

2006

A Graduate Recital in Voice

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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 in Music

Celeste Lea Bemby
University of Northern Iowa
December 2006

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The Abstract by: Celeste Lea Bemby

has been approved as meeting the thesis requirement for the

Degree of Master of Music – Vocal Performance

8-28-06
Date

Dr. Jean McDonald, Chair, Thesis Committee

8-28-06
Date

Dr. Nicole Lamartine, Thesis Committee Member

8-28-06
Date

Dr. Randy Grabowski, Thesis Committee Member

8-28-06
Date

Dr. Rebecca Burkhardt, Graduate Advisor

10-9-06
Date

Dr. Susan J. Koch, Dean, Graduate College

Celeste Lea Bemby, soprano, presented a Graduate Voice Recital on Monday, March 21, 2005, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Music degree in Vocal Performance at the University of Northern Iowa. The recital was held in the Gallagher-Bluedorn Performing Arts Center's Jebe Hall. The program consisted of art songs (*Joy* and *My People* by Ricky Ian Gordon, *Dry Bones* by Terell Izzard, and *L'Invitation au Voyage* by Henri Duparc), a chamber work (*Der Hirt auf dem Felsen* by Franz Schubert), and a piece for voice with orchestra reduction (*Knoxville: Summer of 1915* by Samuel Barber). Additionally, the program included an Italian recitative (*Crudele! Ah! No mio bene*) and an aria (*Non mi dir*) from the opera *Don Giovanni* by Wolfgang Mozart. Assisting in the performance were Professor Emeritus Dr. John Holstad, piano, and UNI student Adrian Brown, clarinet. Celeste Lea Bemby studied with Professor Won Cho at the University of Northern Iowa.

Ricky Ian Gordon: *Joy* and *My People*

The first two presentations, *Joy* and *My People*, were songs set to poems by Langston Hughes from his collected works, *Genius Child* (1935). This Hughes collection is set as a song cycle, also entitled *Genius Child*, by the 20th century Jewish American composer Ricky Ian Gordon (b. 1957). *Genius Child* was premiered in 1993 at the Bermuda Festival by soprano Harolyn Blackwell and pianist Neal Goren.

The opening selection, *Joy*, is a rhythmic and spirited work aptly described by the score's musical indications "exuberant and accented." Metric variation, syncopation, and an *allegro* tempo are used to capture the spirit of the text and promote the percussive dance-like nature of the composition. In Gordon's words, "I think he [Hughes] is the most terse, economical and wise American poet."¹ Evidence of this is found in the syllabic text setting highlighted by judicious use of melisma on each

¹ Ricky Ian Gordon, *Genius Child*, (Milwaukee: Williamson Music, 1995), 3.

statement of the word “joy.” Additionally, the composer features rhythmic punctuation on the words “dancing” and “laughing” and only briefly sustains the word “such” for heightened meaning. The piano is syncopated and articulates contrasting ideas through the accented treatment of dissonant major seconds and sonorous first inversion triad arpeggiations. The piece is structured in standard binary form (ABA'B') with a modulation from B-flat major to G-flat major. This art song was selected for performance for the work’s percussive, highly rhythmic and dance-like aspects.

As a companion piece to *Joy, My People* offers a strong atmospheric and musical contrast. Gordon states, “The nature of the expression was more philosophical and based on reflective contemplation.”² Musical devices illuminate this text “*the night is beautiful...the stars are beautiful*” by creating an ethereal setting through use of treble quartal triads within a four-measure *ostinato* pattern at a *pianissimo* dynamic. This effect is further enhanced by lyrical vocal and piano lines expressed in *poco ritardando* E-flat minor arpeggiations to the text “*my people*.” In contrast, the composer sets the words “*so the eyes of my people*” to an eighth-note syllabic chant. Overall, this andante piece in triple meter is structured in standard binary form (ABA'B') with modulation from A-flat minor to A major. The performance appeal of this work is that it sustains a high *tessitura* at the piano dynamic.

Terrell Izzard: *Dry Bones*

The third presentation, *Dry Bones*, composed by UNI graduate student Terrell Izzard (b. 1964), is a concert spiritual featuring a non-poetic text source taken from the Holy Bible, Ezekiel, chapter 37.³ The work premiered in 1991 at Georgia Southern University.

This composition is a variation of a Negro spiritual entitled *Dem Dry Bones*. In her anthology, *Art Songs and Spirituals by African American Women Composers*, Vivian Taylor stated, “The similarities between classical art songs and concert spirituals are in

² Ibid., 3.

³ The Holy Bible, Revised Standard Version, (Iowa Falls, World Bible Publishers, 1972).

their melodic and rhythmic structures, harmonic language, text and emotional content.”⁴ In this work, the composer illustrated elements of nature and the supernatural with thematic motives. Chromaticism, appoggiaturas and hemiolas were used to create the mood and sentiment of the biblical text that, when paraphrased states the once lifeless, dry bones have been joined together and brought to life by the act of God.⁵

Throughout the song, the composer sustains the word “bones” to convey the breath of God and uses a two-note descending motive to describe the connection “dem dry bones.” The piece is structured in rondo form, is in G minor within a moderato tempo, and is in 4/4 meter. The vocal showcase in this work is its expressive and interpretive qualities.

Henri Duparc: *L'invitation au Voyage*

This Romantic 19th century poem was written by Charles Beaudelaire (1821-1867) and included in his larger work, *Les Fleurs du mal*. In 1870, the poetry was set to music for piano and high voice by Henri Duparc (1848 – 1933), a French composer of *mélodie*, symphonic poems, and motets.

The composer’s approach in relation to the sentiment of the poetry is of interest.

Barbara Meister’s Nineteenth-century French Song stated,

The song is full of mystery and allure. The music seemed to describe some unearthly unattainable paradise. The piano opened with one of Duparc’s favorite harmonic progressions – the tonic minor to II^{7th} chord with a lowered 5th expressed with alternations and repetitions which traveled to a glorious tonic major.⁶

In its portrayal of ebbing tides, the piano incorporates frequent harmonic shifts and articulates sweeping arpeggiations highlighted by *crescendi* and *diminuendi*. In

⁴ Vivian Taylor, *Art Songs and Spirituals by African American Women Composers*, (Bryn Mawr: Hildegard Publishing Company, 1995), i.

⁵ The Holy Bible, Revised Standard Version, (Iowa Falls, World Bible Publishers, 1972).

⁶ Barbara Meister, *Nineteenth-century French Song: Fauré, Chausson, Duparc, and Debussy*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980), 250.

contrast, the accompaniment shifts to sustained homophonic chords against a chant-like vocal melody, depicting the poetic sentiment of an “unearthly unattainable paradise.”⁷ The piece is in standard binary form (ABA'B') and is unified by a clear key structure (C minor) underlined with pedal tones and changing meters (6/8 meter of the A section and 9/8 meter of the B section). The beauty of this work, with its superior French poetic writing, makes this piece a very alluring song to perform.

Franz Schubert: *Der Hirt auf dem Felsen* (Shepherd on the Rock) D. 965

This piece was composed for voice with pianoforte, clarinet or violoncello in October, 1828. The text was compiled from two sources, the beginning and ending from Wilhelm Müller's *Der Berghirt* and the middle verse from Helmina von Chézy's *Liebesgedanke*. The song was written for Frau Anna Milder-Hauptmann, who premiered the work in Riga (1830).

Schubert's musical depiction of the mountains, valleys and fields is remarkable. The scenario describes a shepherd on a mountain calling for his beloved in the valley.

The work is more like an operatic aria than Schubert's other lieder. The vocal line, solo instrument and piano are closely interwoven, thus creating an organic texture which does equal justice to the piece's claims to be treated both as a chamber work and as a *concertante* aria.⁸

The color of the clarinet obbligato primarily functions to create the pastoral imaging of the text. Initially, this effect is created by an *andantino* instrumental introduction in B-flat major in which the voices alternate to craft an echo. A shift of sentiment is manifested by a change to minor mode and a descending chromatic bass line in the piano to the text, “*In tiefem Gram*” (In misery). A third and final mood shift returning to B-flat major (*allegretto*) declares, “*Der Frühling will kommen.*” (The spring will come).

⁷ Ibid., 250.

⁸ Joseph Wechsberg, *Schubert: his life, his work, his time*, (New York: Rizzoli, 1977), 33.

Schubert uses a dance-like 2/4 meter and a more active and florid sixteenth-note ascending scale dialogue in alternating sequences between the voice and clarinet. The final section is further embellished by an extended postlude of virtuosic obbligato by the clarinet. The work is through-composed and is structured in major and minor alternating tonalities. Its folk-like appeal and fame makes this work satisfying to perform.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart: *Crudele! Ah! No mio bene!* and *Non mi dir* from *Don Giovanni*

Don Giovanni was the second of three Mozart operas with librettos by Lorenzo da Ponte, who contributed to the success of *opera buffa* in Vienna from 1783 to 1790. The opera premiered in Prague 1787, and is “one of the Mozart operas that has remained popular in the operatic repertory from the 18th century to the present day.”⁹

In contrast to the previous works on the program, this piece is an Italian operatic recitative and aria performed with piano reduction. The scenario for the aria is in Act II: Donna Anna tries to convince her betrothed, Don Ottavio, of her devotion to him despite her emotional duress as a result of her father having been slain in the opening scene of Act I by the lead character, Don Giovanni.

The recitative, *Crudele! Ah! No, mio bene!* features a rhythmic and emotional speech-like vocal line against a punctuated *accompagnato*. The aria, *Non mi dir*, is characterized by elegant and lyrical musical lines realized in delicately ornamented symmetrical phrases. In F Major, it features florid vocal and instrumental passages within a 4/4 meter and *allegretto moderato* tempo. The work’s theatrical flare and operatic vocalise make for an attractive choice for performance.

⁹ Friedrich Kerst, *Mozart*, (New York: B.W. Huebsch, 1905), 22.

Samuel Barber: Knoxville: Summer of 1915 Op. 24 (1947)

Knoxville: Summer of 1915 for voice and orchestra was set to prose by American composer Samuel Barber (1910-1981) from the 1934 James Agee's novel, A Death in the Family. This work was commissioned by Eleanor Steber and was premiered with Steber and the Boston Orchestra on April 9, 1948.

Knoxville is highly acclaimed for its imaginative compositional writing that complements Agee's prose. "Barber's artistry as a musical poet and a master of orchestral color inform his mature expression."¹⁰ The piece is a through-composed, lyrical work seamlessly employing themes and motives throughout. Generous chromaticism and frequent meter changes further characterize this work. To the text, "*It has become that time of evening...*", Barber creates tranquility through sweeping orchestral phrasing and lilting triple meter. The thematic and motivic materials are introduced instrumentally followed by a restatement of themes in the vocal line. In contrast, an *allegro agitato* section depicts a transition in mood (evidenced in the orchestral writing) characterized by highly chromatic leaps of major and minor sevenths, frequent meters shifts, liberal *staccati* accents and dissonances. Additionally, the vocal line shifts to a highly rhythmic and percussive recitative-like treatment. The cohesive role of the returning themes between instrument and voice is an important feature of this work. The performance appeal of this work rests in the substantive text within the setting of riveting orchestral music.

¹⁰ Barbara Heyman, *Samuel Barber, the composer and his music*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 293.

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The Holy Bible, Revised Standard Version. Iowa Falls: World Bible Publishers, 1972.

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RECITAL APPROVAL FORM


THIS RECITAL BY: Celeste Lea Bembry

ENTITLED: A Graduate Recital in Voice

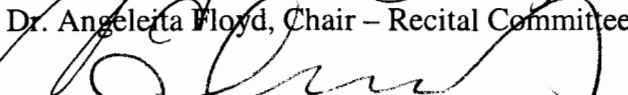
DATE OF RECITAL: March 21, 2005

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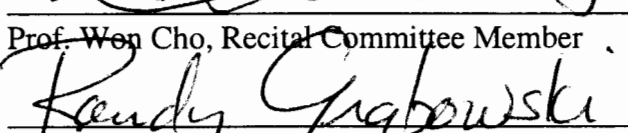
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Dr. Angeleita Floyd, Chair - Recital Committee

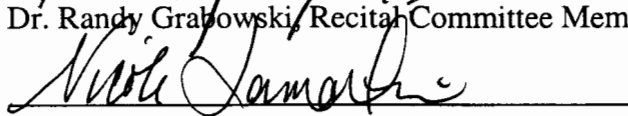
3/24/05
Date


Prof. Wen Cho, Recital Committee Member

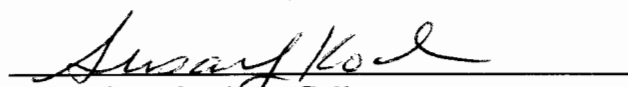
3-24-05
Date


Dr. Randy Grabowski, Recital Committee Member

3/24/05
Date


Dr. Nicole Lamartine, Recital Committee Member

10-9-06
Date


Dean of the Graduate College

UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA ~ SCHOOL OF MUSIC
FROM THE STUDIO OF WON CHO

Graduate Recital

Miss Celeste Lea Bembry, soprano
Dr. John Holstad, (Professor Emeritus), piano
With
Mr. Adrian Brown, clarinet

Monday, March 21, 2005
8:00 p.m. Jebe Hall
Gallagher-Bluedorn Performing Arts Center

* IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE MASTER OF MUSIC DEGREE
REQUIREMENTS

PROGAMME

JOY
MY PEOPLE

RICKY IAN GORDON (B. 1956)

DRY BONES

TERELL IZZARD (B. 1964)

L'INVITATION AU VOYAGE

HENRI DUPAR (1848-1933)

MISS BEMBRY, DR. HOLSTAD

DER HIRT AUF DEM FELSEN

FRANZ SCHUBERT (1797-1828)

MISS BEMBRY, DR HOLSTAD AND MR. BROWN

INTERMISSION

NON MI DIR FROM THE OPERA,
"DON GIOVANNI"

W.A. MOZART (1756-1791)

MISS BEMBRY, DR. HOLSTAD

KNOXVILLE, SUMMER OF 1915

SAMUEL BARBER (1910-1981)

MISS BEMBRY, DR. HOLSTAD

L'Invitation Au Voyage French Text by Bauletaire

Songez à la douceur
D'aller là-bas vivre ensemble,
Aimer à loisir,
Aimer et mourir
Au pays qui te ressemble.

Think how sweet it would be
To go down there, to live together
To love free from care
To love and to die
In the land that resembles you!

Les soleils mouillés
De ces ciels brouillés
Pour mon esprit ont les charmes
Si mystérieux
De tes traitées yeux,
Brillant à travers leurs larmes.

The moist suns
of these misty skies,
To my mind, hush the charms,
So mysterious,
Of your treacherous eyes,
Sparkling through the tears.

Là, tout n'est qu'ordre et beauté,
Luxe, calme et volupté.

There everything is order and beauty
Luxury, calm and pleasure!

Vois sur ces canaux
Dormir ces rivières
Dont l'humeur est vagabonde;
C'est pour assouvir
Ton moindre désir
Qu'ils viennent du bout du monde.

See on these canals
The sleeping rivers
That capriciously like to roam
To satisfy
Your slightest wish
They hush come from the ends of the world.

Les soleils couchants
Revêtent les champs,
Les canaux, la ville entière,
D'hyacinthe et d'or;
Le monde s'endort
Dans une chaude lumière!

The setting suns
Again clothe the fields
The canals, the whole town,
with hyacinth and gold
The world falls asleep
In a warm light!

Là, tout n'est qu'ordre et beauté,
Luxe, calme et volupté.

There everything is order and beauty
Luxury, calm and pleasure!

Chamber Music: A classical composition that utilizes a small ensemble of instruments (strings, winds, brass, voice or and combination thereof.)

Historically, performed in residential parlors however, today they are routinely performed in recital venues. Chamber music thrived in Europe during their classical period of 1750 to 1820.

German translation provided below.

Der Hirt auf dem Felsen

German text by Wilhelm Muller and Wilhelmina von Chezy

Wenn auf dem höchsten Fels ich steh',	When, from the highest rock up I stand
In's tiefe Tal hernieder seh',	Down to the valley deep I peer,
Und singe.	And sing,
Fern aus dem tiefen dunkeln Tal	Far from the valley dark and deep
Schwingt sich empor der Widerhall	Echoes rush through, in upward sweep
Der Klüfte.	the chasm.
Je weiter meine Stimme dringt,	The farther that my voice resounds

Je heller sie mir wieder klingt Von unten.	so much the brighter it rebounds from under.
Mein Liebchen wohnt so weit von mir, Drum seh'n' ich mich so heiß nach ihr Hinüber.	My love lives so far away I long for her by night and day, My darling.
In tiefem Gram verzehr ich mich, Mir ist die Freude hin, Auf Erden mir die Hoffnung wich, Ich hier so einsam bin.	In deepest gloom I pine and sigh The world is dark and drear, Upon the earth my visions die, I here am so lonesome.
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 yearning sang his tender song, So yearning sang his tale of love, And all who heard were drawn to heaven above.
Der Frühling will kommen, Der Frühling, meine Freud', Nun mach' ich mich fertig Zum Wandern bereit.	The spring is coming The spring, my friend I'll make myself ready, Then up and away.

Recitative and Aria ~ a principal song from an opera where the text expresses emotion rather than drives the plot of the story.

Non Mi Dir	Italian text by
Crudele! Ah no!	Cruel! Oh no!
Mio ben, troppo mi spiace	My love, too much I grieve
Allontanarti un ben che luna- mente,	Thus to delay a hope that long ago Our hearts desired; and yet, what
La nostr' alma desia: ma il mondo!	Will the world say?
Oh Dio!	Oh God!
Non sedur la costanza	Do not shake the constancy
Del sensibil mio core	of my heart, so deeply grieved,
Abbastanza per te mi parla amore.	But yet love pleads for you too earnestly.
Non mir dir bell'idol mio	Say not then, dear love, of me
Che son io crudel con te	that I'm cruel to you;
Tu ben sai quant'io t'amai	Since you know my constancy,
Tu conosci la mia fe	And how faithfully I love.
Calma, calma il tuo tormento!	Calm, Calm that anxious heart!
Se di duol non vuoi ch'io mora	Unless with grief you'd see me die.
Forse un giorno il Cielo ancora	A day will come, no more to part,
Sentira pieta di me.	And Heaven to us its grace will prove.

Work for Orchestra and Voice ~ Tonight's presentation is in a piano reduction format.

In Gratitude

Thank you, Dr. John Holstad, Mr. Terell Izzard and Mr. Adrian Brown for your collaboration on this degree performance requirement. I have enjoyed working with you and applaud your excellence and kindness.

My blessing is to have been trained and influenced by wonderful teachers. They are Professor Won Cho, Dr. Darryl Taylor, Dr. Jean Mc Donald, Professor Sandra Walden and especially, Dr. Lathon Jernigan. To the UNI School of Music faculty and administration thank you for an excellent education in Western Music.

To my family, church family and friends here and in Los Angeles, I am humbled by your support and enriched from your love.

Praise God from whom all blessings flow!

Tonight's recital

Dedicated

*To the loving memory of the
Late Mrs. Rosa Ponselle Gates*

Please join Miss Bemby and Dr. Holstad at a reception immediately following the performance outside the Febe Hall entrance.

Peace be with you now and always!