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The Flower of Stars

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## Abstract

### The Flower of Stars

By Smitha Johnson

This honors voice recital features pieces by Antonio Vivaldi, Gabriel Fauré, Gaetano Donizetti, Abbie Betinis, and Franz Schubert. The program represents proficiency in music from various time periods, genres, and languages. The primary goal in this recital is to produce a performance in which the poetic aspects of the texts of each piece are made clear to the audience, both through musical choices and dramatic interpretation.

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# Acknowledgements

## Dedication

“The Flower of Stars”

A Little Offering  
To God Because  
He Made the World So Beautiful  
And  
To Father and Mother  
Because They Showed the Way

~ Opal Whiteley

## Special Thanks

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Motet *O qui coeli* RV 631 by Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741)

Antonio Vivaldi is one of the most prolific and well known Baroque composers. His output includes about 500 concertos as well as numerous sacred and theatrical works for chamber ensembles. He is perhaps most well known for his *Four Seasons*. Even though Vivaldi distinguished himself as a composer, he was also a well-established concert violinist. Vivaldi was ordained as a priest, but left the position to work at the *Ospedale della Pietà*, an institution set up to educate orphaned, illegitimate, and indigent girls. Vivaldi's later career took him to Venice where he was heavily involved in Venetian opera.

This motet, scored for voice and strings, is among Vivaldi's lesser known solo pieces. It is composed in a typical Baroque style, and is comprised of three arias and one recitative ranging in tempos from Largo to Allegro. The text is clearly religious, though the anonymous author does not specifically name God or Christ through the course of the piece. The overall poetic quality of the piece is quite striking, however, and includes several vivid images such as a fountain of light ("fons lucis"), a dying rose ("rosa quae moritur"), and the ebbing of waves ("unda quae labitur").

The first movement, *O qui coeli*, is a lovely dance-like introduction to the motet and sets the key of E flat major. It features several repeated phrases in both the instrumental and vocal parts, allowing ample opportunity for the terraced dynamics typical of Baroque performance practice. The vocal line is split up into short phrases with brief instrumental "ritornello" interludes in between. The form of the movement is rounded binary, with a transition to the relative minor, C minor, followed by a repetition

of the "A" section of the piece. Upon repetition, the soloist is expected to include ornamental and dynamic variations that were not initially performed. The first movement is followed by a brief recitative in G minor which textually connects the first and third movements of the piece.

The third movement, "Rosa quae moritur," is among the most beautiful melodies Vivaldi composed. This slow movement is divided into two distinct sections. The first portion is set in C minor, and appropriately so since the text depressingly refers to the transitory nature of human existence. The harmonic progression in the accompaniment is quite slow, and so Vivaldi adds textural interest by having the basso continuo play a sequence of pulsating eighth notes, which also acts as a nice rhythmic contrast to the legato vocal lines. As in the first movement, this movement includes several repeated phrases allowing for terraced dynamics, though the length of the phrases is significantly longer than the prior aria. The first portion of the aria ends on a fermata; harmonically, the piece could end here, but Vivaldi chooses to set the remainder of the text in the original key of the motet, E flat major. The shift to the relative major is textually supported since this portion of the aria describes the "evil spirits'" ("larvae fallaces") failure to "entice us with false charms". Interestingly enough, listeners may expect the aria to return to the beginning in the same rounded binary style as the first movement. However, Vivaldi chooses to end the movement firmly in the key of E flat major, which prepares both singer and audience for the final "Alleluia" movement.

The "Alleluia" is a lively, embellished, and virtuostic ending to this motet.

Though its tempo is marked at Allegro just as the first movement was, the feeling is much

more energetic and propulsive. Vivaldi maintains the tonic of the motet throughout most of the movement, though he does include modulations into the relative minor during a few phrases. More than in the other movements, this "Alleluia" leaves much room for dynamic interpretation. The singer's line is comprised mostly of eighth notes and sixteenth notes, adding to the forward momentum of the piece. The string accompaniment is made of mostly rhythmic quarter notes and eighth notes which provides a stable base for the florid vocal melismas. There are a few moments of echoing in between the instruments and voice which has not been a feature of this motet to this point. Overall, this demanding "Alleluia" provides an ideal conclusion to this motet and truly shows Vivaldi's prowess as a composer of both instrumental and vocal works.

Motet *O qui coeli*

**I. Allegro**

O qui coeli terraeque serenitas  
et fons lucis et arbiter es.  
Unda regis aeterna sua sydera  
Mitis considera nostra nota clamores  
Et spes.

**II. Recitativo**

Fac ut virescat tellus  
Dum repicimus coelum  
Fac ut bona superna  
Constanter diligamus  
Et sperantes aeterna  
Quid quid caducam est odio habeamus.

**III. Largo**

Rosa quae moritur,  
unda quae labitur,  
mundi delicias  
docent fugaces.  
Vix fronte amabili  
mulcent cum labile  
pede praetervolant  
larvae fallaces.

**IV. Allegro**

Alleluia.

**I. Allegro**

*Oh you the serenity of heaven and earth  
and its judge and source of light.  
From where you eternally guide the stars  
kindly consider our clamorous notes  
and hopes.*

**II. Recitative**

*Grant that earth seems unclean  
while gazing upon heaven  
Grant that supreme goodness  
We firmly aspire towards  
and in hopes of life eternal  
that which perishes is hateful to behold.*

**III. Largo**

*The rose that dies,  
the wave that ebbs away  
earthly delights  
teach us their transient nature.  
Scarcely has their pleasant appearance  
charmed us with false lips  
when with fleeting feet pass by  
these deceitful evil spirits.*

**IV. Allegro**

Alleluia.

*La Chanson d'Eve* by Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924)

Gabriel Fauré's remarkable success as a composer was likely due to his ability to work in a variety of genres, including piano nocturnes, string sonatas, operas (most notably *Pelléas et Melisande*), and his famous *Requiem*. Above all, Fauré is usually regarded as the master of the French art song, or *mélodie*. His works for voice evolved drastically throughout his career, ranging from the subtle and restrained sound in the well known "Après un rêve" to the harmonic wandering presented in this song cycle.

*La Chanson d'Eve* is often regarded as Fauré's most ambitious work, with the cycle containing ten movements in its entirety. Sources say that he spent between three and five years composing this cycle, from about 1906-1910. The text comes from the Belgian symbolist poet Charles van Lerberghe; it presents an image-saturated, evocative, and sensual portrayal of Eve's first days in Paradise. The poetry is also unique in that it tells of the first days in Paradise through the eyes of Eve alone; the poet never mentions Adam. Interestingly enough, the main relationship in the poetry is between Eve and God, a relationship which begins as pure fascination and builds to a clear romantic tension between the young woman and her creator. The whole cycle is seldom performed simply because it lacks the virtuosity and melodic through-line which normally engages audience members. However, multiple careful listenings of the piece reveal intricate harmonic nuances, exquisite and meticulous text setting, and rhythmic complexity, characteristics common to Faure's late compositions.

The first movement, *Paradis*, is the longest of the ten songs and opens with one

of the sparsest, yet most hauntingly beautiful lines in all of Fauré's repertoire. Even though the cycle does not contain any memorable melodies, Fauré presents two main motifs which are alluded to in the fourth, eighth, and ninth movements. Fauré sets the beginning of the movement in E minor, but introduces dissonance by the singer's second note. The minimalist setting of the initial lines of poetry seem to echo the sentiment of the text itself, perfectly capturing the quiet, pristine, almost reverential essence of the first morning in Paradise. Eve is not yet awake; Fauré transitions into E major as he sets the description of Eden. The piano scoring becomes significantly denser and the vocal line, though still in mid-range, exhibits much rhythmic variation. The initial theme and tonality return in the piano just before the text describes Eve's awakening. The next portion of text is important because it is the only point in the collection in which God speaks to Eve, bidding her to go forth and name the animals he has created; Fauré appropriately highlights this crucial moment through a key change to F major. The remainder of the song describes Eve's first day in Paradise and alternates between the initial minimalist style and the denser, more lyrical style. In the final phrases of the movement, Fauré introduces arpeggiated figures and finally allows the warmth of the piano to pervade the vocal line in a style typical of his earlier compositions. This richness grows in anticipation of the most crucial moment in the song: the moment at which Eve sings her first words.

*Prima verba*, the second movement in the collection, is by contrast one of the shortest and most melodic movements in the cycle. However, it too displays harmonic intricacy with chromaticism and false cadences. The piano scoring maintains a fairly

consistent texture throughout with "a steady quarter-note accompaniment, which marches with serene gravity from beginning to end" (Meister 1980, 136). The overall tone of the piece is nothing short of lovely and echoes the innocence of Eve's first words. The piece ends much like it began, with a brief echo of a melodic line heard at the beginning of the movement and the same B-flat ostinato in the left hand of the piano.

The sixth movement of the song cycle is unique because it exhibits one of the few examples of onomatopoeic accompaniment found in Fauré's melodies. The running, scalar sixteenth-note motive is clearly meant to represent the "running water" which is both the title and subject of this movement. The piece begins in C major, but as in the first movement, Faure introduces accidentals almost immediately. The vocal line is almost recitative-like in quality and its fluidity mirrors the subject matter. There is an undeniable sense of resistance and release throughout the movement, apparent through the continual use of crescendos and diminuendos; one might say that this tension parallels the tumultuous undercurrents of the stream as it runs towards the ocean. The sixteenth-note figure winds down in the final moments of the song, and ultimately ends in a soft C major chord, which may represent the stream's "unification" with the heavens mentioned in the final line of the poem.

As afore mentioned, the ninth movement, *Crepuscule* opens with one of the motifs presented in the first movement. Although one may be lulled into thinking that this movement exudes the same, ethereal quality of "Paradis," the quicker tempo and vacillation between D minor and B-flat major lends a sense of agitation—one that mirrors the confusion Eve conveys through her words. There is a clear foreshadowing of an

ominous future through both the text and the composition. Poetically, Eve continually asks questions, which accounts for her uncertainty and fear of the near future. Listeners may feel that the apprehension Eve feels towards the twilight of this day may actually be an embodiment of her apprehension towards the twilight of her life in Paradise. As the piece progresses, it loses the lightness present in the opening of both this movement and *Paradis*. Faure utilizes heavy quarter note chords in the left hand of the piano, suggesting an "earthbound heaviness, which is perhaps meant to remind us that Eve has fallen from Paradise" (Meister 1980, 147). A piano interlude in the middle of the movement presents strong, loud dissonances; it captures an overtness that has largely been missing thus far in the song cycle. Although the text grows increasingly agitated, emotional, and confused, Fauré chooses to end with a D major tonality which brings a false sense of peace—a peace which matures into Eve's somber acceptance of her fate.

The final movement of the song cycle begins with the same tonic, steady quarter-note ostinato as in *Prima verba*. This may seem surprising, as listeners may expect the grating dissonances that often accompany pieces about death. However, this poem and this movement perfectly encapsulate the sentiment of a joyous and arduous release into death. Eve compares her wavering self to a "flame drunk with the wind!," an ecstatic phrase which does not evoke images of a frail or guilt-ridden sinner, but rather a young woman longing for what she perceives as "the ultimate union with the universe" (Meister 148). Fauré highlights this exclamation with a dramatic octave leap at a forte dynamic marking. At the climax of the piece, the moment at which Eve cries for death to "break her like a flower of spray," Faure utilizes two tritone dissonances

between the voice and piano. The final page of the song cycle is perhaps the most cutting-edge of Fauré's compositional endeavors. He writes a series of one-measure sequences, repeated four times. He utilizes eight out of twelve notes in the scale in these sequences, resulting in what modern theorists and composers would call a tone cluster (Gartside 1997, 256). The complexity of these sequences is such that a definite key is almost indistinguishable. However, in the final seconds of the song cycle, Fauré arrives at D-flat major. The vocal line alternates between an F-natural and a C-natural, and finally ends on an F which slowly dwindles into silence as the piano gradually arrives at its final tonality. Fauré endows these final lines with such a sense of peaceful release that listeners can almost forget that their heroine has fallen from grace and has relinquished her spirit to the earth from which she was formed.

*La Chanson d'Eve*

**I. Paradis**

C'est le premier matin du monde,  
 Comme une fleur confuse exhalée dans la nuit,  
 Au souffle nouveau qui se lève des  
 ondes,  
 Un jardin bleu s'épanouit.  
 Tout s'y confond encore et tout s'y mêle,  
 Frissons de feuilles, chants d'oiseaux,  
 Glissements d'ailes,  
 Sources qui sourdent, voix des airs,  
 voix des eaux,  
 Murmure immense  
 Et qui pourtant est du silence.  
 Ouvrant à la clarté ses doux et vagues yeux,  
 La jeune et divine Eve, s'est éveillée de Dieu,  
 Et le monde à ses pieds s'étend  
 comme un beau rêve.  
 Or Dieu lui dit: "Va fille humaine,  
 Et donne à tous les êtres  
 Que je créés,  
 Une parole de tes lèvres,  
 Un son pour les connaître."  
 Et Eve s'en alla, docile à son seigneur,  
 En son bosquet de roses,

**I. Paradise**

*It is the first morning of the world,  
 Like an obscure flower exhaling in the night,  
 In the new breath which rises from the  
 shadows,  
 A blue garden blossoms.  
 All things merge and mingle again,  
 Trembling of leaves, songs of birds,  
 Shifting of wings,  
 Sources that well up, voices of breezes,  
 voices of waters,  
 An immense murmur  
 And which is nevertheless of silence.  
 Opening her soft and vague eyes to the clarity,  
 The young and divine Eve is awakened by God,  
 And the world stretches itself at her feet  
 Like a beautiful dream.  
 Then God speaks: "Go human girl,  
 And give to all the beings  
 That I have created,  
 A word of your lips,  
 A sound for knowing them."  
 And Eve went, obediently to her master,  
 Into her grove of roses,*



Donnant à toutes choses  
 Une parole, un son de ses lèvres de fleur:  
 Chose qui fuit, chose qui souffle,  
 chose qui vole...  
 Cependent le jour passe, et vague,  
 comme à l'aube.  
 Au crépuscule, peu à peu, l'Eden s'endort  
 et se dérobe  
 Dans le silence d'un songe bleu.  
 La voix s'est tue, mais tout l'écoute  
 encore,  
 Tout demeure en l'attente,  
 Lorsqu'avec le lever de l'étoile du soir,  
 Eve chante.

## II. Prima verba

Comme elle chante dans ma voix  
 L'âme longtemps murmurante des fontaines  
 et des bois.  
 Air limpide du paradis,  
 Avec tes grappes de rubis,  
 Avec tes grebes de lumière,  
 Avec tes roses et tes fruits.  
 Quelle merveille on nous â cette heure!  
 Des paroles depuis des âges endormies,  
 En des sons, en des fleurs sur mes lèvres  
 enfin prennent vie.  
 Depuis que mon souffle dit leur chanson,  
 Depuis que ma voix les a créées,  
 Quel silence heureuse et profound  
 Nait de leurs âmes allégées!

## XI. Eau vivante

Que tu es simple et claire,  
 Eau vivante,  
 Qui, du sein de la terre,  
 Jallis en ces bassins et chantes!  
 O fontaine divine et pure,  
 Les plantes aspirent  
 Ta liquid clarté.  
 La biche et la colombe en toi se  
 désaltèrent.  
 Et tu descends par des pentes douces de  
 fleurs et de mousses,  
 Vers l'océan originel,  
 Toi qui passes et vas sans cesse  
 et jamais lasse  
 De la terre à la mer et  
 de la mer au ciel...

## IX. Crépuscule

Ce soir, à travers le bonheur,  
 Qui donc soupire, qu'est-ce qui pleure?  
 Qu'est-ce qui vient palpiter sur mon cœur,

*Giving to all things  
 A word, a sound from her lips of flowers:  
 Things that run, things that breathe,  
 things that fly...  
 However the day passes, and vague,  
 as the dawn.  
 In the twilight, little by little, Eden reposes  
 and undresses  
 In the silence of a blue dream.  
 The voice quiets itself, but everything listens  
 still,  
 Everything demure in waiting,  
 When with the rising of the evening star,  
 Eve sings.*

## II. First words

*How it sings in my voice  
 The long-murmuring soul of fountains  
 and of woods.  
 Clear air of paradise,  
 With your clusters of rubies,  
 With your sheaves of light,  
 With your roses and your fruits.  
 What marvel is in us at this hour!  
 The words asleep during the ages,  
 In the sounds, in the flowers on my lips  
 finally take life.  
 Since my breath has spoken their song,  
 Since my voice has created them,  
 What happy and profound silence  
 Is born from their lightened souls!*

## XI. Running water

*How simple and clear you are,  
 Running water,  
 That, from the bosom of the earth,  
 Splashes in these basins and sings!  
 Oh fountain divine and pure,  
 The plants breathe in  
 Your liquid clarity.  
 The deer and the dove in you  
 quench their thirst.  
 And you descend by the sweet slopes of  
 flowers and of mosses,  
 Towards the original ocean,  
 You who come and go ceaselessly  
 and without tiring  
 From the earth to the sea and  
 from the sea to the heavens...*

## IX. Twilight

*This evening, through the happy hour,  
 Who then sighs, who is it that weeps?  
 What is it that comes to palpitate in my heart,*

Comme un oiseau blessé?  
 Est'ce une voix future, une voix du passé?  
 J'écoute, jusqu'à la souffrance,  
 Ce son dans le silence.  
 Ile d'oublis, ô Paradis!  
 Quel cri déchire, dans la nuit,  
 Ta voix qui me berce?  
 Quel cri traverse  
 Ta ceinture de fleurs,  
 Et ton beau voile d'allégresse?

**X. O mort, poussière d'étoiles**

O mort, poussière d'étoiles,  
 Lève-toi sous mes pas!  
 Viens, ô douce vague qui brille  
 Dans les ténèbres.  
 Emporte-moi dans ton neant!  
 Viens, souffle sombre où je vacille,  
 Comme une flamme ivre de vent!  
 C'est en toi que je veux m'étendre,  
 M'éteindre et me dissoudre,  
 Mort où mon âme aspire!  
 Viens, brise-moi comme une fleur d'écume,  
 Une fleur de soleil à la cime des  
 eaux!

Et comme d'une amphore d'or  
 Un vin de flamme et d'arome divin,  
 Épanche mon âme en ton abîme,  
 Pour qu'elle embaume  
 La terre sombre et le souffle des  
 morts.

*Like a wounded bird?  
 Is it a voice of the future, a voice of the past?  
 I listen, up to the point of suffering,  
 This sound in the silence.  
 Isle of forgetfulness, oh Paradise!  
 What cry pierces, in the night,  
 Your voice that cradles me?  
 What cry cuts through  
 Your girdle of flowers  
 And your beautiful veil of joy?*

**X. O death, dust of stars**

*Oh death, dust of stars  
 Arise beneath my steps!  
 Come, oh sweet vagueness that shines  
 In the shadows.  
 Transport me in your void!  
 Come, somber breeze where I waver,  
 Like a flame drunk with the wind!  
 It is in you that I wish to extend myself,  
 Extinguish myself and dissolve myself,  
 Death where my soul aspires!  
 Come, break me like a flower of spray,  
 A flower of the sun in the depths of the  
 waters!*

*And like an amphora of gold,  
 A wine of flame and of divine aroma,  
 Pour out my soul into your abyss,  
 That it may embalm her  
 The somber earth and the breath of the  
 dead.*

Scene IX from *L'Elisir d'Amore* by Gaetano Donizetti (1797-1848)

As a composer, Donizetti played an important role in the development of European operas and his signature style places him between Giacomo Rossini and Giuseppe Verdi. Donizetti's operatic output is staggering; between 1818 and 1830, he is reputed to have composed at least 31 operas. His operas ranged from intense dramas such as *Lucia di Lammermoor*—which features one of the most famous mad scenes in the operatic repertoire—to lighthearted comedies such as *La Fille du Regiment*.

*L'Elisir d'Amore* is one of Donizetti's most performed operas. Its charming libretto was written by Felice Romani, the leading theatre writer of the day. Like many comedic operas, its plot revolves around love, hilarious pranks, and mistaken identities.

The opera begins in the Basque Country near the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Nemorino, the leading male protagonist, is a poor, love-struck peasant. The object of his affection is Adina, the beautiful and wealthy landowner who tortures him with complete indifference to his affections. Upon hearing Adina relay the story of *Tristan and Isolde* to the local townspeople, Nemorino is convinced that the only way to win Adina's heart is to purchase a love potion. His compulsion to turn to such drastic measures is also prompted by his fear that Adina is in love with the egotistical Sergeant Belcore who publicly proposes to Adina. Luckily, a travelling quack salesman named Dulcamara arrives in time selling cure-all remedies to gullible country folk. When he hears of Nemorino's troubles, he quickly sells him an "elixir of love" comparable to the one in *Tristan and Isolde*; unbeknownst to Nemorino, this elixir is actually only a bottle of

cheap wine. Nemorino spends his last coins on this potion and drinks the entire bottle.

Feeling like a new man after taking the elixir, Nemorino confronts Adina, but acts indifferent to her flirtatious teasing. Adina, insulted by his over-confident and careless demeanor tries to enervate him by agreeing to immediately marry Belcore, secretly hoping that this will provide the impetus for Nemorino to openly declare his love for her.

Nemorino realizes that he is on the brink of losing his beloved forever and once more turns to Dulcamara for assistance.

The next day, Adina and Sergeant Belcore prepare to sign the official wedding contract in the presence of Dulcamara. Adina despairs when she realizes that Nemorino has not come to her rescue. As they retreat inside, Nemorino appears begging Dulcamara for a more potent potion. When Dulcamara hears that Nemorino is broke, he refuses to provide any more potion. At this point, Belcore enters the scene, deeply troubled because Adina has broken off their wedding agreement without any explanation. When he sees Nemorino begging for a love potion, he realizes that the peasant is hopelessly in love with his intended fiancée. Since Belcore is aware that Nemorino knows nothing of Adina's rejection, he decides to use this situation to his advantage; he approaches Nemorino, and tells him that he can get immediate payment if he joins the army. Nemorino foolishly agrees to join, signs the life-long contract, and dashes away to find Dulcamara for more love potion.

That same day, word gets out amidst the women of the town that Nemorino's wealthy uncle has passed away and that he has inherited a large fortune, about which he has yet to hear. When they see Nemorino—who has just stumbled onstage after

consuming a large amount of love potion—they quickly begin flirting with him.

Nemorino thinks that the potion has finally worked. Adina enters and sees this scene unfolding before her. She sees Dulcamara and queries as to why Nemorino is acting so strangely. Dulcamara reveals the truth behind the love potion and the reason Nemorino signed his life away to the army in order to procure it. Adina immediately realizes both his and her own true emotions. She leaves the scene, crying tears of joy at his love and sorrow at his untimely contractual commitment to the army.

When this scene starts, Nemorino has just witnessed Adina leaving with the tear upon her cheek. He sings “Una furtive lagrima” (“One furtive tear”), one of the most excerpted arias from operatic repertoire. This final scene of the opera is one that brings together breathtakingly lyrical solo lines, virtuosic melismatic passages, and playful back and forth dialogue between the young lovers.

Scene IX from *L'Elisir d'Amore*

NEMORINO:  
furtiva lagrima  
negl'occhi suoi spuntó:  
quelle festose giovani  
invidiar sembró:  
che piu cercando io vo'?'  
M'ama, si m'ama,  
lo vedo, lo vedo.

Un solo istante i palpiti  
del suo bel cor sentir!  
i miei sospir confodere  
per poco a' suoi sospir!  
I palpiti i palpiti sentir!  
Confondere i miei co'suoi sospir!  
Cielo, si puó morir;  
di piú chiedo, non chiedo, ah!

Eccola...Oh! Qual le accresce beltá  
L'amor nascente!  
A farl'indifferente si seguiti cosi,  
fin ché non viene ella a spiegarsi.

NEMORINO: Una  
*A furtive tear  
that rose in her eye,  
that festive youth  
seemed to envy...  
What more searching can I do?  
She loves me, yes she loves me,  
I see it, I see it.*

*To feel for just one instant the throbbing  
of her beautiful heart!  
My sighs being confused  
momentarily with her sighs!  
To feel the heart throbs!  
Confusing mine with her sighs!  
Heaven, if I should die;  
I ask nothing more, nothing more, ah!*

*There she is...Oh how the budding love  
heightens her beauty!  
I will continue to seem indifferent,  
so that she comes out and unfurls*

ADINA:  
Nemorino! Ebbene?

NEMORINO:  
Non so piú dove io sia:  
giovani e vecchie, belle e brute mi  
voglion per marito.

ADINA:  
E tu?

NEMORINO:  
A verun partito appigliarmi non posso:  
Attend ancora...la mia felicità...  
(ch'è pur vicina)

ADINA:  
Odimi!

NEMORINO:  
(Ah! Ci siamo.) Lo v'odo, Adina.

ADINA:  
Dimmi: perché partire, perché farti  
soldato hai risoluto?

NEMORINO:  
Perché? Perché ho voluto tentar se con  
tal mezzo il mio destino io potea migliorar.

ADINA:  
La tua persona, la tua vita ci è cara...  
Io ricomprai il fatale contratto da Belcore.

NEMORINO:  
Voi stessa?! (È natural: opra è  
d'amore.)

ADINA:  
Prendi, per me sei libero,  
Resta nel suol natio.  
Non v'ha destin sì rio  
Che non si cangi un di. Resta!  
Qui dove tutti t'amano  
Saggio, amoroso, onesto.  
Sempre scontento e mesto  
No, non sarai così.

NEMORINO:  
(Or, or si spiega.)

ADINA:  
*Nemorino! Well then?*

NEMORINO:  
*I don't know where I am:  
young and old, beautiful and ugly, they  
all want me for a husband.*

ADINA:  
*And you?*

NEMORINO:  
*Being divided, I can't get hold of myself:  
I am still waiting for... my bliss...  
(which is so close)*

ADINA:  
*Listen to me.*

NEMORINO:  
*(Ah! Here we go.) I'm listening, Adina.*

ADINA:  
*Tell me, why are you leaving, why are you  
so resolutely becoming a soldier?*

NEMORINO:  
*Why? Because I want to know if  
in this way I can improve my destiny.*

ADINA:  
*Your person, your life is precious to us...  
I redeemed the fatal contract from Belcore*

NEMORINO:  
*You did that?! (Naturally: the potion is  
of love.)*

ADINA:  
*Take it, because of me you are free,  
stay on your native soil.  
There is not destiny so bitter for you  
that will not change one day. Stay!  
Here where everyone loves you  
wise, loving, and honest.  
Always unhappy and miserable  
No, you will not always be that way.*

NEMORINO:  
*(Oh, oh, she explains it.)*

ADINA:  
Addio.

ADINA:  
*Goodbye.*

NEMORINO:  
Che?! Mi lasciate?

NEMORINO:  
*What?! You are leaving me?*

ADINA:  
Lo...si.

ADINA:  
*Well...yes.*

NEMORINO:  
Null'altro a dirmi avete?

NEMORINO:  
*You have nothing more to tell me?*

ADINA:  
Null'altro.

ADINA:  
*Nothing.*

NEMORINO:  
Ebben, tenete.  
poiché non sono amato, voglio morir  
soldato; non v'ha per me piú pace,  
se m'ingannó il dottor, io vo' morir  
soldato.

NEMORINO:  
*Alright, run.*  
*Since I am not loved, I shall die a*  
*soldier; you don't have more peace for*  
*me, if the doctor deceived me, I shall die*  
*a soldier.*

ADINA:  
Ah, fu conte verace, se presti  
fede al cor.  
Sappilo al fin, sappilo, tu mi sei caro.

ADINA:  
*Ah, certainly it was true, if you gave*  
*credence to your heart.*  
*Hear it at last, hear it, you are my darling.*

NEMORINO:  
Io!

NEMORINO:  
*I!*

ADINA:  
Si, mi sei caro e t'amo.

ADINA:  
*Yes, you are my darling and I love you.*

NEMORINO:  
Tu m'ami?

NEMORINO:  
*You love me?*

ADINA:  
Si, t'amo!

ADINA:  
*Yes, I love you!*

NEMORINO:  
O gioja inesprimibile!

NEMORINO:  
*Oh inexpressible joy!*

ADINA:  
Quanto ti féi già misero,  
farti felice or bramo.

ADINA:  
*How miserable I've already made you,*  
*I long to make you happy.*

NEMORINO:  
Tu m'ami? Non m'inganno il dottor.  
Oh gioja inesprimibile!

NEMORINO:  
*You love me? The doctor didn't deceive*  
*me. Oh inexpressible joy!*

ADINA:  
Farti felice or bramo, io bramo.

ADINA:  
*I long to make you happy, I do.*

NEMORINO:  
Oh gioja!

ADINA:  
Il mio rigordi dimentica;  
Ti giuro eterno amor.  
Sí farti felice io bramo, ah,  
ti giuro eterno amor.

NEMORINO:  
Caro...  
Non m'ingannó il dottor!  
No!

ADINA:  
Eterno amor!

NEMORINO:  
*Oh joy!*

ADINA:  
*Forget my severity;  
I swear to you eternal love.  
Yes I long to make you happy, ah,  
to you I swear eternal love.*

NEMORINO:  
*Darling...  
The doctor didn't deceive me!  
No!*

ADINA:  
*Eternal love!*



*The Clan of the Lichens* by Abbie Betinis (b. 1980)

Abbie Betinis is quickly gaining distinction among 20th and 21st century composers with her edgy, unique, and challenging solo vocal, choral, and instrumental repertoire. Her solo voice compositions are marked by passages of rhythmic variation, virtuosic melodic lines, and an undeniable sense of energy and playfulness. She is also known for her linguistic experimentation, setting texts in languages ranging from Greek to pure gibberish. *The Clan of the Lichens* was debuted in 2004. It is a five-song cycle, setting poems by naturalist poet Opal Whiteley. *The Manitou Messenger*, the St. Olaf University newspaper, hailed *The Clan of the Lichens* as a masterpiece, filled with “alternating bursts of melodic invention with dreamlike impressionist harmony.”

Opal Whiteley’s autobiographical details and the legitimacy of her literary career are often shrouded in mystery. It is rumored that in her youth, Whiteley claimed to be the daughter of French royalty who was simply adopted by the Whiteleys in rural Oregon. Several scholars also claim that these fabricated ancestries were early evidence of a lifelong struggle with schizophrenia. Most traditional accounts state that she was born in Washington in 1897. In any case, her family and friends noticed that Whiteley was an unusual child who preferred to spend time alone, traversing the rich Oregon wilderness or simply sitting in a room thinking. She reputedly collected hundreds of natural specimens, spent countless hours studying and reciting Bible passages, and teaching her peers about the importance of respecting nature.

After the death of her mother and grandmother, Whiteley dropped out of the University of Oregon (where she was admitted even before she completed high school) and travelled to Boston in order to publish and promote *The Fairyland Around Us*, a children's nature book she had written between 1918 and 1919. While there, she met Ellery Sedgwick, the editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*. Whiteley revealed that she had kept a childhood diary hidden in Oregon, but that it was in pieces because her sister had found it once and ripped it to shreds. Allegedly, she returned to Oregon, found the fragmented diary, and spent the next eight months piecing it together. She returned to Boston with the completed diary, and it was serialized in the *Atlantic Monthly* and published as a book in 1920. That same year, Whiteley's book became a bestseller.

Sadly, Whiteley's fame and success were short-lived. Almost as soon as the book was published, critics began trying to discredit her, saying that it was impossible for a six year-old child to have written in such a detailed and mature style. This, in combination with the conspiracy theories surrounding her parentage and origin tarnished her reputation beyond repair. After publishing a book of poems entitled *The Flower of Stars* in 1923 (the same collection Betinis uses for her poetic selections in *The Clan of the Lichens*), Whiteley traveled to India and Europe in an effort to re-legitimize her career. Sadly, the rumors had spread abroad as well, and she found little hope for a revival of her literary career. She eventually migrated to London, where poverty and isolation in combination with any mental instability she may have exhibited as a child spelled out her tragic downfall. She was admitted to the Napsbury Hospital, an institution for the mentally ill. She refused to go by the name Opal Whiteley and demanded to be called by her rightful

name, “Francoise d’Orleans.” Opal Whiteley never left the institution and died on February 16, 1992.

Looking beyond the debate and mystery surrounding Whiteley’s personal life, it is impossible to deny the brilliance of her writing, particularly if we consider these the words of an adult recounting images and memories from her early childhood. These selections of Opal Whiteley’s poetry are filled with countless striking, ethereal, and surreal images, and the opportunities for text painting abound throughout her works. Scenes of nature, both terrestrial and celestial, pervade much of her poetry.

The first movement of the song cycle, “All Things Live” is lively, highly ornamented and seems to be joyous celebration of the life and essence of mankind. The vocal stylings can be considered a modern take on a traditional coloratura aria. The voice starts somewhat hesitantly, easing into the initial melisma with cautious piano. However, it quickly builds into a propulsive melisma that sets the vigorous mood for the rest of the movement. Like the vocal melody, the piano part is also quite energetic, marked with staccatos and accents. The bright coloratura sections are offset by a slower, more deliberate legato section. These two contrasting sections clearly reveal Betinis’s expertise at text setting. She uses these legato sections to highlight the deeper, more complex portions of the poem while reserving the line “all things live” and non-specific “ah’s” for the difficult coloratura passages.

“Night and the Little Failures” begins with a long piano opening that has moments of distinguishable melodies and moments which resemble some 12-tone compositions by Anton Webern or Arnold Schönberg. However, throughout this opening, there are slight

glimmers of tonal melodies in the right hand. Of all the movements, this one presents the greatest challenge between singer and pianist; although the parts are technically harmonically connected, the dissonances and unusual rhythms suggest a disconnect between the parts. Betinis does not actually use all of Whiteley's poem in this particular setting (the omitted section is indicated by ellipses in the text). However, her fluid compositional style allows for her to seamlessly weave together two separate parts of the poem.

The third movement is perhaps the most melodic and fluid of the five movements. The running triplet motive in the left hand against the steady duples in the right hand at the beginning of "The Prayer Wind" calls to mind the sound of the "Prayer Wind" itself. Right after the singer finishes her first phrase, the duples of the right hand become rolled chords, imitating the "music from the harp of stars." Structurally, this movement is composed of two strophic stanzas with an unusual "recitative coda." Just before this recitative section enters, the piano part breaks into an aleatoric accompaniment, playing seven notes freely and randomly, in imitation of a wind chime. Not only does this provide an interesting and unexpected texture to the listeners, it perfectly captures the idea of the Prayer Wind blowing through wind chimes. The ending of the movement is quite mysterious, both textually and musically. During the aleatoric section, the singer describes the "low sweet notes" drifting down to earth, making homes gladder for no apparent reason. However, the final line ("there were more blue eyed children") seems to be completely disconnected to the rest of the movement. The sense of mystery at the end of this movement gives the singer the power to experiment with different vocal

colors. Upon reading more of Whiteley's poetry, one will see that the recurrence of the color blue (which she believed possessed mystical powers) and the continual presence of children is quite characteristic of her work, and thus renders this final line less nonsensical.

The playfulness of the piano and voice parts in "A Tale for Children and Taller Ones" expressly conveys the mood of the title itself and perfectly accompanies Whiteley's unusual, but evocative text. One could argue that this movement demands the singer to expand her expertise into the realm of extended vocal technique. The solo line features several unexpected devices, such as glissandos spanning an octave (perhaps representing the elliptical trajectory of the comet), a marking in the score that asks the singer to imitate the Doppler effect, and setting the final phrase in an eerie stage whisper. Betinis cleverly conveys the character of the comet through these choices. For example, at the end of the piece, the pianist is expected to repeat the final measures as many times as he or she wants, in order to convey the endlessness of the comet's life. This movement is also unique in that it asks the singer to be both the voice of the narrator and the voice of the comet. Whiteley's poem describes the lonely song of the comet as it "whirls around the world", and the singer is then expected to portray the two distinct characters through shifts in tone color.

The final movement of the piece is appropriately also the title of Betinis's composition. This movement is atmospherically quite different than the others. The tone of the poetry itself is much more serious, stately, and mature, while still maintaining the vivid imagery seen in the other selections. The movement starts with the voice alone,

starting on the same E-flat on which the previous movement ended. The piano enters on the second measure, and from that point on, the piano accompaniment ceases to be just accompaniment. This movement allows more opportunities for the pianist to play independently than any of the others. The singer's phrases are long and sustained, but each phrase is separated by a dense piano line, featuring complex rhythms, extended chromaticism, as well as distinct melodic phrases. The climax of the piece occurs when the voice proclaims "And we will cling that no wind may part us." The vocal line climbs to a soaring B-flat 5, the highest note sung in this movement. This line successfully contains the core of the meaning behind this poem, and it serves to bring a sense of purpose to the entire cycle. The playfulness and the sheer imaginative splendor of the language and the compositional style might cause one to easily dismiss this song cycle as one that is creative and unique, but lacking in real substance. This final movement clearly refutes any such theory. More so than in the other movements, "The Clan of the Lichens" brings together piano virtuosity, stunning text, perfect text setting, and unforgettable melodic lines in such a way that the audience walks away with a complete sense of the depth behind Whiteley's words and the undeniable promise in Abbie Betinis's compositions.

*The Clan of the Lichens*

**I. All Things Live\***

All Things live;  
 The innermost thoughts  
 Of a Man's soul  
 Walk the highway  
 Of the Universe,  
 And are seen

---

\* I have retained the capitalization as given in Betinis's score.

By all the pilgrims,  
Who have gone before.

## II. Night and the Little Failures

Night took up the web of life  
And wove a star thereon  
Of amethyst and silver glimmering.

From her rosary she drew a pearl  
And gave its holding to this star  
Lest coldness come to her heart...

Also, Night took from her girdle, a rose  
And caught in its petals the hour glimmering  
That this star might be a flower  
To shed its fragrance on earth fields.

So wove she into beauty  
The little failures of man,  
But his successes  
She cast to earth again.

## IV. A Tale for Children and Taller Ones

There is a little comet  
That whirls around the world.

Sometimes,  
He is seen nearing earth.  
But mostly he is seen  
Dancing and prancing up and down  
The high hall of heaven.

He goeth quickly,  
Yet may be always with us.

He sparkles a song  
Like a ribbon.

Have you heard him sing?

“I am so weary and lonely,  
Most people think me a comet only.  
My tail can be very big with light,  
But I’d like to go to bed at night.”

“I’ll come with patter light  
At latter light...”

## III. The Prayer Wind

There was quiet in the garden  
Save for the music  
From the harp of stars,  
When to its playing  
Came the Prayer Wind  
Wearing rose petal slippers  
And twining forget-me-nots  
In her hair.

There was quiet in the garden  
While the Prayer Wind  
Dropped her forget-me-nots  
From twining in her hair.  
They fell to earth  
With the low sweet notes  
From the harp of stars.

They gently drifted down  
And homes were gladder that day—  
Nobody knew why, only  
There were more blue-eyed children.

## V. The Clan of the Lichens

We will be gray  
For the dumbness of old things  
And we will be  
Without form  
As are old longings.  
And we will be like petals  
As are new yearnings.  
And we will be  
Gray with a little green  
As are old hopes  
That live on with a fore-seeing  
And a dream.

And we will cling  
That no wind may part us  
As old friends.

We will be a symbol  
Of things grown old  
And the beauty that yet is  
When youth glory sleeps.

*Der Hirt auf dem Felsen* by Franz Schubert (1797-1828)

Although hailed as the master of the *lied*, or German art song, Franz Schubert's immense and impressive output includes symphonies, operas, sonatas, liturgical music, and chamber pieces. The most important characteristics of what we today consider Schubert's style are his attention to masterful poetic text setting and use of melody and harmony to perfectly illustrate the texts he selected for composition.

*Der Hirt auf dem Felsen* was one of the last pieces Schubert composed, completing it in October 1828. It is rarely the piece that scholars and critics look to as his final crowning glory because the piece was commissioned by Anna Milder-Hauptman, the star soprano of the time, as a virtuostic concert aria that would showcase her ample instrument and her stylistic versatility. The piece is one of the few Schubert composed for voice, piano, and a third instrument obbligato—in this case, a clarinet. It took Schubert over three years to compose the piece to her liking. Sadly, the composer was never able to see this masterpiece performed. Schubert died November 19, 1828 from what modern scholars classify as syphilis, though some say that he may have died from an overdose of the mercury treatment that was used to treat typhoid fever during his time.

The piece can easily be divided into three distinct sections. The first section begins with the piano firmly establishing the key of B-flat major. The clarinet enters softly at first, playing the melody that the voice eventually echoes after it enters. Once the voice enters, the clarinet and voice begin a pattern of call-and-response; this technique



is an ideal example of Schubert's brilliant text painting since Wilhelm Müller's original poem, "Der Berghirt" ("The Mountain Shepherd") describes the lonely shepherd sitting atop a rocky crag listening to his voice echoing back from ravines. The prevailing melodic line in this first section is quite lyrical, but includes a few impressive leaps, sometimes spanning over an octave. There is a shift in rhythm and tone with the line "Je weiter meiner Stimme dringt," when Schubert introduces dotted eighth-note and sixteenth-note rhythms, both of which recur on the same line repeated in the third section.

The second section is among the most beautiful and challenging pieces in the entire collection of German lied. The slow, sustained vocal line is deceptively simple, featuring mostly half notes and quarter notes. Harmonically, Schubert sets this section of text in G minor, appropriately so since the text describes the shepherd's loneliness at being separated from his love. The clarinet part is significantly sparser in this section, although the echo motif is still prevalent, particularly in the lines which overtly describe the shepherd's song "longingly resounding in the wood" and "through the night". The text makes an optimistic turn when the shepherd speaks of his heart being drawn towards heaven, and appropriately, Schubert shifts into G major. There are a few lovely examples of text painting in this final portion of the second movement. "Zum Himmel zieht" is phrased with a grand, arching vocal line that spans G4 to a G5 before coming to rest on a D5. The climax of this section comes when the vocal line leaps from a D5 to a B-natural 5, the highest pitch sung in the entire piece, and it occurs when the shepherd says for the last time that his heart is drawn towards Heaven.

The final movement of the piece introduced by the clarinet playing a "mini-

cadenza" that not only foreshadows the playful energy of the final movement, but also firmly brings the key center back to B-flat major. Schubert, being both a master of lieder composition, understood that this piece, which is nothing short of epic, required a flashy and energetic finale. He utilizes the text, which describes the shepherd's joy and eagerness at the coming spring and the prospect of journeying to his love, in order to set up a lively melodic line incorporating running sixteenth-notes, spritely eighth-notes, and the same dotted rhythms introduced on the same text in the first movement. The piano accompaniment, which has until this point been relatively sparse and done nothing more than to provide a stable harmonic progression, is given a few moments of melodic independence. Though the text is clearly meant to convey the shepherd's happiness at the coming spring, one must bear in mind that the original singer of this piece was a dramatic operatic soprano who was looking for a concert aria to astound her audiences. For this reason, Schubert chooses to bring back the text of "Je weiter meine Stimme dringt,/ Je heller sie mir wiederklingt/ Von unten" which translates to "However further my voice penetrates,/ the clearer it rings back to me/ from below." This brilliant decision to reintroduce this text (along with the dotted rhythms that originally accompanied it in the first movement) not only serves to thematically unify the piece, but also makes this piece a testament to the power of the human voice.

*Der Hirt auf dem Felsen*

Wenn auf dem höchsten Fels ich steh,  
 Ins tiefe Tal hernieder seh,  
 Und singe,

Fern aus dem tiefen, dunkeln Tal  
 Schwingt sich empor der Widerhall  
 Der Klüfte.

*The Shepherd on the Rock*

*When upon the highest rock I stand,  
 Into the deep valley I look,  
 And sing,*

*Far from the deep, dark valley  
 Whirls upwards the echo  
 From the ravines.*

Je weiter meine Stimme dringt,  
 Je heller sie mir widerklingt  
 Von unten.

*Ever farther my voice penetrates  
 Ever clearer it rings back to me  
 From below.*

Mein Liebchen wohnt so weit von mir,  
 Drum seh'n ich mich so heiß nach ihr  
 Hinüber.

*My sweetheart dwells so far from me  
 That I yearn for her more ardently  
 Over yonder.*

In tiefem Gram verzehr ich mich,  
 Mir ist die Freude hin,  
 Auf Erden mir die Hoffnung wich,  
 Ich hier so einsam bin.

*In deepest sorrow I am consumed,  
 For me joy has gone away,  
 On Earth, hope has given way,  
 I am so alone here.*

So seh'nend klang im Wald das Lied,  
 So seh'nend klang es durch die Nacht.  
 Die Herzen es zum Himmel zieht  
 Mit wunderbarer Macht.

*So longingly the song resounded in the forest,  
 So longingly it resounded through the night.  
 Hearts are drawn towards heaven  
 With wondrous power.*

Der Frühling will kommen,  
 Der Frühling, meine Freud,  
 Nun mach ich mich fertig  
 Zum Wandern bereit.

*The spring will come,  
 The spring, my joy,  
 Now I will make myself ready  
 Ready for journeying.*

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