SONGS OF LOVE AND LOSS FOR MEZZO-SOPRANO

An Abstract submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
For the degree of Master of Music
Vocal Performance

by

Katelyn Adair Neumann

May 2012
The abstract of Katelyn Adair Neumann is approved:

Dr. David Scott

David Aks

Dr. Deanna Murray, Chair

California State University, Northridge
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Signature page .................................................................................................................. ii
- Abstract ............................................................................................................................. iv
- Program ............................................................................................................................. x
- Notes and texts ................................................................................................................ 13
ABSTRACT

SONGS OF LOVE AND LOSS FOR MEZZO-SOPRANO

By

Katelyn Adair Neumann

Master of Music

Vocal Performance

*Songs of Love and Loss* presents a mosaic of human emotions triggered by experiences in life, love, and loss. French mélodie, German lied, English song, Italian ariettas, and Spanish tonadillas are all represented. The poignant songs of loss may be of particular interest for the listener for they are representative of the transition during the 1800s in which the concert-going public began preferring serious art songs over the traditional popular songs. Three musical periods—Classical, Romantic, and 20th-Century—are represented in sixteen selections which offer a variety of styles by twelve distinguished composers as influenced by their respective time periods and nationalities. Each piece about loss represents various moments in what has been termed the human cycle of acceptance: denial, anger, aggression, depression, bargaining, and acceptance.

Three French mélodie expressing various emotions about life and love open the recital. Jules Massenet’s “Élégie” (published 1875) is a dramatic—almost operatic—expression of loss. The repetitive nature of the conjunct vocal line characterizes mélodie as a step away from traditional French folk songs and a step toward more contemplative, dramatic music. The vocal part and the piano accompaniment are interwoven, with the
piano echoing and adding asperity to the subject’s feelings. “Extase” (1894) is a sharp contrast to the first piece. A long, meditative piano accompaniment sets the tone for the piece and underlines the subject’s state of total bliss. The subject’s vocal line floats in and out of the piano as she basks in a rush of joy. “L’énamourée” (1892) features a text by poet Théodore Faullin de Banville. It tells a bittersweet story of one who has loved and lost and is consoled by his memories of his lover with the belief that the two will be reunited. At first, it seems as though the character of the story has accepted the loss. Yet, as the story unfolds, the listener discovers a great deal of denial and underlying bargaining. Hahn, who was influenced by Massenet, utilizes the strophic form (like “Élégie”) with small rhythmic adjustments to separate and define each section. Hahn’s style is reflective of la belle époque. The unusual lyric settings of the text and the varied phrase lengths both represent the indifference to structure society experienced as result of World War 1 and the losses everyone experienced.

A lieder group by Johannes Brahms are similar to the French mélodie with a good vocal line that is integrated with the piano accompaniment, but to a more acute degree. Brahms has carefully selected texts which reflect pastoral and romantic love themes that are typical of lieder. All three lieder utilize texts that are brimming with visual imagery and pastoral qualities. “Die Mainacht” (1866) is set to a text by German poet Christoph Heinrich Höltz, who is remembered for his 140 poems written in his short life of 27 years. “Die Mainacht” juxtaposes a grief-stricken lover against a pair of doves on a clear, peaceful night. Brahms sets this four-verse poem strophically with an unassuming accompaniment. “Die Mainacht” uses a modulation from E-flat major to B major to
highlight the serene pair of doves, then returns to the original key as the narrator
withdraws into his grief. Brahms sustains the vocal line on the words *tears* and *cheek* to reveal the unspoken state of the sad lover. “Auf dem Kirchhofe” (1888) is set to a text by Detlev von Liliencron to portray a wild storm over a graveyard. The thunder and rain in section A is depicted with heavy arpeggiated chords in the piano. Brahms uses a vocal rolling of the German letter *r* as a unique tool to depict the sound of thunder. Section B reiterates the storm with the same arpeggiated accompaniment and rolled *r*’s, but presents a condensed version of section A because the tempest is nearing an end. Section C contrasts the previous sections with a quadruple time signature, a legato vocal line of even quarter notes, and a sturdy chordal accompaniment. There is no longer any rhythmic emphasis on the letter *r*. The storm has finally passed and the cemetery is at peace. “Von ewiger Liebe” (1864) takes its text from a poem by Josef Wenzig that tells a narrative story of insecurities and true love. The accompaniment plays an important part in depicting the feelings of each lover. The movement of the lyrical vocal line against the changing accompaniment creates tension and release within the piece and reveals the intimate weaving together of the two parts that steadily builds to a climax and resolution. Brahms uses contrasting rhythmic passages to create a forward-moving force and doubles the melody in the piano accompaniment to emphasize an already frantic moment. The last section of the piece features a rocking motion in the accompaniment in 6/8 meter as the girl reassures her lover that their love is indestructible.

“Silent Noon” (1904) by Ralph Vaughan Williams which features a text by Dante Gabriel Rossetti from a sonnet sequence entitled “The House of Life”, is replete with
imagery that appeals to the senses. “Silent Noon” features one of Vaughan Williams’
signature compositional methods which is to create an accompaniment in which the top
notes of the harmonies double the vocal line. The heavy use of imagery and the doubling
of the vocal line in the accompaniment are both elements seen in “Von ewiger Liebe”,
which demonstrates the spreading popularity of the art song form throughout Europe at
this time. Vaughan Williams emphasizes the sense of time with a pulsating chordal
accompaniment, while the long lyrical vocal line gives a contrasting sense of
spaciousness. Like “Silent Noon”, Ned Rorem’s “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy
Evening” (1974) has a tranquil pastoral quality. The text is taken from Robert Frost’s
poem of the same title. Frost’s poetry has some unique qualities in that it defies
traditional meter and length of line and avoids any extraneous fluff of artificial-sounding
poetic language. Rorem’s art song retains the integrity of Frost’s poetic intention. The
piece features a sparse texture which intensifies the poetry rather than interprets it. The
vocal line and accompaniment act as extensions of the text and capture the essence of
Frost’s text by utilizing phrases that obscure normal phrase lengths and start off-the-beat.
“My Life’s Delight,” (1908) comes from a collection of pieces entitled Seven Elizabethan
Lyrics, Op. 12 by Thomas Campion. As is typical of Quilter’s art songs, “My Life’s
Delight” is a setting of love lyrics. There is a noticeably conservative approach with
strong melodic appeal, although the rhythm of the text does defy one’s expectation like
that of “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening.”

Ariettas “La Lontananza” and “Amore e morte”, and the canzone napoletana “Me
voglio fà ’na casa” epitomize the popular bel canto style for which Donizetti and his
operas are lauded. “La Lontananza” and “Me voglio fà ‘na casa” feature compound meters, quick tempi, and ornately embellished vocal lines accompanied by surprising vocal leaps, all of which require the vocal agility, consistent breath control, and legato lines of which bel canto professionals were masters. “Amore e morte” (“Love and death”) takes its text from poet Giovanni Antonio Luigi Redaelli’s poem and is full of symbolic imagery that is bittersweet and touching. Contrasting points-of-view, as well as shifts between f-minor and the parallel F-major heighten the dying man’s urgency. The Picardy third and imperfect cadence at the end of the piece leave the listener suspended with a sense of peace and resolution.

Three Spanish songs by different composers share the same theme: they are all concerned with love for another person. “Seguidilla dolorosa de una enamorada” by Luis Misón depicts a tormented girl who has been abandoned by her lover and knows he will not be returning. However, unlike the narrator in “Élégie”, the narrator in this poem wanders to the mountains for consolation. The tormented lover’s song is book-ended by a piano accompaniment that gives a sense of release. “La maja dolorosa” exhibits a lover in the stage of trying to cope with the loss of a beloved. The narrator’s thoughts seem to be motivated by anxiety and denial, almost to a state of madness. The last notes of both verses have sustained notes that seem to express cries of torment. There is an underlying determination in the narrator’s tone that implies that he thinks he may be able to outsmart death and bring his lover back. “La mi sola, Laureola” concerns Leriano who, whether captive or captivated by Laureola, is in a state of bliss like that of the narrator in the mélodie “Extase.” An a cappella vocal solo at the opening and closing sections of the
piece allows the listener to perceive Leriano’s true emotional state. His legato serenade not only shows him to be enamored by Laureola, but reveals his willingness to submit himself to her affections, as well.

“Bella figlia dell’amore”, a quartet from Rigoletto, closes the program. It is a perfect closing to the recital because the four characters singing express the emotions explored in all the other sets. One finds elements of denial, anger, aggression, depression, bargaining, and acceptance as well as a few additional feelings. This recital of life, love, and loss offers a heartfelt collage of feelings and experiences that people experience at different stages in their lives. At its very core, this recital presents what it means to be human.
California State University, Northridge
Mike Curb College of Arts, Media, and Communication
Department of Music

present

Katelyn Neumann, Mezzo-Soprano

in her Master of Music Recital in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Music Degree in Vocal Performance

A Student of Dr. Deanna Murray

Carol Roberts, piano

Sunday, April 22, 2012, 4:30 PM
Music Recital Hall
Program
Graduate Recital
Katelyn Neumann, Mezzo-Soprano
Carol Roberts, piano

Élégie.................................................................Jules Massenet
(1842-1912)

Extase............................................................Henri Duparc
(1848-1933)

L’énamourée....................................................Reynaldo Hahn
(1874-1947)

Set of Three German Pieces.................................Johannes Brahms
Die Mainacht (1833-1897)
Auf dem Kirchhofe
Von ewiger Liebe

Two Ariettas and a Canzone napoletana..................Gaetano Donizetti
La Lontananza (1797-1848)
Amore e morte
Me voglio fà ’na casa

ณ Intermission ณ
Silent Noon.........................................................Ralph Vaughan Williams  
Dante Gabriel Rossetti, poet (1828-1882) (1872-1958)

Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening.....................................Ned Rorem  
Robert Frost, poet (1874-1963) (b. 1923)

My Life’s Delight......................................................................Roger Quilter  
Thomas Campion, poet (1567-1620) (b. 1957)

Seguidilla dolorosa de una enamorada......................................Luis Misón  
from “Una Mesonera y un Arriero” (b. 1757)

La maja dolorosa......................................................................Enrique Granados  
from Colección de tonadillas (1867-1916)

La mi sola, Laureola.................................................................Fernando J. Obradors (1897-1945)

Bella figlia dell'amore.............................................................Giuseppe Verdi  
from Rigoletto (1813-1901)  
Soloists: Dr. Deanna Murray, Qian Wang, Joel Castro
Élégie – Elegy

Oh sweet springtime of other times,
verdant seasons, you have fled forever!
I cannot see the blue sky;
I no longer hear the joyful songs of the birds!
You have taken away my happiness,
Oh beloved, you have gone away!
And it is in vain that the Spring returns!
Yes, without returning,
without you, the bright sun,
the happy days have fled!
How in my heart all is gloomy and cold!
All has withered forever!

Text by Louis Gallet (1835-1898)

Extase – Ecstasy

On a pale lily my heart sleeps
in a sleep sweet as death...
Death exquisite, death perfumed
by the breath of my beloved...
On your pale bosom my heart sleeps
in a sleep sweet as death...

Text by Henri Cazalis (1840-1909)
L’énamourée – The Enamoured

It they say, my dove,
that, although you are dead, you still dream,
beneath the headstone of a grave:
no, you saw that I adore you!
but for the soul which adores you!
You awaken reanimated,
oh thoughtful beloved!
Through the sleepless star-filled night,
in the breeze which murmurs,
I caress your long veils,
Your flowing hair
and your wings half-closed,
which flutter among the roses.
Oh delights! I breathe in
your divine blond tresses;
Your pure voice, this lyre,
follows the swell across the waters
and softly, touches them,
Like a swan which is weeping!

Text by Théodore Faullin de Banville (1823-1891)

Die Mainacht – The Maynight

When the silvery moon
through the shrubs gleams,
And its slumbering light
over the grass scatters,
And the nightingale sings,
roam I sadly from bush to bush.
Covered from foliage coos a pair of doves.
Their delight before me;
But I turn away, seeking darker shadows,
And a lonely tear runs down.
When, oh smiling image, that like the dawn
through my soul shines,
do I find you on earth?
And the lonely tear trembles
hotter, hotter down my cheek.

Text by Ludwig Heinrich Christoph Hölty (1748-1776)
Auf dem Kirchhofe – At the Cemetery

The day passed heavy with rain and storm-tossed,
I have at many forgotten graves been,
weathered stone and cross, the wreaths old,
the names overgrown, hardly to be read.
The day passed storm-tossed and heavy with rain,
On every grave froze the word: Departed.
As if dead to the storm the coffins slumbered,
On every grave thawed silently: Healed.

Text by Detlev von Liliencron (1844-1909)

Von ewiger Liebe – Of Eternal Love

How dark it is in forest and in field!
It is already night; the world is now silent.
Nowhere a light and nowhere still smoke,
yes, and the lark is silent now also.
Out from the village comes the lad,
accompanying his beloved home,
He leads her on past the willow grove,
Talking so much and of so many things:

“If you are suffering shame and grieving,
If you suffer disgrace from others because of me,
let the love be separated so quickly,
as quickly as we once were united in it;
depart with the rain and depart with the wind,
as quickly as we once were united in it.”

Says the maiden:
“Our love they could not separate!
Firm is steel and iron even more,
Our love is firmer still.
Iron and steel, one forges them into something else,
Our love, who can change it?
Iron and steel, they can rust away;
Our love, must forever endure!”

Text by Josef Wenzig (1807-1876)
La Lontananza – The Distance

Now that I am taken from you,
now that you are stolen from me,
I wouldn’t change the thorns of my life
for another man’s flowers.
If a heart is alone in suffering,
that suffering turns into pain,
dear beloved, dearest love!

Text by Felice Romani (1788-1865)
Translation by Camilla Bugge, 2004

Amore e morte – Love and Death

Hear from a dying man,
hear the last sound:
this faded flower
I leave you, Elvira, as a gift.
How precious it is
you understand fully;
on that day you were first mine
I stole it from your breast.
A symbol then of love,
now a token of sorrow;
return it once more to your breast
this faded flower.
And you will have engraved in your heart,
if your heart is not too hard,
how it was once stolen from you,
and how it returned to you.

Text by Giovanni Antonio Luigi Redaelli (1785-1815)

'Me voglio fà 'na casa – I Want to Build A House'

I want to build a house in the middle of the sea,
made of the feathers of peacocks tralla la la...
I will make the staircase of gold and of silver
and the balconies of precious stones tralla la la...
When my Nennella herself comes to appear
Everyone will say the sun now rises tralla la la...

Text by an anonymous Italian poet
Seguidilla dolorosa de una enamorada – Mournful Song of A Girl in Love

Away to the mountains I go
To see if I find a soul
To console me in my torment.
Woe is me! I am dying
For my heartless lover has gone,
To return no more.

Text by Luis Mixón

La maja dolorosa – The Sorrowful Lover

Ay! Love of my life, no,
no, you have not died!
How could I exist if this were true?
I want crazily to kiss your mouth!
I want to safely enjoy more
of your happiness.
Ay! Of your happiness!
But ay, I rave,
dream, my lover doesn’t exist.
Around me the world is sobbing and sad.
In my grief I do not find consolation.
But dead and cold
always the lover will be mine.
Ay! Always mine.

Fernando Periquet, poet (1873-1940)

La mi sola, Laureola – My Only Laureola.

My only Laureola,
My only one,
I, captive Leriano
Although I am very proud
To be wounded in the hand
Which is unique in the world.
My only Laureola,
My only one.

Juan Ponce, poet (b.ca.1480)
Synopsis: Mantua, 1500s. Rigoletto is a hunchback jester in the court of the Duke of Mantua, where he humiliates the courtiers for the Duke's amusement. The courtiers decide to get back at Rigoletto by kidnapping his daughter, Gilda, and delivering her to the Duke so he can have his way with her. Upon Gilda's return, Rigoletto contacts a brute assassin named Sparafucile and his beautiful accomplice and sister, Maddalena, to avenge his daughter. He contracts the two of them to lure the Duke into their tavern on the river where Sparafucile will murder him. Knowing the Duke will find Maddalena irresistible, Rigoletto takes Gilda to stand outside the tavern so she can see for herself that the Duke is not a faithful lover.

Duke:
Fairest daughter of love,
I am a slave to your charms;
with but a single word you could
relieve my every pain.
Come, touch my breast and feel
how my heart is racing.

Maddalena:
Ah! Ah! That really makes me laugh;
talk like that is cheap enough.
Believe me, I know exactly
what such play-acting is worth!
I, my fine sir, am quite accustomed
to foolish jokes like this.

Gilda:
Ah, these are the loving words
the scoundrel spoke once to me!
O wretched heart betrayed
do not break for sorrow.

Rigoletto (to Gilda):
Hush, weeping can do no good...
You are now convinced he was lying.
Hush, and leave it up to me
to hasten our revenge.
It will be quick, it will be deadly;
I know how to deal with him.

From the opera *Rigoletto* by Giuseppe Verdi
Libretto by Francesco Maria Piave
Dr. Murray, I have been so fortunate to be able to study with you for the past two years. You were encouraging from the very beginning and have continually supported me as I set new goals and develop further interests. Thank you for being a fantastic vocal teacher and for helping me progress vocally.

To the CSUN Music Department, thank you for all the extra rehearsals, office hours, and combined efforts you’ve made on my behalf. You have helped me grow as a singer and I couldn’t have achieved my M.M. in Voice without you.

My family, through good times and bad, you have supported me and reminded me that having a loving family is a gift to be cherished. You are always on my mind wherever I go. I am so glad you could be here today to share this special experience with me. I love you all.

Carol Roberts, you are one of the most elegant and lovely women I know. I have loved every moment of working with you and all the laughter we have shared. Thank you for lending your skillful hands today so that we could make some beautiful music.

Daryoush, thank you for your patience, support, and sense of humor when I need them the most. You are a loving person and I look forward to our upcoming adventures together. I love you, Babi!

Suzanne Recer, thank you for all your wonderful advice and tough love. You have helped me strengthen my work ethic and for that I am truly grateful.

My friends and colleagues, thank you for sharing your days with me and creating such a supportive community. It has been a strenuous journey with various hurdles; I am so glad to have had you there to inspire me to keep pushing forward to the end.

To the entire audience, thank you for taking the time to be here today. Your presence is my inspiration for singing.

A special note to my grandma, Carolyn Watkins. Together or apart, you are a blazing light in my life. I love you dearly and dedicate this recital to you.

-K.N.
Thank you so much for attending. You are invited to stay for a reception and refreshments.