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**AN ANNOTATED GUIDE TO BARITONE AND BASS ARIAS  
FROM AMERICAN OPERAS IN THE 1980'S**

**by**

**STEPHEN KALM**

**A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Music  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Musical Arts, The City University of New York**

**2000**

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**This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Music in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts.**

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**ABSTRACT****AN ANNOTATED GUIDE TO BARITONE  
AND BASS ARIAS FROM AMERICAN OPERAS IN THE 1980'S****BY****Stephen Kalm****Adviser: Professor Bruce Saylor**

**New American Opera underwent a renaissance during the 1980's, as the number of operatic premieres multiplied dramatically. This guide lists 119 Baritone and Bass arias from American operas during that decade. Organized by composer, each entry includes a listing of librettist, opera producer and year of premiere, opening line of aria, singer in first production, voice type, range, publisher and/or source information, location of aria in the piano/vocal score, AMC call number (if applicable), and recordings. Each entry also includes comments related to plot synopsis, tessitura, tempo and interpretive insights, often with suggestions from the composer. There is an introductory essay, "Opera in the 1980's", a Key to the Guide, a list of music sources and bibliography. Indexes for operas, aria titles and opening lines are included as well.**

## PREFACE

The inspiration for this project grew out of my experiences as a performer. My interest in contemporary music and my fascination for working with living composers drew me to participate as a singer in a large number of operatic premieres during the 1980's. In recent years I have performed in recital and at auditions many of the arias which I premiered. On numerous occasions, singers, conductors, and voice teachers have asked about the sources and availability of these arias. These professionals confirmed the need for reference material about this important contemporary repertory.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to Eero Richmond of the American Music Center who encouraged me to pursue this project. I am also indebted to Steve Burgess who played through all of the arias with me and offered insight into the special demands of the piano accompaniments. Harriett Ranney, music librarian at the University of Montana, helped track down many scores. I have many wonderful colleagues at UM who read and edited my manuscript. Most prominent were Anne Basinski and Andrea Opitz. Grateful acknowledgement is extended to Ben Krywosc and Richard Flusser who gave me valuable interviews. I also want to thank Professors Barbara Hanning, Rufus Hallmark Bruce Saylor, and Robert White of the City University of New York for their guidance. I am grateful as well, to my family for their patience and support. Finally, I would like extend my appreciation to the many composers and singers who have contacted me to show their enthusiasm for this project.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Preface</b>	<b>V</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>VI</b>
<b>Introduction: Opera in the 80's</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Key to the Guide</b>	<b>10</b>
<b><i>An Annotated Guide to Baritone and Bass Arias From American Operas in the 1980's</i></b>	
<b>John Adams</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Bruce Adolphe</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Hugh Aitken</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Roger Ames</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Dominick Argento</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Diane Armitage-Carnes</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>Seymour Barab</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Leonard Bernstein</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>Jared Beynon</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>Chester Biscardi</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>Harold Blumenfeld</b>	<b>57</b>

<b>Richard E. Brown</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>William Bolcom</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>John Carbon</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>Conrad Cummings</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>Anthony Davis</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>Solomon Epstein</b>	<b>74</b>
<b>Carlisle Floyd</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>Eric Funk</b>	<b>82</b>
<b>Margaret Garwood</b>	<b>86</b>
<b>Gordin Getty</b>	<b>87</b>
<b>Lee Goldstein</b>	<b>89</b>
<b>Philip Hagemann</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>William Harper</b>	<b>92</b>
<b>Alva Henderson</b>	<b>94</b>
<b>Lee Hoiby</b>	<b>99</b>
<b>David Hollister</b>	<b>103</b>
<b>Ian Krouse</b>	<b>105</b>
<b>James Legg</b>	<b>108</b>
<b>William Mayer</b>	<b>110</b>
<b>Kirke Mechem</b>	<b>115</b>

<b>Thea Musgrave</b>	<b>118</b>
<b>Robert S. Nelson</b>	<b>119</b>
<b>Richard Owen</b>	<b>122</b>
<b>Thomas Pasatieri</b>	<b>124</b>
<b>Stephen Paulus</b>	<b>125</b>
<b>Ronald Perera</b>	<b>133</b>
<b>Greg Pliska</b>	<b>136</b>
<b>Jay Reise</b>	<b>138</b>
<b>George Rochberg</b>	<b>139</b>
<b>Peter Schickele</b>	<b>142</b>
<b>William Schuman</b>	<b>144</b>
<b>Michael Jeffrey Shapiro</b>	<b>147</b>
<b>Thomas Z. Shepard</b>	<b>148</b>
<b>Kim Sherman</b>	<b>150</b>
<b>Randall Shinn</b>	<b>152</b>
<b>Elie Siegmeister</b>	<b>155</b>
<b>Mira J. Spektor</b>	<b>157</b>
<b>Jerre Tanner</b>	<b>160</b>
<b>Stewart Wallace</b>	<b>163</b>
<b>Joelle Wallach</b>	<b>165</b>

<b>Robert Ward</b>	<b>168</b>
<b>Betsy Frost Warren</b>	<b>173</b>
<b>Hugo Weisgall</b>	<b>174</b>
<b>List of Publishers and Other Sources</b>	<b>178</b>
<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>182</b>
<b>Index of Operas</b>	<b>191</b>
<b>Index of Aria Titles</b>	<b>193</b>
<b>Index of Opening Lines</b>	<b>194</b>

## INTRODUCTION: Opera in the 1980's

Opera in America underwent a renaissance during the period of the 1980's. Although many of the seeds of rebirth originated in the works of earlier decades, in the 1980's the number of performances of American operas tripled, and the number of world premieres in this country multiplied even more dramatically.<sup>1</sup> In the 1984-85 season, for example, America's professional opera companies staged 121 world premieres, compared to 16 world premieres in the 1974-75 season.<sup>2</sup> Such a stark contrast in numbers indicates that major changes occurred among creators, producing organizations, and audience attitude toward new opera over this ten-year period.

In his 1979 article, "Whither American Music Theater?" Eric Salzman wrote:

The renewal of "music theater" is perhaps the most essential new task...in the performing arts today and the establishment of the institutional forms which it requires is

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<sup>1</sup> Maria Rich, ed., *Directory of Contemporary Operas & Music Theater Works & North American Premieres: 1980 -1989*, Vol. 30, nos. 2-4 (New York: Central Opera Service, 1990), 323.

<sup>2</sup> Rich, *Directory*, 323.

an essential task of arts funding in this country. The creative impulse is there; the proper vehicle for its realization must be found.<sup>3</sup>

What was the cultural impetus for this renaissance and what “institutional forms” were responsible for promoting the operatic “creative impulse?”

Several artistic currents intersected during the 1980's to broaden the operatic genre. From the 1950's through the 1970's, some American operas, commissioned and premiered in prominent venues were composed in complex atonal idioms with disjunct vocal lines to very complicated librettos. Some of these factors were instrumental to the dearth of new music theater to which Eric Salzman alluded in his article. John Rockwell observed in 1984:

For a long time, a disproportionate number of new operas were composed in daunting dissonant idioms, and opera audiences, artists and administrators resisted them stoutly.

Rockwell continues:

Now, however, serious composers have begun to swing away from dissonance and complexity, and back toward a simpler accessibility.... In opera the very presence of a lay audience

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<sup>3</sup> Eric Salzman, “Whither American Music Theater?,” *Musical Quarterly* 65, no. 2 (April 1979): 244.

that wants to be entertained both condones and encourages accessibility.<sup>4</sup>

This “accessibility“ was brought about through three separate influences: the Broadway musical, a non-linear visual approach to production, and the assimilation of popular music and its corresponding singing styles into the operatic genre.

The 1980's brought about a new attitude regarding the integration of opera and musical theater. This integration was spearheaded by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), which in 1979 renamed its opera division the Opera-Musical Theater Program.<sup>5</sup> Although there was a great deal of controversy and discussion among opera impresarios and theater professionals about the wisdom of this marriage,<sup>6</sup> the program proved to have a noticeable impact on both genres.

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<sup>4</sup> John Rockwell, “New Opera Thriving After Years of Neglect,” *New York Times*, 5 August 1984, sec. 2, 1.

<sup>5</sup> National Endowment for the Arts, *Five -Year Planning Document: 1986-1990* (Washington D.C., February 1984), 281.

<sup>6</sup> Janice Brenner, “An Historical Perspective of Music Theater Support By the National Endowment For the Arts,” paper presented to the Opera-Musical Theater Program, April 1983, NEA, 26-7.

The Broadway musical was an “outgrowth of opera to begin with.”<sup>7</sup> With the exception of theatrical works which flourished equally on Broadway and the operatic stage like George Gershwin’s *Porgy and Bess*, Gian Carlo Menotti’s *The Medium*, and Leonard Bernstein’s *Candide*, opera and the Broadway musical operated in separate stylistic, cultural and financial spheres until the 1980’s. During the 1980’s, however, opera companies across the country began to add Broadway musicals to their repertory, and the Broadway musical returned to its operatic origins in its use of through-composed scores and classical singing techniques.<sup>8</sup>

In the foreground of this phenomenon emerged the crossover singer, equally at home in the opera house and the Broadway theater. Crossover singers, like Timothy Nolen, Judy Kaye, George Hearn and Susan Larsen, figured prominently in the production of new operas

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<sup>7</sup> Will Crutchfield, “From Musicals to Opera (and Back),” *New York Times*, 12 October 1984.

<sup>8</sup> Crutchfield, *New York Times*.

and musicals.<sup>9</sup> Also borrowed from Broadway was the concept of submitting new operas to a workshop process. The Public Theater, Eugene O'Neill Theater Center, American Music Theater Festival, New Music-Theater Ensemble, and the Brooklyn Academy of Music were among the most prominent organized workshop environments where composers and librettists could try out their new works. Often opera companies and commissioning organizations held public readings and workshops of new works before they were premiered.<sup>10</sup>

The composer Jeff Abell echoed the sentiments of many of his contemporaries when he wrote that:

...opera, as a form of theater, has had to undergo the same aesthetic soul-searching on such issues as narrative continuity (linear versus simultaneous), etc., that other theatrical forms have faced in the twentieth century. The question in people's minds is whether opera can ever hope to become a genuine contemporary art form, or if it is destined to become a form of

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<sup>9</sup> The singer, Timothy Nolen, gives an excellent description of the vocal challenges confronting the crossover singer in his essay, "America's Opera." Timothy Nolen, "America's Opera," *Arts Review* 5, no.1 (Winter 1988), 89.

<sup>10</sup> Jon Pareles, "Creative Stages: In Music-Theater Workshops, Process Equals Product," *New York Times Magazine*, 9 November 1986, 37.

“living museum” of works by long-dead artists.<sup>11</sup>

Many avant-garde composers in the 1980's found their creative inspiration in two operas by Virgil Thompson and Gertrude Stein, *Four Saints in Three Acts* (1934) and *The Mother of Us All* (1947).<sup>12</sup>

Perhaps the most profound influence on opera in the 1980's came from outside the realm of music, from abstract painting and the visual, non-narrative approach to operatic staging. Philip Glass maintained that the 1980's were to opera and music theater what the 1960's and 70's were to the visual arts. Minimalism in both art and music stretched the boundaries of their respective forms.<sup>13</sup> Operas were often pictures set in motion, rather than narratives acted out on stage. Directors such as Robert Wilson, Richard Foreman, and Peter Sellars attracted attention with their opera productions, often emphasizing the visual aspects of traditional and

---

<sup>11</sup> Jeff Abell, “Overture or Curtains: Opera Confronts the Twentieth Century,” *New Art Examiner*, February 1988, 45.

<sup>12</sup> J. Bunker Clark, ed., “The Composer and Performer and Other Matters: A Panel Discussion with Virgil Thomson and Philip Glass, moderated by Gregory Sandow,” *American Music* (Summer 1989) : 185.

<sup>13</sup> Philip Glass, *Arts Review* 5, 18.

new operas over their musical and textual qualities. The advent of supertitles for foreign language and even English-language opera productions denoted yet another aspect of transferring the audience experience from the aural to the visual.<sup>14</sup>

The use of electronic instruments in pit orchestras for musicals and operas precipitated the use of amplified voices. Operas by composers such as Philip Glass, Paul Dresher and William Harper required singers to adjust their vibratos and pitch to the inherent peculiarities of non-acoustic instruments. The emergence of the crossover singer enabled composers to explore popular idioms and integrate them into their operas.<sup>15</sup>

The responsibility of selling these new aesthetic ideas to skeptical producing organizations was undertaken chiefly through a collaborative project sponsored by Opera America, the Rockefeller Foundation and the National Endowment of the Arts called "Opera for

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<sup>14</sup> Although the use of supertitles has now become commonplace in virtually every major opera house in the world, during the 1980's their viability was still an issue of much debate. Donal Henahan, "Supertitles: The Eyes Have It," *New York Times*, 13 April 1988, sec. H, 27.

<sup>15</sup> Clark, *American Music*, 193.

the 80's and Beyond (OFTEAB).” Alarmed at the dangerously low number of new American opera productions, this organization set out to increase the number of productions and premieres. It also aspired to effect a “substantial shift in thinking on the part of general directors and subsequently their boards [regarding] the creation, development and production of new work.”<sup>16</sup> Working with large opera companies like the Lyric Opera of Chicago and Houston Grand Opera, and smaller producing organizations such as the Music-Theatre Group and the New Music-Theater Ensemble, the OFTEAB project directors were able to encourage collaborations with established mainstream composers, along with the likes of Meredith Monk, Stewart Copland, and Elizabeth Swados, whose work stretched the boundaries of conventional operatic form.

The 1980's marked a revival of interest in American opera. Although the next decade saw a waning in the annual number of new

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<sup>16</sup> Ben Krywosz, “Essay, ” *Opera for the 80's and Beyond: Final Report* (Washington, DC: Opera America, 1993), 12.

productions, it was still enriched by the decade that preceded it.<sup>17</sup>

Ben Krywosz, project director for the OFTEAB in its early years and now director of the Nautilus Music-Theatre Ensemble, takes a global stance on opera's development:

Most importantly, in a slow and quiet evolution that provides the field with its greatest excitement, there is a sense that a new generation of American writers, composers, directors, designers and performers are re-discovering the power of music-theater to impact audiences in an emotionally visceral way.<sup>18</sup>

The 1980's signaled a renewal of interest in the operatic form in America. The musical and cultural influences that created that awakening are now firmly entrenched. There is no turning back.

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<sup>17</sup> Concerned about creating an ongoing repertory of American works, Opera America has refocused its energies and developed a program called *Next Stage*, which encourages companies to give second performances to new works.

<sup>18</sup> Ben Krywosz, "Renewing the Vows," *Parabasis* 4, no.3 (Fall 1997) : 3.

## A KEY TO THE GUIDE

The purpose of this guide is to identify and provide information for arias written for the baritone and bass voice from American operas that premiered between the years 1980 and 1989.<sup>19</sup> The guide is intended as a research tool for performers, teachers, and coaches, who will use these arias for audition and/or concert purposes. This guide includes both published and unpublished material, as the 1980's was a period when many composers, both established and emerging, consciously or of necessity did not submit their work for publication.<sup>20</sup>

This guide does not include: operas without a piano/vocal

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<sup>19</sup> In a few cases arias have been included from operas, though written and published in the 1980's, that did not receive a production until the 1990's. In even fewer instances, arias from operas that have never received a performance have been included due to the quality of the music and the ready accessibility of materials for the performer.

<sup>20</sup> Many reasons were given for this phenomenon, among them, delays in publication, lack of promotion, nonexistent editing, poor quality of the printed product, and the conservative tastes of publishers. Most significantly, the advent of music software has made self-publishing of music economically feasible and advantageous for many composers. James Chute, "Publish or Perish: Some Composers, Disenchanted with Their Publishers, Go the Do-It-Yourself Route," *High Fidelity*, January 1982, MA 18.

score,<sup>21</sup> children's operas, dissertation operas, operas or music theater works that premiered in Broadway houses, and operas that have never had productions (except where noted). Additionally, the guide does not furnish complete synopsis and production information of all the operas listed.<sup>22</sup>

The aria entries for this guide are listed alphabetically by composer. The names of the operas appear under the composers' names in *italic bold* print. Each entry is listed in the following format:<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> With the exception of three arias, all of the entries are taken from piano/vocal scores. In the case of all three arias, the composers have published the arias separately.

<sup>22</sup> For full synopsis and production information on many of the operas mentioned in this guide, two excellent sources are available: Rebecca Hodell Kornick, *Recent American Opera: A Production Guide* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991). Franklin W. Summers, *Operas in One Act: A Production Guide* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 1997).

<sup>23</sup> The format is compatible with a work-in-progress "Catalogue of Soprano Arias from the American Music Center Collection" by Eero Richmond.

**P:** producing company (year of production)  
**L:** librettist  
**T:** title of aria<sup>24</sup>  
**O:** "opening line of aria"<sup>25</sup>  
**C:** character  
**S:** singer in the original production<sup>26</sup>  
**V:** voice type  
**R:** vocal range of the aria<sup>27</sup>  
**PB:** publisher<sup>28</sup>  
**LC:** location of aria in score, pp. refers to page numbers, numbers by themselves refer to measures  
**N:** American Music Center call number<sup>29</sup>  
**RC:** recording (performance recordings deposited at the American Music Center are denoted AMC cassette plus call number)  
**CM:** comments

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<sup>24</sup> Occasionally the composer or librettist has given the aria a title in the score.

<sup>25</sup> The entry number will always appear in the left margin of this line.

<sup>26</sup> Most of these singers can be heard on commercial recordings. It is often useful for the prospective singer to hear the voices which originally sang these roles.

<sup>27</sup> See illustration of vocal ranges.

<sup>28</sup> If the work is unpublished and not in the American Music Center collection, the source of the entry will appear in this section.

<sup>29</sup> Call numbers are included because so many of these scores are available at the American Music Center.

The vocal ranges listed will correspond to the following system:



The Comments section of each entry usually will include a short synopsis of the scenes leading up to the aria. Other comments might include observations on style, character, tessitura, musical difficulty, unusual vocal gestures, difficulty of the piano accompaniment, and suitability of the aria for student voices or professional singers. In the case of an aria not having a well-defined ending, a possible ending will be suggested. Many of the composers themselves in private communication, as well as published critical commentators, have provided valuable insights into the performances of these arias. These observations have been included.

At the conclusion of the guide there is a list of addresses, phone numbers and web sites of publishers, libraries, agencies and other sources where the performer may find the piano/vocal scores.

Three separate indexes appear after the bibliography: operas, aria titles, and opening lines of arias. Each index is referenced to the

Three separate indexes appear after the bibliography: operas, aria titles, and opening lines of arias. Each index is referenced to the entry number of the aria which can be found in the left margin on the same line as the "O" entry, for opening lines of arias.

The 119 arias included in this guide reflect the musically rich and theatrically diverse operatic environment of the decade of the 1980's. One hopes that the addition of these arias into the concert and audition repertory will encourage a reexamination of this period, which will in turn result in new productions of these operas.

**AN ANNOTATED GUIDE TO BARITONE AND BASS ARIAS  
FROM AMERICAN OPERAS IN THE 1980's**

**ADAMS, JOHN (b.1947)**

***Nixon in China***

**P: Houston Grand Opera (1987)**

**L: Alice Goodman**

**1. O: "News has a kind of mystery"**

**C: Richard Nixon, President of the United States**

**S: James Maddalena**

**V: Baritone**

**R: c - f1**

**PB: Boosey and Hawkes**

**LC: Act 1 Scene 1, pp. 30-50**

**N: 1503 A2144 N7**

**RC: Nonesuch 79177-2 (complete), 79193-2 (highlights)**

**CM: *Nixon in China* focuses on an historic event, the meeting between an American president and Communist Chinese leaders that changed the global political landscape of the cold war era.**

On February 21, 1972, Richard Nixon became the first American President officially to visit China's mainland, thereby giving the Communist country the diplomatic recognition it had not formerly enjoyed.

The beginning of the opera showcases this dramatic event. Nixon and his entourage arrive in China. After greeting Chou En-lai, China's premiere, Nixon breaks into a spirited aria that reveals his excitement, exhaustion, anticipation and fears regarding the coming negotiations. Matthew Daines writes that:

"News is a kind of mystery" is a good example of how Adams' music responds to the nuances of [Alice] Goodman's libretto: Nixon gets off the plane, sees himself first as an Apollo astronaut, then as a hero surrounded by traitors, and then on TV back in the heartland of America. The music is very mobile and mercurial.<sup>30</sup>

The composer and the librettist create an air of anxiety through repetition, both musical and textual (the word "News" repeats 12 times at the beginning of the aria), and through

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<sup>30</sup> Matthew Daines, "Telling the Truth About *Nixon*: Parody, Cultural Representation, and Gender Politics in John Adams' Opera *Nixon in China*" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California at Davis, 1995), 217.

irregular phrase structure. Adams and Goodman employ short enigmatic phrases like “the rats begin to chew the sheets.” Nixon then repeats “the rats” several times on one pitch as if spoken in a trance. This phrase deconstruction lends a sense of alienation to his character. Adams depicts Nixon’s emotional instability by alternating long melismas with phrases in which each syllable is interrupted by a rest. The tessitura is high, and the meter changes every few measures. This aria requires a performer with advanced capabilities as a singer and actor. “News has a kind of mystery” is also available with orchestration for concert use from the publisher.

2. O: “Ladies and Gentlemen, Comrades and Friends”

C: Chou En-lai, Premier of China

S: Sanford Sylvan

V: Baritone

R: c# - f1

LC: Act 1 Scene 3, pp. 150-62, 278-477

CM: Act 1 Scene 3 is set in the Great Hall of the People during

a banquet honoring the president and his entourage. The action revolves around two toasts given by Chou En-lai and Richard Nixon, respectively. The composer and librettist use arias to explore the personalities and philosophies of the banquet's principal players, President Nixon and Premier Chou En-lai.

Michael Steinberg writes:

...the distinct musics of the two toasts--Chou's fluent, flexible, confident, free, Nixon's staccato, nervous,... somehow stiff in its irregularities -- speaks volumes.<sup>31</sup>

Chou's aria demands incredible concentration for the singer. The tempo is "serenely and gently rolling." The tessitura is very high, hovering around e<sup>1</sup> and f<sup>1</sup>, and the range of dynamics is quite large. John Adam's minimalist style offers infrequent harmonic change, and a sense of obliteration of the downbeat. When excerpting the aria, the singer should omit measures 424-42, continuing the B<sup>b</sup> major harmony. In the 2nd measure at the bottom of revised page 16, the pianist can extend the B<sup>b</sup> major chord as a possible ending.

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<sup>31</sup> Michael Steinberg, CD booklet notes for John Adams' *Nixon in China*, performed by Orchestra of St. Lukes, conducted by Edo De Waart, Elektra Nonesuch 79193-2, 1988, 16.

3. O: "Mister Premiere, distinguished guests"

C: Richard Nixon, President of the United States

LC: Act 1 Scene 3, pp. 167-76, 514-666

CM: President Nixon's toast to the Chinese people presents similar performance requirements as Chou En-lai's toast, a high tessitura and rhythmic challenges. Nixon and Chou are high baritones with similar tessituras. However, the individual characters and their arias could not be more diverse. The great difference lies in the vocal color and articulation of these arias. Nixon's aria is more declamatory and must be sung *marcato* with an edge to the tone. The gentle arpeggios that accompany Chou's aria offer a contrast to the syncopated and highly accented orchestral background of Nixon's aria.

Daines observes:

The nervous tension is heightened in the music by the use of smaller metrical units in the music; the half note meters of Chou's aria (2/2, 3/2, and 4/2) are replaced by the smaller units of Nixon's music (2/4, 3/4, and 4/4) to heighten the surface rhythmic tension.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Daines, "Telling the Truth About *Nixon...*," 147.

The piano part is demanding, as well, in this aria, involving polyrhythmic complexities between the hands. Ending the aria on the E major chord at the beginning of measure 666 will help convey the dramatic effect of the chorus at the end of this scene.

4. O: "I am old and cannot sleep forever"

C: Chou En-lai

R: B - f1

LC: Act 3 Scene 1, pp. 67-72, 846-938

CM: Chou En-lai's elegy upon his life as a revolutionary ends *Nixon in China*. Alone and tired at the end of this historic event, Chou sings a bittersweet lament that simultaneously conjures up regret for the antipathies among nations and hope for the Chinese people. Act 3 is musically less repetitive, more intimate and individual. The tempo is rhapsodic and relaxed. Adams feels that "in Act 3 we've travelled a great distance and [are] no longer talking about landscape and simple

peasants...[but] about very complicated human dynamics.”<sup>33</sup>

The tessitura is not as high as Chou’s earlier aria, but the challenges in phrasing and shading of dynamics are equally daunting.

**ADOLPHE, BRUCE (b. 1955)**

***The False Messiah***

**P: Jewish Opera at the 92nd Street Y (1983)**

**L: Mel Gordon**

**5. O: “Between exile and redemption is the first Sabbath”**

**C: Natan of Gaza, the prophet of Shabtai**

**S: Robert Galbraith**

**V: Baritone**

**R: B - e1**

**LC: Act 1 Scene 2, pp. 25-31**

**N: M1503 A239 F2**

**RC: AMC Cassette 384**

**CM: Subtitled *The Life of Shabtai Svi, The False Messiah* is**

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<sup>33</sup> Andrew Porter, “John Adams in Conversation,” *Tempo* 167 (December 1988): 28.

based on the true story of a 17th-century Turkish Jew who was hailed by his followers as “The Son of God” and “The Jewish King.” Svi’s messianic ambitions were dealt a severe setback when, brought before a Turkish sultan, the Grand Vizier, Svi chose to convert to Islam rather than face torture and death.

In Act 2 Scene 1, Natan, a prophet, has a vision and announces to the world that the Messiah will be Shabtai Svi. Natan’s aria has the improvised quality of cantorial chant, full of chromatic melismas and the rhythmic freedoms associated with Jewish liturgical chant. The tempo is moderate and the tessitura is medium. The vocal line is angular and dissonant, but the pitches are often doubled in the piano part. The alternation of recitative and arioso styles presents challenges for both singer and pianist.

T: Shabtai’s Torah Song

6. O: “Through the window I saw a spinning”

C: Shabtai Zvi, the False Messiah

S: Kenneth Bell

**V: Bass**

**R: F# - f1 (falsetto)**

**LC: Act 1 Scene 3, pp. 50-3**

**CM: Shabtai Zvi is seen dancing with the Torah, a synagogue's most valuable possession, in the street outside a merchant's house in Smyrna, Turkey. He sings a "mad song" during which he personifies the Torah as a woman. At the end of the aria, in a state of frenzy, he kisses the Torah, and then throws it to the ground. The tempo is marked *andante*. Melismatic recitatives set to nonsense syllables frame each stanza. The aria concludes with a cadenza on the word "Torah" in which the bass sings in *falsetto* alternating between e1 and f1 to d#1, and then echoes that text on a parallel musical passage on G#-A to F#.**

**7. O: "If not now when ?"**

**C: Natan of Gaza**

**R: e - g1**

**LC: Act 1 Scene 5, pp. 100-3**

CM: In Jerusalem, by the Wailing Wall, Natan pleads with the reluctant Shabtai to accept the title of Messiah. Again, as in Natan's earlier aria, Adolphe uses Jewish cantorial devices, such as repeated melismas to lend color to the vocalizations. His use of hairpin dynamics and *sforzando* pianos add to the impassioned declamation. Adolphe characterized his composition as employing "dervish rhythms and improvisatory cadenzas (to) let the music give a mystical feeling through the way the material is twisted around and combined."<sup>34</sup> The tempo is moderately fast. At one point, for example, the singer is asked to create a "throbbing" effect on a triplet of a<sup>b</sup>'s sung to the word "who." It would be useful for the performer to listen to recordings of Jewish liturgical singing in order to execute faithfully the rhetorical requirements of this aria.

### *Mikhoels the Wise*

P: Jewish Opera at the 92nd Street Y (1982)

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<sup>34</sup> Edward Rothstein, " 'False Messiah', Opera of Time When World Seemed Doomed," *New York Times*, 8 April 1983, sec. C, p.3.

L: Mel Gordon

T: Song of the Wandering Jew

8. O: "When the Ziggurats of Babel began eroding"

C: Solomon Mikhoels, Yiddish Actor

S: Richard Corrado

V: Baritone

R: B<sup>b</sup> - e1

PB: MMB Music, Inc.

LC: Act 1 Scene 2, pp. 59-63

RC: AMC Cassettes 382-83

CM: The libretto is based on the true story of Solomon Mikhailovich Mikhoels, a Yiddish actor, who begins his career as a Communist revolutionary only to fall out of favor with Joseph Stalin, who later orders his murder.

In this early scene of the opera, Mikhoels, much to his surprise, finds work as a Yiddish actor in the new Soviet Republic. He performs the Song of the Wandering Jew for an enthusiastic audience. Adolphe's vocal writing is very singable, and highly chromatic. Most of the pitches can be found in the accompaniment. *Portamenti*, chromatic melismas,

and augmented seconds pervading the vocal line of the aria give the aria its strong Jewish character. The tempo is fast and spirited. Though it should be sung in the style of a Yiddish folk song, the technical and musical requirements of this aria demand a professional singer.

9. O: "You, Jews of America"

C: Solomon Mikhoels

R: c - f#1

LC: Act 2 Scene 1, pp. 133-36

CM: From a radio station in Moscow, Mikhoels broadcasts an appeal for American Jews to support the Red Army's defense of the Jews of Europe against Hitler's forces. This aria requires a rhetorically forceful singer who must use his voice to sway an unseen audience. The tempo is that of a military march. A suggested starting point would be the last two bars of page 133. If a longer introduction is desired, the pianist can begin three measures earlier.

T: Scottsboro Song

10. O: "Down in Scottsboro, in Alabama"

C: Paul Robeson, American Singer-Actor

S: John West

V: Baritone

R: B - f1

LC: Act 2 Scene 1, pp.144-48

CM: The scene quickly moves from Moscow to the Polo Grounds of New York City where Mikhoel's socialist cause is supported by an evening of political entertainment. Among the leftist luminaries who speak that evening are Charlie Chaplin and Paul Robeson. Robeson sings passionately about a racist trial in Alabama where "a Jewish child appeared like magic and entered the courtroom with a hammer and sickle." The tempo is like a slow spiritual. Adolphe asks for a baritone voice for this role, although Robeson was actually a bass.<sup>35</sup> Interestingly, in the first production the role was sung by the same singer who portrayed Der Nister (the story teller), the leading bass role. Robeson gives a short speech that precedes

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<sup>35</sup> For example, Paul Robeson premiered the role of Joe in Jerome Kern's *Showboat* singing "Old Man River", one of the most famous bass roles in American musical theater.

the aria. Its inclusion would make an effective introduction to the scene.

11. O: "Greetings from the five million Jews..."

C: Solomon Mikhoels

R: B<sup>b</sup> - e1

LC: Act 2 Scene 1, pp.149-56

CM: Almost immediately after Robeson's song, Mikhoels stands up at the rally to make his declamatory final appeal for socialism and the Soviet Union. He pleads, "I don't have to tell you that there is only one country in the world where anti-semitism is considered a crime against the state." The aria demands a high tessitura, consistently between c<sup>#</sup>1 and e1. The tempo is *moderato*. The singer must exhibit pacing and endurance as the dynamics range mainly from *f* to *fff*.

T: Star-Bear Song

12. O: "If I tell you a story, will you listen?"

C: Der Nister, a story teller

**S: John West**

**V: Bass**

**R: F# - e1**

**LC: Act 2 Scene 2, pp.164-73**

**CM: Mikhoels attempts to enlist Stalin's help in saving the Jews, but the Soviet dictator orders his murder. In this final scene of the opera, Der Nister metaphorically explains to Nina, Mikhoels' wife, her husband's rise to fame, his association with Stalin, his subsequent loss of favor, and his destruction by his former mentor. The "Star-Bear" symbolizes the dreams of Mikhoels, and his ideals. But "Star-Bear" also represents Mikhoels failure to recognize the futility of his situation. Mikhoels' move from the theater to politics puts him on an inevitable collision course with communism and anti-semitism that ultimately leads to his death. The tempo is moderate. The pianist must be sensitive to the frequent alternation of recitative and aria.**

### ***The Tell-Tale Heart***

**P: Opera Theater of Boston and The New England Conservatory**

(1982)

L: Bruce Adolphe

13. O: "The happiest day, the happiest hour..."

C: Mason, Andrew's blind landlord

S: Donald Dumas

V: Bass

R: A - e1

PB: MMB Music, Inc.

LC: pp. 9-12

RC: MMB Music, Inc.

CM: A one-act opera based on the story by Edgar Allan Poe, *The Tell-Tale Heart* is a story of obsession, murder, and guilt. Set near the beginning of the opera, "The happiest day, the happiest hour..." is a poem of Poe's which Adolphe has appropriated for the opera, but which is not in the original story. Mason responds to a request from Andrew, his tenant and soon-to-be murderer, "Tell me, then, of your happiest days."

The aria is lyrical with a plodding and deliberate phrase structure, as if characterizing the speech of an older man. The

tessitura is quite low, with many of the lines cadencing on sustained A's. The vocal line is very chromatic, but many pitches can be found in the accompaniment.

**AITKEN, HUGH (b.1924)**

***Felipe***

**P: Opera America Showcase (1982)**

**L: Laura Tapia**

**14. O: "Even now, after a year"**

**C: Don Felipe de Carrizales**

**S: Jan Opalach**

**V: Baritone**

**R: G - e1**

**PB: Theodore Presser**

**LC: Act 1 Scene 3, pp. 73-81**

**N: M1503 A311 F3 v.1**

**RC: AMC Cassette 774**

**CM: Based on *El Celoso Extremno* of Cervantes, *Felipe* tells the story of Don Felipe de Carrizales, a dignified, roughhewn nobleman of about sixty years. He keeps his very young wife,**

Leonora, under lock and key in their home.

In Act 1 scene 3, Felipe makes his initial appearance in the opera. Although married a year, he has forbidden Leonora to see any other man but himself. In this aria, Felipe seeks self-justification for this way of life. He has convinced himself that he is finally safe from his all-consuming jealousy. Felipe believes “where no fancies are fed, no deeds are bred.”

The music is written in a conservative, yet dissonant language. The vocal writing is syllabic requiring good diction. The meter changes often, and sometimes includes fractional lengths, e.g., four and a half beats to the measure. The tempo is moderate. The aria moves between conversational declamation and more melismatic emotional outbursts; therefore it requires careful coordination between the singer and pianist.

15. O: “Behold a fool!”

C: Don Felipe de Carrizales

R: A - e<sup>b</sup>1

LC: Act 3, pp. 28-42

**N: M1503 A311 F3 v.3**

**CM: During Act 2, Leonora gives Felipe a sleeping potion so that she may escape for a few hours to hear a young man, Loaysa, sing. After an evening of revelry, Loaysa and Leonora innocently fall asleep together in her bed.**

**As Act 3 begins, Felipe discovers the sleeping couple. Enraged, he runs for his sword, and summons a priest, a notary, and Leonora's parents to his home. After all have assembled, Felipe has a change of heart blaming only himself for the situation. He dictates his last will and testament. After leaving various amounts of gold to all those present, Felipe dies. The vocal demands are similar to the Act 1 aria. The tempo is moderate. The performer must be an excellent actor.<sup>36</sup> The music powerfully communicates the qualities of embarrassment, dignity, and compassion in a man about to die.**

**AMES, ROGER (b.1944)**

***Amarantha***

**P: Lake George Opera (1984)**

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**<sup>36</sup> Hugh Aitken, 1999, letter to author, 1 July.**

L: Roger Ames

T: Humble's Scene: How Beautiful Are Thy Feet With Shoes

16. O: "Don't Amarantha...don't be so frightened"

C: Humble Jewett

S: Timothy Nolen

R: A<sub>b</sub> - f1

PB: Hinshaw Music

LC: Scene 1, 100-428

CM: Set in the depression era in the Appalachian Mountains, *Amarantha* is a one-act opera based on the short story, *How Beautiful with Shoes*, by Wilbur Daniel Steele. Raised by a deaf mother and an alcoholic uncle, Amarantha seeks to escape from this stifling environment at age 19. She dreams of a better life. Humble Jewett, an escaped schizophrenic mental patient, kidnaps her and tries to woo her by quoting John Donne, Shakespeare, and the Song of Solomon.

During this scene, Humble relates to Amarantha why he killed a student, Blossom Hinckley, as well as Dr. Ryeworth, the principal of the high school where he taught English Literature. According to Humble, Blossom and Ryeworth were

having a “blasphemous affair.” Eventually, Amarantha’s uncle discovers them and kills Humble. Amarantha is forced to return to her dismal life. The opera ends with a beautiful love duet between Amarantha and the now dead Humble, who has become her inspiration as she enters a world of madness and fantasies.

Humble’s scene presents many difficulties for the performer including a wide tessitura, falsetto singing, and wide-ranging dynamics. The most difficult challenge of this aria involves distinguishing Humble’s multiple personalities. They include Mr. Ryeworth, and Jesus Christ, as well as Humble himself. The accompaniment is written for two pianos and percussion. The tempo is slow. The composer has supplied a few cuts which he believes improve the pacing of the scene. These cuts are marked in the score.<sup>37</sup>

ARGENTO, DOMINICK (b. 1927)

*The Aspern Papers*

P: The Dallas Opera (1988)

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<sup>37</sup> Roger Ames, 1999, letter to author, 12 July.

**L: Dominick Argento**

**17. O: "Strange beyond all strangeness"**

**C: The Lodger, a critic and biographer**

**S: Richard Stilwell**

**V: Baritone**

**R: c - f#1**

**PB: Boosey & Hawkes**

**LC: Act 1 Scene 3, pp. 57-65**

**N: M1503 A692 A8**

**CM: Adapted from the novella by Henry James by the composer, Argento, *The Aspern Papers* tells the story of Juliana Bordereau, who has in her possession the manuscript of an opera by her long-dead lover, the composer John Aspern. Tina, her spinster niece who cares for Juliana, rents a room in their home to a man, called the Lodger in the opera, who unbeknownst to them seeks the manuscript.**

**Much of the opera juxtaposes the present time of the action, 1895, with flashbacks of Aspern's life sixty years earlier. In this aria, the Lodger outlines his plan to seduce the niece in order to gain access to the manuscript. The character**

relates his plan while composing a letter, a device that allows the character to sing about the past and the present at the same time. The letter-writing music is accompanied by a two-note ostinato that illuminates the impatient quality of the singer. The pianist should begin at the E<sup>b</sup> Major chord four measures before Scene 3 to provide an introduction. The performers should eliminate the interjections of Olympia on pp. 61-2, Julianna on pp. 63-4, and Tina on pp. 64-5. In addition, a few text alterations are necessary to make this aria a true soliloquy. On p.62, "I'm afraid you have not had many of late", the singer should change "you" to "they", and on p.65, "Come into the garden yourself and pick them" will be clearer if one changes the text "yourself" to "my dear."

The vocal line is lyrical and often dissonant. The meter is constantly changing, and the tempo is slow to moderate. Diction is very important since the Lodger is functioning here as a narrator, as well. Careful facial expressions are suggested to clarify the focus of the narrative.

18. O: "What a yielding nature she has"

**C: The Lodger**

**R: B - g1**

**LC: Act 1 Scene 5, pp. 109-14**

**CM: The Lodger and Tina have just returned home from a romantic evening. Tina sings of how much she has enjoyed the experience and declares that she will help the Lodger in his quest for the manuscripts. After Tina leaves the room to tend her ailing aunt, the Lodger cynically describes the ease of his seduction, and marvels at the weakness and pliability of Tina's personality. Although the vocal line is very lyrical, the singer should deliver the aria with a cold and distant quality to his voice. The tempo is moderate. Virtually all of the pitches are doubled in the accompaniment.**

***Casanova's Homecoming***

**P: The Minnesota Opera (1985)**

**L: Dominick Argento**

**19. O: "No, I was never a thief"**

**C: Casanova, recently returned to Venice after 18 years of exile; age 49**

**S: Julian Patrick**

**V: Baritone**

**R: B - g1**

**PB: Boosey & Hawkes**

**LC: Act 1 Scene 1, pp. 18-24**

**N: M1503 A692 C3**

**RC: AMC Cassettes 2303-2304**

**CM: *Casanova's Homecoming* is a three act opera buffa that takes place in Venice during the first week of Carnival Season in 1774. Most of the facts, people, and events of the libretto are drawn from Casanova's own memoirs.**

**An aging Casanova has been allowed to return to Venice after 18 years of exile on the condition that he behave himself. During this aria in the opening scene, Casanova reveals his philosophy, "that deception rules this world," to a 12-year-old boy, Marcantonio, whom he has caught stealing at the Carnival. In order to set up a clear context, the singer might choose to begin this aria speaking the boy's two previous lines in the first person, "Am I Casanova? Was I caught stealing?" The vocal line is very demanding with a high tessitura, and the**

tempo, which is generally fast, changes about every eight measures. The language is tonal, and singer 's melody is occasionally doubled by the piano accompaniment. The aria ends with the accompanist's octave F#'s on the top of p. 24.

20. O: "Though royal robes befit that queenly frame"

C: Casanova

R: c - f#1 (g1)

LC. Act 1 Scene 3, pp. 130-5

CM: An evil Marquis schemes to discredit Casanova, the famous lover, by engineering a trap in which Casanova will publicly and unwittingly seduce an operatic castrato disguised as a woman. "Through royal robes..." is the serenade with which Casanova woos his conquest, who thereupon humiliates Casanova by declaring that he is not a woman. In a later scene, the castrato is in fact revealed to be a woman, or a woman impersonating a man playing a woman, thus vindicating Casanova.

The aria features a guitar accompaniment in the score which could probably be used along with piano in a concert

setting. The composer asks for “bel canto” style, and the aria should accordingly be sung very legato with *rubato* and *portamento* and other stylistic elements inherent in that style. The composer writes in the score that “the accompaniment should crescendo and decrescendo along with the vocal part.” The tessitura is high and very demanding with sustained subito piano f1’s and a mixed or falsetto g1, which demand great skill. This challenging aria is well worth the effort for a technically proficient high baritone.

21. O: Me? Ha! I haven’t slept for days”

C: Lorenzo, a newly ordained abbot and a friend of Casanova;  
age 25

S: Vern Sutton

V: Baritone<sup>38</sup>

R: c - g1 (g#1)

LC: Act 3 Scene 1, pp. 304-310

CM: At the end of act 2, Casanova has taken the Marquis’ aunt,

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<sup>38</sup> The vocal designation in the score is for high baritone. Vern Sutton is a tenor. Baritone David Hamilton sang the role for later performances at the New York City Opera.

Madame d'Urfe, out in a boat on a lagoon in the middle of the night in an attempt to swindle her of her jewels. Casanova's plan, unfortunately for him, is foiled when a storm sinks their boat. Casanova's young friend, Lorenzo, the same Lorenzo da Ponte who thirteen years later would write a libretto for Mozart about the life and adventures of yet another libertine, Don Giovanni, visits Casanova several days after this escapade. He is in a highly agitated state. He recounts the disaster of the "boating accident" and then warns Casanova that he risks "permanent exile" with his scheme, and has gained no monetary "profit" in the process.

An excellent acting scene, Lorenzo's aria offers a fine opportunity to display one's talents as a character baritone. The patter-like delivery of the text requires accurate diction, a wide range of vocal colors, and excellent musicianship. The tessitura is very high, with a  $g^{\#1}$  marked as *Sprechstimme*. The melodic writing has large leaps, and the rhythms are challenging. The piano reduction is difficult, as well, requiring many changes of character, articulation and tempo.

22. O: "A toast! To the luckiest Groom in the Hist'ry of Man..."

C: Casanova

R: G# - g1

LC: Act 3 Scene 3, pp. 386-90

CM: Casanova sings a triumphant credo to his goddaughter and her new husband at their wedding celebration. "The most important thing," he sings, "is to live; to love; and most of all to love living." As in Casanova's previous arias, the tessitura is high, and the dynamics wide and demanding. The musical language is quite tonal, but the performers should watch for accidentals, as most of the aria is in C# Major. The tempo is moderate to fast. This aria is an outstanding *tour de force* for either concert or audition.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Not all would agree with this assessment. The critic, Samuel Lipman, found the music of this aria to be "thin, plain and even angular, thus giving the impression that the composer himself can't believe what his hero is saying at the climax of the opera." Seymour Lipman, *Arguing for Music/Arguing for Culture* (Boston: David R. Godine, 1990), 186.

ARMITAGE-CARNES, DIANE W. (b.1911)

*Stanislaus and Clare*

P: (1985)<sup>40</sup>

L: Diane W. Armitage-Carnes

23. O: "Her voice, her words, spin me in a maze"

C: Wendall

V: Baritone

R: c - g1

LC: Act 1 Scene 2, pp. 6-9, 137-211

N: M1503 C2887 s7

CM: *Stanislaus and Clare* takes place on the northern coast of Florida during the Second World War, and tells the tragic love story of a captured Nazi submariner and the daughter of an American prison-camp commander. The second scene of the opera involves two other characters, Wendall, an MP Staff Sergeant and Ann, a volunteer coast-watcher and Red Cross

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<sup>40</sup> According to the composer, her opera has not been produced. Despite this, the work is included here because of the excellent quality of the music and the easy access to materials. Diane Armitage-Carnes, 1999, letter to author, 26 May.

through the pined woods of North Florida at the edge of the great Okefenoke Swamp and the Marshes of Glyn. Both are on leave for the weekend from Camp Blanding, a POW camp.

Wendall's aria is lyrical and vocally idiomatic. The tempo is slow. The aria displays a wide vocal range with several extended g<sup>1</sup>'s on closed vowel sounds to words like "veins" and "beams." Other vocal challenges include glissandi and difficult chromatic coloratura passages.

**BARAB, SEYMOUR (b.1921)**

***Only A Miracle***

**P: University of Illinois Opera Theater (1983)**

**L: Seymour Barab**

**24. O: "I shall certainly chop off some heads"**

**C: King Herod**

**S: Lawrence Craig**

**V: Bass**

**R: d - d1**

**PB: G. Schirmer**

**LC: Scene 5, pp. 25-9**

LC: Scene 5, pp. 25-9

CM: Subtitled *A Christmas Opera, Only A Miracle* is set outside the Inn at Bethlehem, a few days after the birth of Jesus. A servant girl, Sylphinia, and a lodger soldier are approached by King Herod who angrily tells them he has been betrayed by the Three Wise Men. He is offering a generous reward for information as to the whereabouts of the Holy Child, to whom he wishes to pay homage.

In his aria, Herod claims he was once happy and the “greatest King of all, but with the Holy Infant’s birth, He’ll be the Lord of all the Earth.” The aria begins with a recitative section in which Herod vents his anger and then moves into a lyrical section where he reflects on his former greatness. The middle section of the aria relates his conversation with the Wise Men. The conversation is in 5/4 time, and each quotation is prefaced with a spoken “I said” or “They said.” The aria ends with Herod lamenting his fate as “second best” to the Holy Infant. The vocal line and piano part are simple.

25. O: “You! Help me? But you are only a mortal”

**C: The Messenger**

**V: Bass**

**R: c - d1**

**LC: Scene 14, pp. 90-2**

**CM: The landlord of the Inn hears of Herod's reward and, knowing that Sylphinia believes in the Holy Birth, demands she reveal the whereabouts of the child. Sylphinia and the soldier, who now believe it is Herod's intent to harm the baby, refuse to cooperate. A struggle ensues in which they are captured. As the landlord prepares to coerce Sylphinia to reveal the information, an angel in the guise of a Messenger appears who kills the landlord and unshackles Sylphinia and the soldier. The Messenger, too, is looking for Joseph, Mary and the Holy Child. When the soldier offers to help, the Messenger, an angel, replies that he chose to be disguised as a man, "slow and earthbound." After accepting the soldier's help, the Messenger decrees that each year a period of time called "Christmas" will celebrate the birth of the Holy Child.**

**The Messenger's aria begins with a recitative that is followed by a two-verse strophic song and variation. The**

tempo of the song is fast. The tessitura is not high, but the many octave displacements in the vocal line force the singer to negotiate some large leaps between registers. Deliberately written for college performers, "You! Help me? But you are only mortal" is an useful entry into contemporary repertoire for the young bass voice.

**BERNSTEIN, LEONARD (1918-1990)**

***A Quiet Place***

**P: Houston Grand Opera (1983)**

**L: Stephen Wadsworth**

**26. O: "You're late. You shouldn't have come"**

**C: Sam**

**S: Chester Ludgin**

**V: Bass**

**R: B - f1**

**PB: Boosey & Hawkes**

**LC: Act 1, pp. 72-83, 756-934**

**RC: Deutsche Grammophon 419 761-2**

**CM: *A Quiet Place* grew out of Leonard Bernstein's 1950's**

one-act opera *Trouble in Tahiti*. Indeed, all of the earlier work is included in *A Quiet Place*. According to librettist Wadsworth, it is an opera “about loss, grief, family mourning, and coming through tragedy together.”<sup>41</sup>

The beginning of the opera centers around Dinah’s funeral. Sam, Dinah’s husband, stands immobilized and silent throughout the service. Their children, Dede and Junior, arrive late. After the funeral, Sam’s first words, “You’re late. You shouldn’t have come,” are an explosion of anger and grief aimed at his children.

This aria’s greatest challenges lie in the realms of rhythm and character. The tessitura is not demanding, but the length and emotional build of the scene require pacing and stamina. The language is tonal and the style sometimes minimalist, with meter changes often occurring each measure. The tempo is fast and agitated. The composer specifically asks for vocal colors, such as “breathy” or “bluesy.” Another

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<sup>41</sup> Stephen Wadsworth, “‘A Quiet Place’: Librettist’s notes,” CD booklet notes for Leonard Bernstein’s *A Quiet Place*, Austrian Radio Symphony Orchestra, conducted Leonard Bernstein, Deutsche Grammophon 419 761-2, 5.

unusual vocal request is the large number of *subito piano* and *subito forte* asked of the singer. Finally, the aria requires excellent diction, and a sure sense of ensemble between the singer and his pianist.

27. O: "I wish I could sleep"

C: Sam

R: A - g1

LC: Act 2 Scene 1, pp. 97-101, 1-57

CM: In the master bedroom of his house, Sam sits, engrossed in Dinah's diary. Her writings make him angry, but Sam also feels love for Dinah, and eventually realizes that he misses her. The jazz-like style of the music evokes a drunken atmosphere of resentment and self-pity. The tessitura is quite high. The tempo is moderate. The rendering of this aria requires a great deal of vocal and musical control reflecting Sam's long-suppressed contained emotions. There are several phrases that involve large leaps into different vocal registers. This aria makes an excellent audition piece for a mature bass voice.

28. O: "There's a law"

C: Young Sam

S: Edward Crafts

V: Bass-Baritone

R: c - e1

LC: Act 2 Scene 4, pp. 207-17, 1175-1338

CM: This aria is taken from Part 1 of *Trouble in Tahiti*. Sam's encounter with his wife's diary evokes flashbacks from thirty years earlier. The Young Sam has just won a handball trophy. In the locker room shower he sings his credo: there are men, like himself, who are destined to be winners and other men who will never win. A spirited up-tempo number, "There's a law" is reminiscent of the more Broadway-oriented Bernstein of *Wonderful Town* and *West Side Story*. Not only is the tessitura high, but many of the phrases end with a sustained e1 which the singer must execute on a relatively closed vowel, [i]. One section also asks for whistling. Musically, this aria is much easier than the older Sam's arias, but in terms of vocal technique, it is equally challenging.

29. O: "You see, Daddy, that... um...That death does bring some relief"

C: Junior, Sam's son

S: Timothy Nolen

V: Baritone

R: d - f1

LC: Act 3, pp. 306-11, 548-606

CM: Sam's son, Junior, has a history of mental illness and, until the funeral, has not seen his father in twenty years. "You see, Daddy..." occurs at the end of the opera where, in the midst of a vicious family argument, Junior hurls his mother's diary into the air, scattering all the pages. Junior, in his halting, stammering, stream-of-consciousness style of speech, attempts a reconciliation with his father and the rest of his family.

The vocal line is doubled in the accompaniment throughout the aria. The tessitura is not demanding, but diverse vocal colorations and acting ability are necessary to capture this character's unstable personality.

BEYNON, JARED (b.1949)

*Iphigenia*

P: New Opera New York (1984)

L: R. Radin<sup>42</sup>

30. O: "O fortunate men of lowly birth"

C: Agamemnon

S: Allan Glassman

V: Bass-Baritone

R: B - e<sup>b</sup>1

LC: Scene 3, pp. 61-6, 308-40

N: M1503 B573 I6

CM: *Iphigenia* is adapted from the play, *Iphigenia in Aulis* of Euripides. This scene finds Agamemnon, King of the Greeks, revealing to his brother, Menelaus, his anger and shame upon discovering the betrayal of his wife, Helen, with Paris of Troy.

This highly charged dramatic scene begins slowly with Agamemnon bemoans in lofty language the heavy weight of his

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<sup>42</sup> There is no mention of a librettist in the score. This name is mentioned in the Central Opera Service Directory. Rich, *Directory*, 12.

responsibilities as King. The tempo quickens as he cries out in pain to Menelaus. The ensemble between the singer and pianist is particularly difficult during the *più mosso* section. The musical language is tonal and dissonant, and the meter changes regularly throughout the scene.

**BISCARDI, CHESTER (b.1948)**

***Tight-Rope***

**P: University of Wisconsin, Madison (1985)**

**L: Henry Butler**

**T: Poet's Aria**

**31. O: "I did not intend to be a poet"**

**C: Luther Dane**

**S: John Reardon**

**V: Baritone**

**R: B<sup>b</sup> - g1**

**PB: Theodore Presser Company<sup>43</sup>**

**LC: Act 1 Scene 1, pp. 13-7, 164-217**

**N: M1503 B621 T5**

**CM: An opera in nine scenes, *Tight-Rope* relates “one man’s (The Actor’s) search for identity and the risk in not only the search but in being true to the discovery.”<sup>44</sup>**

The libretto’s premise: the legend of Luther Dane, poet and cult hero, enhanced by his mysterious disappearance and presumed death, is now the subject of a film biography. After the shooting of the film begins, work is disrupted when the actor portraying Dane insists that his lines could not be the words of the man whose life and poetry he so admires. Left alone to sort out his feelings, The Actor finds himself suddenly face to face with Luther Dane, very much alive and an unsuspected witness to the filming. Intrigued by The Actor’s

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<sup>43</sup> Biscardi has recently had both the original baritone setting of this aria and a tenor version transposed up a minor third published by C. F. Peters. Both versions are easier to read than the original handwritten copy published by Theodore Presser. Chester Biscardi, e-mail to author, 21 May 1999.

<sup>44</sup> James Chute, “U. Wisconsin: Biscardi ‘Tight-Rope’ [Premiere],” *High Fidelity*, January 1986, MA 16-17.

concern for integrity, the poet offers his help, through memory and witnesses. Luther describes “what it felt like to be a young poet and a young man -- looking at both his struggles and the miracles of being alive.”<sup>45</sup>

Beginning with a recitative-like section, Luther sings, “day after day, the words and pictures made me drunk, tumbling through my head, demanding that I give them order, and that order is called poetry!” “It’s as if he’s rediscovering... his early self-doubt and creative courage,” writes the composer.<sup>46</sup> Luther then sings a beautiful, lyrical aria in which he elaborates upon the sensual joys of being a poet. The tempo is moderate and flowing. The musical language is tonal and accessible to the singer and the audience.<sup>47</sup> The tessitura is moderate, but with difficult climactic high notes requiring the

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<sup>45</sup> Biscardi, 1999, letter to author, 6 July.

<sup>46</sup> Biscardi, letter.

<sup>47</sup> Interestingly, the composer at first found the aria “too Broadway, too naive and too open sounding.” Chester Biscardi, “Keeping a Long Work Alive,” *Sarah Lawrence Magazine*, Fall/Winter 1987-88, 15.

closed [i] vowel on the words “feel” and “street.”

**BLUMENFELD, HAROLD (b.1923)**

***Fourscore* (1986)**

**P: University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music**

**(1989)**

**L: Charles Kondek**

**32. O: “I cut, I clip, groom,snip,wash,wave, tint and shave”**

**C: James “Slim Jim” Chrimcutt, barberand factotum**

**V: Baritone**

**R: G#(B) - g1**

**LC: Act 1 Scene 2, pp. 15-20, 104-179**

**PB: MMB Music, Inc.**

**N: M1503 B658 F7**

**CM: Based on J. N. Nestroy's *Das Haus der Temperamente*, *Fourscore* is subtitled, *An Opera of Opposites*. The libretto has a formal structure that is much akin to the Italian comic opera of the early 19th century. Indeed, according to its composer *Fourscore* is meant to be a “total spoof.”<sup>48</sup> The plot**

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**48 Harold Blumenfeld, 1999, fax to author, 24 May.**

centers around four households, each characterized by one of the four classic temperaments, the Bounce-Bubbly's, the Weep's, the Immergrump's and the Hohum's. Each household consists of a father, daughter, son, and maid. Inevitable conflicts erupt as, much to the displeasure of their fathers, the sons and daughters from opposite families fall in love with each other. Into the fray leaps James Chrimcutt, barber extraordinaire and general factotum, who, like his archetype, Figaro, schemes and connives with the lovers to bring their predicaments to a happy conclusion.

Howard Blumenfeld, a well-known opera critic, uses musical quotations from Rossini operas and a neo-classical formal structure as an organizational device. Thus, Chrimcutt's Act 1 Scene 2 aria consciously echoes the famous "Largo al factotum" from Rossini's *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*. "I cut, I clip..." employs a wide range and requires a singer of the same consummate skills, excellent diction, facility, and an easy top range, needed to negotiate its more famous counterpart aria. Blumenfeld has provided optional notes for those that lie low in the baritone range. The accompaniment is

difficult and requires a skillful working-out of ensemble problems.

**33. O: "Opposites attract and that's a fact"**

**C: James Chrimcutt**

**R: A<sup>b</sup> - g1**

**LC: Act 2 Scene 7, pp. 305-10, 974-1040**

**CM: Chrimcutt expounds upon the attraction of opposite personalities. "Opposites attract.." is another spirited *aria di bravura* for this mercurial character. A baritone must have good low notes for, unlike Rossini in this instance, Blumenfeld has the singer perform significant phrases at the very bottom of the baritone range over highly pitched accompaniment. Although the language is tonal, pitch recognition is not easy due to the large leaps between registers in the vocal line, and a dissonant piano part often at odds with the melody.**

**BROWN, RICHARD E. (b.1947)**

***The Gift of the Magi***

**P: (1985)<sup>49</sup>**

**L: Nancy B. Grobe**

**34. O: "The fellow in the carol sent his love five golden rings"**

**C: Jim**

**V: Baritone**

**R: B<sup>b</sup> - e1**

**LC: Scene 2, pp. 27-35, 1-122**

**N: M1500 B8795 G4**

**CM: Based on the famous short story by O. Henry, *The Gift of the Magi* is a one-act opera for soprano, baritone and piano.**

**In this scene, Jim searches a shop window for the perfect Christmas present for his wife. A brass quartet can be heard offstage, playing "The Twelve Days of Christmas." The tempo is moderate. The music is tonal and very accessible to the college- age singer. Some occasional changes to irregular**

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**49 No record found of a production. The aria is included in this guide because of the quality of the music and the ready accessibility of materials for the performer.**

meters may present challenges to the performers. The piano part is of moderate difficulty.

**BOLCOM, WILLIAM (b.1938)**

***Casino Paradise***

**(Cabaret Version)**

**P: American Music Theatre Festival (1987)**

**L: Arnold Weinstein**

**T: Finale: Power!**

**35. O: "Put him in for a year or two, see what happens then"**

**C: Ferguson, a shady developer**

**S: André De Shields (Timothy Nolen in the recording)**

**V: Baritone**

**R: c - g1**

**PB: Marks Music**

**LC: Act 1, pp. 42-5**

**RC: Koch International Classics 3-70747-2H1**

**CM: William Bolcom describes *Casino Paradise* as:**

**a show...theater opera? cabaret opera? - about greed. It has a resemblance to 'The Passion of Donald Trump' or even 'The Harry and Leona Helmsley Story,' but this is**

coincidence. Arnold Weinstein and I conceived it around 1985 as parable, not biography.<sup>50</sup>

Ferguson, the principal character, buys up a small town in order to build a casino. In the process, he earns the contempt of many townspeople including his own son, Stanley.

In Finale: Power!, Ferguson sings deliriously of his love of power. Stanley, whom Ferguson earlier framed and sent off to jail, shoots and wounds his father at the end of the scene. The music throbs in a fast rock tempo, and should be sung in a declamatory manner without too much vibrato. The relatively easy piano part, nevertheless, requires experience with musical theater accompaniment due to many measures of repeat signs.

T: The Curse

36. O: "I'd like to see, it would be paradise on earth..."

C: Ferguson

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<sup>50</sup> William Bolcom. "Notes from the Composer," CD booklet notes from William Bolcom's *Casino Paradise*, produced by the American Music Theater Festival, conducted by Michael Barrett, Koch 3-7047-2H1, 1991, 1.

R: B - f#1

LC: Act 2, pp. 66-8

CM: As Ferguson senses his own downfall through the machinations of his son and his employees, he curses them all as well as himself in this climactic scene set to the rhythm of a tango. The singer should emphasize the long lines with a consistent legato, and very gradual crescendo that unfolds over the first 34 measures. In some instances the lyrics in the published score differ from those in the recording produced five years later.

CARBON, JOHN (b.1951)

*Benjamin: An Opera of Our Own Invention*

P: Franklin and Marshall College (1987)

L: Sarah White

37. O: "Bibles, Testaments, Psalters..."

C: Benjamin Baritone (Benjamin Franklin)

S: Stephen Kalm

V: Baritone

R: c - f1

**LC: Act 1 Scene 1, pp. 21-5**

**N: M1503 C264 B4**

**RC: AMC Cassette 1944**

**CM: *Benjamin*, an operatic biography of Benjamin Franklin, employs three separate singers to embody different facets of Benjamin Franklin's personality: the Child Benjamin, inquisitive and full of wonder, portrayed by a boy soprano; the brash, carefree and adventuresome Benjamin Younger, sung by a mezzo-soprano; and finally, Benjamin Baritone, the iconic Benjamin Franklin, balding, spectacled, and consumed with obligation and self-doubt. The three Benjamins often appear or interact simultaneously.**

**This scene marks the first appearance of Benjamin Baritone. Benjamin must cope with the public demands of running a printing press, and his litany of anxieties are recounted in this aria. This is the Franklin of *Poor Richard's Almanac*, full of common sense aphorisms.**

**Carbon writes this spirited aria in a neo-classical idiom complete with trills, scales and sequential passages, which are both very accessible to audiences and outstanding learning**

exercises for the young singer. A recitative connects this aria with “To be frugal...” and makes an excellent audition or concert offering when performed together.

**38. O: “To be frugal ‘till I have paid all the debts I owe”**

**C: Benjamin Baritone**

**R: c - e1**

**LC: Act Scene1, pp. 26-9**

**CM: A slow, lyrical aria in which Benjamin laments the self-imposed duties and obligations that prevent him from enjoying his life. This aria can be performed with an obbligato violin, flute or clarinet playing during the interludes. It can also be combined with “Bibles, Testaments, Psalters...” by the recitative that precedes it.**

**39. O: “Deborah, our bell”**

**C: Benjamin Baritone**

**R: f - f1**

**LC: Act 1 Scene 2, pp. 106 - 7**

**CM: Benjamin explains to his wife, Deborah, a more romantic**

turkeys. He will attach a little bell to a lightening rod that will signal to the couple an impending storm. The tempo is slow with rubato. This is an excellent selection for the college-level singer, with a simple piano accompaniment. As an option, one can begin the scene on p.105 with the C major seven chord that precedes the words, "Surely, Debbie dear!"

T: Letter Arias

40. O: "December seventeenth, Seventeen Sixty-five,"  
"July tenth, Seventeen Sixty-nine"

C: Benjamin Baritone

R: B<sup>b</sup> - f1

LC: Act 2 Scene 1, pp. 140-2, pp. 150-1

CM: These two charming vignettes are too brief to be performed separately; when performed together they create a very effective portrait of Benjamin Franklin's relationship with his wife through letters written during his lengthy sojourns in London and Paris.

In the first aria, Franklin writes of his busy life in London. The tempo is quick and excited. During the second

aria, he reads a letter from an obviously lonely and disappointed wife who informs him of the birth of a grandson named Benjamin. The tempo is moderate. Both scenes are musically connected by the motivic use of an appoggiatura figure that dominates the accompaniments. For a longer offering, the performer should consider these arias as a prelude to the heartrending Dear Child Reprise.

T: Dear Child Reprise

41. O: "It's from me"

C: Benjamin Baritone

R: B<sup>b</sup> - f1

LC: Act 2 scene 1, pp. 166-7

CM: In this poignant scene, Franklin returns home after eight years abroad to discover that his wife, Deborah, has died. As he walks into their home, he finds a letter he had written to his wife eight years earlier lying on her chair. This is the same letter he read in an earlier aria, "December seventeenth, Seventeen sixty-five." In that letter, he had written that he hoped to return home the following May. Crestfallen and alone,

Franklin sings a slow lament to his dead and long-neglected wife. The aria recalls melodies from Franklin's Letter Arias and Deborah's aria, "Dear Child" which take place earlier in the opera.<sup>51</sup> A successful performance demands long legato lines and careful shading of dynamics. Dear Child Reprise is scored for piano and english horn obbligato.

**CUMMINGS, CONRAD (b.1948)**

***Eros and Psyche***

**P: Oberlin Opera Theater (1983)**

**L: Conrad Cummings**

**42. O: "Aha! Eros in love!"**

**C: Apollo, God of War**

**S: Randall Turner**

**V: Baritone**

**R: B<sup>b</sup> - f1**

**PB: Belwin-Mills**

**LC: Act1 Scene 3, pp. 33-9**

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**<sup>51</sup> John Carbon, 1999, e-mail to author, 7 March.**

**N: M1503 C9715 E7**

**RC: AMC Cassette 436-438**

**CM: *Eros and Psyche* was written to be performed by college students for the sesquicentennial of Oberlin College. As such, these arias are an excellent pedagogical resource for studio teachers looking for contemporary operatic repertoire for their students.**

**The composer freely adapted the plot from the work of the second-century Roman author Apuleius and described it “as a metaphor for melding of personal soulful love and erotic love into the same relationship. The opera’s central message is that conflicts which threaten the continuation of life must be resolved.”<sup>52</sup>**

**In this scene, Eros pleads with Apollo to help him woo Psyche, a mortal, with whom he has fallen madly in love. In his aria, Apollo, in a spirited manner, jests about the irony that Eros, who is constantly slinging his arrows at others, must finally succumb to the joys and pains of love himself.**

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**<sup>52</sup> John Harvith, “Interview with Conrad Cummings,” *Oberlin College News*, 24 October 1983, 3.**

The tessitura is accessible to the student singer and the piano part is easy. The composer specifically demands that “all repeats and Da Capos are compulsory.”<sup>53</sup>

43. O: “Zephyr they call me, the one who blows sweet”

C: Zephyr

S: Todd Thomas

V: High Baritone

R:  $d^b - b^b$

LC: Act 2 Scene 1, pp. 1-4

CM: Psyche, alone and depressed, is serenaded by Zephyr, the West Wind. Zephyr offers to spirit her away to his master. The vocal writing is very easy and the tempo is fast. The five note repeated melisma utilized throughout the melody is strikingly reminiscent of the pan-pipe solo in Papageno's aria, “Der Vogelfänger bin ich ja!” from Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*.

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<sup>53</sup> Harvith, “Interview.”

**DAVIS, ANTHONY (b.1951)**

**X**

**P: American Music Theatre Festival (1985)**

**L: Thulani Davis**

**44. O: "I wouldn't tell you what I know"**

**C: Malcolm X**

**S: Avery Brooks**

**V: Baritone**

**R: B - f#1**

**PB: G. Schirmer**

**LC: Act 1, pp. 115-24, A408-A506**

**CM: X, subtitled *The Life and Times of Malcolm X*, explores the relationships and exploits of the famous African American social figure from his youth in Harlem, through his conversion to Islam, and ultimately to his assassination in 1965.**

**Malcolm, who at this point of the opera is Malcolm Little, ends the first act of the opera in prison with a spirited indictment against his white oppressors, who, he believes, "want the truth, but...don't want to know." The tempo is fast,**

with frequent meter changes. The musical style has elements of minimalism, jazz and African influences. K. Robert Schwarz describes Anthony Davis's music in *X* as:

...rhythmic repetition and layering ... the musical equivalent of the violence on the stage. The primacy of the rhythmic pulse and pitch center characterize much of Davis's music, allowing even the most dissonant modern gestures to seem accessible.<sup>54</sup>

The vocal line is chromatic and dissonant. Most of the dramatic progression takes place through the rhythm and the declamation of the text. This aria makes a dramatic and compelling selection for either audition purposes or the concert hall.

45. O: "I have come so far among so many"

C: Malcolm X

R: A<sup>b</sup>- e1

LC: Act 3 Scene 2, pp. 37-45, 433-530

CM: Malcolm visits Mecca, where he converts to Islam and

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<sup>54</sup> K. Robert Schwarz, "Mavericks of Modern Music: Modern Music Takes a Dramatic Turn in the Hands of Young American Composers," *Horizon*, June 1986, 36.

takes a new name, El Hajj Malik el Shabazz, to signify his rebirth. In a stark contrast to his Act 1 aria, Malcolm has made the transition from street criminal to prophetic figure. He states, "I have seen both Black and White men. All bow as one before God. If we could know Allah, we could live in peace." He has formed a larger world view of the struggle for human rights all over the world.

"I have come so far..." is rhapsodic and dreamlike. The accompaniment has a rocking, hypnotic rhythm that evokes an otherworldly quality to Malcolm's ruminations about the possibilities for peace. Due to the *ostinati* prevalent throughout, a performance requires excellent concentration on the part of the singer for entrances and difficult rhythms. Pitch recognition is also a problem as the harmony is relatively static. The tessitura is medium to low for the baritone voice, and the performer must have good access to an A<sup>b</sup>. According to the composer, both these arias may be performed by anyone for concert purposes. There are no racial

limitations.<sup>55</sup>

**EPSTEIN, SOLOMON (b.1939)**

***The Wild Boy***

**P: Philadelphia College of the Performing Arts (1986)**

**L: Solomon Epstein**

**46. O: "How strange he is to me still"**

**C: Dr. Jean-Marc Itard**

**V: High baritone**

**R: c - g1**

**LC: pp. 9-23**

**N: M1503 E6458 W6**

**CM: Solomon Epstein's one-act opera is based on the actual case history of a boy, abandoned as an infant, found running wild and naked in the woods outside Aveyron around 1800. It explores the relationship of the boy to his teacher, Dr. Jean-Marc Itard, who seeks to educate and civilize the boy. In a long soliloquy, Dr. Itard questions whether the boy would not have been better served remaining in the wild. Is civilized society**

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**<sup>55</sup> Anthony Davis, 1999, e-mail to author, 15 July.**

truly a better life for this child? Dr. Itard decides to proceed with his efforts to “unlock [the boy’s] mind.”

This dramatic scene is tonal, but dissonant. The tessitura is very high, lying consistently between c1 and g1. The accompaniment is very orchestral and difficult. The tempo is moderate. A suggested ending would be on p. 23, bottom score, 4th measure, playing the b1 to a1 slur in the right hand while holding the f#1 with the left hand.

**FLOYD, CARLISLE (b.1926)**

***Willie Stark***

**P: Houston Grand Opera (1981)**

**L: Carlisle Floyd**

**47. O: “Once upon a time on a cold winter night”**

**C: Willie Stark, Governor**

**S: Timothy Nolen**

**V: Baritone**

**R: c - f1**

**PB: Belwin-Mills**

**LC: Act 1 Scene 2, pp. 51-6**

**CM: Adapted from the novel *All the King's Men* by Robert Penn Warren, *Willie Stark* tells the story of a man who rises from his humble origins to become governor of a southern state. A populist, Willie makes enemies of the political and social establishment along the way to his powerful position. Willie soon finds himself facing impeachment. Supported by his advisors, Sadie Burke and Jack Burden, who believe in his populist ideals, Willie sets out to head off impeachment through any means available.**

**As the opera opens, Willie confronts two legislators with incriminating evidence of wrong-doing. He offers to suppress this material in exchange for their votes against impeachment. These legislators warn Willie that Judge Burden, the father of his aide Jack, supports the impeachment and refuses to be strong-armed by Willie's tactics. Willie immediately decides to visit the judge in order to dissuade him from endorsing the impeachment proceedings.**

**In scene 2, Willie forces his way into the Judge's home. When the Judge says that he will never support Willie and**

disapproves of his manipulation of the legal system, Willie launches into a parable about three men in a double bed who must share a blanket that can only cover one of them. “The law is like a single bed blanket...We gotta keep stretchin’ that blanket, Judge, to keep more people warm.” “Once upon a time...” is written in a blues idiom that accentuates the difference in class and culture between the Judge and Willie. The piano accompaniment is easy to moderate in difficulty, and the singer should add a bit of edge to his tone to create a contrast with lazy blues rhythm.

48. O: “I sure like your mouth organ, son”

C: Willie Stark

R: B - f#1

LC: Act 1 Scene 3, pp. 22-9

CM: Later that evening Willie returns to his hometown and, on the courthouse steps, rallies a crowd for support against impeachment. In the midst of this frenzy, Willie notices a young boy with a harmonica. Immediately, he recalls his childhood. Willie’s mood is reflective and elegiac. He tells the

stunned crowd that “deep in his soul I am homesick... For a self I left behind when wandered abroad.” The music is tonal but constantly changing in key and meter, perhaps reflecting a soul adrift. After the opening recitative, the vocal range begins to climb and the tessitura is high for the last half of the aria. The piano part is moderate to difficult because of the many accidentals, along with constant changes in tempo and meter.

49. O: “Come back, Willie, come back home”

C: Willie Stark

R: B - a1

LC: Act 1 Scene 3, pp. 35-7

CM: “Come back, Willie, come back home” is a continuation of Stark’s yearning for his past. It can stand on its own as an aria or be combined with the intervening material to be sung with “I sure like your mouth organ, son.” This lyrical interlude in the midst of a political rally reflects the inner turmoil between the idealistic politician of Willie’s youth and the jaded and corrupted governor he has now become. Floyd states

that he writes in “a conservative idiom...it is where [his] musical sympathies obviously lie.”<sup>56</sup> The accompaniment is easy and the vocal line is haunting and beautiful. The singer needs to have a secure a1 in his range as it is approached by a leap, and needs to be sung *forte* .

50. O: “Jack, you know why I keep Duffy around?”

C: Willie Stark

R: A# - g1

LC: Act 2 Scene 1, pp. 13-20

CM: Willie learns from his unscrupulous and opportunistic Lieutenant-Governor, Duffy, that Judge Burden accepted a bribe many years ago in return for dismissing a case against a large corporation. Willie gives an incriminating letter to Jack, who angrily defends his father’s innocence. Willie then interrupts Jack to give him a lesson on the absence of morality in the political world. He tells Jack a story about Duffy. Willie relates how years earlier Duffy manipulated him into entering

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<sup>56</sup> Scott Heumann, “The Trial of Willie Stark,” *Opera News* 45, no.18 (11 April 1981): 11.

a race he could not win in order to “split the redneck vote.” When he won the race for Governor a few years later he hired Duffy to remind himself that “those big city boys [are] long on greed an’ short on ideals, an’ they’re infinitely adaptable.”

This scene shows the darker, more paranoid side of Willie. The singer must utilize *Sprechstimme* and a wide tessitura. The tempo indication is *allegro non troppo e deciso*. The piano part is difficult because it contains many accidentals and orchestral gestures.

51. O: “No, the letter is true”

C: Judge Courtney Burden

S: Don Garret

V: Bass-Baritone

R: A<sup>#</sup> - g<sup>b1</sup>

LC: Act 3 Scene 1, pp. 15-21

CM: Jack confronts his father with an incriminating letter and asks him to defend himself. The Judge sadly acknowledges to his son that he took the bribe in a moment of weakness, but that he has atoned for his sin with a lifetime of public service.

Jack is unmoved by his father's admission and demands that the Judge retract his support for Willie's impeachment or else he will publish the letter. The Judge refuses to yield his principles. After Jack leaves him, he takes a pistol from his desk and shoots himself. This aria has a high tessitura for the bass voice. The aria begins slowly and quickens with desperate pleading by the Judge. The spectrum of dramatic expression incorporates shame, anger, self-justification, and ultimately defeat.

52. O: "I stand before you triumphant!"

C: Willie Stark

R: c - g1

LC: Act 3 Scene 3, pp. 16-22

CM: Willies survives the legislature's attempt to impeach him. Standing before his supporters on the steps of the state capital he makes an impassioned speech pledging further social reforms and vowing to wreak vengeance upon his political rivals. As Willie revels in his power, Jack Burden emerges from the shadows to assassinate him.

A modified ABA form, "I stand before you triumphant!" contrasts the ruthless and gloating Willie of the outer sections with the caring, populist Willie who attends to the needs of his flock in the middle section. The tempo is *andante risoluto assai*. The tessitura is very high, and the high dramatic pitch of the scene demands a great deal of vocal stamina.

FUNK, ERIC (b.1949)

*Pamelia*

P: Billings Symphony Orchestra (1989)

L: Linda Peavy and Ursala Smith

53. O: "Courage my friend"

C: James Fergus

S: Pablo Elvira

V: Baritone

R: G - g<sup>b</sup>1

LC: Act 1 Scene 1, pp. 3-6

N: M1500 F9818 P2

CM: *Pamelia* outlines the true story of the Fergus family

which survives hardship and separation to move west and settles in the mining town of Virginia City, Montana.

James Fergus decides that he must leave his family and strikes out west to seek his fortune in gold. In “Courage my friend,” James summons the nerve to inform his strong-willed wife, Pamela, that he will soon abandon her, their children and their family business in search of gold and riches.<sup>57</sup>

The lyrical melody features extreme registers. The f1’s and g<sup>b</sup>1’s, of which there are many, are mainly approached through large leaps (eg. octaves and ninths). The low G’s occur a cappella or over a lightly textured accompaniment. The final g<sup>b</sup> may be sung up an octave for dramatic effect as it was performed in the original production.<sup>58</sup> The piano reduction is quite simple, but should bring out the anxious heartbeat motive

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<sup>57</sup> The composer explains that his view of the role of James Fergus was somewhat different from the librettists. The librettists felt that Fergus was a “chauvinist pig.” Eric Funk feels that the Fergus’ marriage reflected the social norm of the times and he therefore “painted him musically as strong and sincere.” Eric Funk, 1999, e-mail to author, 28 June.

<sup>58</sup> Funk, e-mail.

of the original timpani which plays a quarter note pulse throughout the aria.

54. O: "Farewell my children, dear"

C: James Fergus

R: B<sup>b</sup> - f1

LC: Act 1 Scene 2, pp. 28-30

CM: After James confronts his wife with the news of his departure, he gathers his family together to present them with a gift in the form of a poem he has composed justifying his pending departure. Funk writes, "the nature of the Farewell aria (which are actually words the real-life Fergus penned to his wife) is like a Scottish ballad, the melody quite folklike, excepting perhaps the enormous, expressive leaps."<sup>59</sup> This tender scene again explores the wide spectrum of the baritone range with very large leaps crossing vocal registers. An excellent selection for auditions or concerts, this aria features a pianissimo f1 as part of its final cadence.

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<sup>59</sup> Funk, e-mail.

55. O: "They'll never understand"

C: James Fergus

R: A<sup>b</sup> - f1

LC: Act 3 Scene 1, pp. 111-113

CM: Fergus has already sent word for Pamela and his children to join him in Virginia City. The other miners have just learned of a big strike in Prickly Pear and make plans to leave even as their wives come to join them in Virginia City. The miners complain that "...they should leave all the wives back east. They'll never understand..." the life of a gold miner. Fergus reflects upon their words and suggests that wives "will never understand the way an earnest man can lose himself while looking for gold." He swears that he will not leave Pamela again "for all the gold beneath the mountain," a vow he will break soon after Pamela and his family arrive to join him. At the end of the opera, Fergus tells Pamela that he must continue to pursue his dreams at Prickly Pear. Much of the musical material for the aria is derived from the miners' chorus that precedes it. Pablo Elvira employed a *fermata* on the f1 in the first score, last measure of p. 112 to great effect

in his performance.<sup>60</sup>

**GARWOOD, MARGARET (b.1927)**

***Rappacini's Daughter***

**P: Pennsylvania Opera Theater (1983)**

**L: Margaret Garwood**

**56. O: "Yes, daughter, soon there will come to the garden"**

**C: Rappacini, a scientist**

**V: Bass-Baritone**

**S: Ralph Bassett**

**R: c(A) - f#1**

**LC: Act 1 Scene 1, pp. 48-51**

**N: M1503 G245 R2**

**RC: AMC Cassette 390-391**

**CM: This story by Nathaniel Hawthorne inspired at least five different operatic adaptations during the 1980's.<sup>61</sup> Rappacini,**

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<sup>60</sup> Pablo Elvira, personal interview, Whitefish, MT, 2 August 1998.

<sup>61</sup> The composers of the other four operas were: Michael Cohen (1983), Dennis Riley (1984), Sam Dennison (1985), and Robert Mitchell (1985). Rich, *Directory*, 295.

a botanist, has nurtured his daughter on poisons since birth as a scientific experiment to create perfect beings. In this soliloquy, he reveals his intentions. "For it is I Rappacini, I, alone with the power of science over the evil of man," he sings. The aria is slow and lyrical using a conservative harmonic language that evokes the music of Debussy and Ravel. Although written for a bass-baritone, the tessitura is relatively high and the singer must be able to produce easy f1's, and an f#1.

**GETTY, GORDON (b. 1933)**

***Plump Jack***

**P: San Francisco Symphony Orchestra (1987)**

**L: William Shakespeare**

**57. O: "My lord, the man I know"**

**C: Sir John Falstaff**

**S: John Del Carlo**

**V: Baritone or Bass**

**R: B - e#1**

**PB: Rork Music (Theodore Presser)<sup>62</sup>**

**LC: Act 1 Scene 4**

**CM: Taken from Shakespeare's *Henry IV, Part 1*, Act II, Scene 4, Falstaff strikes out in defiance against those who plot against him and those who make fun of his portliness, old age, and accuse him of being a "whoremaster." Falstaff sings to Prince Hal in his own defense, "banish not him thy Harry's company, banish Plump Jack, and banish the world."**

**This aria reflects the pompous, paranoid and extreme emotionality of Sir John Falstaff. Getty describes the character thus:**

**Falstaff in adversity is irresistible. His outbursts are as true as they are preposterous. We know just how he feels. He is Everyman magnified by comic genius...He cannot stop acting, even in his soliloquies. He is a man too ebullient, too full of life to suspend the game.<sup>63</sup>**

**Getty employs many changes in tempo dynamics and texture that illuminate Falstaff's improvisational personality.**

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**62 This aria is published separately by Rork Music, which is a subsidiary of Theodore Presser.**

**63 Gordon Getty, "Some Ideas on Casting and Interpretation," *Plump Jack: Libretto* (San Francisco: Rork Music, 1985), iv.**

The piano accompaniment is generally very symphonic, dominated by tremolos.

**GOLDSTEIN, LEE (1952-1990)**

***The Fan***

**P: Chicago Lyric Opera Center for American Artists (1989)**

**L: Charles Kondek**

**58. O: "Evarist. What has he and why to do with all of this?"**

**C: Crispino**

**S: Gary Lehman**

**V: Baritone**

**R: G# - f#1**

**PB: Lyric Opera of Chicago music library**

**LC: Act 2, pp. 38-45, 382-460**

**CM: *The Fan* is a comic opera in two acts based on the farce *Il Ventaglio* by the 18th-century playwright Carlo Goldoni. The plot revolves around a misplaced broken fan and 11 characters whose love affairs become equally misplaced in the ensuing action.**

**The farce begins with Evarist, who replaces a broken fan**

with a new fan for his lover, Candida. Evarist gives the new fan to Nina to return to Candida. Crispino is in love with Nina. Then because Crispino spies Evarist giving the fan to Nina, Crispino now suspects that Nina loves Evarist. In this aria, Crispino declares that even if Nina is guilty he will continue to love her.

There are many wide leaps and octave displacements in the vocal line that recall the music of Richard Strauss. John Von Rhein feels the music "acknowledges neoclassic Stravinsky as well as ...musical comedy."<sup>64</sup> The tempo is moderate. Although scored for the baritone voice, the part is written in the treble clef.

**HAGEMANN, PHILIP (b.1932)**

***The Aspern Papers***

**P: Ragland Opera Theater, Evanston, IL (1988)**

**L: Philip Hagemann**

**59. O: "Jeffrey Aspern is my God!"**

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<sup>64</sup> John von Rhein, "Goldstein: The Fan," *Opera News* 54, no.4 (October 1989): 47.

**C: Henry Jonson, American literary critic**

**V: Baritone**

**R: c - g1**

**LC: Act 1 Scene1, pp. 5-12, 73-167**

**N: M1503 H142 A8 1988**

**CM: Hagemann's libretto follows the Henry James novella more closely than Dominick Argento's opera of the same name, which also premiered in 1988. This aria occurs in the beginning of the opera and serves to set up the story. There are two characters in the scene, Henry Jonson, an American literary critic in his 30's, and John Cumnor, an English literary critic. Jonson tells Cumnor of his passion for Aspern's works, whom he calls an "American Byron." Jonson has discovered that the "Julianna" of Aspern's sonnets is still alive and he is determined to discover whatever secrets she may hold to the life and work of Jeffrey Aspern.**

**The aria's tessitura is high, and the musical style is tonal and conservative. The tempo is *andante*. Because much of the background to the story is imparted in this aria, clear diction is a necessity. This is an excellent selection for the college**

student who has an easy access to his upper range.

**HARPER, WILLIAM (b.1949)**

***Snow Leopard***

**P: Minnesota Opera (1989)**

**L: Roger Nieboer**

**60. O: "As you fly across the open sky"**

**C: Potter**

**V: Baritone**

**S: Stephen Kalm**

**R: F - f1 (optional a<sup>b1</sup>)**

**PB: The Great Blue Heron Corporation**

**LC: Act 1 Scene 1, pp. 16-22, 86-169**

**CM: Harper and Nieboer's opera deals with the issues of death, spirituality and redemption. It tells the tale of a powerful American official, The Man, who makes a decision to build a dam in Tibet that will effectively destroy the ecosystem and livelihood of the Tibetans who live near it. A political and public relations disaster ensues in which The Man becomes the victim. He commits suicide and then is guided by a Potter, a**

Virgil-like figure, through demons of his past in a quest for ultimate redemption and salvation.

*Snow Leopard* takes its name from Peter Matthiessen's 1978 memoir of his journey and spiritual odyssey through Tibet. William Harper describes the opera as an "American Book of the Dead," and claims *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* as a source material for the work. Another influence for the character of The Man was Robert McFarlane, President Reagan's former National Security Advisor, who attempted suicide in 1987.<sup>65</sup>

The Potter's aria is addressed to The Man, who is impervious to the destruction of a world outside his own. It is part prophecy, "And now it's time to face the end of everything you know," and part curse, "The river will roll you away, to an empty house." William Harper writes in a style that combines a Rock idiom with Baroque forms, eg., a rap fugue. In the opera, the aria is sung over a women's backup group of 3 angels which can be added in a concert situation. An optional a<sup>b1</sup> can

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<sup>65</sup> William Harper, 1999, e-mail to the author, 15 June.

be interpolated in the second verse on the text "face the end"  
by singing up an octave from the written pitches.

HENDERSON, ALVA (b.1940)

*Achilles*

P: (1980)<sup>66</sup>

L: Richard Freis

61. O: "The day will come when civil Troy will fall"

C: Hector

S: Peter Van Derick

V: Baritone (light)

R: B<sup>#</sup> - g1

PB: University of California, Berkeley<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Although there has not been a production of this opera, these two arias have been included in this guide due to the quality of the music and the accessibility of score and tape for the performer.

<sup>67</sup> The library call number is M1508.H39.A2 1980.

**LC: Act 2 Scene 1, pp. 29-47<sup>68</sup>**

**RC: Composer c/o Corbett Arts Management**

**CM: Based on The *Iliad* of Homer, the opera focuses on the life and exploits of Achilles, the Greek champion of the Trojan war. Achilles, in the opera, is treated as a somewhat ambiguous character who exhibits “an absoluteness, both in generosity and ruthlessness.”<sup>69</sup>**

**This scene involves Hector, the Trojan champion, and his wife, Andromache. On leave from the battlefield, Hector comes upon his wife singing a lullaby to his infant son. Andromache implores Hector not to return to the battlefield because she has lost so many loved ones. Hector tells her that he must return for the sake of his family and Troy. He picks up his son and prays for the future. The aria is divided into two sections. The first section is urgent and restless; the second**

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**<sup>68</sup> The composer has recently condensed the opera into two acts and in its present configuration this aria would take place in Act 1 Scene 4. The older designation is adhered to in this guide as it conforms to the score found at UC Berkeley. Alva Henderson, 1999, telephone conversation with the author, 18 July.**

**<sup>69</sup> Alva Henderson, 1999, letter to author, 15 July.**

section is lyrical and restrained. The music is tonal and romantic, with the melody line often doubled in the accompaniment. The tessitura is high, and the accompaniment is difficult and orchestral.

62. O: "Drowned in the serene abyss of sleep"

C: Patroclus

S: Michael Matthews

V: Baritone

R: B - g<sup>b1</sup>

LC: Act 3 scene 3, pp. 67-81

CM: Hector slays Patroclus, the best friend of Achilles. In a fit of rage, Achilles swears that he will refrain from food, drink, sleep and all earthly pleasures until he has avenged his friend's death. Achilles kills Hector, ties his body to a chariot, and drags it around the Trojan city of Ilios. Later that night, Patroclus appears to Achilles in a dream. He predicts Achilles' imminent death and requests that their ashes be placed together in the same urn.

The aria is slow and lyrical, and requires excellent legato

singing. Long vocal lines demand outstanding breath control. The vocal range is wide involving many large leaps. The aria ends decisively in B<sup>b</sup> Major on the first beat of p. 80. At that point, the pianist should double the bass with a low octave B<sup>b</sup> in the left hand for maximum dramatic effect.<sup>70</sup>

***West of Washington Square***

**P: Opera San Jose (1988)**

**L: Janet Lewis**

**63. O: "She left suddenly"**

**C: Paul**

**S: Douglas Nagel**

**V: Baritone**

**R: c<sup>b</sup> - f<sup>#</sup>1**

**PB: Composer c/o Corbett Arts Management**

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<sup>70</sup> Henderson, letter.

LC: Part 2,<sup>71</sup> pp. 24-39

RC: Composer c/o Corbett Arts Management

CM: Adapted from the O'Henry story *The Room Across the Hall*, the setting is the Villa Vallombrosa in Greenwich Village, circa 1905. Paul is a new tenant at the Villa Vallombrosa. He has come there in search of his beloved Anna who has recently left him during a lover's spat. As he looks at his room, empty of anything save an onion, Paul muses on his attempts to find Anna and declares his love for her.

The aria moves between recitative and soaring lyrical passages. The many changes in tempo reflect Paul's thought process as it passes through stages of observation, memory, fantasy, and finally self-realization in his search for his beloved Anna.

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<sup>71</sup> *West of Washington Square* is divided into two parts. Part One is adapted from "The Last Leaf" and Part Two is based on "The Room Across the Hall." Both stories are by O'Henry. The two parts share only one character, Mrs. O'Gara, the landlady.

HOIBY, LEE (b.1926)

***The Tempest***

**P: Des Moines Metro Opera (1986)**

**L: Mark Shulgasser**

**64. O: "Here's neither bush nor shrub"**

**C: Trinculo, a jester**

**S: Edward Bogusz**

**V: Baritone**

**R: B<sup>b</sup> - f1 (c2 falsetto)**

**PB: G. Schirmer, Inc.**

**LC: Act 1 Scene 3, pp. 95-99, 1114-1181**

**N: M1503 H719 T2**

**CM: The libretto follows the Shakespeare play. Prospero, the former Duke of Naples, and his daughter Miranda have lived on a deserted island ever since being cast out to sea by his brother Antonio and Alonso, the King of Naples. Prospero, along with the spirit Ariel, casts a spell on his enemies, which results in a shipwreck. Two of Alonso's servants, Trinculo, the court jester, and Stephano, the ship's butler, float to shore on a keg of wine. On the island they meet Caliban, a man-fish, enslaved**

by Prospero, who is hiding from his master under a giant tarpaulin.

“Here’s neither a shrub nor bush” is Trinculo’s drunken encounter with Caliban. Looking at Caliban, Trinculo exclaims, “This is no fish, but an islander that has lately suffered by a thunderbolt.” Caught in a thunderstorm, he decides to join Caliban under his tarpaulin because, “Misery acquaints a man with strange bedfellows.”

This aria is an excellent audition selection for a character baritone. Hoiby compliments the rich text with many vocal effects, e.g, *falseto*, *parlando*, and *glissandi*. The tempo is marked *moderato*. The difficult piano accompaniment as well has many ornaments, such as trills, turns and other orchestral effects that illuminate the physical and emotional environment of a confused and drunken man stumbling around in a thunderstorm.

65. O: “Be cheerful, sir”

C: Prospero, the rightful Duke of Milan; a magician

S: Peter Van Derick

**V: Bass-Baritone**

**R: F# - e<sup>b1</sup>**

**LC: Act 3 Scene 1, pp. 268-71, 579-636**

**CM: Prospero summons his magic to present a masque to the young lovers, Miranda, his daughter, and Ferdinand, Alonso's son. Ferdinand finds the masque confusing, and Prospero reassures him that all is well. "We are such stuff," Prospero explains, "as dreams are made on, and our little life is rounded with sleep." At this point, Prospero unites the two lovers and blesses them.**

**The musical idiom is tonal and conservative with many of the singer's pitches supported in the accompaniment. John McCauley aptly describes the composer's musical style:**

**In *The Tempest* the climate is appropriately stormy, sunny, joyful, or eerie, depending on the qualities called for by Shakespeare. Though there are plenty of moments of harmonic acerbity and dissonance...the prevailing musical atmosphere is sweetly harmonious.<sup>72</sup>**

**Excellent legato and secure low notes are required throughout.**

**The tempo is *andante*. The rhythms are simple, but the singer**

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**<sup>72</sup> John McCauley, "The Tempest: Opera in Three Acts," *Notes* 53, no.1 (September 1996): 292.**

must focus on correct inflection of the text in order to bring out the beauty of this rich language.

66. O: "Ye elves of hills"

C: Prospero, the rightful Duke of Milan; a magician

R: B<sup>b</sup> - g<sup>b</sup>1 (optional e<sup>b</sup>1)

LC: Act 3 Scene 2, pp. 274-82, 745-881

CM: Prospero sends Ariel to release those who have plotted against him so he may forgive them in person. He revels in his powers, "I have bedimmed the noon-tide sun, called forth the mutinous winds and twixt the green sea and the azure vault set roaring war." But as he will soon return to Milan, Prospero decides that he will give up his magical powers. "I will break my staff, bury it certain fathoms in the earth," he vows, "and deeper than did ever plummet sound I'll drown my book."

The aria is built on a four-measure *passacaglia*. The descending ground adds a rich layer of loss and regret to

Prospero's speech.<sup>73</sup> The lament is momentarily interrupted by a *più mosso* section, where Prospero appears to revel one last time in the powers of his magic, only to return to an *allargando*, where he decides to forsake his powers.

HOLLISTER, DAVID (b.1929)

***A Change of Hearts***

P: Medicine Show Theatre Ensemble (1985)

L: Kenneth Koch

67. O: "Ah, in my work of changing hearts"

C: Barratag Harmeg, a great heart surgeon

V: Bass-Baritone

R: A<sup>#</sup> - f<sup>#</sup>1

PB: Rebus Music

LC: Scene 6, pp. 27-32

N: M1503 H744 C4

CM: A one-act opera, *A Change of Hearts* centers around a

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<sup>73</sup> For an explanation of this musical metaphor, see: Ellen Rosand, "The Descending Tetrachord: An Emblem of Lament," *The Musical Quarterly* 65 (1979): 346-59.

transplant operation, where, as a mad experiment, the heart of a University president, Ditmore, is deliberately exchanged with the heart of a student protester, Billy. Barratag Harmeg, while operating, muses on why he is “so interested in changing one thing for another.” He worries about the psychological and sociological consequences of his actions. Indeed, the exchange of hearts fosters profound changes in both Ditmore and Billy. They take on each others personalities.

Written in a neo-baroque idiom, the aria’s texture is completely homophonic. Harmeg’s first two phrases are musical quotations from the vocal melody of Dido’s *Lament*. The tessitura is moderate and the piano accompaniment easy. The tempo is slow. The performer’s greatest challenge lies in creating a legato line out of the syllabic setting of the text.

68. O: “A strange unknown fact”

C: Barratag Harmeg

R: B - g1

LC: Scene 14, pp. 67-71

CM: In the final scene of the opera, Harmeg, many heart

transplants later, finds Billy, the student, and Lindy, Billy's girlfriend, unconscious on his operating table. Harmeg leaves Billy alone, rips his own heart out and places it in Lindy's chest. Harmeg dies. Billy and Lindy awaken. Though Billy professes love, Lindy rejects him, for, with Harmeg's heart, she is now dedicated to science. Lindy then operates and inserts her old heart into Harmeg's body. Harmeg, resurrected, realizes what Lindy has done, and asks her to marry him. The whole sequence of events is predicated on the "strange, unknown fact that the body has consciousness and can perfectly well act out a routine performance...for eight long minutes after the fact of death." The tempo is slow and accompaniment easy. This singular aria, perhaps the only one ever written as man performs heart surgery on himself, demands a high tessitura. The singer is often challenged with large leaps between vocal registers.

**KROUSE, IAN (b.1956)**

***Lorca - Child of the Moon***

**P: Bilingual Foundation of the Arts, Los Angeles, CA (1987)**

**L: Carmen Zapata and Michael Dewell**

**69. O: "Gone forever are the gypsies"**

**C: Federico Garcia Lorca**

**V: Baritone**

**R: d<sup>b</sup> - a<sup>b</sup>1**

**LC: Act 1 Scene 3, pp. 40-44**

**N: M1503 K937 L8**

**CM: The opera is inspired by the works of Garcia Lorca. Lorca appears as both narrator and protagonist. In this aria, Lorca sings of a carefree way of life that no longer exists. The tessitura is very high, the style is tonal and chromatic. The tempo is slow. The piano accompaniment reflects the unusual orchestration of flamenco guitars, harp and strings. This is a short song which would do well in concert especially with one or two of the other selections from this opera.**

**T: Ballad of the Spanish Civil Guard**

**70. O: "Black! Horses! The shoes on their hooves are black, all black"**

**C: Federico Garcia Lorca**

R: G - e1

LC: pp. 81-91

CM: In this dramatic scene, Lorca vividly describes the violent soldiers who attack the *ciudad de los gitanos*, the “city of the gypsies.” The ballad is labeled a *Saeta*, a religious song for Holy Week. Fast and spirited, this aria presents rhythmic challenges of changing meters and Spanish flamenco rhythms. The singer must also employ such vocal effects as *parlando*, whispering and spoken text. The piano accompaniment is difficult and should incorporate the choral part for the last ten measures to keep the aria energized to the end of the scene.

T: Lorca's Soliloquy

71. O: “All that matters is your arms”

C: Federico Garcia Lorca

R: e - d1

LC: pp. 284-88

CM: Lorca sits at a desk as if composing, and sings this brief, simple love song: “The flower is a tiny whirlpool...And now the moon no longer matters! All that matters is your arms - When

you hold me in the night!" The composer asks, if possible, for the singer to play one of the guitar parts along with the piano. The aria is marked *tempo di Zorongo*, a moderately-paced flamenco dance in 3/4 with folkloric roots. This aria serves as an excellent introduction to the Spanish style for the beginning singer.

**LEGG, JAMES (b. 1962)**

***The Wife of Bath's Tale***

**P: Aspen Music Festival (1986)**

**L: James Legg and Melvin Freedman**

**72. O: "It is with sad and somber tones"**

**C: The King**

**S: Spencer Mason**

**V: Bass-Baritone**

**R: A<sup>#</sup> - f1**

**LC: Act 1 Scene 2, pp. 25-30**

**N: M1503 L513 W6**

**RC: AMC Cassette 1316**

**CM: Adapted from *The Canterbury Tales* of Geoffrey Chaucer,**

*The Wife of Bath's Tale* is a one-act moralistic fairy tale that tells the story of a young Knight condemned to death for wooing the King's daughter. The Princess begs her father for mercy for the Knight, and the King offers him a year and a day to answer a riddle in exchange for his life. On his last day, the Knight meets an old woman who promises him the answer in exchange for one wish he must grant sometime later. The next day, his life is spared, and in front of the royal court, the old woman demands that the Knight marry her. He objects, but the King commands the wedding begin at once. After the ceremony, the Knight storms out of the palace followed by his bride. The old woman follows and apprehends the Knight, explaining to him the true value of virtue and chivalry. Won over by her arguments, the Knight kisses her. The old woman then removes her disguise and reveals herself as the princess.

“It is with sad and somber tones” is the King’s condemnation aria with which he sentences the Knight to death. The idiom is tonal and dissonant with constantly changing meters. The King must sing with a “suppressed rage” over a moderate to difficult accompaniment.

73. O: "Must you play so sad a song?"

C: Knight

S: Earl Simmons

V: Baritone

R: B - e<sup>b</sup>1

LC: Act 1 Scene 4, pp. 80-3

CM: As he lies sprawled and dejected in the forest on the last day of his quest for the answer to the riddle, the Knight asks his Squire to play a cheerful song. The aria is lyrical and pensive and requires a keen sense of rhythm and rubato, as the composer asks for many ritards and changes of tempo.

MAYER, WILLIAM (b.1925)

*A Death in the Family*

P: Minnesota Opera Company (1983)

L: William Mayer

74. O: "Gone! The mountains, the shady hills with gray and blue shadows"

C: Jay

**S: James E. McKeel Jr.**

**V: Baritone**

**R: G# - f1**

**PB: Music Associates of America**

**LC: Act 1 Scene 2, pp. 38-42**

**N: \*M1503 M468 D32 v.1**

**RC: AMC Cassette 1917-1918**

**CM: *A Death in the Family*, based on the James Agee novel of the same name, as well as on Tad Mosel's play, *All the Way Home*, explores the influence of memories and dreams on the reality of the present and future. Jay and his wife, Mary, are expecting a child. They are at odds as to how to break the news to their son, Rufus. In addition, Jay is an alcoholic, which complicates the family dynamic.**

**In this scene, Jay has taken his young son to a bar where they are suddenly confronted by Temperance Ladies. As Jay returns home, he yearns for his childhood days in the mountains of Tennessee and cries out, "My home, my only home beyond the hills...Real country, old country, deep country." He is also comforted by the memory of his mother. The tempo is**

moderate. The tessitura is wide-ranging and has several large leaps between registers. The accompaniment is difficult and orchestral. In this aria, which merges past with present, the singer must present the character's anguish and longing in a wistful tone.

75. O: "Ev'ry time the sun goes down"

C: Jay

R: G(g) - g1

LC: Act 2 Scene 1, pp. 167-73

RC: Albany Records - Troy 068<sup>74</sup>

CM: Jay sings a lullaby to comfort his son, Rufus, who suffers from nightmares. The scene begins with a recitative where Jay brings Rufus a stuffed animal named Jackie in order to stop his son's crying. When that fails to calm Rufus, he sings a folk song: "Ev'rytime the sun goes down, 'nother dollar made for

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<sup>74</sup> The aria is excerpted from the opera for this recording. The singer is James McKeel. The recording is titled *Voices From Lost Realms*.

Betsy Brown, Sugar Babe.”<sup>75</sup> The musical accents of the original melody have all been displaced in order to create a more surreal setting.<sup>76</sup> The tempo is slow. The tessitura is high, but the composer has provided alternate pitches. In the middle of the aria, there are a few measures of a cappella chorus, between rehearsal numbers 185 and 186, that might best be omitted to give a smooth continuity to the scene.

76. O: “Scuse me ladies”<sup>77</sup>

C: Ralph

R: B - g<sup>b</sup>1

PB: c/o composer

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<sup>75</sup> James Agee’s sister sang the song for the composer while he was researching the opera. According to the sister, the folk song was a childhood favorite of Agee’s. William Mayer, 1999, phone interview with author, 13 July.

<sup>76</sup> Mayer, interview.

<sup>77</sup> Ralph’s aria was not included in the original production, and thus is unpublished. The aria will be included in a new production of the opera to be mounted by the Manhattan School of Music Opera Theater during their 1999-2000 season. William Mayer, 1999, letter to author, July 3.

**LC: Act 2 Scene 2, pp. 1-15**

**CM: Ralph, Jay's alcoholic brother, sneaks outside his father's house to have a drink. Finding the flask empty, Ralph slams his head against the wall of the house in frustration and knocks himself out. At this point, Ralph becomes the main character in his own fantasy. He hears voices from his past. He sees his wife, Sally, seducing his brother, Jay, and recognizes himself as the object of ridicule for his entire family. Ralph cries, "God, I'm weak...a sobbing pillow of a man who acts big because he knows he's small inside."**

**This intense dramatic scene details the self-revelation of a hopeless drunk. The aria ends with Ralph pounding his fist into his hand at quarter-note intervals. The tempo is moderate. Mayer suggests the following cuts when the scene is performed as an aria:**

**The singer should start [at] the 3rd system, bar 2 [of the first page]. The singer should then go from the end of the 2nd system on page 4 directly to the bottom system of page 11 where Ralph sings, "God, I'm weak." End [the aria] on the 2nd system, 3rd bar of page 15.<sup>78</sup>**

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**<sup>78</sup> William Mayer, letter.**

**MECHEM, KIRKE (b.1925)**

***Tartuffe***

**P: Western Opera Theater (1980)**

**L: Kirke Mechem**

**77. O: "That man's a saint"**

**C: Orgon, a wealthy Parisian**

**S: Thomas Hammons**

**V: Bass**

**R: G - d1**

**PB: G. Schirmer, Inc.**

**LC: Act 1, pp. 44-50**

**N: \*M1503 M486 T22**

**RC: AMC Cassette 232-233**

**CM: Based on the comedy of Moliere, *Tartuffe* takes place in 17th-century Paris. Orgon, a wealthy Parisian, has fallen under the spell of Tartuffe, a self-appointed "holy man," and brings him into his home as a guest. Despite the fact that Orgon has previously promised his daughter, Mariane, that she may marry her beloved, Valere, Orgon now decrees that she will marry Tartuffe.**

In "That man's a saint," Orgon describes Tartuffe to his skeptical family as pious, destitute, and so selfless that when given charity he would "cry too much by half and share it with the poor." Written in a musical style that parodies church hymns, the composer explains:

...when composing Orgon's first aria I wanted to mock the stereotypes of operatic religiosity in the same way that Moliere ridiculed the tone of Orgon's newly-found sanctimony.<sup>79</sup>

Solemn and lyrical, this aria needs a warm legato line. The musical language is tonal, and the rhythm is not complex. The tessitura and piano part are both moderately difficult. The aria should begin with the held trill that precedes the *più mosso* a measure before the singer enters.

78. O: "The love of heav'nly virtue cannot cancel earthly love"

C: Tartuffe, a hypocrite

S: John Del Carlo

V: Baritone

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<sup>79</sup> Kirke Mechem, "Tartuffe and Musical Humor," *Tartuffe: Comic Opera in Three Acts - Libretto* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1980), 3.

**R: A# - g1**

**LC: Act 2, pp. 172-88**

**CM: Tartuffe, not satisfied to have just the daughter, propositions Orgon's wife, Elmire, as well. Initially, Tartuffe employs pious symbolism to woo Elmire. "Alleluia, Hosanna, sings my heart a hundred ways as it beholds in you the fairest goddess in all God's Passion Plays." He justifies his behavior by reasoning, "I'm not an angel after all, and even angels have been known to fall." She reproaches him for his advances. Counters Tartuffe, "You're far too kind for that...Love may be blind, but not the lover." Elmire allows that she will not tell her husband of Tartuffe's advances if Tartuffe will persuade Orgon to permit Valere to wed Mariane.**

**The tessitura exploits all registers of the baritone instrument. The tempo is quick, and the accompaniment is difficult. Most importantly, the singer should explore varied colors and articulations to bring to life the quick-minded, chameleon-like nature of Tartuffe.**

**MUSGRAVE, THEA (b.1928)**

***Harriet, The Woman Called Moses***

**P: Virginia Opera (1984)**

**L: Thea Musgrave**

**79. O: "Oh Hattie! Why is you leaving me?"**

**C: Josiah, a friend of Harriet's**

**S: Ben Holt**

**V: Baritone**

**R: c - g<sup>b</sup>1**

**PB: Novello & Co.**

**LC: Act 2, pp. 177-80**

**N: \*M1503 M987 H2**

**CM: This opera is freely based on the life of Harriet Tubman, an escaped slave, who became a "conductor" on the Underground Railroad. She shepherded hundreds of black slaves to freedom in Canada during the American Civil War.**

**In this scene, Josiah, Harriet's lover, bemoans the fact that she has just left him to lead more slaves to freedom. Josiah prays to God to "let her come back soon." The tempo begins and becomes more animated. The musical language is**

very dissonant and thickly textured. The melodic line is lyrical with pitches often doubled in the bass line of the accompaniment. The scene ends with Josiah being recaptured by slave catchers. Their lines are shouted above the end of Josiah's aria but may be omitted. One possible ending is to cut the final  $g^{b1}$  short and shout "Get your hands off me!" as written in the score. Depending on the purpose and venue of the performance, the singer may opt to hold the final note for two measures.

**NELSON, ROBERT S. (b.1929)**

***The Man Who Corrupted Hadleyville***

**P: Houston Community College (1986)**

**L: Kate Pogue**

**80. O: "Once not long ago lived a generous fox"**

**C: Burgess, a photographer**

**S: Adair McGowen**

**V: Baritone**

**R: d - f1**

**LC: Act 1 Scene 4, pp. 27-30**

**N: M1503 N429 M2**

**CM: *The Man Who Corrupted Hadleyville* is based on a story by Mark Twain. The townspeople of Hadleyville have gathered for their centennial celebration. They take pride in claiming to be the most honest city in the country.**

**The town's revelry is interrupted by children dragging a wagon which contains only a letter. The letter states that twenty years earlier an unknown man from Hadleyville saved the letter-writer's life by giving him twenty dollars. This letter-writer (according to the letter) is now dying, and is sending a bag of gold to reward his savior. To identify himself, the savior-claimant must send a letter to Mr. Burgess, the town photographer and curmudgeon, quoting the last sentence of their encounter-- a sentence known only to the recipient and the savior.**

**In his Act 1 aria, Burgess uses a parable about a generous fox to describe the mysterious philanthropist who will reveal the townspeople of Hadleyville as hypocrites. Robert Nelson writes, "Once not long ago" is a narrative ballad, quite consciously imitating the traditional American folk ballad, and**

needs to be performed in that style.”<sup>80</sup> The aria is not technically demanding for either singer or pianist but requires good acting skills. In addition, the singer needs to be able to whistle on pitch.

81. O: “You came to me to make your portraits”

C: Burgess

R: c<sup>#</sup> - f1

LC: Act 2 Scene 16, pp. 165-66e

CM: Every townspeople wants the gold, and they all write letters claiming to know the necessary sentence. As they gather in church, the townspeople learn to their horror, that not one of them, not even their minister, can be considered an honest person. A mysterious person enters the church carrying a sack. The townspeople rush to tear it apart and discover that it contains bricks, not gold. The mysterious figure then reveals himself to be Burgess. The moral of the story: without temptation no one’s honesty is strong. Nelson writes:

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<sup>80</sup> Robert Nelson, letter to author, 30 May 1999.

"You came to me to make your portraits" is in a much more operatic style [than the Act 1 aria], and is significant in that it expresses most directly the 'moral' of the opera.<sup>81</sup>

The tempo is *andante con moto*. The tessitura is moderate and the piano accompaniment is easy.

OWEN, RICHARD (b.1922)

*The Death of the Virgin*

P: New York Lyric Opera (1983)

L: Michael Straight

82. O: "Your robe was still dripping"

C: Caravaggio, the painter

S: Gordon Vorhees

V: Baritone

R: c# - g1

LC: Scene 5, pp. 69-74

N: M1503 D977 D2

CM: Set in Rome in the year 1600, *The Death of the Virgin*, a one-act opera, recounts the circumstances surrounding

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<sup>81</sup> Nelson, letter.

Caravaggio's painting of the same name. Caravaggio enrages his patron, Cardinal Del Monte, by omitting a halo over the Virgin in his painting. Angered by this criticism, Caravaggio destroys the painting. The Cardinal disowns Caravaggio but orders him to leave all his paintings. Caravaggio is arrested for stealing after he takes his favorite painting with him. He is later released when Lena, a whore he has taken in as a model, produces the missing painting to the Court. Caravaggio accuses Lena of betraying him and subsequently, Lena's body is found in the Tiber River. Claiming he is innocent of Lena's murder, Caravaggio uses her as a model for his work *The Death of the Virgin*, which he presents as the altarpiece in the chapel of St. Andrea della Scala. When the friars demand that he remove the painting because he has used a whore as a model, Caravaggio sings his aria. He cries, "I painted her just as she was. I don't care what you wanted...I am the master in my world! I shall paint as I please." As the opera ends, Caravaggio is seen running from the chapel.

Written in a neo-romantic idiom, the aria's accompaniment is thickly textured, often doubling the vocal

line. The aria begins in the last measure of the top score of p. 69. The pianist should end the aria with a b minor chord on the downbeat of the second score of p. 74. The tessitura is high, the tempo is moderate and the piano part is difficult.<sup>82</sup>

**PASATIERI, THOMAS (b.1949)**

***Maria Elena***

**P: University of Arizona Opera Theater (1983)**

**L: Thomas Pasatieri**

**83. O: "How little you understand your own heart"**

**C: Gonzalo**

**S: Thomas Allen**

**V: Baritone**

**R: c<sup>#</sup> - f<sup>b1</sup>**

**PB: G. Schirmer, Inc.**

**LC: pp. 51-4**

**CM: In this one-act opera, Maria is attracted to Gonzalo, a passionate, yet violent man. Maria admits she would do**

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<sup>82</sup> Franklin W. Summers, *Operas in One-act: A Production Guide*, (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 1997), 238.

anything for Gonzalo. He, thereupon, asks her to seduce the jeweler, Silva. While they are in bed, Gonzalo would steal the jeweler's money. Maria refuses to play along, and Gonzalo, in this aria, convinces her that their love is stronger than "human laws." Later, Maria sleeps with Silva, and allows Gonzalo access to the house. When Gonzalo is unsuccessful at finding the money, he shoots Silva.

Written in a modern romantic style, many of the phrases contain leaps of minor 7ths. Most of the singer's pitches are doubled in the accompaniment. The tempo is marked *andante cantabile*. The aria ends with a question mark in both the text and the harmony. The performers might opt to resolve the harmony with a B<sup>b</sup> major chord in the piano to give more finality to the scene.

PAULUS, STEPHEN (b.1949)

*The Postman Always Rings Twice*

P: Opera Theatre of Saint Louis (1982)

L: Colin Graham

T: Frank's Road Song

84. O: "I caught a ride to San Bernardino"

C: Frank Chambers, unemployed

S: David Parsons

V: Baritone

R: c - e1

PB: European American Music Corporation

LC: Act 1, pp. 97-105

CM: Based on the novel by James M. Cain, *The Postman Always Rings Twice* situates the elements of Greek tragedy in a contemporary American environment. In flashbacks, Frank, a young drifter, recounts much of the story from his death-row prison cell. He recalls how he is given a job at a gas station/diner by its owner, Nick. Frank and Nick's wife, Cora, immediately attracted to each other, begin a love affair. They connive to kill Nick by concocting a car crash, and then collect on his life insurance policy. Although they get away with their crime, Frank and Cora are soon plagued with guilt and believe they are haunted by Nick's voice. When Cora dies in a car accident with Frank at the wheel, Frank is ironically convicted of her murder, and sentenced to death.

In Frank's Road Song, Frank remembers the difficulty he experienced trying to avoid Cora. Whether he tried a new job or went with another woman, he always returned to Cora and her wild scheme to murder Nick. The tempo is fast, and the tessitura is moderate. The difficult piano part expresses the anxiety and listlessness of Frank's personality.

T: Frank's Dreams

85. O: "I got to get away"

C: Frank Chambers

R: c# - f#1

LC: Act 2, pp. 272-95

CM: In this lengthy soliloquy Frank is haunted by the sound of Nick's voice and his guitar. He tries to ignore these visions and nightmares. He no longer trusts Cora, thinking she may turn him into the police at any time. Frank's memory swings back and forth between his sexual obsession for Cora and his desire to escape the guilt, jealousy and mistrust that has suffused their relationship. The changes in musical tempi reflect his violent mood changes.

The aria is in ABA form. The first part of the scene is sung on a parlando style over a difficult orchestral accompaniment. Frank begins to remember his relationship with Cora and a rhapsodic lyric section follows in which he describes their life. This middle section climaxes with the text, "The weeks go by and we can't say a word; we just watch and shout and hate and love --God, how we love." In the scene's final section, Frank launches into a fierce renunciation of Cora as the tessitura gets higher and the dynamics become louder.

T: Death and Finale

86. O: "This time they got me for it well and true"

C: Frank Chambers

R: A - e1

LC: Act 2, pp. 330-43

CM: In the last scene of the opera, Frank awaits his execution. He seems resigned to the inevitability of his own death as he recounts the tragic accident that killed Cora. He also revisits the incriminating letter that Cora wrote, which has sealed his

fate. The tempo is slow. A ponderous, deliberative quality to the accompaniment reflects Frank's mood of resignation and the inevitability of his fate in the electric chair. The scene ends with percussive rolls in the piano signifying his death.

***The Woodlanders***

**P: Opera Theatre of Saint Louis (1985)**

**L: Colin Graham**

**87. O: "Woman I love, how you call to me"**

**C: Giles Winterbourne, arborealists, age 25**

**S: James McGuire**

**V: Baritone**

**R: d<sup>b</sup> - c<sup>#</sup>1**

**PB: European American Music Corporation**

**LC: Act 1 Scene 1, pp. 41-4**

**N: M1503 P333 W8 v.1**

**CM: Based on the novel by Thomas Hardy, *The Woodlanders* is a romantic tragedy that tells the story of the ill-fated love of Grace Melbury and Giles Winterbourne. The sylvan environment is crucial to the plot. As Graham writes in his notes to the**

score:

The Woodlanders themselves are like their trees: some ancient, soon to be cut down, some younger but firmly rooted here. They are the eternal citizens of the hamlet.. and are thus in a perfect position to observe its life and comment on it.<sup>83</sup>

Grace returns home from finishing school. Feeling gentrified, she decides to marry the higher born Dr. Fitzpiers, much to the chagrin of her childhood sweetheart, Giles. Giles, a young tree surgeon, loves Grace as much as ever; seeing that her feelings for him have changed, he sings a wistful air in the hope she will change her mind.

All of the arias in *The Woodlanders* are adapted from poetry not found in the Hardy novel. Andrew Porter writes:

For the [arias], Graham adapts poems--by Chatterton, Shelley, Edmund Grosse--and folk songs that Hardy cites in his book, and also introduces Hardy poems freely rewritten...either to fit the new situations or to eliminate Hardy's distinctive quirks of diction and metre.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Stephen Paulus, *The Woodlanders: A Romantic tragedy in Three Acts* by Colin Graham (Valley Forge, PA: European American Music, 1985).

<sup>84</sup> Andrew Porter, "Musical Events: Beside the River and Into the Trees," *New Yorker*, 1 July 1985, 93.

This particular text is based on Hardy's poem "The Voice."  
The vocal demands of this aria are not challenging, but excellent musicianship is required.

88. O: "So, brannew summer, you will never be all that summer saw?"

C: George Melbury, timber-merchant, age 45

S: Daniel Sullivan

V: Bass-Baritone

R: A - c1

LC: Act 1 Scene 2, pp. 52-4

CM: Grace's father, George, is a prosperous man who feels guilty for sending her to boarding school. For now, Grace believes Giles is no longer worthy of the woman she has become. Graham uses lyrics from Hardy's poem "This Summer and Last." George tries to comfort his daughter, who cannot explain why she feels so differently about the world.

Brief and lyrical, this is an excellent selection for the college student or young professional who wants to explore contemporary operatic literature. One might choose to end the

aria with the B<sup>b</sup> major chord on the downbeat of the top score, last measure of page 54.

89. O: "If they should part us now -- can hearts break more than once?"

C: Giles Winterbourne

R: c<sup>#</sup> - e1

LC: Act 3 Scene 1, pp. 230-36

N: M1503 P333 W8 v.2

CM: Fitzpiers abandons Grace and runs off to France with another woman. Although Giles recently resumed his relationship with Grace, he now sits despondent in Melbury's garden clutching a letter. The letter, from Melbury in London, states that Fitzpiers is returning to England to reclaim Grace. It is apparent that Giles will never be able to marry his beloved.

Giles' aria is a setting of Edmund Gosse's "Two Points of View."<sup>85</sup> The piano accompaniment is written on three staves

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<sup>85</sup> Andrew Porter, *New Yorker*, 93.

and is quite orchestral. The slow, lyrical vocal line features some wonderful melismas on the words “breeze” and “dream.”

90. O: “I have done all I could for the lady I knew!”

C: Giles Winterbourne

R: c - e<sup>b1</sup>

LC: Act 3 Scene 2, pp. 278-82

CM: Giles’ deathbed aria is inspired by Hardy’s “The Tree and the Lady.” Giles, in a delirious state, dwells on all that he has lost, but finally seems resigned to death. “It will be much better when I am under the bough -- more myself than I am now.” The aria is musically reminiscent of Giles Act 1 aria, “Women I love, how you call to me.” The tempo is moderate. An F major chord on p. 282, second score, fifth measure makes an excellent ending for this eloquent and powerful scene which challenges the pianist more than the singer.

PERERA, RONALD (b. 1941)

*The Yellow Wallpaper*

P: Smith College, Northampton, MA (1989)

**L: Constance Congdon**

**91. O: "If this was my place"**

**C: Ed, an older workman**

**S: Jan Opalach**

**V: Bass**

**R: G - c1**

**PB: Theodore Presser**

**LC: Act 1 Scene 4, pp. 70-3**

**N: M1503 P434 Y4**

**RC: AMC Cassette 1749-1750**

**CM: *The Yellow Wallpaper* is a chamber opera adapted from an 1892 novella by the feminist writer Charlotte Perkins Gilman. It tells the story of Charlotte who suffers from "neurasthenia, a depression (frequently post-partum) that was epidemic among Victorian women and treated as an illness."<sup>86</sup>**

**Her physician husband John moves her to a beautiful country house where her treatment consists of "confinement, regimented meals, and severe limitations on intellectual and**

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**86 Constance Cogdan, "Genesis of an American Chamber Opera: 'The Yellow Wallpaper' Bows in Massachusetts," *MadAminA!* Fall 1990, 14.**

creative activity.”<sup>87</sup>

In Act1, scene 4, Ed, a handyman who has been hired to maintain the property, sits on the porch and plans how he would fix up the old house if it were his own. The aria has a spirited jazz-like feeling, mixing measures of 5/8 and 7/8. The composer helps the performer by indicating the division of the meter over the measure, (e.g 2+2+3 or 3+2). Occasionally some spoken lines occur during the interludes. The singer must have a secure sense of rhythm. Accurate coordination with the pianist represents the greatest challenge of the aria.

92. O: “Oh, Jennie, how the regimen is working now!”

C: John, a doctor, married to Charlotte

S: David Ripley

V: Baritone

R: c - f<sup>#</sup>1

LC: Act 2 Scene 3, pp. 159-62

CM: The ‘cure’ is not working for Charlotte. Against her

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<sup>87</sup> Congdon, *MadAminA!*

husband's orders she begins writing her experiences in a journal. Finding his wife's journal, John forbids Charlotte from recording her thoughts. Cut off from all form of communication, Charlotte, in her loneliness and despair, begins to hear voices of women emanating from the yellow wallpaper of her room. John, noticing that Charlotte has discontinued entries into her diary, misinterprets this development as vindication for the regimen he has imposed on her. He sings triumphantly of his love for Charlotte to his sister.

A passionate love song, the aria illuminates John's delusions, as his wife hallucinates in her nearby room. The tempo is *andante*. The musical style is neo-romantic, with a piano accompaniment of moderate demands.

**PLISKA, GREG (b. 1962)**

***The Secret Garden***

**P: The Pennsylvania Opera Theater (1988)**

**L: David Ives**

**93. O: "Her name was Constance, but he called her Lilly"**

**C: Ben Weatherstaff, the gardener**

**S: Stephen Kalm**

**V: Baritone**

**R: A - f<sup>#</sup>1**

**PB: Greg Pliska**

**LC: Act 1 Scene 4, pp. 20-31**

**CM: Based on the novel of the same name by Frances Hodgson Burnett, *The Secret Garden* tells of the experiences of a young girl, Mary Lennox. After the death of her parents, Mary is sent off to live with her embittered uncle. At her uncle's house, Mary meets many servants and friends who help guide her through this perplexing experience.**

**In this aria, one of those servants is Ben Weatherstaff, the gardener, who discloses to Mary the source of her uncle's great sadness, the death of his beloved wife Lilly. The musical language is tonal, the tessitura is moderate. The tempo is *andante con moto*. Though the style of the aria is very lyrical and romantic, it should be noted that Weatherstaff is an elderly man and that he is singing about another man's feelings. The composer's use of changing meters helps lend a halting, slightly embarrassed quality to a scene where one man**

**explains another man's pain to a child.**

**REISE, JAY (b.1950)**

***Rasputin***

**P: New York City Opera (1988)**

**L: Jay Reise, in collaboration with Frank Corsaro**

**94. O: "They believe in me!"**

**C: Rasputin**

**S: John Cheek**

**V: Bass-Baritone**

**R: c - f1**

**PB: Theodore Presser Co.**

**LC: Act 2 Scene 1, pp. 179-85**

**N: M1503 R375 R2**

**CM: This historically derived opera is inspired by the life of the monk, Rasputin, who rose to unimaginable power in the waning days of the Russian monarchy. The opera charts Rasputin's ascent from a peasant monk to the principal advisor to Tsar and Tsaritsa Nicholas and Alexandra of Russia. In the aftermath of World War I and in the wake of the Russian**

Revolution, Rasputin gains hypnotic power over the Romanovs when he quiets an angry mob, and when he miraculously stops the bleeding of their hemophiliac son.

At the beginning of Act 2 Scene 1, Rasputin revels over his emergent power and prays for the strength to continue his quest to become the Tsar of Russia. Reise uses both tonality and atonality to signify the social instability that dominates this period of Russian history. Reise explains that "he tried to make the music a metaphor for the Romanovs, who teeter-totter, then crash into the twentieth century."<sup>88</sup> The wild, delirious character of the aria demands excellent range and a powerful instrument as the dynamic markings are consistently *forte* throughout.

**ROCHBERG, GEORGE (b.1919)**

***The Confidence Man***

**P: Santa Fe Opera (1982)**

**L: Gene Rochberg**

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<sup>88</sup> Mark S. Laporta, "Reise Meets Rasputin," *Opera News* 53, no.3 (September 1988): 13.

95. O: "Ladies and Gentlemen!"

C: The Confidence Man

S: Brent Ellis

V: Baritone

R: B<sup>b</sup> - f1

PB: Theodore Presser Co.

LC: Act 1 Prologue, pp. 1-24

N: M1 503 R672 C7

**CM:** *The Confidence Man: A Comic Fable* is loosely based on Herman Melville's last novel *The Confidence Man: His Masquerade*. It is "less a novel than suite of eight fables in which its protagonist takes on numerous guises..."<sup>89</sup> The Rochbergs, husband and wife, deal with this narrative problem by focusing on one fable, "The Story of China Astor." The protagonist, The Confidence Man, tells this story to a group of midwest townspeople after failing to con them into buying his wares. He functions as narrator and *deus ex machina* for the

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<sup>89</sup> Kenneth LaFave, "Odyssey to Opera: After Years of Refining His Craft, George Rochberg Has Finally Composed His First Opera for Santa Fe - 'The Confidence Man'," *Opera News* 47 (June 1982): 14.

story. The object of his story is to convince the townspeople to trust their fellowman.

“Ladies and gentlemen!” is a lengthy prologue to the opera that is not in the original novel.<sup>90</sup> The Confidence Man tries to sell his audience pain killers, a healing balm and membership into a World Charity Organization. Seemingly appalled by the skepticism of his audience, he launches into his tale of China Astor. The language is tonal and dissonant, often in a neo-classic style. There are constant changes in key, meter, tempo and mood which correspond to the different tactics of each con. The composer also employs *Sprechstimme* and *glissandi* for expressive purposes.

96. O: “I am a cosmopolitan”

C: The Confidence Man

R: A<sup>b</sup> - f<sup>#</sup>1

LC: Act 1 Scene 1, pp. 59-64

CM: The Confidence Man lays out his credo before he enters into

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<sup>90</sup> Peter G. Davis, “Lost in the Desert,” *New York*, 23 August 1982, 79.

his story. He is a “cosmopolitan, a man of confidence, a man of trust.” George Rochberg sees the protagonist as a man who embodies “America and its meanings....The Midwest in 1850 was the great melting pot, and it was a place for visionaries and for those who felt themselves the chosen.”<sup>91</sup> This aria displays none of the episodic flow of the earlier scene but contains the same rhetorical style. Although the melodic line is often full of large leaps, most of the pitches can be found in the accompaniment.

**SCHICKELE, PETER (b.1935)**

***A Little Nightmare Music***

**P: Carnegie Hall (1982)**

**L: Peter Schickele**

**97. O: “What sweet music”**

**C: Antonio Salieri, a successful composer**

**S: James Billings**

**V: Baritone**

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**91 Daniel Webster, “George Rochberg: His First Opera, To Be Premiered Next Month Turns a Stylistic Corner,” *High Fidelity*, June 1982, MA5.**

R: A - e1

PB: Theodore Presser

LC: pp. 6-14

N: M1503 S331 L7

RC: Vanguard Records, VMD-79448

CM: *A Little Nightmare Music: An Opera in One Irrevocable Act* is an operatic parody purportedly penned by Professor Schickele's invention, P.D.Q. Bach, J.S. Bach's imaginary offspring. Inspired "by an actual dream that P.D.Q. Bach had on the night....that Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart died and Antonio Salieri didn't,"<sup>92</sup> the opera satirizes the controversy that surrounded the popularity of Peter Shaffer's play *Amadeus*, which alluded to the now discredited rumor that Mozart was poisoned by Salieri.

Salieri's aria begins the opera. After waking up from a drunken nap, Salieri sings that Mozart, although a genius, will never amount to anything because he has no head for business.

"He does not know whom to kiss and also where." Mozart also

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<sup>92</sup> Peter Schickele, "Program Note," *A Little Nightmare Music*, (Bryn Mawr, PA: Theodore Presser, 1984).

“spends his time at billiards” and will be “a pauper ‘til the day he dies.” Schickele freely appropriates melodic ideas from a variety of Mozart’s works. The tempo is fast. Not difficult to perform, this aria would make an excellent encore selection or do well as a comic interlude during a serious program.

**SCHUMAN, WILLIAM (1910-1992)**

***A Question of Taste***

**P: Glimmerglass Opera (1989)**

**L: J.D. McClatchy**

**98. O: “No meal can be called complete”**

**C: Mr. Schonfield, a solid citizen in his fifties**

**S: Brian Steele**

**V: Baritone**

**R: c -e1**

**PB: Merion Music, Inc. (Theodore Presser Co.)**

**LC: pp. 62-7**

**RC: Delos 1030**

**CM: Based on a story by Roald Dahl that was originally**

published in *The New Yorker*,<sup>93</sup> *A Question of Taste* is a one-act comedy that pokes fun at wine connoisseurs. The action takes place in the dining room of the Schofields, where the family entertains a famous wine connoisseur, Philisto Pratt. On two earlier occasions, Pratt had risen to the challenge and guessed the vintage of a rare wine that his host, Mr. Schofield, a business man in his mid-fifties, had served. Determined to stump his adversary, Mr. Schofield enters into another wager over a rare bottle of wine, this time with his own daughter as collateral.

The harmonic language is tonal but dissonant with large leaps in the vocal line. The scene begins with a waltz-like tempo that expresses the expansiveness of Schofield's nature. As he challenges Pratt, the tempo increases. Schofield is already enjoying his victory. At one point, the composer has an extended two-note melisma on the word, "breathing," which he asks the performer to exaggerate for comic effect. The aria ends with a question, "Are you game?" The piano part that

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<sup>93</sup> J.D. McClatchy, "Questions and Answers," CD booklet notes for *A Question of Taste* by William Schuman, performed by the Julliard Opera Center, conducted by Gerard Schwartz, Delos 32, 24.

follows delivers Pratt's answer with a playful two-measure phrase that ends the scene.

99. O: "An interesting little wine"

C: Phillisto Pratt, wine connoisseur

S: Daniel Sullivan

V: Bass-Baritone

R: F# - d1

LC: pp. 93-112

CM: A lengthy scene in which Pratt seeks to guess the year and vintage of Mr. Schofield's rare wine begins with a "tasting motive" that acts as a *ritornello* throughout the aria. In the course of five stanzas, Pratt slowly unravels the riddle of the year, the aftertaste, the grape and ultimately the vineyard of his glass of wine. The aria ends triumphantly on a sustained G<sup>b</sup> major chord. Schuman uses a halting, ponderous tempo to express Pratt's struggle and arrogance. Ultimately, Pratt is revealed to be an imposter who cheats to establish his aura of expertise. Pratt's aria requires excellent diction, a secure

legato line and generous lower register, as it ends on a low F#.

SHAPIRO, MICHAEL JEFFREY (b.1951)

*The Love of Don Perlimplin and Belisa in the Garden*

P: Opera Theatre of Northern Virginia (1997)<sup>94</sup>

L: Michael Jeffrey Shapiro

100. O: "Love, love that lies here wounded"

C: Don Perlimplin

V: Baritone

R: A<sup>b</sup> - f1

LC: Act 1 Scene 1, pp. 95-8, 536-77

N: M1500 S5296 L8

CM: Subtitled *An Erotic Lace-Paper Valentine in Four Scenes*, *The Love of Don Perlimplin and Belisa in the Garden* is based on a play by Federico Garcia Lorca as translated by James Graham-Lujan and Richard L. O'Connell. Don Perlimplin, a shy old man, has been coerced by his maid,

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<sup>94</sup> Although the opera was written in 1987, it just recently had its first production. Michael Jeffrey Shapiro, 1999, e-mail to author, May 29.

Marccolfa, to marry the comely young maiden, Belisa. Scene 1 takes place in Don Perlimplin's bedroom. On their wedding night a terrified Perplimplin peers through a partially opened door as his young bride prances about the room in a lace nightgown and a red cape. Five men whistle at her from the street below. Don Perlimplin imagines the men at the five balconies of his bedroom as he walks toward the bed with enormous gilded horns. He argues with Belisa, who, exhausted, falls back onto the bed asleep. Don Perlimplin covers her with the red cape and then sits on the edge of the bed, singing of his wounded love.

The aria is romantic and lyrical in  $A_b$  Major. Most of the vocal line is doubled on the piano. The tessitura exploits all of the baritone range and involves a substantial amount of soft singing in the higher register. The rhythmic syncopations help delineate the excited and nervous state of Don Perlimplin.

**SHEPARD, THOMAS Z. (b. 1936)**

***That Pig of a Molette***

**P: O'Neill Theater Center (1989)**

L: Sheldon Harnick

101. O: "By Jove! What a pretty woman!"

C: Molette

S: Stephen Kalm

V: Baritone

R: B - a1

PB: Theodore Presser

LC: p.12-24, 272-444

CM: Sheldon Harnick's libretto, adapted from Guy DeMaupassant's short story, *That Pig of a Morin*,<sup>95</sup> tells of the misfortunes of a middle-aged French country shopkeeper, Molette, who on a fortnight train ride to Paris without his wife, in a fit of uncharacteristic passion, kisses a beautiful unsuspecting young woman. This indiscretion provokes a lawsuit, as well as problems with his marriage and business. So scandalized is he that for the rest of his life, wherever he goes he is hounded by the epithet, "That Pig of a Molette."

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<sup>95</sup> Sheldon Harnick changed the name of "Morin" to "Molette" for the purpose of having a sound that would rhyme more easily in English. He did, however, feel it important to keep the accent on the final syllable. Sheldon Harnick, 1999, letter to author, 13 June.

Molette's soliloquy enacts his fall from grace. He notices the woman, tries to muster the courage to speak to her, and then fantasizes that a railway accident will make him her savior and hero. Suddenly terrified that the train will arrive in Paris before he can make an impression, an emboldened Molette grabs the half-asleep woman by the shoulders and kisses her on the mouth. As she screams out in terror, Molette begs her forgiveness. But the damage to his reputation is now irreversible.

Written in a late-romantic idiom, Shepard uses the incessant rhythm of the train as metaphor for Molette's racing heartbeat. The aria has an episodic quality that reflects Molette's changing strategies as well as the conflict between fantasy and reality in Molette's persona. The episodes include the train ostinato, recitative, and a waltz section that charts the progression of Molette's thoughts and emotional states.

**SHERMAN, KIM (b. 1954)**

***Red Tide***

**P: Minnesota Opera (1989)**

**L: Paul Selig**

**102. O: "Mister McGruter conducted the choir"**

**C: Worm, a boy of 17**

**S: Stephen Kalm**

**V: Baritone**

**R: B<sup>b</sup> - b<sup>b1</sup> (falsetto), opt. D2 (falsetto)**

**PB: composer c/o ASCAP**

**LC: Scene 3, pp. 57-64**

**CM: A one-act opera, *Red Tide* tells the story of two young men, Lutece and Worm, camping out on a Long Island beach. Friends since childhood, each teenager has come to the beach to reveal something of himself to the other. Lutece seeks to re-enact a near-death experience he had as a child when, almost drowning, he was saved by a lifeguard. He sees this rescue as the seminal spiritual experience of his life. As Lutece prepares to walk into the ocean, Worm at first ridicules him for his naivete, but at the last moment sings this aria where he expresses his love for Lutece.**

**"Mister McGruter..." is a lyric aria written in a tonal idiom. The piano accompaniment is quite simple, and the**

tempo is slow. The tessitura exploits all registers of the baritone voice. Minimum vibrato should be employed by the singer due to the youth of the character and the simplicity of the musical texture.<sup>96</sup> If the singer cannot manage the d2 with falsetto voice, he may sing the pitch an octave lower. The b<sub>1</sub> in the previous phrase should be sung in falsetto and the final f1 should be sung with either falsetto or mixed voice

SHINN, RANDALL (b.1944)

*Wilbur*<sup>97</sup>

P: Arizona State University (1986)

L: Randall Shinn

103. O: "How sad, an idealist, the most perfect fool of all"

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<sup>96</sup> Kim D. Sherman, personal interview in New York City, NY, 12 July 1996.

<sup>97</sup> The opera was revised in 1996 and the name changed to *Beautiful Princess Available for Rescue* by the composer because it "captures the spirit of the work much better than the original title." Randall Shinn, 1999, letter to author, 16 June.

**C: Bullstrode, an ogre**

**S: Jeffrey Stevens**

**V: Baritone**

**R: A - d1**

**LC: Act 2 Scene 1, p. 176-81, 207-71**

**N: M1503 s5566 W6**

**RC: AMC Cassette 905-906**

**CM: Crown Prince Edmund decides that his brother, Prince Wilbur, is in need of a quest. In his travels, Wilbur encounters Primrose, a vain and conceited princess, who demands to be rescued from her captor, the ogre Bullstrode. Bullstrode's servant, Arianthe, is a part-time witch who tries to help Wilbur improve his combat skills. When Bullstode learns of Arianthe's treachery he tries to kill her, but Arianthe's magic defeats him.**

The musical language is tonal and very lyrical. The composer makes a conscious attempt to set the opera in a neo-classic form.<sup>98</sup> Randall Shinn writes:

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<sup>98</sup> Anne Bendheim, "Opera Fantastique," *The Phoenix Gazette*, 19 April 1986, Marquee 3.

**Bullstrode shows himself to be the most poetic and self-aware character in the opera. The text can communicate his intelligence, but the performance needs to reveal the passion fueling his obsession with the beautiful princess he holds captive. Bullstrode understands the motivation and nature of his obsession. But this understanding does little to help him. Though he sees the princess as an empty shell whose beauty is destructive, he cannot rid himself of his desire to possess her.<sup>99</sup>**

**The moderate tessitura and accessibility of the music make this an excellent aria for the college-age singer.**

**104. O: "Wilbur! It's too late to think about it"**

**C: Edmund, Prince of Rivendal**

**S: J. V. Heffel**

**V: Baritone**

**R: d - e<sup>b</sup>1**

**LC: Act 2 Scene 3, pp. 232-4, 150-69**

**CM: Freed from captivity, Primrose expects Wilbur to propose marriage, but Wilbur finds her boring. His chauvinistic brother, Prince Edmund, calls Wilbur short-sighted for not recognizing the advantages of Primrose's wealth. Edmund**

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**<sup>99</sup> Shinn, letter.**

ridicules his brother for not wanting to marry Primrose. "Beds are not made for conversation," he sings, "for that one has friends."

The composer states that "Edmund's male chauvinism is so ridiculously blatant the performance can thus be fairly direct."<sup>100</sup> The range, tessitura, and musical demands of this aria are simple, making it an excellent selection for the young college student. The tempo is slow, and the piano accompaniment is easy.

**SIEGMEISTER, ELIE (1909-1991)**

***Angel Levine***

**P: Jewish Opera at the Y, NYC (1985)**

**L: Edward Mabley**

**105. O: "Dearest God, please hear me"**

**C: Nathan Manishevitz, a poor tailor, about 60 years old**

**S: Richard Frisch**

**V: Bass-Baritone**

**R: A - d<sup>#</sup>1**

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<sup>100</sup> Shinn, letter.

**PB: Carl Fischer, Inc.**

**LC: Scene 1, pp. 22-6**

**CM: An opera in one-act based on a story by Bernard Malamud, *Angel Levine* is set in New York City in the 1940's. It is a modern variation of the biblical story of Job.**

**A poor Jewish tailor, Nathan Manishevitz, complains to God about his difficult life: his daughter has married a gentile, his son has left for the army, his business was destroyed by fire, and now his beloved wife has been told that she will soon die. After the doctor leaves the apartment, Nathan prays to God to spare his wife.**

**More a meditation than an angry plea, Nathan's aria is in the style of a rhapsody moving back and forth between recitative and arioso. The tessitura is not challenging, but the angular vocal line and dissonant harmonies require a good ear on the part of the performer.**

**106. O: "Oh, Gottenyu, this is too much!"**

**C: Nathan Manishevitz**

**R: A - f1**

LC: Scene 1, pp. 45-51

CM: Nathan's prayer is answered and an angel comes to him in the form of a black Jew named Alexander Levine. Nathan calls Levine a fraud and chases him from his apartment. Fanny overhears the conversation, and convinces Nathan to go to Harlem in search of the black angel.

Desperate and confused, Nathan again addresses God, this time more forcefully. The aria is written in three stanzas with variations. The tempo is *adagio*. Siegmeyer weaves gospel and jazz elements into his musical language in a manner that evokes the blending of two cultures.<sup>101</sup>

SPEKTOR, MIRA J. (b.1928)

*The Lady of the Castle*

P: Theatre for the New City, NYC (1982)

L: Mira J. Spektor

T: The Table is Always Set for Two

107. O: "A solitary old man"

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<sup>101</sup>Bryron Belt, "Angel Levine," *Opera News* 50, no.8 (January 4, 1986): 42.

**C: Zabrovsky**

**S: Paul Ukena**

**V: Bass-Baritone**

**R: G - d1**

**LC: pp. 15-7**

**N: M1503 s742 L2**

**RC: AMC Cassette 207**

**CM: *The Lady of the Castle* is a one-act *Ballad Opera* for four voices and three instruments. It is adapted from a play by Leah Goldberg who, in turn, based her story on a true incident. The scene is an old castle in Eastern Europe. The year is 1947. An old man, Zabrovsky, the castle's librarian, reminisces about the past for two guests who seek refuge on a stormy night. The guests happen to be two Jews from what was then Palestine trying to locate Jewish children who disappeared during the war.**

**The musical language is tonal. The aria is preceded by a brief recitative. The tempo is *andante*. There are several changes in meter, and the accompaniment is not difficult.**

108. O: "I know this castle"

C: Zabrovsky

R: G - c1

LC: pp. 26-9

CM: Zabrovsky reveals to his visitors that he is in fact the owner of the castle. The estate has been in his family for many generations. Zabrovsky jokes to his visitors that the castle is reputed to be haunted by ghosts. The aria is occasionally interrupted by recitative. The tempo is *allegretto*. The tessitura lies very low and requires a singer with an excellent low G.

109. O: "Who would believe an Old Man, alone among old stone walls?"

C: Zabrovsky

R: G - b<sup>b</sup>

LC: pp. 57-60

CM: The castle clock strikes midnight and suddenly a young woman appears. Her name is Lena, and she tells the visitors how Zabrovsky saved her life and hid her from the Nazis during

the past four years. She has, however, not been told that the war had ended two years before. Zabrovsky attempts to explain to the visitors and Lena why he sheltered her from the world after saving her life. The two Jews try to persuade her to come to Palestine. Ultimately, Lena disappears again, leaving the visitors to wonder if she was real or a ghostly vision brought about by memories of war and the stormy night. The tempo is *andante* and the tessitura is low.

TANNER, JERRE (b1939)

*The Kona Coffee Cantata*

P: Uptown Opera Co., Spokane, WA (1986)

L: Harvey Hess

110. O: "What's keeping her?"

C: Mr. Kua, a middle-aged coffee farmer, father of Kolea

S: G. Robert Newman (David Small on recording)

V: Bass

R: d - f#1

LC: no. 2-4

N: M1508 T166 K8

RC: Albany Records - Troy 313

CM: *The Kona Coffee Cantata (or What Happened to the Special Roast)* is a contemporary sequel to J. S. Bach's *Cantata BMV 211, The Coffee Cantata*. The one-act opera pits traditional values of a middle-aged father, Kua, against the new ideas of his daughter, Kolea.

Kolea has secretly been selling off her dowry, a hoard of the finest Kona coffee beans, to customers in Honolulu at higher prices. Kua at first sings of the wonderful gift he has harvested for his beloved daughter and then falls into a rage toward the thief he suspects to have stolen her dowry. Only later does Kolea admit to her father that she indeed has been the 'thief' in order to persuade him to set up gourmet coffee houses in Honolulu.

The music is written in a Baroque Hawaiian style, in which the composer combines:

Baroque musical traditions with Hawaiian musical traditions as seamlessly as possible, looking for a common ground so that...audiences would accept this cross-cultural hybrid as being perfectly natural, as

though Hawaii really did have a Baroque period.<sup>102</sup>

To create this hybrid style, the composer employs *secco* and *accompagnato* recitative, *da capo* aria form, fugues, walking bass and florid ornamentation, alongside “ancient chant, slack key guitar, hula rhythms and more hula rhythms.”<sup>103</sup>

Mr. Kua’s scene is arranged in the same order of recitatives and a *da capo* aria as found in Bach’s cantata. Tanner writes that “the role seems to work best when sung by a lyric baritone with a fairly dark but agile voice.”<sup>104</sup> The tessitura is moderate to high, and the coloratura can be very challenging. The tempo is marked *adagietto*. The aria may be performed without the repeat to save time, but the composer would prefer the whole aria intact as “the symmetry of the *Da Capo* aria is beautiful and satisfying in a way that can never be

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<sup>102</sup> Jerre Tanner, *The Making of an Hawaiian Opera: The Kona Coffee Cantata - A Brief History* (Kailua-Kona, HI: Malama Arts, 1995), 7.

<sup>103</sup> Tanner, *The Making of an Hawaiian Opera*.

<sup>104</sup> Jerre Tanner, 1999, letter to author, 11 June.

without the repeat.”<sup>105</sup>

WALLACE, STEWART (b. 1960)

***Kabbalah***

P: New York Dance Theater Workshop (1989)<sup>106</sup>

L: Michael Korie

111. O: “Tah chazai chaivan d’itgzar Avraham nafak maiarla”<sup>107</sup>

C: Chesed #4 (Abraham)

S: Wilbur Pauley (Robert Osborne in recording)

V: Bass - Baritone

R: G - e1

LC: Scene 2, pp. 20- 6, 326-418

N: M1503 W194 K2

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<sup>105</sup> Tanner, letter.

<sup>106</sup> The production was part of the Next Wave Festival at the Brooklyn Academy of Music.

<sup>107</sup> The English translation of the Hebrew reads: “Thus when Abraham was circumcised.” Michael Korie, CD booklet translation for Stewart Wallace’s *Kabbalah*, conducted by Michael Barrett (KIC 3-7048-2H1).

RC: Koch International Classics 3-7048-2H1

CM: *Kabbalah* is based on the texts of a Jewish mystical movement of the same name. It advocates the meditative use of numbers, words, incantations and music as a way for the soul to transcend the body in order to contemplate the higher mysteries of the universe. *Kabbalah* is structured with a prologue and seven movements which symbolize the seven days of creation. With a non-narrative libretto based on ancient texts in Hebrew, medieval German and Spanish, the opera explores kabbalistic ritual.

This ritual is enacted by ten performers, male and female, who represent the ten...emanations of the divine, each with a corresponding locus on the human body.<sup>108</sup>

During the second movement, the patriarch Abraham circumcises himself and proclaims his covenant with God. The style is minimalist with a soaring vocal line suspended over complicated rhythmic *ostinati*. The aria is in 5/4 meter and requires excellent musicianship. The tempo is *moderato*. The tessitura is low, demanding a sustained G, often over full orchestration. A translation of the complete libretto is not

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<sup>108</sup> Stewart Wallace, "Composer's Notes," *Kabbalah* CD.

part of the piano/vocal score but can be found in the liner notes of the recording.

WALLACH, JOELLE (b.1946)

*The King's Twelve Moons*

P: The Magic Circle Opera Repertory Ensemble(1992)<sup>109</sup>

L: Joelle Wallach

112. O: "My wife, my queen, queen of my kingdom and queen of my heart"

C: King

V: Baritone or Bass- Baritone

R: F - f1, A<sup>b</sup> (a<sup>b</sup> ossia) - b1 (g<sup>b</sup>1 ossia),<sup>110</sup>

LC: Scene 2, pp. 4-9, pp. 79-84,<sup>111</sup> 38-111

N: M1500 W195 K5

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<sup>109</sup> The score is copyrighted 1989.

<sup>110</sup> The composer has provided alternate versions (transpositions) for each aria.

<sup>111</sup> Appendix containing alternative version of the aria.

CM: *The King's Twelve Moons* is a chamber opera adapted from a folktale recorded by the brothers Grimm.<sup>112</sup> It is a story of unwitting tyranny and the responses it evokes. The plot involves a father who, after losing his wife, keeps his daughters locked in their room while he stands guard. Despite their father's vigil, the daughters flee their room each night and dance the night away. The composer writes that the music:

...expresses the emotional and psychological facets of the story: love and grief twisted into overpowering possessiveness, the daughter's responses to unreasonable authority, and the final triumph of the forces of exuberant life -- a denouement different from the Grimms'.<sup>113</sup>

In this aria, marked, "desolate, but vigorous with the frustrated machismo of suppressed desolation," the King cries out to his dead wife about his pain, loneliness, and inability to be a single parent to his twelve daughters. The musical idiom is tonal but highly dissonant. Wallach's music is very contrapuntal and thickly textured. The singing line, though vocally idiomatic, is extremely challenging with regard to

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<sup>112</sup> Joelle Wallach, 1999, letter to author, 13 July.

<sup>113</sup> Wallach, letter.

tessitura. For example, the baritone alternative version calls for a b<sup>1</sup> descending to a b<sup>b1</sup> at the end of a high-lying section that would be impossible for most high baritone voices

113. O: "I sit out here ev'ry night"

R: G<sup>b</sup> - g<sup>b1</sup> (ossia e<sup>b1</sup>), A<sup>b</sup> - a<sup>b1</sup> (f1 ossia)

LC: Scene 4, pp. 35-41, pp. 85-91, 330-405

CM: Sitting on a stool outside his daughters' bedroom, the King rationalizes his reasons for imprisoning his daughters. He sings a doleful *cantilena* that expresses his longing for his dead wife, and his fears for his children.

The two arias as originally written for the King did not comfortably accommodate a single voice type. The composer decided to transposed each aria accordingly so the singer could choose the most gratifying combination. In most instances, a baritone should opt for the alternative in the first aria and the original version in this aria. A Bass-Baritone should make the opposite choices.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> Wallach, letter.

**WARD, ROBERT (b.1917)**

***Abelard and Heloise***

**P: Charlotte Opera (1982)**

**L: Jan Hartman**

**T: Condemn not. Oh woeful man**

**114. O: "Condemn not one whose sufferings outpace Job's"**

**C: Denys, a Canon of Notre Dame**

**S: Chester Ludgin**

**V: Baritone**

**R: B - g1**

**PB: Highgate Press (Catalog No. 7.0391)**

**LC: Robert Ward, Arias: For Baritone, pp. 22-6<sup>115</sup>**

**RC: Bay Cities Classical CD 1029 (William Stone, Baritone)**

**CM: Abelard and Heloise is based on the historical twelfth-century tragic love affair of a famous cleric and his student.**

**As news spreads of the illicit affair, Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux, jealous of Abelard's fame as a scholar and**

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**115 One of the few instances in this guide where an aria has published on its own outside the original score. The aria is from Act 1 Scene 4 of the opera.**

humanist, plots to have Abelard expelled from the church. He beseeches Denys, a friend of Abelard, to publicly renounce his friend for his immoral behavior. Denys not only refuses to turn on Abelard, but calls upon Bernard to look to his own soul for his unholy motives that compel him to feel such anger towards his “greatest rival.”

The music is in a conservative, tonal idiom that emphasizes long legato lines and emotional expression with allusions to many different styles. Ward states that he has:

...never really worried about having a highly personal style. What counts is whether the music achieves a powerful expression... Eclecticism is quite conscious on my part.<sup>116</sup>

As Denys becomes more staunch in his defense of Abelard, the tessitura rises. Ward feels, “Denys’ aria should be indignant and vigorously so.”<sup>117</sup> The singer must have excellent breath control as the phrases are long and there are no lengthy piano interludes to help with pacing. The *allegro giusto* tempo

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<sup>116</sup> Shirley Fleming, “Robert Ward: His New Opera ‘Minutes Till Midnight’ Opens Miami’s New World Festival on an Urgent Note,” *High Fidelity*, May 1982, MA 5.

<sup>117</sup> Robert Ward, 1999, letter to author, 14 August.

illuminates the desperate and passionate emotions of the characters.

115. O: "Ah, Sister Heloise"

C: Peter the Venerable

S: Timothy Braden

V: Bass

R: B<sup>b</sup> - f1

PB: Highgate Press (Galaxy Music)<sup>118</sup>

LC: Act 3 Scene 4, pp. 278-82

CM: The final scene of the opera. Abelard has been castrated and killed for his actions. He lies in his coffin in the yard of the Paraclete as he is mourned and remembered by Heloise and his faithful friend, Peter the Venerable. Peter eulogizes Abelard as a great man who now awaits Heloise in the "pastures of the Lord."

The aria is lyrical and long-lined with an easy piano accompaniment. The tempo is slow. Most of the vocal pitches

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<sup>118</sup> This aria can be found in the piano/vocal score of *Abelard and Heloise*.

can be found in the accompaniment. The tessitura is moderate. The d minor chord on the first beat of the last measure of p. 262 makes an excellent ending for the aria.

***Minutes Till Midnight***

**P: Contemporary Festival of the Arts, Miami, FL (1982)**

**L: Daniel Lang**

**116. O: "Oh, Cosmos, with your myriad stars"**

**C: Emil Roszak, a famous nuclear physicist**

**S: Thomas Stewart**

**V: Baritone**

**R: B<sup>b</sup> - f1**

**LC: Robert Ward, Arias: For Baritone, pp. 35-9**

**RC: Bay Cities Classical CD 1029 (William Stone, Baritone)**

**CM: *Minutes Till Midnight* is a modern morality tale. Emil Roszak, a famous American nuclear physicist, discovers the formula for "cosmic energy" and gives it to the world instead of his country. In the last act of the opera, Roszak returns to his laboratory after a meeting with the National Security Council. He is deeply troubled and conflicted because the**

country's leaders have asked him to harness the power of "cosmic energy" toward the creation of a bomb. Ward writes:

Emil Roszak's motivation at the time of the opera is to try to prevent the development of a new weapon. The discovery of the formula therefore intensifies the moral crisis which he faces. The tension brings on [a] heart attack.<sup>119</sup>

This aria is an excellent selection for a dramatic baritone voice with ample power in the middle range of the voice. The tempo is marked *Largo*. Ward describes the genesis of this aria thus:

"Oh, Cosmos, with your myriad stars" reflects the awe which David Lang and I felt as we contemplated the universe. Singing the aria should be easy for anyone who understands and feels the text.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> Robert Ward, 1999, fax to author, August 15.

<sup>120</sup> Ward, letter.

WARREN, BETSY FROST<sup>121</sup>

*Gift of the Magi*

P: New Orleans Opera (1987)

L: David McCord

117. O: "Come Christmas"

C: James Dillingham Young (Jim)

S: Philip Frohnmayer

V: Baritone

R: B - g<sup>#</sup>1

PB: Wiscasset Music

LC: pp. 6-9, 28-100

N: M1503 W2855 G4

CM: A chamber opera based on the like-named O'Henry story, *Gift of the Magi* celebrates the triumph of human love over material wealth. As the opera begins, Jim bemoans the fact that he cannot afford to buy his beautiful wife a Christmas present. He decides to pawn off his prize possession, a gold

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<sup>121</sup> The composer declined to give out her date of birth, but offered 1942 as the year she graduated from Radcliffe. Betsy Frost Warren, phone interview, 23 June 1999.

watch, to buy a comb for his wife's beautiful brown hair, without realizing that his wife, at the same time, is cutting her hair to purchase a present for him.

Jim's aria tests the extremes in both the high and low ranges of the baritone voice. The musical language is polytonal. The tempo is marked *animato*. Reflective moments of recitative sometimes interrupt the aria. Ms. Warren suggests that the recitative sections should be very free in rhythm and tempo.<sup>122</sup>

**WEISGALL, HUGO (b.1912-1997)**

***Will You Marry Me?***

**P: Opera Ensemble of New York (1989)**

**L: Charles Kondeck**

**118. O: "I'm a self-made man"**

**C: He**

**S: David Trombley**

**V: Baritone**

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**122 Warren, interview.**

R: B<sup>b</sup> - f1

PB: Theodore Presser

LC: pp. 12-18, 130-223

N: M1503 W427 W6

CM: *Will You Marry Me?* is a one-act comedy adapted from the play *A Marriage Has Been Arranged* by Alfred Sutro. Set on a terrace overlooking Long Island Sound in the 1920's, the opera tells the story of a man and woman who meet at a small dinner party. According to the stage directions, as the couple walks out onto the terrace to talk, a small dinner dance is in progress behind curtained French windows. Andrew Porter observes, "Popular dance forms, cunningly and expressively distorted, underpin the couple's conversation."<sup>123</sup> Indeed, "I'm a self-made man" is written to a *tempo di Polka* which frames the jaunty, boisterous, and offhand character of the scene. The man tells the woman that he is now a wealthy boor who "cannot abide Art or Music." When that strategy does not provoke her, he describes how he once killed a man who had run

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<sup>123</sup> Andrew Porter, "Weisgall: Will You Marry Me?" *New Yorker*, 17 April 1989, 119.

off with his girlfriend. After claiming that he “doubts that [he can] feel about anyone the way [he] feels” about the woman who got away, he casually asks this woman to marry him.

The vocal line is angular, dissonant, with the pitches often doubled in the accompaniment. The piano part is difficult. Good diction and expressive care for word inflection are vital to a successful performance.

119. O: “You’re the first person who’s ever been honest with me”

C: He

R: B<sup>b</sup> - f<sup>#</sup>1

LC: pp. 38-41, 496-531

CM: The woman refuses the proposal but soon tells the man the story of her own previous unhappy love experience. He is surprisingly sympathetic and sincerely touched by her candor and honesty. In this aria he asks the woman if she can recommend someone for him to marry. He is tired of his “playboy lifestyle” and wants to find a compatible soul.

In contrast to the dancing, elusive quality of the first aria, the music is more lyric, the vocal line less angular, and the manner more

straightforward in approach, reflecting the vulnerability in this otherwise aloof and urbane character. The aria begins with a line of recitative, moves to a slow, lyrical section in which he asks for the woman's help, and ends with an *allegro* where he airs his frustration about his current life. The final section contains changing meters, often alternating between 6/8 and 7/8. The piano part has an obbligato line which may require a second player.

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**Index of Operas  
(by entry number)**

***Abelard and Heloise*, 114, 115**  
***Achilles*, 61, 62**  
***Amarantha*, 16**  
***Angel Levine*, 105, 106**  
***Aspern Papers, The* (Argento), 17, 18**  
***Aspern Papers, The* (Hagemann), 59**  
***Benjamin: An Opera of Our Own Invention*, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41**  
***Casanova's Homecoming*, 19, 20, 21, 22**  
***Casino Paradise* (Cabaret Version) , 35, 36**  
***Change of Hearts, A*, 67, 68**  
***Confidence Man, The*, 95, 96**  
***Death of the Virgin, The* , 82**  
***Death in the Family, A*, 74, 75, 76**  
***Eros and Psyche*, 42, 43**  
***False Messiah, The*, 5, 6, 7**  
***Fan, The*, 58**  
***Felipe*, 14, 15**  
***Fourscore*, 32, 33**  
***Gift of the Magi, The* (Brown), 34**  
***Gift of the Magi*, (Warren), 117**  
***Harriet, The Woman Called Moses*, 79**  
***Iphigenia*, 30**  
***Kabbalah*, 111**  
***King's Twelve Moons, The*, 112, 113**  
***Kona Coffee Cantata, The* , 110**  
***Lady of the Castle, The*, 107, 108, 109**  
***Little Nightmare Music, A*, 97**  
***Lorca - Child of the Moon*, 69, 70, 71**  
***Love of Don Perlimplin and Belisa in the Garden, The*, 100**  
***Man Who Corrupted Hadleyville, The*, 80, 81**  
***Maria Elena*, 83**  
***Mikhoels the Wise*, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12**  
***Minutes Till Midnight*, 116**

*Nixon in China*, 1, 2, 3, 4  
*Only A Miracle*, 24, 25  
*Pamelia*, 53, 54, 55  
*Plump Jack*, 57  
*Postman Always Rings Twice, The*, 84, 85, 86  
*Question of Taste, A*, 98, 99  
*Quiet Place, A*, 26, 27, 28, 29  
*Rappacini's Daughter*, 56  
*Rasputin*, 94  
*Red Tide*, 102  
*Secret Garden, The*, 93  
*Snow Leopard*, 60  
*Stanislaus and Clare*, 23  
*Tartuffe*, 77, 78  
*Tell, Tale Heart, The*, 13  
*Tempest, The*, 64, 65, 66  
*That Pig of a Molette*, 101  
*Tight, Rope*, 31  
*West of Washington Square*, 63  
*Wife of Bath's Tale, The*, 72, 73  
*Wilbur*, 103, 104  
*Wild Boy, The*, 46  
*Will You Marry Me?*, 118, 119  
*Willie Stark*, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52  
*Woodlanders, The*, 87, 88, 89, 90  
*X*, 44, 45  
*Yellow Wallpaper, The*, 91, 92

**Index of Titles  
(by entry)**

**Ballad of the Spanish Civil Guard, 70**  
**Condemn not, Oh woeful man, 114**  
**Dear Child Reprise, 41**  
**Death and Finale, 86**  
**Finale: Power, 35**  
**Frank's Dreams, 85**  
**Frank's Road Song, 84**  
**Humble's Scene: How Beautiful Are Thy Feet With Shoes, 16**  
**Letter Arias, 40**  
**Lorca's Soliloquy, 71**  
**Poet's Aria, 31**  
**Scottsboro Song, 10**  
**Shabtai's Torah Song, 5**  
**Song of the Wandering Jew, 8**  
**Star-Bear Song, 12**  
**The Table is Always Set for Two, 107**  
**The Curse, 36**

Index of Opening Lines  
(by entry)

- Aha! Eros in love! (*Eros and Psyche*), 42
- Ah, in my work of changing hearts (*A Change of Hearts*), 67
- Ah, Sister Heloise (*Abelard and Heloise*), 115
- All that matter is your arms (*Lorca Child of the Moon*), 71
- An interesting little wine (*A Question of Taste*), 99
- A solitary old man (*The Lady of the Castle*), 107
- A strange unknown fact (*A Change of Hearts*), 68
- As you fly across the open sky (*Snow Leopard*), 60
- A toast! To the luckiest Groom in the Hist'ry of Man (*Casanova's Homecoming*), 22
- Be cheerful, sir (*The Tempest*), 65
- Behold a fool! (*Felipe*), 15
- Between exile and redemption is the first Sabbath (*The False Messiah*), 5
- Bibles, Testaments, Psalters (*Benjamin: An Opera of Our Own Invention*), 37
- Black horses! The shoes of their hooves are black (*Lorca - Child of the Moon*), 70
- By Jove! What a pretty woman! (*That Pig of a Molette*), 101
- Come back, Willie, come back home (*Willie Stark*), 49
- Come Christmas (*Gift of the Magi/ Warren*), 117
- Condemn not one whose sufferings outpace Job's (*Abelard and Heloise*), 114
- Courage my friend (*Pamelia*), 53
- Dearest God, please hear me (*Angel Levine*), 105
- Deborah, our bell (*Benjamin: An Opera of Our Own Invention*), 39
- December seventeenth, Seventeen sixty-five July tenth, Seventeen Sixty-nine (*Benjamin: An Opera of Our Own Invention*), 40
- Don't Amarantha...don't be so frightened (*Amarantha*), 16
- Down in Scottsboro, in Alabama (*Mikhoels the Wise*), 10
- Drowned in the serene abyss of sleep (*Achilles*), 62
- Evarist. What has he and why to do with all of this? (*The Fan*), 58
- Even now, after a year (*Felipe*), 14

- Ev'ry time the sun goes down (*A Death in the Family*), 75  
 Farewell my children, dear (*Pamelia*), 54  
 Greetings from the five million Jews (*Mikhoels the Wise*), 11  
 Gone forever are the gypsies (*Lorca - Child of the Moon*), 69  
 Gone! The mountains, the shady hills with gray and blueshadows (*A Death in the Family*), 74  
 Here's neither bush nor shrub (*The Tempest*), 64  
 Her name was Constance, but he called her Lilly (*The Secret Garden*), 93  
 Her voice, her words spin me in a maze (*Stanislaus and Clare*), 23  
 How little you understand your own heart (*Maria Elena*), 83  
 How sad, an idealist, the most perfect fool of all (*Wilbur*), 103  
 How strange he is to me still (*The Wild Boy*), 46  
 I am a cosmopolitan (*The Confidence Man*), 96  
 I am old and cannot sleep forever (*Nixon in China*), 4  
 I caught a ride to San Bernadino (*The Postman Always Rings Twice*), 84  
 I cut, I clip, groom,snip,wash,wave, tint and shave (*Fourscore*), 32  
 I did not intend to be a poet (*Tight-Rope*), 31  
 I'd like to see, it would be paradise on earth (*Casino Paradise*), 36  
 If not now, when? (*The False Messiah*), 7  
 If I tell you a story, will you listen? (*Mikhoels the Wise*), 12  
 If they should part us now - can hearts break more than once? (*The Woodlanders*), 89  
 If this was my place (*The Yellow Wallpaper*), 91  
 I got to get away (*The Postman Always Rings Twice*), 85  
 I have come so far among so many (X), 45  
 I have done all I could for the lady I knew! (*The Woodlanders*), 90  
 I know this castle (*The Lady of the Castle*), 108  
 I'm a self-made man (*Will You Marry Me?*), 118  
 I shall certainly chop off some heads (*Only A Miracle*), 24  
 I sit out here ev'ry night (*The King's Twelve Moons*), 113  
 I stand before you triumphant! (*Willie Stark*), 52  
 I sure like your mouth organ son (*Willie Stark*), 48  
 It is with sad and somber tones (*The Wife of Bath's Tale*), 72  
 It's from me (*Benjamin: An Opera of Our Own Invention*), 41  
 I wish I could sleep (*A Quiet Place*), 27  
 I wouldn't tell you what I know (X), 44

- Jack, you know why I keep Duffy around? (*Willie Stark*), 50
- Jeffrey Aspern is my God! (*The Aspern Papers/ Hagemann*), 59
- Ladies and Gentlemen! (*The Confidence Man*), 95
- Ladies and Gentlemen, Comrades and Friends (*Nixon in China*), 2
- Love, love that lies here wounded (*The Love of Don Perlimplin and Belisa in the Garden*), 100
- Me? Ha! I haven't slept for days (*Casanova's Homecoming*), 21
- Mister McGruter conducted the choir (*Red Tide*), 102
- Mister Premiere, distinguished guests (*Nixon in China*), 3
- Must you play so sad a song? (*The Wife of Bath's Tale*), 73
- My lord, the man I know (*Plump Jack*), 57
- My wife, my queen, queen of my kingdom and queen of my heart (*The King's Twelve Moons*), 112
- News has a kind of mystery (*Nixon in China*), 1
- No, I was never a thief (*Casanova's Homecoming*), 19
- No meal can be called complete (*A Question of Taste*), 98
- No, the letter is true (*Willie Stark*), 51
- O fortunate men of lowly birth (*Iphigenia*), 30
- Oh, Cosmos, with your myriad stars (*Minutes Till Midnight*), 116
- Oh, Gottenyu, this is too much! (*Angel Levine*), 106
- Oh Hattie! Why is you leaving me? (*Harriet, The Woman Called Moses*), 79
- Oh, Jennie, how the regimen is working now! (*The Yellow Wallpaper*), 92
- Once not long ago lived a generous fox (*The Man Who Corrupted Hadleyville*), 80
- Once upon a time on a cold winter night (*Willie Stark*), 47
- Opposites attract and that's a fact (*Fourscore*), 33
- Put him in for a year or two, see what happens then (*Casino Paradise*), 35
- 'Scuse me ladies (*A Death in the Family*), 76
- She left suddenly (*West of Washington Square*), 63
- So, brannew summer, you will never be all that (*The Woodlanders*), 88
- Strange beyond all strangness (*The Aspern Papers/Argento*), 17
- Tah chazai chaivan d'itgzar Avraham nafak maiarla (*Kabbalah*), 111
- That man's a saint (*Tartuffe*), 77
- The day will come when civil Troy will fall (*Achilles*), 61

- The fellow in the carol sent his love five golden rings (*The Gift of the Magi/Brown*), 34
- The happiest day, the happiest hour (*The Tell-Tale Heart*), 13
- The love of heav'nly virtue cannot cancel earthly love (*Tartuffe*), 78
- There's a law (*A Quiet Place*), 28
- They believe in me! (*Rasputin*), 94
- They'll never understand (*Pamelia*), 55
- This time they got me for it well and true (*The Postman Always Rings Twice*), 86
- Though royal robes befit that queenly frame (*Casanova's Homecoming*), 20
- Through the window I saw a spinning (*The False Messiah*), 6
- To be frugal 'till I have paid all the debts I owe (*Benjamin: An Opera of Our Own Invention*), 38
- What a yielding nature she has (*The Aspern Papers/Argento*), 18
- What's keeping her? (*The Kona Coffee Cantata*), 110
- What sweet music (*A Little Nightmare Music*), 97
- When the Ziggurats of Babel began eroding (*Mikhoels the Wise*), 8
- Who would believe an Old Man, alone among old stone walls (*The Lady of the Castle*), 109
- Wilbur! It's too late to think about it (*Wilbur*), 104
- Woman I love, how you call to me (*The Woodlanders*), 87
- Ye elves of hills (*The Tempest*), 66
- Yes, daughter, soon there will come to the garden (*Rappacini's Daughter*), 56
- You came to me to make your portraits (*The Man Who Corrupted Hadleyville*), 81
- You! Help me? But you are only a mortal (*Only A Miracle*), 25
- You, Jews of America (*Mikhoels the Wise*), 9
- Your robe was still dripping (*The Death of the Virgin*), 82
- You're late. You shouldn't have come (*A Quiet Place*), 26
- You're the first person who's ever been honest with me (*Will You Marry Me?*), 119
- You see, Daddy, that... um... That death does bring some relief (*A Quiet Place*), 29
- Zephyr they call me, the one who blows sweet (*Eros and Psyche*), 43