

REMEMBERING VOICES

Honors Thesis

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By

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Remembering Voices

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Program Notes

Remembering Voices is a recital designed with two parts, each centering around a different theme. The first section of the program honors traditions in the classical music realm with art songs and arias that are close to my heart. The preparation for this portion of the recital has been a lovely trip down memory lane where I have had ample opportunity to remember my voice from years prior. I have also had the opportunity to acknowledge its growth while at Salem State University as a result of working with esteemed vocal instructors. The second section remembers voices that were silenced throughout history, especially in the nineteenth and twentieth century as a result of antisemitism. It attempts to pay homage to the struggle endured by European Jews during this time as they were mistreated, silenced, faced discrimination and hate, and often had to flee their homes or convert to Christianity, as Mahler did. While I am not Jewish, I am very interested in Jewish culture and am committed to honoring the challenges faced by both Jewish composers and non-musicians. Through this commitment, interest, and admiration, I resolved to dedicate a portion of this recital to the works of Jewish composers and Jewish music out of respect for their suffering and their incredible contributions to the musical world.

It is both for my remembering of my own voice and for the conscious remembering of silenced voices that this recital is entitled *Remembering Voices*. Remembering the voices of these marginalized people, and the voices of all other composers represented in her repertoire for this recital, is exactly what I intend to do.

Annabelle Dionne is a Music Major at Salem State University pursuing minors in English and History. She will graduate this May as a member of the Commonwealth Honors Program. Ms. Dionne plans to continue her education and pursue a PhD in Musicology/Ethnomusicology and hopes to teach music history and culture at the collegiate level. Her interests include Jewish/Israeli music, Greek music, Turkish music, and folk music of various cultures.

In addition to academics, she is very involved in performance and has been for many years. Her most recent performance took place at Carnegie Hall, where she was a participant in the Young Adult Honors Performance Series, and she will be traveling to Berlin in July, 2021 for her role as Zweite Knabe in Berlin Opera Academy's production of *Die Zauberflöte*. She has also maintained a job as a liturgical singer for seven years.

Chanson d'amour-Gabriel Fauré

This exciting piece is based on a Paul-Armand Silvestre poem from a larger collection entitled *Le pays des roses*. The poem bears the same name as the song itself. Published in 1882, Chanson d'amour conveys the intense and beautiful feelings of love through bouncy, arpeggiated accompaniment and joyful words set to melodies that express this joy. While it is rather modal at times (specifically at the repetition of "Où mes baisers s'épuiseront"), the piece was composed in F Major, thus contributing to the joy and peace of love, though this song is nearly buoyant with its excitement! The text of the piece is clearly spoken from one who is in love, perhaps in the stage today known as the "honeymoon phase." Wouldn't you love to have someone serenade you with a piece like this?

Translation

J'aime tes yeux, j'aime ton front	I love your eyes, I love your brow,
Ô ma rebelle, ô ma farouche,	oh my rebellious one, oh my wild one,
J'aime tes yeux, j'aime ta bouche	I love your eyes, I love your mouth
Où mes baisers s'épuiseront.	where my kisses exhaust themselves.
J'aime ta voix, j'aime l'étrange	I love your voice, I love the strange
Grâce de tout ce que tu dis,	gracefulness of all that which you say,
Ô ma rebelle, ô mon cher ange,	oh my rebellious one, oh my dear angel,
Mon enfer et mon paradis!	my hell and my paradise!
J'aime tes yeux, j'aime ton front	I love your eyes, I love your brow,
Ô ma rebelle, ô ma farouche,	oh my rebellious one, oh my wild one,
J'aime tes yeux, j'aime ta bouche	I love your eyes, I love your mouth
Où mes baisers s'épuiseront.	where my kisses exhaust themselves.
J'aime tout ce qui te fait belle,	I love all that makes you beautiful,
De tes pieds jusqu'à tes cheveux,	from your feet up to your hair;
Ô toi vers qui montent mes vœux,	oh you towards whom rises my desires,
Ô ma farouche, ô ma rebelle!	oh my wild one, oh my rebellious one!
J'aime tes yeux, j'aime ton front	I love your eyes, I love your brow,
Ô ma rebelle, ô ma farouche,	oh my rebellious one, oh my wild one,
J'aime tes yeux, j'aime ta bouche	I love your eyes, I love your mouth
Où mes baisers s'épuiseront.	where my kisses exhaust themselves.

Le Secret-Gabriel Fauré

Le Secret was published in 1879 with the text of Paul-Armand Silvestre's poem *Mystère*, also from *Le pays des roses*. The song's publication predates that of the poem collection, which was released in 1882. This gentle, yet passionate, song can be considered in three sections, each representing the time of day discussed by the lyrics and the moods conveyed in each section. Though it is written in D minor, Le Secret lacks the typical happy-sounding chords of a piece composed in a major key. D minor is typically associated with grief, sadness, and

unusual feelings. Fauré's perfect choice of key and usage of dynamics creates a piece accurately reflecting the poetry, as the narrator contemplates their love's place in their life.

Translation

Je veux que le matin l'ignore	I wish that the morning were unaware
Le nom que j'ai dit à la nuit,	of the name I told to the night;
Et qu'au vent de l'aube, sans bruit,	and that in the dawn wind, silently,
Comme une larme il s'évapore	like a tear it would evaporate.
Je veux que le jour le proclame	I want the day to proclaim it,
L'amour qu'au matin j'ai cache	the love I have hidden from the morning,
Et sur mon cœur ouvert penché	and leaning over my open heart
Comme un grain d'encens il l'enflamme.	like a grain of incense sets it on fire.
Je veux que le couchant l'oublie	I want the sunset to forget it,
Le secret que j'ai dit au jour,	the secret I told to the day,
Et l'emporte avec mon amour	to carry it away with my love
Aux plis de sa robe pâlie!	in the fold of its pale robe!

Pie Jesu-from Gabriel Fauré's *Requiem*

This piece, written in Latin, was first performed in 1888 as the fifth piece of seven in Fauré's *Requiem*. *Requiem* is Fauré's most well-known large-scale work, and it was played at his funeral in 1924. It is composed in Bb Major, which communicates clarity and love, as well as a hopefulness for peace. No other key could better reflect the meaning of this prayer used in this stunning song. This piece is remarkably peaceful, moving slowly to reflect the tranquil mood of the lyrics.

Translation

Pie Jésus, Domine, dona eis réquiem	Kind Jesus, Lord, give them rest,
dona eis sempiternam requiem	give them eternal rest.

"Giunse alfin il momento/Deh vieni non tardar" from Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro*

This recitative and aria are from Mozart's 1786 opera *Le nozze di Figaro*. *Le nozze di Figaro* is a farcical comedy-of-errors-type involving mistaken identities, disguises, marriages, and tricks between both spouses and servants and their masters! In this piece, Susanna tricks her betrothed and beloved Figaro by pretending to sing this aria to the Count, their master who is quite smitten with Susanna, though the Count is not present when she sings this. This very romantic song is enough to fool anyone into thinking that they are in love, and Figaro falls victim to her ruse, declaring his love for her in order to separate Susanna and the Count.

This piece is separated into two different sections: the recitative and the aria. The recitative is a musical component utilized by operatic composers to set the scene for the upcoming aria. It is often more speech-like than the aria, either in rhythm, range, or musicality. The aria, contrastingly, is a more traditionally song-like composition. It is a single

singer reflecting on a situation, thought, or even another character in the opera! It can be considered a musical monologue.

Mozart writes these pieces brilliantly, allowing the joyful, romantic words to shine through the equally joyful accompaniment. While it is scarce and mostly ornamental during the recitative, the accompaniment in the aria takes a larger role, communicating the peace and joy Susanna feels (or is pretending to feel!) as she sings to her beloved. The recitative is written in C Major and is thus overflowing with innocent love and joy, while the aria is written in F Major, communicating the calmness Susanna feels with her new love! It is a lovely contrast to the clear excitement felt in the recitative

Translation

Recitative:

Giunse alfin il momento	Has arrived at last the moment
Che godrò senz'affanno	that I will enjoy without worry
In braccio all'idol mio.	in the arm of the beloved mine.
Timide cure, uscite dal mio petto,	Timid worries, get out of my chest,
A turbar non venite il mio diletto	do not come to disturb my delight!
Oh come par che all'amoroso foco	Oh, how it seems that to the amorous fires
L'amenità del loco	the comfort of the place
La terra e il ciel responda	the earth and the heaven respond,
Come la notte i furti miei seconda	as the night the ruses mine seconds!

Aria:

Deh, vieni, non tardar, o gioja bella,	Ah, come, do not delay, my joy beautiful
Vieni ove amore per goder t'appella,	come to where love's enjoyment calls you
Finchè non splende in ciel notturna face,	before the moon rises,
Finchè l'aria è ancor bruna e il mondo tace.	while the air is still dark and the world is quiet.
Qui mormora il ruscel, qui scherza l'aura	Here murmurs the stream, here plays the breeze,
Che col dolce susurro il cor ristaura.	which with sweet whispering the heart restores.
Qui ridono i fioretti e l'erba è fresca,	Here laughs the little flowers and the grass is cool,
Ai piaceri d'amor qui tutto adescia.	to the pleasures of love here everything entices you.
Vieni, ben mio, tra queste piante ascose.	Come, dearest mine, among these trees sheltering.
Vieni, vieni!	Come, come!
Ti vo' la fronte incoronar di rose.	I want to crown your brow with roses.

“O mio babbino caro” from Puccini’s *Gianni Schicchi*

This aria is taken from Giacomo Puccini’s famous comedic opera *Gianni Schicchi*. A one-act opera, it was originally intended to be performed alongside two other one-act operas written by Puccini in a set called *Il trittico*, but it was widely favored over its counterparts upon debut. Today, it is typically performed alone, or with one other opera intended for *Il trittico*.

Gianni Schicchi follows the schemes of a family mourning the loss of a relative—well, more mourning the loss of his money, which he left to a monastery. The deceased’s nephew, Rinuccio, hoping to marry Lauretta, the daughter of Gianni Schicchi, sends for the Schicchi and Lauretta before discovering the tragedy of the lost money. Before Schicchi and Lauretta’s arrival, Rinuccio attempts to convince the family that Schicchi will be able to help them reallocate the decedent’s money and property for their own gain. Schicchi and Lauretta arrive and the family, indignant by Schicchi and Lauretta’s social status, tells them to leave. Schicchi swears against aiding the family in their scrutiny of and scheming about the will because of their rude dispositions. Lauretta begs him to reconsider with this aria, in which she proclaims her affection for Rinuccio and her resolution to throw herself off of Ponte Vecchio into the River Arno if she is unable to marry him!

At her pleas, Schicchi agrees to assist the family, and plots to trick the doctor and the notary of Florence that the family member is, in fact, not dead and to create a new will, voiding all wills made prior. In dictating who in the family should receive what, he fulfills the minor requests of the family members, but leaves the most coveted aspects of the deceased’s property, including the home, to himself, saying that these will be left to “my devoted friend Gianni Schicchi.” Of course, the family is unable to contest these requests in front of the notary due to Florence’s strict punishments regarding falsification of a will, and Schicchi kicks them out of his new home! With nothing separating them anymore, Rinuccio and Lauretta are able to marry and they sing a duet, entitled “Lauretta mia” and Schicchi is moved by the love between the two, using it as justification for the laws he just broke!

Lauretta’s dramatic pleading and threatening to throw herself off of Ponte Vecchio is mirrored in Puccini’s writing of this piece. The drama of this piece cannot be understated, and Puccini’s exquisite setting of the lyrics make it a beautiful, melodramatic, operatic temper-tantrum of sorts. It is in Ab Major, a key often associated with struggle and lament, which is exactly what Lauretta is attempting to communicate to her father! With all the drama, this piece is one of the most fun arias I have ever had the pleasure of singing.

Translation

O mio babbino caro,	Oh my daddy dearest,
Mi piace è bello;	he pleases me, he is handsome;
Vo’ andare in Porta Rossa	I want to go to Porta Rossa
A comperar l’anello!	to buy the ring!
Sì, sì, ci voglio andare!	Yes, yes, there I want to go!
E se l’amassi indarno	And if I love him in vain,

Andrei sul Ponte Vecchio,	I would go to Ponte Vecchio
Ma per buttarmi in Arno!	But to throw myself into the Arno!
Mi strugge e mi tormento!	I suffer and I am tormented!
O Dio, vorrei morir!	O God, I want to die!
Babbo, pietà, pietà!	Daddy, pity, pity!

Gian Carlo Menotti-*The Medium*

This opera, written in English and in French, is a creepy one! The story follows Madame Flora (Babba), Babba's daughter Monica, and Toby as they conduct a scam business in which Babba pretends to communicate with the spirits of her clients' deceased loved ones. Monica and Toby, having known no other way of life, try to find fun and innocence amidst this craziness and often play together as an escape from their dark world. While Monica finds great pleasure in Toby, who is mute, Babba is constantly suspicious of him and abuses him often. When Babba actually does experience a paranormal event, she becomes entirely frightened and blames Toby for the event; Toby is unable to defend himself due to his disability, but is innocent of the ordeal. However, Babba remains unconvinced.

Later in the opera, Babba, having turned to alcohol for consolation, approaches Toby, reminding him of how she has cared for him since he was young and promises him a reward if he confesses to trying to frighten her through the paranormal experience. She begins to beat him when he does not answer, but is interrupted by her clients. She attempts to return their money and confess to her scheme, but the clients refuse to accept her confessions, instead believing her lies. When they leave, Babba falls asleep after locking Monica in her room and drinking herself into a stupor and Toby attempts to sneak by Babba without waking her. He drops the lid of a trunk, however, waking her and quickly hides behind a curtain, but Babba, frightened by the sound and the ghostly habits of late, shoots at the curtain, killing Toby. Monica demands to be released and, upon seeing Toby's bloody body, she runs away looking for help. According to Menotti, "As the curtain falls, Baba kneels over Toby's lifeless body, desperately seeking the truth in his unanswering [*sic*] eyes."

Mummy, Mummy Dear

In this song, Monica performs her seance ruse for Mrs. Nolan, a client of Babba, looking to communicate with her deceased daughter Doodly. She speaks to Mrs. Nolan as Doodly referring to her as "Mummy" and asking her to relieve herself of her grief and allow her (Doodly) to rest. This song is very comforting on the surface, proclaiming the peace Doodly feels through death and the enjoyment she feels in her rest. It is even composed in G Major, which communicates tenderness, peacefulness, and gentleness. However, it is not without ulterior motives. At the conclusion of the song, Monica as Doodly tells Mrs. Nolan to keep only Doodly's golden locket, an object of which Mrs. Nolan is unaware. Conveniently, immediately after giving these instructions, Monica as Doodly begins to disappear, leaving Mrs. Nolan confused and eager to become a regular patron of Madame Flora.

The Black Swan

This song is perhaps the strangest lullaby you will ever hear! Grim and dark, it is hard to imagine this is a lullaby, but when one considers the creepy upbringing Monica experienced,

it becomes more feasible! Its creepy lyrics are made more impactful through the repetitive accompaniment lolling along as Monica sings of the fallen and dying sun. Menotti's use of a minor communicates the restlessness of the narrator's search for her lover.

Monica sings this lullaby to Babba to calm her after Babba becomes frightened by the paranormal experience she feels during the séance. In the opera, it is a duet, but for this evening's purposes, please enjoy a solo rendition of "The Black Swan".

"Csárdás" from Johann Strauss's *Die Fledermaus*

Premiered in Vienna in 1874, Strauss's *Die Fledermaus* chronicles the happenings of Eisenstein, Rosalinde, Alfred, and Adele on New Year's Eve in Vienna in 1899 as they interact with other characters, tricking and being tricked by both them and themselves! The opera begins with Alfred serenading Rosalinde, an old girlfriend of his who is now married to Gabriel von Eisenstein. His serenade catches the attention of Adele, the Eisensteins' housekeeper who has just received an invitation to Prince Orlofsky's ball. Adele uses the excuse of visiting a sick relative to request the night off in order to attend the ball, but her mistress, Rosalinde refuses. After refusing Adele's request, Alfred appears and Rosalinde, attracted by and to his voice, is intrigued by him. Hearing her husband return home, however, she sends him away. Eisenstein returns home yelling at his lawyer, Blind, who, in defending Eisenstein in court, has elongated Eisenstein's prison sentence by five days! At Rosalinde and Eisenstein's suggestion, Blind leaves the Eisenstein residence and Falke, a friend of Eisenstein arrives to privately invite him to Prince Orlofsky's ball before his prison sentence. As Eisenstein changes apparel for the occasion under the guise of changing for prison, Falke approaches Rosalinde to invite her to the ball, as well, in a disguise so that she may see Eisenstein's flirtatious habits. She reluctantly agrees and bids her husband adieu with Adele as he "leaves for prison" before telling Adele that she may "visit her aunt" tonight after all. In her anger at Eisenstein's lie, Rosalinde meets with Alfred and sings a duet with him, ever attracted by his singing voice, until the prison warden arrives at the Eisenstein residence to collect Eisenstein for his prison sentence. To preserve her honor, Rosalinde convinces Alfred to pose as Eisenstein, going to prison for him.

After Alfred leaves for Eisenstein's jail sentence, Rosalinde attends the ball, posing as a Hungarian countess! Eisenstein, pretending to be a Frenchman, and Adele, pretending to be a Russian actress named Olga, are also present and Rosalinde sees Eisenstein flirting with 'Olga'. She then catches his attention, and he begins to flirt with her, not knowing that she is, in fact, his wife. They sing a duet, in the process of which she manages to steal his pocket watch, but is successful in keeping her identity hidden through the use of a mask. To prove the Hungarian roots that she does not possess, Rosalinde sings the *Csárdás*, an impassioned song about the joys and beauties of her homeland and her loyalty to it. This convinces everyone that she is, in fact, Hungarian, and all the guests continue to enjoy the party while Eisenstein flirts with her.

After the end of the party, Eisenstein reports to the prison to begin his jail sentence, but discovers that an unknown man found in his apartment with his wife has claimed his

identity and taken his place in the jail. Wanting to uncover the truth, Eisenstein dons a disguise as Blind, his old lawyer. When Rosalinde arrives at the jail to secure Alfred's release, she sees "Blind" and asks him to press divorce charges against her deviant, unfaithful husband. After an interrogation, Eisenstein reveals himself, removing the disguise, and accuses Rosalinde of impropriety. In response to this accusation, Rosalinde simply shows him the pocket watch she had stolen from him at the party while disguised as the Hungarian countess. With both of their unfaithful transgressions, they agree that they should not divorce because they do love each other. As they embrace, Falke arrives to relish in his successful ruse, but finds that his plan only caused success for everyone he tricked! The opera ends happily with a chorus praising champagne and all the joys it brings!

The Csárdás honors its Hungarian claims through a series of grace notes and its customary fast ending. The song starts slowly and full of emotion, with the accompaniment illustrating and elaborating upon the drama of the words and the singer herself through playing heavy chords for emphasis and even tear-like notes and phrases to echo Rosalinde's longing for her "homeland." The second half of the piece, contrastingly, is very lively and quick, encouraging dance and spectacle. The entire piece is composed in D Major, making it triumphant and joyful, despite Rosalinde's false longing for Hungary! Perhaps the triumph is found in her fooling of the party guests and her husband! The playfulness between the singer and the accompanying musician(s) make this piece extraordinary, exciting, and extra fun to perform.

Deux melodies hébraïques by Maurice Ravel

Kaddisch

Traditionally spelled Kaddish, *Kaddisch* utilizes the Jewish Kaddish prayer, which is used most often in mourning. The purpose of Kaddish is to sanctify God's name, praise God, and express desire for God's kingdom to be created on earth. Within the traditions of Judaism, the Kaddish is recited with a *minyan* (a quorum of ten Jews necessary for public services) after a psalm or prayer recited also in the presence of the *minyan*. Because of its public sanctification purposes, the aspect of a *minyan* is important in the Kaddish recitation. The person praying the Kaddish stands and those praying with him may either sit or stand, depending on the congregation. The Kaddish is typically recited in unison by all mourners present for the funeral or memorial, and a child younger than thirteen is permitted to speak the Mourner's Kaddish if a parent has died. Daughters are allowed to participate in saying the Kaddish by most religious authorities, but are not required to do so, whereas sons must recite the Kaddish for eleven months after the death of a parent and on each anniversary of their death.

As you can see below in the translation, there is no mention of death in this Mourner's Kaddish. Instead of mourning the death of their friend or relative, the prayer praises God's goodness and His name as holy above all else. It is an interesting way to consider death, thanking and praising the Almighty rather than lamenting the loss. It is an inspiring way of coping with grief.

The accompaniment for this piece is incredibly scarce. It is only used for ornamental purposes which truly allows the beauty and reverence of the prayer to shine through the song. Ravel, while not Jewish, clearly wrote this piece in an attempt to honor the Jewish culture both through the prayer itself and his addition of grace notes and various melisma to create a more “Jewish” sound. His writing can sometimes be difficult to understand, as the downbeats do not always line up with the proper accentuation of a word, and his spelling of Aramaic words is also often incorrect. Despite these issues, respect for a religion, culture, and language is seen and heard through *Kaddisch*.

The Kaddish is written and spoken in Aramaic and, because of this, a word-for-word translation is difficult to find, but Rabbi David Kudan of Temple Tiferet Shalom was remarkably helpful in crafting this translation, in which he did translate each word. Where it was appropriate or might have been helpful, a paraphrased translation has been included in the English column in brackets.

Translation

Yit'gadal	may it grow exalted
v'yit'kadash	may it be sanctified
sh'mei	His name
raba	great
	[May His great Name grow exalted and sanctified]
b'al'ma	In the world
di v'ra	which He created
khir'utei	as He willed
	in the world that He created as He willed.
v'yam'likh	may He reign
mal'khutei	(over) His kingdom
	May He give reign to His kingship
b'chayeikhon	in your lifetimes
uv'yomeikhon	and in your days.
uv'chayei	and in the lives
d'khol	of all
beit yis'ra'eil	the house of Israel
ba'agala	swiftly
uviz'man kariv	and soon
v'im'ru:	Now say:
Amein	Amen
Yit'barakh	may it be blessed
v'yish'tabach	and may it be praised
v'yit'pa'ar	and may it be glorified
v'yit'romam	and exalted

v'yit'nasei	and extolled
v'yit'hadar	and lauded
v'yit'aleh	and raised up
v'yit'halal	and praised
sh'mei	His name
d'kud'sha	The Holy One
	[Blessed and praised and glorified and exalted and extolled and mighty and upraised and lauded be the Name of the Holy One]
B'rikh hu.	Blessed is He.
l'eila min	beyond
kol	all
bir'khata	the blessings
v'shirata	and songs
toosh'b'chatah	and paeons
v'nechematah	and praises
	[Beyond any blessing and song, praise and consolation]
da'ameeran	that are uttered
b'al'mah	in the world
v'eemru:	Now say:
Amein	Amen

*Translation and transliteration courtesy of Ms. Bryna Tabasky and Rabbi David Kudan

L'énigme éternelle

L'énigme éternelle is very different from *Kaddisch*. It is written in Yiddish, which was, according to Ms. Bryna Tabasky, a form of medieval German. This does explain the multiple similarities between the two languages, though perhaps the most notable difference is in the accompaniment. While the accompaniment of *Kaddisch* is sparse, the e minor accompaniment of *L'énigme éternelle* is very present, and very repetitive. Its harshness adds to the purpose of the piece: the eternal question of life. It is clear from Ravel's writing that he does not know what the answer is to life's eternal question, as the answers in this song are all "Tra-la-la" and even they eventually fade away. Ravel's agnosticism is said to have played a role in the composition of this piece as he "found it hard enough to fathom his own motives without trying to understand those of a celestial Being." The coyness of the lyrics is unmistakable. His refusal to finish any sentence leaves only questions where "Tra la la"s lie instead of answers.

Translation

Frägt die Velt die alte Casche	"If the world asks the old question"
Tra la la la...	Tra la la la...

Entfernt men	“One answers”
Tra la la la...	Tra la la la...
Un as men will kennen sagen	“And if one wants. [one] can say”
Tra la la la...	Tra la la la...
Frägt die Velt die alte Casche	If the world asks the old question
Tra la la la	Tra la la la

*Translation from Laura Prichard

Rückert Lieder by Gustav Mahler

Mahler’s *Rückert Lieder* were composed in 1901 using Fredrich Rückert’s poems as text for the songs. *Rückert Lieder* is a set of five songs, all of varying themes, yet all-encompassing the feelings of an artist. Mahler’s setting of the text creates an exquisite mirroring of the emotions conveyed and beautifully frames the romantic element of the poems he uses. While these five songs were written and released as a set, the set is traditionally broken for performance’s sake. Tonight, you will hear two of the *Rückert Lieder*: “Liebst du um Schönheit” and “Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen.”

Liebst du um Schönheit

This heartwarming piece about love was given as a gift by Mahler to his wife Alma and perfectly sums up the true nature and purpose of love. Love is given for love’s sake, not for the admiration of beauty, youth, wealth, or anything else! Mahler saw himself in this poem, apparently believing he lacked beauty and youth, but was abundant in dedication and love for his wife. His instrumentation of the poem reflects the wonder of love for love’s sake and is nothing but joyful, and his chosen key of Eb Major conveys an unconditional, devoted love. This sweet piece always brings a smile to my face and I sincerely hope you find the same enjoyment I find in it.

Translation

Liebst du um Schönheit, o nicht mich liebe!	If you love for beauty, oh do not love me!
Liebe die Sonne, sie trägt ein gold’nes Haar!	Love the sun, she has golden hair!
Liebst du um Jugend, o nicht mich liebe!	If you love for youth, oh do not love me!
Liebe der Frühling, der jung ist jedes Jahr!	Love the spring which is young every year!
Liebst du um Schätze, o nicht mich liebe.	If you love for wealth, oh do not love me.
Liebe die Meerfrau, sie hat viel Perlen klar.	Love the mermaid; she has many shining pearls.
Liebst du um Liebe, o ja, mich liebe!	If you love for love’s sake, oh yes, love me!
Liebe mich immer, dich lieb’ ich immerdar.	Love me always, I shall love you forever!

“Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen”

This powerful song needs little explanation. Mahler’s setting of the text creates a stunning piece of music inspiring reflection and meditation on what our place in the world truly is.

The narrator's peacefulness in being dead to the world and living in their own heaven, love, and song is nearly palpable through Mahler's setting of the poem in F Major, and encourages listeners to find their own peace, potentially even through reclusion.

Translation

Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen,	I have become lost to the world,
Mit der ich sonst viele Zeit verdorben,	with which I used to waste so much time,
Sie hat so lange nichts von mir vernommen,	for so long it has heard nothing from me,
Sie mag wohl glauben, ich sei gestorben!	it may well believe I am dead!
Es ist mir auch gar nichts daran gelegen,	It is also of absolutely no consequence to me,
Ob sie mich für gestorben hält.	whether it believes me dead.
Ich kann auch gar nichts sagen dagegen,	Nor can I say anything against its assumption
Denn wirklich bin ich gestorben der Welt.	for actually am I dead to the world.
Ich bin gestorben dem Weltgetümmel,	I am dead to the world's tumult,
Und ruh' in einem stillen Gebiet!	and I rest in a quiet realm!
Ich leb' allein in meinem Himmel,	I live alone in my heaven,
In meinem Lieben, in meinem Lied!	in my love, in my song!

Gratitude

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