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A graduate recital in voice

Branden D.S. Haralson
University of Northern Iowa

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A GRADUATE RECITAL IN VOICE

An Abstract of a Thesis

Submitted

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Music

Branden D. S. Haralson

University of Northern Iowa

May 2015

This Study By: Branden D. S. Haralson

Entitled: Graduate Recital in Voice

has been approved as meeting the thesis requirements for the

Degree of Master of Music

Date _____ Dr. Jean McDonald, Chair, Thesis Committee

Date _____ Dr. John Hines, Thesis Committee Member

Date _____ Dr. Mitra Sadeghpour, Thesis Committee Member

Date _____ Prof. Jeffrey Brich, Thesis Committee Member

Date _____ Dr. April Chatham-Carpenter, Interim Dean, Graduate College

This Recital Performance by: Branden D. S. Haralson

Entitled: Graduate Recital in Voice

Date of Recital: April 3, 2015

has been approved as meeting the recital requirements for the Degree of Master of Music

Date Dr. Jean McDonald, Chair, Recital Committee

Date Dr. John Hines, Recital Committee Member

Date Dr. Mitra Sadeghpour, Recital Committee Member

Date Prof. Jeffrey Brich, Recital Committee Member

Date Dr. April Chatham-Carpenter, Interim Dean, Graduate College

ABSTRACT

Branden D. S. Haralson, baritone, presented his graduate voice recital on Friday, April 3, 2015, at 6:00 p.m., in Davis Hall of the Gallagher-Bluedorn Performing Arts Center on the University of Northern Iowa campus. The recital was presented in collaboration with pianist Dr. Robin Guy, and included works by Beethoven, Schubert, Mahler, and Duparc. This abstract discusses musical and historical features of the works performed.

Beethoven (1770-1827), “Sally in our Alley” from *Twenty-Five Scottish Songs*

Although lesser known than some of his other works, the *Twenty-Five Scottish Songs*, Op. 108, are substantial and charming pieces composed during Beethoven’s Late Period. In 1817, Beethoven accepted a commission by the Philharmonic Society of London, which came during a time in Beethoven’s life of considerable melancholy due to deteriorating health and total loss of hearing. The journey to London, however, was soothing to Beethoven’s health, and furthermore, to his ego, at a time when he was feeling out of touch with current compositional trends. Opus 108 was first published in London in 1818.¹ Originally in English, the songs were translated into German and published in Berlin in 1822. The texts were derived from traditional Scottish folk songs, and were compiled by George Thomson (1757-1815).² Within this unique collection are pieces for solo voice and piano, chorus, and small string chamber ensemble with voice.

¹ . Joseph Kerman, et al. "Beethoven, Ludwig van." *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online.* Oxford University Press, accessed March 27, 2015, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/40026pg17>.

² . Ibid.

“Sally in our Alley” is the final song of the set, and opened the recital. Scored for voice, piano, violin, and violincello, the song is set in strophic form, and is characterized by light staccati and pizzicati in the piano and strings. The optimism of D-major creates a light and joyous feeling, and an A-major seventh chord serves to emphasize the importance of “heart” in each verse by the use of the authentic cadence. Finally, the song concludes with an extended instrumental postlude.

Schubert (1797-1828), I. “Gute Nacht” from *Winterreise*

Arguably the greatest of Schubert’s song cycles, *Winterreise* (Winter Journey)³, Op. 89, is a collection of twenty-four songs based on Wilhelm Müller’s poetry collection, *Die Winterreise*.⁴ Schubert originally published the first twelve songs of *Winterreise* in 1823, in the exact order of Müller’s then twelve-poem collection. In 1824, when Müller added twelve new poems to his collection, Schubert followed his lead and finished what we now know as the complete *Winterreise*, changing the order of the second grouping of the twelve Müller poems.⁵ The first song of the cycle, “Gute Nacht” (Good Night), begins a narrative tale of the poet’s wilderness journey while pondering an unrequited love. The piece begins with a steady tempo marking of “Mäßig” (moderate).⁶ Unrelenting eighth-notes in the piano create the feeling of a decided march into the unknown. The D-minor tonality portrays the devastating circumstances surrounding his departure. And in the fourth verse, a modulation to D-major highlights the poet’s sarcasm with the words,

³. All translations in this abstract are my own.

⁴. Arnold Feil, *Franz Schubert: Die Schöne Müllerin – Winterreise*, ed. Reinhard G. Pauly, trans. Ann C. Sherwin, (Portland, Oregon: Amadeus Press, 1988), 24.

⁵. Ibid.

“Will dich im Traum nicht stören, wär schad' um deine Ruh’,” (I will not disturb your dream, for it would upset your rest.) This tonality continues until the last iteration of, “An dich hab' ich gedacht” (You will know that I have thought about you), when the D-minor tonality resumes and finishes the piece.

Schubert, IV. “Erstarrung” from *Winterreise*

The fourth song of *Winterreise*, “Erstarrung” (Numbness), is marked “Ziemlich schnell” (rather fast), and this tempo remains unchanged until the last vocal phrase, “ihr Bild dahin” (her image away). This single variant in the tempo reveals the poet’s final acceptance of his lost love. C-minor tonality and unwavering eighth-note triplets further contribute to the sense of a frantic search, as suggested by the opening text, “Ich such' im Schnee vergebens nach ihrer Tritte Spur” (I search in vain in the snow for a trace of her footsteps). Schubert sets the phrase, “Durchdringen Eis und Schnee mit meinen heißen Tränen, Bis ich die Erde seh’” (I penetrate the snow with my hot tears, and I see the Earth beneath) with an ascending climactic line that remains unresolved for eighteen measures. The highest note in the line (A-flat 4) occurs ironically on the unstressed syllable, “-nen” of “meinen” (my), increasing the impression of instability. This device is used effectively, again, in the return of the A section on “das” (the), again, highlighting the narrator’s irrational state of mind.

Schubert, XII. “Einsamkeit” from *Winterreise*

The twelfth song of *Winterreise*, “Einsamkeit” (Solitude), was originally the final piece of the first twelve-song publication of *Winterreise*. It is interesting that Schubert

maintained this piece's position in his final publication of the entire cycle.⁷ In the cycle's final form, "Einsamkeit" indicates the beginning of the narrator's journey to insanity, with the narrator skipping erratically from one statement to another without transition. The first full sentence begins slowly and peacefully, with sparse accompaniment barely supporting the voice in B-minor tonality. With the text, "Ach, daß die Luft so ruhig! Ach, daß die Welt so licht!" (Ah, how the air is so peaceful, the world so bright), Schubert employs diminished tonality and a cutting F-natural to E-natural iteration from the piano to emphasize the narrator's emotional conflict. Subsequently, a progression of sixteenth-note triplets move through A-major, E-major seven, and A-major flat seven, culminating in F-sharp major. The voice enters dramatically on an A-sharp with the statement, "Als noch die Stürme tobten" (When the storms still raged). Immediately following this phrase, the piano modulates to G-major in a fluid accompaniment of eighth-notes, as the voice answers with, "War ich so elend nicht." (I was not so miserable).

Schubert, XXIV. "Der Leiermann" from *Winterreise*

The final song of *Winterreise*, "Der Leiermann" (The Hurdy-Gurdy Man), is the final statement of a man succumbing to hypothermia. He describes the image of a hurdy-gurdy man playing his song in the middle of a town square. A D-sharp grace note followed by an open fifth of A and E aptly indicates the initiation of the drone of the hurdy-gurdy. In the third measure, the hurdy-gurdy's tune is heard for the first time. The tempo throughout is "Etwas langsam" (somewhat slow), and the hurdy-gurdy tune

⁷. Robert Winter, et al. "Schubert, Franz." *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, accessed March 11, 2015, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/25109pg2>.

answers each statement by the narrator. Only on the penultimate statement of, “Wunderlicher Alter, Soll ich mit dir geh'n?” (Strange old man, shall I go with you), do we hear the continuance of the hurdy-gurdy's song overlap with the voice. After the final statement of, “Willst zu meinen Liedern Deine Leier dreh'n?” (Will you play your hurdy-gurdy to my songs), the piano plays the final answer of the “Leiermann.” The final dynamic marking diminishes with the “Leier” tune finishing the haunting cycle.

Mahler (1860-1911), “Nun will die Sonn' so hell aufgeh'n” from *Kindertotenlieder*

Kindertotenlieder is a song cycle composed of five songs based on the poetry of Friedrich Rückert. Rückert's collection by the same name contains 425 poems lamenting the loss of his two young children.⁸ Scored for orchestra and low voice, the cycle was premiered by German baritone Friedrich Weidemann.⁹ The three strophic pieces “Wenn dein Mütterlein,” “Oft denk' ich,” and “In diesem Wetter,” are set with variants in each verse because of Mahler's belief that, “There should be no repetition, only evolution.”¹⁰ Conversely, the other two pieces, both “psychological vignettes lacking narrative continuity and concluding somewhat ambiguously,” highlight Mahler's search for the stark contrast of light and dark embodying the idea of death and resurrection.¹¹

Kindertotenlieder was composed four years before the death of Mahler's own daughter. After her death, the composer offered this remark: “I placed myself in the situation that a

⁸. Stephen E. Hefling, “Song and Symphony (II). From Wunderhorn to Rückert and the middle-period symphonies: vocal and instrumental works for a new century,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Mahler*, ed. by Jeremy Barham. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 113-114.

⁹. Mr. Weidemann was well known in his time as a leading Wotan and Kurwenal, along with other Puccini and Verdi baritone roles.

¹⁰. Ibid, 112.

¹¹. Ibid.

child of mine had died. When I really lost my daughter, I could not have written these songs any more.”¹²

The first song, “Nun will die Sonn’ so hell aufgeh’n” (Now will the sun so brightly rise), portrays agony in a chromatic, two-part counterpoint that reaches no harmonic resolution. The first line of text, “Nun will die Sonn’ so hell aufgeh’n,” musically descends rather than ascends, produces a tritone, and concludes with a half-diminished seventh chord. This unexpected setting expresses how the narrator’s grief at having lost his children has left him emotionally unstable. The answering phrase, “Als sei kein Unglück” (as if no unhappiness), rises chromatically with a lullaby accompaniment that highlights the narrator’s pain and anguish brought on by the memories of his children.¹³ “Heil sei dem Freudenlicht der Welt!” (Welcome you, the joy of the world), the third-to-last line of the piece, is answered bitterly with the ominous and foreboding chime of the glockenspiel, another instance of childhood imagery.

Mahler, “Nun seh’ ich Wohl, warum so dunkle Flammen” from *Kindertotenlieder*

The second song, “Nun seh’ ich Wohl, warum so dunkle Flammen” (Now I see well why with such dark flames), is considered by scholars like Stephen Hefling to be the most subtly complex.¹⁴ Rückert uses the imagery of the children’s eyes to express his feeble understanding of life; there is only light and dark (life and death). The tonal center

¹². Ibid.

¹³. Ibid.

¹⁴. Ibid.

of C-minor that pervades the piece, throughout, is interrupted only intermittently by the optimism of major passages.¹⁵

Mahler, “Wenn dein Mütterlein” from *Kindertotenlieder*

The third song, “Wenn dein Mütterlein” (When your darling mother), is the first of three strophic pieces within the cycle. The song remains fairly calm, describing the narrator’s recurring images of his daughter playing in her room, until a climax on, “Dort, wo würde dein lieb Gesichten sein” (There, where your dear face would be). At this point, the vocal line ascends almost two octaves between this phrase and the final line of text, depicting the extreme emotions felt by the narrator. Finally, with the words, “mein Töchterlein” (my darling daughter), the voice sinks to G2, and then raises by three consecutive whole steps up to the foundational key of C-minor. By finishing on the dominant, there is no resolution to the third piece, indicative of the narrator’s lack of acceptance.

Mahler, “Oft denk’ ich, sie sind nur ausgegangen” from *Kindertotenlieder*

The fourth song, “Oft denk’ ich, sie sind nur ausgegangen” (Often I think they have just gone out), is the second of the three strophic songs. Beginning in E-flat major, Mahler briefly creates the impression of feigned acceptance. In the last verse of the piece, however, the character seems to find peace with the knowledge that, although his children will not return home, he will see them again in the after life. Musically, this is evidenced by the shift to A-flat seven, and with the text’s hopeful message, “Wir holen

¹⁵. Ibid.

sie ein auf jenen Höh'n" (We will catch up to them on those hills).¹⁶ As in "Wenn dein Mütterlein," the final statement of "der Tag is schön auf jenen Höh'n" (the day is beautiful on those hills), brings back a surge of emotions indicated by an increase in tempo, dynamics, and chromaticism in the vocal line.¹⁷

Mahler, "In diesem Wetter" from *Kindertotenlieder*

The fifth and final song of the cycle, "In diesem Wetter" (In this weather), is an allegory for the guilt the narrator feels at having allowed his children to journey out into the storm that took their lives. To create the storm, both literal and figurative, Mahler uses D-minor trilled chords and sixteenth-note interjections that leap between two octaves and outline the D-minor triad. The result symbolizes the pulsating and unrelenting quality of the narrator's emotional pain. Stephen Hefling describes the first half of the piece thusly: "Obsessively repetitive like the poetry, the music blusters ahead without pause between stanzas. While avoiding literal repetition, Mahler also prevents his variants from relieving the turmoil by adding to the score "With restless painful expression."¹⁸ The "storm" finally passes, and the minor to major relationship depicts the narrator's anguish at having to finally realize that the children are gone. Signifying an awareness that he must move on with his life, the text states, "Sie ruh'n als wie in der Mutter Haus" (they rest as they did in their mother's house), and the glockenspiel that is heard in the first piece returns. The bells ring higher and in doubled octaves as if to indicate their presence with the Almighty, and also indicated by the text, "Von Gottes

¹⁶. Ibid.

¹⁷. Ibid.

¹⁸. Ibid.

Hand bedecked” (They are covered by the hand of God).¹⁹ Below the bells, a steady lullaby restates melodic patterns earlier used to represent the “storm,” but this time in the major tonality, further signifying the children’s place in Heaven. Mahler masterfully winds down the storm to sparse eighth and quarter-notes atop steady and stable D-major triads.

Duparc (1848-1933), “Phydilé”

Based on a text of Leconte De Lisle, “Phydilé” is an exploration of Duparc’s late nineteenth-century style. Duparc was heavily influenced by Wagner’s rich harmonic language and his use of large textures. As was generally his practice, Duparc composed “Phydilé” with the intention that he would eventually create an orchestral version. Duparc did eventually orchestrate “Phydilé,” along with most of his other *mélodies*. Unfortunately, Duparc, who suffered from Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, destroyed most of his life’s work, including many *mélodies*, with “Phydilé” being one of only nineteen to survive. For this performance, the original key of A-flat major has been transposed down a whole step. The song begins subtly with four peaceful F-sharp major chords that usher in the voice on, “L’herbe est molle au sommeil” (The grass is soft for slumber). The tonality moves through the keys of G-major, A-flat major, C-major, D-flat major, and returns to F-sharp for the conclusion of the song. These unpredictable tonal shifts, coupled with rhythmic prolongations, are further examples of Wagner’s influence in Duparc’s writing.²⁰ Throughout the piece, Duparc sets “repose” (sleep) several times,

¹⁹. Ibid.

²⁰. Frits Noske, *French Song from Berlioz to Duparc*, trans. Rita Benton (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1970), 292.

raising the pitch level and decreasing the dynamic level with each utterance. Duparc finishes the song with a brilliant and triumphant ending in the original F-sharp major tonality.

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Branden D. S. Haralson, baritone

Dr. Robin Guy, piano

UNI School of Music
Graduate Recital

Friday, April 3, 2015, 6:00 pm

Davis Hall

Program

Sally in our Alley Ludwig van Beethoven
from Twenty-Five Scottish Songs, Op. 108 (1817) (1770-1827)

Winterreise, Op. 89 (1828) Franz Schubert
I. Gute Nacht (1797-1828)
IV. Erstarrung
XII. Einsamkeit
XXIV. Der Leiermann

Intermission

Kindertotenlieder (1905) Gustav Mahler
Nun will die Sonn' so hell aufgeh'n (1860-1911)
Nun seh' ich wohl, warum so dunkle Flammen
Wenn dein Mütterlein
Oft denk' ich sie sind nur ausgegangen
In diesem Wetter

Phydilé (1894) Henri Duparc
(1848-1933)

*From the studio of Mr. Jeffrey Brich
This recital is given in partial fulfillment of the degree of Master of Music in Voice Performance.*