rises with the setting sun
With an almost soothing agony,
Which delights and distresses all at once.

To muffle better this lament,
The snow falls in long strips of lint
Across the blood-flecked setting sun,

And the air has the air of an autumn sigh,
So mild is this monotonous night
On which a languid landscape takes its ease.

The third poem “Le son du cor s’afflige vers les bois” depicts a peaceful landscape on an autumn evening where one can hear the sounds of wolves and horns in the distance. Loeffler shows his impressionist influence in the piano cadenza in the opening of this song. The colors and harmonies depict the loneliness and emptiness created by the autumnal evening.

4. Serenade

As tho’ it were the voice of one that cries,
From where he lies buried,
Hear, lady, to thy chamber window rise
My voice harsh and wearied.

My mandolin thine ear a moment long,
Thine heart, too, surrender.
For thee it was, for thee I made this song,
So cruel, so tender.

I’ll sing thine eyes that onyx are and gold,
Clear and unclouded,
Thy Lethe breasts that Stygian tresses hold
In the darkness enshrouded.

As tho’ it were the voice of one that cries,
From where he lies buried,
Hear, lady, to thy chamber window rise
My voice harsh and wearied.

Then will I greatly praise, as is their right,
Beauties without number,

Whose mem'ries still come to me on a night
Deserted of slumber.

And then, to end, I'll tell thee of thy kiss,
All red-lipped and human,
Thy sweetness, with its agonizing bliss:
My angel - My demon!

My mandolin thine ear a moment long,
Thine heart, too, surrender.
For thee it was, for thee I made this song,
So cruel, so tender.

The final movement depicts a man's attempt to win the interest of a woman by playing a serenade on his mandolin outside her window. The pizzicato chords in the viola represent the man strumming his tune on the mandolin. The viola pointedly plays the opening of the "dies irae" motive, coloring the text about the man's description of his voice as coming from "where he lies buried." After mentioning the mandolin, Loeffler instructs the viola to play pizzicato close to the bridge to capture the twanging and bright sound of the mandolin. The voice plunges an octave on "my demon" and also on the word "tender", drawing more emphasis on these words as if the man cannot decide if his interest is torturing him or a source of joy. Further, the man's torment is experienced through snarling gestures and cold ponticello.

Benjamin Britten 1913-1976

Lachrymae, reflections on a song of Dowland for Viola and Piano, Op. 48 (1950)

Benjamin Britten established himself as a leading and extremely influential English composer in the twentieth century. While able to compose music for all genres (symphonic, chamber music, choral, etc.), he is credited in particular for the revival of British opera. Britten's music does not bear a striking resemblance to that

of his first teacher, Frank Bridge, nor is there obvious stylistic continuity. Britten believed that music should be accessible to every audience member; he reacted against the increasing obscurity of the modernists by developing an accessible and rich tonal harmonic language. As an advocate for increasing musical knowledge and education, Britten composed one of his best-known works: *A Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra*, based on a tune by English composer Henry Purcell.

Lachrymae was written for the great Scottish violist William Primrose, after he agreed to participate at the Aldeburgh Festival. Britten and his partner Peter Pears established the Aldeburgh Festival to present performances of music by friends in the town they called home. Primrose and Britten gave the premiere of this work at the festival in 1950.

Britten adored the music of the late 16th and 17th centuries, particularly the works of Henry Purcell. *Lachrymae* draws its thematic material from a song by early English composer John Dowland (1563-1626). The opening four notes of Dowland's "If My Complaints Could Passions Move" can be heard in the muted notes of the viola at the opening. The theme is hidden subliminally in the left hand of the piano.

The structure of this work is in reverse variation form, an unusual form with the ten variations of "If My Complaints Could Passions Move" coming before a full iteration of Dowland's theme at the very end. Britten inserts Dowland's most popular song, "Flow My Tears", in the sixth variation. The tenth variation brings the music to a dramatic climax before the intensity gradually ebbs into a purely personal statement of the theme. Britten's choice of introducing Dowland's full theme at the end of the

ten variations harnesses immense emotional power. The text of Dowland's closing line is as follows:

Die shall my hopes, but not my faith,
That you that of my fall may hearers be.
May here despair, which truly saith,
I was more true to Love than Love to me.

Johannes Brahms 1833-1897

Zwei Gesänge for Alto Voice, Viola, and Piano, Op. 91

Johannes Brahms is one of the great Late Romantic composers of his time. His orchestral and chamber works are considered to be equal to the genius of Beethoven, and his piano music is compared to the brilliance of Robert Schumann. Music critics of his own time weighed in on whether Brahms was tethered to traditional practices, or a true progressive.²⁷ During his time, he was often deemed too traditional because of his preference for using the forms of the early romantics at a time when other composers were breaking free of these casts. Stylistically, his music is comprised of thick chords, complex rhythms such as duple against triple, and triadic melodies. "Brahms the Progressive", an essay by Arnold Schoenberg, credits Brahms as being a radical with his irregular phrase lengths, exploration of existing forms, and fearlessly chromatic harmonic language.²⁸ Brahms was a perfectionist; he spent much of his life being compared to Beethoven and held to the expectations created by his mentor Robert Schumann in his article "Neue Bahnen" (New Paths), where he calls Brahms the one to "give expression to his age in an ideal fashion."²⁹

²⁷ Malcolm MacDonald, *Brahms* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1990), vii-viii.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ John Daverio, *Robert Schumann Herald of a New Poetic Age* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 454.

Brahms' choice of including an obligato viola part in his Op. 91 songs is monumental, as these two songs are the only songs from his oeuvre with another instrument besides the piano. The choice of adding viola to the songs relates to the dedicatees. The first song, "Gestillte Sehnsucht", was actually written in 1884, several years after the second song. **[Then follow this with the text below for #1, and move #2 below #1.]

1. Appeased Desire

Steeped in the golden light of evening,
How solemnly the forests stand!
In the soft voices of birds breathes
The gentle stirring of the evening wind.
What whisper the wind and the birds?
They whisper the world to sleep.

Desires which always arise
In the heart that is without peace or rest,
Longings that trouble the soul,
When will you rest, when will you cease?
To the sounds of whispering wind and the birds,
You longing desires, when will you be lulled to sleep?
When no longer into golden distances
My spirit hastens on wings of dreams,
No longer on the eternal distant stars
My eyes are fixed with a longing gaze;
Then the winds, the birds shall lull
My life and my longings.

The first song "Gestillte Sehnsucht" was written several years later, in 1884. Brahms intended for this song to rectify Joachim's relationship with Amalie while the couple was having trouble in their marriage.³⁰ The text for the song comes from a poem by Friedrich Rückert, exploring themes of internal yearning and desire without

³⁰ Ibid, 242-43.

peace. The opening viola melody is warm and deeply sublime. The low register and generously warm timbre of the viola illustrates the “golden light of evening.” The middle section modulates to G minor with the mood of the music shifting to restlessness, giving life to the text: “the heart that is without peace or rest.” After finding peace again, the song ends contentedly.

2. Sacred Lullaby

[Joseph, my good Joseph,
Help me to rock my darling child,
God will be the one to reward you
In the Heavenly Kingdom of the Virgin's Son, Maria, Maria.]
You who fly above these palm trees
In the night and the wind,
You holy angels, silence the treetops!
My child is asleep.
You palms of Bethlehem, in the raging wind,
How can you rustle so angrily today,
Do not sigh thus, be silent,
Sway softly and gently.
Silence the treetops! My child is asleep.
The Child of Heaven suffers pain;
He was so weary of the sorrows of the earth. Now gently soothed in sleep
The agony leaves him.
Silence the treetops, my child is asleep.
Bitter cold descends,
With what can I cover my child's limbs?
All you angels, who on wings
Hover in the air,

Brahms wrote the second song “Geistliches Wiegenlied” in 1863 to mark the birth of a son to his friend and colleague Josef Joachim and his contralto wife Amalie Weiss.³¹ Joachim was not only an accomplished and renowned violinist, but also a viola player. The text comes from a Spanish song about the nativity and rocking the young child to sleep. The viola starts the movement lovingly with the first stanza of

³¹ MacDonald, *Brahms*, 132.

text written in the score underneath the notes the viola plays. There are moments when the wind blows through the treetops and the music is more tumultuous but in the end calms down as the baby continues to sleep.

Chapter 3: Recital III Program Notes

Toru Takemitsu 1930-1996

A String Around Autumn

Toru Takemitsu is remembered as a prominent Japanese composer with a particular personalized approach to timbre. Essentially a self-taught composer, Takemitsu combines his love of modern western music and traditional Japanese music into his own style. The music of Claude Debussy and Olivier Messiaen shaped Takemitsu's approach to orchestration, timbre, and the organization of pitches. Two Japanese composers, Yasuji Kiyose and Fumio Hayasaka, captured Takemitsu's interest through their expression of the experience of Japanese culture as a "human condition."³² The Japanese concept of 'Ma' (negative space, gap, or pause) plays an important role in Takemitsu's compositions. He says:

'Ma' cannot be dominated by a person, by a composer. 'Ma' can never be determined. 'Ma' is the mother of sound and should be very vivid. 'Ma' is a living space..."³³

Takemitsu was also influenced by nature and the coexistence of all things in a natural balance. Numerous compositions of his are given titles relating to nature such as *A Flock Descends into the Pentagonal Garden*, *Toward the Sea*, and *Tree Line*.

A String Around Autumn, for solo viola and orchestra, was commissioned by the Festival D'Automne à Paris in 1989 for the commemoration of the bicentennial of the French Revolution. The piece was premiered on November 29th, 1989 by Japanese violist (and friend of Takemitsu) Nobuko Imai, with Kent Kango conducting

³² Noriko Ohtake, *Creative Sources for the music of Toru Takemitsu* (Aldershot: Scholar Press, 1993), 15.

³³ Ibid, 55.

the Orchestre de Paris. Takemitsu extracted the title of his work from a short poem by Japanese poet Makoto Ōoka called *A String Around Autumn*. Takemitsu thought this was a clever name since the piece was written for a solo string instrument for the Festival D'Automne.

Sink
Don't sing.

Be simply
Silent.

Be simple:
A string
To wind around
Autumn.

- Makoto Ōoka

The piece has been arranged for viola and piano by Toshio Hosokawa. While still successful, this arrangement is not quite as powerful as the original version with the full colors of the symphony orchestra Takemitsu intended.

The work consists of short musical gestures with a focus on color, and space between each gesture. Takemitsu uses the full timbral range of the viola very effectively through the inclusion of harmonics, double-stops, muted playing, and ponticello colors. The gestures described are unified based on the harmonic language Takemitsu creates. The harmonic language comes from the pentatonic scale with the major/minor chord. The gestures themselves are carefully organized, much like features in a perfectly created Japanese garden. The text from the poem is clear in the musical mood created by the slowly evolving gestures. The poem and musical mood match in their Zen character and simplicity of gesture.

Vincent Persichetti 1915-1987

Infanta Marina, Op. 83

Reflections on a poem by Wallace Stevens

Persichetti held a number of positions including head of the theory and composition department at the Philadelphia Conservatory (twenty-three years), faculty member at Juilliard (forty years), and director of publications at Elkan-Vogel (thirty-five years), all while composing, raising a family, and performing.³⁴ His ambitious nature was also apparent during his years as a graduate student when he served as the head of the theory department at Combs College of Music, studied conducting with Fritz Reiner at Curtis, and studied organ and piano at the Philadelphia Conservatory simultaneously. Because of his great versatility as a composer, it is difficult to characterize Persichetti's music into one category. He is known for writing "student pieces", and felt these works were at an equally high artistic level to his pieces for professional musicians. Serenade No. 6 for trombone, viola, and cello also demonstrates that he is comfortable writing for unusual combinations of instruments. His music before the 1950s has been compared to Bartok, Hindemith, and Copland. Persichetti was interested in polytonality and pandiatonicism, and used this language in many of his pieces. When asked about his own composition style, Persichetti identified a choice between two creative characteristics: grace and grit. Programmatic music served no purpose for Persichetti, and he had very firm opinions on the subject:

"Program music" is valid only if it can be heard as absolute music. Programmatic information can be disposed of, once it has served its purpose - stimulating absolute music..."³⁵

³⁴ Andrea Olmstead, *Vincent Persichetti Grazioso, Grit, and Gold* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2018), xxi.

³⁵ Ibid, xxii.

All of his musical material was subject to borrowing from his own oeuvre. He would take thematic material from completed works and use it in a new way for a new piece of music. It is through this process that the viola version of *Infanta Marina* came to exist.

Her terrace was the sand
And the palms and the twilight.
She made of the motions of her wrist
The grandiose gestures
Of her thought.

The rumpling of the plumes
Of this creature of the evening
Came to be sleights of sails
Over the sea.

And thus she roamed
In the roamings of her fan,
Partaking of the sea,
And of the evening,
As they flowed around
And uttered their subsiding sound.

- Wallace Stevens

Infanta Marina was originally from a twenty-song cycle for soprano and piano called *Harmonium*, based on poems by American poet Wallace Stevens. The viola version includes a fifteen measure long introductory passage for solo viola, and a middle section of music composed originally for viola and piano. There are two sections which consist of the original song in the first, with the reappearance varying in register and timbre, with muted viola. The viola is capable of capturing the vocal quality of the original song through specific fingerings and bowings. By playing up in higher positions, violists can create subtle portamenti that imitate the voice and keep an even tone that is more difficult to produce when crossing strings. The middle

section of music that is originally for the viola contains non-vocal gestures such as percussive pizzicato, flurries of notes, rapid string crossings, and double-stop passages.

Robert Schumann 1810-1856
Märchenbilder, Op. 113
Märchenerzählungen, Op. 132

A musical giant of the Romantic era, Robert Schumann exerted a tremendous influence on a generation of late Romantic composers with his stylistic approach to chromatic harmony, original forms outside the Classical canon, and complex rhythmic structure. As the son of a publisher, Schumann naturally grew to adore literature and cherished the works of Heinrich Heine, Johann Wolfgang Goethe, and Friedrich Schiller, to name a few. Schumann chose to pursue a career as a composer over his desire to write poetry, but one could argue his music is as colorful and cathartic as any poem. A distinguished pianist and composer herself, Robert's wife Clara Schumann (née Wieck) championed and premiered many of her husband's most notable works for piano, including the Piano Concerto in A minor and the Piano Quintet in E-flat major. Schumann's adoration for literature exists in his musical subjects and forms, particularly his character pieces. *Carnaval* (1834-5) for solo piano consists of twenty short character pieces in which Schumann illustrates the musical personas of his friends, colleagues, and imaginary characters, including two aspects of the composer's personality: the dreamy, deliberate Eusebius and the fiery, impetuous Florestan. This love of words also led to his career as an influential music critic. At the end of his life, Schumann was plagued with health issues manifesting in symptoms that caused delusions and a general mental decline. After a suicide attempt

in 1854, Schumann asked to be taken to an asylum in Endenich, where he spent the rest of his days until his death in 1856.

Märchenbilder (Fairy Tale Pictures) was composed in 1851 and dedicated to Schumann's friend, violinist Wilhelm Joseph von Wasielewski. In a letter to the dedicatee, Schumann characterized the pieces as miniatures saying, "Childish pranks! There's not much to them." The work is comprised of four short character pieces all closely related to D minor. The four pieces tell a story from the first to the final movement with an arch-like structure. The first movement in D minor has lyrical melodies with plunging intervals of tritones or perfect fifths that yearn for an escape or rescue. This movement could depict the mood of an individual captured by a villainous figure. The second movement (a rondo) announces itself with a galloping rhythm played in F major by the viola. The repeated rhythmic figure from the opening gesture could depict a hero riding on horseback to save the character from the first movement. The B section illustrates the hero's infiltration of the villain's lair with sneaky sixteenth notes in the piano and sly gestures in the viola. After the return of the heroic rondo theme, rescuer and captive are joyously reunited in the C section with dancing sixteenth notes in a call and response from piano and viola. The second movement ends charmingly before an interruption from the sinister and vengeful third movement in D minor. The villain chases after the couple in an attempt to spoil their happiness. Dashing sixteenth note triplets in the viola and bold melodic gestures in the piano bring the infernal chase to life. The music modulates suddenly to B major in a more lyrical and loving tone, depicting the couple oblivious to the villain's chase. Back in D minor, the villain continues his chase until the end of the movement where

he runs out of energy and gives up his chase with a final cadenza like passage. The final movement, in D major, is warm and loving like a lullaby, signifying the happy ending to this tale.

Märchenerzählungen (Fairy Tales) was written in 1853 during a visit to the Schumann household by a young Johannes Brahms. At this time, Schumann published an article presenting the young Brahms to the musical world as “the chosen one.”³⁶ The choice of instrumentation (clarinet, viola, and piano) may be credited to Schumann looking back at Mozart’s *Kegelstatt Trio*, written for the same instruments, or possibly to an interest in using the darker timbres of the viola and clarinet to depict fanciful stories. Like *Märchenbilder*, the trio is also comprised of four character pieces with each capturing a different mood or scene all closely related to B-flat Major. The first movement gently and merrily moves along in the key of B-flat Major, introducing the characters and scenery of the story. In G minor, the second movement depicts mischievous characters contrasted with a soothing middle section with gently rocking triplets. The third movement sounds Brahmsian in texture with Arabesque figures under a soaring love duet between clarinet and viola, with rich counter melodies. The final movement is robust and playful in nature, with a return to B-flat major. These pieces were dedicated to Schumann’s student Albert Dietrich.

³⁶ Malcolm MacDonald, *Brahms* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1990), 18.

Text Translations

Schilflieder by Nikolaus von Lenau

I.

Drüben geht die Sonne scheiden
Und der müde Tag entschlief.
Niederhangen hier die Weiden
In den Teich, so still, so tief.

Und ich muß mein Liebstes meiden:
Quill, o Träne, quill hervor!
Traurig säuseln hier die Weiden,
Und im Winde bebt das Rohr,

In mein stilles, tiefes Leiden
Strahlst du, Ferne! hell und mild,
Wie durch Binsen hier und Weiden
Strahlt des Abendsternes Bild.

II.

Trübe wird's, die Wolken jagen,
Und der Regen niederbricht,
Und die lauten Winde klagen:
"Teich, wo ist dein
Sternenlicht?"

Suchen den erloschnen
Schimmer
Tief im aufgewühlten See.
Deine Liebe lächelt nimmer
Nieder in mein tiefes Weh.

I.

Over there the sun is setting,
weary day sinks into sleep
and the willows hang down low
to the pond, so calm so deep.

And my love is lost forever,
flow, oh tears, which no one heeds,
sad the wind through willows
rustles,
weaving through the shivering reeds.

In the depth of desolation
you shine brightly from afar,
while through reeds and rushes
brightly
shines the gentle evening star.

II.

Waning light, the clouds are
scurrying
and the rain falls like a stone,
and the noisy winds cry sadly:
"Pond, where has your starlight
flown?"

Seeking the light, extinguished
in the depths, whipped by the
storm.
Never more your love will smile

III.

Auf geheimem Waldespfade
Schleich ich gern im Abendschein
An das öde Schilfgestade
Mädchen, und gedenke dein!

Wenn sich dann der Busch verdüstert,
Rauscht das Rohr geheimnisvoll,
Und es klaget, und es flüstert,
Daß ich weinen, weinen soll.

Und ich mein, ich höre wehen
Leise deiner Stimme Klang
Und im Weiher untergehen
Deinen lieblichen Gesang.

IV.

Sonnenuntergang;
Schwarze Wolken ziehn,
O wie schwül und bang
Alle Winde fliehn!

Durch den Himmel wild
Jagen Blitze, bleich;
Ihr vergänglich Bild
Wandelt durch den Teich.

Wie gewitterklar
Mein ich dich zu sehn,
Und dein langes Haar
Frei im Sturme wehn!

III.

Oft on secret forest paths
I creep in the evening glow
to the lonely banks of rushes,
darling girl, and think of you.

When the shrubs begin to darken
the reeds tell of mysteries deep,
and a plaintive, whispering voice
tells me I must weep, must weep.

And I fancy I can hear
the gentle music of your voice
while your charming song is sinking
into the pond without a trace.

IV.

The sun has gone down;
black clouds are drifting,
sultry and anxious
all the winds are fleeing!

Furiously across the sky
pallid lightning sears
and her transient image in the
pond appears.

In the stormy light
I seem to see your form
and your loosened hair
blowing in the storm!

V.

Auf dem Teich, dem regungslosen,
Weilt des Mondes holder Glanz,
Flechtend seine bleichen Rosen
In des Schilfes grünen Kranz.

Hirsche wandeln dort am Hügel,
Blicken in die Nacht empor;
Manchmal regt sich das Geflügel
Träumerisch im tiefen Rohr.

Weinend muß mein Blick sich senken;
Durch die tiefste Seele geht
Mir ein süßes Deingedenken,
Wie ein stilles Nachtgebet.

Translation by Gary Bramall

L'étang by Maurice Rollinat

Plein de très vieux poissons frappés de cécité,
L'étang, sous un ciel bas roulant de sourds tonnerres,
Étale entre ses joncs plusieurs fois centenaires
La clapotante horreur de son opacité.

Là-bas, des farfadets servent de luminaires
À plus d'un marais noir, sinistre et redouté ;
Mais lui ne se révèle en ce lieu déserté
Que par ses bruits affreux de crapauds poitrinaires.

Or, la lune qui point tout juste en ce moment,
Semble s'y regarder si fantastiquement,
Que l'on dirait, à voir sa spectrale figure,

Son nez plat et le vague étrange de ses dents,
Une tête de mort éclairée en dedans
Qui viendrait se mirer dans une glace obscure.

V.

Motionless upon the pond
lies the moonlight's gentle glow,
weaving her pallid roses
into the reed's green wreath below.

Stags, roving on the hills,
look up into the night,
sometimes the dreaming birds
stir in the depths of the reeds.

I drop my tearful gaze;
my soul is pierced to the core
by sweet memories of you,
like a quiet evening prayer.

The Pool

Full of old fish, blind-stricken long ago,
The pool, under a near sky rumbling dull thunder,
Bares between centuries-old rushes the splashing
horror of its gloom.

Over yonder, goblins light up more than one marsh
that is black, sinister, unbearable;
But the pool is revealed in this lonely place
Only by the croaking of consumptive frogs.

Now the moon, piercing at this very moment,
Seems to look here at herself fantastically;
As though, one might say, to see her spectral face.

Her flat nose, the strange vacuity of teeth—
A death's head lighted from within,
About to peer into a dull mirror.

La cornemuse by Maurice Rollinat

Sa cornemuse dans les bois
Geignait comme le vent qui brame
Et jamais le cerf aux abois,
Jamais le saule ni la rame,
N'ont pleuré comme cette voix.

Ces sons de flûte et de hautbois
Semblaient râlés par une femme.
Oh ! près du carrefour des croix,
Sa cornemuse !

Il est mort. Mais, sous les cieux froids,
Aussitôt que la nuit se trame,
Toujours, tout au fond de mon âme,
Là, dans le coin des vieux effrois,
J'entends gémir, comme autrefois,
Sa cornemuse.

Translations by Philip Hale

The Bagpipe

His bagpipe groaned in the woods
As the wind that belleth;
And never has stag at bay,
Nor willow, nor oar,
Wept as that voice wept.

Those sounds of flute and hautboy
Seemed like the death-rattle of a woman.
Oh! his bagpipe,
Near the cross-roads of the crucifix!

He is dead. But under cold skies,
As soon as night weaves her mesh,
Down deep in my soul,
There is the nook of old fears,
I always hear his bagpipe
Groaning as of yore.

La Cloche fêlée. by Charles Baudelaire

Il est amer et doux, pendant les nuits d'hiver,
D'écouter, près du feu qui palpite et qui fume,
Les souvenirs lointains lentement s'élever
Au bruit des carillons qui chantent dans la brume.

Bienheureuse la cloche au gosier vigoureux
Qui, malgré sa vieillesse, alerte et bien portante,
Jette fidèlement son cri religieux,
Ainsi qu'un vieux soldat qui veille sous la tente!

Moi, mon âme est fêlée, et lorsqu'en ses ennuis
Elle veut de ses chants peupler l'air froid des nuits,
Il arrive souvent que sa voix affaiblie

Semble le râle épais d'un blessé qu'on oublie
Au bord d'un lac de sang, sous un grand tas de morts,
Et qui meurt, sans bouger, dans d'immenses efforts!

Translation by Edna St. Vincent Millay

The Cracked Bell

Bitter and sweet it is on these long winter nights
To sit before the fire and watch the smoking log
Beat like a heart; and hear our lost, our mute delights
Call with the carillons that ring out in the fog.

What certitude, what health, sounds from that brazen
throat,
In spite of age and rust, alert! O happy bell,
Sending into the dark your clear religious note,
Like an old soldier crying through the night, "All's
well!"

I am not thus; my soul is cracked across by care;
Its voice, that once could clang upon this icy air,
Has lost the power, it seems, — comes faintly forth,
instead,

As from the rattling throat of a hurt man who lies
Beside a lake of blood, under a heap of dead,
And cannot stir, and in prodigious struggling die!

Dansons la gigue! By Paul Verlaine

Dansons la gigue!
J'aimais surtout ses jolis yeux,
Plus clairs que l'étoile des cieux,
J'aimais ses yeux malicieux.

Dansons la gigue!
Elle avait des façons vraiment
De désoler un pauvre amant,
Que c'en était vraiment charmant!

Dansons la gigue!
Mais je trouve encore meilleur
Le baiser de sa bouche en fleur,
Depuis qu'elle est morte à mon cœur.

Dansons la gigue!
Je me souviens, je me souviens
Des heures et des entretiens,
Et c'est le meilleur de mes biens.
Dansons la gigue!

Translation by A. S. Kline

Dansons La Gigue!

Let's dance a jig!
I loved, above all, her pretty eyes
Brighter than stars in the skies,
I loved her malicious eyes likewise.

Let's dance a jig!
She for sure, she knew the art
Of breaking a poor lover's heart,
How charmingly she played the part.

Let's dance a jig!
But I find it even better
That kiss of her mouth in flower
Now, in my heart, she's a dead letter.

Let's dance a jig!
I recall, oh I recall
The hours, the words we let fall,
And this the very best of all.
Let's dance a jig!

Le son du cor s'afflige vers les bois by Paul Verlaine

Le son du cor s'afflige vers les bois
D'une douleur on veut croire orpheline
Qui vient mourir au bas de la colline
Parmi la brise errant en courts abois.

L'âme du loup pleure dans cette voix
Qui monte avec le soleil qui décline
D'une agonie on veut croire câline
Et qui ravit et qui navre à la fois.

Pour faire mieux cette plainte assoupie,
La neige tombe à longs traits de charpie
À travers le couchant sanguinolent.

Et l'air a l'air d'être un soupir d'automne
Tant il fait doux par ce soir monotone
Où se drolote un paysage lent.

Translation by Richard Stokes

The Sound of the horn wails toward the woods

The sound of the horn wails towards the woods
With an almost orphan sorrow
Which fades away at the foot of the hill
Amid the gusts of the fierce North wind.

The soul of the wolf weeps in that voice
Which rises with the setting sun
With an almost soothing agony,
Which delights and distresses all at once.

To muffle better this lament,
The snow falls in long strips of lint
Across the blood-flecked setting sun,

And the air has the air of an autumn sigh,
So mild is this monotonous night
On which a languid landscape takes its ease.

Sérénade by Paul Verlaine

Comme la voix d'un mort qui chanterait
Du fond de sa fosse,
Maîtresse, entends monter vers ton retraits
Ma voix aigre et fausse.
Ouvre ton âme et ton oreille au son
De ma mandoline:
Pour toi j'ai fait, pour toi, cette chanson
Cruelle et câline.

Je chanterai tes yeux d'or et d'onyx
Purs de toutes ombres,
Puis le Léthé de ton sein, puis le Styx
De tes cheveux sombres.

Comme la voix d'un mort qui chanterait
Du fond de sa fosse,
Maîtresse, entends monter vers ton retraits
Ma voix aigre et fausse.

Puis je l'ourai beaucoup, comme il convient,
Cette chair bénie,
Dont le parfum opulent me revient
Les nuits d'insomnie.

Et pour finir, je dirai le baiser
De ta lèvre rouge,
Et ta douceur à me martyriser,
Mon Ange! Ma Gouge!

Ouvre ton âme et ton oreille au son
De ma mandoline:
Pour toi j'ai fait, pour toi, cette chanson
Cruelle et câline.

Translation by Henry G. Chapman

Serenade

As tho' it were the voice of one that cries,
From where he lies buried,
Hear, lady, to thy chamber window rise
My voice harsh and wearied.

My mandolin thine ear a moment long,
Thine heart, too, surrender.
For thee it was, for thee I made this song,
So cruel, so tender.

I'll sing thine eyes that onyx are and gold,
Clear and unclouded,
Thy Lethe breasts that Stygian tresses hold
In the darkness enshrouded.

As tho' it were the voice of one that cries,
From where he lies buried,
Hear, lady, to thy chamber window rise
My voice harsh and wearied.

Then will I greatly praise, as is their right,
Beauties without number,
Whose mem'ries still come to me on a night
Deserted of slumber.

And then, to end, I'll tell thee of thy kiss,
All red-lipped and human,
Thy sweetness, with its agonizing bliss:
My angel - My demon!

My mandolin thine ear a moment long,
Thine heart, too, surrender.
For thee it was, for thee I made this song,
So cruel, so tender.

Gestillte Sehnsucht by Friedrich Rückert

In goldnen Abendschein getauchet,
Wie feierlich die Wälder stehn!
In leise Stimmen der Vöglein hauchet
Des Abendwindes leises Wehn.
Was lispeln die Winde, die Vögelein?
Sie lispeln die Welt in Schlummer ein.

Ihr Wünsche, die ihr stets euch reget
Im Herzen sonder Rast und Ruh!
Du Sehnen, das die Brust beweget,
Wann ruhest du, wann schlummerst du?
Beim Lispeln der Winde, der Vögelein,
Ihr sehnenden Wünsche, wann schlaft ihr ein?

Ach, wenn nicht mehr in goldne Fernen
Mein Geist auf Traumgefieder eilt,
Nicht mehr an ewig fernen Sternen
Mit sehnendem Blick mein Auge weilt;
Dann lispeln die Winde, die Vögelein
Mit meinem Sehnen mein Leben ein.

Translation by Waldo Lyman

Appeased Desire

Steeped in the golden light of evening,
How solemnly the forests stand!
In the soft voices of birds breathes
The gentle stirring of the evening wind.
What whisper the wind and the birds?
They whisper the world to sleep.

Desires which always arise
In the heart that is without peace or rest,
Longings that trouble the soul,
When will you rest, when will you cease?
To the sounds of whispering wind and the birds,
You longing desires, when will you be lulled to sleep?

When no longer into golden distances
My spirit hastens on wings of dreams,
No longer on the eternal distant stars
My eyes are fixed with a longing gaze;
Then the winds, the birds shall lull
My life and my longings.

Geistliches Wiegenlied by Lope de Vega

[Joseph, lieber Joseph mein,
Hilf mir wiegen mein Kindelein fein,
Gott, der wird dein Lohner sein,
Im Himmelreich, der Jungfrau Sohn,
Maria, Maria.]
Die ihr schwebet um diese Palmen
In Nacht und Wind,
Ihr heil'gen Engel, stilltet die Wipfel!
Es schlummert mein Kind.
Ihr Palmen von Bethlehem in Windesbrausen,
Wie mögt ihr heute so zornig sausen!
O rauscht nicht also, schweiget,
Neiget euch leis und lind,
Stillet die Wipfel! Es schlummert mein Kind.
Der Himmelsknabe duldet Beschwerde;
Ach, wie so müd er ward vom Leid der Erde
Ach, nun im Schlaf, ihm leise gesänftigt,
Die Qual zerrinnt,
Stillet die Wipfel, es schlummert mein Kind.
Grimmige Kälte sauset hernieder,
Womit nur deck ich des Kindleins Glieder!
O all ihr Engel, die ihr geflügelt
Wandelt im Wind,
Stillet die Wipfel, es schlummert mein Kind.

Translation by Waldo Lyman

Sacred Lullaby

[Joseph, my good Joseph,
Help me to rock my darling child,
God will be the one to reward you
In the Heavenly Kingdom of the Virgin's Son,
Maria, Maria.]
You who fly above these palm trees
In the night and the wind,
You holy angels, silence the treetops!
My child is asleep.
You palms of Bethlehem, in the raging wind,
How can you rustle so angrily today,
Do not sough thus, be silent,
Sway softly and gently.
Silence the treetops! My child is asleep.
The Child of Heaven suffers pain;
He was so weary of the sorrows of the earth.
Now gently soothed in sleep
The agony leaves him.
Silence the treetops, my child is asleep.
Bitter cold descends,
With what can I cover my child's limbs?
All you angles, who on wings
Hover in the air,
Silence the treetops, my child is asleep.

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