

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE

An Ongoing Musical Journey
A Recital for Lyric Coloratura Soprano

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

by
Sarah Lonsert

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The graduate project of Sarah Lonsert is approved:

Professor Diane Ketchie

Date

Professor Erica Davis

Date

Dr. Hugo Vera, Chair

Date

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this thesis and recital to my family. Thank you for always being so patient and understanding of this crazy musician lifestyle I choose to live. I love you all so much and I wouldn't be where I am or who I am without you. Your support has been invaluable to me, and I will never forget it. Thank you so much and I love you all deeply. I hope you enjoy because this is for you. Also, I will always apologize for my vocal practicing at eleven at night.

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Abstract

An Ongoing Musical Journey A Recital for Lyric Coloratura Soprano

By

Sarah Lonsert

Master of Music in Music, Performance

While many of the selections may seem random, all the selections reflect my own personal growth as a musician throughout my college career. Having started out not even knowing how to read music, I wanted to share the many pieces I have fallen in love with over the years of this musical journey.

While most well-known today for his oratorios such as *Samson* and *Messiah*, George Frederic Handel (1685-1759) also was a prolific composer of operas. His last opera to have a magical plot, *Alcina* helped restore Handel's image in the London public eye. Its success helped establish Handel's relationship with John Rich's newly founded Covent Garden Theatre where he would stay until he retired from opera in 1741.

Chanson Triste was Henri Duparc's (1848-1933) first ever *mélodie* which he composed in a way that looks back on the salon style of Gounod. Duparc was highly critical of himself and only composed for twenty-five years before suddenly stopping at the age of thirty-seven. While only composing sixteen *mélodies* all using living Parnassian poets, Duparc's *mélodies* are some of the finest in all the genre.

The epitome of French restraint, Reynaldo Hahn (1874-1947) wrote his first song cycle, and therefore *L'heure exquise*, which was the fifth song in the set, at eighteen years of age.

Heavily influenced by his conservative teacher Jules Massenet, Hahn demonstrates a mastery over subtlety, melodic writing, and atmospheric composition setting him up for a long career in Paris.

Après un rêve is perhaps the most well-known piece of the perfecter of the French Mélodie, Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924). While many of his songs are familiar to modern audiences, one must remember to keep listening for the ways in which he broadened the French art song and the poetry that he highly regarded and wrote the music around.

Charles Gounod (1818-1893) was born to compose music and did everything in his power to pursue a career in it. Known as the “father of the French Mélodie”, Gounod’s art songs have influenced many later composers. Gounod’s claim to fame are his operas and no other opera exemplifies Gounod’s musical talents than one of his most successful operas, *Faust*.

One of the three most celebrated operatic composers of the Italian Romantic age, Gaetano Donizetti (1297-1848) would leave behind a legacy of compositions and helped to pave the way for the bel canto style of singing. Many composers followed in his footsteps for dramatic and comedic opera writing and one of his best known and most performed comic operas is *Don Pasquale*.

Written during the ‘golden age’ of Israeli music, Mordechai Zeira’s (1905-1968) *Hayu Leilot* has become one of the staple tunes for Israeli culture. Sung during Israeli’s Remembrance Day, this is only one example of Zeira’s many contributions to the young country’s musical library.

Chakeh li aba was composed as a dedication to Danny Maseng’s (b.1950) poet mentor Natan Yonatan. Known throughout the secular and religious music scenes in Israel, Maseng continues to increase his Israeli music contributions with subtle yet deeply emotional settings of the texts.

Best known for composing the “Friends” TV series theme song, Michael Skloff (b. 1959) has also been very active in the religious music scene. Dedicated to Danny Maseng, Skloff’s *Kedusha* has become one of the staples of the Jewish High Holy Days in the reformed and liberal synagogues.

The quintessential American composer, Aaron Copland (1900-1990) has contributed greatly to the American musical sound. One of his greatest contributions comes in the form of his song cycle “Twelve Poems of Emily Dickinson” in which *Heart, We Will Forget Him* can be found.

Composing to this very day (at the time of writing this), Ricky Ian Gordon (b. 1956) is a highly prolific American composer whose works are deeply instilled in the cabaret and musical theatre tradition. Very open with his inspirations, *Will There Really Be a Morning?* seems to be the only composition that has ever warranted the composer to use a repeat for he “simply wanted to hear it again”.

One of the most prolific and influential modern classical composers, Ned Rorem (b.1923) continues to make huge impacts in the classical world. His masterful work of marrying the words to a lyrical musical line can best displayed in his vocal music. A very short but sweet example would be his birthday present composition *I am Rose*.

A musical prodigy since she entered the world, Amy Marcy Cheney Beach (1867-1944) would become one of the most heroic figures for female composers in America. With her prolific composing, including her most remembered art song “The Year’s at the Spring” from *The Browning Songs*, and her generous heart, Beach helped paved the way for American females to chase their own musical dreams.

In her first attempt at a Broadway musical, Lucy Simon (b. 1944) teamed up with famed playwright Marsha Norman to create a truly ‘lighting in a bottle’ musical debut for both with *The Secret Garden* (1991). Even though she is not as prolific as her other siblings, who include Carly Simon, Lucy preferred to focus on her family and children’s albums, and would go on to write one more musical, *Doctor Zhivago* (2015).

Brought up playing classical piano, Cy Coleman (1929-2004) would leave his classical roots to pursue a musical career on Broadway. Through his many collaborations, Coleman would go on to create many musicals in differentiating styles, but arguably his most remembered show would be *On the Twentieth Century* (1978).

Despite his mother’s wishes for him to be a classical musician, Andrew Lloyd Webber (b. 1948) would pursue his passion of musical theatre to bring the world some of the most well-

known and beloved musicals and songs. Even having experienced the low points in his career, Webber is still a master at his craft and manages to produce memorable songs even in his less successful musicals, such as “Love Never Dies” from *Love Never Dies*.

Against his father’s wishes, Johann Strauss II (1825-1899) became a musician and eventually overtook his father in popularity. One of Strauss’s many accomplishments would be solidifying the art form of the operetta. One of the masterpieces of this genre would be Strauss’s very own *Die Fledermaus*.

Throughout this program, I hope I have shared a little bit of my passion for the great art that is music. I have only shared a small sliver of the music I have grown to love, and I hope that you will grow to love its beauty and complexity as well. I am excited to continue down the journey music has laid before me. The journey will never end now that it has begun.

Section 1: *Alcina* by George Frideric Handel

George Frideric Handel (1685-1759) was a prolific writer of music during the Baroque era. Whether he was composing in Germany or England, Handel's works influenced many composers of both oratorio and opera alike. While most well-known for his oratorios, Handel spent much of his life, and indeed his later years, composing operas. While famous for his music, Handel's life was riddled with politics, business, and dealings with royalty. In a strange way, Handel can be looked at as a 18th century entrepreneur with how many companies/theatres he helped establish and with how much he sought out and built his own network for his music. Handel was also wonderfully inventive when it came to building relationships with people to help further his career. A great example of how charming Handel was would be with his lifelong relationship with King George I of London, whom Handel had worked under as Kapellmeister when George was still the Elector of Hanover. Handel would go on to desert George to go to London and ended up composing a piece of music for him as an apology for when George became King of England¹.

During his life in London, Handel became a celebrity of his day, mostly due to his operas. He was a prolific composer and wrote 41 operas in England in a 30-year time span (1710-1740)². During these years, he also helped to found three commercial opera companies in England and was the biggest influencer of Italian Opera in England. Even with all of this success, Handel, being the shrewd businessman he was, never seemed to settle in one place. Once his contract with the Royal Academy of Music was up, Handel went to work for John Rich's newly founded theatre in Covent Garden, a theatre that was in direct opposition to the Opera of the Nobility at the King's Theatre.³

It was here, in John Rich's Covent Garden Theatre that Handel composed the opera *Alcina* in the Italian opera seria tradition. Its official premiere was on the 16th of April 1735 with the autographed score signed by Handel on the 8th of April, only eight days before its premiere. The librettist of the opera is unknown; however, it does appear that Handel adapted the plot from Riccardo Broschi's *L'isola di Alcina* (written in 1728 in Rome). While being an Italian opera

¹ J. Peter Burkholder, Donald Jay Grout, and Claude V. Palisca, *A History of Western Music*, 8th ed. (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 2010).

² Ibid.

³ Donald Burrows, *Handel*, 2nd ed. (New York City: Oxford University Press, 2012).

seria due to the structure of the opera and the predominance of da capo arias, in *Alcina* there are many references to French opera. One of the most notable of these references are the ballet sequences that happen throughout the opera. The titular character of Alcina uses dance to help seduce would-be heroes to her enchanted island. These ballet dances would often be performed by the French dancer Marie Sallé and her company.⁴ These dance numbers were added spectacle to help boost the Covent Garden Theatre's popularity during its rivalry with the Opera of the Nobility.

Spectacle would be something that John Rich and the Covent Garden Theatre would become well known for as Rich would go to great lengths to add this element into his productions. Rich's first big blockbuster at the Covent Garden Theatre would be with John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera* for which he commissioned leading landscape painters to paint elaborate backdrops and scenery. However, this spectacle idea would backfire as Sallé was hissed off stage during a performance of *Alcina* for wearing too provocative an outfit for the London public's taste. Despite this, *Alcina* did much to revive Handel's position in the fickle eye of the London public.⁵

One of the more interesting notes in *Alcina*'s history would be the subplot and character of Oberto. Oberto does not appear in Broschi's original *L'isola di Alcina* and it appears that Handel wrote in the character at the last minute to showcase the young and talented boy, William Savage. Savage had sung for Handel in his oratorio *Athalia* and seemed to have impressed Handel enough to write a part specifically for him into the opera of *Alcina*. Savage and Handel would continue working together even as Savage grew from a boy treble into a bass. Savage, as a bass, would go on to create the roles of Imeneo from *Imeneo*, Fenice in *Deidamia*, and Manoa in the oratorio *Samson*.⁶

While not impressively successful, *Alcina* had a very good run at the Covent Garden Theatre with eighteen shows by the end of the season. Handel would go on to revive the opera twice within the span of his life, both times at the Covent Garden Theatre and with a shorter run time (without the dances). This would be the last opera that Handel would write that used magic

⁴ Stanley Sadie and Laura Macy, *The Grove Book of Operas*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

⁵ "Handel House - Handel's Operas: Alcina," Handel and Hendrix, June 14, 2018, <https://handelhendrix.org/learn/about-handel/opera-synopses/alcina/>.

⁶ Simon Ravens, *The Supernatural Voice: A History of High Male Singing* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2014).

as a major plot point. Musically speaking, by this time in his life, Handel had grown from the simple melodies of *Giulio Cesare* and into the more complex and challenging melodies of *Alcina*. While still beautifully written for the voice, *Alcina* offers new melodies that are a bit more challenging vocally than Handel's earlier works. Mary Pendarves, one of Handel's neighbors, even comments on the beauty of Handel's music by writing,

'I think it is the best he ever made', she reported 'but I have thought so of so many, that I will not say positively 'tis the finest, but 'tis so fine I have not words to describe it...Whilst Mr. Handel was playing his part, I could not help thinking of him a necromancer in the midst of his own enchantments.'⁷

⁷ Donald Burrows, *Handel*, 2nd ed. (New York City: Oxford University Press, 2012).

Section 2: *Chanson Triste* by Henri Duparc

While not the most prolific of composers, Henri Duparc (1848-1933) left sixteen *mélodies* (French art songs) behind at the time of his death. Even though his art song output is low, the quality and the impact his compositions had on French salon music and *mélodies* is considerable. A piano pupil of César Franck at the Jesuit College of Vanguard and an acquaintance of Franz Liszt and Richard Wagner, Duparc's compositional style centered a lot around the use of the piano to create intricate and beautiful scenes. Many of his *mélodies* are marked with a beautiful shimmery sound, rich piano texture, and an expressive bassline.⁸

Unfortunately, Duparc suffered during his life and one of his main struggles was with his perfectionism. Many of his works would be unpublished or some even suffered a worse fate, destruction. Alongside battling his perfectionism, Duparc would also suffer from a nervous system disease which was diagnosed back in 1885 as “neurasthenia” but further modern-day investigations have been vague at best. This disease would cause Duparc to quit composing all together in 1886 even though Duparc was still full of ideas as is evidenced by him beginning composing his new opera, *Roussalka* (which would later be destroyed having never been finished).⁹

“*Chanson Triste*”, Duparc's first *mélodie*, was composed in 1868 and was dedicated to Duparc's brother-in-law M. Leon MacSwiney. “*Chanson Triste*” would later be incorporated into a small collection called *Cinq Mélodies, op. 2*. MacSwiney was a very talented, albeit amateur, vocalist as evidenced by Duparc's use of what he coined as, the “violin voice” which was a voice capable of flexible phrasing and had an intense tone to cut through the thick piano arpeggios.¹⁰ Duparc utilized the broad lines in the voice part to write counter melodies that appear in the piano part during the reprisal of the B section. When the text starts proclaiming the ballade that

⁸ Carol Kimball and Richard Walters, eds., *The French Song Anthology High Voice* (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard Corporation, 2001).

⁹ Frits Noske and Rita Bentom, *French Song from Berlioz to Duparc: The Origin and Development of the *mélodie** (New York: Dover Publications, 1988).

¹⁰ Carol Kimball, *Song: A Guide to Art Song Style and Literature* (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard Corporation, 2005).

the person shall sing to soothe their pain, the ballade can be heard in the upper line of the piano which helps soothe the singer's sadness and brings the song a sense of hope and comfort.¹¹

The text was very important to Duparc as it helped influence his composition. Duparc was insistent on using only living poets from the Parnassian school. This school of poetry was headed by Charles-Marie-René Leconte de Lisle and they “stressed restraint, objectivity, technical perfection, and precise description as a reaction against the emotionalism and verbal imprecision of the Romantics.”¹² Many of this schools' poets would go on to found and be a part of the Symbolist movement of poetry in the 19th century. One of the poets Duparc used was Jean Lahor, one of the pen names of Dr. Henri Cazalis. A well-travelled and intellectual individual, he would also write the poetry that would inspire Duparc's compositions of “Extase” and “Sérénade Florentine”. The Parnassian school's view on poetry resonated with Duparc's own opinions about the human voice and his songs. Duparc despised many romantic ideals or indulgence and vocal exuberance. Duparc once even said to the singer Clair Croiza in a letter “If I had known what some singers do with them, I would never have put any *rallentandi* in my songs”.¹³

Even though the Parnassians valued restraint and were a reaction to the romanticism of the time, the slight sentimentalism of “Chanson Triste” leans more towards the salon style of composition. It is also interesting to note that Duparc marks “Chanson Triste” at the beginning with the phrase “with tender and intimate feelings”. Indeed, much of Duparc's compositional choices in this song seem to start out in the Parnassian idea but they slowly melt into romanticism, not only with the counter melody example in the piano mentioned above. Another example of this transition into romanticism is Duparc's small postlude after the singer has finished. This piano postlude melody is built on the vocal line that was just heard. “Et dans tes yeux pleins de tristesse” or “and from your eyes that are full of sorrow”. This gives the song a nostalgic feeling towards the end as the song ends with a slow diminuendo and finally lands on the major tonic. These choices give “Chanson Triste” (sorrowful song) an underlying sense of comfort and peace, an idea that goes against the objectivity and restraint that was stressed in the

¹¹ Barbara Meister, *Nineteenth-Century French Song: Fauré, Chausson, Duparc, and Debussy* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1998).

¹² “Parnassian,” *Encyclopedia Britannica* (Encyclopedia Britannica, inc.), accessed October 20, 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Parnassian>.

¹³ Carol Kimball, *Song: A Guide to Art Song Style and Literature* (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard Corporation, 2005

Parnassian poetry. Perhaps there was an inner struggle with Duparc about how much to emotionally express in his music within the 'taste of the times'.

Section 3: *L'heure Exquise* by Reynaldo Hahn

A Venezuelan by birth, Reynaldo Hahn (1874-1947) made quite the name for himself in France by composing the model of French mélodies. Hahn was the product of the very effective French music education and the cosmopolitan nature of Paris and, because of this, the fact that Hahn was not actually French never deterred people from thinking otherwise. He became so well integrated into the French culture that by all definitions, Hahn was indeed French. Hahn began composing at the tender age of thirteen under the tutelage of Jules Massenet at the Paris conservatoire. Massenet was one of Hahn's biggest supporters, and he even helped get Hahn's first song cycle, *Chanson grises*, published. It was Massenet who would also nurture Hahn's love for the poetry of Victor Hugo, Théophile Gautier, and Paul Verlaine.¹⁴

Perhaps it is because of Massenet's huge influence on his early composition life that Hahn's music was so conservative in nature. Throughout his life, Hahn composed ninety-five works for solo voice, eighty-four of which were mélodies. All his mélodies share in the idea of French restraint. Most of his songs are simple, yet poignant; uncomplicated, yet romantic. He was very much against complicated and 'unnecessary' compositional techniques and therefore he never broke any new ground during his life. However, regardless of Hahn's interest in pursuing new techniques, his songs are still a staple of the romantic period in France and fully capture the spirit of their time.¹⁵

Being only eighteen when he composed *Chanson grises* and using the poetry of Verlaine, Hahn displays a great deal of compositional mastery and restraint in his first song cycle. *L'heure exquisite* is the fifth song of this song cycle and is the most recognizable of the set. Most of the text setting of this song is simple in nature with rhythmic intricacies woven into the vocal line. The constant fluid piano arpeggio that permeates throughout the piece evokes a feeling of nighttime, awe, and serenity. With an overall passive melodic line, Hahn only builds to 2 climaxes during the lines "O, bien-aimée" (Oh beloved) and "C'est l'heure exquisite" (It is the exquisite hour). Both climaxes aren't loud or declamatory. Both are soft, introspective, and float over the piano line. Overall, Hahn manages to create a hypnotic atmosphere that doesn't overstay its welcome and lures the listener into a place of peace and calm.

¹⁴ Carol Kimball, *Song: A Guide to Art Song Style and Literature* (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard Corporation, 2005).

¹⁵ Ibid.

Later in his life, Hahn would go on to become the conductor of the Paris Opera, during which time he favored the works of Mozart above all else. Hahn's life would be intricately woven in with the voice, as he himself was a singer as well as being a composer, and he would show his passion for the voice. Hahn would go on to write many lectures on singers and the art of singing that would later be compiled into a book. An excerpt from his lectures shows just how passionate he was for the art of singing,

The genuine beauty of singing consists in a perfect union, an amalgam, a mysterious alloy of the singing and the speaking voice, or, to put it better, the melody and the spoken word...In singing, melody represents the spiritual element that gives the words an additional intensity, force, subtlety, poetry, charm, or exoticism in ways that elude analysis but through which we experience enchantment without being able to say why.¹⁶

¹⁶ Reynaldo Hahn, Simoneau Léopold, and Reinhard G. Pauly, *On Singers and Singing: Lectures and an Essay* (Portland: Amadeus Press, 1990).

Section 4: *Après un rêve* by Gabriel Fauré

Dubbed “the master of charms” by Debussy, Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924) was well regarded for his skill with the French Mélodie. In fact, Fauré, alongside Debussy and Duparc, would go on to define and perfect exactly what a French mélodie was and how it was to be composed. An organist and composer by trade, Fauré’s talent for music was discovered at a young age and he would go to the École de Musique Classique et Religieuse (School of Classical and Religious Music), better known as the École Niedermeyer de Paris, where he would be mentored by Camille Saint-Saëns who introduced Fauré to contemporary music, including that of Schumann, Liszt, and Wagner.

Fauré’s musical style would go on to extend the French style into much broader and varying musical textures. However, just because Fauré broadened the French song horizon didn’t mean that he wasn’t considered a master at the subtle nuances and details that defined the French musical style. It appeared that all Fauré wished to do was to compose music night and day which is proved by his output of over one hundred songs can attest to. He was devoted to the music but more importantly, he was married to the poetry. Many composers in the twentieth century have very specific instructions to singers but, perhaps, Fauré was the one who popularized that trend. Fauré was extremely strict with his instructions to the singers. He was adamant that the music was about the poetry, not the singer. He made sure to instruct the singer at every turn to not have a ‘diva’ sing his music.

Much of Fauré’s work that people are most familiar come from his early and middle periods. During his early period, Fauré used Romantic poets and seemed to compose more tuneful, strophic songs. One can hear the influence of his mentor and of Gounod in these songs. It is in the early period in which Fauré would compose *Après un rêve*. Composed in his thirties, *Après un rêve* would be the opening number for Opus 7. *Après un rêve* showcases the piano’s subordination to the lyrical line but, even so, its soft rhythmic insistence drives the piece forward in passion and intensity.¹⁷ The simplicity of the song helps bring out the poetry and the singer begs for the night to return to them so they can return to their beautiful dream. In the vocal line, Fauré employs an almost hypnotic motive that enraptures both the singer and the audience. Perhaps it is the call of the music to bring the beauty of night back.

¹⁷ Carol Kimball, *Song: A Guide to Art Song Style and Literature* (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard Corporation, 2005).

Section 5: “The Jewel Song” from *Faust* by Charles Gounod

Many of the most well-known French composers, such as Fauré and Duparc, constantly attribute their musical inspirations to Charles Gounod (1818-1893). Dubbed the “Father of the Mélodie”, Gounod was a very well-travelled and learned composer. Coming from a wealthy family, Gounod’s first introduction to music was through his mother, a talented pianist in her own right. She began giving Gounod lessons, but she had hopes for her son to become a lawyer as Gounod was a very bright individual, excelling in both Latin and Greek. However, Gounod’s interests would always be in the arts as he would pursue a career in music and become quite an accomplished painter, a talent possibly inherited by his father who was a very accomplished painter before his death.

Gounod’s schooling seemed to foreshadow his future love of travel. He jumped from school to school all the while thinking about compositions he would want to write. Gounod recounts a night at the theatre during his time at the Lycée Saint-Louis,

That night I never closed my eyes; I was haunted, ‘possessed;’ I was wild to write an ‘Otello’ myself! I am ashamed to say my work in school betrayed my state of mind. I scamped my duties in every possible way; I used to dash off my exercises without making any draft, so as to gain more time to give to musical composition, my favourite occupation-the only one worth attention, as it seemed to me.¹⁸

It should be known however that even though Gounod’s mind was always fixated on music, he still managed to learn many different languages and obtain a degree in philosophy while he was enrolled in his various institutions of learning.

One of the best places of study for Gounod would be when he went to Italy, a privilege awarded to him by his win of the Prix de Rome for music for his cantata *Fernand*. Here, he was exposed to the bel canto style of singing which would greatly influence his own art song style. It was in Italy that Gounod studied the works of Palestrina and perhaps it is the mixing of Palestrina and the bel canto style that allowed Gounod’s art song writing to be known for its refined tastes. After Rome, Gounod would travel to Prague, Dresden, Berlin, and Leipzig before returning to Paris. On his travels, Gounod would meet and befriend Pauline Viardot, Fanny Hensel, and Felix Mendelssohn through whom Gounod was introduced to the works of Bach.

¹⁸ Charles Gounod, *Charles Gounod; Autobiographical Reminiscences, with Family Letters and Notes on Music* (London: W. Heinemann, 1895).

While Gounod's French Mélodie would go on to inspire many later composers, perhaps his biggest claim to fame were his operas. Spawning some of the most well-known and performed soprano arias, Gounod's opera repertoire includes *Mireille*, *Roméo et Juliette*, and perhaps his most famous opera, *Faust*. It was in Italy that Gounod was first introduced to the writings of Goethe, and he was enthralled by his writing of "Faust". However, his dreams of having a "Faust" opera would have to wait until he met the librettist team of Barbier and Carré in 1855. Carré himself had already written a three act play around Goethe's "Faust" and had been a moderate success at the Gymnase-Dramatique. However, this play would only provide the bone structure for the team as they worked to incorporate more of Goethe's original work into the plot.

Right when Gounod finished composing *Faust*, it immediately went into rehearsals, but the rehearsal process was stricken with a myriad of issues. The first singer to have been cast to play the titular Faust, Hector Gruyer, was replaced with a veteran from the opera house's roster Barbot citing Gruyer's inability to "cope with the part". One of the biggest issues for musical historians was that Gounod composed a lot more music than the final version. Throughout the rehearsal process, Gounod kept cutting scenes and numbers and would rip them out of his full signed score. Many of these cut pieces weren't published during Gounod's lifetime but as recently as the 1970's, extracts and the signed autographs of some of the original score have begun to surface in public records.¹⁹

Faust is, arguably, one of Gounod's most successful operas. Not only did it open with acclaim at the Théâtre Lyrique in 1859, it also survived the opera house's bankruptcy closure and continued to have many productions (six) over the course of a hundred years at the Opéra. Perhaps one of the reasons *Faust* was so successful was its dramatically different approach to its older grand opera contemporaries. *Faust* tells its story with a very tuneful and natural approach. Many of its arias are hummable and there were no big ballet's, opulent staging, or grand orchestral effects. It was sincere in its emotions, and it didn't hide behind any special effects. *Faust* was also immediately published after its first opening run and had productions in Strasbourg, Rouen, Bordeaux, Dresden, the La Scala theatre in Italy and at Her Majesty's Theatre in England. For many of these productions, Gounod would often write new material for the specific place. For example, he wrote new recitatives to replace the spoken dialogue and he

¹⁹ Stanley Sadie and Laura Macy, *The Grove Book of Operas*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

also would create new solo numbers.²⁰ *Faust* truly was an opera that continued to change depending on where you saw it.

²⁰ Stanley Sadie and Laura Macy, *The Grove Book of Operas*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

Section 6: Four Lieder from Richard Strauss

A complex human being in every sense of the word, Richard Strauss (1864-1949) was a master of German opera and lied. Born in Munich, Strauss was immediately engrossed in the musical world thanks to his father who played horn in the Court Opera in Munich and who took his son, Richard, to orchestral rehearsals for these operas. During these rehearsals, Strauss would learn much about the structure of music. His private studies for piano and violin had begun when he was still under ten. Strauss's father made sure that music was an integral part of the family home and would go on to teach his son about all the great musicians of the past such as Mozart, Haydn, and Schubert plus some of the more modern masters such as Mendelssohn and Schumann. Later in his life, Strauss would be well known for his restraint from overindulgence, instead wanting the beauty of the music to speak for itself. Perhaps that stemmed from his father's great influence on his son and the composers to whom he was introduced.

One composer who had a huge impact on Strauss was Richard Wagner. Strauss would go on to see every single opera in Wagner's *Ring Cycle* operas and saw *Tristan und Isolde* and *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*. His father played principal horn on many of these operas.²¹ Strauss's distant connection with Wagner only deepened as he met his wife, soprano Pauline de Ahna, who was performing in Wagner's *Tannhäuser*. With her fiery personality and whirlwind relationships, Pauline would be one of the greatest influences of Strauss's vocal music. With his father making music the center of the household, Strauss practically growing up in the opera house, and his wife being a muse for his compositions, it is no surprise that Strauss would be well-known for his vocal music later in life.

While much is known and written about Strauss, the composer himself seems to live in a constant dichotomy. Bryan Gilliam speaks of this duality in Strauss quite beautifully,

Richard Strauss poses a unique challenge in modern music. His predilection for mixing the trivial and the sublime, for undercutting the extraordinary with the everyday, defines our stereotype of nineteenth and twentieth century composers...Strauss' world was one clearly divided into two distinct but frequently overlapping spheres of professional and domestic life...While other composers derived their creative spark through struggle or personal tragedy, Strauss would simply not indulge. He did not see discipline, order, and stability as obstacles but rather as catalysts for creativity.

²¹ Bryan Randolph Gilliam, *The Life of Richard Strauss* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

On one level Strauss remains one of the most often performed, widely recorded composers of our century, and seems therefore to be readily accessible. Yet on another level we inevitably confront a private, contradictory human being who seems to elude our grasp... How, indeed, does one come to terms with the creator of temporally adjacent works such as *Symphonia domestica*, with its harmless depiction of family life, and *Salome*, an opera that combine oriental exoticism and sexual depravity?²²

With so much happening in his music and with so many dualities in his publications, it is difficult to explain the man behind many beloved operas and arts songs. Perhaps one of the key factors in Strauss's enigma was his "acceptance" of being a musician and conductor under the Nazi regime. Strauss chose to keep quiet and take up positions as head of the Reichsmusikkammer and as principal conductor of the Bayreuth Festival. While this branded him as a "Nazi sympathizer" to many on the outside, Strauss wasn't interested in politics and was likely using his position to protect his Jewish daughter-in-law and grandchildren.²³ Strauss would later be cleared of any wrongdoing by the denazification tribunal in Munich.

Even though he wrote operas throughout his life, Strauss seemed to have a "song period" where he composed most of his lieder. This time was from 1899-1900 and he managed to compose six different collections that included thirty-one songs. All the songs in these opuses display "passionate lyricism and feature richly-textured accompaniments".²⁴ One of the best examples of this composition style would be with his earliest and arguably most well-known lied, *Allerseelen* (All Souls' Day) number 8 from opus 10, composed in 1882-3 with text from Hermann von Glim. All Souls' Day is November 2 and is a very important day in German culture. It is the day where the dead can come back to the living for a brief period. With such an emotional and heavy text, the singers try to connect and keep their lost loved one for as long as they can before eventually having to let them go. As this is one of Strauss's earlier songs, it verges on being too romantic and sentimental, but Strauss just manages not to overstep that line thanks to the way he sets the text. The song builds gently and quietly to the climax where the lyrics ask the loved one to come into their embrace once more. The long wandering postlude helps evoke the idea of the dead leaving the living once more before going back to rest in a place that the living cannot reach. This is one of Strauss's songs that he orchestrated, following in the

²² Bryan Randolph Gilliam, *The Life of Richard Strauss* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

²³ Bryan Gilliam, ed., *Richard Strauss and His World* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 1992).

²⁴ Carol Kimball, *Song: A Guide to Art Song Style and Literature* (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard Corporation, 2005).

steps of Berlioz and Mahler. However, many of his orchestrated songs are less popular than their solo piano and voice counterparts.

In 1888, Strauss published opus 19 that contained no. 2 *Breit' über mein Haupt* (Spread out over my head) with the text by Adolph Friedrich von Schack. Schack was known for his understandability and was loved by Naturalists. His poetry was realistic and sensual in its details and simple in its message. Even though it is a short song, Strauss shows his mastery in restraint as he paints the serene mood of the text. The song is primarily diatonic and like *Allerseelen*, the song is quiet and reserved throughout until it builds to one big climax when the singer exclaims that they only wish for the light of their lovers' eyes.²⁵

Published in 1900, the same year as his opera *Feuersnot* and the Rückert and Uhland cycles, Op. 48 was one of Strauss's last song cycles. It contains no. 2 *Ich schwebe* (I float) and *Kling!* (Resound) both texts are by Karl Friedrich Henckell who was well known for his revolutionary and socialistic leaning poetry. *Ich schwebe* is very tonal despite the middle section which tends to be more fluid in its tonality. The text speaks of young love and the delusions that that type of love can create. Strauss uses the subtlety of the rhythm to help describe the lightness and fanciful nature of this type of love. The voice and piano rhythms never seem to truly come together as one is always one beat ahead or behind the other. There are two sections where the voice and piano do sync up. The first is during the first climax of the piece where the singer exclaims that their eyes are sparkling but the piano quickly rises seemingly catching the voice line off guard as the melody comes back in after the down beat. The second is during the ending line of the song where the singer talks about smiling at their love passing by. The piano still plays its lighthearted melody underneath, but it seems to guide the singer to its final 'glance' before continuing the skipping melodic line that ends in a soft dynamic, almost as if the piano itself has skipped off with joy.²⁶

No. 3 *Kling* is an example of Strauss's use of the tone-poem. The piano offers no accompaniment other than its constant sweeping arpeggios as the vocalist sings over the top of

²⁵ Virginia Saya and Richard Walters, eds., *The Lieder Anthology High Voice* (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard Corporation, 2003).

²⁶ Chris Woodstra, Gerald Brennan, and Allen Schrott, *All Music Guide to Classical Music: The Definitive Guide to Classical Music* (San Francisco, CA: Backbeat, 2005).

them in an exclamation of joy.²⁷ This song is anything but tonal as the piano arpeggiates through many different tonal centers almost as if bursting with joy so much it cannot find where to put its tonal center. The voice and piano seem to be on their own joyful paths until they collide in a huge climax as the singer exclaims for their soul to sing and ring out for all to hear. It is during this cycle that Strauss shows his preference for the soprano voice, very likely heavily influenced by his soprano wife.²⁸

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Lorraine Gorrell, *The Nineteenth-Century German Lied* (Pompton Plains, NJ: Amadeus Press, 2005).

Section 7: “Quel guardo il cavaliere, So anch’io la virtù magica” from *Don Pasquale* by Gaetano Donizetti

One of the most prolific Italian composers, Gaetano Donizetti (1797-1848) wrote art songs, oratorios, cantatas, chamber and church music, several symphonies, and around seventy operas.²⁹ Born to a non-musical family, Donizetti wasn’t the best-behaved young man. He would skip classes and constantly run around the city of Bergamo. However, he was encouraged by the maestro di cappella of Bergamo’s church, a German composer named Johann Simone Mayr, to study music after having encountered and taught the young Donizetti in a choirboy school. It was because of Mayr’s insistence that Donizetti’s talent for music began to slowly surface. Donizetti didn’t seem like a born prodigy, but his musical talents were indeed hidden underneath.

As Donizetti grew, he mostly stayed in Rome, Naples, and Milan but he did travel to Paris for a brief time. Around this time, the bel canto style of singing and romanticism were in full swing. Having finished his schooling, Donizetti set about writing music and shopping them around to any opera house who would take them. He was finally accepted at the Teatro San Luca and from then on, his opera career began to take off. Donizetti’s opera contemporaries were the pioneers of the new grand opera genre, Rossini, and Bellini. Much like his fellow composers, Donizetti seemed to have a natural flair for the theatre. Many describe Donizetti’s talent for weaving melodies that captured a character, situation, or feeling as skillful and masterful. In fact, much of the ways Donizetti would structure his scenes would serve as a model for Giuseppe Verdi.

Donizetti wrote both comic and dramatic operas. His comic operas featured a healthy mix of comedy and sentimentality, with hummable tunes and light rhythmic drives while his dramatic operas showcase more of his compositional talents. For example, Donizetti would sometimes avoid cadences that would lead to audience applause and would keep the dramatic tension unresolved.³⁰ In this sense, Donizetti would have complete control of not just the music, but the audience’s reaction to it as well. It is no wonder that his dramatic opera *Lucia di Lammermoor* is a part of a great ‘opera blockbuster trilogy’ of the time, alongside Bellini’s *Norma* and Rossini’s *The Barber of Seville*.

²⁹ J. Peter Burkholder, Donald Jay Grout, and Claude V. Palisca, *A History of Western Music*, 8th ed. (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 2010).

³⁰ Ibid.

Even though Donizetti was well known for his dramatic operas, his comic operas are also masterpieces. Perhaps his best-known comic-opera would be *Don Pasquale* which premiered at La Scala in Milan in 1843. With the libretto by Giovanni Ruffini, *Don Pasquale* was written very quickly, as with most Donizetti compositions. Much of the cast was handpicked as Donizetti had worked with them before and he knew what their voices could handle.³¹ This was a very good idea for *Don Pasquale* is a light, fluffy, delight for the audience but it is extremely hard work for the performers. *Don Pasquale* was a huge success and, since its premiere, has never left the popular circle of classic operas. Indeed, *Don Pasquale* was such a success that in its first year, it premiered in London at Her Majesty's Theatre and in Vienna. It also has had premieres in Paris and even was sung in English for its American premiere in New York City.³²

With *Don Pasquale*'s success sweeping Europe, Donizetti would only go on to write two more operas. He was institutionalized with the claim of a mental disease as Donizetti would suffer from headaches and he was diagnosed with cerebral-spinal syphilis. He would die a few years later seemingly detached from everyone and everything around him. While Donizetti's passing was tragic, his legacy lives on as one of the most influential and performed composers of his time. He is survived by his numerous works and paved the way for the next generation of great opera composers.

In the cavitina/cabaletta "Quel guardo il cavaliere... So anch'io la virtù magica", the audience is introduced to the main female lead of Norina. She is young, poor, and widowed, but nevertheless she is the love interest for the main lead Ernesto. During her aria, the audience gets to see how 'wise' Norina is about the world and how to navigate love. She playfully mocks a fairytale she is reading and claims that she knows how to be authentic while also manipulating the men around her. The audience gets a clear understanding of how bright and intelligent this young woman is. Her cleverness is extremely important to the plot of the opera as Norina stays in cahoots with another character to eventually humiliate Don Pasquale and get together with Ernesto. Norina's introductory aria is playful and silly which allows the singer to have fun with their choices of rubato and acting.

³¹ "Don Pasquale," Encyclopedia Britannica (Encyclopedia Britannica, inc.), accessed October 20, 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Don-Pasquale>.

³² Stanley Sadie and Laura Macy, *The Grove Book of Operas*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

Section 8: *Hayu Leilot* by Mordechai Zeira

Written during the ‘golden age’ of Israeli music, the beautifully haunting *Hayu Leilot* by Mordechai Zeira (1905-1968) with lyrics by Ya’akov Orland is, arguably, one of the best candidates to encompass the music of this time in Israel’s young life. *Hayu Leilot* is an extremely important ‘snapshot’ song as it reminds the Israeli people of the harsh reality lived by the older generations to create the State of Israel. It is usually sung once a year on the Israeli Day of Remembrance for its nostalgic and sad tale but simply calling it a remembrance song would be doing it a huge disservice. *Hayu Leilot* was written as a nostalgic freeze frame of “The Second Aliyah” (defined as the second wave of Jewish people returning to the land of Israel right before the first world war), more specifically the life at the Kibbutz (lit. gathering/cluster) of Deganya and Kinneret. Deganya and Kinneret were established on the shore of the Sea of Galilee in a marshy land that had been completely neglected by the Ottoman Empire. Settlers in these Kibbutz worked hard, clearing out the swampy lands in unbearable heat just to make the land livable. Many died of exposure, heat stroke, and malaria. Even though the people living and working these lands lived hard and brutal lives, they believed they were building a brighter future and home for their children as they themselves had left the cruel and harsh realities of their previous homelands and were willing to do anything to build a better future for their people. *Hayu Leilot* is written, both lyrically and musically, like a fairytale. A small story of what life would have been like in the early Kibbutz.

Zeira himself was an immigrant to Israel from the Ukraine in 1924 and was a member of the young Zionist movement, a movement in which the Jewish people were trying to claim Israel back. Zeira has written over hundreds of Jewish songs, more than fifty of which have been cemented into the cultural heritage of Israel. Because of his prolific nature, Zeira helped to cement the identity of the Israeli people in music, poetry, and song. To this day, many Israelis would confirm that poets, musicians, and artists have a higher stance in Israeli society over any other form of occupation. Perhaps, this is because of people like Zeira who helped establish what it meant to be Israeli from the very beginning. Having come from Ukraine, many of Zeira’s melodies for his Israeli music are heavily influenced by Eastern European cantorial and Russian romance music. Many in Israel call him a master of lyricism, melody, and emotional intensity. The last point is especially important for Jewish music because subtlety is extremely important to

the art of Israeli music. Israeli music, especially during the golden age', was chock-full of emotions but restrained in its outward expression of them. Many Israeli composers look to Zeira as an influence as many western composers might look to Mendelssohn or Bach for influence.

Section 9: *Chakeh Li Aba* by Danny Maseng

Newly composed, *Chakeh Li Aba* started life as a poem by Natan Yonatan (1923-2004). Yonatan started writing poetry in 1940 and would go on to receive recognition for his poems with people citing his lyrical qualities and use of folk imagery. While many of his poems are diverse in subject matter, much of Yonatan's more regarded poetry revolves around the human cost of war. The inspiration behind these poems comes from the death of his son, Lior, during the October 1973 war. His son was in his early twenties when he was killed in war, and this deeply affected Yonatan's writings. *Chakeh Li Aba* is a poem where Yonatan writes what he thinks his son would tell him if his son could speak to him one more time. While deeply emotional in its text, Yonatan keeps with the Israeli tradition of being emotional yet subtle in his word choice. He also manages to weave in a religious undertone as he describes his son going up to the mountain and as he repeats that line, the text morphs into going up to G-d³³. Yonatan would win the Bialik Prize for his significance to Hebrew Literature by the city of Tel Aviv.

A friend of Yonatan's and hailing from Tel Aviv, Danny Maseng (b.1950) tackles Yonatan's poetry with grace and respect. Maseng simply sets the text and allows the poetry to speak for itself while the music simply carries it along. It should be no wonder why Maseng is able to set Yonatan's text with such Israeli skill for Maseng has been composing Israeli and religious music for decades. Many temples and synagogues around the world and the United States of America use his setting of religious texts in their services and holidays. He was also one of the pioneers, alongside Debbie Friedman, for including live instruments into Jewish services. Maseng has written and released many 'love letter' songs and poems about Israel and now works to bring about the beauty of Israeli music (new and old) to the forefront of the musical stage. While Israel might be a young country, many composers alongside Danny are working to have the music of Israel heard with the weight of all the history that its people have to offer.

³³ When speaking about the one G-d spoken about in the Torah, Jewish tradition states that G-d's true name cannot be fully uttered by human tongue, nor can even his shorter names be fully written out outside of Hebrew text. Even in the Torah, where G-d's name is properly written out in the Holy language (Hebrew) it is never pronounced out loud. There are many religious reasons for this line of thinking, but the most readily available answer is that G-d is too mighty and too much for the human tongue or pen to capture and therefore cannot be uttered by the tongue nor fully written out in secular print. Because of this, I have decided to respect their tradition on this matter and opted their way of spelling G-d's name when they used it in their own writings.

Section 10: *Kedusha* by Michael Skloff

Best known for co-writing the *Friends* TV show theme song “I’ll Be There for You”, Michael Skloff (b. 1959) has been composing for 3 decades. Having been raised in the Jewish faith, Michael composed his version of the “Kedusha” prayer as a gift to his friend Danny Maseng who was the cantor at Temple Israel of Hollywood, the temple Skloff attended. The “Kedusha” prayer is one of the most common prayers in the Jewish liturgy. Kedusha roughly translates to “Holiness”, and it is recited during the Amidah prayer, a prayer that is said during every service. The “Kedusha” prayer is extremely important as it is the sanctification of G-d’s holy name. Because of the grand setting, Skloff’s “Kedusha” isn’t normally sung every week, but it is saved for extremely special occasions such as the High Holy Days of the Jewish celebration. It is during this period where the sanctification of G-d’s name with Skloff’s musical setting can, and indeed does, set the stage for the days of celebration and repentance that are to come in the Jewish faith.

Section 11: *Heart, we will forget him* by Aaron Copland

A writer, teacher, conductor and composer, Aaron Copland (1900-1990) was an American composer from New York. Copland has been referred to as “the Dean of American Composers” by his own peers and critics. His slowly changing harmonies and the openness of his compositions are why many people have considered this to be what the American classical sound should be. Receiving his love of music from his mother, Copland began to write songs at the age of eight with his earliest notation of music being when he was eleven. Starting his compositions in the Romantic style, Copland would eventually venture to Paris to hear the most modern and latest music Europeans had to offer. After studying at the Paris Conservatoire and the Fontainebleau School of Music, Copland returned to America with an optimistic spirit.³⁴

Even though he fell in love with the more modern compositional style, Copland found that it wasn't a financially suitable endeavor and therefore began to write in the more “accessible” style. These pieces include his ballets of *Appalachian Spring* and *Rodeo* alongside his Third Symphony. However, upon becoming aware of Schoenberg and his influence over fellow composers, such as Stravinsky, Copland's music began to marry his two styles, his love for the modern approach but the accessibility of the vernacular style.

It is during this period of stylistic marriage that Copland composed *Heart, We Will Forget Him*. The fifth song in Copland's “Twelve Poems of Emily Dickinson”, Copland seems to have perfectly married his two styles during this piece. At twenty-eight minutes, this song cycle is the longest piece Copland has ever written for voice. Perhaps to keep the poetry at the forefront, Copland uses simple melodic material with wide, angular vocal lines with the occasional outburst of dissonance. According to Copland himself, “the piano was easy, it was the vocal lines that were my real challenge, I followed the natural inflection of the words of the poems, particularly when they were conversational.”³⁵ According to Christie Finn,

Even with its contemporary tonality, “Heart, We Will Forget Him” has an unmistakable folksong-like quality and genuine simplicity in Copland's setting. The listener cannot help but

³⁴ Howard Pollack, *Aaron Copland: The Life and Work of an Uncommon Man* (New York, NY: Henry Holt and Company, 2015).

³⁵ Carol Kimball, *Song: A Guide to Art Song Style and Literature* (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard Corporation, 2005).

feel like a sympathetic observer to a dialogue between the brain and heart of a despairing lover. The song ends clearly: the lover is not (and perhaps never will be) forgotten.³⁶

According to Copland, it was his intuition and spontaneous response to Dickinson's poetry that inspired him to write this song cycle. It remains one of the most important contributions to American music ever composed.³⁷

Emily Dickinson was born in 1830 and died of heart failure in 1886. Unlike most women during her time, she never married which makes "Heart, we will forget him" more interesting. Who exactly this poem was written about remains unknown. Much of her poetry was published after she died by her sister Lavinia. Dickinson lived a solitary life, mostly staying confined to her family's homestead. Many scholars now believe that Dickinson might have suffered from agoraphobia, depression, and anxiety. While she didn't lead the happiest of lives, Dickinson left a huge legacy of beautiful poetry behind her which continues to inspire many composers.

³⁶ Christine Finn, "Heart, We Will Forget Him," Song of America, July 18, 2018, <https://songofamerica.net/song/heart-we-will-forget-him-1/>.

³⁷ Carol Kimball, *Song: A Guide to Art Song Style and Literature* (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard Corporation, 2005).

Section 12: *Will there really be a morning?* by Ricky Ian Gordon

Still performing live at the time of writing this thesis, Ricky Ian Gordon (b.1956) is an American composer from New York whose compositions span the concert hall, opera, dance, theatre, and film. His most recent composition *Ellen West*, a one-act opera, premiered in 2019 to glowing reviews with another opera *The Garden of the Finzi-Continis* set to premiere in 2022. Gordon studied piano, composition, and acting at Carnegie Mellon University which might explain why he feels so at home in many different genres of composition. Much of his compositional style is steeped in the traditions of cabaret and musical theatre.

Gordon describes many of his inspirations about why he chose to write certain songs in the front of his music books. *Will There Really Be a Morning* has an excerpt from the composer reading,

In 1983, I was at Easter brunch with my friend Jim Mahady. He picked up Frances Farmer's autobiography, which uses this poem for the title and epigraph. This was the only time Jim ever asked me to write something for him and I did. It is also the only song of mine that uses a repeat, I wanted to hear it again.³⁸

The original poet for *Will There Really Be a Morning* is Emily Dickinson whose poetry is known to have a whimsical nature even though the subject of death is very frequent in her writings. The meaning of the poem is ambiguous but according to Nadia Colburn,

Emily Dickinson's "Will There Really Be a Morning" is a poem about her relationship with meaning itself, and with, one might say, God. What is the absolute "morning"? How do abstract concepts or ideals relate to lived experience? What is the role of language in mediating that? And how can we all be seekers for these ideals and these lived realities both?³⁹

³⁸ Gordon, Ricky Ian. *A Horse with Wings; the Songs of Ricky Ian Gordon*. Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard Corporation, 1995.

³⁹ Nadia Colburn and *, "Emily Dickinson Will There Really Be a Morning?" Nadia Colburn, May 10, 2021, <https://nadiacolburn.com/emily-dickinson-will-there-really-be-a-morning/>.

Section 13: *I am Rose* by Ned Rorem

American composer Ned Rorem (b. 1923) is one of the most influential composers still living today. His prolific nature for writing music isn't limited to one genre. Having written for solo instrument/voice, ensembles, orchestras, and operas, Rorem's fingerprints can be seen all throughout the modern music scene. Rorem has been recognized and honored heavily, winning many awards such as the Pulitzer Prize for his suite *Air Music*, a Fullbright Fellowship, a Guggenheim Fellowship, an award from the National Institute of Arts and Letters, and is a three-time winner of the ASCAP Deems Taylor award.

Rorem was born in Indiana but soon moved to Chicago where he studied piano at the age of ten. His piano teacher introduced him to the works of Debussy and Ravel which "changed my life forever," according to the composer.⁴⁰ He has studied composition and music immensely, gaining degrees from Juilliard and Northwestern University. With all of his knowledge and vast musical catalogue, perhaps Rorem's best expression of music can be found in his art songs. Rorem's musical style seems to blend the sensitivity for the literature and an elegant lyric music sense.⁴¹ His most ambitious and 'tour de force' composition comes in the form of *Evidence of Things Not Seen*, a vocal work from 1997 that includes thirty-six songs! Outside of his compositions, Rorem is also a prolific writer. He has also been very open about his private life alongside his many relationships and sexual orientation.

A short but adorable art song from Rorem is *I am Rose* which was dedicated to Marya Freund on her 80th birthday. Ms. Freund was a wonderful soprano who was very well known in the 1920's. Rorem was one of the many composers who gifted her a composition for her 80th birthday alongside Schoenberg. *I am Rose* is a very short but sweet song that showcases Rorem's affinity with a lyrical line. The piano and singer are locked in a playful and youth dance which is uncomplicated and straightforward. The lyrical lightness and fun bounce to the song evokes the youth nature of the singer. A very flattering and youthful gift to give an elegant and well honored elder soprano.

⁴⁰ Burning Sled Web Design, Ned Rorem Biography, accessed November 19, 2021, <http://nedrorem.org/bio.html>.

⁴¹ Carol Kimball, *Song: A Guide to Art Song Style and Literature* (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard Corporation, 2005).

Section 14: *The Year's at the Spring* by Amy Beach

Recognized as the first successful woman composer in the United States, Amy Marcy Cheney Beach (1867-1944) from birth was seen as a prodigy in music. With piano being her main instrument, Beach's childhood was filled with music, so much so that her family found it difficult to keep up with her musical demands. She was clearly gifted in the field of music and was married to Dr. Henry Harris Aubrey Beach when she was only eighteen. Her new husband was a lecturer at Harvard University, but he was also an amateur singer. This marriage gave her access to a new social standing in life which would give her access to many important figures in the musical and art world. Studying piano and composition at a European Conservatory in Boston, Beach began her formal education in composition in which she would become quite prolific. She composed over three hundred works in her lifetime, one hundred and seventeen of which were art songs. Even though she composed so many songs, Beach insisted that writing songs was more of a pastime, a way for her to relax and take some time off composing much harder pieces of music. In her own words "I just drop the larger work for the day and write a song. It freshens me up; I really consider that I have given myself a special treat when I have written a song"⁴²

After her husband died, Beach would set out on a European tour, performing in recitals in order to establish a name for herself as a pianist and composer. By this time in her life, she was already well known in the States, having performed with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, in own personal recitals, and having been commissioned to compose pieces from Chicago to San Francisco. In Europe, Beach made a successful name for herself, having received rave reviews in the German papers. However, she would have to return to the States following the breakout of World War I. She would continue to give solo recitals around the Eastern United States and eventually would become the composer in residence at St. Bartholomew's Protestant Episcopal Church in New York. Later in her life, she would become the leader of the Music Teachers National Association, Music Educators National Conference, and was the first female president and co-founder of the Society of American Women Composers. Beach herself is well remembered, not only for her great skills in composition, but also her generosity. Even in her

⁴² Adrienne Fried Block, *Amy Beach, Passionate Victorian* (New York: Oxford University Press, 200).

will, she gave her royalties to the MacDowell Colony.⁴³ Beach is well regarded as a hero to women composers, especially in the United States as she forged a path during her life to show how important and impactful women can be to the art of music making.

Arguably, Beach's most well-known song composition comes from Op. 44 entitled *Three Browning Songs* (1900). This opus was dedicated to the Browning Society of Boston as the society had commissioned Beach to compose music using Browning's poems for his birthday.⁴⁴ Beach was deeply religious and therefore wrote many of her compositions using religious texts so it is unclear as to whether Beach would have set Browning's poetry on her own accord (as Browning wasn't that religious himself) without the commission from the society. However, Beach was well known for her love of nature and romantic melodies which, oddly, made the three Browning poems that comprise this opus ("The Year's at the Spring", "Ah, Love, but a day!" and "I send my heart up to thee") perfect for Beach's personal composition style.

Beach's late romantic compositional style can be clearly seen in "The Year's at the Spring". She composed this song while on a train while saying the text to the poem over and over in her head. She found that the persistent rhythm of the train permeated the rhythm of the text, and this can be clearly seen by the constant triplet figure in the piano, driving the piece forward like a train to its joyous destination. The song is full of joy, youth, and exuberance and Beach pours that part of herself into the accompaniment.⁴⁵ The drive of the piece evokes the feeling of watching the beauty of nature fly by a train window as it causes the music to soar into a beautiful arc that finally arrives at its own station with the climactic "All's right with the world". It might not be the longest piece in Beach's repertoire, but its effective use of a rhythm and developed idea helps cement "The Year's at the Spring" as one of Beach's most performed and enduring pieces of music.

⁴³ Julie Anne Sadie and Rhian Samuel, *The Norton/Grove Dictionary of Women Composers* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1995).

⁴⁴ Carol Kimball, *Song: A Guide to Art Song Style and Literature* (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard Corporation, 2005).

⁴⁵ Adrienne Fried Block, *Amy Beach, Passionate Victorian: The Life and Work of an American Composer, 1867-1944* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

Section 15: “Never” from *On the Twentieth Century* by Cy Coleman

Born Seymour Kauffman to a landlady and a brick mason, Cy Coleman (1929-2004) was an unexpected musical prodigy from Bronx, New York. Indeed, both his parents knew little to nothing about music and it was only by the intervention of his neighbors who saw and recognized his talent that Coleman was able to receive classical piano training with Constance Tallarico and eventually Rudolph Guren. Coleman impressed his teachers and went on to perform in many contests, earning him several victories and opportunities to play at the Town Hall and Carnegie Hall. With his mother refusing to send him to Europe for further study (due to her fear of the looming World War II), Coleman would instead go on to study at New York’s High School of Music & Art and eventually at the New York College of Music.

Even with all the classical training Coleman was receiving, he decided to part ways with the classical tradition and dive more into popular music, specifically that of the Broadway musical. Perhaps this change of heart came about when still a senior in high school, Coleman was given the opportunity to be the rehearsal pianist for the musicals of *If the Shoe Fits* and *Cinderella*. After his schooling, Coleman would go on to collaborate with Carolyn Leigh, which would turn out to be a successful but frustrating partnership. It was this collaboration that Coleman would write “Hey, Look Me Over” from *Wildcats* (1960), “Witchcraft”, “The Best is Yet to Come”, and “Playboy’s Theme” which would go on to become Playboy magazine’s signature musical theme.⁴⁶

Coleman was bitten by the popular music bug, and it certainly didn’t let him go until he took his last breath. Coleman would collaborate and work with many different lyricists and musicians to create a vast library of compositions ranging from his deep-rooted love of Broadway to the silver screen in films. Some of his most famous Broadway music compositions include *City of Angels* (1989), *The Will Rodgers Follies* (1991), and *On the Twentieth Century* (1978).⁴⁷ While prolific in his compositions, Coleman initially wasn’t that excited about composing *On the Twentieth Century*, but his partners Betty Comden and Adolph Green eventually convinced him to stay on board with this idea. Coleman’s reasoning for this was that *On the Twentieth Century* was based off Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur’s comedy *Twentieth*

⁴⁶ Andy Propst, *You Fascinate Me so: The Life and Times of Cy Coleman* (New York: Applause Theatre et Cinema Books, 2015).

⁴⁷ Lee Stacy and Lol Henderson, *Encyclopedia of Music in the 20th Century* (London: Fitzroy Dearborn, 1999).

Century which was a period piece set in the 1920's. In his own words, Coleman stated, "I knew there was a certain perception that the show should have a 1920s score. I didn't mind doing a period piece, but it was not a period that I wanted to do. I felt it was too boxlike and confining musically."⁴⁸

However, after some convincing and an improvisation session in which all three creators had a 'lightbulb' moment as to how the musical should sound, *On the Twentieth Century* was now cooking with gas. Precisely why Comden and Green kept coming back to creating a musical version of Hecht and MacArthur's comedy is unspecified. The rehearsal process was riddled with misfires as actors and actresses kept being cast and recast but finally the cast was decided upon Madeline Kahn as leading lady Lily Garland and Jon Cullum as leading man Oscar Jaffee. Cullum even noted that he didn't interact with Coleman that much because there was so much going wrong with the production that they didn't have time to interact.⁴⁹ Even as opening night hit, the critics weren't kind to Ms. Kahn calling her performance distant from the character. When Kahn eventually left the production, the role of Lily went to Judy Kaye, which launched her career.

On the Twentieth Century was a successful show with a yearlong run at the St James Theatre in New York, albeit receiving mixed reviews. Perhaps the show is best known in modern day for its 2011 production at the Roundabout Theatre Company with Hugh Jackman as Oscar Jaffee and Kristin Chenoweth as Lily Garland. This revival was nominated at the Tony Awards for Best Revival, but it did not take the award home.

⁴⁸ Andy Propst, *You Fascinate Me so: The Life and Times of Cy Coleman* (New York: Applause Theatre et Cinema Books, 2015).

⁴⁹ Ibid.

Section 16: “How could I ever know?” from *The Secret Garden* by Lucy Simon

The middle child of the famous Simon Sisters family, Lucy Simon (b. 1944) had always been the quieter and more demure child out of her siblings. After the sisters decided to make their own careers, her elder sister Joanne would go on to be an opera star while the youngest sister Carly would go on to outshine her two sisters with her pop career. But while Joanne was singing opera and Carly was composing “Nobody Does It Better” for the James Bond movie *The Spy Who Loved Me*, Lucy continued being a singer/songwriter during which time she would win two Grammys for her children’s albums of *In Harmony* and *In Harmony 2*.⁵⁰ However, it was her team up with lyricist Marsha Norman that would put her name squarely in the theatrical world’s eyes.

Based on the book of the same name by Frances Hodgson Burnett, *The Secret Garden* opened on Broadway at the St. James Theatre in New York on April 25, 1991. While Norman is one of the main female voices in American contemporary theatre, for Simon, this was her Broadway debut. Norman was a good choice in lyricist to team up with as she has won a Pulitzer Prize, Hull-Warriner Award, and the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize for her play *‘night, Mother*.⁵¹ Many other of Norman’s plays also won awards in the theatre scene so she was a veteran when it came to the theatre. However, while Norman was an accomplished playwright, *The Secret Garden* was also her first attempt at a Broadway musical. Norman and Simon teamed up to make their first ever Broadway musical debut and was hoping the show would be a success.

Luckily for both, *The Secret Garden* was a smash, running for an impressive seven hundred and nine performances. *The Secret Garden* would go on to be nominated for “Best Musical” and “Best Original Score” at the Tony Awards and would take home three awards for “Best Book”, “Best Performance” and “Best Scenic Design”. Simon has gone on to compose the music for another musical, *Doctor Zhivago*, which premiered on Broadway at the Broadway Theatre in 2015.

⁵⁰ Program for Marsha Norman and Lucy Simon’s *The Secret Garden* at the St. James Theatre, New York. Playbill 1991

⁵¹ Marsha Norman and Frances Hodgson Burnett, *The Secret Garden: Musical Book and Lyrics* (New York, NY: Theatre Communications Group, 1992).

Section 17: “Love never dies” from *Love Never Dies* by Andrew Lloyd Webber

The successful musical theatre composer Andrew Lloyd Webber (b. 1948) began his love of composing for the theatre at the age of seventeen. While his love of music began when he was young, his mother had hoped for her son to be a classical musician. Webber would go on to disappoint her, but his father took an interest in Webber’s “puerile melodies”.⁵² Perhaps it was thanks to his father’s interest in Webber’s love of non-classical music that kept his passion alive. Webber would go on to study music at the Royal College of Music in London and during this time, Webber would be introduced to his famous partner in crime lyricist, Tim Rice (whom many might know for his musical work at the Walt Disney company and DreamWorks). Eventually, this duo would go on to create *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dream Coat*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, and *Evita*.

While Webber has many mega hits under his belt, he also has as many misses to his name as well. However, Webber’s song writing has endured many of these failures, as demonstrated by the titular “Love Never Dies” from *Love Never Dies*. Aside from musicals, Webber has also dipped his toes into writing classically as he wrote a Requiem dedicated to his father and *Variations*, a set of variations based on Niccolò Paganini’s *Caprice*. Webber has also dabbled in film scoring with *The Odessa File* and *Watership Down*. However, he is best known for his mega musicals and the songs from those musicals. Webber can be considered musical royalty with how much he has given to the genre of musical theatre. Despite the many ups and downs in his career, from mega hits to mega flops and from original songs to accusations of plagiarism, Webber continues to compose musicals and his newest musical, an adaption of the classic fairytale *Cinderella*, opened in London’s West End in August of 2021.

The beginning of what would eventually become the musical *Love Never Dies* was a rocky one. While Webber had always wanted to have a sequel to his insanely popular musical *The Phantom of the Opera* since 1986, Webber was artistically stuck on where to take the story. While *The Phantom of the Opera* was based on Gaston Leroux’s novel of the same name, *Love Never Dies* had no pre-existing material to be based on. That was when Webber sought out the veteran, journalist, and spy thriller novelist Fredrick Forsyth. While they threw ideas back and forth, Webber would eventually part ways with Forsyth stating that the ideas that were presented

⁵² Andrew Lloyd Webber, *Unmasked: A Memoir* (New York: HarperCollins, 2019).

would be too difficult to adapt to stage. Parting ways, Forsyth would take his unused ideas and use them to mold the plot of his book *The Phantom of Manhattan*.⁵³ Webber then went to librettist Ben Elton to help rewrite the ideas that he had come up with Forsyth.

The titular song “Love Never Dies” is a rewrite of one of Webber’s earlier songs. This is a technique that Webber has employed many times. He will compose a song without having a musical in mind for that song. This happened with the number “Memory” from *Cats*. Webber had written “Memory” but only the music and he put it on the shelf until he could find the right place for it.⁵⁴ This is exactly what he did with “Love Never Dies”. Perhaps that is why the titular song is the most sung and remembered from this musical. Cobbling together the plot with different ideas and a delay by “cat interference” later, Webber finally revealed his new musical on London’s West End in 2010 but was closed in a few short months due to poor critical reception. Webber made more adjustments to the musical and then opened it once more in Australia, Copenhagen, Vienna, Tokyo, Hamburg, A United States Tour, and a World Tour. To this day, *Love Never Dies* has never played on Broadway. Even though the musical hasn’t seen the warmest reaction from critics, it has become a ‘guilty pleasure’ or ‘love to hate’ musical amongst *The Phantom of the Opera* community and fans.

⁵³ Frederick Forsyth, Peter Marinker, and Gaston Leroux, *The Phantom of Manhattan* (London: Royal National Institute of the Blind, 2007).

⁵⁴ John Snelson, *Andrew Lloyd Webber* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).

Section 18: “Mein Herr Marquis” from *Die Fledermaus* by Johann Strauss II

As the grand Romantic age of music continued, Grand opera began to become a luxury. Many people were looking for the grandness of opera without the gravitas. This came in the form of musical theatre’s predecessor, operetta. Operetta combined the singing talents of opera with spoken dialogue that was mainly for entertainment.

Originating in the opéra bouffe of Offenbach... was manifestly entertainment, in which nationalism was beside the point. It could be both funny and romantic, spoofing the conventions of opera yet using them sincerely when appropriate.⁵⁵

Alongside the operetta master Offenbach, Gilbert and Sullivan and Johann Strauss the Younger (1825-1899) would join on the operetta pedestal.

Not to be confused with Richard Strauss, Johann Strauss was born in Vienna where his father, a composer himself, desperately wished for him to become a banker and to stay far away from music. However, Strauss would ignore his father’s wishes and would go on to study counterpoint and harmony under Joachim Hoffman and violin under Anton Kollman. It was Kollman who would help young Strauss get his foot in the door with the Vienna Court Opera as he worked there with the ballet. This disobedience of his father’s wishes would become a lifelong difficulty for Strauss as there became an intense rivalry between father and son until his father died of scarlet fever.

Johann Strauss Jr. would eventually overtake his father in popularity and would go on to revive the popularity of the waltz and become one of the most well-known operetta composers of all time. One of his most famous and enduring operettas is *Die Fledermaus* with the libretto by Carl Haffner and Richard Genée. Haffner first translated the vaudeville *Le Réveillon* into German and then Genée was brought on to adapt this translation for Strauss’s libretto. Even though they are credited as the librettists for this operetta neither Genée nor Haffner ever met each other in person.⁵⁶ *Die Fledermaus* premiered at the Theater an der Wien in 1874 and has been a part of the standard repertoire ever since. Maybe apropos of this being a comic operetta, *Die Fledermaus* has two funny little anecdotes that can be found in the Grove Book of Operas.

⁵⁵ J. Peter Burkholder, Donald Jay Grout, and Claude V. Palisca, *A History of Western Music*, 8th ed. (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 2010).

⁵⁶ Stanley Sadie and Laura Macy, *The Grove Book of Operas*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

...the first that the work was composed in 42 days, and the second that it was such a failure that it had to be taken off after 16 nights. The work was indeed sketched out in six weeks, but six months elapsed from start of composition to production. Moreover, Rosalinda's "Czardas" had already been performed...at a charity performance, and her disguise as a Hungarian at Orlofsky's party was a means of enabling it to be taken over into the operetta. The work was indeed taken off after 16 performances, but only because of a pre-booked visiting operatic company season, after which it returned.⁵⁷

The plot of *Die Fledermaus* can get complicated but thankfully, the characters sometimes are as confused as the audience is with everything that is happening. Much of the comedy comes from one character being confused and other characters pointing out how funny it is that they are. Eisenstein, the leading man of the operetta, is usually the character that is at the butt of many jokes. The plot kicks off when he lies to his wife about serving his time in jail to go to a party at Prince Orlofsky's palace. Wishing to go to the party as well, Adele, Eisenstein's maid, borrows a dress from his wife to go as well, thinking that they would never run into each other since the palace is so huge. Of course, the two run into each other and Eisenstein immediately claims that Adele is his maid. Showing off how clever and quick thinking she is, Adele immediately puts on a ruse saying that it is impossible for her to be a maid because of how gorgeous and graceful she is, she eventually gets the entire party in on her lie as she laughs off Eisenstein's accusation. Subtextually, Adele is secretly threatening Eisenstein, explaining that if he tells on her, she'll tell on him to his wife. The aria provides a delightful and entertaining conclusion to my recital program.

⁵⁷ Stanley Sadie and Laura Macy, *The Grove Book of Operas*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

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