LONGING FOR THE EMOTION IN MUSIC

A graduate project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
For the degree of Master of Music
in Music, Performance

By
Xuanjin Bi

December 2016
The graduate project of Xuanjin Bi is approved:

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ABSTRACT
LONGING FOR THE EMOTION IN MUSIC

By
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Master of Music in Music, Performance

The “longing” of humanity for peace, love, spirituality, freedom and happiness and home are common themes in poetry. Five art song groups on this program, in five languages, English, German, French, Italian and Chinese, express these different kinds of longing across different eras and cultures. The repertoire varies in style, accompaniment pattern and vocal line, but all capture the sense of longing as experienced by humanity.

“O sleep, why dost thou leave me?” “Oh, had I Jubal’s Lyre” and “Thou didst Blow,” are all from Oratorio arias by Handel. The slow rocking rhythm in the accompaniment of “O sleep, why dost thou leave me?” is expressive of the longing for sleep. “Oh, had I Jubal’s Lyre,” is from Joshua and the text expresses the longing for artistic expression. Handel used an AA’ B form, with a ritornello preceding and concluding every section. The coloratura passages at the texts “rejoice” and “I would aspire” deepens the meaning of the text. “Thou didst blow” is based on the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt. God Blew upon the waters to part the Red Sea and the Israelites went through on dry ground. The coloratura passages represent the breath of God rippling back the waters. This text displays man’s longing for spiritual assistance in their lives.

“Schöne Fremde”, “Geheimes”, and “Es Hing er Reif” are three German Lieder
by Robert Schumann, Franz Schubert and Johannes Brahms respectively. The text to “Schone Fremde” is written by Joseph von Eichendorff, depicts longing for nature. It describes the trees, darkling splendor and stars in a fantastic night with an accompaniment of running notes. “Geheimes” translates secret and is on a text by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. This song starts with a short allegro rhythm in the piano accompaniment supporting the voice line. The text “Ich Liebe diesen, und nicht etwas den und jenen” means “I love him, not you, nor you, sir,” expresses longing for the true lover. The text of “Es Hing der Reif” written by Klaus Groth, has the same feeling of longing as “Gehimes” although expressed by Brahms in a much more passionate manner as is typical of the style of Brahms. The harmonic tension used by Brahms along with modulations expresses a very passionate form of longing.

“Quando me’n vo’ by Giacomo Puccini, Musetta’s aria from the opera La Boheme. The aria expresses character Musetta’s longing to re-unite with her love Marcello. Musetta expresses her desire by putting on a show to gain Marcello’s attention. Puccini’s long spinning lines capture Musetta’s natural sensuality and the longing she still has for him.

A French group has three beautiful “melodies,” “Romance” by Debussy, “L’Absence” by Hector Berlioz and “Ouvre ton coeur” by Georges Bizet. The text of “Romance” is written by Paul Bourget is set in a simple, elegant melody. The piano accompaniment has an independent melody from the song which creates a mystical mood. “L’Absence” with a text by Theophile Gautier has a luscious voice line set with a chordal accompaniment. Harmonic tension in the voice line gives this song a passionate feeling which represents longing for the absent love. “Ouvre ton Coeur” on a text by Louis Michel James Lacour Delatre is written in a gypsy dance style reminiscent of the character Carmen. This song ends with a vocal flourish up to a high
The Italian group has three songs composed by opera composer Vincenzo Bellini: “Ma rendi pur contento”, “Per pieta, bell'idol mio”, and “Almen se non poss’io”. The text for all three of these songs is written by the opera librettist Pietro Metastasio. These songs are more in line stylistically with short operatic arias as one would expect with Bellini and Metastasio. The composer uses long elegant lines, or energetic passionate rhythms to express the longings of various lovers.

The last group, Lu Hua by Qing Yin, is a Chinese folk song which uses a picture of longing for nature to represent longing for the homeland. The last sentence of the song “Wearing a red flower to signal the spring beauty” represents patriotism which Chineses speaking people would recognize as a metaphor for longing for home.

Longing is a bitter sweet experience as experienced by all humanity. Artists of all kinds re-create this for us through the interpretation of text and music. A song recital is an opportunity to present the emotional and technical expression of longing.
Appendix: Program

California State University, Northridge
Mike Curb College of Arts, Media, and Communication
Department of Music

Present

Xuanjin Bi, Soprano

in her Master of Music Recital

A student of Dr. Deanna Murray

with Carol Roberts, piano

Friday, Nov. 18, 2016, 4:30 PM
Cypress Recital Hall

*In partial fulfillment of the Master of Music in Vocal Performance
PROGRAM

I

1. O sleep, why dost thou leave me?........................................G.F. Handel
2. Oh, had I Jubal’s lyre (1685-1759)
3. Thou didst blow

II

1. Schöne Fremde............................................................ Robert Schumann (1810-1856)
2. Geheimes................................................................. Franz Schubert (1797-1828)
3. Es hing der Reif.......................................................... Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

III

Quando me’n vo’ ........................................................... Giacomo Puccini (1858-1924)

INTERMISSION
IV

1. Romance.................................................Achille Claude Debussy
   (1862-1918)

2. L’Absence.........................................Hector Berlioz
   (1803-1869)

3. Ouvre ton coeur..................................................Georges Bizet
   (1838-1875)

V

1. Ma rendi pur contento.................................Vincenzo Bellini

2. Per pieta, bell’idol mio
   (1801-1835)

3. Almen se non poss’io

VI

Lu Hua..........................................................................Qing Yin
   (1954-Curren)
II.

**Schöne Fremde**

The treetops rustle and shiver
as if at this hour
about the half-subken walls
the old gods are making their rounds.

Here, behind the myrtle trees,
In secretly darkening splendor,
What do you say so murmuringly, as if in a dream,
To me, fantastic night?

The stars glitter down on me
With glowing, loving gazes,
and the distance speaks tipsily,
it seems, of great future happiness.

**Geheimes**

Concerning my sweetheart’s ogling,
All people are astonished;
I, the knowing one, on the contrary
Know very well what that means.
For it means: I love this one,
and not perhaps that one or that other one.
Quit now, you good people,
your marveling, your longing.
Yes, with mighty powers
she does glance round about;
but she seeks only to make known
to him the next sweet hour.
Es hing der Reif
Hoarfrost was hanging in the linden tree boughs,
through which the light streamed like silver
I saw your house, as brightly as in a dream,
a sparkling fairy castle.

And your window stood open
I could even see you in your room;
then you stepped into the sunshine
you darkest of fairies!

I shivered with blissful pleasure,
so spring-warm and wonderful:
but then I realized from your greeting,
that it was actually frosty winter.

III
Quando me’n vo’

When walking alone on the streets,
People stop and stare
And examine my beauty
From head to toe...
And then I savor the cravings

which from their eyes transpire
And from the obvious charms they perceive
The hidden beauties
So the scent of desire is all around me
It makes me happy!

And you who know,
who remembers and yearns
You shrink from me
I know why this is:
You do not want to tell me of your anguish,
But you feel like dying!
IV.

**Romance**
The soul vanishing and suffering,
the soul gentle, the soul fragrant
of lilies divine that I have gathered
in the garden of your thought,
where then the winds have-them driven,
this soul adorable of-the lilies?
Not-is –it more a perfume that remains
of the sweetness celestial
of-the days when you me-enveloped
with-a vapor supernatural,
made of-hope, of-love faithful,
of bliss and of peace?

**Absence**
Return, return my well-beloved;
like a flower far from-the sun,
the flower of my life closed
far from your smile crimson!
Between our hearts, what-a distance!
So-much space between our kisses!
Oh fate bitter! Oh harsh absence!
Oh great desires unappeased!
From-here to-there, so many countrysides,
So many towns and many hamlets,
So many valleys and many mountains,
to tire the hoofs of-the horses!

**Ouvre ton Coeur**
The daisy closed its flower crown,
Twilight closed the eye of day,
My lovely one, will you keep your word?
Open your heart to my love.
Oh, young angel, to my ardor,
May a dream enchant your slumber …
Open your heart,
I want to take back my soul,
Open your heart,
Oh, young angel, to my ardor,
Like a flower opens to the sun.
V.

Ma rendi pur contento

Only make happy
The heart of my beautiful,
And I will pardon you, love
If my own heart is not glad.

Her trouble I fear
More than my own troubles,
Because I live more in her
Than I live in myself.

Per piëta, bell'idol mio

For pity's sake, my beautiful idol,
do not tell me that I am ungrateful;
unhappy and unfortunate enough
has heaven made me.

That I am faithful to you,
that I lauguish under your bright gaze,
Love knows, the gods know,
my heart, and yours knows.

Almen se non poss’io

At least, if I am not able
to follow my beloved,
you affections of my hearts,
go with him for me.

Already near him always,
Love keeps you gathered,
And the path to him is not
an unfamiliar one for you.
VI.

Lu Hua
Reed catkins white and beautiful,
The petal flying.
Endless meaning,
On the road chasing clouds,
After the roller coaster, overtake the water,
Flower fly for whom?
A pair of pedestrian geese,
Acacia flower as a matchmaker.
Affection and love, flower as the matchmaker,
Thousands of internal dream together,
Don't forget hometown’s autumn is good,
Wearing a red flower to signal the spring beauty.