

THE ART SONGS OF TOM CIPULLO

by

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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.

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Abstract

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by

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This study explores the role Tom Cipullo plays in the development of American Art Song 1992-2008. Born in 1956, composer Tom Cipullo has written well over 100 songs. His music is complex and challenging yet firmly rooted in the 20th-century continuation of Romanticism. Cipullo's choice of poetry is almost always contemporary American, embracing a full range of themes. His songs have won top awards in their field, and are well received by audiences and performers.

Following an introduction to the research and a biography, "A Guide to the Songs" provides an annotated catalog and performance guide to 67 published songs written between 1992 and 2007. The performance guide explains non-standard indications in the scores and outlines Cipullo's interpretive preferences. It provides essential information for singers, pianists, coaches, and teachers wishing to access this repertoire. A discussion of the development of the "neo-Romantic" movement in the field of Art Song, and Cipullo's role in this progression follows. Appendices provide an alphabetic list of songs, a list of authors set by Cipullo, a complete works list 1983-2009, a discography, and a bibliography.

This study is informed through interviews with Cipullo. The author prepared, coached, and performed many of the songs; attended coachings and master classes with

Cipullo; and attended live performances of Cipullo's songs. The remaining songs are analyzed through both professional and unpublished recordings. Several prominent performers of Cipullo's vocal music provided live interviews. Secondary sources aid in identifying Cipullo's role in the development of American Art Song 1992-2008. This study serves as the basis for further research into Cipullo's life and works, and for successful performances of his songs.

INTRODUCTION

I discovered Tom Cipullo's songs on a *Marilyn Horne Foundation* recital CD in the Firestone Music Library of the New England Conservatory of Music. When I heard "The Pocketbook," I was intrigued by its wit and humor, and I set about looking for published music written by this living composer. To my dismay, I found nothing. My library did not have his songs, and I could not figure out where to purchase them. I scoured the Internet, finding sparse and obviously out-of-date references to Cipullo and his music, but nothing that brought me closer to getting my hands on his music. Frustrated, I complained to my friend pianist Michael Shinn, and he declared with fervor "I know him!" Shinn contacted Cipullo and we were off and running. Cipullo helped us with everything, from obtaining scores, to interpreting the music. He attended my first doctoral recital, which only contained two of his songs, and enthusiastically yelled "brava" from the audience, following a set of songs by Dominick Argento. His friendship and generosity has continued to dazzle me over the years.

My initial experience, however, led me to wonder how others were managing to access this fabulous repertoire. Eventually I came to realize that unless you knew someone who knew him, and you lived in New York City, you would likely miss out. As I became more familiar with Cipullo's massive song output, I was heartbroken that so many eager young singers – thirsty for vocally-friendly music with interesting texts – might never find these gems. After researching extensively, I realized that the only "written" information available was in the form of two (at that time) Oxford University Press Publications (which contained some background information), some CD liner notes from a handful of recordings, publication reviews in the *Journal of Singing*, and live

performance reviews. These resources were not extremely helpful for writing program notes, or for trying to understand how to perform in his aesthetic.

This all culminated in my desire to produce comprehensive, authoritative, and helpful information on Tom Cipullo and his songs. It is my hope that this study will aid singers, pianists, coaches, and teachers in their own exploration of Cipullo's songs, and that it will inspire further discussion of his works.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express sincere gratitude to Tom Cipullo for composing songs of profound beauty and wit, and depth of interest. His contributions to this study are immeasurable, and his generosity, encouragement, and friendship have fueled me through the process of research and writing.

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Lastly, my greatest blessing is my family. From my parents who convinced me that I could achieve all my dreams, to my daughter Lydia who is certain that I am a super hero, their encouragement kept me going. I thank my daughter Miriam for kicking me, literally, toward the finish line. But most importantly, I thank my husband Nathan for his patience, understanding, and unwavering support.

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CHAPTER ONE:

BIOGRAPHY

I. Childhood and Education

Tom Cipullo was born 22 November 1956 in Glen Cove, New York to Lois Cipullo (née Stevens) a store clerk and homemaker, and Ralph Cipullo (a.k.a. Ray Carle) a jazz musician and bar and restaurant owner. Tom Cipullo was the second of two boys, his elder brother Christopher James Cipullo, also a musician, was born in 1950. Born in 1926, Lois Stevens was raised in Ohio and came to the Bronx as a young adult. After leaving high school she worked in department stores such as Gimbels and Macy's. From her years of experience as a clerk, she was a brilliant gift wrapper. She passed away in 1998. Cipullo dedicated two songs to her: "The Crane at Gibbs' Pond" (1992) from the cycle *Long Island Songs*, and "Epilogue" (1998) from the cycle *A Visit with Emily*.

Ralph Cipullo (b. 1922) worked as a jazz bass player under the name Ray Carle for most of his life. He took this stage name to deemphasize his Italian heritage. His mother, Josephine Cipullo (née Petro) was a mandolin player who had a very beautiful singing voice. Ralph Cipullo grew up in the Bronx, graduated high school, and joined the United States Marine Corps during World War II. After being stationed in the South Pacific, he returned to New York City and met Lois Stevens at the pharmacy where she was working. The two married in 1949, and moved to Westbury, Long Island shortly thereafter. Ralph Cipullo enjoyed the affluent music environment following WWII where every bar, even the cheap ones, was hiring live musicians. As was the standard expectation, he was a musician who could play any song in any key. Later in life, he built bars and restaurants so that he could have a place to showcase the music he wanted

to hear and play. Lois and Ralph divorced in 1974, and Ralph moved to Florida in the 1980s. He stopped playing bass professionally at the age of 85 because of the inconvenience of transporting the amplifier.

In 1956, Ralph Cipullo had been playing in a band at a Hilton Hotel, and another band employed there was the Tommy Dorsey band. Ralph Cipullo was a fan of the Tommy Dorsey band, and of its young leader. Tom Cipullo was legally named “Tommy Cipullo” after the late Tommy Dorsey, who died tragically from choking in his sleep on 26 November 1956, just days after Cipullo’s birth. Though his brother Christopher James Cipullo was given a middle name at his baptism, Tom Cipullo was never baptized and does not have a legal middle name. Professionally, he has dropped the diminutive ending on his name, and was never named “Thomas.”

Cipullo’s brother, Christopher also went into the field of music as a drummer in a rock band. He was hired by the USO (United Service Organizations) to entertain troops on army bases around the world. In 1984, he and his band were on a tour of the Far East, where anti-American sentiment was rampant. While sightseeing off base in the Philippines, Christopher was murdered. Of the four assailants involved, two of them were eventually caught and sent to prison. The brothers were close, and Cipullo was deeply affected by Christopher’s death. “The Odor of Pear” (1992) from the cycle *Long Island Songs* is dedicated to Christopher.

Tom Cipullo had a colorful musical life in his formative years. His father often brought other musicians home from work. The two Cipullo boys would occasionally accompany their father to see him play in bars and restaurants, and would sometimes go to New York City to see a movie musical at Radio City Music Hall. Cipullo was exposed

to the music of George and Ira Gershwin and that of Cole Porter, and was drawn to jazz and show tunes. The Cipullos had a music room in their home in Westbury, which held a Lester piano with 68 keys. Cipullo learned to play on this instrument, mostly reading out of fake books.

Cipullo's formal piano studies began at age five with a Manhattan School of Music student, Robert Yodice. Cipullo studied with Yodice for three or four years, and then took some time off to explore his youthful interest in baseball. Soon after, Cipullo began piano lessons again, this time with Graham Forbes. Forbes had been an accompanist for Frank Sinatra, and was well versed in the genres of jazz and show tunes. Cipullo stayed with Forbes until age 14, when he began to study classical music as well. He then began lessons with Frank Launi who lived in Huntington, Long Island. Christopher Cipullo volunteered to drive his brother to lessons every week. Despite his boredom with waiting for the 60-minute lesson to end, Christopher continued to take his brother to lessons for several years. Cipullo studied with Frank Launi until he graduated from college.

Cipullo attended Cherry Lane Elementary School where he impressed his third grade teacher with his piano rendition of "Moon River." Later he attended Rushmore School, and then Carle Place High School. At Carle Place, he had a very influential teacher, William Westcott, who built a chorus and gave Cipullo no choice but to participate. He could sing bass or tenor using falsetto, so he was much in demand. Since it was known that he could read music, he was asked to learn to play the tuba in order to join the school marching band. Westcott also taught music theory and encouraged Cipullo to begin composing. Westcott later left his job at the school, but he and Cipullo

remained friends for years. Cipullo graduated from Carle Place High School in 1974. He began college at Hofstra University on Long Island, and continued to study piano with Frank Launi. Cipullo felt a strong sense of loyalty to Launi and therefore did not study with one of the piano faculty members at Hofstra, but he did take advantage of the university's composition faculty, namely Albert Tepper and Elie Siegmeister. Later, a professor shared with Cipullo that there was some debate among the faculty as to whether or not they should admit him to the university. They eventually decided to accept him, because he had one composition that they believed was "pretty good."¹

Cipullo's first composition teacher at Hofstra University was Elie Siegmeister. Siegmeister is associated with his writings on music, including *The Music Lover's Handbook* (1943) and *Harmony and Melody* (1965-66). However, he was also a prolific song composer, with an output of over 200 songs, and professor of composition at Hofstra University from 1949 to 1976. Cipullo recalls his piano facility as incredibly flawless. Siegmeister could sight-read anything, including full scores. Siegmeister instilled in Cipullo a great respect for technique and counterpoint, and his direct and somewhat severe approach was very helpful. Since Cipullo hadn't formally studied composition before coming to Hofstra, he felt he was behind. He was anxious to catch up by composing rapidly and prolifically. Siegmeister wanted him to focus on counterpoint and would not allow him to write a string quartet until his counterpoint technique reached a certain level of fluency. When Cipullo began to explore song composition, Siegmeister required him to bring one song each by Debussy, Brahms, Schumann, and Ives for study

¹ Tom Cipullo, interview by the author, digital audio recording, New York City, 24 January 2009.

at every lesson. He emphasized the role of the piano, stating that it must have its own identity and character, but not overshadow the voice, yet always must support it.

At Hofstra, Cipullo studied harmony and theory with Dr. Helen Greenwald. She gave him one of his few A-minus grades because of his creative harmonies. He liked to alter certain chords, but Greenwald did not find the resulting sound to be musical.

Cipullo graduated from Hofstra University in 1979, earning a Bachelor of Science in Music with an emphasis in composition and a minor in literature. He graduated magna cum laude, Phi Beta Kappa, and with highest honors in music. He was the first in his family to attend and graduate college.

In 1981, Cipullo began a Master's degree program at Boston University. During his first year, he studied composition with Theodore Antoniou, who's compositional aesthetic was influenced by atonality and serial techniques. This style differed greatly from Cipullo's, which was colored by jazz, musical theater, and a tendency toward tonality. The two were not a good match, so Cipullo changed teachers to study with Girolamo Arrigo, a visiting professor from Italy. Arrigo was a more flexible teacher, but he returned to Italy after just one semester at Boston University.

Finally, Cipullo began composition lessons with David Del Tredici. Del Tredici had just received the Pulitzer Prize for *In memory of a summer day* in 1980, and many students wanted to study with him. His classes were also full of eager young aspiring composers. Cipullo recalls the first day of his orchestration class, where Del Tredici found "too many" students (there were approximately 12). He decided to audition them all, by requesting them to sight-read the orchestral score of Tchaikovsky's Fourth Symphony. Serendipitously, this was one of Cipullo's favorite pieces, and he had played

it at the piano many times. He passed the audition, and made a favorable first impression on Del Tredici. For Cipullo, one of the most memorable aspects of Del Tredici's teaching, was his concept of harmonic motion. He has an innate sense of when certain harmonies change, when they need to change, and how they ought to change.

Del Tredici's style falls into two distinct categories, atonal works (1958-67), and increasingly tonal works (1968-). After trying to write a string quartet for a year, and "sitting joylessly at the piano,"² he experienced a kind of breakthrough, and decided that he wouldn't compose a single note that he didn't enjoy. His encounter with the writings of Lewis Carroll marked the change in style, and he set texts from *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass* for three decades. Del Tredici was adamant that composing must be fun, which was, as Cipullo says, "the opposite of what most of us had been hearing our whole lives."³ He taught with humor and wit, and he was known for wearing a T-shirt stating "Tonality Lives." He encouraged all of his students to work at the piano, and to play and sing their songs. He would often say, "play it again," after the first hearing of a composition, and then would share comments almost always having to do with harmony or orchestration. Cipullo believes that Del Tredici is one of the most brilliant orchestrators of his generation, and has great admiration for him.

During his time at Boston University, Cipullo was a founding member of the prestigious group "Underground Composers," which presented new compositions throughout the greater Boston area. The group still exists today.

² Erica Duncan, "Encounters; A composer who finds lasting inspiration in *Alice in Wonderland*," *The New York Times*, 3 March 1996, sec. 13LI.

³ Tom Cipullo, interview.

After graduating from Boston University in 1985, Cipullo moved to Hawaii for two years. He attended the Aspen Music Festival in 1986, where he studied with Bernard Rands and Earle Brown. Brown was known at the time for his “open form” piece, *Available Forms*, which used graphic notation to define parameters within which performers could improvise. While the avant-garde movement did not speak to Cipullo, it was the fashionable style of American composition throughout his formal education. At the time, Brown was enjoying prominent status in this compositional genre. Cipullo felt strongly that live performance already had an indeterminate nature since every performer was different, and he believed the musical materials Brown was employing were not very interesting and would not likely lead to a “sophisticated artistic experience.”⁴ In a master class, Cipullo challenged Brown’s position on improvisation, stating that improvisation does not always lead to successful music making. Brown responded with mild irritation and did not seem to appreciate Cipullo’s objections to “open form” style.

In 1988, Cipullo returned to New York City to enroll in the doctoral program at The City University of New York. He wanted to continue to study with Del Tredici, who encouraged Cipullo’s tonal compositional style. Del Tredici remains extremely supportive of Cipullo and his works to this day. Cipullo successfully completed all of his coursework, comprehensive exams, and his dissertation proposal. His dissertation was to focus on William Flanagan (1923-1969), a song composer and music critic, and a contemporary of Virgil Thompson and Ned Rorem. Cipullo was drawn to Flanagan’s music because it was tonal, yet complex, much like his own compositional style.

⁴ Tom Cipullo, email to the author, 18 June 2010.

However, this time coincided with some of Cipullo's first major compositional commissions, and he never completed his dissertation. Despite not having earned his doctorate, he became a professor of music at Bronx Community College (part of the City University of New York).

II. Professional Life

Cipullo's love of tonal music is closely tied to his prolific vocal output. While still a student, he sensed that vocal music gave rise to tonal music. It was as if having a melody and a text gave permission to compose in a tonal style. His love of poetry and language also fueled the fire. John Goodman, one of his professors at Boston University, advised him to write more songs. Cipullo decided that he would like to carve out his niche, and become known for writing songs. He was also influenced by Ned Rorem's diaries, which he had read and admired.

While studying at the CUNY Graduate Center, Cipullo and five fellow composition students founded "The Friends and Enemies of New Music," a group of composers who produce and present concerts of contemporary American chamber music (including song). Since 1989, the group has been providing a performance outlet for new music in a wide variety of aesthetic and musical styles. It also gave Cipullo the opportunity to develop his craft, and have his works regularly performed and received by New York City audiences. The founding members of "Friends and Enemies" included John Link, Ben Yarmolinsky, Gregory Pinney, Nancy Gunn, and Cynthia Miller. The latter three members have moved out of New York City and are no longer active in the group. Now in its 22nd season, "Friends and Enemies" consists of three members: Cipullo, Link and Yarmolinsky.

Following the end of his formal education, Cipullo was hired as a lecturer to teach at Bronx Community College, a division of The City University of New York. He earned his doctoral equivalency in 1998 and currently serves as a tenured full professor. He teaches general music courses, although there is no music major available. He does not teach composition.

In 1992, Cipullo was invited to the Pacific Music Festival in Sapporo, Japan where his vocal chamber piece *Rain* was to be performed. This piece had already had its premiere in February 1992 by tenor Paul Sperry, who also served as the director of the voice program at the Pacific Music Festival. Sperry introduced Cipullo to pianist Michael Barrett at the festival. After hearing *Rain*, Barrett commissioned Cipullo to write *The Husbands*, which was completed in 1993. Barrett's commission came via the New York Festival of Song (NYFOS), which was still a new organization at the time. NYFOS premiered *The Husbands* at the Greenwich House Music School where it was very well received. A review in *Chorus!* said that the piece "so effectively moved the audience through its emotional paces that the piece seemed much longer than its ten minutes."⁵

Commissions have often supported Cipullo's work. Two major commissioners in her career have been Paul Sperry and Tobé Malawista. Sperry has commissioned songs by many young composers, and has had a long collaborative relationship with Cipullo. One of Cipullo's early commissions was from Sperry, for *The Land of Nod* (1994). Through the organization Joy in Singing, Sperry also commissioned "Crickets" which

⁵ Ken Smith, "New York Festival of Song: Michael Barrett and Steven Blier, conducting," *Chorus!* 5, no. 7 (1993).

later became the first song in the set *Late Summer* (2001). As a tenor, Sperry went on to premiere, perform, promote, and record other works by Cipullo, including *Rain* (1992), *Long Island Songs* (1992), *The Land of Nod* (1994), and *Another Reason Why I Don't Keep a Gun in the House* (2000).

Cipullo met soprano and founding member of the Mirror Visions Ensemble Tobé Malawista in 1995. She commissioned Cipullo to write his first large cycle: *A Visit with Emily* (1998). Through the Mirror Visions Ensemble, Malawista commissioned several songs including *Aubade* (1996), *The Cove* (1996), and *Harriet's Song* (1999); as well as the larger cycle *Secrets* (2002, revised 2003). Cipullo wrote *Ask the Moon* (2005) for Malawista as a Christmas gift.

Cipullo's collaborations have been fruitful, and have often challenged him to set a particular text that he may not have chosen on his own. He appreciates the ways he has grown from these experiences, and acknowledges that collaboration has been very good for him, though his preference is to work alone.

Many moving and successful songs have been written of Cipullo's own inspiration. He spent many hours browsing in the poetry section at the Mid-Manhattan Library, which led him to discover the works of several contemporary American poets. Among these is William Carpenter, whose poems inspired five works between 1992 and 1997 (*Symphony: At the Foxtrot Motel*, *Rain*, *The Husbands*, *The Ecuadorian Sailors*, and *Landscape with Figures*). Other than *Symphony: At the Foxtrot Motel*, all the songs are chamber pieces set for voice and piano with additional instruments or voices.

In the mid-1990s, Cipullo wrote several non-vocal pieces. These include *Sparkler* (1995) for four-hand piano, an arrangement of *Sparkler* (1995) for orchestra, *Water Lilies*

(1995) for solo piano, *Paradigm Shifting* (1996) for solo violin, and *The Shadows Around the House* (1996) for SATB chorus, string quartet and percussion. The latter piece was commissioned by I Cantori di New York and recorded on the PGM label. In 1999, Cipullo was commissioned by the Monmouth Civic Chorus to write *Voices of the Young* for SATB chorus and orchestra. This work is based on texts from poetry by Monmouth County schoolchildren. Between 1999 and 2009, all of Cipullo's compositions have been song cycles with one exception: his opera, *Glory Denied*, which premiered in 2007. In the first decade of the 21st century Cipullo wrote over 70 songs, which comprise 10 song cycles, and several stand-alone songs.

Cipullo has won several notable Art Song composition competitions, including the 2006 Phyllis C. Wattis Prize for Song Composition from the San Francisco Song Festival (*Drifts and Shadows*) and the 2008 NATS (National Association of Teachers of Singing) Art Song Competition (*Of a Certain Age*). He continues to receive awards and fellowships from artist foundations around the world where many of his compositions are completed.

Cipullo primarily resides in New York City, and is married to visual artist Hedwig Brouckaert. Brouckaert designed the CD cover to *Landscape with Figures* on Albany Records, and took some of the photos featured on Cipullo's website:

<http://www.tomcipullo.com>.

Many of Cipullo's colleagues interviewed for this dissertation underlined his generosity, humility, and kindness. He donates his time to singers and pianists who are preparing to perform his songs. He coaches with enthusiasm, exuberance, and

specificity. He fosters young composers and performers, and makes himself accessible to anyone interested in his music.

CHAPTER TWO

STYLE

In an era where innovation is highly valued, it is challenging to group composers together by style. While maintaining that Tom Cipullo has an extremely distinctive voice, it is possible to trace his influences and identify contemporaries working in a similar stylistic vein. This study proposes that Cipullo's style continues a steady line of American Romantic composers stemming from Samuel Barber and Gian Carlo Menotti; but is also influenced by eclectic sources including jazz and musical theater. Other notable influences include Cipullo's composition teachers Elie Siegmeister and David Del Tredici, the latter being credited with significant contribution to the "neo-Romantic" movement of the 1970s. However, re-embracing tonality did not "begin" with Del Tredici or any other composer. Tonal style has continually existed as an alternative to the mainstream – particularly in the genre of song – since the time of the great Romantic song composers of the 19th century. The "new" aspect of this tonal approach has been the gradually increasing use of chromaticism.

Following a discussion of Barber and Menotti, two generations of contemporaries will be discussed. Well into their golden years, Lee Hoiby, Ned Rorem, and Richard Hundley were sidelined during the avant-garde movement, yet all held fast to tonal and lyrical song composition. Cipullo shares many stylistic traits with these three composers. Lori Laitman and Ricky Ian Gordon represent two contemporaries born within a few years of Cipullo whose songs are also built upon the tenets of tonality. Taking into account his many influences, Cipullo's own style is identified and discussed. While still

a young man and a prolific composer, his influence on others can in part be measured through his roles as a teacher, collaborator, and concert presenter.

I. Early Eclectic Influences

Cipullo's earliest influence was his father, Ralph Cipullo (Ray Carle), who made his living as a jazz bass player. The young Cipullo was surrounded by the sounds of jazz, particularly Gershwin and Porter, and he taught himself to play the piano out of jazz fake books. Working in the jazz idiom, Cipullo's formative perception of song presumably associated complex harmonies with accessible vocal melodies and texts.

One of Cipullo's early piano teachers, Graeme Forbes, had worked as Frank Sinatra's accompanist. While teaching a master class in 2009, Cipullo cites Frank Sinatra as part of his "blend of influences:"

If you listen to Frank Sinatra the interesting thing is that he does these crazy phrases that shape the line in such a way that focus your attention where you aren't expecting it to go, and it forces your ear to listen, it's really intriguing.¹

Not a formally trained singer, Cipullo often sings his songs to teach them to singers. His crooning vocal sound has been affectionately referred to as "that Frank Sinatra *rubato* style."²

Another great influence on the young Cipullo was musical theater, specifically the musicals of Frank Loesser. One of his earliest memories of being "fixated" on a song was after hearing "Standing on the corner" from Loesser's *Most Happy Fella*. He recalls

¹ Cipullo, *Master class: Songs of Tom Cipullo*, digital audio recording, Malibu, CA, 22 June 2009.

² Andrew Garland, telephone interview by the author, Denver, 17 August 2010.

playing the song by ear at the piano and unraveling the shift of rhythmic pulse on “watchin’ all the girls, watchin’ all the girls, watchin’ all the girls.” The song is primarily in duple meter, but uses a hemiola to shift the pulse to feel like triple meter in this phrase. This discovery was seminal for Cipullo. He was awestruck by the idea that a popular song could “change” meter. He describes his reaction,

I thought: Wow! You can do that? You can be accessible and tuneful but unpredictable and expressive. You can go where people don’t expect, but you can still invite them in.³

Remnants of these early influences are heard clearly in Cipullo’s songs. Many of the songs call for spoken lines, such as “The Pocketbook” from *How to Get Heat Without Fire*. This carry-over from musical theater is quite rare in the recital hall, and has a striking effect with audiences.

Example 2.1: “The Pocketbook”⁴ mm. 152-154

151 **stringendo** (passionate) **string. ancora**

Spoken: *God Bless you,
Bergdorf Goodman!*

stringendo **string. ancora**

Cipullo frequently uses hemiola and change of meter to remain accessible and expressive.

³ Cipullo, interview, 8 March 2008.

⁴ Music and text © 2005 by Tom Cipullo, from *How to Get Heat Without Fire*, reprinted by permission of the composer.

Example 2.2: “Embrace”⁵ mm. 30-32

Cipullo enjoys harmonic colors that evoke a strong sense tonality with simultaneous dissonance.

Example 2.3: “Epilogue”⁶ mm. 37-40

The composite sound on the downbeat of measure 39 evokes F-major with the use of the tonic triad F-A-C. However at the same time, the dissonance of the diads G-A and B \flat -C

⁵ Text for “Embrace” © 1988 by Billy Collins, from *The Apple that Astonished Paris* by Billy Collins, used by permission of University of Arkansas Press. Music for “Embrace” from *Another Reason Why I Don’t Keep a Gun in the House* by Tom Cipullo © Oxford University Press Inc, 2004. Assigned to Oxford University Press 2010. Music extracts reproduced by permission. All rights reserved.

⁶ Text in public domain. Music for “Epilogue” from *A Visit with Emily* by Tom Cipullo © Oxford University Press Inc, 2004. Assigned to Oxford University Press 2010. Music extracts reproduced by permission. All rights reserved.

add complexity. Tenor Paul Sperry states that Cipullo “treats major seconds as a *consonance*” but deems this treatment successful.⁷ Consonant major seconds are found throughout “Epilogue” and contribute to its haunting effect.

II. Higher Education and the *Avant-Garde*

Cipullo’s first formal composition teacher at Hofstra University was Elie Siegmeister. Siegmeister (1909-1991) is highly regarded for numerous publications of American folk songs and he composed many large orchestral works, operas, chamber pieces, piano works, and over 200 original songs in a style described as having been “‘romantic’ all along.”⁸

In 1927, Siegmeister followed aspiring composers such as Aaron Copland and Virgil Thomson to Paris “for a musical ‘finishing’ at the hands of Nadia Boulanger.”⁹ While he valued her sense of counterpoint and “melodic structure,” he disagreed esthetically with Boulanger, rejecting her attempt “to force the neoclassical style.”¹⁰

Siegmeister was always sensitive to how an audience would receive a piece of new music, and strove to make music accessible even for the layperson. This sensitivity railed against the “Who cares if you listen?” attitude, articulated by Milton Babbitt in 1958, and is a testament of Siegmeister’s individuality and determination.

⁷ Paul Sperry, interview by the author, New York City, 28 May 2009.

⁸ Carol J. Oja, “Composer with a Conscience: Elie Siegmeister in Profile,” *American Music* 6, no. 2 (Summer 1988): 174.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 159.

¹⁰ Siegmeister interview by Carol J. Oja, Great Neck, NY, 20 July 1985, quoted in Carol J. Oja, “Composer with a Conscience: Elie Siegmeister in Profile,” *American Music* 6, no. 2 (Summer 1988): 159.

Siegmeister taught composition at Hofstra until 1976. Cipullo overlapped with Siegmeister by only one year, but continued his studies even after Siegmeister's retirement, traveling to Siegmeister's home in Great Neck, NY for lessons. Cipullo describes Siegmeister as a "severe"¹¹ teacher, rooted in the fundamental tradition of counterpoint. At one lesson, the ambitious Cipullo brought a setting of a Shakespearean Sonnet to show his teacher. Siegmeister, not amused in the least, stated that no composer has ever succeeded in appropriately setting a Shakespearean Sonnet, and proceeded to examine Cipullo's attempt.¹²

Cipullo had an interest in poetry, and completed a minor in literature at Hofstra. This naturally spilled over into his composition, and he began to take an active interest in composing song. In order to study this genre, Siegmeister instructed him to bring 4 new songs to every lesson: one each by Debussy, Brahms, Schumann (or Schubert), and Ives. These composers represent the best of text declamation, harmony, melody, and innovation in song. Siegmeister instilled in Cipullo the concept that the piano should have its own identity and character while never overshadowing the voice.

A few years before Cipullo began his studies at Hofstra, Siegmeister described the avant-garde movement in a 1971 radio interview stating,

I think we have all been victims of a gigantic musical snow job. A group of intellectual flimflam men have tried to sell us the idea that the most important thing about a piece of music is that it prove an esthetic theory, or that it make interesting designs on paper.¹³

¹¹ Cipullo, interview, 8 March 2008.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Siegmeister, script for a radio broadcast on WNCN, 25 April 1971, 6, quoted in Oja, "Composer with a Conscience: Elie Siegmeister in Profile," *American Music* 6, no. 2 (Summer 1988): 177.

We may assume from his stated opinions that he must have encouraged Cipullo to compose music that communicates with an audience. In any case, we may be certain that Siegmeister never suggested that Cipullo subscribe to an anti-tonal aesthetic.

The accessibility of Cipullo's music is striking. After performing one of his comic songs, such as "The Pocketbook," the author has never made an exit from the recital hall without inquiries about the composer and heartfelt expressions of admiration for the song itself. Audiences laugh out loud, and respond equally to more serious sentiments. Cipullo carefully selects his texts, and sets them so that they remain the focus of the piece. He adds profoundly "singable" vocal lines, and lush piano harmonies to compliment the texts. In a letter to baritone Richard Lalli, he explains "My main musical interest is always in the harmony. I hear individual texts in certain keys, and the relationship between adjacent songs can make or break the effect."¹⁴ One critic praises Cipullo's text-setting stating, "he excels by pulling off the conjuror's trick mastered by all the great writers of poem-based song from Schubert forward – the blurring of the demarcation between where the word ends and the music begins."¹⁵

Two years after graduating from Hofstra, Cipullo enrolled at Boston University and began composition studies with David Del Tredici (b. 1937). Del Tredici's style had begun in the atonal realm in the late 1950s, but by the late 1960s was becoming increasingly more tonal. He was adamant that composing must be fun, which was, as

¹⁴ Cipullo, letter to Richard Lalli, 30 July 1997.

¹⁵ William Zagorski, review of *Landscape with Figures: Vocal Music of Tom Cipullo*, by Tom Cipullo, *Fanfare* 33, no. 4 (March-April 2010): 167.

Cipullo says, “the opposite of what most of us had been hearing our whole lives.”¹⁶ In stark contrast to Siegmeister, Del Tredici taught with humor and wit.

Like Cipullo, Del Tredici was a self-taught pianist until his teenage years. He won a scholarship to the University of California at Berkeley, where he specialized in Romantic piano literature, particularly Schumann. A summer spent studying piano with “an ogre of a teacher”¹⁷ (Leonard Shure) at the Aspen Music Festival drove Del Tredici to try his hand at composition. He wrote his first piece that summer (*Soliloquy*), which impressed Darius Milhaud,¹⁸ and set Del Tredici on the path of aspiring composer. He enrolled in the master’s program at Princeton University and studied with Roger Sessions and Earl Kim. He was there at the height of the serial movement, and Princeton was the epicenter.

Del Tredici describes the music of the time as “structural autopsies being passed off as fully realized music” and “German expressionism” which lacked the *expressive* element.¹⁹ He finished his degree in 1963, and quickly established himself as a prominent up-and-coming composer with the premiere of *I Hear an Army* at Tanglewood. This piece represents “Del Tredici’s most stringent use of 12-tone

¹⁶ Cipullo, interview, 8 March 2008.

¹⁷ Del Tredici, quoted in Tim Page, “The New Romance With Tonality,” *New York Times Magazine*, 29 May 1983 quoted in James E. Chute, “The Reemergence of Tonality in Contemporary Music as Shown in the Works of David Del Tredici, Joseph Schwantner, and John Adams,” (DMA diss., University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, 1991), 35.

¹⁸ James E. Chute, “The Reemergence of Tonality in Contemporary Music as Shown in the Works of David Del Tredici, Joseph Schwantner, and John Adams,” (DMA diss., University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, 1991), 36.

¹⁹ Page, “The New Romance With Tonality,” quoted in Chute, “The Reemergence of Tonality,” 38.

procedure” but still violates “basic tenets” with the use of fragmentation and repetition.²⁰ Del Tredici describes,

I tried to be a 12-tone composer. But I would get through the first 12 notes and then my ear would want another note. I used serial techniques, but I always liked to have some overriding expressive element.²¹

Del Tredici’s discovery of Lewis Carroll’s writings is often cited as the inspiration for his turn toward tonality. Del Tredici explains,

I certainly didn’t sit down and consciously decide to become a tonal composer. I fought it all the way. I came of musical age in the 1960s when atonality, whether you happened to like it or not, was widely considered to be the only viable contemporary musical language. So I had a lot of conditioning to shed. I simply set Lewis Carroll’s words in what seemed to me the most appropriate way – that is to say, tonally.²²

His own voice and specific reaction to a given text seem to take precedence over subscribing to a given musical style. In a 1983 *New York Times* Interview, he is not willing to say if tonality will remain part of his method.²³ He remains open to “finding out just where future texts will lead his music in the years to come.”²⁴

Cipullo is more firmly committed to tonality than Del Tredici. In his mind, vocal music can only be tonal. However, he does also reserve the right to react to a given text in a way that may suggest less tonality. One example of this is *glances* (2001).

²⁰ Chute, “The Reemergence of Tonality,” 40.

²¹ John Rockwell, “Del Tredici: His Success Could Be a Signpost,” *New York Times*, 26 October 1980, quoted in Chute, “The Reemergence of Tonality,” 39.

²² Page, “The New Romance With Tonality,” quoted in Chute, “The Reemergence of Tonality,” 51.

²³ Page, “The New Romance with Tonality,” quoted in Robert P. Mathews, “David Del Tredici: *Final Alice*,” (DMA diss., Peabody Conservatory of Music of Johns Hopkins University, 1993), 282.

²⁴ Mathews, “David Del Tredici: *Final Alice*,” 280.

While the majority of Cipullo's songs are as Paul Sperry describes, "unabashedly tonal,"²⁵ one cycle stands out as a "second strand where he isn't as concerned with tonality."²⁶ *glances* (2002). Cipullo admits that he took on the commission from Mezzo-Soprano Mary Ann Hart to set seven brief poems by Agata Tuszyńska because he thought it would take "two weeks"²⁷ to complete. At the time, he was behind on many projects (including the Mirror Visions Ensemble commission *Secrets*), and his interest in opera was growing. In spite of their brevity – the seven songs take less than eight minutes to perform – the songs are intensely emotional and atmospheric. It was Cipullo's response to Tuszyńska's "direct, sincere, and emotional"²⁸ poems that brought out a seemingly less-tonal side of his harmonic palate. Del Tredici's turn *toward* tonality was also in response to a text, the writings of Lewis Carroll.

Unlike the majority of Cipullo's song output, *glances* requires study in order to reveal lyricism and beauty. Baritone Andrew Garland describes the songs as the kind of music he likes, "but can't sell to an audience."²⁹ The vocal lines are lyrical and beautiful, as is almost always the case with Cipullo's songs. However, the piano part is often dissonant and sparse.

²⁵ Paul Sperry, letter to the CUNY Graduate Center, Department of music, 31 January 2008.

²⁶ Sperry, interview.

²⁷ Cipullo, *Master class: Songs of Tom Cipullo*.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Garland, interview.

Example 2.4: “Echo 1”³⁰ mm. 1-4

The image shows a musical score for the first four measures of "Echo 1". The score is in 6/8 time and marked "Allegretto giocoso" with a tempo of ♩ = 72. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The top staff is for the Voice, and the bottom two staves are for the Piano. The piano part is marked "una corda" and "pp poco accente". The lyrics "On - - - - ly an e -" are written below the voice staff. The piano accompaniment features lush, arpeggiated chords and melodic lines.

Cipullo’s neo-Romantic voice is present in the form of lush harmonies and overriding consonance when the emotion of the poem calls for it. The end of “Unbroken” is hopeful, and presents one of the most strikingly beautiful phrases of the cycle.

³⁰ Text for “Echo 1” © 2002 by Agata Tuszyńska, used by permission of the author. Music for “Echo 1” © 2002 by Tom Cipullo, from *glances* by Tom Cipullo, used by permission of the composer.

Example 2.5: “Unbroken”³¹ mm. 16-20

While Cipullo came of age at Boston University, he aligned himself with Del Tredici, a so-called neo-Romantic. The Romantic school existed throughout the 20th century, particularly in song literature, as represented by Samuel Barber, Gian Carlo Menotti, Ned Rorem, Lee Hoiby, and Richard Hundley. It was Del Tredici’s prominence as a successful “avant-garde” composer who then turned back to tonality that warranted

³¹ Text for “Unbroken” © 2002 by Agata Tuszyńska, used by permission of the author. Music for “Unbroken” © 2002 by Tom Cipullo, from *glances* by Tom Cipullo, used by permission of the composer.

the “neo” for his Romantic. The movement itself was not new, but Del Tredici (among others) certainly brought it into the mainstream academic discussion.

III. Style and Compositional Process

The Voice Emerges

Cipullo enrolled as a doctoral student at the City University of New York Graduate Center in 1988 so that he could continue to study with Del Tredici. Cipullo had already begun to write songs, and during the 1980s, he composed the extant cycles *Birds of North America* (1983) and *Turning Away* (1988). For Cipullo, a love of tonal music and a love of vocal music go hand-in-hand. He explains that writing vocal music gave him an excuse to compose in a tonal style. He was inspired by the diaries of Ned Rorem, enjoyed working with singers, and made a conscious decision to become “known” for writing songs.³² In a 2009 master class, Cipullo describes his compositional tradition,

Every contemporary composer that I know works within a certain tradition, whether it’s German expressionism, or something. Me, I’m an Italian-American, and try as I may to escape it, I have this blend of influences that comes from Italian opera like Puccini, and Frank Sinatra.³³

Cipullo would not consider his style “neo-Romantic” since it was never anything other than “Romantic.” However, for the purposes of this study, we may label Barber, Menotti, Hoiby, Rorem, Hundley, Siegmeister, Del Tredici, and Cipullo as neo-Romantics with the understanding that chromaticism and dissonance are frequently used within this style for expressive purposes.

³² Cipullo, interview by author, New York City, 24 January 2009.

³³ Cipullo, *Master class: Songs of Tom Cipullo*.

As Cipullo began to compose for a living, certain stylistic components became solidified. Firstly, Cipullo's choice of texts is not typical. Sperry states, "He is drawn to people with a quirky look on life."³⁴ He carefully selects texts, and then reacts to the text through his music. Identifiable traits of his songs include specific melodic application, evocative harmonies with distinctive textures, and frequent meter changes.

Cipullo's choice of melodic style depends on the text he is setting, however it may be said that all of his melodies are eminently "singable." In a performance review, Barry L. Cohen says, "Tom Cipullo is one of the rare emerging composers who can set texts with the utmost sensitivity and grace the human voice with exquisitely lyrical lines."³⁵ Even within the so-called "general flow of melodic recitative"³⁶ of "Crickets," Cipullo maintains an arching melody, with a *messa di voce* that follows the natural inclination of the voice, and encourages the phrase to be shaped for extreme expression.

³⁴ Sperry, interview.

³⁵ Barry L. Cohen, review of *The Songs of Tom Cipullo* by Joy in Singing, Cooper Union, NY, 8 April 2000, *The New Music Connoisseur: The Magazine Devoted to the Contemporary Music Scene* 10, nos. 3-4 (2002): 1.

³⁶ Judith Carman, review of *Late Summer* by Tom Cipullo, *Journal of Singing* 60, no. 3 (January-February 2004): 312.

Example 2.6: “Crickets”³⁷ mm. 6-8

The musical score for "Crickets" (mm. 6-8) is presented in three staves. The top staff is the vocal line, the middle staff is the piano right hand, and the bottom staff is the piano left hand. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 2/4. The score includes various dynamics and performance markings: *mp*, *poco f*, *riten.*, *p*, *a tempo*, *pp gently*, and *mp*. The vocal line includes the lyrics "you can still see light-ning bugs sig-nal-ing, look, a". The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note pattern in the right hand and a more complex bass line in the left hand. Performance instructions include *espr. sempre* and 3-measure rests.

Cipullo’s phrases are often extremely long and explicitly marked *no breath* in the score. While challenging, these long phrases are manageable with practice. The range and tessitura that Cipullo selects is often extreme. He will often write for “high baritone” as in the cycles *A Visit with Emily*, *Drifts and Shadows*, and *America 1968*, which all crest at F4 or higher. However, this leaves the cycles open to being sung by a dramatic tenor. He expects very low notes from sopranos and tenors, yet in the same song will ask for a floating *pp* (or softer) note in the upper part of the range. The final six measures of “The Garden” illustrate Cipullo’s use of extreme vocal range.

³⁷ Text for “Crickets” © 1991 by Time Being Books, from *Pterodactyl Rose: Poems of Ecology* by William Heyen, reprinted by permission of Time Being Press. Music for “Crickets” © 2003 by Tom Cipullo, from *Late Summer* by Tom Cipullo, used by permission of the composer.

Example 2.7: “The Garden”³⁸ mm. 34-41

34 *a piacere*
fruit can-not pull the branch-es a-ny clo-ser
pppp floating

colla voce
pppp

38 *morendo*
to the ground.

Cipullo employs complex chromaticism when the poem calls for it. The first vocal phrase of “Mary” is highly chromatic, illustrating the *cold* character of the text.

³⁸ Text for “The Garden” © 1996 by Lisel Mueller, from *Alive Together: New and Selected Poems* by Lisel Mueller, used by permission of Louisiana State University Press. Music for “The Garden” from *Of a Certain Age* by Tom Cipullo © Oxford University Press Inc, 2009. Assigned to Oxford University Press 2010. Music extracts reproduced by permission. All rights reserved.

Example 2.8: “Mary”³⁹ mm. 3-4

3 *cold*
p
Mar - y points to a fel - low pa-tient in the nurs - ing home and says,
no breath
p

The harmonic language used by Cipullo is often described as “lush” or “dense.” Cipullo carefully selects the harmonies themselves, writing and rewriting many times. He chooses a harmonic vocabulary for a given song based on the text he is setting. His harmonic textures vary greatly, depending on his reaction to the text. The faster songs may involve a light constant flow of sixteenth notes, such as in “Arietta parlante” from *A Visit with Emily*.

³⁹ Text for “Mary” © 1996 by Lisel Mueller, from *Alive Together: New and Selected Poems* by Lisel Mueller, used by permission of Louisiana State University Press. Music for “Mary” from *Of a Certain Age* by Tom Cipullo © Oxford University Press Inc, 2009. Assigned to Oxford University Press 2010. Music extracts reproduced by permission. All rights reserved.

Example 2.9: “Arietta parlante”⁴⁰ mm. 1-5

The image shows a musical score for a piece titled "Arietta parlante" (Example 2.9), measures 1-5. The score is written for Soprano and Piano. The Soprano part has lyrics: "Dear Friend, Your let - ter gave no Drunk - en - ness, be - cause I tast - ed Rum be -". The Piano part includes dynamic markings such as *p*, *poco f*, *pp*, and *leggiero*. The score is divided into two systems, with the second system starting at measure 3. The time signature is 4/4.

Slower songs often include a stronger character in the piano and a more pervasive use of evocative harmonies. One such example is in “Epilogue” from *A Visit with Emily*. Cipullo’s piano interlude contains many dissonant major seconds, which eventually function as consonances within the overall harmony.

⁴⁰ Text in public domain. Music from *A Visit with Emily* by Tom Cipullo © Oxford University Press Inc, 2004. Assigned to Oxford University Press 2010. Music extracts reproduced by permission. All rights reserved.

Example 2.10: "Epilogue"⁴¹ mm. 1-13

Slow, expressive

Soprano

Piano

dolce
legato mp
poco f p ppp
mp
mf
passione
poco f
LH

6 riten. molto

10 a tempo
p
poco
p
dolcissimo
dolcissimo

Na - - - ture, the Gen - tlest Moth - er is, Im - pa - tient of no -

LH
pp
poco
mmm

⁴¹ Text in public domain. Music from *A Visit with Emily* by Tom Cipullo © Oxford University Press Inc, 2004. Assigned to Oxford University Press 2010. Music extracts reproduced by permission. All rights reserved.

Vocal lines in songs with a medium tempo may float upon the support of the piano part, but are not overwhelmed by it at any point. The piano part often serves to provide a consistent rhythmic pulse in these songs.

Example 2.11: “Why I Wear My Hair Long”⁴² mm. 8-10

The image shows a musical score for the song "Why I Wear My Hair Long" by Tom Cipullo, measures 8-10. The score is written for voice and piano. The vocal line is in treble clef, and the piano accompaniment is in grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The key signature has one sharp (F#). The time signature is 7/8. The vocal line starts with a piano (p) dynamic and the lyrics "I want to wrap it a - round you". The piano accompaniment features a complex rhythmic pattern with frequent meter changes, indicated by the "subito p" marking. The score ends with a double bar line and repeat signs.

Cipullo’s use of meter and rhythm vary based on the text he is setting. However, the majority of his rhythmic treatment is highly complex. He expects singers to have a sense of rhythm equal to that of any pianist, yet the singer must perform from memory. Managing a frequently changing meter and complex rhythms represent some of the greatest challenges for singers attempting to perform Cipullo’s songs. Sperry describes, Cipullo shifts his “meters rapidly so that phrases are not totally predictable” which “makes it challenging, and keeps it very appealing.”⁴³

Most of Cipullo’s songs feature an almost constant changing of meter in order to accommodate the most natural prosody. On the page, the music will appear very

⁴² Text for “Why I Wear My Hair Long” © 2009 by Marilyn Kallet, from *Packing Light: New and Selected Poems* by Marilyn Kallet, used by permission of the author and Black Widow Press. Music © 2005 by Tom Cipullo, from *How to Get Heat Without Fire* by Tom Cipullo, used by permission of the composer.

⁴³ Sperry, interview.

complex, however the song will sound “completely natural”⁴⁴ to an audience. Cipullo uses simple, compound, irregular, and improvisatory meters. In “A Death in the Family,” all of these are present.

It is extremely rare for a song written by Cipullo to remain in the same meter from start to finish. In these cases, the predominant structural element may be something other than the text. “The Garden” is one example of this. This song is built on seven-bar harmonic phrases in the piano part. The end of one poetic line may move (without breath) into the next in order to maintain the harmonic structure. However, any song in which the rhythms are not determined by the text is an exception to Cipullo’s typical style.

⁴⁴ Chris Trakas, interview by author, New York City, 29 May 2009.

Example 2.12: "A Death in the Family"⁴⁵ mm. 8-21

8 *a tempo* *ff* *liberamente* *a tempo* *f*
 Tenor had she re-fused to drink, if no luck with one method to try another. It's for sure, one

a tempo *ff* *a tempo* *poco f*
 Pno.

11 (2+3) (3+2)
 Tenor thing we could all a-gree: She had

(2+3) (3+2)
 Pno.

16 *fp* *ff* *p (intense)*
 Tenor it com-ing. What a nas-ty char-act-er,

f *mf* *p*
 Pno.

⁴⁵ Text for "A Death in the Family" © 1993 by Alice Wirth Gray, from *What the Poor Eat* by Alice Wirth Gray, used by permission of Cleveland State University Poetry Center. Music © 1994 by Tom Cipullo, from *The Land of Nod* by Tom Cipullo, used by permission of the composer.

Cipullo frequently uses hemiola and syncopation to highlight a given word or phrase, which increases drama and builds-in expressive emphasis.

Example 2.13: “Quodlibet II”⁴⁶ mm. 24-26, hemiola

24 *ff* *p*
This is the Gnat that man - gles men.
ff *p*
This is the Gnat that man - gles men.
ff *poco f* *p*

Example 2.14: “Saying Goodbye”⁴⁷ mm. 32-36, syncopation

32 *più riten.* *pp* *hopeless* *pp* *riten.*
(straight tone)
edge of. Your touch ec - hoed.
più riten. *riten.*
mf *molto* *p* *ppp* *p* *ppp*

⁴⁶ Text in public domain. Music from *A Visit with Emily* by Tom Cipullo © Oxford University Press Inc, 2004. Assigned to Oxford University Press 2010. Music extracts reproduced by permission. All rights reserved.

⁴⁷ Text for “Saying Goodbye” © 2009 by Marilyn Kallet, from *Packing Light: New and Selected Poems* by Marilyn Kallet, used by permission of the author and Black Widow Press. Music © 2005 by Tom Cipullo, from *How to Get Heat Without Fire* by Tom Cipullo, used by permission of the composer.

The pillars of Cipullo's style include a specific melodic application, evocative harmonies with distinctive textures, and frequent meter changes. These compositional traits are specifically applied in order to support the text being set. Cipullo's choice of poet is almost always American, and often "witty" such as Billy Collins (*Another Reason Why I Don't Keep a Gun in the House*) or Alice Wirth Gray (*The Land of Nod*), resulting in some of his best humorous songs. Cipullo's more nostalgic selections include William Heyen (*Long Island Songs*), Stanley Kunitz ("Touch me"), and Emily Dickinson (*A Visit with Emily*).

Cipullo has what Carol Kimball calls "a heightened sense of prosody,"⁴⁸ which determines most of his compositional choices. Soprano Melanie Mitrano describes,

He is a great story-teller. He pays careful attention to the text, honors the text, and sets the words in musical way. As the singer, you feel like the poem is telling the story. Then Tom adds the perfect music, to tell the story exactly without going against the text in any way.⁴⁹

Baritone Chris Trakas echoes this sentiment, describing Cipullo's rhythmic setting of texts, "It's perfect. He never misses, and never works against the natural rhythm of a text. It just falls out of your mouth."⁵⁰

Cipullo tends to favor poets who write borderline prose, such as William Carpenter (*Rain, The Husbands, Landscape with Figures*) who turned to writing prose right after completing his volume of poetry *Rain* (1985). Cipullo set five of Lisel Mueller's poems in *Of a Certain Age*. Mueller writes in complete sentences, but breaks

⁴⁸ Carol Kimball, *Song: A Guide to Art Song Style and Literature* (Milwaukee: Hal Leonard, 2005), 17.

⁴⁹ Mitrano, telephone interview by author, Denver, 12 May 2009.

⁵⁰ Chris Trakas, interview.

them into multiple lines. Prose is highly descriptive and by definition lacks form. This lack of form allows Cipullo more structural freedom within a song.

Cipullo sets poems by poets he has met at various artist colonies. These include Marilyn Kallet (*How to Get Heat Without Fire*), Judith Baumel (“Two Men Loved Me Once”), and Agata Tuszyńska (*glances*). An enthusiastic lover of poetry, Cipullo enjoys attending poetry readings while serving compositional residencies Yaddo and the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts. He humorously comments, “It’s nice to make friends with other artists who are at the bottom of the food chain.”⁵¹ Cipullo has a profound respect for poets and their work, and consciously strives to provide the texts in his songs with the best possible musical setting.

Compositional Process

Describing his “artistic process” is difficult for Cipullo. He often doesn’t recall how he creates a piece of music, and he believes that this is the definition of inspiration. His music breathes through him and onto the page. He often begins with a poem that he likes, and then he goes to the piano to look for something that will evoke that text. He believes that a melody is easy to make, but harmony is the most important aspect of a song. Harmony will “break your heart or make you laugh.”⁵² Cipullo recalls that Siegmeister often said that the accompaniment had to have its own “profile.” Cipullo has never forgotten this concept, and strives to give his piano parts their own personality and integrity. Cipullo composes at the piano and uses improvisation to develop his ideas.

⁵¹ Cipullo, interview, 8 March 2008.

⁵² Cipullo, interview, 24 Jan 2009.

Composition itself is a long process. He throws a lot of material away, and challenges himself to make changes that may move in unfamiliar directions. He also strives to add instructions to help focus the song, such as dramatic direction; this makes the piece seem “true, lifelike, and real.”⁵³ He has come to value self-criticism, and has states that the last thing you learn is how to edit your own work.⁵⁴ Cipullo’s songs are filled with dynamic markings, style instructions, breath marks, and other instructions.

Cipullo writes by hand, and then converts to printed form in Sibelius. He revises by hand using different colored pencils, and then enters the changes into the computer. This back and forth process can continue for months, even years. One example of this is the last song in the set *How to Get Heat Without Fire*, also called “How to Get Heat Without Fire.” In a program note from a recital with soprano Melanie Mitrano, Cipullo writes, “I rewrote this concluding number dozens of times, enamored of the melody but bedeviled by the details of form and continuity.”⁵⁵ Though the rewriting process lasted several years, the song went on to be recorded by Mitrano on the Capstone label, and remains one of Cipullo’s most striking songs.

IV. American Song’s neo-Romantic Past

The American “grandfathers” of tonal traditionalism have long been identified as Samuel Barber (1910-1981) and Gian Carlo Menotti (1911-2007). Barber’s vocal compositions were particularly successful, including *Dover Beach* (1931), *Knoxville: Summer of 1915* (1950), and the song cycle *Hermit Songs* (1952-1953). Barber’s style

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Cipullo, fax message to Dr. Melanie Mitrano, 27 September 2005.

includes lyrical melodies, predominantly tonal harmonies, and accessibility to the text.

John Corigliano describes Barber's music as an alternation between "post-Straussian chromaticism and an oft-diatonic, typically American simplicity."⁵⁶

Barber is identified as having stayed in the "conservative" stylistic camp, which was largely ignored by critics and historians, but favored by singers and performers. His primary colleague in the "conservative" camp is Gian Carlo Menotti. Italian-born Menotti wrote a great deal of American vocal music and opera libretti. His success was largely in the field of opera, and his most famous works include *The Medium* (1945), *The Consul* (1949), and *Amahl and the Night Visitors* (1951). Like Barber, Menotti's style "deftly side-step[s] the Second Viennese School" and "provides an alternative model...of the rigorously trained classical musician whose prime motivation has been to communicate with his audience."⁵⁷ His melodies are eminently lyrical and expressive, and always serve the text.

Cipullo follows in this stylistic vein, remaining committed to lyrical melody, tonal harmony, and communication with the audience. However, even before Cipullo began composing, Ned Rorem (b. 1923), Lee Hoiby (b. 1926), and Richard Hundley (b. 1931) were continuing the traditions of Barber and Menotti through the composition of their own songs.

⁵⁶ John Corigliano, program notes for *Canzonetta for Oboe and Orchestra* op. 48, by Samuel Barber, quoted in Barbara Heyman, *Samuel Barber: The Composer and his Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 507.

⁵⁷ Bruce Archibald and Jennifer Barnes, "Menotti, Gian Carlo," in *Grove Music Online*, *Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/18410> (accessed 1 September 2010).

Ned Rorem

Ned Rorem, like Cipullo, Siegmeyer, Barber, and Menotti, is motivated by a strong commitment to communicate with an audience. He rejected the rigid conservatism of the Curtis Institute in the early 1940s, attended Copland's composition classes at Tanglewood in 1946 and 1947, and eventually completed two music degrees at the Juilliard School. He studied in Paris with Arthur Honegger and lived in Paris until 1958. He wrote extensive personal diaries and essays beginning with his time in Paris, and continuing through to the present day. His writings are described by Carol Kimball as "erudite, gossipy, often maddening, and thought provoking, but never dull."⁵⁸ Cipullo read many of these diaries as a student and emerging professional composer.

Rorem earned the reputation of being "America's leading song writer at a time when practically nobody is writing songs."⁵⁹ To date, he has written over 500 songs, and is drawn to vocal music for the poetry, explaining, "I'm not a unique melodist. I am a setter of literature, which has no special claim to tunes."⁶⁰ Rorem's prosody is exceptional, and this clarity of text maintains faultless communication with the audience.

Rorem's most recent large-scale song composition was his 1996 "tour de force vocal work,"⁶¹ *Evidence of Things Not Seen*, a cycle of 36 poems by 24 poets. This cycle is for Soprano, Mezzo-Soprano, Tenor, Baritone, and Piano. There are solos, duets, trios, and quartets. The overall story-line is that of a lifetime, structured into "Beginnings," "Middles," and "Ends," and includes poems by authors ranging from

⁵⁸ Kimball, *Song*, 299.

⁵⁹ Philip Lieson Miller, "The Songs of Ned Rorem," *Tempo* New Series, no. 127 (December 1978): 25.

⁶⁰ Ned Rorem, "Why I Write as I Do," *Tempo* New Series, no. 109 (June 1974): 39.

⁶¹ Kimball, 299.

William Penn, Walt Whitman, Charles Baudelaire, and Langston Hughes to contemporary poets Mark Doty and Paul Monnette. In the liner notes to the recording, Rorem describes the piece,

The order of the songs relies on subject matter. The opening group, *Beginnings*, is just that – songs about moving forward, and the wistful optimism of love, with a concluding hymn – text from the eighteenth century to be sung by a congregation in the morning... The second group, *Middles*, about coming of age, horror of war, romantic disappointment, concludes with another hymn, this one for evening. The last group, *Ends*, about death, concludes with an admonishment from William Penn, echoing a definition of Faith in Corinthians II: Look not to things that are seen, but to that which is unseen; for things that are seen pass away, but that which is unseen is forever.⁶²

Following its sold-out Carnegie Hall premiere, Peter G. Davis of *New York* magazine wrote, “After just one hearing, I will rashly proclaim it one of the musically richest, most exquisitely fashioned, most voice-friendly collections of songs I have ever heard by any American composer,” and noted “how generously the music flatters the voice and prompts a singer’s most expressive instincts.”⁶³

Cipullo’s first large-scale cycle *A Visit with Emily* is written for three voices and piano. This cycle is more modest in scope and duration than Rorem’s *Evidence*, but certainly compares as an example of an extended song cycle. In *A Visit with Emily*, Cipullo fashioned a narrative using poems and letters by Emily Dickinson and T.W. Higginson. Twenty-one movements, including solos, duets, and trios, unfold the story, and the text always remains in the forefront of the drama. Cipullo explains that he does not provide “insight into the thoughts and emotions of the Belle of Amherst (indeed, can

⁶² Rorem quoted in Steven Blier, CD liner notes for *Evidence of Things Not Seen* by Ned Rorem, New World Records 80575, 1999.

⁶³ Peter G. Davis, review of *Evidence of Things Not Seen* by Ned Rorem, *New York Magazine*, 9 February 1998.

anyone truly make such a claim?)” but instead provides his “reaction to the words, an intuitive rather than a studied reaction.”⁶⁴

Following its New York City premiere, Jed Distler of *New York Concert Review Inc* wrote, “Cipullo’s musical and expressive range touch upon musical theater, the terse lyricism characterizing Barber and Rorem’s best songs, and David Del Tredici’s hyper-romantic gestures.” Distler continues, “Cipullo’s singular voice, however, emerges from these myriad influences. He is a real composer, and his witty settings abound with melodic appeal, bracing rhythms, and tart twists of harmony.”⁶⁵

Rorem and Cipullo are friends, and are often both featured composers on programs of *The Friends and Enemies of New Music* concert series in New York City. The two composers share a desire to glorify the singing voice in the form of song, a reverence for poetry, and a remarkable sense of prosody.

Lee Hoiby

As a student of Gian Carlo Menotti, Lee Hoiby (b. 1926) is almost always labeled a neo-Romantic. However, in a 1988 interview he objects to this label, insisting, “There is nothing neo about me!”⁶⁶ His music has always been tonal, and his compositions “are consistently natural expressive, accessible, and always vocally rewarding for a singer.”⁶⁷

⁶⁴ Cipullo, *A Visit with Emily*, composer’s note (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

⁶⁵ Jed Distler, review of *A Visit with Emily* by Tom Cipullo, *New York Concert Review* (Winter 2000): 7.

⁶⁶ Lee Hoiby, interview by John Robin Rice, Long Eddy, NY, June 1988, quoted in John Robin Rice, “The Songs of Lee Hoiby” (DMA diss., University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, 1993), 9.

⁶⁷ Kimball, *Song*, 304.

He completely rejected the atonal movement, stating, "...the atonal line is anathema to the lyrical vocal impulse."⁶⁸ Cipullo shares this sentiment, and believes that melody and text give rise only to tonal music.

Hoiby has composed over 70 songs, including the 1988 cycle for baritone *I Was There*, which sets text by Walt Whitman, and the humorous song *The Serpent* (1979). His songs are characterized by a heightened sense of prosody, changing meters, beautiful melodies, and stable harmonies. The piano part is often complex and rhapsodic, reflecting Hoiby's extensive training as a concert pianist. Hoiby describes the role of the piano part in a song, "it supports the voice by providing a cushion of sound that the voice can ride over, and that's what we love." He continues, "...the piano part gives most pleasure to the pianist and the listeners when it is...a satisfactory and interesting entity without the voice, so that it is fun to practice without the voice."⁶⁹

Along with a heightened prosody, changing meters, and beautiful melodies, Cipullo's songs also reflect extensive piano training, and an effort to keep the piano part autonomous from the vocal line. His 2000 song "The Pocketbook" not only maintains a conversational quality between the singer and piano part, but also requires the pianist to sing in measures 69 and 72.

⁶⁸ John Duffy, "Composers for the 90s," *Central Opera Service Conference Bulletin* 30, no. 1 (Spring 1990): 75, quoted in Lori Ellefson Bade, "Lee Hoiby: The Composer and His Compositional Style, His Role in the History of American Music, and His Song Output" (DMA diss., University of Texas at Austin, 1994), 12.

⁶⁹ Hoiby, interview, quoted in Rice, "The Songs of Lee Hoiby," 19.

Example 2.15: “The Pocketbook”⁷⁰ mm. 68-81, conversational quality, pianist singing

The musical score consists of two systems. The first system covers measures 68 to 71. The vocal line (S.) begins at measure 68 with the lyrics "life's this beau-ti-ful." and continues through measure 71 with "Noth-ing else in my life's this beau-ti-ful." The piano accompaniment (Pno.) starts at measure 69 with the lyrics "Flu-id It-al-ian suede." and continues through measure 71. Performance instructions include "(emphatic)" above the vocal line, "p" and "f" dynamics, and "singing emphatically looking at audience" above the piano part. The second system covers measures 72 to 75. The vocal line (S.) begins at measure 72 with the lyrics "To keep it I would have to buy" and continues through measure 75. The piano accompaniment (Pno.) starts at measure 72 with the lyrics "Flu-id It-al-ian suede." and continues through measure 75. Performance instructions include "f" and "ff" dynamics, and "poco f" above the piano part.

⁷⁰ Text for “The Pocketbook” © 2009 by Marilyn Kallet, from *Packing Light: New and Selected Poems* by Marilyn Kallet, used by permission of the author and Black Widow Press. Music © 2005 by Tom Cipullo, from *How to Get Heat Without Fire* by Tom Cipullo, used by permission of the composer.

Richard Hundley

Born in 1931, Hundley trained as a pianist, composer, and singer at the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music. He moved to New York City in 1952, and sang in the Metropolitan Opera Chorus from 1960 to 1964. He met many famous singers during his tenure including Anna Moffo, Teresa Stratas, and Betty Allen. After showing his songs to these singers, all three of them programmed recitals including his music. This led to the first publications of two of his songs by General Music Publishing Company.

In 1962, Hundley was introduced to Virgil Thomson who supported and influenced Hundley for the next 27 years. Samuel Barber and William Flanagan also influenced Hundley. Flanagan is the composer about whom Cipullo was to write his doctoral dissertation. From Flanagan, Hundley learned to use lightly textured piano accompaniments with expressive and lyrical vocal lines. Barber, like Hundley trained as a singer and had a great deal of singing experience, and “both men show mastery in composing lyrical, expressive vocal lines that reflect the words and their inherent emotions.”⁷¹ Thomson encouraged the clear setting of texts, which he assured Hundley would allow an understanding of meaning. Indeed, critic Thor Eckert describes, “He is an impassioned lyricist, who loves to caress the words with beguiling melody.”⁷² Victoria

⁷¹ Lisa A. Cellucci, “An Examination of Selected Songs by Richard Hundley” (DMA diss., University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, 2000), 21.

⁷² Thor Eckert, review of *Newport Music Festival Concert*, *Christian Science Monitor*, 24 July 1987.

Etnier Villamil echoes this sentiment, “Never sacrificing lyric beauty, each poem is set for total comprehensibility.”⁷³

After leaving the Metropolitan Opera Chorus, Hundley took a position as accompanist in the voice studio of Zinka Milanov. He worked for her for the next fourteen years, and describes, “My relationship with this great singer gave me one of the deepest inspirations of my life.”⁷⁴ Hundley has continued to produce songs throughout his life. Tenor Paul Sperry has commissioned, performed, and promoted his music since 1969. In the CD liner notes to a 1990 recording, Sperry notes that Hundley’s songs have always had their audience, and says that Hundley

...persevered in unabashed lyricism and humor even when those qualities were out of fashion, and is now finding that his songs are in great demand and are being sung by many of our leading singers throughout the world.⁷⁵

One of the simplest descriptions of Hundley’s songs may be found in Carol Kimball’s monograph on song: “Hundley’s songs exhibit a return to romantic feeling, tonal harmony, and melody.”⁷⁶ However, this does not limit Hundley’s style. Sperry assures us that Hundley “writes every kind of song: slow, fast, wet, dry, funny, moving, waltzes, fox-trots, major statements, little bonbons.”⁷⁷ Thor Eckert perfectly states, “Singers clearly love to sing these songs. (Though tricky, they’re a balm for weary throats and weary ears!)”⁷⁸

⁷³ Victoria Etnier Villamil, *A Singer’s Guide to American Art Song: 1870-1980* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 1993), 218.

⁷⁴ Richard Hundley, “Zinka Milanov,” *Opera Quarterly* 7, no. 1 (Spring 1990): 108.

⁷⁵ Sperry, CD liner notes for *Paul Sperry Sings Romantic American Songs*, Albany Records TROY-0432, 1990.

⁷⁶ Kimball, *Song*, 317.

⁷⁷ Sperry, “The Great American Songbook,” *Opera News* 61, no. 2 (August 1996): 24-25.

⁷⁸ Eckert, review, 24 July 1987.

A wonderfully lyrical approach to melody and a deep understanding of the human voice are traits also found in Cipullo's songs. Cipullo sang in choirs throughout high school and college. He sang tenor or baritone as was needed. He credits Giacomo Puccini and Frank Sinatra for teaching him how to shape a melodic vocal phrase. His 2007 setting of Lisel Mueller's "The Garden" exhibits an extraordinary sense of melody as he spins out long lines, allowing for pauses and breaths within a seamless flow of expressive sound.

Example 2.16: "The Garden"⁷⁹ mm. 22-29

22 a tempo, but relaxed slightly slower, teneramente
pppp
 How strange that in the gar - den of

sub. *pp* *pppp*

26 no breath (s) no breath
 me - mo - ry where she lives noth - ing ev - er chan - ges

port.

⁷⁹ Text for "The Garden" © 1996 by Lisel Mueller, from *Alive Together: New and Selected Poems* by Lisel Mueller, used by permission of Louisiana State University Press. Music for "The Garden" from *Of a Certain Age* by Tom Cipullo © Oxford University Press Inc, 2009. Assigned to Oxford University Press 2010. Music extracts reproduced by permission. All rights reserved.

V. Contemporaries

Born within a few years of Cipullo, Ricky Ian Gordon (b.1956) and Lori Laitman (b.1955) are two contemporary art song composers who work in a primarily tonal style. The three do not share schooling or any common teachers, but have come to compose art songs through a love of poetry and the human voice.

For Gordon, poetry and music filled his childhood home, and he was encouraged to study piano by his supportive and musically inclined parents. Gordon began college as a piano major, but quickly realized that he was more interested in composing. He has written hundreds of songs, and came into professional prominence as a composer of theater music and of musical theater. Gordon's collaboration with soprano Harolyn Blackwell resulted in the cycle *Genius Child* (1992) and led to his first song publications and professional recordings.

In her dissertation on Gordon's *Genius Child*, Cayce Brecheen Benton states that Gordon's style "defies characterization." She reports that Gordon believes that "style is a product of influence, and his musical influences are eclectic" including Bernstein, Blitzstein, Neil Young and the Beatles. She continues, "he writes in a style that utilizes elements from a variety of musical genres and blurs the borders of art song and musical theater." Gordon sings his own songs "in a pop style while others, who have recorded his music, sing in a classical style."⁸⁰

⁸⁰ Cayce Brecheen Benton, "A Study of the Musical Settings of Langston Hughes' Poetry in Ricky Ian Gordon's Song Cycle *Genius Child*" (DMA diss., University of Miami, 2001) 26.

Genius Child sets poems by Langston Hughes, and Gordon is devoted to prosody the same way Cipullo is. Gordon states, “The poem tells you what it needs musically”⁸¹ and he does his best to meet those needs. Cipullo and Gordon both enjoy popularity among singers, and a reputation for writing text-driven music of drama and significance. Their influences are eclectic indeed, and share an interest in musical theater.

Gordon represents one of the most famous “crossover” composers of today. He works in both the musical theater world and in the traditional concert hall. Cipullo does not identify with the genre of “crossover” music. He enjoys musical theater as an influence, but does not consider his own compositions to fall into any genre outside of “classical.”

Lori Laitman is a prolific and successful composer of songs. She first began composing songs while a student at Yale, and while she has enjoyed success in other genres, she admits, “I found my voice writing for the voice.”⁸² Joanne Sydney Lessner describes,

She lets the texts inform her music, spinning lyrical neo-romantic vocal lines over shifting post-modern sonorities. It’s a treat to hear contemporary art songs that showcase the voice as flatteringly as these, and which retain individuality and surprise without sacrificing accessibility.”⁸³

Some of Laitman’s best-known works include the song “Echo” (1995) and the song cycle *Becoming A Redwood* (2004).

⁸¹ Greg Varner, “A gesture on behalf of the poem,” *The Washington Blade*, 5 May 2000, quoted in Benton, 25.

⁸² Laitman, correspondence with Kimball, quoted in Kimball, *Song*, 339.

⁸³ Lessner, review of *Mystery* by Lori Laitman, Albany Records TROY-393, *Opera News.com Online Edition* (March 2001).

Laitman selects excellent poetry, including Emily Dickinson, Dana Gioia, and Sara Teasdale. She also “carefully follows speech rhythms, creating declamatory sections and relying on mixed meters to accommodate the vocal rhythms.” Her vocal lines are described as “generally tonal with frequent large, ascending intervals.”⁸⁴

Cipullo and Laitman share a respect for natural poetic rhythms. Both use changing meters to most “accurately” set texts, and demand a certain vocal facility that will most effectively express the texts they are setting.

VI. Influence

While still actively composing, Cipullo is in the process of creating his legacy. His musical style follows along the path of Samuel Barber, David Del Tredici, and Ned Rorem. Cipullo’s commitment to tonal harmonies with expressive dissonances, admiration for the human voice, and reverence for poetry yield songs that rank him among the best.

As a teacher, Cipullo has influenced his students in music courses at Bronx Community College for over 10 years. He does not formally teach composition, but he has some contact with developing composers. If an emerging composer approaches Cipullo and would like him to take a look at a new work, Cipullo welcomes him enthusiastically. He calls the process “a lot of fun.”⁸⁵ He loves to work with emerging singers as well, and offers to coach with anyone who is preparing to perform his songs.

⁸⁴ Lucy Owen Hoyt, “*Becoming a Redwood: A Genealogy of Expression in Dana Gioia’s Poetry and Lori Laitman’s Song Cycle*” (DMA diss., University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 2009), 13.

⁸⁵ Cipullo, interview, 8 March 2008.

While still studying at the CUNY Graduate Center, Cipullo and five fellow composition students founded *The Friends and Enemies of New Music* a group of composers who produce and present concerts of contemporary American chamber music (including song). Since 1989, the group has been providing a performance outlet for new music in a wide variety of aesthetic and musical styles. It also gave Cipullo the opportunity to develop his craft, and have his works regularly performed and received by New York City audiences. Cipullo inevitably assists new composers by providing this outlet for the performance of their songs. The concerts also serve as a gathering place for lovers of new music, be they composers, performers, or patrons.

In recent years, Cipullo has begun to take a more active role in teaching and residencies. In 2009 and 2010, he served as composer-in-residence at *SongFest*, a summer program for voice and collaborative piano students held annually at Pepperdine University in Malibu, CA. In 2009, Rosemary Hyler Ritter (the director of *SongFest*) commissioned *Insomnia*, a cycle of ten songs for solo quartet and piano. The piece was premiered by students at *SongFest* on 25 June 2009. At *SongFest*, Cipullo also taught master classes and privately coached his songs with numerous students. In 2010, he served a residency at Central Michigan University, which culminated in an all-Cipullo concert.

Cipullo's opera *Glory Denied* is rising in prominence. The first professional production was by the crossover company Remarkable Theater Brigade (2008). The work has since been performed by Chelsea Opera in New York (2010), and will have its New England premiere by Boston Metro Opera in 2011. Cipullo plans to continue to

write opera, which one hopes will bring him greater recognition and celebrity. This, in turn, may allow for the composition of even more songs.

Summary

Tom Cipullo's style may be identified as neo-Romantic, tonal, eclectically influenced, rhapsodic, text-inspired, rhythmically complex, and technically challenging. His major influences come from jazz, musical theater, Barber and Del Tredici. While Cipullo shares the influence of musical theater and a heightened sense of prosody with contemporaries Gordon and Laitman, his fundamental musical style aligns even more concretely with the scope, accessibility, pianistic autonomy, and expressive and lyrical vocal lines found in the songs of Rorem, Hoiby, and Hundley.

CHAPTER THREE

A GUIDE TO THE SONGS

This guide organizes Tom Cipullo's songs chronologically according to set. Published song cycles composed between 1992 and 2007 are included, which total 67 songs. These cycles are: *Long Island Songs*, *The Land of Nod*, *A Visit with Emily*, *Another Reason Why I Don't Keep a Gun in the House*, *How to Get Heat Without Fire*, *Climbing*, *Late Summer*, *glances*, *Drifts and Shadows*, and *Of a Certain Age*. Songs composed prior to 1991 are considered juvenilia and are listed in Appendices A and C. Single songs, chamber pieces, songs composed as personal gifts, and those published after 2009 have not been included in the guide, but are listed in Appendices A and C. Taken as a group, these 67 songs represent only a portion of Cipullo's art song output. However, they are some of the most frequently performed and readily available pieces.

The inclusion of an interpretive guide for each song is inspired by *The Interpretation of French Song* by Pierre Bernac (New York: Norton, 1978). This volume is a resource for singers, pianists, coaches and teachers who strive for the highest quality performance, and that which most closely follows the composer's intentions. The guide to Cipullo's songs is intended for use by singers, pianists, coaches, and teachers. The catalog and interpretive guide provide comprehensive background information on these songs for use in program notes, repertoire selection, and performance preparation. The guide provides informed and composer-approved suggestions.

Each cycle is provided with background information, which includes information relevant to the cycle as a whole. Each song within the cycle is then provided with (I)

catalog data, (II) annotations, and (III) an interpretive guide. The catalog provides background information on each song, including the nature of the work, date of composition, source of score for analysis, publisher, publication, copyright, recording, voice, range, length, duration, meter, tempo, mood, subject, author of text, source of text, dedication, premiere, source of commission, and musical and text incipit. The annotation further discusses the genesis of the song, details any changes made to the poetry, and addresses performance variations in tempo. The interpretive guide explains any non-standard indications in the score, identifies performance difficulties, and provides variations approved by the composer.

The guide is informed by extensive live interviews with the composer and prominent professional musicians associated with Cipullo's songs. My personal experience coaching and performing many of the songs, as well as observed coachings and master classes with Cipullo contribute to the interpretive sections. Explicit suggestions by Cipullo are indicated as such. Where a general suggestion is presented, it is based upon Cipullo's recordings on record, or what he would likely recommend. Reference to reviews of live performances and publications also provide helpful information.

In general, it may be said that to perform Cipullo's songs requires a high level of training and technique for both singer and pianist. The songs demand extremes of range and dynamics, as well as a variety of vocal timbres and dramatic colors. Interpreting Cipullo's choice of texts requires every acting tool, from humor to tragedy, from insane to elated. Complex rhythms, shifting meters, and challenging textures necessitate disciplined musicianship and a strong sense of ensemble between singer and pianist. For

the most part, these songs are intended to be performed by professional musicians. However, they may be appreciated by audiences of all levels due to Cipullo's accessible text setting, beautiful melodies, and rich harmonies.

***LONG ISLAND SONGS* (1992)**

Invocation
 The Odor of Pear
 The Nesconset Crickets
 The Crane at Gibbs' Pond

While browsing in the poetry section of the Mid-Manhattan Library, Cipullo found William Heyen's 1979 volume *Long Island Light: Poems and a Memoir*. Cipullo was raised in Westbury on Long Island, and was attracted to Heyen's poetry. He selected four poems from this volume, and set them to music in 1992. After having completed the set, Cipullo discarded the original second song (which set another poem) and replaced it with "The Odor of Pear." He wanted a faster and livelier song to contrast with the other three in the set.

In the late 1980s, Cipullo audited a class taught by tenor Paul Sperry on American Music at Brooklyn College Conservatory of Music. Cipullo showed some of his songs to Sperry, and the two began a lasting friendship. Sperry premiered *Long Island Songs* in 1992 at Greenwich House in New York City.

Long Island Songs have been performed both by tenors and sopranos. Cipullo conceived of the set for tenor, and believes that it sits better in the tenor voice. He points out that the poet is male, and the poems have a male point of view. However, the first

commercial recording of the set is by soprano Monica Harte with Cipullo at the piano.¹ Harte premiered the role of Young Alyce in Cipullo's opera *Glory Denied* and has also recorded his 2003 unpublished song set: *Going*.² In contrast to *Going*, which is written for soprano, Harte found specific vocal challenges within *Long Island Songs* due to the tessitura. In the end however, she found the poetic point of view to be universally "passionate" and "nostalgic." The pieces are about "a time in your life" and a "love for this place," sentiments that both men and women relate to.³

Invocation

I. Catalog data

Nature of the work: First of Four in the cycle *Long Island Songs*

Date of composition: 1992, revised 2005 Virginia Center for the Creative Arts

Source of score for analysis: Published score

Publisher: Classical Vocal Reprints

Publication: *Long Island Songs: On poems of William Heyen*

Copyright: Music 2005, Tom Cipullo; Text 1978, William Heyen

Meter: 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 5/4

Tempo: Not too slowly, somewhat free, always expressive (eighth note=88)

Voice: Tenor (Soprano) Length: 32 measures

Vocal Range: T:C#3 to G#4, S: C#4 to G#5 Duration: 3:15

Mood: Dreamy Subject: Sleep, love

Author of text: William Heyen

Source of text: *Long Island Light: Poems and a Memoir* (New York: Vanguard Press, 1979). Out of print.

Premiere: 2 December 1992 at Greenwich House, NYC; Paul Sperry, tenor and Tom Cipullo, piano

¹ Tom Cipullo, *Long Island Songs*, Monica Harte, soprano and Tom Cipullo, piano, recording in preparation, advance copy given to author, MSR Classics, Fall 2010.

² Cipullo, *Going*, Monica Harte, soprano and Tom Cipullo, piano, from *Landscape with Figures: Vocal Music of Tom Cipullo*, Albany Records TROY-1145, 2009.

³ Monica Harte, telephone interview by author, Denver, 10 September 2010.

Incipit: “Invocation”⁴ mm. 4-5

4 *p* *mf* *mf*

Out-side our bed-room win - dow a night-shift of crick-ets works

legato *mp*

(h) $\bar{\sigma}$

II. Annotation

“Invocation” was written in 1992, and minimally revised before publication in 2005. Though this is one of the earliest songs of Cipullo’s oeuvre, it is extremely technically demanding. The piano part requires large shifts in range, extreme *rubato* and dynamic versatility. The vocal line is rhythmically complex, with frequent *crescendi* to *subito pp*. The very high “float” technique is demanded in measure 24, and the singer must be extremely comfortable at any dynamic level throughout the range.

Cipullo repeats Heyen’s line “Is this the secret then?” in measure 17. Heyen’s final two lines of the poem read, “I am drifting back, into your body, drifting/back, into your body.” Cipullo continues this repetition by adding another statement of “drifting back, into your body into your body” in measures 27 to 31.

⁴ Music © 2005 Tom Cipullo, reprinted by permission of Tom Cipullo. Text ©1978 William Heyen, reprinted by permission of William Heyen.

In Cipullo and Harte's recording, the metronome marking of eighth note=88 serves as a good guideline, but the *rubato* of each measure begins at a slower tempo, closer to eighth note=72, and accelerates slightly above 88.

III. Interpretive guide

The piano introduction sets the dreamy mood of "Invocation." The *crescendo* in measure 2 leads to a *subito pp* on the downbeat of measure 3. As the voice enters in measure 4, the tempo slows slightly to allow for the indicated *legato* in both parts.

In measure 5, the singer may want to *crescendo* the descending line to counter the natural *diminuendo*, which can occur in this range. The *crescendo* on the final eighth note of measure 5 is very quick, and some singers may prefer to sing the note *forte* throughout to achieve the *subito piano* on the downbeat of measure 6. Balance may be challenging in measure 8, as the singer is quite low, and the piano plays in the same range. If the singer keeps the timbre extremely bright, the vocal line may be more audible. A breath in measure 9 after "to sleep is to die" aids the *pressing forward*, which begins here. It is difficult for the singer to keep the low E \flat balanced in measure 10. It may be necessary to sing the first half of the measure slightly less than *ff* and bring out the low E \flat to match. The pianist can help by staying very light in the second half of measure 10, despite the *ff* and *crescendo* markings.

Harte points to the section beginning "Is this the secret then?" (mm. 14-15) as the high point of passion in the song.⁵ In performance, Harte sings the *ossia* line in measures 18-19. However, in the recording, she sings Cipullo's preferred non-*ossia* line. There

⁵ Harte, interview.

should be no *crescendo* at the end of measure 21. A *portamento* may be desired on “slowly” in measure 22. The [k] sound of “back” in measure 23 must be very short to achieve the sixteenth rest and to observe Heyen’s comma. There should be no breath between “body” and “drifting” in measures 23 to 24. The “float” technique should be used on both G#s in measure 24 to follow Cipullo’s direction of *dolcissimo*. In measure 30, Cipullo directs *breathy*, but many singers may think of this as a *sotto voce* effect to achieve the desired result. The final note of the vocal line in measure 31 should cutoff before the piano’s chord on beat 3.

The Odor of Pear

I. Catalog data

Nature of the work: Second of Four in the cycle *Long Island Songs*

Date of composition: November 1992, Westbeth, NY

Source of score for analysis: Published score

Publisher: Classical Vocal Reprints

Publication: *Long Island Songs: On poems of William Heyen*

Copyright: Music 2005, Tom Cipullo; Texts 1978, William Heyen

Meter: 3/8, 4/8, 5/8, 6/8

Tempo: Presto possibile (eighth note=200)

Voice: Tenor (Soprano)

Length: 72 measures

Vocal Range: T: E3 to G♭4, S: E4 to G♭5

Duration: 2:00

Mood: Restless

Subject: Nature, memories

Author of text: William Heyen

Source of text: *Long Island Light: Poems and a Memoir* (New York: Vanguard Press, 1979).

Dedication: For Christopher Cipullo

Premiere: 2 December 1992 at Greenwich House, NYC; Paul Sperry, tenor and Tom Cipullo, piano

Incipit: “The Odor of Pear”⁶ mm. 10-12

II. Annotation

“The Odor of Pear” was not the original second song in *Long Island Songs*. Cipullo was not happy with his first choice, so he selected a new poem and wrote a completely new song. “The Odor of Pear” is faster and livelier than the original second song in the set.

This song is dedicated to Christopher Cipullo, Tom Cipullo’s brother. The poem reminded Cipullo of his childhood, with many hours spent climbing pear trees with his brother. Christopher Cipullo was also a musician, and the two were close. He died in 1984.

The metronome marking of eighth note=200 is extremely fast. In Cipullo’s recording,⁷ the eighth note is approximately 176. The fastest tempo that can be played

⁶ Text for “The Odor of Pear” © 1978 by William Heyen, from *Long Island Light: Poems and a Memoir* by William Heyen, used by permission of the author. Music © 2005 by Tom Cipullo, from *Long Island Songs* by Tom Cipullo, used by permission of the composer.

⁷ Cipullo, *Long Island Songs*, Monica Harte, soprano and Tom Cipullo, piano, recording in preparation, advance copy given to author, MSR Classics, Fall 2010.

cleanly by the pianist is ideal. However, the high energy and *feroce* sentiment of the piece is still evident at 176.

III. Interpretive guide

The piano introduction is marked *feroce*, and should be fierce but not violent. Accents fall on the downbeats of measures 1-4, but the accent then shifts to beat 4 in measures 5 and 6. When the voice enters in measure 10, the piano must reduce to *mp* or less to balance. The piano may cover the voice briefly in measure 14 and play strongly in measure 15 until the *decrescendo*. The vocal line should be very *legato* in contrast to the busy piano part. In measure 24, the piano may execute a slight *ritardando* to cue the singer's entrance in measure 25. There should be no breath in measures 30 to 34. The piano part may be *legato* in measures 41 to 46, indicated *dolcissimo* in the score. The vocal line in measures 42 to 46 should be sung without breath. In measure 57, "once more," marks the end of Heyen's poetic line, but Cipullo prefers no breath here.

The tempo seems slower with the temporary cessation of sixteenth note triplets in measures 59 to 62. However there is no actual change in tempo. This underlines the importance of the words "the deep odor of pear drifts up." There should be no breath between "drifts" and "up" in measures 62 to 63. In a performance with tenor Scott Murphree, Cipullo changed the second note of measure 62 to an F, making the leap in "drifts" into an octave. Murphree found this to be easier to sing. In the recording, Harte sings the written E \flat . It is the author's opinion that the published E \flat is preferable.

Example 3.1: “The Odor of Pear”⁸ mm. 62, as written

The musical score for Example 3.1, "The Odor of Pear" mm. 62, is presented in three staves. The top staff is the vocal line in treble clef, 4/8 time, starting with a whole note on E4 marked "drifts", followed by a half note on E4b. The middle staff is the piano right hand in treble clef, 4/8 time, starting with a half rest, followed by a melodic line with notes G4, A4, B4, and C5. The bottom staff is the piano left hand in bass clef, 4/8 time, starting with a half rest, followed by a bass line with notes G3, F3, E3, and D3. A dynamic marking "f" is placed at the end of the piano part.

Rather than a gradual *crescendo* in this measure, Harte favors a *subito f* on the E \flat . In measure 69, the end of the vocal line should be well coordinated with the piano.

The Nesconset Crickets

I. Catalog data

Nature of the work: Third of Four in the cycle *Long Island Songs*

Date of composition: 1992

Source of score for analysis: Published score

Publisher: Classical Vocal Reprints

Publication: *Long Island Songs: On poems of William Heyen*

Copyright: Music 2005, Tom Cipullo; Texts 1978, William Heyen

Meter: 3/4, 4/4, 5/4

Tempo: Not too slowly, free (quarter note=72)

Voice: Tenor (Soprano) Length: 18 measures

Vocal Range: T: B \flat 2 to E4, S: B \flat 3 to E5 Duration: 1:15

Mood: Dreamy Subject: Nature, sleep

Author of text: William Heyen

Source of text: *Long Island Light: Poems and a Memoir* (New York: Vanguard Press, 1979). Out of print.

Premiere: 2 December 1992 at Greenwich House, NYC; Paul Sperry, tenor and Tom Cipullo, piano

⁸ Text for “The Odor of Pear” © 1978 by William Heyen, from *Long Island Light: Poems and a Memoir* by William Heyen, used by permission of the author. Music © 2005 by Tom Cipullo, from *Long Island Songs* by Tom Cipullo, used by permission of the composer.

Incipit: “The Nesconset Crickets”⁹ mm. 3-5

3 *pp* *sotto voce* *mp* *f*

8

Ei-ther the crick-ets stopped, or I fell a-sleep as they kept on.

f *p*

II. Annotation

This brief song (one single page) functions as an introduction to the fourth song of the cycle “The Crane at Gibbs’ Pond.” Paul Sperry cites “The Nesconset Crickets” as an example of Cipullo’s technically demanding style. He argues that many tenors would not have a comfortable B \flat 3 in measure 5. However, he maintains that Cipullo has “always been cooperative” if Sperry found there was something he could not successfully perform.¹⁰ At the premiere, Sperry sang the song as written.

The tempo is indicated as “free” but has an accompanying metronome marking of quarter note=72. This functions only as a guideline, and each individual phrase should be

⁹ Text for “The Nesconset Crickets” © 1978 by William Heyen, from *Long Island Light: Poems and a Memoir* by William Heyen, used by permission of the author. Music © 2005 by Tom Cipullo, from *Long Island Songs* by Tom Cipullo, used by permission of the composer.

¹⁰ Paul Sperry, interview by author, New York City, 28 May 2009.

shaped using *rubato*. According to Harte, Cipullo does not want there to be a feeling of rushing in this song.¹¹

III. Interpretive guide

In Cipullo's recording, he plays the left-hand grace notes before the right-hand grace notes in measure 3. There should be a *sostenuto* or slight lingering on the downbeat chord before moving slowly to the eighth notes in the middle of the measure. Harte holds the last two eighth notes in measure 5 almost twice their value. The singer should hold the C ("on") through the downbeat of measure 6. Cipullo often favors connecting the vocal line to the piano line in this way. The pianist should move the tempo forward in measure 6, indicated *passione* in the score. The vocal line in measures 9 and 10 should continue in the slower tempo, in the range of quarter note=60. In order to maintain clear diction, the singer may choose to sing the [s] of "sleep" *mf*, and change to *subito p* on the [i] vowel in measure 12. The *a cappella* final vocal line should hold the *fermata* until the piano begins the introduction of the next song, "The Crane at Gibbs' Pond."

The Crane at Gibbs' Pond

I. Catalog data

Nature of the work: Fourth of Four in the cycle *Long Island Songs*

Date of composition: 1992, NYC

Source of score for analysis: Published score

Publisher: Classical Vocal Reprints

Publication: *Long Island Songs: On poems of William Heyen*

Copyright: Music 2005, Tom Cipullo; Texts 1967-79, William Heyen

Meter: 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 6/4

¹¹ Harte, interview.

Tempo: Not too slowly, always expressive (quarter note=66)

Voice: Tenor (Soprano) Length: 48 measures

Vocal Range: T: C#3 to G#4, S: C#4 to G#5 Duration: 3:00

Mood: Nostalgic Subject: Nature

Author of text: William Heyen

Source of text: *Long Island Light: Poems and a Memoir* (New York: Vanguard Press, 1979). Out of print.

Dedication: For Lois Cipullo

Premiere: 2 December 1992 at Greenwich House, NYC; Paul Sperry, tenor and Tom Cipullo, piano

Incipit: “The Crane at Gibbs’ Pond”¹² mm. 4-5

The musical score shows the vocal line and piano accompaniment for measures 4 and 5. The vocal line is in 3/4 time, starting with a quarter rest in measure 4, followed by a quarter note G4 in measure 5. The piano accompaniment is in 3/4 time, with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The piano part features a sustained chord in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. Dynamics include *p* (piano) and *mp* (mezzo-piano). There are triplets in the vocal line and a *poco* marking. The score ends with an 8va (octave) marking and a dashed line.

II. Annotation

William Heyen dedicates this poem to his mother. Following his example, Cipullo dedicates the song to his mother, Lois Cipullo, who was still living at the time of its composition and premiere. Sperry calls this one of Cipullo’s truly “spectacular” songs.¹³ Heyen’s original poem does not have a possessive apostrophe in the title; it reads “The Crane at Gibbs Pond.” Gibbs Pond is a place in Nesconset, Long Island.

¹² Text for “The Crane at Gibbs Pond” © 1978 by William Heyen, from *Long Island Light: Poems and a Memoir* by William Heyen, used by permission of the author. Music © 2005 by Tom Cipullo, from *Long Island Songs* by Tom Cipullo, used by permission of the composer.

¹³ Sperry, interview.

The metronome marking of quarter note=66 is faster than Cipullo and Harte's recording. They range between 44 and 66 throughout the song, with much of the piece staying on the slow side.¹⁴

III. Interpretive guide

Based on Cipullo and Harte's recording, the piano introduction may be slower than 66, as slow as 44. The vocal entrance in measure 5 should also be slow, and a breath is recommended after "pond" at the end of the measure. Measure 8 may be in a faster tempo, closer to 60. Soft consonants are needed on "Against pines" in order to maintain the *dolce* indication in the score. Measure 15 should move the tempo forward (indicated *passione*) but may add *sostenuti* to the last two eighth notes of the measure ("failing"). In measure 20, a breath may be taken after "praise" but the remainder of the phrase through measure 23 should be sung without additional breath.

Cipullo adds a breath after "Maybe," in measure 26, observing Heyen's comma and end of poetic line. The surprising *rhythmic, dancing* section beginning in measure 28 should accelerate through measure 36. The tempo in this section should be at its fastest of the song. Cipullo and Harte begin at quarter note=66 in measure 28. Harte does not breathe during the rest in measure 34, but instead sings "in her other world, it tried to reach her in the only way it could" without pause. Cipullo's sixteenth rest (after "world") observes Heyen's change of poetic line, but it may be used to enunciate the [*ld*] sounds of "world," rather than to breathe. The *ossia* notes in measure 35 were written at Sperry's

¹⁴ Cipullo, *Long Island Songs*, Monica Harte, soprano and Tom Cipullo, piano, recording in preparation, advance copy given to author, MSR Classics, Fall 2010.

request. Tenors may find this melodic contour more favorable, however, Cipullo prefers the non-*ossia* notes.

The tempo in measures 37 to 38 should be very slow, perhaps even slower than quarter note=44. In measure 40, a medium tempo is preferred. Harte and Cipullo's recording is approximately quarter note=54. In measures 42 to 43, the phrase "the boy standing there knew he would someday sing of" should be sung without breath. For dramatic purposes, a breath may be taken between "of" and "the crane" at the end of measure 43. However, this choice breaks the poetic and melodic line, so should only be implemented if necessary. In measure 44, the singer will often use the [n] sound to achieve the very fast slide between "crane's" and "song." There may not be enough time to enunciate both the final [s] of "crane's" and the initial [s] of "song." The two sounds may be combined into one [s]. Cipullo added an *ossia* for Harte in measure 46 which is not printed in the published score. She sings an A5 and G#5 on "water" instead of the written two F#5s. This may be preferable for high sopranos, but tenors will likely favor the ending as written.

THE LAND OF NOD (1994)

The Land of Nod

A Death in the Family

Deer in Mist and Almonds

On a Nineteenth Century Color Lithograph of Red Riding Hood by the Artist J.H.

The Land of Nod is a set of four songs with texts by Alice Wirth Gray. Following the publication of Gray's *What the Poor Eat* in 1993, tenor Paul Sperry called Cipullo

“and exclaimed ‘I’ve just read a new book of poetry and thought immediately of you.’”

¹⁵ Cipullo admits that he was “flattered” until he “read the poems and discovered their subject matter ranged from a hitch-hiking Manson-family devotee to matricide.”¹⁶ In spite of their tone, Cipullo agreed, “Alice Wirth Gray’s quirky sense of humor was right up my alley.”¹⁷ Sperry knew the poet from Chicago, where they both were raised. A passionate supporter of new American music, Sperry commissioned, premiered, and recorded *The Land of Nod*.

Alice Wirth Gray “grew up in Chicago, where Langston Hughes was her first poetry teacher.”¹⁸ She was educated at the University of California at Berkeley, and lived in California until her death in March 2008. She attended the premiere of *The Land of Nod* and Cipullo remembers her as “a force of nature.”¹⁹

At the premiere of *The Land of Nod*, the songs were described as suiting Paul Sperry’s “tenor voice very well.”²⁰ The score lists the songs as intended for “high voice.” However, the set is often performed by sopranos and mezzo-sopranos. They may be performed as a cycle, or excerpted into mixed sets. Cipullo suggests that it is most effective to keep the first and second songs together, as the first functions as a sort of introduction to the second.

¹⁵ Tom Cipullo, liner notes for *Landscape with Figures: Vocal Music of Tom Cipullo*, Albany Records TROY-1145, 2009.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Alice Wirth Gray, *What the poor eat* (Cleveland: Cleveland State University Poetry Center, 1993), biography.

¹⁹ Cipullo, e-mail message to author, 23 March 2008.

²⁰ Bernard Holland, “*The Hill-Thomas Hearings* and other new works,” *New York Times* 13 June 1994.

Cipullo revised the songs in 2005 when he transcribed the manuscript into computerized notation. He made a few minor changes, but did not republish them. The first two songs: “The Land of Nod” and “A Death in the Family” are available from the composer in keys for low voice, one whole step below the published keys. In a review of a performance sung by mezzo-soprano Tara Venditti (2000), the first three songs of the cycle were described as “rather offputting little gems.”²¹

The third song of the cycle – “Deer in Mist and Almonds” – was recorded by tenor Tom Bogdan in 2002. This CD (*For your delight: New American Art Songs*) includes what Bogdan calls “crossover” music, that is, it “crosses over the boundaries of ‘classical’ and more ‘popular’ forms and reaches a larger audience.”²² Also included on this CD are songs by Richard Hundley, Ned Rorem, Daron Hagen, Ricky Ian Gordon, John Musto, and Meredith Monk. Cipullo himself is very much rooted in the tradition of classical vocal music, and does not identify with the “crossover” genre. He admits, “In fact, I really have no interest in crossover music.”²³

The first two songs of the set were recorded by soprano Meagan Miller in 2000. Miller met Cipullo in 1998 through Joy in Singing, the organization that supports emerging professional singers and composers, and is directed by Paul Sperry. Cipullo showed Miller some songs in preparation for her Marilyn Horne Foundation debut recital, and she selected a mixed set for that performance. Her set included: “The Land of Nod”

²¹ Barry L. Cohen, “The joy of Cipullo’s *Emily*,” *The New Music Connoisseur* 10, nos. 3-4 (2002): 1.

²² Tom Bogdan, liner notes for *For your delight... : New American Art Songs*, CRI-901, 2002.

²³ Cipullo, e-mail to author, 16 September 2010.

and “A Death in the Family” both from *The Land of Nod*, “Epilogue” from *A Visit with Emily* and “The Pocketbook” from *How to Get Heat Without Fire*.²⁴

Paul Sperry’s recording of *The Land of Nod* (with pianist Colette Valentine) appears on a disc entitled *Landscape with Figures: Vocal music of Tom Cipullo*.²⁵ Three of Cipullo’s vocal chamber pieces are also on this disc: *The Ecuadorian Sailors* (1994), for mezzo-soprano, flute, viola, and harp; *Rain* (1992) for tenor and instrumental ensemble; and *Landscape with Figures* (1997) for bass-baritone, boy soprano, flute, viola, and piano.

The Land of Nod

I. Catalog data

Nature of the work: First of Four in the cycle *The Land of Nod*

Date of composition: 1994, Westbeth, NY; revised 2005

Source of score for analysis: Composer’s copy

Publisher: Classical Vocal Reprints

Publication: *The Land of Nod: Four Songs on Poems of Alice Wirth Gray*

Copyright: Music 2005, Tom Cipullo; Texts 1993, Alice Wirth Gray

Recordings: 1. Paul Sperry, tenor and Colette Valentine, piano, from *Landscape with Figures: Vocal Music of Tom Cipullo* (Albany Records TROY-1145, 2009).

2. Meagan Miller, soprano and Brian Zeger, piano, from *The Marilyn Horne Foundation presents On wings of song. Recital No. 6*, (Marilyn Horne Foundation, recorded live 12 March 2000 at the Kosciuszko Foundation, New York City).

Meter: 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 5/4

Tempo: Allegro giocoso (quarter note=140)

Voice: High Length: 77 measures

Vocal Range: S: D#4 to F#5, T: D#3 to F#4 Duration: 2:04

Mood: Dreamy, humorous Subject: Strange dreams

Author of text: Alice Wirth Gray

Source of text: Poem published in *What the poor eat* (Cleveland: Cleveland State University Poetry Center, 1993).

²⁴ Meagan Miller, soprano and Brian Zeger, piano, *The Marilyn Horne Foundation presents On wings of song: Recital No. 6*, Marilyn Horne Foundation, recorded live at the Kosciuszko Foundation, New York City, 12 March 2000.

²⁵ Tom Cipullo, *Landscape with Figures: Vocal Music of Tom Cipullo*, Albany Records TROY-1145, 2009.

Dedication: To Paul Sperry

Premiere: 9 June 1994 at Merkin Concert Hall, NYC; Paul Sperry, tenor and Tom
Cipullo, piano

Commissioned by: Paul Sperry

Incipit: “The Land of Nod”²⁶ mm. 3-6

The image shows a musical score for the incipit of "The Land of Nod" (measures 3-6). The score is in 3/4 time and consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line begins with a triplet of eighth notes (G4, A4, B4) marked with a '3' and a 'p' (piano) dynamic. The lyrics are: "Dreams of pure spir - it are oth - er peo - ple's dreams." The piano accompaniment features a steady triplet of eighth notes in the right hand and a triplet of eighth notes in the left hand, with a 'cresc.' (crescendo) marking. A 4:3 ratio is indicated above the vocal line in the second measure.

II. Annotation

“The Land of Nod” explores a variety of emotions, including humor, anger, disbelief, and fear. Vocal extremes are explored, including an awestruck spoken exclamation that one “needs keys to use the restroom” in one’s *own* dream. The piano provides a dreamlike atmosphere with the rise and fall of near-incessant triplets.

Musicologist Keith E. Clifton describes the song as a “whimsical, witty text” which “inspires a flowing, lyrical musical style” with a “quiet close.”²⁷ Cipullo calls it “quirky” and full of anger, yet “humorous” at the same time.²⁸

²⁶ Text for “The Land of Nod” © 1993 by Alice Wirth Gray, from *What the Poor Eat* by Alice Wirth Gray, used by permission of Cleveland State University Poetry Center. Music © 1994 by Tom Cipullo, from *The Land of Nod* by Tom Cipullo, used by permission of the composer.

²⁷ Keith E. Clifton, *Recent American Art Song* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2008) 35.

²⁸ Cipullo, interview by author, New York City, 8 March 2008.

“The Land of Nod” functions as a kind of introduction to the second song of the set, “A Death in the Family.” In programming, Cipullo prefers to keep this pair together whenever possible. The song is also available from the composer in a version a whole step lower than published.

The metronome marking of 140 is very effective, but may also be exceeded in performance, up to 152.

III. Interpretive guide

Throughout “The Land of Nod,” the piano must always take great care not to cover the voice. There are recurring accents in the piano part, but these accents shift position within the measure, and even within a given figure.

Example 3.2: “The Land of Nod”²⁹ mm. 32-37, shifting accents in piano

Even in the high range, the busy triplets of the piano part may easily overpower the voice.

The opening of the piece should be light and *legato* for the singer. Measure 14 may be sung *fp* as indicated, or instead *decrescendo* to *pp*. The line “or their dreams are in French” (mm. 22-23) is one of the humorous lines that Cipullo enjoys in the song.

²⁹ Text for “The Land of Nod” © 1993 by Alice Wirth Gray, from *What the Poor Eat* by Alice Wirth Gray, used by permission of Cleveland State University Poetry Center. Music © 1994 by Tom Cipullo, from *The Land of Nod* by Tom Cipullo, used by permission of the composer.

While it is marked *with disgust*, an element of humor should remain in the drama. The singer may choose to deliver the “dreams are in French” in a quasi-spoken fashion. The singer should not breathe in measure 26. The tempo should remain steady through measure 30, and the *poco ritenuto* in measure 31 is very brief.

In measure 38, Cipullo translates *sdegnate* as “harsh.” The most common English translation is “enraged.” The indication of *rough* in measure 39 continues in the same vein. In measure 44, *passione* is indicated over the singer’s line, but should also apply to the piano. This marking refers to pushing the tempo forward slightly. In measure 52, the singer is low, and the piano should take care to follow Cipullo’s wise indication *Don’t cover voice!*. This indication is an example of Cipullo’s sensitivity to balance between the voice and piano. Measures 53-54 may be very loud and *violent* but must *decrecendo* to *mf* or less in measure 55 so as to remain balanced with the singer’s low tessitura. In measure 58, “gas stations” may be quasi-spoken or slid up to. Tenors can yell (as indicated) “You need keys to use the rest-room” in measures 59-60, but sopranos may prefer to “hoot” above the *fierce* piano part. Good balance is essential in these measures, as this exclamation represents the height of the speaker’s frustration.

The opening material returns in the piano part in m. 61, but the vocal line takes the melody toward a lyrical and *legato* set of ending phrases. There should be no breath in measures 69 through 72. The *ritenuto* in measure 70 should be very slight, immediately returning to tempo in measure 71. Tenors may choose to use the *falsetto* register on the final note.

The next song begins *attacca*. The singer must lead the shift to the next song because the first line of “A Death in the Family” is spoken without piano accompaniment.

A Death in the Family

I. Catalog data

Nature of the work: Second of Four in the cycle *The Land of Nod*

Date of composition: 1994, Westbeth, NY; revised 2005

Source of score for analysis: Composer’s copy

Publisher: Classical Vocal Reprints

Publication: *The Land of Nod: Four Songs on Poems of Alice Wirth Gray*

Copyright: Music 2005, Tom Cipullo; Texts 1993, Alice Wirth Gray

Recordings: 1. Paul Sperry, tenor and Colette Valentine, piano, from *Landscape with Figures: Vocal Music of Tom Cipullo* (Albany Records TROY-1145, 2009).

2. Meagan Miller, soprano and Brian Zeger, piano, from *The Marilyn Horne Foundation presents On wings of song. Recital No. 6*, (Marilyn Horne Foundation, recorded live 12 March 2000 at the Kosciuszko Foundation, New York City).

Meter: 3/8, 4/8, 5/8, 6/8, 7/8, 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 5/4

Tempo: Fast, frantic, accented (quarter note=172)

Voice: High

Length: 167 measures

Vocal Range: S: C4 to A5, T: C3 to A4

Duration: 3:53

Mood: Darkly humorous

Subject: Matricide

Author of text: Alice Wirth Gray

Source of text: Poem published in *What the poor eat* (Cleveland: Cleveland State University Poetry Center, 1993).

Dedication: To Paul Sperry

Premiere: 9 June 1994 at Merkin Concert Hall, NYC; Paul Sperry, tenor and Tom Cipullo, piano

Commissioned by: Paul Sperry

Incipit: “A Death in the Family”³⁰ mm. 1-2

The musical score is in 4/4 time and consists of three systems. The first system is for the vocal line, starting with the tempo marking **liberamente**. The second system is for the piano accompaniment, starting with the tempo marking **a tempo** and a dynamic marking of **ff**. The piano part features a prominent bass line with eighth-note patterns and a treble line with sixteenth-note patterns. The vocal line begins with the spoken text: "Spoken: I dreamed last night I murdered mother." The tempo marking **a tempo** is also present above the piano accompaniment in the second system.

II. Annotation

“A Death in the Family” has been called “a model of black humor.”³¹ The dark but “tongue-in-cheek”³² matricidal fantasy is cleverly linked to musical quotes ranging from *Star Wars* to Verdi. At its premiere, the opening spoken line “I dreamed last night I murdered Mother” made the audience audibly groan.³³ However, in the end, there were “genuine smiles”³⁴ and heartfelt laughter.

The influence of musical theater on Cipullo’s style is prominent in this song, as the vocal part requires several different singing styles and delivery of spoken text. The musical quotations include themes from the films *Jaws* (mm. 41-42), *Halloween* (mm.43-44), *Star Wars* (mm. 45-46), and *Psycho* (mm. 47-48), as well as excerpts from G.F.

³⁰ Text for “A Death in the Family” © 1993 by Alice Wirth Gray, from *What the Poor Eat* by Alice Wirth Gray, used by permission of Cleveland State University Poetry Center. Music © 1994 by Tom Cipullo, from *The Land of Nod* by Tom Cipullo, used by permission of the composer.

³¹ Barry L. Cohen, “The joy of Cipullo’s *Emily*,” *The New Music Connoisseur* 10, nos. 3-4 (2002): 1.

³² Keith E. Clifton, *Recent American Art Song*, 34.

³³ Sperry, interview.

³⁴ Bernard Holland, “*The Hill-Thomas Hearings* and other new works,” *New York Times*, 13 June 1994.

Handel's "Hallelujah Chorus" from *Messiah* (mm. 70-72), Giuseppe Verdi's "Brindisi" from *La Traviata* (mm. 91-97), Giacomo Puccini's "E lucevan le stelle" from *Tosca* (mm. 104-110), and Gaetano Donizetti's "Mad Scene" from *Lucia di Lammermoor* (mm. 134-136). At the premiere, composer Ben Yarmolinsky told Cipullo "it's not the quote itself that is funny, but how you get in and out of it."³⁵ Audiences often laugh out loud in reaction to many of these quotations, especially at the triumphant "Hallelujah Chorus" following the mother's death.

Soprano Meagan Miller believes that "A Death in the Family" is even more effective when performed by a "sweet soprano voice." She argues that a male voice can "make people uneasy," whereas detailing the fantasy of killing one's mother can be even more humorous when delivered by the innocent voice of a soprano.³⁶

The song is also available from the composer in a version that is a whole step lower. "A Death in the Family" is a very effective and popular encore, and functions well as the final song in a mixed set of Cipullo songs.

III. Interpretive guide

The opening line should be delivered matter-of-factly or detached. In his recording, Sperry favors a kind of embarrassed nasal voice, which is quite effective. The piano's entrance in measure 2 should violently contrast with the gentle spoken lines of the singer. In measure 4, the emphasized word in the sentence should be "poison." Again in measure 5 the piano entrance should be violent, almost interrupting the thoughts

³⁵ Cipullo, paraphrasing Ben Yarmolinsky, interview by author, 8 March 2008.

³⁶ Meagan Miller, telephone interview by author, Denver, 14 April 2009.

of the singer. The space between “determined” in measure 7 and “had” in measure 8 is marked *attacca (no pause)*, and does not allow time for a breath. The pianist must be ready to join the singer in measure 8 in the middle of the phrase (mm. 7-8). Just before measure 10, the singer and pianist may breathe together to coordinate their entrance on the downbeat. Crisp diction is essential in measures 20 to 35. The poetic language is sophisticated and often unexpected, such as “insistently unattractive” (mm. 32-33). As the large-scale *crescendo* builds in measures 20 to 35, very clear diction will aid the precision of rhythm and heightening of emotion. In measures 34 to 35, “not pleasant” should have extremely crisp diction, and in this low range, may almost need to be spit.

In measure 37, the C5 is often held longer than its given eighth note duration. The parenthetical poetic line “(snarling, snarling, twisted, twisted, jealous, plain mean)” is set over 8 measures of music, which include quotations of four famous musical themes from films. There are four distinct metronome markings, which must be strictly followed in order to make the quotes effective. The quotation of the *Jaws* theme lasts from measures 41 to 42, and should accelerate through measure 42. In the low range, the singer’s vocal quality may be sacrificed in order to be audible (m. 42). This quote moves directly into another (from *Halloween*) in measures 43-44. The *sotto voce* effect should be born out of fear, and may be quasi-whispered or squeaked. The *Star Wars* quote contrasts greatly, with its slow tempo and accented low notes. In measure 46, Cipullo indicates *(like James Earl Jones) (wobbly sound)*, referring to the actor who provided the voice of Darth Vader in the classic films. Most singers widen the vibrato to achieve this effect. Tenors may prefer the *ossia* low C in measure 46, while sopranos will likely remain on the C5. The piano is extremely loud during the *Psycho* quotation in measures

47-48. Sopranos likely will speak the “plain mean” in a high and therefore audible register. Tenors may have the cut in their mid-range to follow Cipullo’s indication of (*almost screaming!*).

The character returns to the plan to murder mother in measure 49, intending to leave “two cups on the kitchen counter” (mm. 49-50). The *staccato* “There were no guilt feelings involved” (mm. 53-54) requires a very *happy* vocal sound, as indicated in the score. Singers often change the timbre to bright and light through measure 58. The pianist should match this light and carefree tone in measures 54 to 58. Balance may be challenging in measures 62 to 63 because the piano doubles the voice in the mid-range. The breath in measure 68 is optional, but if taken should be very quick. The C# in measure 70 is often held longer than its given quarter note duration.

Immediately following the death of the mother, the celebratory quote of Handel’s “Hallelujah Chorus” in measures 70-72 often causes an audience to laugh out loud. The speaker must then try to deal with the emotional (and legal) ramifications of having committed such a crime. To underline the speaker’s maniacal character, measures 84-85 may be sung *pp* (“I had”), which contrasts with measure 86 sung *subito ff* (“attitudinal problems”). While quoting Verdi’s “Brindisi” on the words “Perhaps I’d get drunk and blurt out everything” the singer may be slightly sloppy with the notes, as if drunk. Staggering slightly on stage is not inappropriate. In order to fill the musical quotation with text, Cipullo adds repeated words, changing the line to “Perhaps I’d get drunk I’d get drunk and blurt out ev’rything, ev’rything” (mm. 93-97).

The long quotation of Puccini’s “E lucevan le stelle” lasts from measure 104 to 111. Though the words have been changed, Cipullo calls this “a soprano’s only chance

to sing an infamous tenor aria.”³⁷ The tempo should be very slow, indicated *Andante lento*, and extreme *rubato* may be used throughout. The line “and myself like Misses Harris” refers to Jean Harris, a school headmistress who shot and killed her ex-lover Dr. Herman Tarnower in 1980, and served 11 years in prison. In his recording, Sperry uses a *subito pp* and falsetto effect on the A in measure 110. The upbeat to measure 111 (“got out”) should be in the *Tempo primo* (quarter note=172).

In measure 124, the vocal timbre should change to a child-like, angelic, or innocent sound, which Cipullo indicates *like a boy scout*. This timbre lasts through measure 126. The singer may express increasing paranoia in mm. 127-133, and exaggerating the emphasis on consonants will aid this process. In measure 134, the quotation from Lucia’s “Mad Scene” begins slowly but quickly accelerates to a vocal break, crack, or screech in measure 137. The F5 in measure 151 is difficult to sing accurately since it clashes with the F#5 in the piano part. The vocal note was originally written as an F#, and Miller sings this version on her recording. Sperry suggested the change to F \natural in order to underline the emotional distress of the speaker. The final two lines “What a peculiar person I am” and “It’s a wonder my life has gone as well as it has” come as an afterthought. The more detached and delighted the singer’s delivery, the more humor it evokes. The final line should be sung with a smile.

Deer in Mist and Almonds

I. Catalog data

Nature of the work: Third of Four in the cycle *The Land of Nod*

Date of composition: 1994

³⁷ Cipullo, *Coaching with the author*, digital audio recording, New York City 12 March 2008.

Source of score for analysis: Published score, Manuscript Edition
 Publisher: Classical Vocal Reprints
 Publication: *The Land of Nod: Four Songs on Poems of Alice Wirth Gray*
 Copyright: Music 1994, Tom Cipullo; Texts 1993, Alice Wirth Gray
 Recording: Paul Sperry, tenor and Colette Valentine, piano, from *Landscape with Figures: Vocal Music of Tom Cipullo* (Albany Records TROY-1145, 2009).
 Tom Bogdan, tenor and Harry Huff, piano, from *For your delight...: New American Art Songs* (Composers Recordings Inc. 901, 2002).
 Meter: 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 5/4
 Tempo: Slow, very expressive (eighth note=84)
 Voice: High Length: 82 measures
 Vocal Range: S: D4 to G5, T: D3 to G4 Duration: 4:59
 Mood: Suspended beauty Subject: Nature
 Author of text: Alice Wirth Gray
 Source of text: Poem published in *What the poor eat* (Cleveland: Cleveland State University Poetry Center, 1993).
 Dedication: For Janet Fredericks, To Paul Sperry
 Premiere: 9 June 1994 at Merkin Concert Hall, NYC; Paul Sperry, tenor and Tom Cipullo, piano
 Commissioned by: Paul Sperry

Incipit: “Deer in Mist and Almonds”³⁸ mm. 9-13

The image shows a musical score for the incipit of the song "Deer in Mist and Almonds". It consists of three staves: a vocal line and two piano accompaniment staves. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 2/4. The score begins at measure 9. The vocal line starts with a rest, followed by the lyrics: "It's rained for months and the deer step del-i-cate-ly,—". The piano accompaniment features a delicate, arpeggiated texture in the right hand and a more rhythmic, chordal texture in the left hand. Performance markings include *pp* (pianissimo) and *teneramente* (tenderly) for the vocal line, and *pp* for the piano accompaniment. The tempo/mood is indicated as *so delicate*.

II. Annotation

This serene and beautiful song sets a “quiet, evocative nature text...in stark contrast to the preceding one.”³⁹ Musicologist Keith E. Clifton notes that the song

³⁸ Text for “Deer in Mist and Almonds” © 1993 by Alice Wirth Gray, from *What the Poor Eat* by Alice Wirth Gray, used by permission of Cleveland State University Poetry Center. Music © 1994 by Tom Cipullo, from *The Land of Nod* by Tom Cipullo, used by permission of the composer.

“requires solid lyrical line and the ability to float sustained high notes at a low dynamic level.”⁴⁰ Soprano Gretchen Munding, who premiered the role of Old Alyce in Cipullo’s opera *Glory Denied*, states that while the first two songs in *The Land of Nod* allow an opportunity for entertaining characterization and silliness, this song is by contrast “gorgeous” and “wonderful to sing.”⁴¹

Daron Hagen also set “Deer in Mist and Almonds” in his song cycle *Figments* (2000), which consists of seven songs to texts by Alice Wirth Gray. The cycle sets poems selected from *What the Poor Eat*, but Hagen and Cipullo have only “Deer in Mist and Almonds” in common. Hagen’s compositional language ranges more toward atonality than Cipullo’s, but both share lyrical vocal lines reflective of this gentle text.

Cipullo admits that he is “still not sure” he understands the poem, but he admires its beauty. He says, “it just evokes something” without explanation.⁴² The author believes that the song is a visceral reaction to the serenity and permanence found in nature. Lush and complex harmonies provide context for soaring vocal lyricism and prosody.

III. Interpretive guide

“Deer in Mist and Almonds” has quite a low tessitura for tenor or soprano. For soprano in particular, it is important to have a strong middle range. Even with a very

³⁹ Keith E. Clifton, *Recent American Art Song* 34.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 34-35.

⁴¹ Gretchen Munding, telephone interview by author, Denver, 12 September 2010.

⁴² Cipullo, interview, 8 March 2008.

sensitive pianist, the voice may easily be overpowered by the lush harmonies in the piano part.

In the piano introduction, the chord in measure 7 is unexpected and extremely beautiful, and the *ppp* should be *subito*. Cipullo labels this chord *das Lebenschord* in the score. This translates to “the chord of life.” This chord does not appear again in the song, but holds special value for Cipullo within the piano introduction. Measure 13 should not be sung in strict time, and the singer should caress the word “delicately.” In order to achieve Cipullo’s marking of *no breath* in measure 20, some singers may need to breathe at the end of measure 17. If the *ritenuto* in measure 17 is only very slight, or if the *crescendo* in measures 19-20 increases only to *mp* or *mf*, enough breath may be conserved to observe Cipullo’s marking. Cipullo’s use of *subito ppp* on the word “mustard” in measure 22 highlights the importance of the word. The singer may bring out the unvoiced consonants in the word in order to create the desired effect.

The text in mm. 30-39 is not written in the everyday vernacular, so careful diction is necessary in this mid-range setting. The rhapsodic triplet in measure 38 is very compelling in the midst of Gray’s alliterative text “steel,/stainless sight.” The *ppp* setting of “holes in the light” in measure 39 should be performed *subito*. Sperry uses a straight tone effect on “light” in measures 39-40. In measure 42, “pinchbeck” is an alloy of copper and zinc used to imitate gold in jewelry. In measure 44, the *stringendo* moves the tempo forward to an *accelerando* in measures 46-48. The *rallentando* just before “mustard” (m. 49) highlights its importance again.

Cipullo observes the break from one poetic stanza to the next with his piano interlude in measures 50 to 54. The breath in measure 58 is almost always necessary, and

would follow Gray's poetic lines. Cipullo repeats the word "float" in measure 63, and the piano should be careful here not to overplay the lush chords under the singer's G. The tempo should increase little by little (*poco a poco incalzando*) from measures 59 to 67. Cipullo adds the marking *molto passione* in measure 66, which refers to tempo and emotional mood. Pianists should emphasize the top B \flat to E \flat line in measures 69 and 70. This helps the singer to reestablish the tempo and find the pitch in measure 70. Tenors may favor a *falsetto* effect in measures 73 to 77. The breath in measure 74 is almost always necessary, but may also serve to anticipate the surprise of the word "pink" which follows in measure 75.

On a Nineteenth Century Color Lithograph of Red Riding Hood by the Artist J.H.

I. Catalog data

Nature of the work: Fourth of Four in the cycle *The Land of Nod*

Date of composition: 1994, revised 1998

Source of score for analysis: Published score, Manuscript Edition

Publisher: Classical Vocal Reprints

Publication: *The Land of Nod: Four Songs on Poems of Alice Wirth Gray*

Copyright: Music 1994, Tom Cipullo; Texts 1993, Alice Wirth Gray

Recording: Paul Sperry, tenor and Colette Valentine, piano, from *Landscape with Figures: Vocal Music of Tom Cipullo* (Albany Records TROY-1145, 2009).

Meter: 5/8, 6/8, 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 5/4, 6/4, 2/2, 3/2

Tempo: Slow, very Free (quarter note=ca. 52)

Voice: High voice

Length: 422 measures

Vocal Range: S: C4 to G5, T: C3 to G4

Duration: 12:45

Mood: Complex

Subject: Red Riding Hood's misadventures

Author of text: Alice Wirth Gray

Source of text: Poem published in *What the poor eat* (Cleveland: Cleveland State University Poetry Center, 1993).

Dedication: To Paul Sperry

Premiere: 9 June 1994 at Merkin Concert Hall, NYC; Paul Sperry, tenor and Tom Cipullo, piano

Commissioned by: Paul Sperry

Incipit: “On a Nineteenth Century Color Lithograph of Red Riding Hood by the Artist J.H.”⁴³ mm. 1-2

Slow, very free

The musical score is for a piece in 4/4 time, marked "Slow, very free". It consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line begins with a spoken introduction: "Spoken: The wolf makes a funny face not to be taken seriously as evil, but as if there's something". The piano accompaniment starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic and includes the instruction "always following the voice". The score features a triplet of eighth notes marked "pochissimo più forte" and a triplet of eighth notes marked "pochissimo". There are also markings for "i.h." and "poco". Pedal points are indicated at the beginning and end of the first two measures.

II. Annotation

Little Red Riding Hood is a tale that has its roots in Asian folklore, was written down by Charles Perrault in 1697, and adapted by The Brothers Grimm in 1812. Gray’s “On a Nineteenth Century Color Lithograph of Red Riding Hood by the Artist J.H.,” frames the story as a crime investigation, and is examined from multiple points of view. The poem is long, and Cipullo’s song lasts nearly 13 minutes. Cipullo calls the song “big and episodic” and admits that the ending “doesn’t provide a good conclusion.”⁴⁴ At its premiere, this piece was described as laboring “less fruitfully” than “A Death in the Family” and “inspiring less interesting music in the process.”⁴⁵ Specifically, Cipullo

⁴³ Text for “On a Nineteenth Century Color Lithograph of Red Riding Hood by the Artist J.H.” © 1993 by Alice Wirth Gray, from *What the Poor Eat* by Alice Wirth Gray, used by permission of Cleveland State University Poetry Center. Music © 1994 by Tom Cipullo, from *The Land of Nod* by Tom Cipullo, used by permission of the composer.

⁴⁴ Cipullo, interview, 8 March 2008.

⁴⁵ Bernard Holland, “*The Hill-Thomas Hearings* and other new works,” *New York Times* 13 June 1994.

believes that the piano part is not interesting enough.⁴⁶ Indeed, it often provides a minimal atmosphere within which the singer delivers a large portion of the text in recitative style. However, the piece has been received favorably as well. In a review of the recording in *Fanfare*, critic William Zagorski singles out this song as his “favorite” and calls the cycle “all too brief.” He describes this song as “an up to date psychosexual explication of the ancient fairy tale replete with current psychobabble, modern stage settings, and ancillary characters.”⁴⁷

The many different characters of the poem include Red Riding Hood, the Night Police, the Wolf, the Hunter, the Mother, and an observer who often identifies with Red Riding Hood. The observer is the person who has the lithograph hung in her room, and she is intricately involved with Red Riding Hood’s plight. The text drives the entire song, and dramatic endurance is required of the singer. Sperry assigns different accents for his characters. The Night Police are from Brooklyn, while the Hunter is a “redneck.”⁴⁸ Red Riding Hood is innocent and child-like, while the Mother is “snooty.”⁴⁹ The Wolf is French, contrasting with Gray’s lines “for you all stories with fear in them/will always be German.”

III. Interpretive guide

This song is best performed by a strong actor with a good singing voice. The piano part is non-intrusive, and provides a framework upon which the singer speaks many

⁴⁶ Cipullo, interview, 8 March 2008.

⁴⁷ William Zagorski, review of *Landscape with Figures: Vocal Music of Tom Cipullo*, Albany Records TROY-1145, *Fanfare* 33, no. 4 (March-April 2010): 166-167.

⁴⁸ Paul Sperry, interview by author, New York City, 29 May 2009.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

lines and moves the story line forward at rapid speed. The piano part also serves to distinguish the many different characters from one another. The score is meticulously marked with dramatic and interpretive markings. There are several changes in tempo, which are led by the singer.

The story begins with a description of the painting by the observer or main character who states, “Some people have a crucifix over the bed:/I have a wolf.” The Night Police enter and “interrogate Riding Hood.” They do not believe she is innocent, and torment her with such questions as “Your mom/is sending you through these woods/by yourself with a bottle of imported wine?/You expect us to buy that?” The observer comments on the composition of the painting: “Riding Hood far left/and the wolf far right/and the center absolutely empty.”

Riding Hood tells “the Cops:/Of course I talked to him,/it’s what the books say to do.” She reasons that her parents sent her into the woods, and “They must have known/the way the world is.” The narrator interjects that she would “like to get past/all that little-girl-and-the-wolf thing.” Red Riding Hood says “When I peeked, I found/she’d sent me off in the dark/without so much as a flashlight.”

The Night Police report frames “the girl” as “an angel,/but you just can’t tell.” They continue, “she says her mother/hung the lithograph of a wolf/over her bed. A likely story.” They try to gather “enough evidence/to run her folks in, too.”

The Wolf attempts to defend himself, claiming he was lost, and that he did not intend to go into the woods alone. He comically proclaims “That’s why we always/travel

in packs./I mean it's dark in there./Dangerous.” Sperry finds this line one of the funniest in the song, but notes that it rarely gets a laugh from the audience in live performance.⁵⁰

The Hunter, obviously lacking in education (“a female in distress I sez”), delivers his testimony claiming he rescued Red Riding Hood from the unbelievable “amount of blood.” His testimony then spirals into a disturbing criticism of Red Riding Hood, saying “that kid does she have/a mouth on her” and vowing that if she were his daughter he would “beat her till she was civil” and “crack all the teeth/in her dirty mouth” and “take away her clothes and lock her up/to sit in her own filth until/she'd learned a little respect.” He is then asked to “stand down.”

The Mother admits that she had “hung the lithograph/over her bed” because she “had to put it somewhere,/it was a gift.” She then blames the girl for having taken the unsafe route through the woods, blames her husband for not helping, and laments, “Oh, if only/we'd been rich enough/to buy her a car.”

In the final stanza, the speaker unravels the story, wondering why the wolf would “put off” eating Red Riding Hood “to eat a stringy old lady” saying “That's not/the reasoning of a beast.” Her emotional tone shifts abruptly when she is asked what she sees in the picture. She becomes defensive and angry, and demands to talk to her attorney.

This song contains many of Cipullo's great vocal techniques. It features comedy, acting, spoken delivery, as well as glorious melodies and lush harmonic moments. It functions well as a stand-alone piece, and is a vocal tour-de-force.

⁵⁰ Sperry, interview.

A VISIT WITH EMILY (1998)

Cavatina
 Arietta parlante
 Aria
 Moto perpetuo
 Arietta
 Quodlibet I
 Arioso
 Aria di campane
 Recitative
 Catch
 Chaconne
 Coranto
 Passacaglia
 Trio
 Cantilena I
 Cantilena II
 Aria
 Aria
 Quodlibet II
 Hymn
 Epilogue

The idea for *A Visit with Emily* came from Tobé Malawista, a soprano and founding member of The Mirror Visions Ensemble. The Mirror Visions Ensemble is a singing trio that has commissioned and premiered more than 70 works by contemporary composers. Malawista selected texts from Emily Dickinson's poems and letters, and some letters written by T.W. Higginson, and sent this collection of texts to three different composers. Cipullo was the only one who responded with excitement.⁵¹ Together, Cipullo and Malawista envisioned a large-scale work featuring texts by Dickinson and her mentor T.W. Higginson. Cipullo added two additional texts to Malawista's

⁵¹ Tobé Malawista, interview by the author, digital audio recording, New York City, 25 September 2009.

selections. One, which his friend Janet Fredericks had sent him while he was going through a particularly difficult time “We never know how high we are,” and another “Nature—the Gentlest Mother is.” Malawista had included the latter with her previous selections but indicated that the poem should be saved for use in a future project. *A Visit with Emily* was completed in 1998, and premiered in 1999. In 2001, Cipullo made some minor revisions in preparation for publication by Oxford University Press. The published score of *A Visit with Emily* indicates that the Mirror Visions Ensemble often programmed “Cantilena II” (#16) between “Quodlibet II” (#19) and “Hymn” (#20). While this change is acceptable to Cipullo, the published order is his preference.

The founding members of The Mirror Visions Ensemble are soprano Malawista, baritone Scott Murphree, and baritone Richard Lalli. The group was founded in 1992 and based concerts around the idea of creating a mirror vision, that is, one text set by two different composers. Cipullo had come to know the group through his friend mezzo-soprano Mary Ann Hart. Hart introduced Cipullo to Richard Lalli, and Malawista commissioned him to write several works for The Mirror Visions Ensemble. Murphree and Lalli both have fairly high baritone instruments, and the tessitura is on the high side for both baritone parts. Murphree eventually transitioned to tenor by around 2002.

The Mirror Visions Ensemble has performed *A Visit with Emily* in North America, Great Britain, Sweden, Switzerland, and France. Audiences consistently respond to the power and drama of the song cycle. The work is most effective when performed as a whole, but solo songs are often programmed in mixed Cipullo sets as well. This cycle contains many solos, and a set of soprano or baritone songs could be

formed by extracting exclusively from *A Visit with Emily*. However, Cipullo does not approve of sopranos excerpting and performing baritone songs, or vice versa.⁵²

When the cycle is performed in its entirety, special care must be taken to follow Cipullo's instructions regarding the length of pauses between songs. Some transitions are indicated *attacca* while others have pauses of varying lengths. The recommendations for each selection are based upon two unpublished recordings on record.

Cipullo often describes *A Visit with Emily* as having taught him an important lesson in song composition. Rather than attempting to illustrate a poet's sentiments, Cipullo came to understand that he could only show us his reaction to the words through notes and rhythms. The performers then show an audience their reactions to his notes and rhythms, and to the texts of Higginson and Dickinson.

Cipullo selected formal titles (Cavatina, Quodlibet etc.) to pay homage to the great forms of musical history. However, the songs are often referred to by their number in the cycle, or by the first line of poetry.

The poems in the catalog are numbered according to *The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson*, edited by Thomas H. Johnson (1960). This volume is based on the Harvard University collection of poems from 1960, and was the definitive resource available to Cipullo when he and Malawista selected these texts in the mid-1990s. Dickinson's poems have since been renumbered in *The Poems of Emily Dickinson: Reading Edition*, edited by R.W. Franklin (1999). This renumbering is also based on Harvard University's collection, and reflects new findings and a chronological re-

⁵² Sperry, interview.

ordering of the poems. The poems set in *A Visit with Emily* may be referred to in either volume by first line.

Cavatina (1)
("If I read a book")

I. Catalog data

Nature of the work: First of Twenty-One in the cycle *A Visit with Emily*

Date of composition: 1998, revised 2001

Source of score for analysis: Published score

Publisher: Oxford University Press

Publication: *A Visit with Emily: Songs for Soprano, Two Baritones, and Piano* based on the Writings of Emily Dickinson and T.W. Higginson

Copyright: Music 2003, Oxford University Press, Text in public domain

Meter: 3/16, 3/8, 4/8, 5/8, 6/8, 7/8, 8/8

Tempo: Slow, expressive (eighth note=ca. 100)

Voice: Soprano

Length: 24 measures

Vocal Range: C4 to F#5

Duration: 1:20

Mood: Pensive

Subject: Poetry

Author of text: T.W. Higginson

Source of text: Letter from T.W. Higginson to his wife Mary Channing Higginson, quoting Emily Dickinson (1870)

Dedication: for Tobé Malawista, Richard Lalli, and Scott Murphree

Premiere: 9 January 1999 Blackstone Memorial Library in Branford, CT by The Mirror Visions Ensemble (Tobé Malawista, soprano and Alan Darling, piano)

Commissioned by: The Mirror Visions Ensemble

Incipit: “Cavatina” (If I read a book)⁵³ mm. 5-7

The musical score consists of three systems. The first system is the vocal line, starting with a piano (*pp*) dynamic and a slur over the first two measures. The lyrics are "If I read a book and it makes my whole bod - y so". The second system continues the vocal line with a slur over the first two measures. The third system is the piano accompaniment, starting with a piano (*pp*) dynamic and a slur over the first two measures. The score is in 7/8, 6/8, and 3/8 time signatures.

II. Annotation

As a musical term, “cavatina” refers to “a short aria without a da capo.” In modern music, it often describes the first half of a two-part aria, such as we see here.⁵⁴

Although the author of the text is T.W. Higginson, he is quoting Dickinson in a letter written to his wife Mary. The letter describes his first and only visit with Dickinson.

III. Interpretive guide

The first line of the text is spoken in the present tense: “If I read a book” (*[i]*). The italicized word in “I know *that* is poetry” needs special emphasis in measure 11. The word “*that*” only has an eighth note duration, and the word “is” which follows has a *tenuto* marking on it. Without special attention paid to the word “*that*” the emphasized

⁵³ Text in public domain. Music from *A Visit with Emily* by Tom Cipullo © Oxford University Press Inc, 2004. Assigned to Oxford University Press 2010. Music extracts reproduced by permission. All rights reserved.

⁵⁴ “Cavatina,” in *Grove Music Online, Oxford University Press Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/05215> (accessed 22 November 2009).

meaning of the sentence is lost. When the text is repeated, Cipullo clearly presents this emphasis by adding an accent mark on “*that*” (m. 18).

Pianists should be certain to note breath marks indicated in the score above the vocal line (mm. 5 and 10). Also, Cipullo uses a “poco accent” throughout the piece for the voice and piano, and explains the marking at the beginning of the piece.

The end of the song is marked *attacca* into the next song. The singer paces this, usually with a single breath between m. 24 of “Cavatina” and m. 1 of “Arietta parlante.”

Arietta parlante (2)
(Dear Friend, your letter gave no Drunkenness)

I. Catalog data

Nature of the work: Second of Twenty-One in the cycle *A Visit with Emily*

Date of composition: 1998, revised 2001

Source of score for analysis: Published score

Publisher: Oxford University Press

Publication: *A Visit with Emily: Songs for Soprano, Two Baritones, and Piano based on the Writings of Emily Dickinson and T.W. Higginson*

Copyright: Music 2003, Oxford University Press, Text in public domain

Meter: 6/16, 12/16, 2/4, 3/4, 4/4

Tempo: Molto vivace (quarter note=160)

Voice: Soprano

Length: 50 measures

Vocal Range: E4 to F#5

Duration: 1:10

Mood: Thoughtful

Subject: Friendship, fame

Author of text: Emily Dickinson

Source of text: Letter from Dickinson to T.W. Higginson, 8 June 1862; Published in *The Letters of Emily Dickinson*, edited by Mabel Loomis Todd, Mineola: Dover Publications, 2003.

Dedication: for Tobé Malawista, Richard Lalli, and Scott Murphree

Premiere: 9 January 1999 Blackstone Memorial Library in Branford, CT by The

Mirror Visions Ensemble (Tobé Malawista, soprano and Alan Darling, piano)

Commissioned by: The Mirror Visions Ensemble

Incipit: “Arietta parlante”⁵⁵ (Dear Friend, your letter) mm. 1-3

Molto vivace (♩ = 160)

Soprano: *p* *poco f* *p* *p*

Piano: *pp leggiero*

Dear Friend, Your

II. Annotation

The title, “Arietta parlante” implies a text-driven short aria. “Arietta” is defined as a shorter, and “less elaborate”⁵⁶ song in an opera. “Parlante” translates from the Italian as “spoken” and is often used as a bridging device⁵⁷ in opera. Cipullo uses the form as such here, as the fast tempo leads into the third song.

III. Interpretive guide

The tempo is quite fast, and the piano has almost constant sixteenth notes. Care must be taken to maintain the balance between the voice and piano because of the dense texture of the piano part. An *ossia* exists in measure 49: the first syllable of the word

⁵⁵ Text in public domain. Music from *A Visit with Emily* by Tom Cipullo © Oxford University Press Inc, 2004. Assigned to Oxford University Press 2010. Music extracts reproduced by permission. All rights reserved.

⁵⁶ Tim Carter, “Arietta,” In *Grove Music Online*, Oxford University Press Online, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/01235> (accessed 22 December 2009).

⁵⁷ Julian Budden, “Parlante (ii),” In *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, edited by Stanley Sadie, *Grove Music Online*, Oxford University Press Online, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/O007252> (accessed 22 December 2009).

“better” may be sung as a B \flat 5, returning to B \flat 4 on the final eighth note. There is a pause before the next song, which should last at least six seconds. Both the first and second songs of the work feature Dickinson as the speaker, and thus establish the soprano as the voice or character of Emily Dickinson.

Aria (3)
(Fame is a fickle food)

I. Catalog data

Nature of the work: Third of Twenty-One in the cycle *A Visit with Emily*

Date of composition: 1998, revised 2001

Source of score for analysis: Published score

Publisher: Oxford University Press

Publication: *A Visit with Emily: Songs for Soprano, Two Baritones, and Piano based on the Writings of Emily Dickinson and T.W. Higginson*

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Meter: 3/8, 5/8, 6/8, 7/8, 2/4, 3/4, 4/4

Tempo: *Grazioso* (quarter note=100)

Voice: Baritone 2

Length: 30 measures

Vocal Range: C3 to F4

Duration: 0:35

Mood: Disdain

Subject: Fame

Author of text: Emily Dickinson

Source of text: Poem 1659 by Emily Dickinson; Published in *The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson*, edited by Thomas H. Johnson (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1960).

Dedication: for Tobé Malawista, Richard Lalli, and Scott Murphree

Premiere: 9 January 1999 Blackstone Memorial Library in Branford, CT by The Mirror Visions Ensemble (Richard Lalli, baritone and Alan Darling, piano)

Commissioned by: The Mirror Visions Ensemble

Incipit: “Aria”⁵⁸ (Fame is a fickle food) mm. 2-4

II. Annotation

This is the first poem to be presented in the cycle. It is also the first of three poems on the subject of fame. Each of the three poems are assigned to be sung by a specific singer, and the three texts are then sung simultaneously in the sixth song. This poem “Fame is a fickle food” is sung by the baritone 2, and begins to establish him as the character of T.W. Higginson.

III. Interpretive guide

The first note of the vocal line has a *tenuto* marking on it, and may even be accented further. Measure 9 is marked *passionato*, which is Oxford University Press’s house style for Cipullo’s marking *passione*. For Cipullo, *passione* or *passionato* may be used interchangeably, but always mean to move the tempo forward and heighten the drama. If needed, the breath marked in measure 14 may be eliminated, and instead taken after the word “Farmer’s” in measure 15. The singer may again breathe after “Men” at

⁵⁸ Text in public domain. Music from *A Visit with Emily* by Tom Cipullo © Oxford University Press Inc, 2004. Assigned to Oxford University Press 2010. Music extracts reproduced by permission. All rights reserved.

the end of measure 20. The final word “die” may be performed straight tone and coldly, to give a stark dramatic effect. As soon as the pedal is lifted at the end of the song, the pianist begins the fourth song *attacca*.

Moto perpetuo (4)
(Fame is the one that does not stay)

I. Catalog data

Nature of the work: Fourth of Twenty-One in the cycle *A Visit with Emily*

Date of composition: 1998, revised 2001

Source of score for analysis: Published score

Publisher: Oxford University Press

Publication: *A Visit with Emily: Songs for Soprano, Two Baritones, and Piano based on the Writings of Emily Dickinson and T.W. Higginson*

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Meter: 3/8, 5/8, 7/8, 9/8, 10/8, 2/4, 3/4, 4/4

Tempo: Presto possibile (quarter note=168)

Voice: Baritone 1

Length: 64 measures

Vocal Range: E3 to G4

Duration: 1:20

Mood: Disdain

Subject: Fame

Author of text: Emily Dickinson

Source of text: Poem 1475 by Emily Dickinson; Published in *The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson*, edited by Thomas H. Johnson (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1960).

Dedication: for Tobé Malawista, Richard Lalli, and Scott Murphree

Premiere: 9 January 1999 Blackstone Memorial Library in Branford, CT by The Mirror Visions Ensemble (Scott Murphree, baritone and Alan Darling, piano)

Commissioned by: The Mirror Visions Ensemble

Incipit: “Moto perpetuo”⁵⁹ (Fame is the one that does not stay) mm. 6-9

The image shows a musical score for the incipit of 'Moto perpetuo' (mm. 6-9). The score is in bass clef with a 10/8 time signature. It features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line starts with 'Fame' and continues with 'is the one that does'. The piano accompaniment consists of a right hand with a rapid sixteenth-note figure and a left hand with a slower, sustained bass line. Dynamics include ff (fortissimo) and poco f (poco fortissimo).

II. Annotation

“Moto perpetuo” translates to “perpetual motion” and often describes “a piece in which rapid figuration is persistently maintained.”⁶⁰ There is no metronome marking in the published score, but Cipullo recommends a minimum speed of quarter note=168.

This is often exceeded in performance.

III. Interpretive guide

This song is highly rhythmical and features a non-legato vocal style. The rhythm in the vocal line requires bounce and lightness. The final syllable of “occupant” must be de-emphasized in measure 14 and a “schwa” or [ə] phoneme used in order to make the text understood. If necessary, the singer may breathe at the end of measure 24 in order to complete the phrase to measure 32 without break. However, this is not ideal since it puts

⁵⁹ Text in public domain. Music from *A Visit with Emily* by Tom Cipullo © Oxford University Press Inc, 2004. Assigned to Oxford University Press 2010. Music extracts reproduced by permission. All rights reserved.

⁶⁰ Michael Tilmouth, "Moto perpetuo," In *Grove Music Online*, Oxford University Press Online, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/19224> (accessed 22 December 2009).

a breath in the middle of a word. In measure 44 “Germ” must be clear, since it may be perceived as “Gem.” At high speed, “Electrical the embryo” should be sung staccato with some space between the notes. A crescendo on the words “But we demand the” in measure 59 helps for comprehension since volume is lost in the voice as it descends. A *subito pp* in measure 60 heightens the drama when it follows the crescendo in measure 59. The pause before the fifth song should last at least six seconds.

Arietta (5)
(Fame is a bee)

I. Catalog data

Nature of the work: Fifth of Twenty-One in the cycle *A Visit with Emily*

Date of composition: 1998, revised 2001

Source of score for analysis: Published score

Publisher: Oxford University Press

Publication: *A Visit with Emily: Songs for Soprano, Two Baritones, and Piano based on the Writings of Emily Dickinson and T.W. Higginson*

Copyright: Music 2003, Oxford University Press, Text in public domain

Meter: 3/8, 5/8, 6/8, 7/8

Tempo: Andante (dotted quarter note=46)

Voice: Soprano

Length: 12 measures

Vocal Range: G4 to G♭5

Duration: 0:35

Mood: Conflicted

Subject: Fame

Author of text: Emily Dickinson

Source of text: Poem 1763 by Emily Dickinson; Published in *The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson*, edited by Thomas H. Johnson (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1960).

Dedication: for Tobé Malawista, Richard Lalli, and Scott Murphree

Premiere: 9 January 1999 Blackstone Memorial Library in Branford, CT by The Mirror Visions Ensemble (Tobé Malawista, soprano and Alan Darling, piano)

Commissioned by: The Mirror Visions Ensemble

Incipit: “Arietta”⁶¹ (Fame is a bee) mm. 2-4

The musical score shows three measures of music. The first measure is in 6/8 time and begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The lyrics are "Fame is a bee." The second measure is in 5/8 time and contains the lyrics "It has a song —". Above this measure, there is a tempo marking "poco riten." with a hairpin indicating a gradual slowing down. The third measure is in 7/8 time and contains the lyrics "It has a". Above this measure, there is a tempo marking "riten." with a hairpin indicating further slowing down. The piano accompaniment consists of chords and moving lines in the left and right hands, with some notes marked with a '2' for a second ending or repeat.

II. Annotation

This text further establishes the soprano as the voice of Dickinson. It is simple and short with ties to nature and fear of the unknown. This text however is the first to present a positive association with the concept of fame: “It has a song –” and “Ah, too, it has a wing.” However, the poem may also be read with negative feeling toward fame: “It has a sting.”

Although the meter shifts frequently, the piece has a distinct swing to it. The swing is established by the 6/8 meter in the first line, and is only mildly interrupted by the asymmetrical 5/8 and 7/8 bars in measures 6 to 8 before it is reestablished in m. 9.

III. Interpretive guide

There is an *ossia* note on the last quarter note of bar 8 (“too”) up to G5. This is not ideal since most singers would be nearing the end of their breath capacity by this time, and the leap up to G5 could detract from the tranquil and serene mood of the piece.

⁶¹ Text in public domain. Music from *A Visit with Emily* by Tom Cipullo © Oxford University Press Inc, 2004. Assigned to Oxford University Press 2010. Music extracts reproduced by permission. All rights reserved.

The pianist should move the tempo forward slightly in measures 10 to the end in order to be closer to the opening tempo of song 6 which starts *attacca*. The soprano holds her G \flat 5 over into the start of the next song.

Quodlibet I (6)

I. Catalog data

Nature of the work: Sixth of Twenty-One in the cycle *A Visit with Emily*

Date of composition: 1998, revised 2001

Source of score for analysis: Published score

Publisher: Oxford University Press

Publication: *A Visit with Emily: Songs for Soprano, Two Baritones, and Piano based on the Writings of Emily Dickinson and T.W. Higginson*

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Meter: 3/8, 5/8, 6/8, 7/8, 9/8, 10/8, 2/4, 3/4

Tempo: L'istesso tempo (dotted quarter=52), Presto

Voice: Soprano, Baritone 1, Baritone 2

Vocal Range: S: G4 to A5, Bar1: B2 to G4, Bar2: E \flat 3 to E4

Length: 43 measures

Duration: 1:20

Mood: Disdain, conflicted

Subject: Fame

Author of text: Emily Dickinson

Source of text: Poems 1659, 1475, and 1763 by Emily Dickinson; Published in *The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson*, edited by Thomas H. Johnson (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 1960).

Dedication: for Tobé Malawista, Richard Lalli, and Scott Murphree

Premiere: 9 January 1999 Blackstone Memorial Library in Branford, CT by The Mirror Visions Ensemble (Tobé Malawista, soprano, Richard Lalli, baritone, Scott Murphree, baritone, and Alan Darling, piano)

Commissioned by: The Mirror Visions Ensemble

Incipit: “Quodlibet I”⁶² mm. 1-3

The musical score shows the beginning of 'Quodlibet I' in 6/8 time. The tempo is 'L'istesso tempo' with a quarter note equal to 46 beats. The Soprano part begins with a rest followed by a melodic phrase 'Fame is a bee.' starting in measure 3. Baritone 1 has a long melodic line starting in measure 1 with lyrics 'Fame is the one that does not stay Its'. Baritone 2 is mostly silent. The Piano accompaniment starts in measure 1 with a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes and rests, marked 'pp' and 'p'.

II. Annotation

Quodlibet translates from the Latin as “what you please”⁶³ and refers to a piece of music “in which well-known melodies and texts appear in successive or simultaneous combinations.”⁶⁴ Cipullo combines the three distinct texts and melodies from songs 3, 4, and 5 in a simultaneous fashion here. In the opening, each singer sings the text from his or her solo song again, with some minimal rhythmic and melodic changes. The baritone 2 is transposed to fit with the key areas of the soprano and baritone 1. The voices are layered and eventually come together on the word “ascend” in measure 16. This leads

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⁶³ Maria Rika Maniates, et al, "Quodlibet," In *Grove Music Online, Oxford University Press Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/22748> (accessed 22 December 2009).

⁶⁴ Ibid.

into the *presto* section of the song where each voice repeats their individual text, but their rhythms are all akin to that of the baritone 1 in song 4. The *moto perpetuo* of song 4 is again present here and is maintained by the piano's near incessant eighth notes. The contour of each melody is maintained, but transpositions exist in every voice part to create complex harmonies in this wash of sound.

III. Interpretive guide

The word "sting" in measure 6 of the soprano line may be underlined with a *fp* accent. If possible, the soprano should hold her G \flat over onto the downbeat of measure 13 to cover the baritone 1's breath in the middle of the word "Ascend." The baritone 1 usually must take this breath at the end of measure 12 in order to make it all the way to the end of measure 20. The pianist is responsible for driving the *accelerando* from measures 14 to 20, but one of the singers must lead the cutoff of "Ascend" at the end of measure 20. The voices must have cut off by the downbeat of measure 21. If possible, the pianist should catch the low left hand octave with the sostenuto pedal on the downbeat of measure 21, and may play measures 21 to 23 *fff*. A rich and powerful baritone sound is desirable in the piece. The small lift in measure 33 is an essential coming together of ensemble and momentary re-set before beginning the *moto perpetuo* to the end of the piece. The soprano must be sure not to hold "bee" for longer than indicated in measure 35 as the baritone 1 must enter clearly on the second eighth note of the measure. The *calando* marking in the baritone 2 and soprano parts in measure 36 only refers to volume, and not to tempo. The tempo remains constant until the end of the piece. The final word of each voice part may be held slightly longer than indicated in

order to allow the note to vibrate and the word to be heard. This is a very successful effect particularly with younger voices. At the end of the piece, there should be a pause of at least 10 seconds before beginning the next song.

Arioso (7)
(Could you believe me without?)

I. Catalog data

Nature of the work: Seventh of Twenty-One in the cycle *A Visit with Emily*

Date of composition: 1998, revised 2001

Source of score for analysis: Published score

Publisher: Oxford University Press

Publication: *A Visit with Emily: Songs for Soprano, Two Baritones, and Piano based on the Writings of Emily Dickinson and T.W. Higginson*

Copyright: Music 2003, Oxford University Press, Text in public domain

Meter: 2/4, 3/4, 4/4

Tempo: Slow (quarter note=50)

Voice: Soprano

Length: 16 measures

Vocal Range: C4 to G5

Duration: 1:10

Mood: Descriptive

Subject: Describing her looks

Author of text: Emily Dickinson

Source of text: Letter to from Dickinson to T.W. Higginson, July 1862; Published in *The Letters of Emily Dickinson*, edited by Mabel Loomis Todd, Mineola: Dover Publications, 2003.

Dedication: for Tobé Malawista, Richard Lalli, and Scott Murphree

Premiere: 9 January 1999 Blackstone Memorial Library in Branford, CT by The Mirror Visions Ensemble (Tobé Malawista, soprano and Alan Darling, piano)

Commissioned by: The Mirror Visions Ensemble

Incipit: “Arioso”⁶⁵ (Could you believe me without?) mm. 3-4

II. Annotation

This song is the only “arioso” of the cycle. Cipullo uses it here to indicate a “short passage of accompanied recitative that has a regular metre and a melodic character.”⁶⁶ This song serves as the recitative for the following song, “Aria di campane.”

III. Interpretive guide

Cipullo includes frequent dramatic indications in the score, such as the *dolcissimo* (almost afraid) in measure 6. For Cipullo, *dolcissimo* means that he wants the performer to pay special attention to it, caress it, and love it as well as he does. Two measures later by contrast, the G6 is marked “confident now,” as if the character were building self-assurance throughout her description of herself. The tessitura is divided, with many

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⁶⁶ Alison Latham, ed., “Arioso,” In *The Oxford Companion to Music*, Oxford University Press Online, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/opr/t114/e384> (accessed 11 July 2010).

eighth-notes on or around D3 contrasted with longer notes on E5, F#5, and G5. The singer must have full control of her dynamic palate throughout the range. The next song begins *attacca*.

Aria di campane (8)
(Dear Friend, I will be home)

I. Catalog data

Nature of the work: Eighth of Twenty-One in the cycle *A Visit with Emily*

Date of composition: 1998, revised 2001

Source of score for analysis: Published score

Publisher: Oxford University Press

Publication: *A Visit with Emily: Songs for Soprano, Two Baritones, and Piano based on the Writings of Emily Dickinson and T.W. Higginson*

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Meter: 5/8, 6/8, 7/8, 2/4, 3/4

Tempo: Bright (dotted quarter=88)

Voice: Soprano

Length: 21 measures

Vocal Range: D4 to B \flat 4

Duration: 0:40

Mood: Happy

Subject: Anticipating a visit

Author of text: Emily Dickinson

Source of text: Letter from Dickinson to T.W. Higginson, August 1870; Published in

The Letters of Emily Dickinson, edited by Mabel Loomis Todd, Mineola: Dover Publications, 2003.

Dedication: for Tobé Malawista, Richard Lalli, and Scott Murphree

Premiere: 9 January 1999 Blackstone Memorial Library in Branford, CT by The Mirror Visions Ensemble (Tobé Malawista, soprano and Alan Darling, piano)

Commissioned by: The Mirror Visions Ensemble

Incipit: “Aria di campane”⁶⁷ (Dear Friend, I will be home) mm. 8-11

The musical score consists of three systems. The first system shows the vocal line starting with the lyrics "Dear Friend, I will be at home and Glad. I think you said the". The second system continues the vocal line. The third system shows the piano accompaniment with a "poco f" marking. The piano part features a complex, rhythmic pattern with many accidentals and dynamic markings, including "p" and "mp".

II. Annotation

The term “aria di campane” is not found in the *Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*. “Aria” is self-explanatory, and “campane” refers to the tubular bells used in orchestras, particularly to achieve the sound of “church bells.” In the score, the piano part begins with the marking “like church bells.” Dickinson’s text does not refer to church, but Cipullo envisioned this effect within her words. The result is an illustration of Dickinson’s exuberant anticipation of Higginson’s visit.

III. Interpretive guide

Balance is a particularly important issue in this song. The piano part has a tessitura that directly competes with the soprano vocal range. In addition, the piano part provides much of the excitement of the song, and is very busy. The voice must be allowed to cut through this brilliance of sound, especially on the last line “The incredible never surprises us because it is the incredible” (mm. 15-21). The frequently changing

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meters help to represent Dickinson's almost breathless excitement at the thought of Higginson's visit. However, the rests that interrupt the last line of text remind us that Dickinson never ceases to live in her own pensive world. The pause before the following song should last at least six seconds.

Recitative (9)
(A large county lawyer's house)

I. Catalog data

Nature of the work: Ninth of Twenty-One in the cycle *A Visit with Emily*

Date of composition: 1998, revised 2001

Source of score for analysis: Published score

Publisher: Oxford University Press

Publication: *A Visit with Emily: Songs for Soprano, Two Baritones, and Piano* based on the Writings of Emily Dickinson and T.W. Higginson

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Meter: 3/8, 5/8, 6/8, 7/8, 9/8, 12/8, 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 5/4, 6/4, 7/4

Tempo: Con moto (dotted quarter=76)

Voice: Baritone 2

Length: 99 measures

Vocal Range: Eb3 to F#4

Duration: 2:50

Mood: Descriptive

Subject: A visit

Author of text: T.W. Higginson

Source of text: Letter from T.W. Higginson to his wife Mary Channing Higginson, describing his visit to Dickinson

Dedication: for Tobé Malawista, Richard Lalli, and Scott Murphree

Premiere: 9 January 1999 Blackstone Memorial Library in Branford, CT by The Mirror Visions Ensemble (Richard Lalli, baritone and Alan Darling, piano)

Commissioned by: The Mirror Visions Ensemble

Incipit: “Recitative”⁶⁸ (A large county lawyer’s house) mm. 1-3

Con moto (♩ = 76), ♩ = ♩ *sempre*

Baritone 2

A large coun - ty law - yer's house,

Piano

II. Annotation

“Recitative” does not refer to the traditional operatic use. Instead, it indicates that the piece will be highly descriptive. Indeed, the text set is Higginson’s description of his first meeting with Dickinson, which he wrote in a letter to his wife Mary Channing Higginson.

III. Interpretive guide

In the piano part in measures 48 through 54, Cipullo uses a descending three note motive from the first song: “Cavatina.” This motive is comprised of a half step followed by a minor third, all descending. The use of the motive here precedes Higginson’s first quotation of Dickinson’s words “These are my introduction.” The motive evokes the innocence and wisdom of Dickinson’s description of poetry in song 1. It underlines her “child-like” and awkward manner during her visit with Higginson.

It is important for the baritone 2 to change the color of his voice when he quotes Dickinson, in measures 57-61 and 68-73. These sections are marked *hypnotic* and *timid*,

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respectively, by Cipullo. In addition, the baritone 2 often performs these sections straight-tone or thinly to present the sound of Dickinson's "child-like voice," as described by Higginson. There may be laughter from a live audience following this song, particularly when Higginson's irritation with Dickinson's incessant talking is dramatized by the singer. However, every effort should be made to begin the next song *attacca*.

Catch (10)

I. Catalog data

Nature of the work: Tenth of Twenty-One in the cycle *A Visit with Emily*

Date of composition: 1998, revised 2001

Source of score for analysis: Published score

Publisher: Oxford University Press

Publication: *A Visit with Emily: Songs for Soprano, Two Baritones, and Piano* based on the Writings of Emily Dickinson and T.W. Higginson

Copyright: Music 2003, Oxford University Press, Text in public domain

Meter: 2/4, 3/4, 4/4

Tempo: Bright, rhythmic, with swing (quarter note=126)

Voice: Soprano, Baritone 1, Baritone 2, no piano

Vocal Range: S: C4 to A4, Bar1: A3 to G4, Bar2: C3 to A3

Length: 27 measures

Duration: 0:45

Mood: Ironic

Subject: Men versus women

Author of text: T.W. Higginson quoting Emily Dickinson

Source of text: Letter from T.W. Higginson to his wife Mary Channing Higginson, quoting Emily Dickinson (1870)

Dedication: for Tobé Malawista, Richard Lalli, and Scott Murphree

Premiere: 9 January 1999 Blackstone Memorial Library in Branford, CT by The Mirror Visions Ensemble (Tobé Malawista, soprano, Richard Lalli, baritone, and Scott Murphree, baritone)

Commissioned by: The Mirror Visions Ensemble

Incipit: "Catch"⁶⁹ mm. 1-5

Bright, rhythmic, with swing (♩ = 126)

Soprano
 "Wom-en talk: men are si-lent: that is why I dread wom-en." "Wom - en talk:"

Baritone 1

Baritone 2
 "Wom-

II. Annotation

A "Catch" is a round for male voices, always involving humor, which was popular in England from about 1580 to 1800.⁷⁰ Cipullo includes a female voice here as well, and underlines the theme of "men versus women" as presented by Dickinson. The piece is a round, but the middle voice is set a fifth away from the outer voices, which are identical except for octave displacement.

III. Interpretive guide

This song has been described as the most difficult for the singers,⁷¹ particularly because it is *a cappella* and rhythmically varied. Each line is independent, but must remain steady to provide the rhythmic framework for the other parts. For Cipullo, the character of the piece is more important than beautiful singing. Historically, a "Catch"

⁶⁹ Text in public domain. Music from *A Visit with Emily* by Tom Cipullo © Oxford University Press Inc, 2004. Assigned to Oxford University Press 2010. Music extracts reproduced by permission. All rights reserved.

⁷⁰ David Johnson. "Catch." In *Grove Music Online*. Oxford University Press Online, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/05164> (accessed 11 July 2010).

⁷¹ Scott Murphree, interview by the author, digital audio recording, New York City, 28 May 2009.

was “designed to work well even if sung badly,”⁷² and this piece is designed to illustrate snarky characters, rather than to showcase lovely voices.

As the men become more and more *animated* the tempo of the piece should accelerate (beginning in measure 14 to the end). A large and gradual crescendo beginning in measure 14 is also very effective. Cipullo recommends pulling back to *mp* in measure 14 and building up to *ff* by the end. Dramatically, if the baritones interact exclusively with each other from measure 14, purposefully ignoring the soprano, her exasperation can steadily grow until it reaches its breaking point in her last line (*scolding*) “Men are silent!” In live performance, there is usually laughter during and following this song. A longer pause is necessary to accommodate the audience’s reaction.

Chaconne (11)
(Your thoughts don’t have words ev’ry day)

I. Catalog data

Nature of the work: Eleventh of Twenty-One in the cycle *A Visit with Emily*

Date of composition: 1998, revised 2001

Source of score for analysis: Published score

Publisher: Oxford University Press

Publication: *A Visit with Emily: Songs for Soprano, Two Baritones, and Piano* based on the Writings of Emily Dickinson and T.W. Higginson

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Meter: 3/4, 4/4

Tempo: Not too fast (quarter note=88)

Voice: Baritone 2

Length: 48 measures

Vocal Range: C3 to F4

Duration: 1:45

Mood: Thoughtful

Subject: Thoughts

Author of text: Emily Dickinson

Source of text: Poem 1452 by Emily Dickinson; Published in *The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson*, edited by Thomas H. Johnson (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1960).

Dedication: for Tobé Malawista, Richard Lalli, and Scott Murphree

Premiere: 9 January 1999 Blackstone Memorial Library in Branford, CT by The Mirror Visions Ensemble (Richard Lalli, baritone and Alan Darling, piano)

⁷²Johnson, "Catch," In *Grove Music Online*, (accessed 11 July 2010).

Commissioned by: The Mirror Visions Ensemble

Incipit: “Chaconne”⁷³ (Your thoughts don’t have words ev’ry day) mm. 9-12

The image shows a musical score for the incipit of a piece titled "Chaconne". The score is in 3/4 time and features a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line starts with the lyrics "Your thoughts don't have words ev - 'ry day". The piano accompaniment includes a bass line and a treble line. Dynamics include "a tempo", "f", and "poco f". A rehearsal mark "11" is present above the second measure of the vocal line.

II. Annotation

A “chaconne” used in 19th- and 20th- century music is defined as “a set of ground-bass or ostinato variations, usually of a severe character.”⁷⁴ The chaconne is almost always in triple meter, as we see here, and is built upon a chord progression. The chaconne is built upon repeating or varying units (in this case, 8-bar units), which end in a cadence, but then lead seamlessly into the next unit. Cipullo’s bass line follows the following 8-bar pattern:

⁷³ Text in public domain. Music from *A Visit with Emily* by Tom Cipullo © Oxford University Press Inc, 2004. Assigned to Oxford University Press 2010. Music extracts reproduced by permission. All rights reserved.

⁷⁴ Alexander Silbiger, "Chaconne," In *Grove Music Online*, Oxford University Press Online, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/05354> (accessed 17 July 2010).

Pattern	$\hat{1}$	$\flat \hat{6}$	$\hat{1}$	$\hat{4}$	$\hat{4}$	$\hat{4}$	$\# \hat{4}/\flat$	$\hat{7}$	$\hat{3}$
Function	i	VI	i	iv	iv	iv	$\hat{5}$ V/VII V	i V	i
A: mm.1-9	C	A \flat	C	F	F	F	F $\#$	B	E
B: mm. 9-17	E	C	E	A	A	A	B \flat	E \flat	A \flat
C: mm. 17-25	A \flat	F \flat	A \flat	C $\#$	C $\#$	C $\#$	D	G	C
A: mm. 25-33	C	A \flat	C	F	F	F	F $\#$	B	E
B': mm.33-40	E	C	E	C*	A	A	A*	A*	C*
A: mm. 41-48	C	A \flat	C	F	F	F	F $\#$	B	E

*Deviation from pattern and function

This pattern moves in sequence three times, with two V-I functions providing the seamless transition between patterns in measures 7-8 and 8-9. As the pattern moves to sequence again in measure 33 (repeating the pattern from measures 9-16) it becomes stalled on scale degree 4, which also coincides with the only change of meter to 4/4 in measures 39-40. Cipullo then repeats the opening pattern again, this time functioning as a piano postlude. The 8-measure piano ostinato pattern does not coincide with the singer's phrases. The singer is usually in the middle of a word or phrase when the pattern restarts, as in measures 16, 25, 32, and 41. This instability contributes to the dark mood of the poem, as does the low range of the piano ostinato.

In Dickinson's original poem (1452), the opening line reads "your thoughts don't have words every day."⁷⁵ Cipullo changed this to "ev'ry" in order to keep the word emphasis of "day" on the downbeat (measures 11-12).

III. Interpretive guide

The singer should breathe in measure 24 to avoid breathing between measures 26 and 27. If possible, the phrase from m. 32 to m. 36 should be sung without a breath. This may require a true *p* dynamic. The feeling of being lost both musically and poetically in mm. 39-40 should be emphasized dramatically. This line feels like a free recitative after the predictability of the ostinato pattern. In the last measure, *morendo* refers to tempo and dynamic level. The next song begins *attacca*.

Coranto (12) ***(Forbidden Fruit a flavor has)***

I. Catalog data

Nature of the work: Twelfth of Twenty-One in the cycle *A Visit with Emily*

Date of composition: 1998, revised 2001

Source of score for analysis: Published score

Publisher: Oxford University Press

Publication: *A Visit with Emily: Songs for Soprano, Two Baritones, and Piano* based on the Writings of Emily Dickinson and T.W. Higginson

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Meter: 10/16, 15/16, 6/8, 9/8, 12/8, 2/4, 3/4, 4/4

Tempo: Presto (quarter note=140)

Voice: Soprano

Length: 29 measures

Vocal Range: F4 to G♭5

Duration: 1:00

Mood: Repressed

Subject: Fruit, sensuality

Author of text: Emily Dickinson

Source of text: Poem 1377 by Emily Dickinson; Published in *The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson*, edited by Thomas H. Johnson (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1960).

Dedication: for Tobé Malawista, Richard Lalli, and Scott Murphree

⁷⁵ Dickinson, *The complete poems*, 616.

Premiere: 9 January 1999 Blackstone Memorial Library in Branford, CT by The Mirror Visions Ensemble (Tobé Malawista, soprano and Alan Darling, piano)
 Commissioned by: The Mirror Visions Ensemble

Incipit: “Coranto”⁷⁶ (Forbidden Fruit a flavor has) mm. 14-16

14

p legato *poco*

For - - - bid - - den Fruit a

p *poco mp* *p*

II. Annotation

The “coranto” is the Italian equivalent of the French “courante” which means running or flowing, and often refers to the dance form popular as part of the dance suite from circa 1600 to 1750.⁷⁷ In this song, the “coranto” label refers to the busy yet fluid texture of the piano part, which features near constant sixteenth-notes over a foundation of frequent meter change and an irregular bass pulse in the left hand. This piece has a similar piano texture to Cipullo’s later-composed song “In back of” from the cycles *Secrets and Drifts and Shadows*.

⁷⁶ Text in public domain. Music from *A Visit with Emily* by Tom Cipullo © Oxford University Press Inc, 2004. Assigned to Oxford University Press 2010. Music extracts reproduced by permission. All rights reserved.

⁷⁷ Meredith Ellis Little and Suzanne G. Cusick, “Courante,” In *Grove Music Online*, *Oxford University Press Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/06707> (accessed 31 July 2010).

III. Interpretive guide

With the meter changing almost every measure resulting in a change of pulse in the left hand of the piano, it is quite easy for the singer to get lost listening for his entrance, especially when performing from memory. It is very helpful for the pianist to include a *ritardando* in measure 13 with an *a tempo* on the downbeat of measure 14. This clearly cues the singer and allows the ensemble to proceed together with ease. In measure 24, an *ossia* A5 exists on the last note (“Pod”). A long pause of at least 10 seconds is necessary before proceeding to the next song.

Passacaglia (13) ***(When I said I would come again sometime)***

I. Catalog data

Nature of the work: Thirteenth of Twenty-One in the cycle *A Visit with Emily*

Date of composition: 1998, revised 2001

Source of score for analysis: Published score

Publisher: Oxford University Press

Publication: *A Visit with Emily: Songs for Soprano, Two Baritones, and Piano* based on the Writings of Emily Dickinson and T.W. Higginson

Copyright: Music 2003, Oxford University Press, Text in public domain

Meter: 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 5/4, 3/2

Tempo: Not slow (quarter note=128)

Voice: Baritone 1, Baritone 2

Vocal Range: Bar1: C#3 to G#4, Bar2: D#3 to E4

Length: 28 measures

Duration: 0:55

Mood: Descriptive

Subject: End of the visit

Author of text: T.W. Higginson

Source of text: Letter from T.W. Higginson to his wife Mary Channing Higginson, describing Dickinson

Dedication: for Tobé Malawista, Richard Lalli, and Scott Murphree

Premiere: 9 January 1999 Blackstone Memorial Library in Branford, CT by The Mirror Visions Ensemble (Richard Lalli, baritone, Scott Murphree, baritone, and Alan Darling, piano)

Commissioned by: The Mirror Visions Ensemble

Incipit: “Passacaglia”⁷⁸ (When I said I would come again *sometime*) mm. 1-3

Not slow (♩ = 128)

Baritone 1
mf *f*
 When I said I would come a-gain some-time, she said, “Say in a long time,

Baritone 2
mf *f*
 Some-time, she said, “Say.”

Piano
mf *f* *legato*

II. Annotation

The terms “passacaglia” and “chaconne” are often used interchangeably, and share much of their history. In 19th- and 20th-century music, their definitions are the same: “a set of ground-bass or ostinato variations, usually of a serious character.”⁷⁹ However, Cipullo distinguishes between the two forms, stating that a passacaglia is a set of variations that occur over a melodic bass line. The piano left-hand repeats and fragments an ascending C#-minor scale in constant quarter-notes. The baritone 1 part repeats and fragments a descending E-major scale, the relative major of the piano’s C#-minor. The baritone 2 part often follows in canon form with the baritone 1, or provides harmony within the E-major/ C#-minor tonality. The tonality does not change throughout the piece, which is rare for Cipullo.

⁷⁸ Text in public domain. Music from *A Visit with Emily* by Tom Cipullo © Oxford University Press Inc, 2004. Assigned to Oxford University Press 2010. Music extracts reproduced by permission. All rights reserved.

⁷⁹ Silbiger, “Passacaglia,” In *Grove Music Online*. Oxford University Press Online, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/21024> (accessed 31 July 2010).

III. Interpretive guide

The text of the piece is a continuation of Higginson's letter to his wife (heard in songs 1 and 9), which describes his visit with Dickinson. While it was important in song 9 to change the vocal quality when quoting Dickinson, that effect is not necessary in this song. In fact, Cipullo favors an almost "snarling" character to her words in measures 23 to 28. Each time the word "say" is repeated, it should be loud, as indicated by the accent, and the emotion should escalate to the end of the piece.

Cipullo's poco accent appears in the baritone 1 part in measures 13 to 16, and serves to underline the half-time variation of the descending E-major scale. The result of the constant quarter-notes, repeated and fragmented lines, and the repeated and fragmented text, which is only one short sentence to begin with, is that the piece grows tedious very quickly. This is perhaps a reflection of Higginson's emotions at the end of his visit with Dickinson. In order to maintain the tedium, the voices must not slow in the final measure. The brief pause before the next song should last no longer than five seconds.

Trio (14)
(If you were coming in the Fall)

I. Catalog data

Nature of the work: Fourteenth of Twenty-One in the cycle *A Visit with Emily*

Date of composition: 1998, revised 2001

Source of score for analysis: Published score

Publisher: Oxford University Press

Publication: *A Visit with Emily: Songs for Soprano, Two Baritones, and Piano* based on the Writings of Emily Dickinson and T.W. Higginson

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Meter: 5/8, 6/8, 7/8, 9/8, 10/8, 12/8, 3/4, 4/4, 5/4, 3/2

Tempo: Flowing, not slow (dotted quarter=72)

Voice: Soprano, Baritone 1, Baritone 2

Vocal Range: S: B3 to A5, Bar1: D#3 to F#4, Bar2: Cb3 to D4

Length: 77 measures

Duration: 2:50

Mood: Impatient

Subject: Waiting

Author of text: Emily Dickinson

Source of text: Poem 511 by Emily Dickinson; Published in *The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson*, edited by Thomas H. Johnson (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1960).

Dedication: for Tobé Malawista, Richard Lalli, and Scott Murphree

Premiere: 9 January 1999 Blackstone Memorial Library in Branford, CT by The Mirror Visions Ensemble (Tobé Malawista, soprano, Richard Lalli, baritone, Scott Murphree, baritone, and Alan Darling, piano)

Commissioned by: The Mirror Visions Ensemble

Incipit: “Trio”⁸⁰ (If you were coming in the Fall) mm. 7-9

II. Annotation

The “trio” designation here simply refers to the fact that all three voices sing together. The text stanzas are assigned one-per-singer through measure 40. The trio sings the fourth stanza together “If certain...Eternity,” underlining the importance of these particular words. After the fifth stanza sung, the piece ends with the first three lines of the fourth stanza repeated, “If certain, when this life was out...yonder like a Rind,”⁸¹

⁸⁰ Text in public domain. Music from *A Visit with Emily* by Tom Cipullo © Oxford University Press Inc, 2004. Assigned to Oxford University Press 2010. Music extracts reproduced by permission. All rights reserved.

⁸¹ Dickinson, *The complete poems*, 249.

Cipullo changes Dickinson's punctuation at the end of this line from a comma to a period.

III. Interpretive guide

Measures 1-40 present an opportunity for exquisite singing showcasing dynamic variation and breath control. Cipullo strives to provide these opportunities for singers, and would always prefer that the voice, rather than the composer, be remembered for its beauty.⁸² “Van Dieman's Land” (mm. 39-40) is the original name for Tasmania, now part of Australia. Measures 41 to 46 should be very strong and striking, which starkly contrasts with measures 47 to 51, which should be sung *pp* with carefully unified vowels and intense legato. The vocal color should change in measure 54 to reflect the new thought of the fifth text stanza “But, now, uncertain...” The baritone 2 may need to increase his volume to balance with the high tessitura of the baritone 1 part in measures 57-58. The soprano may choose an 8va *ossia* in measures 60-61 on “will not state its sting.” This would certainly increase audibility on these words, which can be challenging in the original octave. The repetition of the fourth stanza beginning in measure 67 should be even more powerful than the first time. The piano should cut-off with the “t” sound of the word “certain” for the cleanest result. The *a cappella* final 9 measures of the piece are striking and very emotional. Some performers may choose to begin measure 75 *mf* or *mp* in order to crescendo to the end. Another option is to keep the line strong throughout,

⁸² Cipullo, interview by the author, digital audio recording, New York City, 8 March 2008.

with only a mild crescendo in measures 75-80. A pause of at least 6 seconds is necessary before beginning the next song.

Cantilena I (15)
(When you wrote you would come in November)

I. Catalog data

Nature of the work: Fifteenth of Twenty-One in the cycle *A Visit with Emily*

Date of composition: 1998, revised 2001

Source of score for analysis: Published score

Publisher: Oxford University Press

Publication: *A Visit with Emily: Songs for Soprano, Two Baritones, and Piano* based on the Writings of Emily Dickinson and T.W. Higginson

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Meter: 6/8, 9/8, 2/4, 4/4

Tempo: Slow (quarter note=50)

Voice: Soprano

Length: 23 measures

Vocal Range: D4 to Ab5

Duration: 2:00

Mood: Longing

Subject: Waiting

Author of text: Emily Dickinson

Source of text: Letter from Dickinson to T.W. Higginson, Summer 1878; Published in *The Letters of Emily Dickinson*, edited by Mabel Loomis Todd, Mineola: Dover Publications, 2003.

Dedication: for Tobé Malawista, Richard Lalli, and Scott Murphree

Premiere: 9 January 1999 Blackstone Memorial Library in Branford, CT by The Mirror Visions Ensemble (Tobé Malawista, soprano and Alan Darling, piano)

Commissioned by: The Mirror Visions Ensemble

Incipit: “Cantilena I”⁸³ (When you wrote you would come in November) mm. 4-5

4 a tempo *pp*

When you wrote you would come in No - vem - ber, it would

pp *poco*

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II. Annotation

“Cantilena” is defined as “a particularly sustained or lyrical vocal line.”⁸⁴ That is precisely what we see here and in the following song, also called “Cantilena.” This first of the two is even slower, and features significant *rubato* and vocal effects such as the *ppp floating Eb* in measure 6 and the *pp Ab* in measure 24. While brief, the piece is striking and reflects the bittersweet emotions of Dickinson’s letter. The use of treble clef in the left-hand of the piano also serves to move the emotion upward to the more anxious and perhaps feminine range of the piano.

III. Interpretive guide

Because the piano tessitura is higher than usual, extra care must be taken not to cover the voice in its own range. This is particularly important when the voice is near the bottom of the staff, such as in measures 8 and 17. Nearly every vocal phrase has a dramatic indication above the score, from *more passionate* (m. 10) to *with great tenderness* (m. 17). It is clear that Cipullo loves this song, and wants extreme sensitivity from the performers. The very brief pause before the next song should be no longer than four seconds, and serves to link the two songs in style and sentiment.

Cantilena II (16) ***(As imperceptibly as Grief)***

I. Catalog data

Nature of the work: Sixteenth of Twenty-One in the cycle *A Visit with Emily*

Date of composition: 1998, revised 2001

⁸⁴ Ellen T. Harris, "Cantilena (ii)," In *Grove Music Online*. Oxford University Press Online, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/04774> (accessed 31 July 2010).

Source of score for analysis: Published score

Publisher: Oxford University Press

Publication: *A Visit with Emily: Songs for Soprano, Two Baritones, and Piano* based on the Writings of Emily Dickinson and T.W. Higginson

Copyright: Music 2003, Oxford University Press, Text in public domain

Meter: 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 5/4, 6/4

Tempo: Slow, tender (quarter note=64)

Voice: Soprano

Length: 37 measures

Vocal Range: A \flat 3 to G \flat 5

Duration: 2:00

Mood: Thoughtful

Subject: Time

Author of text: Emily Dickinson

Source of text: Poem 1540 by Emily Dickinson; Published in *The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson*, edited by Thomas H. Johnson (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1960).

Dedication: for Tobé Malawista, Richard Lalli, and Scott Murphree

Premiere: 9 January 1999 Blackstone Memorial Library in Branford, CT by The Mirror Visions Ensemble (Tobé Malawista, soprano and Alan Darling, piano)

Commissioned by: The Mirror Visions Ensemble

Incipit: “*Cantilena II*”⁸⁵ (As imperceptibly as Grief) mm. 4-6

The image shows a musical score for the piece "Cantilena II" (As imperceptibly as Grief) mm. 4-6. It consists of a soprano line and a piano accompaniment. The soprano line starts with a rest, then has the lyrics "im - per - cept - ib - ly as Grief The Sum - mer lapsed a - way,". The piano accompaniment is marked "pp" and "pp". The score includes dynamic markings, articulation marks, and a "no breath" instruction.

II. Annotation

Dickinson’s poem is dated circa 1865, five years before her first visit from Higginson. However, the helplessness one feels toward the passage of time is a unifying theme in both this poem and her 1878 letter to Higginson, which talks about waiting for another visit.

⁸⁵ Text in public domain. Music from *A Visit with Emily* by Tom Cipullo © Oxford University Press Inc, 2004. Assigned to Oxford University Press 2010. Music extracts reproduced by permission. All rights reserved.

III. Interpretive guide

The high piano register through measure 14 highlights Dickinson's anxiety as we saw in "Cantilena I." The same lyrical quality of the vocal line is present, though the tempo is faster overall. There are many opportunities for tender singing, with caressed phrases and *dolcissimo* high notes. But there is also a sense of movement forward with the faster tempo and more frequent tempo markings of *con moto*. When the piano left hand returns to the bass clef in measure 15, there should be a character change to reflect the lessening of anxiety. On the word "shone" in measure 18, the piano should be very light to assure the voice can be heard. The voice may sing an *ossia* A5 in measures 22-24 which is quite nice and underlines the drama. A long pause of at least 10 seconds is necessary before beginning the next song.

Aria (17)
(Wonder is not precisely Knowing)

I. Catalog data

Nature of the work: Seventeenth of Twenty-One in the cycle *A Visit with Emily*

Date of composition: 1998, revised 2001

Source of score for analysis: Published score

Publisher: Oxford University Press

Publication: *A Visit with Emily: Songs for Soprano, Two Baritones, and Piano* based on the Writings of Emily Dickinson and T.W. Higginson

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Meter: 3/8, 5/8, 6/8, 7/8, 9/8, 11/8, 2/4, 3/4

Tempo: Fast, accented (dotted quarter=96)

Voice: Baritone 2

Length: 37 measures

Vocal Range: C3 to F4

Duration: 1:15

Mood: Pensive

Subject: Wonder

Author of text: Emily Dickinson

Source of text: Poem 1331 by Emily Dickinson; Published in *The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson*, edited by Thomas H. Johnson (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1960).

Dedication: for Tobé Malawista, Richard Lalli, and Scott Murphree

Premiere: 9 January 1999 Blackstone Memorial Library in Branford, CT by The Mirror

Visions Ensemble (Richard Lalli, baritone and Alan Darling, piano)
 Commissioned by: The Mirror Visions Ensemble

Incipit: "Aria"⁸⁶ (Wonder is not precisely Knowing) mm. 1-3

Fast, accented (♩ = 96)

f *legato*

Baritone 2

Won-der is not pre-cise-ly Know-ing And not pre-cise-ly Know-ing not A beau-ti - ful but

Piano

f

II. Annotation

After two slow soprano solos, this fast and accented piece is a welcome change. It is labeled "aria" and follows a sort of loose A-B-A pattern as was the 18th-century tradition.⁸⁷ The text is a two-stanza poem, but Cipullo repeats the first stanza to conform to the A-B-A form.

III. Interpretive guide

The piece begins abruptly, in an entirely different key area from the previous song. In order to make the entrance as sudden as possible, the baritone 2 must find his starting note on his own. If the piano were to play the note during the long pause before

⁸⁶ Text in public domain. Music from *A Visit with Emily* by Tom Cipullo © Oxford University Press Inc, 2004. Assigned to Oxford University Press 2010. Music extracts reproduced by permission. All rights reserved.

⁸⁷ Michael Kennedy ed., "Aria," In *The Oxford Dictionary of Music*, 2nd ed. rev., Oxford University Press Online, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/opr/t237/e520> (accessed 31 July 2010).

the aria, it would disturb the silence and give away the surprise. The tessitura is high, as is the case for both baritone parts in this cycle, but this song contains a conversational quality that is comfortable for most baritone voices. The descending lines are also vocally advantageous. While the tempo is marked dotted quarter=96, this speed makes the text difficult to perceive. An acceptable range of tempo is dotted quarter=82 to 96. At the slow end of this spectrum, more legato lines are possible for the singer. At the fast end, the lines must be *marcato* in order to stay rhythmically precise and to get the words out clearly. Care must be taken on the words “Adult Delight” in measures 19-20 and 21. It can sound like “a dull delight” if the [t] is not adequately aspirated. The piece may have a humorous interpretation, with the singer positively confused by his own words. Or it can be interpreted rather matter-of-factly. Either way, a pause of about 6 seconds is necessary before beginning the next song.

Aria (18)
(Whether they have forgotten)

I. Catalog data

Nature of the work: Eighteenth of Twenty-One in the cycle *A Visit with Emily*

Date of composition: 1998, revised 2001

Source of score for analysis: Published score

Publisher: Oxford University Press

Publication: *A Visit with Emily: Songs for Soprano, Two Baritones, and Piano* based on the Writings of Emily Dickinson and T.W. Higginson

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Meter: 4/4

Tempo: Slow, free (quarter=ca. 74)

Voice: Baritone 1

Length: 28 measures

Vocal Range: D#3 to E4

Duration: 1:25

Mood: Sad

Subject: Loss

Author of text: Emily Dickinson

Source of text: Poem 1329 by Emily Dickinson; Published in *The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson*, edited by Thomas H. Johnson (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1960).

Dedication: for Tobé Malawista, Richard Lalli, and Scott Murphree
 Premiere: 9 January 1999 Blackstone Memorial Library in Branford, CT by The Mirror
 Visions Ensemble (Scott Murphree, baritone, and Alan Darling, piano)
 Commissioned by: The Mirror Visions Ensemble

Incipit: "Aria"⁸⁸ (Whether they have forgotten) mm. 1-4

Slow, free (♩ = c. 74) *poco*

p

Baritone I

Wheth - er they ___ have for - got - ten Or ___ are for - get - ting now ___

sempre colla voce

Piano

pp semplice *poco a poco cresc.*

II. Annotation

This aria does not follow an A-B-A pattern, but does have some repeated melodic material. The melody of the first four bars is the same as the melody of measures 18-21, which set the beginning of the second text strophe. The aria is quite sad, and is marked as such in measure 18: *with great sadness*. The fact that the meter stays in 4/4 throughout is unusual, and this simplicity allows for the emotion of the piece to remain the focus.

III. Interpretive guide

The tempo is marked *free*, which refers to the quarter notes in the melody. They should not all be equal. The interpretation of the text, which words are most important, should determine the deviation from strict quarter-note rhythm. This is often seen in 20th-century musical theater, and is an expectation here. Often the word “softer” in measure

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Incipit: “Quodlibet II”⁸⁹ mm. 1-3

The musical score shows three staves. The top staff is for Baritone 1, the middle for Baritone 2, and the bottom for Piano. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 8/8. The tempo is marked 'L'istesso tempo' and 'poco a poco accel.'. The piano part is marked 'pp' and 'ppp'. The lyrics are: 'Won-der is not pre-cise-ly Know-ing and not pre-cise-ly Know-ing not'.

II. Annotation

As we saw in song 6 (Quodlibet I), “Quodlibet” translates from the Latin as “what you please”⁹⁰ and refers to a piece of music “in which well-known melodies and texts appear in successive or simultaneous combinations.”⁹¹ This song is constructed of the melodies from the previous two baritone arias, sung together here as a duet. The two distinct texts do not remain entirely separate. The baritones sing several text lines together.

III. Interpretive guide

The baritone 1 must hold over his note from the previous song in order to link the two songs. While the baritone 2 began the same melodic material *f* and quite abruptly in song 17, in this song, he enters slowly and delicately at a *pp* dynamic. The line is also

⁸⁹ Text in public domain. Music from *A Visit with Emily* by Tom Cipullo © Oxford University Press Inc, 2004. Assigned to Oxford University Press 2010. Music extracts reproduced by permission. All rights reserved.

⁹⁰ Rika Maniates, “Quodlibet,” In *Grove Music Online*, (accessed 22 December 2009).

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

transposed down to meet the baritone 1's melody, and the tempo gradually increases to measure 7. The tempo marking in measure 7 (dotted quarter=96) is ideal and should be followed.

Even at the faster tempo, the melancholy sentiment of the baritone 1's aria should be maintained each time he sings the words "Miseries of conjecture." On the first page, the baritone 1 sings below the baritone 2. If the piano brings out its left-hand in measures 7-10, which doubles the baritone 1, then the line will not be lost beneath the baritone 2's high *forte* line. The baritone 2 should take care again here in measures 15-17 that the words "Adult delight" do not sound like "a dull delight."

The first line of text that both men sing comes from the baritone 2 aria: "This is the Gnat that mangles men" in measures 24-25. The strength of their rhythmic unison is drastic, following lines that often "pass the baton," or trade off sections of movement. The sentiment of frustration is clearly felt here. The next line sung in unison comes from the baritone 1's aria: "a fact of Iron Hardened with I know" (measures 34-38). Measure 36 almost sounds like a cadence with a built-in *ritardando* as Cipullo changes to 6/4 meter. Instead of ending here, the piece sets off into a canonic section, where the men trade off the line "A beautiful but bleak condition," ending with a homophonic statement of the text. The first two syllables of "A beautiful" must be accented, as the word "A" can be easily lost in the bustle of activity. Each descending line should decrescendo in measures 39-42 and 44-47. Note that measure 58 contains eighth notes, not duplets, which precede and follow this measure. The piece ends in a tone of frustration, "Safer not to know." The piano must balance its high unison octaves with the baritone 1 in

order to create an effective ending. A brief pause of no longer than five seconds is necessary before beginning the next song.

Hymn (20)
(We never know how high we are)

I. Catalog data

Nature of the work: Twentieth of Twenty-One in the cycle *A Visit with Emily*

Date of composition: 1998, revised 2001

Source of score for analysis: Published score

Publisher: Oxford University Press

Publication: *A Visit with Emily: Songs for Soprano, Two Baritones, and Piano* based on the Writings of Emily Dickinson and T.W. Higginson

Copyright: Music 2003, Oxford University Press, Text in public domain

Meter: 3/16, 6/16, 3/8, 4/8, 5/8, 6/8, 7/8, 2/4, 3/4, 4/4

Tempo: Broadly (eighth note=76)

Voice: Soprano, Baritone 1, Baritone 2

Vocal Range: S: C4 to F#5, Bar1: Cb3 to Gb4, Bar2: C3 to F4

Length: 59 measures

Duration: 3:10

Mood: Pensive, Hopeful

Subject: Poetry, Challenges

Author of text: Emily Dickinson

Source of text: Excerpted from poem 1176 by Emily Dickinson; Published in *The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson*, edited by Thomas H. Johnson (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 1960), and Letter from T.W. Higginson to his wife Mary Channing Higginson, quoting Emily Dickinson (1870)

Dedication: for Tobé Malawista, Richard Lalli, and Scott Murphree

Premiere: 9 January 1999 Blackstone Memorial Library in Branford, CT by The Mirror Visions Ensemble (Tobé Malawista, soprano, Richard Lalli, baritone, Scott Murphree, baritone, and Alan Darling, piano)

Commissioned by: The Mirror Visions Ensemble

Incipit: “Hymn”⁹² (We never know how high we are) mm. 4-11

The image shows a musical score for the piece "Hymn" (We never know how high we are), measures 4-11. The score is presented in two systems. The first system shows the vocal line and the piano accompaniment. The vocal line begins with the word "We" and is marked with a dynamic of *p* and the instruction *legato*. The piano accompaniment is marked with a dynamic of *pp* and the instruction *delicate*. The second system shows the vocal line continuing with the lyrics "nev - er know how high we are Till we are called to" and the piano accompaniment. The piano accompaniment features a dynamic of *p* and a *cresc.* marking. The score is written in a common time signature and includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and slurs.

II. Annotation

In 1994, Cipullo attended the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts and while there he met a painter named Janet Fredericks. The two became close friends, and later that year he dedicated the third song in the cycle *The Land of Nod* to her: “Deer in Mist and Almonds.”

The text of “Hymn” was not originally planned to be included in the cycle. However, Fredericks sent Cipullo a copy of this poem while he was caring for his dying mother, and he knew as soon as he read it that it needed to be integrated into *A Visit with Emily*.

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The piece is not a “hymn” in the traditional sense, but there is a certain worship-element to the poetry. We are “called” by something higher than ourselves, and through this test, we can “touch the skies.”⁹³ To connect this sentiment to the cycle as a whole, Cipullo brings back the melody and text of the first song of the piece (Cavatina: “If I read a book”) to float above the hymn-setting of Dickinson’s *1176*.

The phrase “asked to rise” appears in many published versions of Dickinson’s poem. However the version that Cipullo set reads, “called to rise.” This is likely an early edited version of Dickinson’s poem, and was not a change made by Cipullo.

III. Interpretive guide

The predominant vocal quality in this song should be lyrical, smooth, and beautiful. Long phrases are present here as well, and should be shaped and caressed as the drama calls for. The canon between the two baritones in measures 23 through 32 must feature agreed-upon breaths at the same points in the text. Typically, this means breathing after “know”, “are” and “called.” When the soprano enters with the same melody and text as the first song of the cycle, she should move the line as closely to the tempo from “Cavatina” as possible. Again, the word “read” in measure 32 is in present tense (“*reed*”), and the italicized word “that” in measure 40 must be emphasized to accurately convey Dickinson’s intentions. A *sostenuto* on “fire” in measure 36 is desirable, as long as “ever can” is in tempo. The soprano entrance note in measure 43 can be difficult to find, and is best taken from the left-hand of the piano on the first two beats of the measure. There is an *8va ossia* on “I know it” in measure 52-53, and on “-y

⁹³ Dickinson, *The complete poems*, 522.

oth-” (of “any other”) in measures 54-55. These are both not ideal, since they change the familiar melody from the first song of the cycle (measures 21-23 of “Cavatina”). However, the *ossias* may be necessary for balance in certain ensembles. All singers must breathe before their last note, for the men this is before “skies,” and for the soprano this is before “way?” The final cluster cord C-D-E is quite long and must crescendo on the fermata in measure 59. The breath marking after the final note indicates that all sound must stop at precisely the same time. One member of the ensemble should cue this cutoff.

Epilogue (21)
(Nature, the Gentlest Mother)

I. Catalog data

Nature of the work: Twenty-first of Twenty-One in the cycle *A Visit with Emily*

Date of composition: 1998, revised 2001

Source of score for analysis: Published score

Publisher: Oxford University Press

Publication: *A Visit with Emily: Songs for Soprano, Two Baritones, and Piano* based on the Writings of Emily Dickinson and T.W. Higginson

Copyright: Music 2003, Oxford University Press, Text in public domain

Meter: 3/8, 5/8, 7/8, 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 5/4

Tempo: Slow, expressive

Voice: Soprano or Baritone 1

Length: 66 measures

Vocal Range: B3 to F#5

Duration: 4:25

Mood: Kind

Subject: Nature

Author of text: Emily Dickinson

Source of text: Poem 790 by Emily Dickinson; Published in *The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson*, edited by Thomas H. Johnson (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1960).

Dedication: for Tobé Malawista, Richard Lalli, and Scott Murphree, For Lois Cipullo

Premiere: 9 January 1999 Blackstone Memorial Library in Branford, CT by The Mirror Visions Ensemble (Scott Murphree, baritone and Alan Darling, piano)

Commissioned by: The Mirror Visions Ensemble

Incipit: “Epilogue”⁹⁴ (Nature, the Gentlest Mother) mm. 10-13

II. Annotation

While the entire work of *A Visit with Emily* is dedicated to the founding members of the Mirror Visions Ensemble, this song is dedicated to Cipullo’s mother: Lois Cipullo. He writes, “She was in every way, ‘the gentlest mother.’”⁹⁵ The tessitura of this piece is low for most sopranos, ending on a very long B3. It is the author’s preference that this song be performed by the soprano, as indicated in the published score. However, in the premiere, and in many subsequent performances by the Mirror Visions Ensemble, Scott Murphree (baritone 1) has performed this song.

There is no metronome marking for the tempo due to the extreme *rubato* throughout the piece. Based on the two unpublished recordings on record, and upon the author’s own experience performing this song, the baseline tempo should be somewhere around quarter note=54.

⁹⁴ Text in public domain. Music from *A Visit with Emily* by Tom Cipullo © Oxford University Press Inc, 2004. Assigned to Oxford University Press 2010. Music extracts reproduced by permission. All rights reserved.

⁹⁵ Cipullo, “A Visit with Emily”. Program notes for *The Mirror Visions Ensemble in Concert*, 30 September 2009 (New York: Christ and St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church, 2009).

This piece was also not originally planned to be included in the cycle, but Malawista sent it to Cipullo with many other Dickinson poems in preparation for *A Visit with Emily*. Though Malawista had marked the poem for a future project, Cipullo chose to include it here in this cycle. It remains one of the most beloved and often extracted songs from the cycle.

An “epilogue” is not a common musical movement, but in literature often functions to reflect upon the action that has taken place before it. Here it is the concluding song of the cycle, and while not precisely reflective upon the action having taken place in songs 1-20, it certainly includes many themes—such as nature and innocence—seen in many the texts included in *A Visit with Emily*.

This poem (790) was also famously set by Aaron Copland in 1949-50, and is the first in his set of *Twelve Poems of Emily Dickinson*.

III. Interpretive guide

The most challenging aspect to this piece is the constantly shifting tempo. This song requires *rubato* to the extreme. In the piano introduction, the measures marked *passione* (5-7) should reach almost double-time of the opening tempo before relaxing in measures 7-9. Cipullo states that “the *rubato* should make people sea-sick.”⁹⁶ Beyond what is written in the score, there are many extra vocal *sostenuti* and *fermate*. Cipullo often marks these with a *tenuto*, but wants much more time taken. For example, the B in measure 11 should be sustained as if marked *sostenuto*. The *subito pp* E5 in measure 17

⁹⁶ Cipullo, *Masterclass on Cipullo Song*, digital audio recording, Malibu, CA, 22 June 2009.

should also be sustained as if there were a *sostenuto* marking on it. The *tenuti* markings in measure 22 and 23 are really almost *fermate*, with “By” lasting slightly longer than “Re-” (of “restraining”). The same is true in measures 45 and 46. “When” should last slightly longer than “she,” and both are *sostenuti* rather than *tenuti*. Cipullo calls the E5 in measure 54 a “*molto tenuto*” though the score is only marked *tenuto*.

Particularly since “infiniter” is a made-up word, it is important to hold this note as long as necessary to effectively perform the *messa di voce* and make the word understandable. Cipullo’s preferred pronunciation of “infiniter” is infin[ai]ter, since infin[I]ter can be perceived as “infinite her.” There is an optional *sostenuto* on “voice” in measure 39 which can be very effective. A *ritardando* in measure 44 on “The most unworthy Flower” is also nice and has been approved by Cipullo.⁹⁷

Because the tempo has so many places where slowing or pausing takes place, it is vital to move the tempo forward when indicated. There are also several places that no tempo increase is indicated, but one must. This is true in measures 19-21 on “In Forest and the Hill.” In addition, the eighth-notes following the *fermate* in measures 22-23 should move forward. The piano interlude in measures 30-32 should start in the baseline tempo (quarter note=54) but accelerate until the *ritenuto* in measure 32. The *poco più mosso* indicated in measure 33 functions as an *accelerando* over the next five measures. This is fueled by the piano downbeat coming slightly early at the start of each measure (33-38). Because breath management is challenging over measures 48-50, the *più incalzando, passionato* marking in the piano part should be quite extreme, and the

⁹⁷ Cipullo, *Coaching with the author*, digital audio recording, New York City 12 March 2008.

ritenuto in measure 49 should be mild. If the singer can hold the last note until measure 65, the piano may press the tempo forward slightly. However, if the singer opts to cut-off on any of the downbeats in measures 61, 62, or 63, the piano tempo should remain steady. The *perdendosi* indication in both parts in measure 59 refers to dynamics, and not to tempo.

Overall, the dynamics should not be too precious. Because of the low tessitura, the piece is already soft to begin with. Measure 18 should be sung *mp* rather than *p* in order to remain audible.

The long *fermata* in the final measure of the piece is written over rests in both parts. However, it is an essential part of the song, and should not be truncated. The length of the pauses between numbers is very precise throughout the entire cycle, and even if this song is excerpted and inserted into another set, the length of the silence following the piece remains indispensable.

ANOTHER REASON WHY I DON'T KEEP A GUN IN THE HOUSE

(1996, 2000)

Desire

Embrace

Cancer

Flames

Putting Down the Cat

Another Reason Why I Don't Keep a Gun in the House

Another Reason Why I Don't Keep a Gun in the House was composed in 1996 and 2000. Cipullo read Billy Collins's volume of poetry *The Apple that Astonished Paris* and decided to create a song set from four of these poems. This early version consisted of settings of "The First Dream," "Cancer," "Flames," and "Another Reason Why I Don't

Keep a Gun in the House.” Cipullo showed it to a singer with some trepidation, and the singer did not appreciate the humor in the final song. Recognizing that there is a fine line “between humorous and stupid,”⁹⁸ Cipullo put away the set for a few years. He later showed the same song to tenor Paul Sperry, who thought it was hilarious, and encouraged Cipullo to revisit the cycle. In 2000, he withdrew “The First Dream” and added three more songs, “Desire,” “Embrace,” and “Putting Down the Cat,” and reconfigured the set into its current version.

Billy Collins (b. 1941) is a New York City native, and has published several volumes of poetry. He was the U.S. Poet Laureate from 2001 to 2003, and currently holds a position as professor of English at Lehman College, City University of New York. In a letter to the author, Collins describes his reaction to Cipullo’s settings of his poems:

I happily agreed to allow Mr. Cipullo to set some poems of mine to music. And as always, I added the caveat that the poems had already been set to music...by me. In other words, I write with my ear as well as my head and heart, and I am very devoted to making my poems sound right.⁹⁹

It is just this “musical” nature of Collins’s poems that attracted Cipullo in the first place. The final song of the cycle, “Another Reason Why I Don’t Keep a Gun in the House,” describes an attempt to drown out the neighbor’s barking dog by listening to a Beethoven symphony “full blast.” Cipullo quotes Beethoven many times, and makes the most of the character’s hilarious desperation.

On 11 September 2000, tenor Paul Sperry premiered the cycle as a whole at CAMI Hall in New York City. Oxford University Press’s editor Chris Johnson attended

⁹⁸ Cipullo, interview by author, New York City, 8 March 2008.

⁹⁹ Billy Collins, letter to author, 7 April 2009.

the premiere, and after hearing the cycle, he approached Cipullo and offered to publish the piece. Sperry and Cipullo recorded *Another Reason Why I Don't Keep a Gun in the House* in 2004 on Albany Records.¹⁰⁰ Three of the songs were premiered individually prior to Sperry's performance in 2000. Baritone Andre Solomon-Glover premiered "Cancer" and "Flames" in 1996 at Christ and St. Stephens Church in New York City. In 2000, Scott Murphree – who was transitioning from baritone to tenor at the time – premiered "Embrace" at Westminster Choir College in New Jersey.

Another Reason Why I Don't Keep a Gun in the House works surprisingly well for all voice types. It may be effectively performed by sopranos, mezzo-sopranos, tenor, and baritones. The tessitura is a little lower than that for a typical tenor or soprano, but not high for mezzo-sopranos or baritones. As Judith Carman states in her review of the Oxford publication, this cycle is well suited for a tenor who is "comfortable with all the poems but perhaps as yet uncomfortable with the top of his voice."¹⁰¹ While the six songs work very well together as a complete cycle, any of the songs may be excerpted and mixed with songs from other cycles by Cipullo. In particular, "Flames" and "Another Reason Why I Don't Keep a Gun in the House" function very well as humorous encores.

Desire

I. Catalog data

Nature of the work: First of six in the cycle *Another Reason Why I Don't Keep a Gun in the House*

¹⁰⁰ Tom Cipullo, *Another Reason Why I Don't Keep a Gun in the House*, from *New American Song Cycles*, Paul Sperry, Albany Records TROY-654, 2002.

¹⁰¹ Judith Carman, review of *Another Reason Why I Don't Keep a Gun in the House* by Tom Cipullo, *Journal of Singing* 61, no. 5 (May-June 2005): 547.

Date of composition: 2000

Source of score for analysis: Published score

Publisher: Oxford University Press

Publication: *Another Reason Why I Don't Keep a Gun in the House*

Copyright: Music 2004, Oxford University Press; Texts 1988, Billy Collins

Recording: Paul Sperry, tenor and Tom Cipullo, piano, from *New American Song Cycles*, (Albany Records TROY-654, 2002).

Meter: 3/4, 4/4, 5/4, 6/4, 7/4, 8/4, 3/2

Tempo: Andante con moto e espressivo (quarter note=96)

Voice: Soprano, Mezzo-Soprano, Tenor, or Baritone

Vocal Range: B3 to G5, or B2 to G4

Length: 54 measures

Duration: 2:45

Mood: Romantic

Subject: Trying to write a love letter

Author of text: Billy Collins

Source of text: Published in *The Apple That Astonished Paris* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1988).

Dedication: For Ann and Paul Sperry

Premiere: 11 September 2000 at CAMI Hall, New York City; Paul Sperry, voice and Tom Cipullo, piano

Incipit: "Desire"¹⁰² mm. 7-9

freely
pp with the greatest tenderness
 a tempo
poco

It would be eas - i - er to com - pile an en - cy - clo - ped - i - a for

pp *colla voce*
ppp
pp *p*

II. Annotation

¹⁰² Text for "Desire" © 1988 by Billy Collins, from *The Apple that Astonished Paris* by Billy Collins, used by permission of University of Arkansas Press. Music from *Another Reason Why I Don't Keep a Gun in the House* by Tom Cipullo © Oxford University Press Inc, 2004. Assigned to Oxford University Press 2010. Music extracts reproduced by permission. All rights reserved.

“Desire” has been described as a “whimsical love poem”¹⁰³ in which the main character tries to write a “longhand” letter to his beloved. He has difficulty, and decides instead to write “an encyclopedia” using a “clear, nimble style.” The harmonies, however, are serious and rich, and allude to a lifetime of love shared. The main character leaves the house with his “spectacles and knotty cane,” implying that he is aged now, but still driven to write love letters.

The song is dedicated to Paul and Ann Sperry, who had been married for decades at the time of composition. Cipullo describes in a 2008 interview that the couple is “in their sixties, and they still hold hands” and finds himself often “touched” by their affection for one another.¹⁰⁴ After nearly 40 years of marriage, Ann Sperry passed away in 2009.

The metronome marking of 96 is effective, and was used by Cipullo and Sperry on their Albany Records recording.

III. Interpretive guide

Throughout the cycle, Cipullo uses a special *poco accentato* marking in both the voice and piano parts. This is explained in a footnote on the first page of “Desire.” The piano introduction is meticulously marked with phrasing, *tenuti*, *crescendi*, *diminuendi*, and dynamics. One element that is not indicated in the score is extreme *rubato*, a trademark of Cipullo’s style. Measures 4-5 should move the tempo forward before the *poco ritenuto* in measure 6. Measures 7-8 should be sung *freely* as indicated, and out of

¹⁰³ Keith E. Clifton, *Recent American Art Song* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2008) 35.

¹⁰⁴ Cipullo, interview, 8 March 2008.

time in the style of a recitative. The regular pulse of the tempo restarts in measure 9.

The final note of measure 13 should be held until the downbeat of measure 14. In order to deliver the *poco accentato* in measure 15, the [bl] of “blackens” may be elongated.

The *crescendo* into a *subito pp dolcissimo* in measures 18-19 is a favored effect of Cipullo’s, and occurs many times throughout the cycle. According to Cipullo, singers should not breathe between measures 18 and 19, and the onset of “dawn” should come after the piano has played its grace note on the downbeat of measure 19. The singer may breathe after “dawn”, which may make the breath indicated in measure 20 unnecessary. If the singer decides to carry “dawn” into “saying” without a breath, care should be taken not to disturb the tempo of the piece (and the poetic line) with an unnaturally long breath between “think” and “the.” In measure 21, “world” should be slightly accented on the downbeat and delivered with enthusiasm.

Measure 23 repeats the harmonic progression of the opening measure, the same progression used in “Touch me” and “Mother to Son” (see Examples 3.11 and 3.13 in *Climbing* section). The word “short” in measure 24 should not be clipped, but a breath is necessary before “like.” Measures 25-27 may move the tempo forward slightly before relaxing in measures 28-29. At the end of measure 19, “crayon” should be held until the downbeat of measure 30. Time should be taken on the *tenuto* in measure 32 and the singer may choose to use a *portamento* between “the” and “research” in measures 32-33. In measure 35, “on” should be held until the downbeat of measure 36. In measure 36,

Cipullo recommends that “personal experience” be delivered in a coy manner, or “with a wink.”¹⁰⁵

Measure 37 repeats the harmonic progression of the opening measure and of measure 23, but in a slightly slower tempo. According to Sperry’s recording, a tempo near quarter note=90 is a good guideline. This measure is indicated *ppp hushed, with the utmost tenderness*, and Cipullo recommends a very special emotion here, as if the singer has “never felt this love before.”¹⁰⁶ The tempo should begin to press forward in measure 38, and accelerate through measure 42. The marking *appassionato* in measure 43 requires the tempo to continue pressing forward through measure 47. Cipullo prefers that singers not breathe between “clear” and “nimble” in measure 44. The *tenuto* marking on the downbeat of measure 44 should not be very long, but should be dramatic. In measure 46, the downbeat of “world” should again be slightly accented. In measure 48, the score directs the singer and pianist to *diminuendo* to *p* by the third beat. There are, however, three different options for this measure. The singer may perform the measure as written, delay the *diminuendo* further until beats 3-4, or continue singing *ff* throughout the measure and allow the piano to perform the *diminuendo* as written.¹⁰⁷

Embrace

I. Catalog data

Nature of the work: Second of six in the cycle *Another Reason Why I Don’t Keep a Gun in the House*

Date of composition: 2000

Source of score for analysis: Published score

Publisher: Oxford University Press

¹⁰⁵ Cipullo, *Coaching with Bethany Flom*, digital audio recording, Malibu, 25 June 2009.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Cipullo, coaching with Bethany Flom, 25 June 2009.

Publication: *Another Reason Why I Don't Keep a Gun in the House*

Copyright: Music 2004, Oxford University Press; Texts 1988, Billy Collins

Recording: Paul Sperry, tenor and Tom Cipullo, piano, from *New American Song Cycles*, (Albany Records TROY-654, 2002).

Meter: 2/8, 3/8, 1/4, 2/4

Tempo: Tempo di tango (eighth note=c.104)

Voice: Soprano, Mezzo-Soprano, Tenor, or Baritone

Vocal Range: C#4 to F5, or C#3 to F4

Length: 53 measures

Duration: 1:55

Mood: Flirtatious, pathetic

Subject: Embracing yourself

Author of text: Billy Collins

Source of text: Published in *The Apple That Astonished Paris* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1988).

Premiere: Summer 2000 at Westminster Choir College; Scott Murphree, voice and J.J. Penna, piano

Incipit: "Embrace"¹⁰⁸ mm. 7-9

II. Annotation

This playful song is set to a seductive and sentimental tango motive in the piano part. The text describes, “how appearances can be deceiving”¹⁰⁹ as it illustrates “that parlor trick” where one puts the arms around the torso and from the back it looks like someone else is “embracing you.” The text continues to describe how from the front, this

¹⁰⁸ Text for “Embrace” © 1988 by Billy Collins, from *The Apple that Astonished Paris* by Billy Collins, used by permission of University of Arkansas Press. Music from *Another Reason Why I Don't Keep a Gun in the House* by Tom Cipullo © Oxford University Press Inc, 2004. Assigned to Oxford University Press 2010. Music extracts reproduced by permission. All rights reserved.

¹⁰⁹ Clifton, *Recent American Art Song*, 35.

“trick” can resemble a fitting for a straight jacket. There are humorous moments in the song, but also an underlying sense of loneliness. The singer must be at times flirtatious, and at times a little pathetic.

There are a few deviations from Collin’s original text. In the second stanza, Collin’s text reads “your crossed elbows and screwy grin” (line 9). Cipullo’s score reads “crossed elbows and silly grin” (mm. 28-30). In Collins’s poem, “straightjacket” (line 11) is one word; while Cipullo conceives of it as one word “with a very eccentric gap in the middle.”¹¹⁰ The published score makes it appear as two separate words (m. 41).

III. Interpretive guide

In the piano introduction, Cipullo asks for an additional accent (not marked in the score) on the 64th note figure at the end of each measure.¹¹¹ Anytime this figure occurs at the end of a measure, this accent should be added to accentuate the “tango” rhythm. The vocal line should be extremely legato in measures 7-10 to mimic the folk quality of the tango song. In measure 11, “back” should come as a surprise, and should be very short, but still voiced. In measure 13, *rubato* may be used to elongate the first sixteenth note, speed the next three sixteenth notes, and then prolong the eighth note triplet. If this is well matched by the piano, it is extremely effective. In measure 19, “neck” may be *staccato* or any vocal technique may be used to illustrate the tickling that is taking place.

¹¹⁰ Cipullo, e-mail message to author, 12 September 2010.

¹¹¹ Cipullo, *Master class: Songs of Tom Cipullo*, Digital audio recording, Malibu, 22 June 2009.

Cipullo asks for “just the idea of trills” in m. 19 in order not to cover the singer in the low range.¹¹²

The piano part may be very heavy in measures 20 and 21 until the *decrescendo*. As momentum builds during the ascending line in measures 23-24, the piano may become violent, with extreme accents and weight in measures 24-25. When the singer re-enters in measure 26, the pianist must decrease the dynamic level to balance, particularly as the voice drops down to a lower range in measure 27. The vocal line may slide during “grin” in measures 30-31, which, in combination with the *hemiola* rhythmic effect, might suggest being spun around to the point of dizziness. The piano interlude in measures 32-36 should again add an accent to the 64th note figures throughout. The vocal line again may be extremely legato in measure 37-39, as was true in measures 7-10. The *crescendo* in measure 39 should be extreme, but playfully lead to a delayed point of arrival. In measure 41, the “r” in “straight” is indicated to be rolled, however the word is set to a *staccato* eighth-note. It is preferable to hold the note longer than indicated in order to deliver a “long and eccentric”¹¹³ rolled “r.” The singer is directed to slide between two notes at the end of measure 45, and again in measure 47. This vocal effect may also be used in other places throughout the song, as it is a folk music effect. In measure 51, the final word “tight” may be sung, whispered, or quasi-spoken, with a specifically chosen dramatic intention.

Cancer

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid.

I. Catalog data

Nature of the work: Third of six in the cycle *Another Reason Why I Don't Keep a Gun in the House*

Date of composition: 1996, revised 2000

Source of score for analysis: Published score

Publisher: Oxford University Press

Publication: *Another Reason Why I Don't Keep a Gun in the House*

Copyright: Music 2004, Oxford University Press; Texts 1988, Billy Collins

Recording: Paul Sperry, tenor and Tom Cipullo, piano, from *New American Song Cycles*, (Albany Records TROY-654, 2002).

Meter: 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 5/4

Tempo: Slow, expressive (quarter note=58)

Voice: Soprano, Mezzo-Soprano, Tenor, or Baritone

Vocal Range: B3 to G♭5, or B2 to G♭4

Length: 24 measures

Duration: 1:40

Mood: Somber

Subject: Cancer, denial

Author of text: Billy Collins

Source of text: Published in *The Apple That Astonished Paris* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1988).

Premiere: 1996, Christ and St. Stephens Church, New York City; Andre Solomon-Glover, baritone

Incipit: "Cancer"¹¹⁴ mm. 5-7

5 *pp* *poco dolce* *p*
When you need to say the word, It cow - ers

¹¹⁴ Text for "Cancer" © 1988 by Billy Collins, from *The Apple that Astonished Paris* by Billy Collins, used by permission of University of Arkansas Press. Music from *Another Reason Why I Don't Keep a Gun in the House* by Tom Cipullo © Oxford University Press Inc, 2004. Assigned to Oxford University Press 2010. Music extracts reproduced by permission. All rights reserved.

II. Annotation

This seemingly “simple” and “reflective”¹¹⁵ text describes one of the ugliest subjects in life: cancer. The speaker describes his or her father’s denial, of his own, or possibly of the speaker’s disease. Musicologist Keith Clifton describes the song as a “lyrical vocal line with rich piano harmonies.”¹¹⁶ This lyricism juxtaposes the ghastly subject of the poem, and makes the scene all the more heartbreaking.

The author finds the metronome marking of 58 too fast for the emotional tone of the poem. A range of 42-48 is preferred. On Cipullo’s recording on Albany Records, his speed begins around 48, but extreme *rubato* and tempo changes occur throughout the song.

III. Interpretive guide

The piano introduction should not be rushed, and emotional expression should take center stage. When the singer enters in measure 5, the first note may be elongated by a *tenuto* or short *fermata*. The vocal phrase in measures 5-6 should be delivered almost out of time, and extremely legato. Measure 7 establishes a steadier tempo. The phrase “in back of your vocabulary” in measures 7-8 should be sung extremely *legato* with a syllabic accent on “-ca-” of “vocabulary” on the downbeat of measure 8. The tempo may begin to push forward in measures 9-10, and continue with the indicated *incalando sempre* in measure 11. In measure 17, the *incalando* reaches its apex, and should be somewhere in the range of quarter note=68-76. The ideal phrasing of measures

¹¹⁵ Clifton, *Recent American Art Song*, 34.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

17-20 is to breathe only once between “yet and “The” in measure 17. However, if another breath is necessary, the singer may take a “dramatically justified”¹¹⁷ breath before “cannot” in measure 18, or before “hear” in measure 19. The most important aspect of the phrase is for “hear” and “it” to contain dramatic and long *fermate* in measures 19-20. The [*t*] of “it” should be held over through the downbeat of measure 21. Cipullo notes that if the singer runs out of breath in measure 20, this “communicates anxiety”¹¹⁸ which is dramatically appropriate at this point in the song. In measure 22, there is a mistake in the published score. The left hand of the piano should be B \flat -D \flat -G \flat . According to the recording on record, the final piano chord in measure 24 should be slowly rolled, and the final word “campfire” should be delivered *sotto voce*.

Flames

I. Catalog data

Nature of the work: Fourth of six in the cycle *Another Reason Why I Don't Keep a Gun in the House*

Date of composition: 1996, revised 2000

Source of score for analysis: Published score

Publisher: Oxford University Press

Publication: *Another Reason Why I Don't Keep a Gun in the House*

Copyright: Music 2004, Oxford University Press; Texts 1988, Billy Collins

Recording: Paul Sperry, tenor and Tom Cipullo, piano, from *New American Song Cycles*, (Albany Records TROY-654, 2002).

Meter: 18/16, 3/8, 5/8, 6/8, 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 5/4

Tempo: Not too fast, a bit goofy (quarter note=84-100)

Voice: Soprano, Mezzo-Soprano, Tenor, or Baritone

Vocal Range: F4 to G5, or F3 to G4

Length: 56 measures

Duration: 1:45

Mood: Sarcastic

Subject: Smokey the Bear starting a fire

Author of text: Billy Collins

Source of text: Published in *The Apple That Astonished Paris* (Fayetteville: University of

¹¹⁷ Cipullo, coaching with Bethany Flom, 25 June 2009.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

Arkansas Press, 1988).

Premiere: 1996, Christ and St. Stephens Church, New York City; Andre Solomon-Glover, baritone

Incipit: “Flames”¹¹⁹ mm. 1-7

Not too fast, a bit goofy ($\text{♩} = 84-100$)

semplice e giocoso

p *cute*

p *poch.*

Smo-key the

Bear heads in - to the au - tumn woods

II. Annotation

This song is humorous and clever, and describes Smokey the Bear turning into his own antithesis. Smokey Bear is a mascot of the United States Forest Service. He was created in the mid-1940s, and his recognizable slogan “Remember, only YOU can prevent forest fires” was created in 1947. Smokey the Bear became a part of mainstream

¹¹⁹ Text for “Flames” © 1988 by Billy Collins, from *The Apple that Astonished Paris* by Billy Collins, used by permission of University of Arkansas Press. Music from *Another Reason Why I Don’t Keep a Gun in the House* by Tom Cipullo © Oxford University Press Inc, 2004. Assigned to Oxford University Press 2010. Music extracts reproduced by permission. All rights reserved.

culture in the 1950s when he was featured in comic strips and cartoons. He represents the longest running public service announcement in U.S. history.¹²⁰

In “Flames,” instead of preventing forest fires, Smokey has reached the end of his tolerance for the “careless, the half-wit camper” and “the dumbbell hiker.” He decides to take matches and gasoline into “the autumn woods” to show them “how a professional” starts a fire.

The song was first published in *American Encores: For Solo Voice and Piano* in 2002.¹²¹ This volume was collected and edited by Paul Sperry, who included this “funny but not fast”¹²² song as an ideal encore. In his “Suggestions for Performance,” Sperry describes “Flames” as needing “to be told like a very interesting story.” He continues to say that the singer must be “totally involved in it, so that you make a perfect foil to the inanity of the piano part.” He also advises that the singer “get into Smokey’s anger.”¹²³

When “Flames” was originally composed, it was a whole step lower. Cipullo raised it for Sperry, and it was published in that form. The lower key is available from the composer, and may be more comfortable for mezzo-sopranos and baritones.

The metronome marking of quarter note=84-100 is often exceeded in performance, and in the recording on record, ranges from 108 to 120. There is very little *rubato* in this piece, and the percussive rhythms underline the Smokey’s anger and disgust.

¹²⁰ *Smokey Bear, Smokey’s Journey*, <http://www.smokeybear.com/vault/default.asp?js=1> (accessed 6 September 2010).

¹²¹ Paul Sperry, ed, *American Encores* (New York City: Oxford University Press, 2002) 30-33.

¹²² *Ibid*, v.

¹²³ *Ibid*, vii.

III. Interpretive guide

The piano part is indicated *semplice e giocoso, cute* in the introduction. Any time these figures occur throughout the piece, the character should be “inane”¹²⁴ in contrast to Smokey’s rage. The singer may begin somewhat detached, as an observer describing the scene. The first sign of emotional involvement is in measure 9 with the “red can of gasoline.” The character of the voice should change to reflect this, and more violent diction may aid this. Measures 11-12 should be even angrier, and match the piano part’s indicated *pesante* character. The *semplice* piano refrain should begin immediately in measure 13 without break from the previous measure. The spoken “cocked at a disturbing angle” in measures 18-19 allows an opportunity for humor. A pause before the word “angle” is effective, and a physical gesture is necessary to illustrate the scene. There may be laughter during the *caesura* in measure 19. The “inane”¹²⁵ piano refrain returns in measure 20. The voice should exaggerate the brief *legato* section in measures 21-26. The breath in measure 22 may not be necessary for some singers. Very crisp diction in measure 29 will help with ensemble balance. The F in measure 31 should be held over until the downbeat of measure 32. The piano’s descending scale in measure 32 should be very loud, and lead into the heavily accented and distorted version of the *semplice* refrain in measure 33. The piano should remain very heavy and “crazed”¹²⁶ until measure 48. As the anger grows, the singer’s diction should become even more

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Cipullo, coaching with Ryan Reithmier, Digital audio recording, Malibu, CA, 25 June 2009.

violent in measures 37-44, which also helps remain balanced with the piano. When the singer is not singing, such as in measures 38 and 41, the piano may be even louder. The piano should remain violent and heavy during the *crescendo* in measure 47, and then with as little space as possible between measures, the *carefree* refrain should begin in measure 48. Measures 49-53 are indicated *whispered*, but this is not often audible. Singers may prefer a *non-vibrato* sound, or *sotto voce* effect. Measure 53 should be sung in strict time. In a live performance, there will often be laughter during the last three bars of the piece.

Putting Down the Cat

I. Catalog data

Nature of the work: Fifth of six in the cycle *Another Reason Why I Don't Keep a Gun in the House*

Date of composition: 2000

Source of score for analysis: Published score

Publisher: Oxford University Press

Publication: *Another Reason Why I Don't Keep a Gun in the House*

Copyright: Music 2004, Oxford University Press; Texts 1988, Billy Collins

Recording: Paul Sperry, tenor and Tom Cipullo, piano, from *New American Song Cycles*, (Albany Records TROY-654, 2002).

Meter: 3/8, 9/8, 2/4, 3/4, 4/4

Tempo: Slowly (quarter note=52)

Voice: Soprano, Mezzo-Soprano, Tenor, or Baritone

Vocal Range: C#4 to F5, or C#3 to F4

Length: 41 measures

Duration: 2:10

Mood: Sad

Subject: Putting down the cat

Author of text: Billy Collins

Source of text: Published in *The Apple That Astonished Paris* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1988).

Premiere: 11 September 2000 at CAMI Hall, New York City; Paul Sperry, voice and Tom Cipullo, piano

Incipit: “Putting Down the Cat”¹²⁷ mm. 1-6

The image shows the first six measures of the song "Putting Down the Cat". It features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The tempo is marked "Slowly" with a metronome marking of quarter note = 52. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The time signature is 2/4. The vocal line begins with a rest, followed by the lyrics "The ass - ist - ant holds her on the ta - ble,". The piano part starts with a half note chord (B-flat, E-flat) and continues with a series of half notes. Performance instructions include "p con tenerezza", "poco", "poco riten.", and "a tempo". A specific instruction for the piano part is "as if stroking" with a slur over the first two notes. Another instruction is "semplice, legato" for the piano part. A note at the bottom indicates "(all grace notes before the beat)".

II. Annotation

This somber song deals with what Clifton calls “an unusual topic: feline euthanasia.”¹²⁸ Anyone who has experienced putting down a cat knows that nothing the veterinarian says can provide comfort. In this poem, the speaker is frozen with grief, and shares his thoughts in reaction to the veterinarian’s comments while the procedure is taking place. At the end of the song, Cipullo fragments and repeats the text “poor cat” from the penultimate line of the poem.

The metronome marking is effective, but in the recording on record, “Putting down the cat” is performed faster, up to quarter note=64.

III. Interpretive guide

The first several measures of the song feature a sparse and cold piano part, perhaps illustrating the clinical feel of the veterinarian’s office. The vocal line has many

¹²⁷ Text for “Putting Down the Cat” © 1988 by Billy Collins, from *The Apple that Astonished Paris* by Billy Collins, used by permission of University of Arkansas Press. Music from *Another Reason Why I Don’t Keep a Gun in the House* by Tom Cipullo © Oxford University Press Inc, 2004. Assigned to Oxford University Press 2010. Music extracts reproduced by permission. All rights reserved.

¹²⁸ Clifton, *Recent American Art Song*, 36.

expressive markings, but should be delivered with a stunned characterization through measure 10. In measure 12, the first rich harmonic passage begins as the vocal line ascends to the heartbreaking downbeat of measure 15. When the singer quotes the veterinarian in measure 20, the timbre of the voice should change to illustrate another person talking. Sperry prefers a *non-vibrato* effect and unfeeling characterization in this measure, which returns during the continuation of the quote in measures 23-24.¹²⁹ Frustration is illustrated through the *incalzando* and *molto incalzando* of measures 26-27. The arrival on “poor” in measure 28 should be coordinated with the piano’s B♭5. Baritones may favor using the falsetto register in measures 31 to 34. If the phrase from measure 30 to 35 cannot be delivered without a breath (as indicated), a quick and well-disguised breath may be taken before changing notes in measure 32. The singer should not breathe after “much” in measure 35, and should sing through the end of the measure to observe the poetic thought. The slight rolls in the piano part in measures 37-40 are indicated *pppp as if stroking*, and illustrate the last strokes the owner will give the cat as it dies. The fragmented text in measures 38-40 represents the cat fading into death.¹³⁰ Sperry adds an *accelerando* in the final line of the song. The surprisingly loud piano chord in the final measure represents the abrupt end of life.

Another Reason Why I Don’t Keep a Gun in the House

I. Catalog data

Nature of the work: Sixth of six in the cycle *Another Reason Why I Don’t Keep a Gun in the House*

Date of composition: 1996, revised 2000

¹²⁹ Tom Cipullo, *Another Reason Why I Don’t Keep a Gun in the House*, Albany Records, 2002.

¹³⁰ Clifton, *Recent American Art Song*, 36.

Incipit: “Another Reason Why I Don’t Keep a Gun in the House”¹³¹ mm. 1-9

The image shows a musical score for the song "Another Reason Why I Don't Keep a Gun in the House". The score is in 3/4 time and begins with the tempo marking "Allegro con brio" and a quarter note equal to 60 (♩ = 60). The first system shows the vocal line starting with the word "The" and the piano accompaniment. The second system shows the vocal line with the lyrics "neighbors' dog will not stop barking." and the piano accompaniment. The piano part features a prominent bass line with a strong rhythmic pattern.

II. Annotation

This hilarious song describes a desperate attempt to drown out the sound of a neighbor’s barking dog by playing “a Beethoven symphony full blast.” The song includes quotations from Ludwig van Beethoven’s *Symphonies Nos. 1, 3, 5, 7* and *9*. Steven Blier of the New York Festival of Song calls this one of “our best titles for modern American song; who could resist a piece called ‘Another Reason Why I Don’t Keep a Gun in the House?’”¹³²

¹³¹ Text for “Another Reason Why I Don’t Keep a Gun in the House” © 1988 by Billy Collins, from *The Apple that Astonished Paris* by Billy Collins, used by permission of University of Arkansas Press. Music from *Another Reason Why I Don’t Keep a Gun in the House* by Tom Cipullo © Oxford University Press Inc, 2004. Assigned to Oxford University Press 2010. Music extracts reproduced by permission. All rights reserved.

¹³² Steven Blier, Program notes for *Brava Italia!* (New York: Weill Recital Hall, 15 and 16 November 2006).

The song is dedicated to Rocky, Cipullo's childhood cocker spaniel. The barking at the end of the song is added by Cipullo, and does not appear in the original Collins poem. The piece is always well received, with audible laughter and heartfelt applause. For this reason, it functions very well as an encore, or as the final song in a recital program. Baritone Andrew Garland has used the song as his encore in every recital since he "discovered it" a few years ago.¹³³

After composing this song, Cipullo showed it to a singer who did not think the Beethoven quotations were in good taste. Cipullo put the song away for years, and finally brought it out again for Paul Sperry, who loved it. This song has become one of Cipullo's most frequently performed pieces. It was premiered in Germany in 2008, Greece in 2010, and is used as an encore by singers all over the United States and Canada.

There are frequent tempo changes throughout the piece, due to the high number of quotations. Cipullo states that the tempo of each quote should match the original Beethoven tempo. Many of these tempi are indicated in the score, but there are some exceptions.

III. Interpretive guide

Cipullo believes that the best quotations will match the tempo of the original as closely as possible. The opening tempo is exactly that of the first movement of Ludwig van Beethoven's *Symphony No. 3*, "Eroica." The singer should begin regally, and slightly detached through measure 28. The percussive setting of "he is barking the same

¹³³ Andrew Garland, telephone interview by author, Denver, 17 August 2010.

high, rhythmic bark/that he barks every time they leave the house” (mm. 12-16) may be sung *marcato*, or *legato* depending on the voice. Higher voices tend to be more comfortable with *marcato*, while lower voices may prefer *legato*. A glottal attack brings a nice emphasis to the word “out” in measure 24.

The tempo change to *Doppio movimento alla scherzo* begins in measure 29. This section may begin directly without pause in measure 29, or time may be taken to breathe before beginning “The neighbor’s dog will not stop barking.” Taken literally, the direction to double the tempo would bring us to dotted quarter note=120, however, this section quotes the third movement (Menuetto) of Beethoven’s *Symphony No. 1*, where the metronome marking is 108. The voice may break or crack in desperation on the word “barking” in measure 33. The accents or *poco accentato* notes marked in the piano part may be applied to the vocal line as well in measures 38-47. The frustrated “barking” in measure 69 may be quasi-spoken, rough, or spoken through gritted teeth.

Time should be taken for the spoken “and” in measure 71, as this marks the beginning of a new quotation: the second movement (*Allegretto*) of *Symphony No. 7*. The word “and” should be spoken during silence, after the piano has finished playing measure 71. This section is marked *suddenly much slower* quarter note=76, which matches Beethoven’s metronome marking. However, in the recording on record and in live performances, it is performed even slower, anywhere from 54 to 76. It may be amusing to roll the “r” in “orchestra” as if mocking the dog’s elegance. A breath may be taken after “confidently” in measure 77. In measure 79, “barking dog” may be said with disgust, and vocal quality may be sacrificed in favor of a frustrated emotion.

The return of *alla scherzo* (from *Symphony No. 1*) in measure 80 should be performed at dotted quarter note=108. The *poco accentato* markings in the piano part in measures 91-92 should be applied to the vocal part as well. The section in measures 104-111 quotes the famous horn solo in the first movement of *Symphony No. 5* (mm. 59-62), and in both Beethoven's work and Cipullo's, it functions as a bridge.

Example 3.3: Beethoven's *Symphony No. 5*, Movement. 1,¹³⁴ mm. 59-64, horn



Example 3.4: "Another Reason Why I Don't Keep a Gun in the House"¹³⁵ mm. 104-110

Musical score for Example 3.4: "Another Reason Why I Don't Keep a Gun in the House" mm. 104-110. The score is in 2/4 time and includes lyrics: bark-ing, his. Dynamics include *ff*, *p*, *mf decres.*, and *riten.*

¹³⁴ Music in public domain.

¹³⁵ Text for "Another Reason Why I Don't Keep a Gun in the House" © 1988 by Billy Collins, from *The Apple that Astonished Paris* by Billy Collins, used by permission of University of Arkansas Press. Music from *Another Reason Why I Don't Keep a Gun in the House* by Tom Cipullo © Oxford University Press Inc, 2004. Assigned to Oxford University Press 2010. Music extracts reproduced by permission. All rights reserved.

There should not be a breath in measure 111, and the vocal line should be very *legato* in measures 112-114. This *legato* may be exaggerated, again mocking the dog's sophistication.

The quotation that begins in measure 116 is of the second movement of Beethoven's *Symphony No. 3*, the "Marcia funebre." Cipullo lists Beethoven's metronome marking (eighth note=80), but in Cipullo's song this section is often performed even slower, as slow as eighth note=66. Frequently, there is laughter from a live audience in this section, so the slower tempo may be preferable. The *fermata* in measure 120 should be quite long, lasting at least 3 seconds.

In measure 121, the tempo should begin much faster, around quarter note=100. This section quotes the final movement (*allegro assai vivace*) of Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9*. Beethoven's metronome marking is quarter note=84. However, Cipullo asks for an *accelerando* just a few bars later, in mm.128-134. Many pianists will begin the *accelerando* even earlier than indicated, in measure 125. The vocal line in measure 125-126 is marked *like a bass*, and every voice type should find a way to affect the voice to imitate a deep sound. The diction of "that first established/Beethoven as an innovative genius" should be extremely crisp as the tempo increases in measures 127-130. By measure 134, the piano should accelerate the tempo to almost double of what it began as in measure 121. This will usually mean half note=100.

As the singer begins his or her barks in measure 135, there is often laughter from a live audience. Each singer should find a unique "bark" sound. It may be very high for sopranos, or in the mid-range for baritones. The final bark in measure 140 requires something slightly different than the six previous barks. Sopranos will often use a high

“yip” sound. Baritones may prefer a longer “ruff” sound. Tenors may enjoy a prolonged “aaaarrfff” in the high range.

***HOW TO GET HEAT WITHOUT FIRE* (2000)**

Why I Wear My Hair Long
Saying Goodbye
The Pocketbook
How to Get Heat Without Fire

The cycle *How to Get Heat Without Fire* sets four poems by Marilyn Kallet, whom Cipullo met while they were both in residence at the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts in 1994. He heard her give a reading from a volume of poems and immediately recognized Kallet’s work as “the types of poems composers dream of...surprising, sexy, funny, expressive, and direct.”¹³⁶ Cipullo gave Kallet a tape of some of his other songs, and she replied in a note “I was afraid I wouldn’t get the music since I don’t have a trained ear, but the music won me over immediately. Congratulations Tom!”¹³⁷ Cipullo selected four poems from Kallet’s published volume of poems *How to Get Heat Without Fire*¹³⁸ and set them to music, finishing the set in 2000. The fourth song was significantly revised in 2005 in preparation for soprano Melanie Mitrano’s recording on Capstone Records.¹³⁹ The premiere of “The Pocketbook” (song 3 of the set) was sung by soprano Meagan Miller on March 12, 2000. The set as a whole was premiered by soprano Jody Sheinbaum on April 8, 2000.

¹³⁶ Tom Cipullo, fax message to Dr. Melanie Mitrano, 27 September 2005.

¹³⁷ Marilyn Kallet, letter to Tom Cipullo, 27 January 1998.

¹³⁸ Kallet, *How to Get Heat Without Fire* (Knoxville: New Messenger Books, 1996).

¹³⁹ Melanie Mitrano, *Songs in Transit*, Capstone Records CPS-8756, 2006.

In terms of programming, this set is rarely performed all together as one group. The third song of the set (“The Pocketbook”) is so hilarious that the audience almost needs to have the relief of clapping afterward. Moreover, the final song of the set (“How to Get Heat Without Fire”) is very long and intense. It presents extreme vocal challenges for even the freshest singer, and may be unwise to perform at the end of a set. Cipullo prefers that the set be performed as a whole, but understands that it is extremely difficult, and may not be ideal for every singer. A good compromise may be to mix one song from another set, such as “Touch me” from *Late Summer* or “Epilogue” from *A Visit with Emily*, and then sing the first three songs from *How to Get Heat Without Fire*, thus ending with “The Pocketbook.” When it is not possible to perform the set as a whole, Cipullo fully approves excerpting and combining any of these four songs into mixed sets.

Why I Wear My Hair Long

I. Catalog data

Nature of the work: First of Four in the cycle *How to Get Heat Without Fire*

Date of composition: August 1, 1999; The MacDowell Colony

Source of score for analysis: Published score

Publisher: Classical Vocal Reprints

Publication: *How to Get Heat Without Fire*

Copyright: Music 2005, Tom Cipullo; Text 1996, Marilyn Kallet

Recording: Melanie Mitrano, soprano and Tom Cipullo, piano, from *Songs in transit: An American Expedition*, (Capstone CPS-8756, 2006).

Meter: 5/8, 6/8, 7/8, 8/8, 9/8, 12/8, 2/4, 3/4, 4/4

Tempo: Lively (quarter note=140)

Voice: Soprano

Length: 40 measures

Vocal Range: Eb4 to F#5

Duration: 1:20

Mood: Flirtatious

Subject: Sex

Author of text: Marilyn Kallet

Source of text: Published in *How to Get Heat Without Fire*, Knoxville: New Messenger Books, 1996, from the collection *Forget the Silk*. Reprinted in *Packing Light: New and Selected Poems*. Boston: Black Widow Press, 2009.

Dedication: For Lucy Yates

Premiere: 8 April 2000 at The Cooper Union (NYC), Jody Sheinbaum, soprano and Tom Cipullo, piano

Incipit: “Why I Wear My Hair Long”¹⁴⁰ mm. 8-10

The image shows a musical score for the incipit of the song "Why I Wear My Hair Long". It consists of three staves. The top staff is the vocal line, starting at measure 8 with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The lyrics are "I want to wrap it a - round you". The middle and bottom staves are the piano accompaniment, starting with a *subito p* marking. The music is in 7/8 time and features a key signature of one sharp (F#).

II. Annotation

The song is dedicated to a good friend of Cipullo’s, Lucy Yates. She is a singer and also a very accomplished pianist. Cipullo calls her “the best sight reader he has ever met.”¹⁴¹ Cipullo was not thinking of Yates’s voice when he wrote “Why I Wear My Hair Long.” The dedication came after completing composition of the song.

The premiere was sung by soprano Jody Sheinbaum as part of an all-Cipullo concert sponsored by Joy in Singing and the Lincoln Center Library. Joy in Singing is an organization that supports emerging professional singers and composers. Cipullo’s friend Paul Sperry has served as music director of Joy in Singing since 1986.

Melanie Mitrano is a soprano and composer who met Cipullo in 2003 through their mutual friend Paul Sperry at a Friends and Enemies of New Music concert. Mitrano and

¹⁴⁰ Text for “Why I Wear My Hair Long” © 2009 by Marilyn Kallet, from *Packing Light: New and Selected Poems* by Marilyn Kallet, used by permission of the author and Black Widow Press. Music © 2005 by Tom Cipullo, from *How to Get Heat Without Fire* by Tom Cipullo, used by permission of the composer.

¹⁴¹ Cipullo, interview by author, New York City, 8 March 2008.

Cipullo then collaborated on a recital in Weill Recital Hall (Carnegie Hall) in 2004, and recorded the set *How to Get Heat Without Fire* for Capstone Records in 2006.

III. Interpretive guide

The piano part in the song is quite busy, with many changes in tempo and meter. It is important that the changes be straight and metrical, and therefore somewhat predictable for the singer. The frequently changing meter presents some memorization challenges for the singer. Melanie Mitrano suggests listening for the “aggregate” rather than memorizing counts.¹⁴² It is far easier to memorize cues in the piano. If one approaches the piece this way, one hardly notices the frequently changing meter.

Mitrano feels very strongly that this piece is sexual in nature. She believes it depicts two people in the sexual act, with the climax beginning to build in measure 20 (“until we ride”), and reaching its apex in measure 30 (“and my flag unfurls”). She advises that the innuendo should be clear and direct.¹⁴³ Cipullo calls this song “the anthem of a diva/siren.”¹⁴⁴

Crisp and clear diction is essential in this piece, which features very colorful and descriptive language. The poem is one single sentence, but is organized into six very short strophes. The result is intense and concentrated, and is served best by a percussive approach to pronunciation.

After the piano introduction, there is no lift between measures 7 and 8. The voice must come in exactly in time, in spite of the *subito p* indication in the piano part. The

¹⁴² Mitrano, telephone interview by author, Denver, 12 May 2009.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Tom Cipullo, fax message to Dr. Melanie Mitrano, 27 September 2005.

breath marked at the end of measure 10 should not disturb the overall pulse of the piece, so the singer should cut-off “you” early to allow for a large breath. The pianist should push the tempo forward in mm. 11-17. The ensemble must be synchronized in measure 15, which also where the story turns sexual (“button it slowly”). With the *a tempo* indication in measure 24, the tempo should arrive there but continue to press forward through measure 26. Maintaining ensemble balance is challenging in measures 25-26, and Cipullo sensitively notes in measure 25 *Don’t cover voice!*. The indication *passione* in measure 27 refers to tempo, and should press the tempo forward through measure 30. The dynamic instructions in measure 30 may be performed as written, or as a *fp* initial attack, with a *decrescendo* in the second half of the measure.

Example 3.5: “Why I Wear My Hair Long”¹⁴⁵ mm. 30-31

The image shows a musical score for measures 30-31. It consists of three staves. The top staff is for the voice, starting at measure 30 with a dynamic of *fff* and a crescendo to *p*. The middle staff is for the piano, starting at measure 30 with a dynamic of *ff* and a crescendo to *p*. The piano part is marked *leggiere* and includes a 'furlis' instruction. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings.

¹⁴⁵ Text for “Why I Wear My Hair Long” © 2009 by Marilyn Kallet, from *Packing Light: New and Selected Poems* by Marilyn Kallet, used by permission of the author and Black Widow Press. Music © 2005 by Tom Cipullo, from *How to Get Heat Without Fire* by Tom Cipullo, used by permission of the composer.

The singer may breathe before measure 35. The piano roll on the final chord should be fast, with only a brief *fermata*.

Saying Goodbye

I. Catalog data

Nature of the work: Second of Four in the cycle *How to Get Heat Without Fire*

Date of composition: August 19, 1999; Yaddo

Source of score for analysis: Published score

Publisher: Classical Vocal Reprints

Publication: *How to Get Heat Without Fire*

Copyright: Music 2005, Tom Cipullo; Text 1996, Marilyn Kallet

Recording: Melanie Mitrano, soprano and Tom Cipullo, piano, from *Songs in transit: An American Expedition*, (Capstone CPS-8756, 2006).

Meter: 3/8, 5/8, 6/8, 2/4, 3/4

Tempo: Slow, expressive (quarter note=66)

Voice: Soprano

Length: 43 measures

Vocal Range: B3 to G#5

Duration: 2:00

Mood: Sad

Subject: End of relationship

Author of text: Marilyn Kallet

Source of text: Published in *How to Get Heat Without Fire*, Knoxville: New Messenger Books, 1996, from the collection *Forget the Silk*. Reprinted in *Packing Light: New and Selected Poems*. Boston: Black Widow Press, 2009.

Dedication: For Linda Larson

Premiere: 8 April 2000 at The Cooper Union (NYC), Jody Sheinbaum, soprano and Tom Cipullo, piano

Incipit: “Saying Goodbye”¹⁴⁶ mm. 7-11

The image shows a musical score for the beginning of the song "Saying Goodbye". It consists of two systems of staves. The first system features a vocal line on a single staff with lyrics underneath. The lyrics are "We em - braced, there in the park-ing lot of the ord - i - nar - y." Above the vocal line, there are performance markings: *p* (piano), *dolce, teneramente*, *no breath*, *mf* (mezzo-forte), and another *p*. The second system shows the piano accompaniment on two staves. It includes markings for *meno*, *p*, *mf*, *legato*, and *mp*. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is common time (C).

II. Annotation

This song is dedicated to Linda Larson, a soprano and good friend of Cipullo. They have performed together many times over the years, including the cycle *Late Summer* at Merkin Hall in 2008. Cipullo dedicated the song to her “in appreciation of her tremendous musicianship and beautiful voice.”¹⁴⁷

According to the recording on record, the metronome marking of 66 is a little fast for the piece. Cipullo’s extreme fondness for *rubato* requires the piano introduction to range from quarter note=48 to 66. When the voice enters, the tempo is on the slower side of that range. The tempo reaches 66 by measures 12-13.

¹⁴⁶ Text for “Saying Goodbye” © 2009 by Marilyn Kallet, from *Packing Light: New and Selected Poems* by Marilyn Kallet, used by permission of the author and Black Widow Press. Music © 2005 by Tom Cipullo, from *How to Get Heat Without Fire* by Tom Cipullo, used by permission of the composer.

¹⁴⁷ Cipullo, e-mail to author, 23 August 2010.

III. Interpretive guide

This song tells the story of “saying goodbye” to a lover, and all of the pain and emotions that come with that experience. Cipullo asks for a range of emotions, most of them heart-wrenching. He indicates specific emotions in the piano introduction: *longing*, *angry*, *shying away* (mm. 4-6), markings which he added to the score after working with Melanie Mitrano in preparation for the recording.

Mitrano describes this piece as “one long recitative” in which the singer tells the story in “as much time as it takes to tell.”¹⁴⁸ While many tempo changes are indicated in the score, there are additional *accelerandi* and *ritardandi*, which support the recitative-like style of the song. Vocally speaking, the piece is very exposed, and requires ease and finesse throughout the range.

The piano introduction should begin *pp* and closer to 48 than 66. Measures 4-5 may speed up slowly with the stronger emotions indicated, but measure 6 slows again to 48. The vocal entrance should be extremely legato and tender (*teneramente*). Measures 12-14 may press forward slightly. The piano entrance in measure 16 should be *optimistic*, as indicated above the vocal line. The piano interlude in measures 20-21 should be *f* and not *poco f* as marked. Measure 22 may be played *ff* which greatly contrasts with the *subito p* downbeat of measure 23. The singer should take extra time on the rest of measure 24, as if they are at a loss to find the word (“vast”). The last beat of measure 24 “In a breath” marks the start of a new thought, and is marked *becoming angry*. The tempo should continue to press forward here, indicated with *passione* in measures 25-26. The vocal line remains *ff* through measure 31, in spite of the *ritenuto*

¹⁴⁸ Mitrano, interview by author, 12 may 2009.

and descending line. The *decrescendo* should be saved for measure 32. Measures 33-37 should be sung in one breath, and Cipullo asks for a very slow delivery. The vocal timbre must change dramatically to a hollow and almost empty *pp*, and Cipullo suggests *straight tone*, though this is not necessary to achieve the desired emotional effect. Extra time may be taken for the breath in measure 39, and the final note should be held as long as possible. The final sound of the [nd] in “sound” should coincide with the lifting of the pedal for a clean ensemble cutoff.

The Pocketbook

I. Catalog data

Nature of the work: Third of Four in the cycle *How to Get Heat Without Fire*

Date of composition: January 2000; Virginia Center for the Creative Arts

Source of score for analysis: Published score

Publisher: Classical Vocal Reprints

Publication: *How to Get Heat Without Fire*

Copyright: Music 2005, Tom Cipullo; Text 1996, Marilyn Kallet

Recording: 1. Melanie Mitrano, soprano and Tom Cipullo, piano, from *Songs in transit: An American Expedition*, (Capstone CPS-8756, 2006).

2. Meagan Miller, soprano and Brian Zeger, piano, from *The Marilyn Horne Foundation presents On wings of song. Recital No. 6*, (Marilyn Horne Foundation, recorded live 12 March 2000 at the Kosciuszko Foundation, New York City).

Meter: 5/8, 6/8, 7/8, 8/8, 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 5/4, 6/4, 7/4, 3/2

Tempo: Fast, emphatic (quarter note=168)

Voice: Soprano

Length: 154 measures

Vocal Range: C4 to G5

Duration: 4:35

Mood: Obsessive, humorous

Subject: Beloved purse

Author of text: Marilyn Kallet

Source of text: Published in *How to Get Heat Without Fire*, Knoxville: New Messenger Books, 1996, from the collection *Sentimental Talk*. Reprinted in *Packing Light: New and Selected Poems*. Boston: Black Widow Press, 2009.

Dedication: For Donna Doyle and Laura Min

Premiere: Meagan Miller, soprano and Brian Zeger, piano, *The Marilyn Horne Foundation presents On wings of song, Recital No. 6*, (Marilyn Horne Foundation, 12 March 2000 at the Kosciuszko Foundation, New York City).

Incipit: “The Pocketbook”¹⁴⁹ mm. 1-5

The image shows a musical score for the piece "The Pocketbook". It consists of two staves: Soprano and Piano. Both staves are marked with the tempo and dynamics "Fast, emphatic (♩ = ♩ always)" and "f". The Soprano part begins with a rest, followed by a melodic line with lyrics "Flu-id It-al-ian suede." written below it. The Piano part features a complex, rhythmic accompaniment with frequent changes in meter, indicated by the time signatures 7/8, 3/8, 4/8, 3/8, 7/8, and 4/8. The score is presented in a clear, black-and-white format with standard musical notation.

II. Annotation

This song functions well as an encore, pops, or fundraiser piece. It is always an audience favorite, even where the Bergdorf Goodman crowd will be present. The more over-the-top the interpretation, the more hilarious the piece becomes. However, it does require diligent preparation for both singer and pianist, and is not in the least bit sight-readable. For the singer, the best method of memorizing the constantly changing meter is to learn and listen for piano cues.

“The Pocketbook” is dedicated to Donna Doyle and Laura Min. Doyle is a friend of Cipullo. She is not a musician, but is a “wonderful shopper with a marvelous sense of humor.”¹⁵⁰ Min is a soprano whom Cipullo met while she was a student. She performed

¹⁴⁹ Text for “The Pocketbook” © 2009 by Marilyn Kallet, from *Packing Light: New and Selected Poems* by Marilyn Kallet, used by permission of the author and Black Widow Press. Music © 2005 by Tom Cipullo, from *How to Get Heat Without Fire* by Tom Cipullo, used by permission of the composer.

¹⁵⁰ Cipullo, interview, 8 March 2008.

this piece on a recital and did so with such conviction and grace that he decided to dedicate the piece to her.

Soprano Meagan Miller premiered “The Pocketbook” in her debut recital sponsored by the Marilyn Horne Foundation in 2000. Miller had met Cipullo in 1998 through Joy in Singing, the organization that supports emerging professional singers and composers, which is directed by Cipullo’s good friend Paul Sperry. Sperry recommended Miller to help Cipullo record portions of *A Visit with Emily* for a grant application. The two got to know each other through this project, and later performed together on several *Friends and Enemies of New Music* concerts. Cipullo showed Miller some songs in preparation for her Marilyn Horne Foundation recital, and she selected a mixed set for that performance. Her set included: “The Land of Nod” and “A Death in the Family” both from the set *The Land of Nod*, “Epilogue” from *A Visit with Emily* and “The Pocketbook” from *How to Get Heat Without Fire*.

Bergdorf Goodman is the infamous New York City department store favored by the world’s elite. In Kallet’s original poem, the pocketbook costs only \$370. It was Mitrano’s idea to ask Kallet for permission to change the price to \$970 to adjust for inflation and to more accurately represent “half a rent check” in New York City. Kallet agreed to the change in 2005, and Mitrano recorded it as such. However, the recording of the premiere sung by Miller uses the original text “Three hundred seventy dollars.”

In measures 136-137, the singer mouths the words “Fluid Italian suede” with no sound, however this would not be perceptible in a studio recording. In Mitrano and Cipullo’s recording, Cipullo substitutes the words “Third floor, women’s accessories” (spoken by himself as pianist). These are not Kallet’s words, and this change should

never be used in live performance. However, it remains an acceptable substitution for any future studio recording. Kallet did not write the final line of text in the song. Cipullo added the spoken “God Bless you, Bergdorf Goodman!”

Mitrano’s recording is a little slower than the ideal performance. Miller’s recording is closer to the intended speed of 168.

III. Interpretive guide

“The Pocketbook” uses elements of musical theater, including spoken sections and over-the-top acting. Extremely clear diction supports telling the story. The opening line “Fluid Italian suede” on a G5 is one of the most difficult lines of text to make audible in the piece. Mitrano suggests that if one treats the song almost as a “patter”¹⁵¹ aria, the end result will be more successful.

Miller suggests going “beyond where you think you can”¹⁵² in terms of the character. This is a passionate love song about a purse. The character should be completely insane. Mitrano believes that gesturing in live performance should be exaggerated and almost choreographed.¹⁵³ Audiences may respond by laughing out loud in the middle of the song, and this is delightful feedback for the performers.

“The Pocketbook” requires that the pianist sing. Miller suggests that the pianist act like “the devil in *Faust*”¹⁵⁴ and try to lure the singer with the lines “Fluid Italian suede” (measures 69-73). When Cipullo performs this piece, he faces the audience and

¹⁵¹ Mitrano, interview by author, 12 May 2009.

¹⁵² Meagan Miller, telephone interview by author, Denver, 14 April 2009.

¹⁵³ Mitrano, interview by author, 12 May 2009.

¹⁵⁴ Miller, interview by author, 14 April 2009.

waggles his eyebrows smugly during his singing, which always has a delightful comic effect.

The opening vocal line must enter in time. Mitrano suggests *non vibrato*, and a real “musical theater approach” to delivering the line.¹⁵⁵ The diction is difficult to get across, especially since the story is just beginning. A slight *ritardando* in measure 10 gives a nice highlight to the church cadence in the piano. In a coaching with the author, Cipullo indicated that the grace notes in measure 16 should be replaced by a *glissando* between G4 and B4 (mm. 15-16).¹⁵⁶ He also suggests a fermata over the B4 in measure 16. In measure 17 “croons” may be spoken or inflected like a croon. The *teneramente* indication in measure 23 should be sarcastic, since the speaker is jealous of “the blonde with garnet lips.” In measure 26, “my” should be angry. A gesture of slapping one’s hip on the line “against her slim hip” (mm. 28-29) may be effective.

In the published score, two chords are missing from measure 28. The correct version is shown below.

¹⁵⁵ Mitrano, interview by author, 12 May 2009.

¹⁵⁶ Cipullo, *Coaching with the author*, digital audio recording, New York City 12 March 2008.

Example 3.6: “The Pocketbook”¹⁵⁷ mm. 27-29

The musical score for Example 3.6 shows three measures of music. The top staff is the vocal line, and the bottom two staves are the piano accompaniment. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 3/4. The vocal line begins in measure 27 with the lyrics "pock-et-book a - gainsther slim. hip." and includes dynamic markings *f* and *p*. The piano accompaniment features chords in the left hand and a melodic line in the right hand. The score is numbered "3" in the top right corner.

The vocal entrance in measure 31 must come directly in time without any lift before the downbeat. After naming the price of the purse (\$970) in measure 31, Miller believes that the 7/8 bar immediately following represents the turning over of the stomach in reaction to this price.¹⁵⁸ The breath indicated in measure 34 should not disturb the regular pulse of the tempo.

Balance is particularly challenging in measures 36 and 38 when the voice is low and the piano plays very dense chords. The “chunk” represents the sound of the old-fashioned tape calculators, as this shopping addict calculates just how much she would have to sacrifice to buy the purse. “One chunk of my daughter’s college” in measures 39-40 may be sung wistfully, as if the woman is asking herself if she can really take away her daughter’s college money. There is a significant change in character beginning in

¹⁵⁷ Text for “The Pocketbook” © 2009 by Marilyn Kallet, from *Packing Light: New and Selected Poems* by Marilyn Kallet, used by permission of the author and Black Widow Press. Music © 2005 by Tom Cipullo, from *How to Get Heat Without Fire* by Tom Cipullo, used by permission of the composer.

¹⁵⁸ Miller, interview.

measure 41. The section beginning here and continuing through measure 48 should be outrageously sexual, with desire building throughout. There may not be any *ritardando* in measure 47, and the singer should be delighted by her choice to “sell out” her family.

Beginning in measure 49, the vocal line is more *legato* throughout. The line “It’s miraculously easy,” in measure 50 may be very matter-of-fact, and reminiscent of an infomercial. Measures 51-55 should be sung very *legato* without a breath. The F4 in measure 53 requires chest voice to be audible against the busy piano line. The *rhapsodic* interlude in measures 57-59 illustrates just how insane this woman has become, and passionate reactions are required from the singer.

A child-like pout is effective in measure 67-68. Miller suggests that the pianist’s singing entrance in measure 69 may be like a “siren song”¹⁵⁹ luring the singer to a deeper level of shopping bliss. The pianist should turn to face the audience directly when they sing, while the singer should not look at the pianist. Cipullo recommends that the singer hear the pianist’s words, but should not overtly react to them. The pianist must use long vowels and good tone in order to be understood. There is a temptation to cut the words short to observe the accents, but this should be avoided for the most effective result.

Measures 76 to 78 should not slow at all. The singer is making a list of all of the new things she has to have to go with the purse. Cipullo prefers that “A silver Porsche” be spoken (not sung) out of time, and delivered very sensually. Miller suggests using a “Marilyn Monroe” sound on this line.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

In measure 88, the singer's "strap" falls on the downbeat, which is then immediately followed by a piano chord on beat two which may represent the crack of a strap or whip. Miller favors a sexually aroused reaction to this crack of the whip on the line "in wine red suede" (mm. 89-91).¹⁶¹ Balance is again challenging in measures 92-93 as the singer is very low and the piano doubles her line. The line "Edgar Allan Poe said." in measure 99 is a matter-of-fact aside from the seriousness of the concept of carrying one's soul in one's pocketbook (mm. 97-102). Measures 104-105 should be completely serious and sincere, in spite of the fact that the audience typically will laugh out loud.

In measure 113, the pianist should enter slightly after the singer to allow the *pp* E5 to be audible. The return of "Nine hundred seventy" in measure 114 breaks the rapture of the previous section. The singer must once again find justification and means for spending so much money on a purse. A "gasp" representing a great idea at the end of measure 116 is very effective. Measure 128 may be sung out of time, very slowly and stately.

Our main character is thrilled to be completely "nuts about a purse."¹⁶² The singer should be so moved or so excited at the idea of having this purse, that she can only mouth the repetition of "Fluid Italian suede" in measure 135. The *ossia* D4 in measure 139 works more effectively for light voices, which may not be audible on a D3 against the busy piano line. However, if the singer can be heard, the D3 is preferable. The pianist should push the tempo forward in mm. 148-152, with an even faster final tag in

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Ibid.

mm. 153-154. The singer's final spoken line "God Bless you, Bergdorf Goodman!" should be ecstatic, and represent that she has really lost her mind over this purse.

This piece is outrageously hilarious, and especially in formal recital settings. The audience will likely applaud even if this is not the final song in a set. For this reason, "The Pocketbook" works best as the end of a set of songs, or as a stand-alone song or encore.

How to Get Heat Without Fire

I. Catalog data

Nature of the work: Fourth of Four in the cycle *How to Get Heat Without Fire*

Date of composition: July 1999; Mac Dowell Colony; Revised Jan-Feb 2005

Source of score for analysis: Published score

Publisher: Classical Vocal Reprints

Publication: *How to Get Heat Without Fire*

Copyright: Music 2005, Tom Cipullo; Text 1996, Marilyn Kallet

Recording: Melanie Mitrano, soprano and Tom Cipullo, piano, from *Songs in transit: An American Expedition*, (Capstone CPS-8756, 2006).

Meter: 6/8, 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 5/4, 6/4, 7/4, 3/2

Tempo: Slow, expressive (quarter note=92)

Voice: Soprano

Length: 84 measures

Vocal Range: G3 (*ossia* D4) to Bb5

Duration: 4:45

Mood: Passionate

Subject: Love

Author of text: Marilyn Kallet

Source of text: Published in *How to Get Heat Without Fire*, Knoxville: New Messenger Books, 1996. Reprinted in *Packing Light: New and Selected Poems*. Boston: Black Widow Press, 2009.

Dedication: For Melanie Mitrano

Premiere: 1999 version: 8 April 2000 at The Cooper Union (NYC), Jody Sheinbaum, soprano and Tom Cipullo, piano

Incipit: “How to Get Heat Without Fire”¹⁶³ mm. 4-9

II. Annotation

The first version of this song was written in July 1999. That is the version that was premiered by Jody Sheinbaum in 2000. However, Cipullo was not completely satisfied with the piece. In particular, he spent years revising the music that sets the line “I will reenter my life as sound as notes strung like pearls.” After meeting Melanie

¹⁶³ Text for “How to Get Heat Without Fire” © 2009 by Marilyn Kallet, from *Packing Light: New and Selected Poems* by Marilyn Kallet, used by permission of the author and Black Widow Press. Music © 2005 by Tom Cipullo, from *How to Get Heat Without Fire* by Tom Cipullo, used by permission of the composer.

Mitrano and working with her in preparation for their recording of the entire set *How to Get Heat Without Fire* in 2005, Cipullo revised the piece with Mitrano's voice in mind. In a program note he explains

I rewrote this concluding number dozens of times, enamored of the melody but bedeviled by the details of form and continuity. The final song is dedicated to Melanie Mitrano, the artist who inspired me to attempt one final rewrite.¹⁶⁴

As the result of numerous re-writes, the song remains a bit disjointed. There are many distinct sections, which shift from one to the next without transition. The song is virtuosic, and requires a considerable range, with full presence of sound in all areas of that range. It is a vocal and emotional tour-de-force.

Miller worked on this song with Cipullo at its inception, and reflects that this song reminds her of Beethoven's spirit in that Cipullo reaches for the extreme and seems to write for a voice that "doesn't exist." She wonders if any one performer can realize the song's full potential.¹⁶⁵

Cipullo and Mitrano's recording uses a tempo closer to quarter note=80. However, Cipullo's published indication of 92 may be easier for some singers to manage.

Mitrano admits to having had difficulty with understanding what this poem was about. She initially perceived that there was a strong yearning for a love relationship with someone that the speaker is just friends with ("How to get heat without fire?"). She also found a great deal of passion in the poem and sexuality in the line "I will reenter my life as sound as notes strung like pearls that you have yearned to enter."¹⁶⁶ This is mixed

¹⁶⁴ Cipullo, fax to Dr. Melanie Mitrano, 27 September 2005.

¹⁶⁵ Miller, interview.

¹⁶⁶ Mitrano, interview.

throughout with a type of maternal protection in “To ease you new into the world” and “Whose mother is there in the dark trying hard to hide you from the memory of the floorboards in flame?” The speaker is torn between wanting to save/protect this man, and wanting to make love to him. Kallet affirmed Mitrano’s interpretation, and told her that this man is based on an actual person she knew, who was the child of a Holocaust survivor who had experienced “floorboards in flame.” However, Kallet describes her poem as being about poetry itself, that writer and reader can experience heat, but they are not connected enough to be burned.¹⁶⁷ The poem ends with a kind of promise to remain near “I will be sound and silence, listening.”¹⁶⁸

III. Interpretive guide

This song is full of very long phrases with extremes of range and dynamic demands. Mitrano advises breathing as often as possible, and always being certain to take a full breath. The tessitura of the song is also centered slightly lower than the first three songs of the set, so more core in the sound is required in the mid-range for most sopranos.

In measure 10, Cipullo favors the low G3 as opposed to the *ossia* D4. In measure 21, there is a misprint in the score. The singer’s last note on “Whose” should be a G4, not a C4. The *no breath* indicated between measures 26 and 27 is due to the frustration the speaker feels toward the central issue “How to get heat without fire?” (mm. 27-29). The dilemma is clear in measures 34-39, “If I am not a mother or a beloved? Pull back?”

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Kallet, *How to Get Heat Without Fire*, (1996) 79.

The singer has to find a way to love this man without possessing him. In measures 43-47, the chromaticism of the vocal line can slow the line, but Cipullo asks for the opposite (*passione, becoming faster, more excited*). Time should be taken to breathe in measure 67 to prepare for the *pp* B♭ in measure 68. Measure 69 should slow significantly, so that the *stringendo, molto passione, più passione, and ancora più passione* markings may be observed in mm. 70-73. The *messa di voce* on the last note is challenging, and should be reserved for the last third of the note's total duration. In the last measure of the piece, the final consonant sound in "listening" should coincide with the lifting of the pedal.

***CLIMBING: 7 SONGS ON 8 POEMS BY AFRICAN-AMERICANS* (2000)**

On Being Brought from Africa to America/Ice Storm

Yet Do I Marvel

Incident

Personal

The Point

Dawn

Mother to Son

In 2000, Tom Cipullo was approached by composer Theodore Wiprud who was preparing a program of vocal music inspired by the words of African-American poets. The program was called "I, Too, Sing America: Poetry of great African-American poets set to music by American composers of many races." The title of the program pays homage to the first line of the 1924 poem by Langston Hughes, which begins "I, too, sing America." While not African-American himself, Wiprud, was inspired to present this

program, which “affirms that American culture is one world with many voices, that the works of leading African-American poets are beacons to many, and that artists of all races and backgrounds can and should respond in their own ways.”¹⁶⁹

Cipullo was intrigued by Wiprud’s offer to contribute to this project, and he decided to participate. He made a conscious decision to select poems by African-Americans that did not have to do with race. However, as he was reviewing and extracting certain poems that he liked and believed would be musical, he found that they all had to do with race. He selected poems from throughout history, from Phillis Wheatley (1753-ca.1784), the first published African-American poet, to Robert Hayden (1913-1980). He also selected poems by Countee Cullen, Paul Laurence Dunbar, and Langston Hughes.

The seven songs that comprise *Climbing* were composed in the summer of 2000 while in residence at Yaddo. The first song “On Being Brought from Africa to America/Ice Storm” features texts by two poets: Wheatley and Hayden. Cipullo calls Wheatley’s poem “deeply troubling to the contemporary reader.” He questions: “Could her religious views have really been this strong? Is her notion of *redemption* so complete that slavery itself is acceptable? Or was she merely stating what circumstances of the time would allow her to say?” By “combining (and juxtaposing)” Wheatley’s poem with...Hayden’s ‘Ice Storm’” Cipullo imposes his “guess...of what was in her heart.”

¹⁶⁹ Theodore Wiprud, “I, too, sing America,” Theodore Wiprud, Composer, <http://www.theodorewiprud.com/itoosingamericaproduction.html> (accessed 2 September 2010).

Cipullo describes the cycle as a whole as a “narrative of heartbreak, defiance, and ultimately triumph.”¹⁷⁰

The remaining poems in the cycle are also religious in nature, including many references to God, and imagery that includes prayer, angels, and dawn. The final poem Langston Hughes’s “Mother to Son,” is in an African-American dialect. Cipullo strongly believes in preserving this dialect out of respect for Hughes’s “unfailing brilliance.”¹⁷¹ For this reason, Cipullo states that the singer “most likely should be black” to perform this cycle.¹⁷²

Climbing’s seven songs run together, in the fashion of a true cycle. In some cases, one song ends and the next begins in the same measure. However, the fifth song “The Point” was later extracted and placed in the 2008 cycle for baritone, *America 1968*, and Cipullo states that the final song “Mother to Son” can stand on its own.¹⁷³

Climbing was scheduled to premiere at Weill Recital Hall (Carnegie Hall) on 10 January 2001, in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr.’s birthday, and “in tribute to Dr. King’s vision of an inclusive society of mutual respect.”¹⁷⁴ Just a few days before this recital, Cipullo had the opportunity to premiere the work (with mezzo-soprano Jeanette Blakeney) at the Harlem School for the Arts. American mezzo-soprano Betty Allen was serving as director of the school, and she attended the concert. The Weill Recital Hall

¹⁷⁰ Cipullo, *Climbing: 7 songs on 8 poems by African-Americans*, (Riverdale, NY: Classical Vocal Reprints, 2000) introduction.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Cipullo, telephone interview by author, Denver, 10 October 2009.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Wiprud, “I, too, sing America,”

<http://www.theodrewiprud.com/itoosingamericaproduction.html> (accessed 2 September 2010).

performance was Jeanette Blakeney's Carnegie Hall debut, and she went on to appear in New York City Opera's *Porgy and Bess*, and to tour internationally as Queenie in *Showboat*. In March 2001, the famous baritone Andre Solomon-Glover also performed *Climbing*.

At the 10 January 2001 recital at Weill Hall, there was a large media presence. ABC sent a camera crew to the recital, and on 15 January (Martin Luther King, Jr. Day), the entire program was broadcast on WQXR, New York City's classical FM-radio station. In 2002, the score of *Climbing* was included in Brown University Library's Special Exhibit "Langston Hughes: The Black Bard at 100."

On Being Brought from Africa to America/Ice Storm

I. Catalog data

Nature of the work: First of Seven in the cycle *Climbing: 7 Songs on 8 Poems by African-*

Americans

Date of composition: 23 October 2000, LIC and Yaddo, Revised 15 March 2001

Source of score for analysis: Published Score, Manuscript Edition

Publisher: Classical Vocal Reprints

Publication: *Climbing: 7 Songs on 8 Poems by African-Americans*

Copyright: Music 2000, Tom Cipullo; Wheatley text in public domain; Hayden text copyright 1985, Irma Hayden

Recording: No published recording available

Meter: 6/16, 7/16, 9/16, 11/16, 12/16, 3/8, 5/8, 6/8, 7/8, 1/4, 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 5/4, 3/2

Tempo: Fast, frantic (quarter note=126)

Voice: Mezzo-soprano (or baritone) Length: 77 measures

Vocal Range: A3 to F5 Duration: 3:00

Mood: Varies-angry, resigned, pensive Subject: Race, religion

Authors of texts: Phillis Wheatley, Robert Hayden

Sources of texts: "On Being Brought from Africa to America" published in *The Collected Works of Phillis Wheatley*, edited by John C. Shields (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988).

"Ice Storm" published in *Robert Hayden: Collected Poems*, edited by Frederick Glaysher (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 1985).

Dedication: to Jeanette Blakeney

Premiere: 8 January 2001, Harlem School for the Arts; Jeanette Blakeney, mezzo-

soprano and Tom Cipullo, piano

Incipit: “On Being Brought from Africa to America/Ice Storm”¹⁷⁵ mm. 1-5

The musical score is written on a single staff in treble clef. It begins with a 4/4 time signature, followed by a 3/4 time signature, and then a 4/4 time signature. The melody starts with a rest, followed by a series of notes with various dynamics and articulations. The lyrics are: "ah (or eh) 'Twas mer-cy brought me from my na-tive".

Annotations above the staff include:

- anguished (almost a scream)* above the first note.
- sfz p* above the first two notes.
- getting raspy, losing pitch* above the first three notes.
- sostenuto* above the first three notes.
- f* above the first three notes.
- slower (controlled)* above the first four notes.
- hymn-like (repressed)* above the first four notes.
- p* above the first four notes.
- molto* above the last two notes.
- f* above the last two notes.

II. Annotation

The two texts in this song are mixed together into a combined narrative.

Wheatley’s text is often set to hymn-like music, indicated *controlled*, or *repressed*.

Hayden’s text floats above percussive and complex piano music, and is at times spoken, whispered, or shouted. The result represents inner-conflict. Cipullo adds an “Ah (or eh)” to begin the song, indicated *anguished (almost a scream)* *getting raspy, losing pitch*. The result of this effect is a primal expression of distress, which immediately takes us into the deep conflict explored in this song.

The metronome marking of 126 is accurate, but should not be exceeded. The *slower* sections should be a little more than half this speed. Much of the song features free rhythms, and the tempo frequently alternates between 126 and the much slower hymn speed.

III. Interpretive guide

Though the published score is handwritten, it is meticulously marked with everything from dramatic indications to tempo changes. A strong dramatic stance is

¹⁷⁵ Text in public domain. Music © 2000 by Tom Cipullo, from *Climbing* by Tom Cipullo, used by permission of the composer.

necessary from the singer. They must be intensely angry at times, and immediately change to sweetly repressed when directed to. The ability to whisper audibly, shout, and speak is demanded of the singer, as well as the ability to sing long and beautiful legato phrases. With this song, the text takes center stage, and all vocal and ensemble decisions should be made in support of it. Crisp diction, careful balance, and deliberate tempo and mood shifts will serve the authors well. The end of this song is immediately followed by the second song of the cycle.

Yet Do I Marvel

I. Catalog data

Nature of the work: Second of Seven in the cycle *Climbing: 7 Songs on 8 Poems by African-Americans*

Date of composition: 23 October 2000, LIC and Yaddo, Revised 15 March 2001

Source of score for analysis: Published Score, Manuscript Edition

Publisher: Classical Vocal Reprints

Publication: *Climbing: 7 Songs on 8 Poems by African-Americans*

Copyright: Music 2000, Tom Cipullo; Text in public domain

Recording: No published recording available

Meter: 3/8, 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 5/4

Tempo: Slow, expressive (quarter note=63)

Voice: Mezzo-soprano (or baritone)

Length: 43 measures

Vocal Range: C4 to G5

Duration: 2:20

Mood: Pensive

Subject: Identity

Author of text: Countee Cullen

Source of text: Published in *The Portable Harlem Renaissance Reader*, edited by David L. Lewis (New York: Viking, 1994).

Dedication: to Jeanette Blakeney

Premiere: 8 January 2001, Harlem School for the Arts; Jeanette Blakeney, mezzo-soprano and Tom Cipullo, piano

Incipit: “Yet Do I Marvel”¹⁷⁶ mm. 9-11

The musical score is written on a single staff in treble clef. It begins with a 3/4 time signature, followed by a key signature change to one flat (B-flat). The melody consists of four measures. The first measure starts with a quarter rest, followed by a quarter note B-flat, a quarter note A, and a quarter note G. The second measure starts with a quarter rest, followed by a quarter note F, a quarter note E, and a quarter note D. The third measure starts with a quarter rest, followed by a quarter note C, a quarter note B, and a quarter note A. The fourth measure starts with a quarter rest, followed by a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E. Above the staff, dynamic markings are placed: *ff* above the first measure, *molto* above the second measure, *mp* above the third measure, and *dolce p* above the fourth measure. Below the staff, the lyrics are aligned with the notes: "I doubt not God is good, well mean-ing Kind,".

II. Annotation

Countee Cullen (1903-1946) is considered one of the great literary contributors to the Harlem Renaissance. He earned a master’s degree in English and French from Harvard University, and was extremely prolific. Sometime before 1918, he was adopted by Reverend Frederick A. Cullen, who established black Methodist churches in New York City as early as 1902. The two were close, and the young Cullen was well schooled in theology.

“Yet Do I Marvel” is an introspective poem, which takes several lines to reveal that it is all about race and self-identity. The first line and final two lines of the poem form the core of the sentiment: “I doubt not God is good, well-meaning, kind,” “Yet do I marvel at this curious thing:/To make a poet black, and bid him sing!”¹⁷⁷ The wonderment should be drawn out and varied as the text progresses.

III. Interpretive guide

The piano introduction alludes to deep conflict with its near-incessant double-dotted rhythms and complex harmonies. The meter is fairly consistent, primarily

¹⁷⁶ Text in public domain. Music © 2000 by Tom Cipullo, from *Climbing* by Tom Cipullo, used by permission of the composer.

¹⁷⁷ Countee Cullen, “Yet Do I Marvel,” in *The Portable Harlem Renaissance Reader*, ed. David L. Lewis, (New York: Viking Press, 1994) 244.

alternating between 2/4, 3/4, and 4/4 with only a few ventures into 3/8. The vocal phrases are short, with nearly every measure beginning with a rest, and thus an opportunity to breathe. The dynamics vary greatly throughout the song. The vocal line ascends gradually to the apex of the song “Yet do I marvel at this curious thing: To make a poet black, and bid him sing!” in measures 34-43. The beginning of the next song is a continuation of the same harmonic thought in the piano part. There is no audible shift from one song to the next.

Example 3.7: “Yet Do I Marvel”¹⁷⁸ mm. 41-43, “Incident”¹⁷⁹ mm. 1-2

The image shows a musical score for two pieces. The top system is for "Yet Do I Marvel" (measures 41-43), featuring a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line has lyrics "bid him sing" and includes a fermata over the word "sing". The piano part has a dynamic marking of *f*. The bottom system is for "Incident" (measures 1-2), starting with a piano introduction marked *riten.* and *attacca*. It then transitions to a section marked *loco* and "Bright, jaunty ($\text{♩} = 104$)". The piano part includes dynamic markings of *sempre f*, *ff*, and *pp subito con moto*.

¹⁷⁸ Text in public domain. Music © 2000 by Tom Cipullo, from *Climbing* by Tom Cipullo, used by permission of the composer.

¹⁷⁹ Text in public domain. Music © 2000 by Tom Cipullo, from *Climbing* by Tom Cipullo, used by permission of the composer.

Incident

I. Catalog data

Nature of the work: Third of Seven in the cycle *Climbing: 7 Songs on 8 Poems by African-Americans*

Date of composition: 23 October 2000, LIC and Yaddo, Revised 15 March 2001

Source of score for analysis: Published Score, Manuscript Edition

Publisher: Classical Vocal Reprints

Publication: *Climbing: 7 Songs on 8 Poems by African-Americans*

Copyright: Music 2000, Tom Cipullo; Text in public domain

Recording: No published recording available

Meter: 6/8, 7/8, 9/8, 12/8, 3/4, 4/4, 5/4, 3/2

Tempo: Bright, jaunty (quarter note=104); Slower

Voice: Mezzo-soprano (or baritone) Length: 39 measures

Vocal Range: B3 to Eb5 Duration: 2:00

Mood: Innocent, sincere Subject: Cruelty

Author of text: Countee Cullen

Source of text: Published in *The Portable Harlem Renaissance Reader*, edited by David L. Lewis (New York: Viking, 1994).

Dedication: to Jeanette Blakeney

Premiere: 8 January 2001, Harlem School for the Arts; Jeanette Blakeney, mezzo-soprano and Tom Cipullo, piano

Incipit: "Incident"¹⁸⁰ mm. 3-6

p *mp* *poco f*
no breath

Once rid - ing in old Bal - ti - more, Heart - filled,

¹⁸⁰ Text in public domain. Music © 2000 by Tom Cipullo, from *Climbing* by Tom Cipullo, used by permission of the composer.

II. Annotation

Countee Cullen's poem is written in common meter. It consists of three strophes of four lines each. Within each strophe, the first poetic line is written in iambic tetrameter and the second is in iambic trimeter. The third and fourth lines repeat this pattern again. The rhyme scheme is *abcb*. The poem's organization is reminiscent of nursery rhymes, such as "Mary had a little lamb" which is also in common meter. This simplicity serves to underline the naïveté of the speaker, who is just "eight and very small."¹⁸¹ However, Cipullo's setting of the poem uses so many changes in time signature, that Cullen's common meter structure is almost lost. Instead, the content of the poem comes to the forefront of the drama. The sentiment is one we may all identify with, innocence and sincerity crushed by the shocking pain of the first "incident" of cruelty.

III. Interpretive guide

Within the framework of a fairly steady tempo, there is opportunity for *rubato*. Measure 14 may slow slightly to underline the *subito pp dolce* C# in measure 15. Blakeney uses an [i] vowel in the word "Nigger," which gives the impression that the boy using the word may be unfamiliar with its pronunciation, but has already been indoctrinated into bigotry. The word is set on the interval of a descending minor third, also used by so many children to taunt, "nah, nah-nah, nah, nah, you ca-an't catch me." The expected emotional response to being called this name is not present in the text. Instead, the fact that this "incident" eclipses everything this child saw during the six

¹⁸¹ Countee Cullen, "Incident," in *The Portable Harlem Renaissance Reader*, ed. David L. Lewis, (New York: Viking Press, 1994) 243.

months in Baltimore is revealed. The simplicity of the child's emotions is maintained throughout, as if they do not completely understand what happened. The song ends harmonically unresolved, and after a brief *fermata*, begins the next song *attacca*.

Personal

I. Catalog data

Nature of the work: Fourth of Seven in the cycle *Climbing: 7 Songs on 8 Poems by African-Americans*

Date of composition: 23 October 2000, LIC and Yaddo, Revised 15 March 2001

Source of score for analysis: Published Score, Manuscript Edition

Publisher: Classical Vocal Reprints

Publication: *Climbing: 7 Songs on 8 Poems by African-Americans*

Copyright: Music 2000, Tom Cipullo; Text 1994, Estate of Langston Hughes

Recording: No published recording available

Meter: 3/8, 6/8, 8/8, 2/4, 3/4, 4/4

Tempo: Fast, frantic (quarter note=132)

Voice: Mezzo-soprano (or baritone)

Length: 18 measures

Vocal Range: D4 to Eb5

Duration: 0:45

Mood: Intense

Subject: Communicating with God

Author of text: Langston Hughes

Source of text: Published in *The Collected Poems of Langston Hughes*, edited by Arnold Rampersad and David E. Roessel (New York: Knopf, 1994).

Dedication: to Jeanette Blakeney

Premiere: 8 January 2001, Harlem School for the Arts; Jeanette Blakeney, mezzo-soprano and Tom Cipullo, piano

Incipit: "Personal"¹⁸² mm. 6-10

free
quasi-recitative

In an en-vel-ope marked Per-son-al God a-ddressed me a let-ter

¹⁸² Text for "Personal" © 1994 by Langston Hughes, from *The Collected Poems of Langston Hughes* by Langston Hughes, used by permission of Random House, Inc. Music © 2000 by Tom Cipullo, from *Climbing* by Tom Cipullo, used by permission of the composer.

II. Annotation

Langston Hughes's tremendous output of poetry ranks him among the best known American poets of all time. This very brief yet intense poem was first published in 1933, and Cipullo retains its original structure by refraining from any repetition. This song was completed in 2000 while Cipullo was in residence at Yaddo. Interestingly, Hughes spent several weeks in residence at Yaddo in 1942.

III. Interpretive guide

This very brief song is packed with passion. The piano introduction is indicated *fast, frantic*, and the dissonant sixteenth notes are accented and *crescendo* in measures 3 to 5. When the voice enters in measure 6, it is indicated *free quasi-recitative*. This dissonance and free rhythm allows for a strong dramatic interpretation.

Hughes's text underlines the distance between the speaker and God. They communicate using envelopes, which are "marked: *Personal*," rather than speaking directly. There is a bitterness, or perhaps resentment felt toward this distance. Cipullo underlines this with the frantic and dissonant piano introduction and the heavily accented vocal line.

The harmonic language remains harsh throughout the song, particularly in the piano interjections between vocal phrases in measures 8, 11, and 14. The delivery of the text is extremely important, as the piano has no action during most of the vocal phrases and instead, holds a dissonant chord under the intensely delivered text. The only line that is "accompanied" is the repetition of "In an envelope marked: *Personal*" in measures 12-13.

Example 3.8: "Personal"¹⁸³ mm. 6-8, recitative style

Handwritten musical score for "Personal" in recitative style, measures 6-8. The score includes vocal lines and piano accompaniment. The vocal line starts with "In an" and continues with "en-vel-ope marked Per-son-al" and "God ad-dressed me a let-ter." The piano accompaniment features complex rhythmic patterns and dynamic markings such as "f", "ff", and "free quasi-recitative".

¹⁸³ Text for "Personal" © 1994 by Langston Hughes, from *The Collected Poems of Langston Hughes* by Langston Hughes, used by permission of Random House, Inc. Music © 2000 by Tom Cipullo, from *Climbing* by Tom Cipullo, used by permission of the composer.

Example 3.9: “Personal”¹⁸⁴ mm. 12-13, accompanied

The musical score is written in 6/8 time. It features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The first system shows the vocal line starting with the lyrics "In an en-vel-ope marked" and the piano accompaniment. The second system shows the vocal line starting with "Per-son-al" and the piano accompaniment. The third system shows the piano accompaniment continuing. Dynamics include *mp*, *f*, and *ff*. Performance instructions include "Left hand molto legato".

The harmony finally softens on the final word “answer” in measures 17-18, and the piece ends with a consonant E-major chord in the high range of the piano. This may reflect a change of mood, or may also serve to prepare the listener for the next song, the calm and lyrical “The Point.”

The Point

I. Catalog data

Nature of the work: Fifth of Seven in the cycle *Climbing: 7 Songs on 8 Poems* by

¹⁸⁴ Text for “Personal” © 1994 by Langston Hughes, from *The Collected Poems of Langston Hughes* by Langston Hughes, used by permission of Random House, Inc. Music © 2000 by Tom Cipullo, from *Climbing* by Tom Cipullo, used by permission of the composer.

African-Americans

Date of composition: 23 October 2000, LIC and Yaddo, Revised 15 March 2001

Source of score for analysis: Published Score, Manuscript Edition

Publisher: Classical Vocal Reprints

Publication: *Climbing: 7 Songs on 8 Poems by African-Americans*

Copyright: Music 2000, Tom Cipullo; Text 1985, Erma Hayden

Recording: No published recording available

Meter: 2/4, 3/4, 4/4

Tempo: Slow, calm (eighth note=72)

Voice: Mezzo-soprano (or baritone)

Length: 51 measures

Vocal Range: E3 (*ossia* A3) to G5

Duration: 3:10

Mood: Wonderment, reverence

Subject: Stonington, CT

Author of text: Robert Hayden

Source of text: Published in *Robert Hayden: Collected Poems*, edited by Frederick Glaysher (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 1985).

Dedication: to Jeanette Blakeney

Premiere: 8 January 2001, Harlem School for the Arts; Jeanette Blakeney, mezzo-soprano and Tom Cipullo, piano

Incipit: "The Point"¹⁸⁵ mm. 8-11

The musical notation is for a vocal line in 3/4 time. It begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The first measure is marked with a fermata and the tempo marking 'a tempo' and dynamic 'pp'. The lyrics under the first two measures are 'Land's end...'. The third measure is marked with 'poco' and the dynamic 'mf'. The lyrics under the next two measures are 'And sound and Riv - er come to - geth - er,'. The final measure is marked with 'free' and dynamic '() pp', and has a 4:3 time signature. The lyrics under this measure are 'flow - ing to the sea.'

II. Annotation

This setting of Robert Hayden's "The Point (Stonington, Connecticut)" focuses on the seaside town of Stonington, CT. The town is positioned on a wide peninsula, which comes to a southern point where an American flag stands at the very tip. The poem describes this place, and refers to the "dead patriots of Stonington,"¹⁸⁶ presumably the early American settlers who fought off British naval attacks in the waters just off the

¹⁸⁵ Text for "The Point," © 1978 by Robert Hayden, from *Collected Poems* by Robert Hayden, used by permission of Liveright Publishing Corporation. Music © 2000 by Tom Cipullo, from *Climbing* by Tom Cipullo, used by permission of the composer.

¹⁸⁶ Robert Hayden, *Collected Poems*, ed. Frederick Glaysher (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 1985) 181.

point of Stonington during the American Revolution and the War of 1812. The overall religious message is one of being “truly held by a loving God.”¹⁸⁷

This song was later excerpted and included in the baritone cycle *America 1968*, a collection of six settings of poems by Robert Hayden. Andrew Garland and pianist Donna Loewy premiered this cycle at Carnegie Hall in 2008, where it was very well received. “The Point” functions as the third song in *America 1968*. In the program notes for Garland and Loewy’s recital, Susan Youens describes “The Point” as juxtaposing “past and present, both the long-dead patriots of early New England celebrated by Cipullo with the softest of distant fanfares and the beauty of wild swans, terns, and beach-goers in the here and now.”¹⁸⁸

When the song was added to *America 1968*, Cipullo changed the metronome marking from eighth note=72 to quarter note=58. This latter speed was used in Cipullo’s and Blakeney’s performances in 2001, and represents a more effective choice for the mood of the piece.

III. Interpretive guide

The song is indicated to be performed *molto rubato*, and Cipullo encourages extreme *rubato* in the piano introduction. He plays the first two eighth notes of each measure in tempo, and the remaining four eighth notes of each measure much faster.

¹⁸⁷ Cipullo, *Climbing: 7 songs on 8 poems by African-Americans*, (Riverdale, NY: Classical Vocal Reprints, 2000) introduction.

¹⁸⁸ Susan Youens, “America 1968,” Program notes for *American Portraits* 21 November, 2008, (New York: Weill Recital Hall) 34.

In the version of “The Point” printed in *America 1968*, Cipullo adds an *ossia* note to measure 12, allowing the singer to choose to sing the written F or an *ossia* D. In the version published in *Climbing*, there is no *ossia* D. In measures 20 through 22, the singer should breathe between measures 20 and 21 rather than between measures 21 and 22. In the *Climbing* publication, this is indicated as such, but in the *America 1968* version, the breath indication was moved to between measures 21 and 22.

The tempo should push forward in measures 25 to 28 as indicated by *passione*. This consonant section stands out as one of the truly beautiful passages of the piece. The reverent prayer-like “praise for dead patriots of Stonington” (mm. 32-35) should be carefully balanced as the voice is in a low range and the piano may easily overpower it. A *poco ritardando* is appropriate in the last two beats of measure 34. If the piece is sung by a mezzo-soprano, the E3 in measure 35 is preferable. However, most baritones who are able to manage the high range of this piece will likely prefer the *ossia* A2.

The song almost seems to come to an end in measure 35, but the piano interlude continues into a slower tempo in measure 37. The delivery of the last two lines of poetry in measures 38 to 48 (“we are for an instant held in shining/like memories in the mind of God”) is almost a musical after-thought, but is certainly a continuation of the poetic thought begun in measure 25 “All for a moment seems inscribed on brightness...” The indication of *sotto voce* in measure 39 is often replaced by a spoken quality in the sound, perhaps to facilitate better ensemble balance. The tempo may press forward slightly in measures 41-42, which contrasts with the *ritenuto* at the end of measure 42. In the *America 1968* version, this *ritenuto* is replaced by a *sostenuto* on the Eb (m. 42), and the indication *no breath* is added between “shining” and “like.” In the *Climbing* version,

there is a breath marked between “shining” and “like” (m. 42), but it is parenthetical with the note *if necessary*. In order to manage this long phrase without a breath (mm. 40 to 43), the dynamic level in measure 41 may be brought down to *mf*, instead of the *f* indicated. If the piano presses forward in measures 41 and 42, this will also aid the singer’s breath management. The ascending phrases of the piano postlude continue the poetic thought suspended in the comforting presence of God.

Dawn

I. Catalog data

Nature of the work: Sixth of Seven in the cycle *Climbing: 7 Songs on 8 Poems by African-Americans*

Date of composition: 23 October 2000, LIC and Yaddo, Revised 15 March 2001

Source of score for analysis: Published Score, Manuscript Edition

Publisher: Classical Vocal Reprints

Publication: *Climbing: 7 Songs on 8 Poems by African-Americans*

Copyright: Music 2000, Tom Cipullo; Text in public domain

Recording: No published recording available

Meter: 4/4, 3/2

Tempo: Slow, free (with wonder)

Voice: Mezzo-soprano (or baritone)

Length: 8 measures

Vocal Range: A3 to E5

Duration: 0:40

Mood: Wonderment

Subject: Nature, angels, man

Author of text: Paul Laurence Dunbar

Source of text: Published in *The Complete Poems of Paul Laurence Dunbar*, edited by William Dean Howells (New York: Amereon, 1997).

Dedication: to Jeanette Blakeney

Premiere: 8 January 2001, Harlem School for the Arts; Jeanette Blakeney, mezzo-soprano and Tom Cipullo, piano

Incipit: “Dawn”¹⁸⁹ mm. 1-4

Slow, free (with wonder)
quasi-recitative

attacca *pp* *poco* *pp < p* *sos* *pp* *poco riten.*

An an - gel, robed in spot-less white, Bent down and kissed the sleep-ing Night.

II. Annotation

This eight-measure song sets a four-line poem by Paul Laurence Dunbar. The poem is packed with the personification of nature, namely the “night” which is “sleeping” and wakes “to blush” after having been kissed by “an angel robed in spotless white.” The poem concludes with “Men saw the blush and called it Dawn.”¹⁹⁰

Dunbar (1872-1906) was one of the first African-American poets to gain national critical acclaim. Though he died at a very young age of tuberculosis, he was extremely prolific. “Dawn” has been set to music by several composers, including Franco Leoni (1902) and Richard Thompson (1999).

While there is no metronome marking at the beginning of the song, a guideline of around quarter note=50 is helpful. The quasi-recitative style varies the tempo widely, but the rhythms should still be observed within each measure.

¹⁸⁹ Text in public domain. Music © 2000 by Tom Cipullo, from *Climbing* by Tom Cipullo, used by permission of the composer.

¹⁹⁰ Dunbar “Dawn” in *The Complete Poems of Paul Laurence Dunbar*, ed. William Dean Howells (New York: Amereon, 1997).

III. Interpretive guide

The piece begins and ends without piano accompaniment. While the piano plays, it mimics the sound of a harp slowly plucking out its arpeggio chords one note at a time. The chords are almost all indicated to be slowly rolled, with the lowest (or first) note of the roll coordinated with the singer's onset. The *una corda* pedal is depressed from measure 1 until the last note in measure 7, which also contributes to the harp-effect.

In measure 2, the singer should allow time for the piano to slowly play all eight of its grace notes before the first beat. Measure 3 should move the tempo forward toward "Night" in measure 4. In measure 5, time is again necessary for the seven slow grace notes. The piano roll in measure 5 starts from above, which Cipullo indicates with an arrow pointing downward. Measure 6 should move the tempo forward, as indicated by *con moto*, but then measure 7 should *ritardando* throughout, with two long breaths taken after "blush" and "it."

The final measure of the song features the singer alone on an E5, which is carried over for two measures into the next song, "Mother to Son." While "Dawn" ends with rather cool tone-cluster harmonies in the high range of the piano, "Mother to Son" changes the perspective entirely with low consonant harmonies that allude to C-major. The effect of holding the final note of one song long enough to introduce the completely different harmonic language of the next song is stunning.

Example 3.10: “Dawn”¹⁹¹ mm. 7-8, “Mother to Son”¹⁹² mm. 1-2

The image shows a musical score for two songs. The top staff is for the voice, and the bottom staff is for the piano accompaniment. The score is divided into two sections: 'Dawn' (measures 7-8) and 'Mother to Son' (measures 1-2). The tempo is 'Moderately, very rhythmic' for both. The 'Dawn' section starts with a 3/2 time signature, followed by 4/4, 10/8, and 5/4. The 'Mother to Son' section starts with a 3/2 time signature, followed by 4/4, 10/8, and 5/4. The piano accompaniment includes dynamics like *p*, *pp*, *ppp*, and *attacca*, and a *una corda* marking. The vocal line includes lyrics: 'Men saw the blush and called it Dawn'. The piano part includes a *come sopra* marking and a *8^{va}* marking.

Mother to Son

I. Catalog data

Nature of the work: Seventh of Seven in the cycle *Climbing: 7 Songs on 8 Poems by African-Americans*

Date of composition: 23 October 2000, LIC and Yaddo, Revised 15 March 2001

Source of score for analysis: Published Score, Manuscript Edition

Publisher: Classical Vocal Reprints

Publication: *Climbing: 7 Songs on 8 Poems by African-Americans*

Copyright: Music 2000, Tom Cipullo; Text 1994, Estate of Langston Hughes

Recording: No published recording available

Meter: 15/16, 3/8, 5/8, 6/8, 7/8, 8/8, 9/8, 10/8, 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 5/4, 6/4, 7/4

Tempo: Moderately, very rhythmic, becoming more and more excited to the end (quarter note=88)

Voice: Mezzo-soprano (or baritone)

Length: 78 measures

Vocal Range: C4 to G5

Duration: 2:30

Mood: Triumphant

Subject: Struggle, endurance, faith

Author of text: Langston Hughes

¹⁹¹ Text in public domain. Music © 2000 by Tom Cipullo, from *Climbing* by Tom Cipullo, used by permission of the composer.

¹⁹² Text for “Mother to Son” © 1994 by Langston Hughes, from *The Collected Poems of Langston Hughes* by Langston Hughes, used by permission of Random House, Inc. Music © 2000 by Tom Cipullo, from *Climbing* by Tom Cipullo, used by permission of the composer.

Source of text: Published in *The Collected Poems of Langston Hughes*, edited by Arnold Rampersad and David E. Roessel (New York: Knopf, 1994).

Dedication: to Jeanette Blakeney

Premiere: 8 January 2001, Harlem School for the Arts; Jeanette Blakeney, mezzo-soprano and Tom Cipullo, piano

Incipit: “Mother to Son”¹⁹³ mm. 5-9



Well, son, I'll tell you: Life for me ain't been no crys - tal stair.

II. Annotation

Langston Hughes’s “Mother to Son” was first published in 1922 and reappeared in his first collection of poetry, *The Weary Blues*, in 1926. The poem is a “dramatic monologue” spoken by a black mother to her son. Using the metaphor of a stairway, the mother tells her son that the journey of life has been dark, difficult, and ugly, but she is “still goin’” and “still climbin’.” She continues to say that life “ain’t been no crystal stair.” This “crystal stair” may be recognized as a metaphor for the American dream of equality and equal opportunity. The mother warns her son not to expect an easy life, but suggests “her endurance and struggle are necessary to progress toward racial justice and maintain spiritual hope and faith.”¹⁹⁴

Cipullo’s setting of “Mother to Son” is celebratory, beginning nostalgically and gradually gaining momentum toward the victorious climax in measures 73 to 78. Cipullo

¹⁹³ Text for “Mother to Son” © 1994 by Langston Hughes, from *The Collected Poems of Langston Hughes* by Langston Hughes, used by permission of Random House, Inc. Music © 2000 by Tom Cipullo, from *Climbing* by Tom Cipullo, used by permission of the composer.

¹⁹⁴ “Explanation of: ‘Mother to Son’ by Langston Hughes,” *LitFinder Contemporary Collection*, (Detroit: Gale, 2007), *LitFinder*, web, accessed 4 September 2010.

repeats Hughes's 10th line "I'se been a climbin'" in measure 24, and the 17th line "Don't you fall now" three times in measures 47-49. The full statement of the poem is completed in measure 54, three pages before the end of the song. Cipullo then extracts, fragments, and repeats text from throughout the poem to accelerate to the final climax. Much of the text used includes "I'se still climbin'" (line 19), "And reachin' landin's" (line 10), and "I'se still goin'" (line 18). The final line of the song "I'm a still climbin'" is modified slightly from Hughes's line 19 with the substitution of "I'm a" for "I'se." Cipullo does not recall if this was a deliberate change. However, Cipullo retains the essence of the dialect and the sentiments presented by Hughes, and the repetition serves to amplify and extend Hughes's text. "Mother to Son" celebrates the very human struggle through life with which we may all identify.

The metronome marking directs the performers to begin around quarter note=88 but gradually *becoming more and more excited to the end*. Cipullo and Blakeney's performances in 2001 began even slower, at quarter note=76, and accelerated to end around quarter note=120.

III. Interpretive guide

The presentation of this song in dialect allows vocal elements of gospel music to be appropriate. Scooping, sliding, or adding grace notes between notes add to the character of the song. The dialect should be maintained throughout and serves to gloriously illustrate the character of this strong black matriarch. The mother may have been modeled on Hughes's own mother, Carrie Mercer Langston Hughes, who was

deserted by Hughes's father just after young Hughes's birth. She struggled for years to support her family.¹⁹⁵

The opening of the song includes the E5 carried over from the previous song "Dawn." The piano's first measure follows the same harmonic progression used in the songs "Desire" (*Another Reason Why I Don't Keep a Gun in the House*, 1998) and "Touch me" (*Late Summer*, 2001).

Example 3.11: "Mother to Son"¹⁹⁶ mm. 1-2

Moderately, very rhythmic
non cresc.

Dawn

Moderately, very rhythmic

¹⁹⁵ Arnold Rampersad and David E. Roessel eds., *The collected Poems of Langston Hughes* (New York: Knopf, 1994) 8.

¹⁹⁶ Text for "Mother to Son" © 1994 by Langston Hughes, from *The Collected Poems of Langston Hughes* by Langston Hughes, used by permission of Random House, Inc. Music © 2000 by Tom Cipullo, from *Climbing* by Tom Cipullo, used by permission of the composer.

Example 3.12: “Desire”¹⁹⁷ m. 1

Andante con moto e espressivo

Andante con moto e espressivo

pp

Example 3.13: “Touch me”¹⁹⁸ mm. 9-10

a tempo
almost a whisper poch.

ppp

Sum - mer is late, my heart.

colla voce

pochissimo

ppp

This distinctively warm progression in C-major evokes deep nostalgia and contentedness.

In each of the three songs, it represents the beginning of a story about life.

¹⁹⁷ Text for “Desire” © 1988 by Billy Collins, from *The Apple that Astonished Paris* by Billy Collins, used by permission of University of Arkansas Press. Music from *Another Reason Why I Don’t Keep a Gun in the House* by Tom Cipullo © Oxford University Press Inc, 2004. Assigned to Oxford University Press 2010. Music extracts reproduced by permission. All rights reserved.

¹⁹⁸ Text for “Touch me” © 1995 by Stanley Kunitz, from *The Collected Poems* by Stanley Kunitz, used by permission of W.W. Norton & Company, Inc. Music © 2003 by Tom Cipullo, from *Late Summer* by Tom Cipullo, used by permission of the composer.

The frequently changing meters in “Mother to Son” serve to make the delivery of the text feel natural. It is recommended that the singer use careful counting when learning the song, but then memorize cues from the piano in order to maintain good ensemble. Cipullo asks for *fff* in measure 70, just when the voice drops down to a lower register (E4-C4). Crisp diction and exaggerated use of consonants may help to deter the natural drop in volume, which occurs as the voice descends to this range. The final word “climbin” (m. 78) may be sung (*or shouted*) as Cipullo indicates in the score. Blakeney prefers a sung delivery.

LATE SUMMER (2001)
 Crickets
 ...Summer into Autumn slips
 Touch me

Late Summer is a cycle of three songs featuring poems by three different poets: William Heyen, Emily Dickinson, and Stanley Kunitz. While *Late Summer* is written for “high or medium-high voice,” it is most often performed by the soprano voice. The poetic point of view is male (“Darling, do you remember the man you married?”¹⁹⁹) but Cipullo also envisions a woman remembering the words her husband spoke to her.

These three songs are most dramatically and musically effective when performed as a complete cycle, unlike many of Cipullo’s songs which may stand alone or be mixed with excerpts from other cycles. The songs are linked by the poetic perspective of summer passing into autumn, used also as a metaphor for the passing of life into later

¹⁹⁹ Kunitz, Stanley, “Touch me” from *The collected poems* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2000).

years. Themes of nature: the sun, the earth, the crickets; hearken back to a certain time of innocence, and make the memories of these times all the more vivid. The tone of Carpenter's "Crickets" is particularly nostalgic, recalling simpler times and the innocence of childhood or country life "where lawns are not sprayed with poisons."²⁰⁰ This reflective stance is also present in Kunitz's "Touch me," as a man is recalling moments experienced "forty years ago, when I was wild with love and torn almost in two."²⁰¹ Dickinson's style is much more concise. The wistfulness in the first and third poems is contrasted by the second song, which contains a matter-of-fact statement about what we value as we age: "...Summer into Autumn slips, And yet, we sooner say 'the Summer' than 'the Autumn.'"²⁰²

Musically, there is also much to provide continuity throughout *Late Summer*. The vocal writing in the first and third songs shares characteristics such as large leaps, extensive use of vocal and dynamic range, and a declamatory style of "melodic recitative."²⁰³ "...Summer into Autumn slips" features a more traditional melodic line, characterized by a narrower range (though it still spans from C#4 to G#5), shorter vocal phrases, and stepwise melodic motion. Meter changes, a trademark of Cipullo's style, are frequent, and support the natural rhythm of the text. The recurring "crickets" motive in the piano is illustrated with a minor 3rd figure simultaneously ascending (in the thumb)

²⁰⁰ Carpenter, William, "Crickets" from *Rain* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1985).

²⁰¹ Kunitz, Stanley, "Touch me" from *The collected poems* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2000).

²⁰² Dickinson, Emily, "[1346]" from *The complete poems by Emily Dickinson*, ed. Thomas H. Johnson (Boston: Back Bay Books, 1961).

²⁰³ Carman, Judith, "Cipullo, Tom: Late summer," *Journal of Singing* (60, 2004): 312.

and descending (in the pinky). The motive occurs first throughout “Crickets” and recurs at the end of “Touch me.”

Example 3.14: “Crickets”²⁰⁴ m. 3

Example 3.15: “Touch me” m. 65

Cipullo marks continuous pedal from the end of “...Summer into Autumn slips” until the second measure of “Touch me.” The effect of this pedaling is particularly striking, and further supports the argument that these three songs should be performed together.

The complete cycle was scheduled premiere on 14 September 2001 with Karen Holvik, a soprano and friend of Cipullo. Due to the tragedy of 11 September, the

²⁰⁴ Text for “Crickets” © 1991 by Time Being Books, from *Pterodactyl Rose: Poems of Ecology* by William Heyen, reprinted by permission of Time Being Press. Music © 2003 by Tom Cipullo, from *Late Summer* by Tom Cipullo, used by permission of the composer.

premiere was delayed to the following month, and took place at CAMI Hall on 11 November. *Late Summer* was a finalist in the American Art Song Composition Competition sponsored by the San Francisco Song Alliance. The cycle has been performed in the United States, Canada, Europe, and Central America.

Crickets

I. Catalog data

Nature of the work: First of three in the cycle *Late Summer*

Date of composition: March 2001; Long Island City

Source of score for analysis: Manuscript and published in a collection

Publisher: Distributed by Classical Vocal Reprints

Publication: *Late Summer* by Tom Cipullo

Copyright: Music: Tom Cipullo 2001, Text: William Heyen, 2000

Meter: Primarily 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, and 5/4 but also includes 3/8, 5/8

Tempo: Slow, very expressive (quarter note=ca. 54)

Voice: High voice

Length: 40 measures

Vocal Range: A3 to C5

Duration: 2:30

Mood: Somber

Subject: Nature

Author of text: William Heyen

Source of text: Published in *Pterodactyl Rose: Poems of Ecology* (Saint Louis: Time Being Books, 1991).

Dedication: For Meagan Miller

Premiere: 21 April 2001 at Merkin Hall; Meagan Miller, soprano and Steve Beck, piano

Incipit: “Crickets”²⁰⁵ mm. 1-2

Slow, very expressive (♩ = ca. 54)

Voice

pp *a piacere* *poco* *p* *a tempo* *pp*

Eve - - nings, Eve - - nings, Where

Piano

a tempo *p*

una corda

II. Annotation

After discovering William Heyen’s *Long Island Light*²⁰⁶ in the poetry section of the Mid-Manhattan Library, Cipullo and the poet began corresponding. Heyen sent Cipullo “Crickets,” but he set it aside for a number of years until “it felt right”²⁰⁷ to set it to music. Commissioned by Joy in Singing, “Crickets” premiered separately from the other songs in the cycle on April 21, 2001. The premiere was performed by Meagan Miller and Steve Beck at Merkin Hall as part of the *Joy in Singing Millennium Celebration*. Cipullo first met Miller in Paul Sperry’s course on American Song Repertoire at The Juilliard School. Miller was performing some of Cipullo’s songs and Sperry invited him to attend the class. Miller premiered this and other songs by Cipullo, including “The Pocketbook” (from *How to Get Heat Without Fire*) in 2000.

²⁰⁵ Text for “Crickets” © 1991 by Time Being Books, from *Pterodactyl Rose: Poems of Ecology* by William Heyen, reprinted by permission of Time Being Press. Music © 2003 by Tom Cipullo, from *Late Summer* by Tom Cipullo, used by permission of the composer.

²⁰⁶ Heyen, William, *Long Island Light* (New York: Vanguard Press, 1979).

²⁰⁷ Cipullo, Tom, interviewed by Elizabeth Kling, 8 March 2008.

III. Interpretive guide

“Crickets” covers a range of more than two octaves (A3 to C5), and demands consistent strength and extreme dynamic capabilities throughout the entire vocal range. The opening a cappella note (C4) is indicated *a piacere*. Cipullo desires a very long *fermata* here, with a definitive shift in mood before going on to repeat “Evenings” in m. 2. The lyrical phrase “Where lawns are not sprayed with poisons” should be nostalgically *dolce* (as indicated) until the word “poisons,” which should have a more bitter or angry tone. *Sdegnante* in m. 12 means harshly, and is an indication that recurs in Cipullo’s works. The *accelerando* (*passione*) indicated in m. 29 continues (driven by the piano) through the end of m. 33. The first time the word “Listen” occurs, it is marked *angry* (mm.34-36). The second “Listen...” (m. 37) should be remorseful (indicated *entreating*) to contrast. The pianist may lift the pedal to cut off with the last whispered “Listen...”

...Summer into Autumn slips

I. Catalog data

Nature of the work: Second of three in the cycle *Late Summer*

Date of composition: August 2001; MacDowell Colony

Source of score for analysis: Published in a collection

Publisher: Distributed by Classical Vocal Reprints

Publication: *Late Summer* by Tom Cipullo

Copyright: Tom Cipullo 2001

Meter: 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 6/8, 12/8

Tempo: Fast, but expressive and free (quarter note=116)

Voice: High or medium-high voice Length: 29 measures

Vocal Range: C#4 to G#5 Duration: 1:10

Mood: Resigned Subject: Passing of time

Author of text: Emily Dickinson (Excerpted from *1346*)

Premiere: 11 November 2001 at CAMI Hall; Karen Holvik, soprano and Tom Cipullo, piano

Incipit: “...Summer into Autumn slips”²⁰⁸ mm. 4-8

The image shows a musical score for a piece titled "Summer into Autumn slips". The score is written for voice and piano. It begins at measure 4. The vocal line starts with the lyrics "...Sum - mer in - to" and is marked with "f emphatic". The piano accompaniment features triplets and is marked with "poco f". The score includes tempo markings such as "più riten.", "subito a tempo", "mp more gently", "poco riten.", and "a tempo". The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The score ends at measure 8 with a double bar line and a repeat sign.

II. Annotation

After having completed the first and third songs of *Late Summer*, Cipullo knew that he wanted to frame them around a fast central piece. He searched for a short text that would compliment the dramatic themes of Heyen and Kunitz’s poems. Cipullo had become familiar with Emily Dickinson’s poems while working on his cycle *A visit with Emily*, and decided to set the first two stanzas of her “[1346].” There are some discrepancies between Dickinson’s poem and the text printed in the score. Dickinson’s first line is “As Summer into Autumn slips.” Dickinson also capitalized certain words, such as “Affront,” which may imply a certain emphasis.

²⁰⁸ Text in public domain. Music © 2003 by Tom Cipullo, from *Late Summer* by Tom Cipullo, used by permission of the composer.

The fast tempo and pulsing energy of the piano's triplets provide a contrast between the two lyrical pieces of the set. The song was completed in August 2001 at the MacDowell Colony.

III. Interpretive guide

This piece has an extremely active piano part, and it is necessary to gauge the appropriate dynamic range based on the particular duo. Balance is especially delicate in the low range of the voice, such as the C#4 in m. 7. The almost constant triplet motion in the piano is complicated by the accents, which produce a *hemiola* effect (mm. 15-16). It is easy to miss an entrance in the vocal part for want of “feeling” a downbeat in m. 16.

Example 3.16: “...Summer into Autumn slips”²⁰⁹ mm. 15-16

The image shows a musical score for two staves. The top staff is the vocal line, and the bottom staff is the piano accompaniment. Both are in 4/4 time. The vocal line has lyrics "And al - most" and is marked with a forte dynamic (*f*) and the instruction *passione*. The piano part features a complex triplet pattern with accents, creating a hemiola effect. The piano part is marked with *poco f*, *poco*, and *f passione*. The score includes various musical notations such as triplets, accents, and dynamic markings.

Passione indicated in both the piano and voice in m. 16 refers to an accelerando, which continues until the *riten. molto* in m. 19. *Floating* in m. 27 refers to the timbre of the note (G#5). While this note is too low to utilize the “float” technique in the soprano voice, Cipullo desires the softest possible dynamic with a light timbre.

²⁰⁹ Text in public domain. Music © 2003 by Tom Cipullo, from *Late Summer* by Tom Cipullo, used by permission of the composer.

Touch me

I. Catalog data

Nature of the work: Third of three in the cycle *Late Summer*

Date of composition: 7 August 2001, MacDowell Colony

Source of score for analysis: Published in a collection

Publisher: Distributed by Classical Vocal Reprints

Publication: *Late Summer*

Copyright: Music, Tom Cipullo 2001; Text, Stanley Kunitz, 2000

Meter: 3/2, 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 5/4, 5/8, 7/8

Tempo: Lento, sempre espressivo e legato

Voice: High or medium-high voice Length: 66 measures

Vocal Range: C4 to Ab5 Duration: 3:45

Mood: Nostalgic, romantic Subject: Young love

Author of text: Stanley Kunitz

Source of text: Published in *The collected poems* (New York: Norton, 2000)

Dedication: For Karen Holvik

Premiere: 11 November 2001 at CAMI Hall; Karen Holvik, soprano and Tom Cipullo, piano

Incipit: "Touch me"²¹⁰ mm. 8-10

The image shows a musical score for the beginning of the piece. It consists of three staves: a vocal line, a piano accompaniment line, and a bass line. The vocal line starts with the lyrics "Sum-mer is late, my heart." and includes performance instructions such as "a tempo", "almost a whisper", "poch", "poco", "riten. espressivo", "loco", "colla voce", and "pochissimo". The piano accompaniment line features dynamic markings like "ppp" and "ppp". The bass line provides harmonic support with various rhythmic patterns. The score is written in a key signature of one sharp (F#) and uses various time signatures including 3/2, 4/4, 5/4, and 7/8.

II. Annotation

While composing at the MacDowell Colony, a colleague gave Cipullo a copy of Stanley Kunitz's poem "Touch me." He set it aside for a year, but then saw a connection

²¹⁰ Text for "Touch me" © 1995 by Stanley Kunitz, from *The Collected Poems* by Stanley Kunitz, used by permission of W.W. Norton & Company, Inc. Music © 2003 by Tom Cipullo, from *Late Summer* by Tom Cipullo, used by permission of the composer.

between Kunitz's text and that of Heyen's "Crickets." Cipullo wrote to Kunitz to request permission to set his poem. Cipullo had been told that Kunitz did not typically support musical settings of his poems, but Cipullo implored him for permission. Kunitz responded that as long as it was not going to be used for advertising purposes, he would consent. Cipullo completed his setting of "Touch me" on August 7, 2001, just months after completing "Crickets." "Touch me" is dedicated to Cipullo's friend, soprano Karen Holvik. Holvik has performed many of Cipullo's songs and is professor of voice at New England Conservatory.

III. Interpretive guide

The piano introduction should be played *molto rubato*. Though there are no indications calling for changes in tempo until measure 8, Cipullo desires extreme *accelerandi* to accompany his marked *crescendi* and *ritardandi* to accompany his marked *decrecendi* throughout the first seven measures. At their fastest, the quarter notes in mm. 6-7 should almost come to be twice as fast as in the opening measure. An increase in tempo is indicated by *passione* marked above the vocal line in m. 38. This change is continued by the piano until m. 42. The tempo is also affected by the indication *pressing forward slightly* in m. 56. The vocal phrase is very long, requiring five measures (mm. 55-59) without break, with a long high note at the beginning and middle-voice moving notes at the end. Depending on the singer, the piano will typically have to press forward quite a bit to support achieving a successful phrase. The "crickets" motive in m. 65 should be played very slowly, as it is in m. 3 of the song "Crickets." (See example 3.14.)

In the vocal line, the opening phrase “Summer is late, my heart” is a quote, and should be *whispered* (yet still sung) in a distinctly different character than the lines that follow. The phrase from m. 13 to m. 15 is indicated to be sung without a breath. However, achieving the *subito pianissimo* on the downbeat of m. 14 is more important than completing the phrase without a breath. Despite the indication *no breath*, Cipullo advises that a breath should be taken at the end of m. 14. The *sostenuto* marking on E5 in measure 21 (“song”) should be treated as a fermata. One should also wait to make the decrescendo, taking time to complete the phrase. In mm. 30-31, a *sostenuto* is indicated above the F5 on the word “child.” However, Cipullo allows a choice between interpreting as indicated in the score, or moving the *sostenuto* to the following measure (31), on the first syllable of “marveled.” The choice should depend upon which word is considered more important in the interpretation of the poem, “child” or “marveled.”

Example 3.17: “Touch me”²¹¹ mm. 30-33

The image shows a musical score for three parts: vocal line, piano (right hand), and piano (left hand). The score is in 4/4 time and consists of measures 30, 31, 32, and 33. The vocal line begins with the lyrics "and like a child a-gain mar-veled to hear so clear and brave a mu-sic". The piano accompaniment features a prominent bass line with a *colla voce* marking in measure 30. Dynamic markings include *ff* (fortissimo) and *p* (piano). Performance instructions such as *passione*, *sost.* (sostenuto), *riten.* (ritardando), *a tempo*, and *bright* are present. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and fermatas.

²¹¹ Text for “Touch me” © 1995 by Stanley Kunitz, from *The Collected Poems* by Stanley Kunitz, used by permission of W.W. Norton & Company, Inc. Music © 2003 by Tom Cipullo, from *Late Summer* by Tom Cipullo, used by permission of the composer.

Measures 48 to 54 are marked to be sung without a breath. This is physically impossible. One option is to breathe after “window panes” in m. 51, which requires a slight shift in the rhythm and deemphasizes the accented syncopation of “and” (m. 51). Another alternative is to breathe after “and” (m. 51), though this is less strong poetically.

glances (2002)
 Echo
 Impossible
 Unbroken
 between verses
 A Plea for mercy
 glance
 Echo 2

The cycle *glances* was commissioned by mezzo-soprano Mary Ann Hart, a professor of voice at Indiana University, and friend of Cipullo since around 1994. The two met at a concert presented by The Friends and Enemies of New Music where Cipullo’s *The Ecuadorian Sailors* was being performed. Mary Ann Hart was performing music by another composer on the same program. Listening from backstage, Hart was struck by Cipullo’s *The Ecuadorian Sailors*, and went on to perform the piece many times, and to record it on Albany Records.²¹² Cipullo was “thrilled to have the commission”²¹³ and he was just about to travel to Germany for a fellowship at the *Oberpfälzer Künstlerhaus*. During the fellowship, he intended to focus on the

²¹² Tom Cipullo, *Landscape with Figures: Vocal Music of Tom Cipullo*, Albany Records TROY-1145, 2009.

²¹³ Cipullo, telephone interview by author, Denver, 10 October 2009.

composition of his opera *Glory Denied*, but he decided to write these “short little pieces”²¹⁴ and then get back to the opera.

Cipullo had already met poet, historian, and non-fiction author Agata Tuszyńska while they were both in residence at the MacDowell Colony in 2001. He enjoyed her poetry, and thought these poems would work well in the short cycle he envisioned for *glances*. The poems are completely devoid of punctuation and upper-case letters. They seem to be one long thought pieced together into a type of stream-of-consciousness narrative. Tuszyńska’s poems are unpublished, and were written in her native Polish. She and Phillis Levin (also in residence at the MacDowell Colony in 2001) worked together to translate these six poems into English. The poem set in the sixth song (*Glance*) was translated exclusively by Tuszyńska.

These pieces are quite unlike the bulk of Cipullo’s oeuvre. Their brevity (only 10 minutes total) is striking, and they come across – as the title suggests – merely as *glances* into the complex emotions of being left by a lover. Almost all of Cipullo’s music would be considered tonal, however tenor Paul Sperry would not describe *glances* as such. He believes this change in style does not represent an “evolution,” but merely a stylistic “second strand where he [Cipullo] isn’t as concerned with tonality, and is responding to the poems.”²¹⁵ The cycle is indeed atmospheric, the pieces flying by with only a brief opportunity to present a given emotion. While the overall impression is not particularly tonal, there are certainly moments of neo-Romantic beauty to be found.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

²¹⁵ Paul Sperry, interview by author, New York City, 28 May 2009.

In preparation for his Marilyn Horne Foundation debut recital, baritone Andrew Garland was given a copy of *glances* by his pianist Donna Loewy. The pair had decided to put together a program of works by living American composers, and Loewy wanted to include a cycle by Cipullo. The rest of the program included works by Jeffrey Wood, Lee Hoiby, and Jake Heggie. Garland recognized *glances* as the type of music he gets from many living American composers, that is, music that he likes and appreciates, but is extremely difficult to “sell to an audience.”²¹⁶ In spite of this challenge, Garland and Loewy decided to include *glances* in their program, and it was well received. In the New York Times recital review, Anne Midgette describes *glances* as “seven snatches of song that seemed simpler than they were, extending from slightly acrid chords to Strauss-like romanticism.”²¹⁷ Garland believes that the brevity of the cycle helps the audience to accept the post-tonal compositional language.²¹⁸ The poetry is extremely accessible and poignant for anyone who has experienced a sudden end to a romantic relationship.

In its publication review, Judith Carman describes *glances* as a tonal setting of “six very short poems” that are “delicate and enigmatic, [and]...speak of a seemingly fragile relationship.”²¹⁹ However, Carman underlines the importance of having “easy access to soft tones at the top of the staff” and recommends the cycle as “an excellent choice for advanced performers to program with longer, heavier works.”²²⁰ Garland and Loewy did just that in their 2005 performance, contrasting the brief *glances* with Lee

²¹⁶ Andrew Garland, telephone interview by author, Denver, 17 August 2010.

²¹⁷ Anne Midgette, “Recital Review: Scrutinizing four American sources with a distinctive eye,” *The New York Times*, 23 April 2005.

²¹⁸ Garland, interview, 17 August 2010.

²¹⁹ Judith Carman, “Circularly yours: Mostly song cycles: Cipullo, Tom: *glances*.” *Journal of Singing* 60, no. 4 (2004): 415.

²²⁰ Ibid.

Hoiby's *I Was There*. This is undoubtedly a cycle for a very advanced singer, with strong presence in the extremes of the range, and the ability to sing very softly most of the time.

Because the harmonic language of this cycle borders on post-tonal, the author discourages mixing these songs with those from other cycles by Cipullo. The songs are also so brief, that each represents only a fragment of the overall story of the cycle. Dramatically, they work best when performed all together, in order, as one complete cycle.

Echo

I. Catalog data

Nature of the work: First of Seven in the cycle *glances*

Date of composition: 17 July 2002; Bavaria and Long Island City

Source of score for analysis: Published Score

Publisher: Classical Vocal Reprints

Publication: *glances*

Copyright: Music 2003, Tom Cipullo; Texts 2002, Agata Tuszyńska

Meter: 6/8

Tempo: Allegretto giocoso (dotted quarter=72)

Voice: Mezzo-Soprano (or Baritone)

Vocal Range: M-S: C#4 to C#5; Bar: C#3 to C#4

Length: 17 measures

Duration: 0:45

Mood: Stunned, comforting

Subject: Reorienting oneself

Author of text: Agata Tuszyńska

Source of text: Unpublished and untitled poem by Agata Tuszyńska

Dedication: Mary Ann Hart

Premiere: 29 September 2002, Indiana University; Mary Ann Hart, mezzo-soprano and Jean-Louis Haguenaer, piano.

Commissioned by: Mary Ann Hart

Incipit: “Echo”²²¹ mm. 1-6

6/8 Allegretto giocoso (♩ = 72)

Voice

On - - - - ly an e -

Allegretto giocoso (♩ = 72)

Piano

pp poco accente

poco

una corda

poco riten. a tempo

5

cho

poco riten. a tempo

P

tre corde

II. Annotation

This is one of the few songs by Cipullo that does not change meter at all during the song. However, there is no stable 6/8 pulse due to the staggered piano part which lacks a downbeat in the left hand until measure 6.

The 13-word poem is organized into six lines, divided into two stanzas. However, the entire poem is double-spaced, underlining the importance of each individual word. Cipullo’s setting ties the thoughts closer together with no break between “is true/to itself” and “like a pendulum/returning.” However, he respects the break in stanza between

²²¹ Text for “Echo” © 2002 by Agata Tuszyńska, used by permission of the author. Music © 2002 by Tom Cipullo, from *glances* by Tom Cipullo, used by permission of the composer.

“itself” and “like a” with a rest and *poco ritenuto* in measure 9. The song feels suspended in time, without a rhythmic pulse to ground it, which illustrates the shock of the lover who has just been abandoned. Cipullo changes the last word from Tuszyńska’s “everything” to “ev’rything.” This is, after all, how the word is pronounced in colloquial American English.

III. Interpretive guide

The singer may find the opening pitch from the piano’s first note in measure 1. Garland recommends painting the word “echo” by making the first syllable *f* and the second *p*. The piano’s downbeat in measure 10 may be rolled or flipped. The singer should almost whisper “like a pendulum” in measure 10. The *a tempo* indicated in measure 10 does not need to be *subito*, but may be eased into throughout measures 10-11. There is a slight *ritardando* in measure 13. The piano part in measures 13 and 14 may be thought of as “climbing bells.”²²² The singer’s final “ev’ry thing” features a *messa di voce* on every syllable. Garland recommends reducing the sound to “one strand” between notes.²²³ Cipullo authorizes actual space between the notes as an extreme representation of the *messe di voce*.²²⁴ There is a very brief pause before the next song, which should last no more than four seconds.

Impossible

I. Catalog data

Nature of the work: Second of Seven in the cycle *glances*

²²² Cipullo, *Coaching with Bethany Flom*, digital audio recording, Malibu, 25 June 2009.

²²³ Garland, interview by author, 17 August 2010.

²²⁴ Cipullo, coaching Bethany Flom, 25 June 2009.

Date of composition: 14 July 2002; Schwandorf, Bavaria

Source of score for analysis: Published Score

Publisher: Classical Vocal Reprints

Publication: *glances*

Copyright: Music 2003, Tom Cipullo; Texts 2002, Agata Tuszyńska

Meter: 7/16, 8/16, 9/16, 3/8, 1/4, 2/4, 3/4, 4/4

Tempo: Fast, accented (quarter note=115)

Voice: Mezzo-Soprano (or Baritone)

Vocal Range: M-S: E4 to E5; Bar: E3 to E4

Length: 13 measures

Duration: 0:35

Mood: Crazy, detached

Subject: Trying to move on

Author of text: Agata Tuszyńska

Source of text: Unpublished and untitled poem by Agata Tuszyńska

Dedication: Mary Ann Hart

Premiere: 29 September 2002, Indiana University; Mary Ann Hart, mezzo-soprano and
Jean-Louis Haguenaer, piano.

Commissioned by: Mary Ann Hart

Incipit: "Impossible"²²⁵ mm. 4-6

II. Annotation

This song changes meter almost every bar. In terms of rhythm, it is the most complex piece in the cycle. Upon first study, careful subdivision into 16th notes is necessary. However, to memorize the piece, the singer must learn and listen for the piano cues in order to maintain a good ensemble.

²²⁵ Text for "Impossible" © 2002 by Agata Tuszyńska, used by permission of the author. Music © 2002 by Tom Cipullo, from *glances* by Tom Cipullo, used by permission of the composer.

Tuszyńska's poem consists of 16 words divided into two stanzas of two lines each. The lines are again double spaced, increasing the emphasis of each word. The poem is organized into two related thoughts: stanza 1: "it's impossible to leave/a house without a door" and stanza 2: "there isn't any way/to get back in." Cipullo runs the first two lines together in measure 6, but leaves significant space at the stanza break in measure 8. The last two lines are separated by more than a measure of rest in the vocal line (mm. 11-12).

III. Interpretive guide

The piece begins in an almost angry fervor. Measure 4 should slow as just a standard *rallentando*, instead of *molto rallentando* as indicated. Cipullo indicates his preferred grouping of 8/16 time into 3+3+2 in measure 2, and maintains this grouping in measure 6 by accenting the important notes in the vocal part. There should be a fermata on the word "door" in measure 7, which allows the singer to stop and think a moment about what has just been said. Garland suggests that the right hand chords in measure 8 represent running into the wall over and over trying to find the door.²²⁶ However, by measure 9, the attempt to find the door has been abandoned. The ending sentiment is utter exhaustion. The pause at the end of the song should last about eight seconds before beginning the next song.

Unbroken

I. Catalog data

Nature of the work: Third of Seven in the cycle *glances*

Date of composition: 18 July 2002; Germany and Long Island City

²²⁶ Garland, interview by author, 17 August 2010.

Source of score for analysis: Published Score

Publisher: Classical Vocal Reprints

Publication: *glances*

Copyright: Music 2003, Tom Cipullo; Texts 2002, Agata Tuszyńska

Meter: 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 5/4

Tempo: As sustained as possible, very free and expressive

Voice: Mezzo-Soprano (or Baritone)

Vocal Range: M-S: A3 to Eb5; Bar: A2 to Eb4

Length: 20 measures

Duration: 1:25

Mood: Defeated, hopeful

Subject: Lost love

Author of text: Agata Tuszyńska

Source of text: Unpublished and untitled poem by Agata Tuszyńska

Dedication: Mary Ann Hart

Premiere: 29 September 2002, Indiana University; Mary Ann Hart, mezzo-soprano and
Jean-Louis Haguenaer, piano.

Commissioned by: Mary Ann Hart

Incipit: “Unbroken”²²⁷ mm. 5-11

5 $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ pressing forward $\frac{4}{4}$ riten. - molto a tempo $\frac{2}{4}$
pp sost. teneramente
 that's how
 a tempo
 pressing forward riten. - molto $\frac{8^{va}}$
poco f *passione* *pp subito*
 9 $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ *sempre pp* $\frac{3}{4}$ non poco $\frac{2}{4}$
 it will stay our
 $\frac{8^{va}}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ *poco* $\frac{8^{va}}$
p

²²⁷ Text for “Unbroken” © 2002 by Agata Tuszyńska, used by permission of the author. Music © 2002 by Tom Cipullo, from *glances* by Tom Cipullo, used by permission of the composer.

II. Annotation

There is no metronome marking, but a successful performance will range between quarter note=40 and 60. There are some very long notes for the singer in the piece, so each singer's individual breath management ability should determine the most effective speed. The song changes meter within a steady x/4 context. The addition of more beats per measure sustains specific emotions, while the subtraction of beats hurries them.

Tuszyńska's poem reads "that's how it will stay/our tenderness" "torn by departure/unbroken." Each line is separated in the music by either a rest or a breath (as with "stay" and "our" in measure 11). The ending sentiment tries to be somewhat triumphant, but is ultimately defeated by dissonant chords in the piano part.

III. Interpretive guide

The prelude is a stark "ripping and recalling"²²⁸ of memories as the piano slowly unravels alternating dissonant and consonant chords. Most of the consonant chords are underlined with indications such as *dolcissimo*, *teneramente*, and *dolce*. The dissonant chords feature accented grace notes and louder dynamics. The chord on the downbeat of measure 4 is not indicated as rolled, but it is impossible to cover the span without rolling the chord. Garland believes the voice enters with a comment on the atmosphere created by the piano introduction "that's how it will stay." The joy of their love can never be recalled without the pain of remembering that it is now over. A breath following "stay" (mm. 11) maintains the break in poetic line and is necessary to begin a different

²²⁸ Garland, interview.

sentiment with “our tenderness” (mm. 11-13). The *portamento* on “tenderness” should keep an open vowel to be successful, and perhaps should stay at *p* or *mp* and rely on the descent to naturally create the *decrescendo molto*. Measures 14-16 may move the tempo forward slightly to reflect the despair of the text “torn by departure.” The A3 in measures 15-16 should be as loud as one can manage well. However, if the voice does become pressed or a quasi-spoken sound is produced, this supports the sentiment of despair. Particularly in the baritone voice, a slightly pressed sound or an “ugly”²²⁹ tone may create the desired color to support the drama. The tempo should slow in the second half of measure 16 before moving into the final phrase of the piece. The ending in the piano part (mm. 17-20) seems to alternate again between consonant and dissonant chords, representing joyful and painful recollections. The pianist should move the tempo slightly in measures 17-18, but take time on the accented beat in measure 18. The voice and piano should cutoff together in measure 20. The extremely brief pause before the next song should last no longer than two seconds. The score does not feature a double line between this song and the next, and it is clear that one should flow to the next.

between verses

I. Catalog data

Nature of the work: Fourth of Seven in the cycle *glances*

Date of composition: 14 July 2002; Bavaria

Source of score for analysis: Published Score

Publisher: Classical Vocal Reprints

Publication: *glances*

Copyright: Music 2003, Tom Cipullo; Texts 2002, Agata Tuszyńska

Meter: 1/4, 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 5/4

Tempo: Lively (quarter note=102)

Voice: Mezzo-Soprano (or Baritone)

²²⁹ Ibid.

Vocal Range: M-S: C4 to F5; Bar: C3 to F4

Length: 36 measures

Duration: 1:20

Mood: Energetic

Subject: Interaction

Author of text: Agata Tuszynska

Source of text: Unpublished poem: *Between Verses*, by Agata Tuszynska

Dedication: Mary Ann Hart

Premiere: 29 September 2002, Indiana University; Mary Ann Hart, mezzo-soprano and Jean-Louis Haguenaer, piano.

Commissioned by: Mary Ann Hart

Incipit: “between verses”²³⁰ mm. 3-5

The musical score shows three measures of music. The vocal line begins with a triplet of eighth notes on the word 'be-tween', followed by 'ver-ses' on a dotted quarter note, 'We eat wild' on a quarter note, and 'Straw-ber-ries' on a triplet of eighth notes. The piano accompaniment consists of a right hand with a staccato eighth-note pattern and a left hand with a bass line. Dynamics include piano (p), mezzo-piano (mp), and pianissimo (pp). The time signature is 3/4.

II. Annotation

This is the longest piece of the cycle, with 36 bars lasting over one minute. It also sets the greatest number of words. Tuszynska’s poem consists of four stanzas of two to four lines each.

The metronome marking of quarter note=102 is correct and quite effective.

²³⁰ Text for “between verses” © 2002 by Agata Tuszynska, used by permission of the author. Music © 2002 by Tom Cipullo, from *glances* by Tom Cipullo, used by permission of the composer.

III. Interpretive guide

It is not clear exactly what the “verses” represent. Garland believes it refers to an argument or “time of struggle”²³¹ between the lovers. However, it could just as easily represent making love. The ambiguity may be intentional, and can vary from singer to singer. However, it is important to come to a concrete decision one way or the other. Garland perceives a passage of time within the poem, with the “wild strawberries” (mm. 7) coming in summertime, and “autumnal” (mm. 27) turning toward the decay of winter.²³²

The words “cabbage soup” should be very crisp in measure 6. In measure 9, “we make the bed” may be quasi-spoken. One of the few *ff* moments in the entire cycle comes in measure 24 with “we ready ourselves for a trip,” taking the emotion to an excited and perhaps hopeful state in measure 26. However, measure 27 makes it clear that there is nothing to be hopeful about with the *pp* dynamic, the *dolore* indication, and the sudden presence of autumn. A significant color change is necessary in the vocal timbre. The piece does not end with a *fermata*, as many of the songs in the cycle do, so it is important that the pause before the next song be long enough. It should last at least eight seconds.

A Plea for mercy

I. Catalog data

Nature of the work: Fifth of Seven in the cycle *glances*

Date of composition: 15 July 2002; Schwandorf, Germany

Source of score for analysis: Published Score

Publisher: Classical Vocal Reprints

Publication: *glances*

²³¹ Garland, interview by author, 17 August 2010.

²³² *Ibid.*

Copyright: Music 2003, Tom Cipullo; Texts 2002, Agata Tuszyńska

Meter: 6/8, 5/8, 8/8, 9/8, 12/8

Tempo: Con moto (dotted quarter note=70)

Voice: Mezzo-Soprano (or Baritone)

Vocal Range: M-S: B3 to G5; Bar: B2 to G4

Length: 28 measures

Duration: 1:35

Mood: Longing

Subject: Wanting to communicate

Author of text: Agata Tuszyńska

Source of text: Unpublished poem: *A Plea for mercy*, by Agata Tuszyńska

Dedication: Mary Ann Hart

Premiere: 29 September 2002, Indiana University; Mary Ann Hart, mezzo-soprano and
Jean-Louis Haguenaer, piano.

Commissioned by: Mary Ann Hart

Incipit: “A Plea for Mercy”²³³ mm. 9-11

The musical score shows three measures of music. Measure 9 is in 6/8 time, marked 'a tempo' and 'p dolce'. The vocal line begins with a dotted quarter note on G4, followed by a half note on A4, and then a dotted quarter note on B4. The piano accompaniment consists of a series of chords in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. Measure 10 is in 9/8 time, marked 'a tempo' and 'poco'. The vocal line continues with a dotted quarter note on C5, followed by a half note on D5, and then a dotted quarter note on E5. The piano accompaniment continues with chords and a bass line. Measure 11 is in 6/8 time, marked 'a tempo' and 'mp'. The vocal line ends with a dotted quarter note on F5, followed by a half note on G5, and then a dotted quarter note on A5. The piano accompaniment concludes with chords and a bass line.

II. Annotation

The metronome marking of 70 is correct from measure 9 forward. However, an effective piano introduction will range slightly slower, averaging around 62.

The song has a strong feeling of triple time, featuring primarily 6/8, 9/8, and 12/8 meters.

²³³ Text for “A Plea for Mercy” © 2002 by Agata Tuszyńska, used by permission of the author. Music © 2002 by Tom Cipullo, from *glances* by Tom Cipullo, used by permission of the composer.

Tuszyńska's poem is organized into two stanzas, the first with three lines of text, and the second with two lines of text: "tell me/what I/told you" "it doesn't matter/that it's impossible." Cipullo repeats fragments of text at the end of the song. He repeats the first line "tell me" in measures 22-24 and 27, setting the first line of the second stanza "it doesn't matter" in between (mm. 25).

III. Interpretive guide

Garland does not believe that this song is a "plea" for mercy, but rather a "longing" for it.²³⁴ The speaker clearly does not get any reply, because "it's impossible" (mm. 20). However, the desire to hear from the lost lover is extremely intense.

The singer's first note may be taken from the F5 on beat 3 of the piano part in measure 8, or it may simply be memorized. It is easy to sharpen the E# pitch because the piano plays an F# in the bass in measure 9 just before the vocal entrance. The desperate repetition of "tell me" in measures 22-24 presents a rare *ff* moment in the cycle. The drama should reach its most desperate state here. Measure 25 represents a stark contrast to the plea of measure 22-24. Garland believes that the speaker has become exasperated and almost given up on "it doesn't matter."²³⁵ Care should be taken not to press the low range of this line, and to maintain the legato and intensity of emotion. The *fermata* in measure 28 should be very long. However, the next song begins *attacca*.

glance

²³⁴ Garland, interview by author, 17 August 2010.

²³⁵ Ibid.

I. Catalog data

Nature of the work: Sixth of Seven in the cycle *glances*

Date of composition: 10 June 2002; Oberpfälzer Künstlerhaus Schwandorf

Source of score for analysis: Published Score

Publisher: Classical Vocal Reprints

Publication: *glances*

Copyright: Music 2003, Tom Cipullo; Texts 2002, Agata Tuszyńska

Meter: 7/8, 2/4, 3/4, 4/4

Tempo: Slow, expressive (quarter note=ca. 44)

Voice: Mezzo-Soprano (or Baritone)

Vocal Range: M-S: G3 (*ossia* D4) to G5; Bar: G2 (*ossia* D3) to G4

Length: 20 measures

Duration: 1:45

Mood: Anger and despair

Subject: Abandonment

Author of text: Agata Tuszyńska

Source of text: Unpublished poem: *Glance*, by Agata Tuszyńska

Dedication: Mary Ann Hart

Premiere: 29 September 2002, Indiana University; Mary Ann Hart, mezzo-soprano and
Jean-Louis Haguenaer, piano.

Commissioned by: Mary Ann Hart

Incipit: “glance”²³⁶ mm. 11-15

11 $\frac{7}{8}$ a tempo $\frac{4}{4}$ *pp* molto legato, con tenerezza *poco*

Glance

13 $\frac{3}{4}$ no breath $\frac{4}{4}$ *p* *mp* *f* *poco*

in the empty envelopes

poco *p* passione *mp* più passione

II. Annotation

The metronome marking of quarter note=ca. 44 is merely a guide. An effective performance may begin slower, closer to 38.

The quasi-regular meter (x/4) is broken by the presence of 7/8 measures, which are only heard in the long piano introduction.

Tuszyńska’s poem reads “in the empty/envelopes/of my eyes” “your unwritten/letters.” Tuszyńska translated this poem herself, giving it the title “Glance.”

²³⁶ Text for “glance” © 2002 by Agata Tuszyńska, used by permission of the author. Music © 2002 by Tom Cipullo, from *glances* by Tom Cipullo, used by permission of the composer.

Cipullo includes the title of the poem in his setting, beginning with the line “Glance/in the empty/envelopes/of my eyes.” He specifically asks for no breath between “Glance” and “in” (mm. 13).

III. Interpretive guide

The piano introduction is quite long, and lasts nearly 45 seconds. The opening measures sound like slow sobs, or the irregular beat of a broken heart. Cipullo recommends holding down the fingers of the left hand in measure 11 in order to sustain the chord underneath the motion in the right hand. The singer may breathe after “in” (mm.13) or after “empty” (mm. 14) since both places mark the end of a poetic line. Measure 14 (“empty”) should be “seething with rage,” and the pianist should move the tempo forward as indicated by *passione*. In measure 16, the rage is still present, but should “turn into tears”²³⁷ in measure 17. The singer should cutoff the G5 in measure 17 just as the pianist plays the chord on beat 3. The right hand of the piano part in measure 18 should present a viola color. For the baritone voice, the *ossia* D3 will be more successful in measure 19. However, the mezzo-soprano voice should attempt to successfully deliver the G3. With both voices, the *sotto voce* indication refers to a type of exasperation and flatness in the tone. The [z] of “letters” should align with the piano chord on beat 3. The extremely brief pause before the next song should last no more than two seconds.

²³⁷ Cipullo, coaching with Bethany Flom, 25 June 2009.

Echo 2

I. Catalog data

Nature of the work: Seventh of Seven in the cycle *glances*

Date of composition: 17 July 2002; Germany and Long Island City

Source of score for analysis: Published Score

Publisher: Classical Vocal Reprints

Publication: *glances*

Copyright: Music 2003, Tom Cipullo; Texts 2002, Agata Tuszyńska

Meter: 6/8, 2/4, 3/4

Tempo: Fast (quarter note=90), Allegretto giocoso (dotted quarter note=68)

Voice: Mezzo-Soprano (or Baritone)

Vocal Range: M-S: C4 to E5; Bar: C3 to E4

Length: 16 measures

Duration: 0:40

Mood: Still stunned

Subject: Still trying to move on

Author of text: Agata Tuszyńska

Source of text: Unpublished and untitled poem by Agata Tuszyńska

Dedication: Mary Ann Hart

Premiere: 29 September 2002, Indiana University; Mary Ann Hart, mezzo-soprano and
Jean-Louis Haguenaer, piano.

Commissioned by: Mary Ann Hart

Incipit: "Echo 2"²³⁸ mm. 1-3

2/4 Fast (♩ = 90)

Voice: *p* *mp* *f* *molto* *p* *riten.* no breath

On - ly an e - - - cho is

Piano: *p* *mp* *molto* *p* *riten.*

²³⁸ Text for "Echo 2" © 2002 by Agata Tuszyńska, used by permission of the author.
Music © 2002 by Tom Cipullo, from *glances* by Tom Cipullo, used by permission of the composer.

II. Annotation

The text is a repetition of “Echo” (song 1). However, the music is different, and significantly faster through measure 10. The tempo indicated in measure 11 (*Allegretto giocoso*, dotted quarter note=68) is slightly slower than the tempo of the opening song (72), however the music is very similar, and should evoke the same emotions.

While the altered recalling of musical material is present at the end of the piece, an audience hearing the cycle for the first time will likely not hear the connection. They will however, be fully aware of the repetition of text. In spite of significant effort, the character has not been able to make any changes in the songs between the echoes. They remain as they began: still stunned, still stuck, still lost, and still heartbroken.

III. Interpretive guide

Cipullo purposefully connects the first two poetic lines (“only an echo/is true”) with a *no breath* indication in measure 3. The vocal and piano parts are marked *p* in measure 3. In measure 4, the piano drops to *pp*, and the voice should be careful not to follow, but instead to remain at *p*. The rest in measure 11 underlines the futility of the attempted emotional journey, as we return to the emotional state we began in. The text illustrates this as well with “returning/despite ev’rything” (mm. 9-14). The dissonant piano chord in measure 15 comes as almost an interjection before the final cadence in measure 16. This dissonance represents a stab of pain, and acts as a reminder that the lover will likely never recover from this heartbreak.

***DRIFTS AND SHADOWS* (2005)**

blizzard
 The Almanac of Last Things
 In Back Of
 Subway
 the arithmetic of alternation

The songs that make up the cycle *Drifts and Shadows* are excerpted from the larger cycle for three voices: *Secrets*. *Secrets* is not included in this guide because it is unpublished. However, the two cycles share a genesis. In the publication review for *Drifts and Shadows*, critic Judith Carman proclaims, “we can be thankful” that Cipullo excerpted this cycle from *Secrets*, “because the songs are truly beautiful.”²³⁹ This cycle for baritone and piano won the prestigious Phyllis C. Wattis Prize for American Song from the San Francisco Song Festival in 2006-2007. It has been published by Classical Vocal Reprints, and recorded on Albany Records both as *Drifts and Shadows* and within *Secrets*.²⁴⁰

In 2000, The Mirror Visions Ensemble was in Paris performing Cipullo’s *A Visit with Emily*. The Mirror Visions Ensemble is a singing trio who has commissioned and premiered more than 70 works by contemporary composers. Soprano and founding member of The Mirror Visions Ensemble Tobé Malawista knew poet Linda Pastan who was poet laureate of Maryland from 1991-1999, and wanted to commission a set of songs setting Pastan’s poems. Malawista gave Cipullo *Carnival Evening* by Pastan, and asked

²³⁹ Judith Carman, “Cipullo, Tom: *Drifts and Shadows*,” *Journal of Singing* 63 (2007): 604.

²⁴⁰ Tom Cipullo, *Drifts and Shadows*, Elem Eley, baritone and J.J. Penna, piano (Albany Records TROY-1050, 2008).

if he would be interested. While still in Paris, Cipullo read *Carnival Evening*²⁴¹ and began to select poems to piece together “a loose narrative of desire, loss, infatuation, rejection, anger, love”²⁴² which eventually became *Secrets*. Cipullo had free rein to determine the scope and scale of the work, and he decided to write another large-scale work, like *A Visit with Emily*. While there is not a specific “story line” or “character development” in *Secrets*, Cipullo does see the overall scene as having to do with the end of a relationship, one “without fault on either side, without blame, senza rancor.”²⁴³ This story is maintained in the excerpted *Drifts and Shadows*, though in this cycle, we hear only one side of the story.

Cipullo calls the creation of *Secrets* “a labor of love.”²⁴⁴ While proclaiming that his first instincts are often wrong, Cipullo admits that he did not feel an immediate affinity for Pastan’s poems. However, he soon grew to like them very much. He describes having found in the poems “a feast of inspiration that sustained” him during the two years that he “worked on the score.”²⁴⁵

Four of the five songs in *Drifts and Shadows* were written in mid-2001 while in residence at Yaddo, and the fifth in January 2002 while in residence at Virginia Center for the Creative Arts (VCCA). Cipullo revised two of the songs in 2002 and 2003 in preparation for their premiere in *Secrets* and again in 2005 in preparation for their formation into *Drifts and Shadows*.

²⁴¹ Linda Pastan, *Carnival evening: New and selected poems: 1968-1998* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1998).

²⁴² Cipullo, *Secrets* manuscript, (2004) inside cover.

²⁴³ Ibid.

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

The Mirror Visions Ensemble premiered *Secrets* on 22 November 2003 at Elebash Recital Hall (The Graduate Center CUNY) in New York City. Linda Pastan was in the audience that evening, and later wrote to Malawista “Thanks for making my own poems come alive for me!”²⁴⁶ The Mirror Visions Ensemble recorded *Secrets* on Albany Records in 2004.²⁴⁷ Baritone Elem Eley and pianist J.J Penna recorded *Drifts and Shadows* on Albany Records in 2008.²⁴⁸

Four of these five songs were written specifically for baritone Richard Lalli, founding member of The Mirror Visions Ensemble. The fifth song (“The Almanac of Last Things”) was originally written for tenor Scott Murphree, also a founding member of The Mirror Visions Ensemble. The result is an unusually high tessitura as suited these two particular singers. In the publication review for *Drifts and Shadows*, Judith Carman cautions that when songs are “composed for specific singers...sometimes the voice of the original singer has capabilities that exceed those of the singer who is squarely in one *Fach* or another.”²⁴⁹ That is most certainly the case with *Drifts and Shadows*. A naturally high lying baritone voice or low tenor will be most comfortable in this cycle. Mezzo-sopranos may also perform this cycle.

blizzard

I. Catalog data

Nature of the work: First of Five in the cycle *Drifts and Shadows*

Date of composition: July 2001, Yaddo; Revised January 2003, Virginia Center for the Creative Arts

Source of score for analysis: Published score

Publisher: Classical Vocal Reprints

²⁴⁶ Pastan, note to Malawista, ca. November 2003.

²⁴⁷ Cipullo, *Secrets*, The Mirror Visions Ensemble (Albany Records TROY-720, 2004).

²⁴⁸ Tom Cipullo, *Drifts and Shadows*, (Albany Records, 2008).

²⁴⁹ Carman, “*Drifts and Shadows*,” *Journal of Singing* 63 (2007): 605.

Publication: *Drifts and Shadows*

Copyright: Music 2005, Tom Cipullo; Texts 1998, Linda Pastan

Recording: Elem Eley, baritone and J.J. Penna, piano, *Drifts and Shadows*, (Albany Records TROY-1050, 2008).

The Mirror Visions Ensemble (Richard Lalli, baritone, and Margaret Kampmeier, piano), from *Secrets*, (Albany Records TROY-720, 2004).

Meter: 11/16, 6/8, 7/8, 8/8, 9/8, 12/8, 15/8, 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 5/4, 3/2

Tempo: Presto possibile (quarter note=ca. 168)

Voice: Baritone

Length: 90 measures

Vocal Range: C#3 to F4

Duration: 2:00

Mood: Wonderment

Subject: Snow

Author of text: Linda Pastan

Source of text: Poem published in *Carnival evening: New and selected poems: 1968-1998*, 1998, part of the collection *Waiting for My Life*, 1981.

Dedication: for Tobé Malawista, Richard Lalli, and Scott Murphree

Premiere: 22 November 2003 at Elebash Recital Hall of The Graduate Center City University of New York, The Mirror Visions Ensemble (baritone Richard Lalli) and pianist Margaret Kampmeier.

Commissioned by: The Mirror Visions Ensemble

Incipit: “blizzard”²⁵⁰ mm. 1-4

Presto possibile (♩ = ca. 168)

Baritone *ff*

The snow has for got-ten how to stop. It falls

Piano *f*

Presto possibile (♩ = ca. 168)

II. Annotation

blizzard is the first song in both *Secrets* and *Drifts and Shadows*. It was written for baritone Richard Lalli, who has an unusually high tessitura. Elem Eley recorded the

²⁵⁰ Text for “blizzard” © 1981 by Linda Pastan, from *Carnival Evening: New and Selected Poems 1968-1998* by Linda Pastan, used by permission of W.W. Norton & Company, Inc. Music © 2005 by Tom Cipullo, from *Drifts and Shadows* by Tom Cipullo, used by permission of the composer.

song in 2008. Eley serves on the voice faculty of Westminster Choir College of Rider University, and has performed and premiered many works by contemporary American composers. Eley met Cipullo through Paul Sperry in 1996, and performed a selection of baritone songs excerpted from *A Visit with Emily* in 2002. Cipullo sent Eley *Drifts and Shadows* when Eley was putting together his program for the 2008 recording. While the recording contains works by six contemporary composers, Eley decided to title the entire recording *Drifts and Shadows: American Song for the New Millennium*.²⁵¹

III. Interpretive guide

The song is extremely fast and full of energy. Judith Carman describes the piece as illustrating the “shape-changing effects of the snow...rhythmically repeated but harmonically changing patterns of the piano part...drive forward, swirl, lift, and fall like the movement of the snow.”²⁵² The piece is indeed frantic and energized, and requires careful diction and ensemble balance.

The first page is *non legato*, which should be starkly contrasted by “blowing under the porch light” in measures 9-11. Here the piano part is marked *legato*, and this should apply also to the singer. In measure 28-29, the pianist should carefully shape each triplet with a slight emphasis on the first note of each grouping in order to maintain a sense of the rhythmic pulse. Without this clarity, the texture creates a wash of sound, which can lose the rhythmic precision prevalent throughout the song. If the triplets in measure 28 and 29 are carefully shaped, the singer may easily enter in measure 30. In

²⁵¹ Elem Eley, telephone interview by author, Denver, 14 May 2009.

²⁵² Carman, “*Drifts and Shadows*,” *Journal of Singing* 63 (2007): 605.

measures 35-38, the singer's descending line will inevitably decrescendo. Balance may be challenging in this section, and a sensitive pianist should drop to *mf* to compensate. The lines "chairs become" (mm. 39-40) and "the moon could be" (mm. 42-44) should be sung extremely *legato* to contrast with the accented triplets that follow.

There is no courtesy natural sign in measure 48, however, the singer's note is in fact an E \sharp . The indication *passione* should increase the tempo in measure 48. If the tempo remains faster than the opening tempo, the three indications of *no breath* in measures 62 to 65 may be observed. If the singer cannot manage this, it is acceptable to breathe in measure 64. Tuning is especially challenging for the singer in measure 62, as the E \sharp forms a dissonant tritone with the piano's B \flat s. The singer should avoid breathing between measure 80 and 81. The quasi-falsetto placement of the final note in measures 88-90 is challenging. Eley recommends gradually changing the resonance of "the" in measure 87 to contain more head voice or falsetto so that changing pitches up to E4 may happen more smoothly, and the correct resonance will already be in place. There is a very brief pause of no longer than three seconds before beginning the next song.

The Almanac of Last Things

I. Catalog data

Nature of the work: Second of Five in the cycle *Drifts and Shadows*

Source of score for analysis: Published score

Publisher: Classical Vocal Reprints

Publication: *Drifts and Shadows*

Copyright: Music 2005, Tom Cipullo; Texts 1998, Linda Pastan

Recording: Elem Eley, baritone and J.J. Penna, piano, *Drifts and Shadows*, (Albany Records TROY-1050, 2008).

The Mirror Visions Ensemble (Richard Lalli, baritone, and Margaret Kampmeier, piano), from *Secrets*, (Albany Records TROY-720, 2004).

Meter: 3/8, 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 5/4, 7/4, 3/2

Tempo: Slow, free, expressive (quarter note=ca. 72)

Voice: Baritone

Length: 47 measures

Vocal Range: C3 to G \flat 4

Duration: 3:20

Mood: Reflective

Subject: Love

Author of text: Linda Pastan

Source of text: Poem published in *Carnival evening: New and selected poems: 1968-1998*, 1998, part of the collection *New Poems*, 1998.

Dedication: for Tobé Malawista, Richard Lalli, and Scott Murphree

Premiere: 22 November 2003 at Elebash Recital Hall of The Graduate Center City University of New York, The Mirror Visions Ensemble (tenor Scott Murphree) and pianist Margaret Kampmeier.

Commissioned by: The Mirror Visions Ensemble

Incipit: “The Almanac of Last Things”²⁵³ mm. 2-3

The image shows the first two measures of a musical score for voice and piano. The voice part is in bass clef, 4/4 time, and begins with a fermata over the first measure. The piano part is in treble and bass clefs, 4/4 time, and begins with a fermata over the first measure. The lyrics are: "From the al - man - ac of last things,". The score includes dynamic markings (p, mp, p), articulation (legato), and tempo markings (a tempo, poco riten.). There are also triplets in the piano part.

II. Annotation

This lyrical song was originally the third song in *Secrets*. It followed “blizzard” and a fast trio called “Secrets.” The song was written for tenor Scott Murphree, a high baritone who transitioned to tenor around 2002. Murphree is a founding member of The

²⁵³ Text for “The Almanac of Last Things” © 1998 by Linda Pastan, from *Carnival Evening: New and Selected Poems 1968-1998* by Linda Pastan, used by permission of W.W. Norton & Company, Inc. Music © 2005 by Tom Cipullo, from *Drifts and Shadows* by Tom Cipullo, used by permission of the composer.

Mirror Visions Ensemble, and has performed and premiered many of Cipullo's songs, including *A Visit with Emily* (baritone 1). When "The Almanac of Last Things" was excerpted from *Secrets* and put into the baritone cycle *Drifts and Shadows*, Cipullo changed nothing in the song except to transcribe the vocal line into the bass clef. However, the song lies in the same high tessitura as the other four baritone songs in the cycle.

The metronome marking of quarter note=ca. 72 is very effective, and serves as a guideline over which extreme *rubato* takes place. The style is almost impressionistic, with the sweeping piano *arpeggi*, and whole tone scales of the piano part. The meter is fairly steady, remaining mostly in 3/2 and 4/4. If a young baritone has a high lying voice and excellent breath management, this would be a lovely piece to serve as an introduction to Cipullo's songs.

III. Interpretive guide

Dramatically, this song presents a reflective emotion. Carman describes it as giving "us a clue to the thread that runs throughout the cycle...that perhaps we see most clearly the thing as it is just before it changes."²⁵⁴

This song contains many challenges to breath management. The *rubato* provided by the piano should do its best to support the singer's phrasing. Tenor Scott Murphree describes this piece as "going to the extreme" with long phrases, almost to the point where it is not comfortable.²⁵⁵ A tenor voice may more easily follow every indication of

²⁵⁴ Carman, "Drifts and Shadows," *Journal of Singing* 63 (2007): 605.

²⁵⁵ Scott Murphree, interview by author, New York City, 28 May 2009.

no breath in the score, but a baritone must breathe more frequently due to the high tessitura of the song.

A breath is recommended in measure 4 after the word “lily.” Time may be taken on the first syllable of the word “brevity” in measure 8. The *ossia* D4 in measure 10 is not as effective as the original F4, and Cipullo would always prefer to hear the original note. The tempo may move forward slightly in the second half of measure 11 on “flesh of those.” Most voices will breathe in measure 13. Measures 16-19 are very moving if sung in one long phrase without breath, however, a breath in measure 18 is acceptable since “chill” marks the end of a poetic line. Time may be taken on the “ch” of “chill” in measure 18, as it is marked *subito pp*. Measure 20 is marked *whispered*, but most singers use a *sotto voce* effect on the words “and August,” and return to *piano* singing on “too sun struck for lessons” in measure 21. The *pressing forward* indication in measure 24 should be *subito*, and if the tempo is suitably fast, the singer may manage the phrase from measure 23-25 in one breath. If this is not comfortable, a breath between the words “wine” and “to” in measure 24 is acceptable, which again reflects the poetic line. The baritone voice may most effectively reach the *ff* dynamic marked in measures 28-31, whereas the tenor would not be in his most powerful range. That said, the tenor voice may more easily manage the phrase in one breath, while the baritone voice would prefer to breathe in measure 29, after the words “last things.” This breath does however break the poetic line. The E4 in measures 30-31 should be held until the downbeat of measure 32. The most challenging phrase in terms of breath management comes in measures 37-40. There are a few options here. One is to breathe in measure 37 just after the word “because” and then sing through measure 40’s “window” without breathing again. The

other option is to breathe precisely where *no breath* is indicated at the end of measure 38. The former option is preferable, as it reflects the continuation of the poetic line and observes Cipullo's markings. A breath is absolutely necessary after "window" in measure 40. The final vocal phrase in measures 43-45 is most effective when sung in one breath, however a breath just before "go out" in measure 44 is acceptable.

As the song appears in *Secrets*, it is indicated to continue *attacca* to the next song ("Because"). However, as it appears in *Drifts and Shadows*, there is no indication as to the amount of time to take between "The Almanac of Last Things" and "In Back Of." Eley's recording included a pause of about five seconds. An unpublished recording of Lalli performing the cycle took nearly ten seconds between this song and "In Back Of." It seems a pause of a certain length, somewhere between five and ten seconds, is appropriate for the reflective character of "The Almanac of Last Things." "In Back Of" begins almost violently, and this can come as quite a shock for an audience enough if time is not taken between songs.

In Back Of

I. Catalog data

Nature of the work: Third of Five in the cycle *Drifts and Shadows*

Date of composition: 8 January 2002, Virginia Center for the Creative Arts

Source of score for analysis: Published score

Publisher: Classical Vocal Reprints

Publication: *Drifts and Shadows*

Copyright: Music 2005, Tom Cipullo; Texts 1998, Linda Pastan

Recording: Elem Eley, baritone and J.J. Penna, piano, *Drifts and Shadows*, (Albany Records TROY-1050, 2008).

The Mirror Visions Ensemble (Richard Lalli, baritone, and Margaret Kampmeier, piano), from *Secrets*, (Albany Records TROY-720, 2004).

Meter: 3/8, 6/8, 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 5/4

Tempo: Presto (quarter note=160)

Voice: Baritone

Length: 55 measures

Vocal Range: D \flat 3 to F4

Duration: 1:20

Mood: Bitter

Subject: Breaking up

Author of text: Linda Pastan

Source of text: Poem published in *Carnival evening: New and selected poems: 1968-1998*, 1998, part of the collection *Waiting for My Life*, 1981.

Dedication: for Tobé Malawista, Richard Lalli, and Scott Murphree

Premiere: 22 November 2003 at Elebash Recital Hall of The Graduate Center City University of New York, The Mirror Visions Ensemble (baritone Richard Lalli) and pianist Margaret Kampmeier.

Commissioned by: The Mirror Visions Ensemble

Incipit: "In back of"²⁵⁶ mm. 1-5

The musical score is for the incipit of the poem "In back of" by Linda Pastan, set to music by Tom Cipullo. It is in 5/4 time, marked Presto with a tempo of quarter note = 160. The score is for Baritone and Piano. The vocal line begins with the lyrics "In back of" and continues with "love you" stands "good - bye." The piano accompaniment consists of a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes in the right hand and quarter notes in the left hand, with dynamic markings such as *f*, *decresc.*, *sim*, and *cresc.* The score includes a triplet of eighth notes in the vocal line and a triplet of eighth notes in the piano accompaniment.

²⁵⁶ Text for "In back of" © 1981 by Linda Pastan, from *Carnival Evening: New and Selected Poems 1968-1998* by Linda Pastan, used by permission of W.W. Norton & Company, Inc. Music © 2005 by Tom Cipullo, from *Drifts and Shadows* by Tom Cipullo, used by permission of the composer.

II. Annotation

“In Back Of” was originally the tenth song in *Secrets*. In *Secrets*, it follows the beautiful and heartbreaking duet for soprano and tenor: “The Dogwoods.” In *Drifts and Shadows*, it follows the equally beautiful and sentimental “The Almanac of Last Things.” The high energy of “In Back Of” is ceaseless, with the “constant rising sixteenth note pattern that takes various footings on the beat...”²⁵⁷ The voice must feed off of the energy of the piano part, yet at the same time retain a floating legato above the underlying clamor in the piano.

The metronome marking of 160 is extremely fast. Most performances are more comfortable around 148-152. The inherent *rubato* in Cipullo’s style will slow the tempo from its initial tempo, but there should be an incessant pulse to the piece driven by the piano.

III. Interpretive guide

Vocally, this piece is fairly simple. The phrases are not nearly as long as in “The Almanac of Last Things,” so breath management is not as challenging. Cipullo has provided frequent rests in the vocal line, which more or less map out the appropriate places to breathe throughout the piece.

A *portamento* between the D# and B in measure 3 is not inappropriate. The *decrescendo* to *p* in measure 5 may be delayed and effectively carried out in measure 6. The *dreamy* phrase in measure 9 to 12 may be delivered almost sarcastically, and extreme *legato* should permeate this section. The singer may breathe in measure 12 or carry

²⁵⁷ Carman, “*Drifts and Shadows*,” *Journal of Singing* 63 (2007): 605.

through without a breath until measure 14. The latter option reflects the poetic line, which ends with “drenched.” There should be no breath between measures 16 and 17 and the *subito pp* F4 should be delivered with a quasi-falsetto tone in order to be successful. This is the most challenging aspect of the song, according to baritone Elem Eley.²⁵⁸ In measure 27, the [z] of “mirrors” should be held through the downbeat of measure 28. The long *legato* phrase of measures 32 to 37 should contrast with the broken consequential phrase in measures 39 to 45. As the vocal line descends in measures 44 to 45, a *decrescendo* will naturally occur, and the singer should be careful to remain audible on the final note. A sensitive pianist will play extremely lightly in measure 45. A slight lift before beginning the postlude in measure 46 is acceptable right as the singer cuts off the final note in measure 45. A pause of at least eight seconds should be taken before beginning the next song.

Subway

I. Catalog data

Nature of the work: Fourth of Five in the cycle *Drifts and Shadows*

Date of composition: Summer 2001, Yaddo; revised 2005

Source of score for analysis: Published score

Publisher: Classical Vocal Reprints

Publication: *Drifts and Shadows*

Copyright: Music 2005, Tom Cipullo; Texts 1998, Linda Pastan

Recording: Elem Eley, baritone and J.J. Penna, piano, *Drifts and Shadows*, (Albany Records TROY-1050, 2008).

The Mirror Visions Ensemble (Richard Lalli, baritone, and Margaret Kampmeier, piano), from *Secrets*, (Albany Records TROY-720, 2004).

Meter: 5/8, 6/8, 7/8, 8/8, 9/8, 10/8, 12/8, 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 5/4

Tempo: Fast, accented (quarter note=160)

Voice: Baritone

Length: 102 measures

Vocal Range: D3 to F4

Duration: 2:35

²⁵⁸ Eley, interview by author, 14 May 2009.

Mood: Painful, violent

Subject: Visiting his parents

Author of text: Linda Pastan

Source of text: Poem published in *Carnival evening: New and selected poems: 1968-1998*, 1998, part of the collection *Heroines in Disguise*, 1991.

Dedication: for Tobé Malawista, Richard Lalli, and Scott Murphree

Premiere: 22 November 2003 at Elebash Recital Hall of The Graduate Center City University of New York, The Mirror Visions Ensemble (baritone Richard Lalli) and pianist Margaret Kampmeier.

Commissioned by: The Mirror Visions Ensemble

Incipit: "Subway"²⁵⁹ mm. 1-9

Fast, accented ♩ = 160

Baritone

Some -

Fast, accented ♩ = 160

Piano

ff

ff

5

Bar.

- times

Some

times at night

ff no breath

Pno.

ff

ff

²⁵⁹ Text for "Subway" © 1991 by Linda Pastan, from *Carnival Evening: New and Selected Poems 1968-1998* by Linda Pastan, used by permission of W.W. Norton & Company, Inc. Music © 2005 by Tom Cipullo, from *Drifts and Shadows* by Tom Cipullo, used by permission of the composer.

II. Annotation

“Subway” begins violently with the low chords in the piano representing the sound of the subway train. Cipullo repeats the first word of the poem “Sometimes” in measures 8-10. The poem is about a section of the B line in New York City, which runs from 125th Street in Manhattan to Fordham Road in the Bronx. Presumably, the speaker lives at 125th in Manhattan and returns home to visit his parents at Fordham Road in the Bronx. The monotony reciting the names of the subway stops is the comfort the speaker clings to before and after the painful visit with his parents.

The song was originally the thirteenth song in *Secrets*, and followed a slow duet between the soprano and tenor “Drift-RSVP: Regrets Only.” It is clear by this point that the relationship has ended, and perhaps he is visiting his parents to deliver the news. There is no warm welcome for him, as his “mediates” between his need for comfort and his “father’s/Silence.”²⁶⁰ Carman describes the song as taking “us back in memory to a childhood that is no more” as the train “clatters along in irregular phrasing in a...noisily chordal atmosphere with many chances to view the stations passing by.”²⁶¹

The oscillation between triple and duple meters can be challenging when memorizing the piece. Here is one example of a song where it is necessary for the singer to memorize the piano part in order to remain rhythmically on track.

The metronome marking of a quarter note=160 is very effective if the diction can remain clear at this speed. A successful performance may range from 144 to 160.

²⁶⁰ Pastan, *Carnival evening* (New York: Norton, 1998) 243.

²⁶¹ Carman, “Drifts and Shadows,” *Journal of Singing* 63 (2007): 605.

III. Interpretive guide

Rhythmic precision and clean *staccati* are essential in this song. The vocal line has few opportunities for *legato*, and must emulate the often detached and monotonous listing of subway stops, which occurs along the train lines of New York City's MTA. The piano's chords are often consonant when listing the stops, particularly in measures 19 to 22 and 70 to 74. This contrasts greatly to the dissonance of visiting the parents in measures 50 to 55.

One opportunity for *legato* singing is in measures 28 to 35 on the words "The tunnel unwinds/Backwards/Under ruined streets." This should contrast with the next several measures as the anger builds during the actual visit. Measure 53 should be sung *marcato* and follow the accents indicated in the piano part.

Example 3.18: "Subway"²⁶² mm. 53-55

The musical score for measures 53-55 of "Subway" is presented in three systems. The top system shows the vocal line in treble clef, starting with a forte (*f*) dynamic and a crescendo leading to fortissimo (*fff*) dynamics. The lyrics are "Child-hood is cold com- fort." The middle system shows the piano accompaniment in bass clef, starting with a forte (*f*) dynamic and a crescendo (*cresc.*) leading to fortissimo (*fff*) dynamics. The piano part includes a "short staccato" marking and various accents. The bottom system continues the piano accompaniment with fortissimo (*fff*) dynamics and accents.

²⁶² Text for "Subway" © 1991 by Linda Pastan, from *Carnival Evening: New and Selected Poems 1968-1998* by Linda Pastan, used by permission of W.W. Norton & Company, Inc. Music © 2005 by Tom Cipullo, from *Drifts and Shadows* by Tom Cipullo, used by permission of the composer.

Another opportunity for *legato* is in measures 77 to 82 on the words “And I cling/To the loop/Of numbers” underlining the comfort the numbers provide. Measure 90 is marked *teneramente* and *dolce*, and measures 90 through 94 may be performed slightly slower than the measures that proceed it. Measure 95 may include a *poco ritardando* in the piano part. This is very effective to underline the sentimental nature of the text here and to follow the piano’s indication of *ghostly* in measure 94. The quasi-falsetto effect used in “In Back Of” may be applied to the final note in “Subway” as the voice *decrescendos* to less than *ppp* on a D#4. A brief pause of no longer than five seconds should be observed before beginning the next song.

the arithmetic of alternation

I. Catalog data

Nature of the work: Fifth of Five in the cycle *Drifts and Shadows*

Date of composition: Summer 2001, Yaddo; revised 2005

Source of score for analysis: Published score

Publisher: Classical Vocal Reprints

Publication: *Drifts and Shadows*

Copyright: Music 2005, Tom Cipullo; Texts 1998, Linda Pastan

Recording: Elem Eley, baritone and J.J. Penna, piano, *Drifts and Shadows*, (Albany Records TROY-1050, 2008).

The Mirror Visions Ensemble (Richard Lalli, baritone, and Margaret Kampmeier, piano), from *Secrets*, (Albany Records TROY-720, 2004).

Meter: 6/8, 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 5/4

Tempo: Slow, very expressive (quarter note=44)

Voice: Baritone

Length: 38 measures

Vocal Range: B2 to F4

Duration: 2:50

Mood: Reflective

Subject: Life

Author of text: Linda Pastan

Source of text: Poem published in *Carnival evening: New and selected poems: 1968-1998*, 1998, part of the collection *An Early Afterlife*, 1995.

Dedication: for Tobé Malawista, Richard Lalli, and Scott Murphree

Premiere: 22 November 2003 at Elebash Recital Hall of The Graduate Center City

University of New York, The Mirror Visions Ensemble (baritone Richard Lalli) and pianist Margaret Kampmeier.

Commissioned by: The Mirror Visions Ensemble

Incipit: “the arithmetic of alternation”²⁶³ mm. 1-2

The image shows a musical score for the piece "the arithmetic of alternation". It consists of two staves: Baritone and Piano. The Baritone staff is in bass clef with a 5/4 time signature. The tempo is "Slow, very expressive" with a quarter note equal to 44 beats (♩ = 44). The dynamics range from *pp* (pianissimo) to *mp* (mezzo-piano). The Baritone part includes lyrics: "To-day I write of the shad-ows flow - ers make on a white wall,". The Piano part is in treble and bass clefs with a 5/4 time signature. It features a melodic line in the right hand and a more rhythmic accompaniment in the left hand, with dynamics from *pp* to *mp*. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and triplets.

II. Annotation

“the arithmetic of alternation” was originally the fifth song in *Secrets*. It followed the lyrical soprano solo “Because.” In *Drifts and Shadows*, this piece serves as the concluding song in the cycle, coming as a relief after the intense “In Back Of” and “Subway.” Carman writes that “the slowly moving eighth notes in the piano...match the reflective quality in ‘the arithmetic of alternation’ changing only briefly into a more passionate movement at ‘But tomorrow I will tell...’”²⁶⁴ The song tells us of the balance between good and bad that makes up the fabric of life. The speaker accepts and revels in this dichotomy and the cycle ends peacefully.

²⁶³ Text for “the arithmetic of alternation” © 1995 by Linda Pastan, from *Carnival Evening: New and Selected Poems 1968-1998* by Linda Pastan, used by permission of W.W. Norton & Company, Inc. Music © 2005 by Tom Cipullo, from *Drifts and Shadows* by Tom Cipullo, used by permission of the composer.

²⁶⁴ Carman, “*Drifts and Shadows*,” *Journal of Singing* 63 (2007): 605.

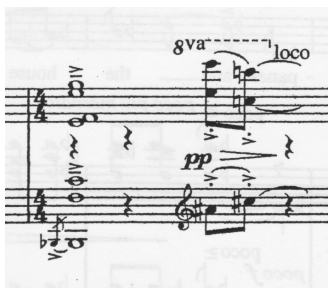
The metronome indication of quarter note=44 may be effective, but at times may feel too slow. A successful performance may range between 44 and 56.

III. Interpretive guide

Baritone Elem Eley describes the opening vocal phrase as the most challenging in the song. Beginning with “half-voice,” indicated *pp with tenderness*, and then ascending with a *crescendo* to *mp* is quite difficult in this range.²⁶⁵ A seamless connection to the *falsetto* register is essential.

In this piece, the “crickets” motive from *Late Summer* appears two times. This is a descending minor third in the high register of the piano. The motive appears in measure 2 and 21. See incipit for measure 2.

Example 3.19: Crickets motive in “Touch me”²⁶⁶ m. 65



²⁶⁵ Eley, interview by author, 14 May 2009.

²⁶⁶ Text for “Touch me” © 1995 by Stanley Kunitz, from *The Collected Poems* by Stanley Kunitz, used by permission of W.W. Norton & Company, Inc. Music © 2003 by Tom Cipullo, from *Late Summer* by Tom Cipullo, used by permission of the composer.

Example 3.20: Crickets motive in “the arithmetic of alternation”²⁶⁷ m. 21

Whether this was intentional or not, the sound is unmistakable, and serves perhaps to remind us that nature is eternal, and life moves forward “The way the hours,/The seasons/Arrange themselves.”²⁶⁸

It is essential to sing the first vocal phrase in one breath (mm. 1-2). The last note in measure 3 should be held until the downbeat of measure 4. Time may be taken in measures 8-9 on “even without color.” The calm peace of the song is indeed “interrupted briefly”²⁶⁹ in measures 11 to 18, as the second stanza of the poem is more passionate than the first. In measure 12, Richard Lalli does not observe the breath indication between “tell” and “how,”²⁷⁰ which serves to reflect the break in the poetic line: “I will tell/How on the warmest day.”²⁷¹ A *sostenuto* stretch is quite effective on the F4 in measure 14. The phrase in measures 16 to 18 should be sung in one breath, or if needed, one may

²⁶⁷ Text for “the arithmetic of alternation” © 1995 by Linda Pastan, from *Carnival Evening: New and Selected Poems 1968-1998* by Linda Pastan, used by permission of W.W. Norton & Company, Inc. Music © 2005 by Tom Cipullo, from *Drifts and Shadows* by Tom Cipullo, used by permission of the composer.

²⁶⁸ Pastan, *Carnival Evening* (New York: Norton, 1998) 273.

²⁶⁹ Carman, “*Drifts and Shadows*,” *Journal of Singing* 63 (2007): 605.

²⁷⁰ Cipullo, *Drifts and Shadows*, Richard Lalli, baritone and Margaret Kampmeier, piano, unpublished recording, 2009.

²⁷¹ Pastan, *Carnival Evening* (New York: Norton, 1998) 273.

breathe between “rim” and “of” in measure 17. The [kt] of “object” should fall on the downbeat of measure 19. The piano interlude from measures 19 to 26 should have a clear dramatic intention. It certainly serves to underline the importance of the final poetic stanza, which begins in measure 27, but the singer and pianist should agree upon a clear dramatic interpretation. In measure 22, the marking *passionate* is the same as Cipullo’s standard *passione*, and indicates an *accelerando* through measure 23, which then slows (*relaxed*) in measure 24. In measure 30, the indications *relaxed* and *dolcissimo* should be observed, but the phrase must be sung in time. Time may be taken on the first note of measure 32 (D4). The singer should take care not to be too soft on the final B2. This note is quite low in the range and will be naturally softer. The pianist should be very sensitive in measures 35-37. The final *sffz* in the piano in measure 38 should be strong and loud, since it is intended as a true interruption of the calmness created in the previous few measures. The pianist should time the downbeat (and grace note) in measure 38 with the singer’s cutoff to underline this effect.

OF A CERTAIN AGE (2007)

Magnolia
 There Are Mornings
 Fugitive
 Two Men Loved Me Once
 Mary
 The Garden

Of a Certain Age was commissioned by soprano Hope Hudson as part of her dissertation entitled *A Study of the Patterns of Collaboration between the 21st Century*

Art Song Composer and Singer.²⁷² For her dissertation, she commissioned works by Cipullo, Richard Pearson Thomas, and Lori Laitman. The theme of the cycle—a singer getting older²⁷³—came to Cipullo because he was close to a number of singers who were indeed aging and were struggling with the decision to continue singing or not. Cipullo already knew the poet Judith Baumel, whom he had met while they were both serving artist residencies at Yaddo, and he discovered Lisel Mueller’s poetry through a reference to her work in a book of poetry by another author. He then focused on Mueller’s volume *Alive Together*²⁷⁴ and selected five poems having to do with aging. The decision to set five poems by one author (Mueller) and only one poem by another (Baumel) gave Cipullo “pause.”²⁷⁵ This is not typical, however Cipullo felt strongly that “these six poems worked well together.”²⁷⁶

Upon its completion, *Of a Certain Age* was entered into the 2008 National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS) Art Song Competition, and won first prize. Hudson and Cipullo premiered the cycle in 2008 at the 50th NATS National Conference in Nashville, TN. It has since been performed all over the United States. Oxford University Press published *Of a Certain Age* in 2009. In program notes for a 2010 performance, Cipullo writes that the poetry “offer[s] a mature perspective on love, loss,

²⁷²Hope Hudson, “A Study of the Patterns of Collaboration between the 21st Century Art Song Composer and Singer” (Ed.D. diss., Teachers College, Columbia University), unpublished.

²⁷³Cipullo, e-mail to author, 14 August 2010.

²⁷⁴Lisel Mueller, *Alive Together* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997).

²⁷⁵Cipullo, e-mail, 14 August 2010.

²⁷⁶Ibid.

aging, and what it means to be a 21st-century American woman ‘of a certain age.’”²⁷⁷

The piece is extremely vocally demanding, and takes many of Cipullo’s favored vocal effects (such as tremendously long phrases) to the extreme. Cipullo does not require that his performers be “of a certain age,” and the piece often performed by young but technically mature singers. However, a singer who is “of a certain age” can certainly offer a different dramatic perspective.

In 2009, Cipullo was invited to be “composer-in-residence” at *SongFest*, a summer program for voice and collaborative piano students held annually at Pepperdine University in Malibu, CA. Students in the program performed *Of a Certain Age* in an all-Cipullo recital, with one singer/pianist pair assigned to each individual song. The success of this performance led many participants of the program to return home (all over the United States) and subsequently perform the cycle or excerpts from it. This, combined with Oxford University Press’s publication of the cycle, marked the beginning of National dissemination of the piece. It has quickly become one of the most favored soprano cycles in Cipullo’s oeuvre.

Magnolia

I. Catalog data

Nature of the work: First of Six in the cycle *Of a Certain Age*

Date of composition: August 5, 2007; Copland House, NY

Source of score for analysis: Published score

Publisher: Oxford University Press

Publication: *Of a Certain Age*

Copyright: Music 2009, Oxford University Press; Texts 1986, Lisel Mueller

Recording: No published recording available

Meter: 5/8, 6/8, 9/8, 12/8

²⁷⁷ Tom Cipullo, “Of a Certain Age,” Program notes for *Right Out of Winter: Songs of Tom Cipullo*, 25 March 2010 (New York City: Elebash Recital Hall, Music in Midtown Concert Series).

Tempo: Bright, playful (dotted quarter note=84)

Voice: Soprano

Length: 58 measures

Vocal Range: C4 to G#5

Duration: 2:40

Mood: Sentimental

Subject: Young love

Author of text: Lisel Mueller

Source of text: Poem published in *Alive Together: New and Selected Poems*, 1996, part of the collection *Waving from Shore*, 1989.

Dedication: to Hope Hudson

Premiere: 27 June 2008, NATS National Conference, Nashville, TN; Hope Hudson, soprano and Tom Cipullo

Commissioned by: Hope Hudson

Incipit: “Magnolia”²⁷⁸ mm. 5-9

5 *a tempo*
p *mp* (or spoken)
 This year— spring and sum-mer de - cid - ed to make it quick,
p

II. Annotation

This song is a perfect audition song, nice and flowing, but showcasing beautiful singing across the entire vocal range and a few Cipullo-trademark *pp* floating high notes.

In spite of the many changes in meter, “Magnolia” is unified by a strong sense of 3.

The metronome marking is rarely taken at 84, and is much more comfortable around 76. The piece was premiered at 60, but Cipullo’s preference is closer to 76.

²⁷⁸ Text for “Magnolia” © 1986 by Lisel Mueller, from *Alive Together: New and Selected Poems* by Lisel Mueller, used by permission of Louisiana State University Press. Music from *Of a Certain Age* by Tom Cipullo © Oxford University Press Inc, 2009. Assigned to Oxford University Press 2010. Music extracts reproduced by permission. All rights reserved.

III. Interpretive guide

While the metronome marking is “bright, playful,” the opening vocal line should be relaxed, and musing. The word “quick” in measure 8 should be cutoff right away to paint the meaning of the word. The tempo is fairly strict within the lazy feeling of 3 throughout the piece. The descending line “the reluctant magnolia buds lost control” in mm. 18 needs a fair amount of chest voice in the sound in order to be audible, and to accomplish the crescendo in that range. The singer may be amused by this line of text, or may deliver it in a purely descriptive fashion. In measure 28, a significant color change is necessary. Cipullo recommends a dynamic level of *pp* instead of the published *mp*, and encourages the singer to be awestruck by the beauty of these flowers. In measure 31, “trunk” should be cutoff cleanly on beat 3. In mm. 31-32, “like castoff” must have two [k] sounds in a row in order to be understood, and “petticoats” cannot carry-over into measure 33 whatsoever.

Cipullo respects Mueller’s strophe break by recalling his introduction in mm. 34-35 before beginning the second strophe of Mueller’s poem (“Remember how long...”). This strophe is less descriptive than the first, and much more personal. It is directed at a specific person, so the singer must make this focal change and increase the level of intimacy. In m. 37, the tempo may be slightly slower to extend the life of the *ppp* G5, but only if the singer has the breath management required for this. This note is also marked *dolcissimo*, meaning that it is one of Cipullo’s favorite moments. There may not be a breath between mm. 41 and 42. The indication *very free* in measure 46 does not indicate a completely free tempo, but rather a quasi-recitative style in the vocal line. The piano should play measures 47 to 51 in a regular tempo. The vocal line in measure 46 should

be hushed and slow, but returning to a more present sound in measures 49 and 51.

The entire last phrase must be sung without a breath. This is easier to accomplish with truly soft dynamics (*pp* and *ppp*). “Toward” can easily sound like “to” in this tessitura (m. 52). Measures 52-53 may not include any type of *portamento*. In order to understand the final syllable of the word “button,” it is necessary for the singer to use an [I] vowel and to briefly hold the [n] sound. The starting note for the next song may be found by taking the B3 from the piano part and moving up an octave to C \flat 5 (B4).

There Are Mornings

I. Catalog data

Nature of the work: Second of Six in the cycle *Of a Certain Age*

Date of composition: August 15, 2007; Copland House

Source of score for analysis: Published score

Publisher: Oxford University Press

Publication: *Of a Certain Age*

Copyright: Music 2009, Oxford University Press; Texts 1986, Lisel Mueller

Recording: No published recording available

Meter: 2/4, 3/4

Tempo: Slow, expressive (quarter note=58)

Voice: Soprano

Length: 43 measures

Vocal Range: B3 to A \flat 5

Duration: 2:10

Mood: Contemplative

Subject: Aging

Author of text: Lisel Mueller

Source of text: Poem published in *Alive Together: New and Selected Poems*, 1996, part of the collection *Second Language*, 1986.

Dedication: to Hope Hudson

Premiere: 27 June 2008, NATS National Conference, Nashville, TN; Hope Hudson, soprano and Tom Cipullo

Commissioned by: Hope Hudson

Incipit: “There Are Mornings”²⁷⁹ mm. 1-5

The image shows a musical score for the first five measures of the song "There Are Mornings". It consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 2/4. The vocal line begins with a forte (f) dynamic, followed by piano (pp) and then mezzo-forte (p). The piano part starts with a piano (pp) dynamic and includes a "poco f" marking. The lyrics are: "Ev - en now, when the plot calls for me to turn to stone, the".

II. Annotation

The song is often performed at quarter note=54, rather than 58. However, 58 does not present significant problems because the piece includes so much *rubato*.

One striking aspect of this piece that is not typical for Cipullo is a fairly consistent meter throughout. There is only one five bar section in 3/4 (mm. 19-23), and the rest of the piece is in 2/4. In many of Cipullo’s other songs, the meter changes frequently in order to allow for the natural inflection of the text. In “There Are Mornings,” Cipullo sets the text within a simple framework of 2/4. The piano part provides mostly harmonies rather than melodies with the exceptions of the interlude in measures 22-23, and the echo of the vocal line “when the plot calls for me to...” in mm. 32-34. The simplicity of the piano part allows for more *rubato* in the vocal line, as the text and score indications require.

²⁷⁹ Text for “There Are Mornings” © 1986 by Lisel Mueller, from *Alive Together: New and Selected Poems* by Lisel Mueller, used by permission of Louisiana State University Press. Music from *Of a Certain Age* by Tom Cipullo © Oxford University Press Inc., 2009. Assigned to Oxford University Press 2010. Music extracts reproduced by permission. All rights reserved.

III. Interpretive guide

The first note of the vocal line may be taken from the B3 in the piano part in mm. 56-57 in the previous song (“Magnolia”). In contrast, “There Are Mornings” must begin *f*, and in an entirely different emotional mood. There is almost a sense of attack, so that the *decrescendo* on the first note can effectively take place. There should be a breath after the word “stone” in measure 5 in order to set up properly for the *ppp dolce, floating* A5 in measures 6-7. A breath may also be taken in measure 7 before the word “intervenes” so that the A \flat 4 may be held through measure 11. It is also helpful to the singer if the pianist presses the tempo forward slightly in measures 8-11. Cipullo favors a slight crescendo in these measures as well (for the piano only) up to *mp* in measure 11.

The breath mark in measure 13 is optional and may be omitted if the tempo is fast enough here. Time should be taken to breathe deeply in measure 16, since the air must last until measure 20, and the tempo remains quite slow until measure 22, and the vocal line is very exposed throughout this phrase. The text “about to die” (mm.19-20) may be hushed, and almost fearful. The pianist must know how long the singer will hold the note, which determines when the pianist should enter with the last eighth note chord, which must move to the downbeat of measure 27 in strict time.

In measure 29, Cipullo favors a long breath before the word “Inside” rather than after it (m. 30). The line “Inside the house” goes together, whereas “anyone.” and “Inside” are divided by a period, and represent the end of one thought and the start of another. The A \flat 5 in measures 35-36 should be sung *mf* rather than *pp*, and is a problematic pitch to find, since it is dissonant against the A \natural in the piano part. Thinking of the pitch as a G \sharp may help this, but the note is not present in the piano chord, and

requires much rehearsal to adjust one's ear to. In the manuscript, the first chord in measure 41 was rolled. This is Cipullo's preference, even though the indication is not present in the published score.

Fugitive

I. Catalog data

Nature of the work: Third of Six in the cycle *Of a Certain Age*

Date of composition: September 23, 2007; Copland House and Long Island City

Source of score for analysis: Published score

Publisher: Oxford University Press

Publication: *Of a Certain Age*

Copyright: Music 2009, Oxford University Press; Texts 1986, Lisel Mueller

Recording: No published recording available

Meter: 5/8, 6/8, 1/4, 2/4, 3/4, 4/4

Tempo: Fast, rhythmic (quarter note=136)

Voice: Soprano

Length: 103 measures

Vocal Range: F#3 to C6 (*ossia* Ab5)

Duration: 2:25

Mood: Humorously insane

Subject: Getting away with it

Author of text: Lisel Mueller

Source of text: Poem published in *Alive Together: New and Selected Poems*, 1996, part of the collection *Second Language*, 1986.

Dedication: to Hope Hudson

Premiere: 27 June 2008, NATS National Conference, Nashville, TN; Hope Hudson, soprano and Tom Cipullo

Commissioned by: Hope Hudson

Incipit: "Fugitive"²⁸⁰ mm. 5-8

II. Annotation

This rowdy and amusing song is a welcome contrast to the serious and sentimental nature of the cycle as a whole. The main character in this song is beginning to lose her marbles, and envisions getting away with some sort of crime by aging beyond recognition. There is also an element of humor in the delight she feels as a result of this. The meter changes almost constantly, reflecting the fractured mental state of the lady in question. The metronome marking of 136 is precise and works very well.

Cipullo modifies Mueller's text slightly by fragmenting and repeating the lines "like the juice in the power line" in measures 45-49, "when they knock on my door" in measures 71-73, and "and apologize" in measure 89. Mueller's original poem ends with "My life in the corner winks, and wipes off my fingerprints."²⁸¹ However, Cipullo adds a whispered "No one suspects." to the end of the line, taken from the earlier line in the poem "No one suspects its value."

²⁸⁰ Text for "Fugitive" © 1986 by Lisel Mueller, from *Alive Together: New and Selected Poems* by Lisel Mueller, used by permission of Louisiana State University Press. Music from *Of a Certain Age* by Tom Cipullo © Oxford University Press Inc, 2009. Assigned to Oxford University Press 2010. Music extracts reproduced by permission. All rights reserved.

²⁸¹ Mueller, *Alive Together*, 190.

III. Interpretive guide

The piano part is rowdy and almost violent. Both piano and vocal entrances must be precisely in time, without any sort of lift or space between them. There is a good deal of “passing the baton” in this piece, where the singer finishes a line and then piano takes over, only to have the singer re-enter when the piano finishes its line (see mm. 5-12 for one example of this). Both performers must have an infallible sense of rhythm, and there is little room for *legato* or *rubato*. Very clean pedaling is required of the piano throughout the piece.

The C♭ in m. 10 is a half-step above the B♭ in the piano chord just before the vocal entrance. Care should be taken not to accidentally sing B♭ on “the” (m. 10). A *poco sostenuto* is permitted on the B♭5 in measure 11, but the singer must return *a tempo* on “cahoots” (mm. 12-13). If the singer breathes on the downbeats of measures 18 and 23, the off-beat entrances may be very precise, and this helps the ensemble stay strictly in time. Even though there is *a cappella* singing taking place in measures 18 to 24, there is no time for slides or affectation. The pitches and rhythms must be precise and exact. The *tenuto* marking in measure 26 (beat 2) should be omitted. It is more effective for the rhythm to carry directly through to the downbeat of measure 27, which marks the first *tutti* entrance of the entire song. The line “under my dress” (m. 29) is often spoken with an affectation of pouting. Speaking the line is perfectly acceptable for Cipullo, and often increases audibility over singing the F♯3. The *portamento* in measure 37 must remain in time, and is often sung without vibrato, closer to a *glissando*. In measure 48, the piano may rock its right hand back and forth between the octaves indicated in order to play cleanly at this speed. This effect also helps to balance with the singer. If the singer

chooses to sing the C6 in m. 48, the text “dat dat dat...” is preferred. If the singer chooses the *ossia* note A♭5, the text “like the juice in the power line,” is preferred.

Measure 52 marks the beginning of the only section of the song that is quasi-lyrical. It is marked *p* and *legato*, contrasting with the raucous mood of the rest of the song. The singer must increase the *legato* as well, and try to avoid breaking the phrase with a breath between measures 53 and 56. Balance is a challenge in measure 58 since the singer is quite low in range and the piano part is very dense in the same range as the vocal part. The lyricism of these few measures ends abruptly with a return to the *pesante* chords in measure 60. The pianist should note that measure 63 is in 1/4 time, and moves immediately (without pause) into measure 64. In order to achieve the correct dynamic level and sentiment in measures 71 and 72, a belt or chest-heavy mix sound may be required of the singer. No *sostenuto* is allowed on the B♭5 in measure 74-75. When the singer re-enters with her spoken text following the *fermata* in measure 76, she should continue immediately to measure 77 in time. It is helpful for singer and pianist to audibly breathe together on the downbeat of measure 77 to achieve a clean entrance on the upbeat. The pianist may rock both hands again in this measure for balance and clarity. Measure 78 should be played without pedal. The singer’s delight with not being recognized should build beginning in measure 82 (marked “joyous”) and continue through to the end of the song. A physical “wink” on beat one of measure 94 is dramatically effective. Measure 97 is marked *conspiring*, and requires a *p* entrance that crescendos through the *fermata*. A belt or chest-heavy mix may be helpful here as well. Typically a pause for laughter is required at the end of the song.

Two Men Loved Me Once

I. Catalog data

Nature of the work: Fourth of Six in the cycle *Of a Certain Age*

Date of composition: August 1, 2007; Yaddo and Copland House

Source of score for analysis: Published score

Publisher: Oxford University Press

Publication: *Of a Certain Age*

Copyright: Music 2009, Oxford University Press; Texts 1988, Judith Baumel

Recording: No published recording available

Meter: 3/8, 5/8, 2/4, 3/4

Tempo: Very free, expressive (quarter note=66)

Voice: Soprano Length: 65 measures

Vocal Range: G3 (*ossia* E4) to G#5 Duration: 3:25

Mood: Sensual Subject: Beauty

Author of text: Judith Baumel

Source of text: Poem published in *The Weight of Numbers*, 1988.

Dedication: to Hope Hudson

Premiere: 27 June 2008, NATS National Conference, Nashville, TN; Hope Hudson,
soprano and Tom Cipullo

Commissioned by: Hope Hudson

Incipit: "Two Men Loved Me Once"²⁸² mm. 9-12

The image shows a musical score for the incipit of "Two Men Loved Me Once". It consists of three staves: a vocal line (Soprano), a piano accompaniment (right hand), and a piano accompaniment (left hand). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The score begins with a measure marked "9" and "a tempo". The vocal line starts with a half note "Two" followed by a half note "men", then a half note "loved" and a half note "me". The piano accompaniment features a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes. Performance markings include "p" (piano) for the vocal line, "mf" (mezzo-forte) for the piano accompaniment, "pressing forward" above the vocal line, and "rit." (ritardando) at the end of the phrase.

²⁸² Text for "Two Men Loved me Once" © 1988 by Judith Baumel, excerpted from *The Weight of Numbers* by Judith Baumel, reprinted with permission of the author and Wesleyan University Press. Music from *Of a Certain Age* by Tom Cipullo © Oxford University Press Inc, 2009. Assigned to Oxford University Press 2010. Music extracts reproduced by permission. All rights reserved.

II. Annotation

Cipullo met poet Judith Baumel when they were both serving artist residencies at Yaddo. He wanted to include this poem in the cycle—even though it is the only one by Baumel in the set—because he felt that it worked well with Mueller’s poems, and supported the overall theme of the cycle.

The poem tells the story of two men who once loved the protagonist. The first man references the 1933 poem *For Anne Gregory* by W.B. Yeats.²⁸³ In Yeats’s poem the character of Anne Gregory has beautiful yellow hair, but is certain that she could be loved for herself alone.²⁸⁴ Baumel’s poem identifies with Anne, and calls her/herself “foolish”²⁸⁵ to believe one can be loved for inner beauty alone. The second man is not specifically influenced by another poem, but Baumel admits that she “was thinking about *A Prayer for my Daughter*,”²⁸⁶ also by Yeats.²⁸⁷ Baumel describes her poem as having forced “errors of opposites”²⁸⁸ such as “shed a *prayer*/nor murmured out his *tears*.”²⁸⁹ This provides interesting challenges for the performer.

In Yeats’s poem the “young men” are “in despair.”²⁹⁰ In Baumel’s poem, the subject of the despair is ambiguous “...in front of young men in despair/I believed

²⁸³ W.B. Yeats, *The Collected Works of W.B. Yeats, Vol 1: The Poems*, 2nd ed., ed. Richard J. Finneran, (New York: Scribner, 1989) 249.

²⁸⁴ Ibid.

²⁸⁵ Judith Baumel, *The Weight of Numbers* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1988) 38.

²⁸⁶ Baumel, e-mail message to author, 10 August 2010.

²⁸⁷ Yeats, *The Collected Works*, 190-192.

²⁸⁸ Baumel, e-mail, 10 August 2010.

²⁸⁹ Baumel, *The Weight of Numbers*.

²⁹⁰ Yeats, *The collected works*, 249.

nothing simple or sincere.”²⁹¹ Cipullo’s setting seems to favor the protagonist in despair, since he places a rest between “young men” and “in despair” (mm. 48-51) and asks for no breath between “in despair” and “I” (mm. 51-52).

Baumel’s poem is organized into two strophes, the first being 17 lines long, and the second only 3. Cipullo respects Baumel’s change of tone in the second strophe by setting it as a sort of postlude, with a vocal line descending in a sequence built around intervals of major and minor 6ths.

This is the most difficult song in the cycle to memorize, and the longest in duration. However, the slow-motion drama is exquisite for both pianist and singer.

The metronome marking (66) is significantly faster than it should be performed. The premiere with the composer at the piano was closer to a quarter note=40. However, there is so much stretch in the measure, with the grace notes and long second beat (see interpretive guide below), that this marking serves merely as a foundational guideline over which extreme *rubato* takes place.

III. Interpretive guide

The piece begins very freely, as indicated, with a very long second beat in the piano. The last three sixteenth notes in each measure should be much slower than the first part of the measure (mm. 1-4 and 9-10). It should be so uneven that it almost feels as though the time signature is 3/4 instead of 2/4. The first grace note in the piano part (m. 3) has an asterisk with a note saying “all grace notes should be played ahead of the

²⁹¹ Baumel, *The Weight of Numbers*.

beat and given ample time.”²⁹² In fact, the grace notes should be almost as long as a sixteenth note. The singer may find the opening pitch by becoming aware of the B \flat 4 in the piano part in measure 8, and simply moving up a half step to the B \natural in measure 9. Because of the long second beat in the piano part, it is challenging to coordinate the ensemble rhythm in measures 9-13. It is helpful for the singer to follow the piano part carefully, and learn to anticipate where the grace notes fall and where extra time is being taken. The indication *con passione* in measure 14 requires the singer to push the tempo forward through measure 15. If the singer times the entrance of the G3 towards the bottom of the rolled piano chord in measure 17, she will be more audible. Even if this note is very soft and somewhat difficult for the singer to produce, Cipullo prefers the G3 rather than the *ossia* E4.

The descriptive sixteenth notes in measures 18-20 require inflected rhythms. The singer should select those words that are more important, and have those 16th notes last longer than some of the others. For example, in measure 18, “sing” and “tell” often last longer than “and” or “of.” The *pressing forward* indication in measure 20 marks the beginning of a large-scale *accelerando* that lasts until m. 28. The most difficult vocal entrance of the entire song lies in measure 27, in the middle of this heightening excitement. Typically with Cipullo, the best way to know when to enter is to listen for a piano cue. Here there is no such cue. To make it more challenging, the tempo is steadily increasing, the entrance is on the second sixteenth-beat of the second quarter-note beat of the bar, and the entrance is immediately followed by a *ritardando* in measure 28. Needless to say, this piece is for the very advanced singer. The singer should

²⁹² Cipullo, *Of a Certain Age* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009) 19.

decrescendo through measure 29 so that the *dolcissimo molto pp* G#5 does not come *subito*. If the pianist plays the first two notes of the rolled chord in measure 30 *ff*, and the remaining notes of the chord *pp*, the balance and effect will be optimal. The singer should hold “hair” (m. 30-31) until the downbeat of m. 32. The pianist should not allow any space between the end of measure 31 and the start of measure 32.

Time may be taken with the description of the second man, beginning in measure 35. Inflected rhythms are appropriate here as well. The F#5 in measure 36 must be soft and balanced with the *mp* notes that come before and after it. There is a *poco ritardando* over the words “shed a prayer” (second beat of measure 36), particularly because “prayer” is not the word we expect to hear here (we expect “shed a tear”), so time must be allowed for extra affectation. The same is true for “murmured out his *tears*” in mm. 37-38. The *pressing forward* in measure 37 is very mild, and followed immediately by a *ritardando* in measure 38. A breath between “tears” and “but” in measure 38 is ideal since “but” begins a new poetic thought. The word “but” should crescendo to *mf* to make the *pppp* downbeat (“wept”) of measure 39 *subito* with a striking color change. The following line “to see me shorn beyond repair” (mm. 41-42) should be sung *mp* in order to achieve the best balance at this low tessitura.

There is no breath in measure 52, and the piano chord in measure 53 should be rolled. Cipullo carries the vocal line over Baumel’s strophe change in measures 56-57. This was a purely vocal choice, to showcase the breath control of the singer and feature high *pp* singing. The final 9 measures of the piece should be very slow and light. In spite of the indication *doloroso* in measure 61, each downbeat in measures 61 to 63 should be floating, rather than weighted in any way. There is no breath allowed after

measure 62, so it is helpful for the singer if the pianist moves the tempo forward slightly in measures 63 and 64. The singer and pianist should cut-off and lift the pedal (respectively) together to end the piece. A sharp pedal lift helps to avoid a “twang” sound on many instruments.

Mary

I. Catalog data

Nature of the work: Fifth of Six in the cycle *Of a Certain Age*

Date of composition: October 18, 2007; Long Island City

Source of score for analysis: Published score

Publisher: Oxford University Press

Publication: *Of a Certain Age*

Copyright: Music 2009, Oxford University Press; Texts 1986, Lisel Mueller

Recording: No published recording available

Meter: 3/8, 5/8, 6/8, 2/4, 3/4, 4/4,

Tempo: Not too quickly, expressive (quarter note=88)

Voice: Soprano

Length: 62 measures

Vocal Range: A3 (*ossia* C#4) to A5

Duration: 2:40

Mood: Hopeless

Subject: Death

Author of text: Lisel Mueller

Source of text: Poem published in *Alive Together: New and Selected Poems*, 1996, part of the collection *Waving from Shore*, 1989.

Dedication: to Hope Hudson

Premiere: 27 June 2008, NATS National Conference, Nashville, TN; Hope Hudson, soprano and Tom Cipullo

Commissioned by: Hope Hudson

Incipit: “Mary”²⁹³ mm. 3-4

II. Annotation

The metronome marking of quarter note=88 is often exceeded in performance, and is acceptable up to around 94. Mueller’s poem is almost prose, and tells the story of a woman at the end of her life in a nursing home. The poem is presented in complete sentences, but these sentences are often broken into several poetic lines. The song vividly depicts the complex emotional journey of the poem, and highlights the inevitability of death through the incessant sixteenth notes in the piano part.

III. Interpretive guide

The opening vocal line is marked *cold*, and Cipullo often says this line should be delivered almost psychopathically, like Nurse Ratched from Ken Kesey’s *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest*.²⁹⁴ The one time we hear Mary speak is in measure 6 when she says “She’s always crying.” This line should be sung in a character voice, with the two

²⁹³ Text for “Mary” © 1989 by Lisel Mueller, from *Alive Together: New and Selected Poems* by Lisel Mueller, used by permission of Louisiana State University Press. Music from *Of a Certain Age* by Tom Cipullo © Oxford University Press Inc, 2009. Assigned to Oxford University Press 2010. Music extracts reproduced by permission. All rights reserved.

²⁹⁴ Ken Kesey, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest* (London: Pan Books, 1988).

glissandi sung without vibrato. Most of the poem is told from the point of view of an observer, and the compassion of this character does not enter until measure 9 with “I’m shocked because there’s no hint of compassion in Mary’s face.”

The E5 in measure 9 is dissonant against the E#4 in the piano part. The singer should take care not to sharpen the E₁. In measure 13, the word “face” should cut-off on the last eighth-beat of the measure in order to have a clean entrance in measure 14. The piano must *decrescendo* immediately in measure 14 in order to balance with the voice in a low range. The line “The callousness of the old” should be sung with a sneer. A glottal stop before “I think” in measure 15 clarifies the punctuation of the poem. The tenderness returns in measure 16, as indicated by *teneramente*. There is no breath between measure 17 and 18. The *subito ppp* entrance in measure 18 should also have a change of color, to a more ghostly sound. In the same measure, there should be a breath lasting almost an eighth-note rest after the word “Mary.” The *molto ritardando* in measure 23 should only be moderate, with the more severe slowing occurring in measure 24. The *a tempo* in measure 25 is entirely dependent on the pianist, and should begin right on the downbeat. The vocal *portamento* in measure 26 must be carefully timed, allowing for the [s] of “kindness” and for a very strong [d] (of “Death”) on the downbeat of measure 27. Measures 30 and 31 should move forward slightly, and may be sung *f* instead of *mp*. One may breathe at the end of measure 31, so long as the dynamic shift to *pp* in measure 32 is *subito*. The breath mark in measure 32 should be omitted. As the piano part ascends to the *8va* section (mm. 34-40), the piece almost sounds minimalist, with striking *ostinato* rhythms, repetition, and iteration. The *8va* marking was intended to continue

through the end of measure 40, and will likely be corrected in subsequent printings of the publication.

Measure 41 should be played savagely (*ff*), with the first two notes in each set of 16th notes sounding together. The sustain pedal should be used with light lifts between each beat. A messy sound is desirable. The same is true in measures 43-44, but the pianist must take care here to pull the dynamic level back (*mp*) to balance with the singer. The vocal line in measure 45 is still *forte*, so that the *p* downbeat of measure 46 may be *subito*. There is no breath permitted between measure 46 and 47. In order to remain audible, the singer's dynamic level in measures 52 and 54 should be *mp*. In measure 56 "shivering rib cage" should be *mf*. As death takes the body part by part, the final line "collar bone" should be delivered in tempo, but with a slightly phonated whisper, like the sound of a dying person attempting to speak. Cipullo calls this "the sound of cold water."²⁹⁵

The Garden

I. Catalog data

Nature of the work: Sixth of Six in the cycle *Of a Certain Age*

Date of composition: October 22, 2007; Long Island City

Source of score for analysis: Published score

Publisher: Oxford University Press

Publication: *Of a Certain Age*

Copyright: Music 2009, Oxford University Press; Texts 1986, Lisel Mueller

Recording: No published recording available

Meter: 4/4, 3/2

Tempo: Very free, always expressive (quarter note=86)

Voice: Soprano

Length: 44 measures

Vocal Range: A3 (*ossia* E4) to G5

Duration: 3:00

Mood: Bittersweet

Subject: Death and aging

Author of text: Lisel Mueller

²⁹⁵ Cipullo, *Coaching with Aliana de la Guardia*, digital audio recording, Malibu 21 June 2009.

Source of text: Poem published in *Alive Together: New and Selected Poems*, 1996,
part of the collection *Second Language*, 1986.

Dedication: to Hope Hudson

Premiere: 27 June 2008, NATS National Conference, Nashville, TN; Hope Hudson,
soprano and Tom Cipullo

Commissioned by: Hope Hudson

Incipit: “The Garden”²⁹⁶ mm. 1-4

Very free, always expressive ♩ = 86

SOPRANO

pp I bring my mother back to life, her eyes still green,--

PIANO

pp *p*

II. Annotation

The metronome marking is merely a guideline in this piece. There is so much *rubato* that it is almost impossible to say what the exact tempo should be. It should be noted however, that if the singer can manage to follow the breath indications throughout the piece, a slower tempo than indicated is favorable. A range of quarter note=72-86 is acceptable, with the slower end of the range being preferred.

This is one of the very few songs by Cipullo that has very little meter change (only m. 36 and 43 are different). The simple and homophonic nature of the piano part makes the song almost hymn-like. Cipullo wanted to let the vocal line reign above all in

²⁹⁶ Text for “The Garden” © 1986 by Lisel Mueller, from *Alive Together: New and Selected Poems* by Lisel Mueller, used by permission of Louisiana State University Press. Music from *Of a Certain Age* by Tom Cipullo © Oxford University Press Inc, 2009. Assigned to Oxford University Press 2010. Music extracts reproduced by permission. All rights reserved.

this piece, with the poetry and the emotion in the foreground. Cipullo cites the influence of Robert Schumann here, particularly “Seit ich ihn gesehen” from *Frauenliebe und –leben*, which he describes as “so simple yet imaginative and sensational.”²⁹⁷ The postlude of *The Garden* also sounds similar to *Sure on this shining night* by Samuel Barber, with its repeated quarter note chords leading to a much-desired chord change in the next measure. However, any similarity to Barber’s song was unintentional. Cipullo does not believe there is any connection between the two songs, “except perhaps, that both songs are tied together by very expressive harmony and a certain lyricism.”²⁹⁸

III. Interpretive guide

In measures 1-14, the piano part is organized into 7-bar phrases, which the voice blurs and overlaps with. The listener does not perceive any sense of phrase repetition, only the stark simplicity of the piano part. The vocal line requires inflected rhythms here, and extreme *rubato* in every phrase. Cipullo cautions not to begin with too much “pathos” because it must be reserved for later in the song.²⁹⁹ The phrase beginning in measure 3 should be louder and stronger in character than the first. Every single breath marking, optional or not, must be taken in this piece. One of the most challenging aspects of the song is the seamless management of breath into effective dramatic phrasing. The downbeat of measure 5 is *subito pppp dolce*. Intense *legato* should be maintained throughout, and there is a sense that the entire piece is floating, almost like a dream. In measure 8, Cipullo desires a literal smile on the face of the singer, as if they

²⁹⁷ Cipullo, interview by author, New York City, 8 March 2008.

²⁹⁸ Cipullo, e-mail to author, 14 August 2010.

²⁹⁹ Cipullo, *Coaching with the author*, digital audio recording, 23 March 2010.

are happily recalling something her mother used to say. The *sostenuto* in measure 10 is very brief, and serves to reestablish the ensemble rhythm of the bar. Measure 12 begins *p* and should crescendo only to about *mp* or *mf*. The *perdendosi* indication in measure 15 refers to tempo, and not to dynamic level. There should be a fermata on “me” in measure 16, which gives that note at least one extra beat. Measure 17 should mark a new thought and corresponding color change to more frustration (in reaction to having become “a graying woman”). A breath at the end of measure 18 allows for enough air to sing measures 19-21 without break, and to hold “be” through to the downbeat of measure 22. The text “Older than she will ever be” (mm. 19-21) should grow in frustration, anger, or torment until the suddenly hopeful sound of the piano chord in m. 22 brings one out of all this negativity. Cutting-off with the harmony change in the piano part (m. 22) is dramatically very striking. The piano should allow extra time for the chord in measure 23 to settle before beginning a new thought (and new harmony) in measure 24.

Measure 24 marks a type of “return” though really more a “recalling” of the material from measure 9. The piano should play only *ppp* and not *pppp* here since the chords can die away too quickly at an extremely soft dynamic. The vocal line should be hushed and pensive in measure 25. Extra time may be taken for the breath in measure 26. In order to assist the singer and heighten the drama, the pianist may move the tempo forward in measures 29-33. The singer may relax the tempo again on “the heavy fruit” in measures 33-34. Extra time should be taken for the breath in measure 35, since this prepares one for the long phrase ending in measure 37. If the singer can manage a very soft (*pppp*) and *floating* sound on the F#5 in measures 36-37, the pianist may slow the

tempo slightly through measure 36 and take extra time on the harmonic change to the downbeat of measure 37. Cipullo calls this “the heartbreak moment,”³⁰⁰ and it is a truly exquisite and moving section. The piano roll in measure 38 should be slow, and the final chord (m. 44) should be rolled very slowly.

³⁰⁰ Ibid.

APPENDIX A

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF SONGS

By song title:

III (*Turning A way*)
 The Almanac of Last Things (*Drifts and Shadows*)
 The Almanac of Last Things (*Secrets*)
 Another Reason Why I Don't Keep a Gun in the House (*Another Reason Why I Don't
 Keep a Gun in the House*)
 Aria (*A Visit with Emily*)
 Aria (*A Visit with Emily*)
 Aria (*A Visit with Emily*)
 Aria di campane (*A Visit with Emily*)
 Arietta (*A Visit with Emily*)
 Arietta parlante (*A Visit with Emily*)
 the arithmetic of alternation (*Drifts and Shadows*)
 the arithmetic of alternation (*Secrets*)
 Arioso (*A Visit with Emily*)
 Ask the Moon (Single song)
 Aubade (Single chamber song)
 Because (*Secrets*)
 Between Verses (*glances*)
 blizzard (*Drifts and Shadows*)
 blizzard (*Secrets*)
 The Brothers (Single song)
 The Book (*Secrets*)
 Cancer (*Another Reason Why I Don't Keep a Gun in the House*)
 Cantilena I (*A Visit with Emily*)
 Cantilena II (*A Visit with Emily*)
 Catch (*A Visit with Emily*)
 Cavatina (*A Visit with Emily*)
 Chaconne (*A Visit with Emily*)
 A Clear Midnight (*Insomnia*)
 Coranto (*A Visit with Emily*)
 The Cove (Single chamber song)
 Country Scene (Single song)
 The Crane at Gibbs' Pond (*Long Island Songs*)
 The Crow (*Birds of North America*)
 Crickets (*Late Summer*)
 Dawn (*Climbing*)
 A Death in the Family (*The Land of Nod*)
 Deer in Mist and Almonds (*The Land of Nod*)
 Desire (*Another Reason Why I Don't Keep a Gun in the House*)

The Dogwoods (*Secrets*)
 Drift (*Secrets*)
 Drift-RSVP Regrets Only: Duet (*Secrets*)
 The Eagle: A Fragment (*Birds of North America*)
 The Earth (*Turning Away*)
 Echo (*glances*)
 Echo 2 (*glances*)
 The Ecuadorian Sailors (Single chamber song)
 Embrace (*Another Reason Why I Don't Keep a Gun in the House*)
 Epilogue (*A Visit with Emily*)
 The Eve of St. Agnes (*Insomnia*)
 Flames (*Another Reason Why I Don't Keep a Gun in the House*)
 Frederick Douglass (*America 1968*)
 For the Bed at Kelmscott (*Insomnia*)
 Fugitive (*Of a Certain Age*)
 The Garden (*Of a Certain Age*)
 Glance (*glances*)
 Going (*Going*)
 Hey Nonny No (*America 1968*)
 The Hill (*Turning Away*)
 House (*Insomnia*)
 House – Reprise (*Insomnia*)
 How to Get Heat Without Fire (*How to Get Heat Without Fire*)
 The Husbands (Single chamber song)
 Hymn (*A Visit with Emily*)
 I Hear America Singing (Single song)
 Impossible (*glances*)
 In Back Of (*Drifts and Shadows*)
 In Back Of (*Secrets*)
 Incident (*Climbing*)
 In the Middle of a Life (*Secrets*)
 Invocation (*Long Island Songs*)
 The Land of Nod (*The Land of Nod*)
 Landscape with Figures (Single chamber song)
 Magnolia (*Of a Certain Age*)
 Mary (*Of a Certain Age*)
 Menelaus and Helen (*Turning Away*)
 Miami (*Going*)
 Monet's Waterlilies (*America 1968*)
 Monet's Waterlilies (Single chamber song)
 Mother to Son (*Climbing*)
 Molto perpetuo (*A Visit with Emily*)
 Music (*Insomnia*)
 The Nesconset Crickets (*Long Island Songs*)
 The Odor of Pear (*Long Island Songs*)

On a Nineteenth Century Color Lithograph of Red Riding Hood by the Artist J.H.
(The Land of Nod)
 On Being Brought from Africa to America/Ice Storm (*Climbing*)
 On the Breakwater (*Of Night and the Sea*)
 O Swallow, Swallow (*Birds of North America*)
 Overflow (*Birds of North America*)
 Passacaglia (*A Visit with Emily*)
 The Path (Single song)
 Personal (*Climbing*)
 A Plea for Mercy (*glances*)
 The Pocketbook (*How to Get Heat Without Fire*)
 The Point (*Climbing*)
 The Point (*America 1968*)
 Prayer (*Insomnia*)
 Putting Down the Cat (*Another Reason Why I Don't Keep a Gun in the House*)
 Quodlibet I (*A Visit with Emily*)
 Quodlibet II (*A Visit with Emily*)
 Rain (Single chamber song)
 Recitative (*A Visit with Emily*)
 RSVP: Regrets Only (*Secrets*)
 Saying Goodbye (*How to Get Heat Without Fire*)
 Seaside (*Of Night and the Sea*)
 Seaside (*Turning A way*)
 The Sea Wash (*Of Night and the Sea*)
 Secrets (*Secrets*)
 Snoring (*Insomnia*)
 Subway (*Drifts and Shadows*)
 Subway (*Secrets*)
 ...Summer into Autumn slips (*Late Summer*)
 Storm (*Insomnia*)
 Symphony: At the Foxtrot Motel (Single song)
 There Are Mornings (*Of a Certain Age*)
 Those Winter Sundays (*America 1968*)
 Touch me (*Late Summer*)
 Trio (*A Visit with Emily*)
 Two Men Loved Me Once (*Of a Certain Age*)
 Unbroken (*glances*)
 Vision (*Going*)
 Weather Forecast (*Secrets*)
 What We Want (*Secrets*)
 The Whipping (*America 1968*)
 A white rose (Single song)
 Why I Wear My Hair Long (*How to Get Heat Without Fire*)
 Yet do I Marvel (*Climbing*)
 You'll Never Sleep Tonight (*Insomnia*)

By song cycle:

AMERICA 1968 (2008)

Monet's Waterlilies

Hey Nonny No

The point (Stonington, Connecticut)

The Whipping

Those Winter Sundays

Frederick Douglass

ANOTHER REASON WHY I DON'T KEEP A GUN IN THE HOUSE (1996, 2000)

Desire

Embrace

Cancer

Flames

Putting Down the Cat

Another Reason Why I Don't Keep a Gun in the House

ASK THE MOON (2005)

Single song for soprano and piano

AUBADE (1996)

Single song for soprano, baritone, and piano

BIRDS OF NORTH AMERICA (1983)

O Swallow, Swallow

The Eagle: A Fragment

Overflow

The Crow

THE BROTHERS (no date, ca. 1985)

Single song for tenor, clarinet, violin, cello, and piano

CLIMBING: 7 SONGS ON 8 POEMS BY AFRICAN-AMERICANS (2000)

On Being Brought from Africa to America/Ice Storm

Yet do I Marvel

Incident

Personal

The Point

Dawn

Mother to Son

COUNTRY SCENE (no date, ca. 1995)

Single song for voice and piano

THE COVE (1996)

Single song for soprano, viola, and piano

DRIFTS AND SHADOWS (2005)

blizzard

The Almanac of Last Things

In Back Of

Subway

the arithmetic of alternation

THE ECUADORIAN SAILORS (1994)

Single song for mezzo-soprano, flute, viola, and harp

GLANCES (2002)

Echo

Impossible

Unbroken

between verses

A Plea for mercy

glance

Echo 2

GOING (2003)

Vision

Miami

Going

HOW TO GET HEAT WITHOUT FIRE (2000)

Why I Wear My Hair Long

Saying Goodbye

The Pocketbook

How to Get Heat Without Fire

THE HUSBANDS (1993)

Single song for mezzo-soprano, baritone, flute, viola, and piano

I HEAR AMERICA SINGING (2008)

Single song for baritone and piano

INSOMNIA (2009): Song cycle for solo quartet and piano

You'll Never Sleep Tonight

House

Storm

Prayer

The Eve of St. Agnes

Snoring

Music

For the Bed at Kelmscott

House – Reprise

A Clear Midnight

THE LAND OF NOD (1994)

The Land of Nod

A Death in the Family

Deer in Mist and Almonds

On a Nineteenth Century Color Lithograph of Red Riding Hood by the Artist J.H.

LANDSCAPE WITH FIGURES (1997)

Single song for bass-baritone, boy soprano, violin, and piano

LATE SUMMER (2001)

Crickets

...Summer into Autumn slips

Touch me

LONG ISLAND SONGS (1992)

Invocation

The Odor of Pear

The Nesconset Crickets

The Crane at Gibbs' Pond

MONET'S WATERLILIES (2005)

Single chamber song for baritone, violin, clarinet, double bass, and piano

OF A CERTAIN AGE (2007)

Magnolia

There Are Mornings

Fugitive

Two Men Loved Me Once

Mary

The Garden

OF NIGHT AND THE SEA (no date, ca. 1986)

On the Breakwater

The Sea Wash

Seaside

THE PATH (1989)

Single song for soprano and piano

RAIN (1992)

Single chamber song for tenor, flute, violin, viola, cello, percussion, harp, and piano

SECRETS (2002, 2003, 2005): Song Cycle for S, T, Bar and Piano

blizzard

Secrets

The Almanac of Last Things

Because

the arithmetic of alternation

Weather Forecast

Drift

RSVP: Regrets Only

The Dogwoods

In Back Of

What We Want

Drift-RSVP Regrets Only: Duet

Subway

The Book

In the Middle of a Life

SONNET 29 (2002)

Single song for tenor and piano

SYMPHONY: AT THE FOXTROT MOTEL (1992)

Single song for tenor and piano

TURNING AWAY (1988)

The Earth

The Hill

III

Menelaus and Helen

Seaside

A VISIT WITH EMILY (1998, 2001): Song Cycle for S, Bar, Bar, and Piano

Cavatina

Arietta parlante

Aria

Moto perpetuo

Arietta

Quodlibet I

Arioso

Aria di campane

Recitative

Catch

Chaconne

Coranto

Passacaglia

Trio

Cantilena I

Cantilena II

Aria

Aria

Quodlibet II

Hymn

Epilogue

A WHITE ROSE (2006)

Single song for mezzo-soprano and piano

APPENDIX B

LIST OF AUTHORS SET BY CIPULLO

Poet	Poem	Song Cycle
Baumel, Judith	“Two Men Loved Me Once”	<i>Of a Certain Age</i>
Collins, Billy	“Another Reason Why I Don’t Keep a Gun in the House”	<i>Another Reason Why I Don’t Keep a Gun in the House</i>
	“Cancer”	<i>Another Reason Why I Don’t Keep a Gun in the House</i>
	“Desire”	<i>Another Reason Why I Don’t Keep a Gun in the House</i>
	“Embrace”	<i>Another Reason Why I Don’t Keep a Gun in the House</i>
	“Flames”	<i>Another Reason Why I Don’t Keep a Gun in the House</i>
	“Putting Down the Cat”	<i>Another Reason Why I Don’t Keep a Gun in the House</i>
Cullen, Countee	“Incident”	<i>Climbing</i>
	“Yet Do I Marvel”	<i>Climbing</i>
Dickinson, Emily	Poems by first line:	
	“As imperceptibly as Grief”	<i>A Visit With Emily</i>
	“As Summer into Autumn slips”	<i>Late Summer</i>
	“Fame is a fickle food”	<i>A Visit With Emily</i>
	“Fame is the one that does not stay”	<i>A Visit With Emily</i>
	“Fame is a bee”	<i>A Visit With Emily</i>
	“Forbidden Fruit a flavor has”	<i>A Visit With Emily</i>
	“If you were coming in the Fall”	<i>A Visit With Emily</i>
	“Nature the Gentlest Mother is”	<i>A Visit With Emily</i>
	“We never know how high we are”	<i>A Visit With Emily</i>
	“Whether they have forgotten”	<i>A Visit With Emily</i>
	“Wonder is not precisely Knowing”	<i>A Visit With Emily</i>
	“Your thoughts don’t have words every day”	<i>A Visit With Emily</i>
	Letters to T.W. Higginson by date:	
	8 June 1862	<i>A Visit With Emily</i>
	July 1862	<i>A Visit With Emily</i>
	16 August 1870	<i>A Visit With Emily</i>
	Summer 1878	<i>A Visit With Emily</i>

Poet	Poem	Song Cycle
Dunbar, Paul Laurence	"Dawn"	<i>Climbing</i>
Gray, Alice Wirth	"A Death in the Family"	<i>The Land of Nod</i>
	"Deer in Mist and Almonds"	<i>The Land of Nod</i>
	"The Land of Nod"	<i>The Land of Nod</i>
	"On a Nineteenth Century Color Lithograph of Red Riding Hood by the Artist J.H."	<i>The Land of Nod</i>
Hayden, Robert	"Ice Storm"	<i>Climbing</i>
	"The Point"	<i>Climbing</i>
Heyen, William	"Crickets"	<i>Late Summer</i>
	"Invocation"	<i>Long Island Songs</i>
	"The Crane at Gibbs Pond"	<i>Long Island Songs</i>
	"The Nesconset Crickets"	<i>Long Island Songs</i>
	"The Odor of Pear"	<i>Long Island Songs</i>
Higginson, T.W.	Letter to his wife	<i>A Visit with Emily</i>
Hughes, Langston	"Mother to Son"	<i>Climbing</i>
	"Personal"	<i>Climbing</i>
Kallet, Marilyn	"How to Get Heat Without Fire"	<i>How to Get Heat Without Fire</i>
	"The Pocketbook"	<i>How to Get Heat Without Fire</i>
	"Saying Goodbye"	<i>How to Get Heat Without Fire</i>
	"Why I Wear My Hair Long"	<i>How to Get Heat Without Fire</i>
Kunitz, Stanley	"Touch me"	<i>Late Summer</i>
Mueller, Lisel	"Fugitive"	<i>Of a Certain Age</i>
	"Magnolia"	<i>Of a Certain Age</i>
	"Mary"	<i>Of a Certain Age</i>
	"The Garden"	<i>Of a Certain Age</i>
	"There Are Mornings"	<i>Of a Certain Age</i>
Pastan, Linda	"blizzard"	<i>Drifts and Shadows</i>
	"In Back Of"	<i>Drifts and Shadows</i>
	"Subway"	<i>Drifts and Shadows</i>
	"The Almanac of Last Things"	<i>Drifts and Shadows</i>
	"the arithmetic of alternation"	<i>Drifts and Shadows</i>

Poet	Poem	Song Cycle
Tuszyńska, Agata	“A Plea for mercy”	<i>glances</i>
	“Between Verses”	<i>glances</i>
	“Glance”	<i>glances</i>
	Untitled ("it's impossible to leave")	<i>glances</i>
	Untitled ("only an echo")	<i>glances</i>
	Untitled ("that's how it will stay")	<i>glances</i>
Wheatley, Phillis	“On Being Brought from Africa to America”	<i>Climbing</i>

APPENDIX C

WORKS LIST
(1983-2009)**OPERAS**

- Glory Denied (T. Cipullo, after T. Philpott: *Glory Denied*), S, S, T, Bar, Orchestra, 2006
 Glory Denied (T. Cipullo, after T. Philpott: *Glory Denied*), S, S, T, Bar, Chbr Orchestra, 2006
 Lucy (T. Cipullo), S, Bar, Piano, 2009

SONG CYCLESSolo Voice and Piano:

- Birds of North America (A. L. Tennyson, J. Bannister Tabb, W. Canton), 1983
 Turning Away (R. Brooke), 1988
 Long Island Songs (W. Heyen), T (S), 1992, rev. 2005
 The Land of Nod (A.W. Gray), T (S), 1994
 Another Reason Why I Don't Keep a Gun in the House (B. Collins), 1996, rev. 2000
 How to Get Heat Without Fire (M. Kallet), S, 2000
 Climbing: 7 Songs on 8 Poems by African-Americans (various), M-S (Bar), 2000
 Late Summer (W. Heyen, E. Dickinson, S. Kunitz), S (M-S), 2001
 glances (A. Tuszyńska), M-S (Bar), 2002
 Going (E. Ellis Hurwitt), S, 2003
 Drifts and Shadows (L. Pastan), Bar, 2005
 Of a Certain Age (L. Mueller, J. Baumel), S, 2007
 America 1968 (R. Hayden), Bar, 2008

SONGSSolo Voice and Piano:

- The Path (E. Thomas), S, 1989
 Symphony: At the Foxtrot Motel (W. Carpenter), T, 1992
 Country Scene (A. Claremont LeZotte), ca. 1995
 Sonnet 29 (W. Shakespeare), T, 2002
 Ask the Moon (L. Pastan), S, 2005
 A White Rose (J.B. O'Reilly), M-S, 2006
 I Hear America Singing (W. Whitman), Bar, 2008

Solo Voice and Instrumental Ensemble:

- The Brothers (J. Logan), T, Clarinet, Violin, Cello, Piano, ca. 1985
 Of Night and the Sea (C. Sandburg, R. Brooke), S, Flute, Clarinet, Violin, Cello, Piano, ca. 1986
 Rain (W. Carpenter), T, Flute, Violin, Viola, Cello, Percussion, Harp, Piano, 1992
 The Ecuadorian Sailors (W. Carpenter), M-S, Flute, Viola, Harp, 1994

Solo Voice and Instrumental Ensemble Continued:

The Cove (K. Boyle), S, Viola (Cello), Piano, 1996

Monet's Waterlilies (R. Hayden), Bar, Violin, Clarinet, Double Bass, Piano, 2005

Multiple Voices and Piano:

Aubade (W. Shakespeare), S, Bar, Piano, 1996

A Visit with Emily (E. Dickinson, T.W. Higginson), S, Bar, Bar, Piano, 1998, rev. 2001

Secrets (L. Pastan), S, T, Bar, Piano, 2002

Insomnia (various), S, M-S, T, Bar, Piano, 2009

Multiple Voices and Instrumental Ensemble:

Landscape with Figures (W. Carpenter), Boy S, Bass-Bar, Violin, Piano, 1997

The Husbands (W. Carpenter), S (M-S), Bar, Flute, Viola, Piano, 1993

OTHER VOCAL

The Shadows Around the House (J. Manrique), SATB Choir, String Quartet, Percussion, 1996

Voices of the Young (various), SATB Choir, Orchestra, 1999

INSTRUMENTALOrchestral:

Sparkler, 1993

Chamber and Solo instrumental:

Fanamberfare, 15 brass, percussion, 1992

Paradigm Shifting, violin, 1996

Keyboard:

Sparkler, 4 hands, 1994

Toccata, 1995

Water Lilies, 1995

Two Meditations, 2006 and 2008

Principal Publishers: Oxford University Press, Classical Vocal Reprints

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