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A GRADUATE RECITAL IN VOICE

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate School in
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of
Master of Music

Patrick O'Halloran

Pittsburg State University

Pittsburg, Kansas

December, 2018

A GRADUATE RECITAL IN VOICE

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A GRADUATE RECITAL IN VOICE

An Abstract of the Thesis by
Patrick O'Halloran

This graduate thesis consists of a vocal recital and the accompanying program notes. The recital includes a compilation of traditional Neapolitan songs, *5 Songs of Laurence Hope* by the composer H.T. Burleigh, and selections from the French opera *Werther* by Jules Massenet. The program notes for each selection will include biographical information, musical analysis, performance history and culture, as well as other pertinent information.

Pittsburg State University
Pittsburg, KS

DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC

GRADUATE RECITAL
PATRICK O'HALLORAN, Tenor
JUNGHEE LEE, Piano

Tuesday, December 4, 2018
Sharon Kay Dean Recital Hall
7:30 pm

Program

O del mio amato benStephano Donaudy (1879-1925)
Torna a SurrientoErnesto De Curtis (1875-1937)
Funiculì, FuniculàLuigi Denza (1846-1922)
Core 'ngrato Salvatore Cardillo (1874-1947)

Five Songs of Laurence Hope..... H.T. Burleigh (1866-1949)
I. *Worth While*
II. *The Jungle Flower*
III. *Kashmiri Song*
IV. *Among the Fuchsias*
V. *Till I Wake*

Intermission

from Werther

“Lorsque l'enfant revient” Jules Massenet (1842-1912)
“Pourquoi me réveiller”

Malià Francesco Paolo Tosti (1846-1916)
Maria, Mari!Eduardo di Capua (1865-1917)
Pecchè Enrico Pennino (1892-1952)

This recital is in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Music degree for Patrick O'Halloran.
Mr. O'Halloran is a student of Patrick Howle. The Department of Music is a constituent of the College of Arts and Sciences.

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CHAPTER I

The Neapolitan Song

History

“Canzone Napoletana” or “Neapolitan Song,” is a generic term for a traditional form of music sung in the Naples dialect. Originally, these songs were performed by solo male voices, usually tenors, although it is not uncommon to hear female voices sing these songs. The Canzone Napoletana has a distinct romantic, popular, and aesthetic sound which is typically accompanied with lyrics portraying a lover’s lament or serenade.

Structurally, this music is similar to popular music, usually starting with an introduction followed by verse one, a refrain, a second verse, and a final refrain (many songs will include a third or fourth verse, but these verses are commonly omitted in performance; a “bridge” is not typically featured). These pieces are commonly performed with piano, but many are orchestrated with thick, lush string lines, and often feature non-traditional orchestral instruments providing solo lines via mandolin, accordion, or guitar. Performing these pieces can be a challenge for the singer due to the distinct Neapolitan dialect. It is similar to the standard Italian vernacular, but it has its own set of unique sounds, ellisions, and conjugations.

Over time, reputable singers began taking stylistic liberties regarding rhythms, tenutos, and additional climactic high notes in order to finish a piece in grand fashion. In

the age of *bel canto* or “beautiful singing,” less emphasis was placed on precise adherence to the score in order to facilitate virtuosic singers’ abilities. In the Harvard Dictionary of Music, Willi Apel notes that *bel canto* denotes “the Italian vocal technique of the 18th century, with its emphasis on beauty of sound and brilliancy of performance rather than dramatic expression or romantic emotion.”¹

The Neapolitan song was popularized in the 1830s. Many of these songs were featured in a new annual songwriting competition during the Festival of Piedigrotta, which celebrated the Madonna di Piedigrotta, a beautiful church located in Naples.² Although, there is no historical evidence supporting the claim, it is presumed that the first winner of the competition was the young Gaetano Donizetti, one of the greatest *bel canto* composers in opera history.³ In Donizetti’s operatic arias, we find a supportive, non-intrusive orchestration underneath the vocal line, which is conducive to a singer’s interpretation, supplying the blueprint for the Neapolitan song.

The festival came to a close in 1950. There were other attempts at similar festivals with varied success, but the popularity of Neapolitan songs has remained intact. International popularity soon surfaced due to southern Italian emigrants in the late nineteenth century. In America, the famous Italian tenor Enrico Caruso brought with him a collection of Neapolitan songs he consistently performed at the Metropolitan Opera to sold-out crowds and standing ovations. The Canzone Napoletana of old are still

¹ Randel, Don Michael. *The Harvard Dictionary of Music* (Harvard University Press, 2014).

² “The Festival at Piedigrotta - Vincenzo Migliaro - Google Arts & Culture,” Google Cultural Institute, accessed November 18, 2018, <https://artsandculture.google.com/asset/the-festival-at-piedigrotta/hwHEsaaCLw-4dA>.

³ Sorce Keller, Marcello (1984). *Io te voglio bene assaje: A Famous Neapolitan Song Traditionally Attributed to Gaetano Donizetti*. *The Music Review*. XLV

celebrated today through the recordings of Giuseppe di Stefano, Mario Lanza, and the Three Tenors. They are commonly referenced in popular culture, movies, television shows, and cartoons as well.

O del mio amato ben

Stefano Donaudy was born February 21, 1879 in Palermo, Italy. The son of a French father and an Italian mother, Donaudy was an active composer in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, during a time when Palermo experienced a period of progress due in part to the relocation of several wealthy Anglo-Sicilian families.⁴

Donaudy studied at the prestigious Palermo Conservatory under the direction of Guglielmo Zuelli, one of Giacomo Puccini's contemporaries. He made his career as a singing teacher, coach and accompanist while actively pursuing a career as a composer. Most of Stefano's compositions were for voice, whether it be opera or song, with text written by his brother, Alberto.

Donaudy's *36 Arie di Stile Antico* is a collection of songs found commonly in voice teachers' libraries and it is still in print today. Many songs from this collection became vocal standards. *Vaghissima sembianza*, *Spirate pur, spirate*, and *O del mio amato ben* were favorites of tenors Enrico Caruso, Beniamino Gigli, and Tito Schipa. Donaudy's experience as a singer and teacher are evident in his vocal writing. Most of his compositions are very "singer friendly," in the sense that melodies are usually diatonic and receive support from the accompaniment.

⁴ Donaudy, Stephano. *36 Arie di Stile Antico* (Рипол Классик, 1918).

Donaudy never experienced much success in his opera compositions. His final attempt, *La Fiamminga* was premiered at the Teatro di San Carlo in Naples on April 25, 1922. The opera was considered a “disaster,” which depressed Donaudy so much that he abandoned composition for the rest of his life. He died three years later, at the age of 46 in 1925.⁵

O del mio amato ben is a beautiful lament of lost love. The song was originally written for tenor, but is commonly sung by sopranos, typically replacing a few conjugations and the word *lei* meaning “her,” to *lui* meaning “him.” Donaudy spent much of his career in Naples, and although the text is not pure Neapolitan, the structure, subject matter, and general feel of the music portray the spirit of Naples.

O del mio amato ben perduto incanto!
Lungi è dagli occhi miei
chi m'era gloria e vanto!
Or per le mute stanze

sempre lo cerco e chiamo
con pieno il cor di speranze
Ma cerco invan, chiamo invan!
E il pianger m'è sì caro,
che di pianto sol nutro il cor.

Mi sembra, senza lei, triste ogni loco.

Notte mi sembra il giorno;

mi sembra gelo il foco.
Se pur talvolta spero
di darmi ad altra cura.

O my beloved, my lost love
She is far from my sight
she who was my glory and pride!
Now the rooms are silent

I constantly search and call for her
with a painful heart. Full of hope.
But I search in vain, I call out in vain!
I weep for my darling,
as though weeping alone would nourish
my heart.

I feel, without her, there is sadness
everywhere.

Night seems like day;

fire seems cold.
And sometimes I think of
Another "cure."

⁵ Donaudy, Stephano. 36 Arie di Stile Antico

sol mi tormenta un pensiero:
Ma, senza lei, che farò?
Mi par così la vita
vana cosa senza il mio ben.

I am tormented by my thoughts
Without her, what will I do?
my life without meaning,
Without my love.

Translation by Donna (Bareket) Breitzer

Torna a Surriento

Ernesto De Curtis was born in Naples on October 4, 1875. He studied piano at the Conservatory of San Pietro a Maiella in Naples. Most of his compositional work consisted of standard vocal Neapolitan-style songs. He died in Naples in 1937.

Torna a Surriento was composed in 1902 with lyrics written by Ernesto's brother, Giambattista. The song achieved instant notoriety when it was officially copyrighted in 1905, and is one of the most performed songs in the "Canzone Napoletana" genre.⁶ It is believed that the song originated when the mayor of Sorrento asked Giambattista to write a song for the Italian Prime Minister, Giuseppe Zanardelli. Zanardelli was on vacation at the Imperial Hotel Tramontano, a popular resort overlooking Naples Bay. It is commonly believed that the piece was intended to celebrate Zanardelli's presence in Sorrento. Others believed that the composition's intent was to remind Zanardelli of his promise to improve structure and economy in Sorrento. The song is an ode to a beautiful city and the love and passion of its citizens.

An English setting of the text by Claude Aveling, *Come Back to Sorrento* gained popularity in the United States, thanks to performances by Frank Sinatra and Dean Martin. Another popular up-tempo version, *Surrender*, was arranged by Doc Pomus and

⁶ "Blog - Do You Know 'Torna a Surriento' Lyrics? Read History and Translation," accessed November 18, 2018, <https://www.opera-lirica.com/blog/opera-e-lirica-torna-a-surriento/>.

Mort Shuman with a new set of lyrics made famous by Elvis Presley. Other popular songs include *Voce 'e note*, *Canta pe' me*, and *Non ti scordar di me*.

Vide 'o mare quant'è bello,
spira tantu sentimento,
Comme tu a chi tieni mente,
Ca scetato 'o fai sunnà.

Look at the sea, how beautiful it is,
it inspires so many emotions,
like you do with the people you look at,
who you make to dream while they are
still awake.

Guarda gua' chistu ciardino;
Siente, sie' sti ciur' arance:
Nu profumo accussi fino
Dinto 'o core se ne va...

Look at this garden
and the scent of these oranges,
such a fine perfume,
it goes straight into your heart

E tu dice: "I' parto, addio!"
T'alluntane da stu core...
Da sta terra del l'ammore...
Tieni 'o core 'e nun turnà?

And you say: "I am leaving, goodbye."
You leave this heart of mine,
away from this land of love,
And you have the heart not return?

Ma nun me lassà,
Nun darne stu turmiento!
Torna a Surriento,
Famme campà!

But don't leave me,
do not give me this pain.
Come back to Surriento,
let me live!

Vid'o mare de Surriento,
che tesoro tene nfunno:
chi ha girato tutto 'o munno
nun l'ha visto comme'a ccà.

Look at the sea of Surriento,
what a treasure it is!
Even one who has travelled the whole
world
has never seen a sea like this one.

Vide attuorno sti Sirene,
ca te guardano 'ncantate,
e te vonno tantu bene...
Te vulessero vasà

Look at these mermaids
that stare, amazed, at you,
that love you so much.
They would like to kiss you

Translation from evfokas via
lyricstranslate.com

Funiculì, Funiculà

Funiculì, Funiculà was composed in 1880 by Luigi Denza, with words scripted by Peppino Turco. The writers' intent was to celebrate the opening of the first funicular cable car on Mount Vesuvius.⁷ Denza and Turco also showcased the piece at the Piedigrotta festival. The prestigious music production company Ricordi offered Denza a contract almost immediately and it sold over a million copies in its first year.⁸ The piece gained tremendous popularity and has been widely adapted and produced since its initial composition. The light, playful tune is one of the most internationally recognized melodies. The song is often performed with a vocal chorus repeating the tail end of most phrases, and it is commonly found in compilations written for children.

When composers Richard Strauss and Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov first heard the melody of *Funiculì, Funiculà*, they assumed it was a traditional Neapolitan folk song composed much earlier than it actually was. They included the melody in their own compositions as sort of an "homage," not realizing the piece was a modern composition. Denza subsequently filed a lawsuit against Strauss and was awarded royalty fees.⁹

Luigi Denza was born on February 24, 1846 in Castellammare di Stabia, a commune in Naples. He enrolled at the prestigious Naples Conservatory, where he studied with Saverio Mercadante and Paolo Serrao.¹⁰ Following his tremendous success with *Funiculì, Funiculà*, he moved to London, where he continued to compose. He was

⁷ Fuld, James J., *The Book of World-Famous Music: Classical, Popular, and Folk* (Courier Corporation, 2000).

⁸ Fuld.

⁹ Foreman, Edward. *Authentic Singing: The History of Singing* (Pro Musica Press, 2001).

¹⁰ "DENZA, Luigi in 'Dizionario Biografico,'" accessed November 18, 2018, [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/luigi-denza_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/luigi-denza_(Dizionario-Biografico)).

eventually hired as the professor of voice at the Royal Academy of Music in 1898. Denza was also a talented guitarist and mandolinist. Other commonly performed selections by Denza include *Luna fedel*, *Occhi di fata*, and *Se*. The composer died on January 27, 1922 in London.

Aissera, oje Nanniné, me ne sagliette,
tu saje addó,
Addó 'stu core 'ngrato cchiù dispietto
farme nun pò!

Addó lu fuoco coce, ma se fuje
te lassa sta! Te lassa sta!
E nun te corre appriesso, nun te struje
sulo a guardà, sulo a guardà.

Jamme, jamme 'ncoppa, jamme jà,
funiculì, funiculà, funiculì, funiculà,
'ncoppa, jamme jà, funiculì, funiculà!

Se n'è sagliuta, oje né, se n'è sagliuta,
la capa già! La capa già!
È gghiuta, po' è turnata, po' è venuta,
sta sempe ccà! Sta sempe ccà!

La capa vota, vota, attuorno, attuorno,
attuorno a tte! Attuorno a tte!
Stu core canta sempe nu taluorno:
Sposamme, oje né! Sposamme, oje né!

I climbed up high this evening, oh,
Nanetta,
Do you know where?
Where your ungrateful heart no longer
pains me
With teasing wiles!

Where fire burns, but if you run away,
It lets you be, it lets you be!
It doesn't follow after nor torment you
Just with a look, just with a look.

Let's go, let's go! To the top we'll go!
Let's go, let's go! To the top we'll go!
Funiculi, funicula, funiculi, funicula!

The car has climbed up high, see,
climbed up high now,
Right to the top! Right to the top!
It went, and turned around, and came
back,
And now it's stopped! And now it's
stopped!

The top is turning round, and round, and
round, Around you! Around you!
My heart is singing the same refrain:
We should be wed! We should be wed!

Translation by Edward Oxenford

Core 'ngrato

Biographical information on composer Salvatore Cardillo is somewhat scarce, however, he did grace the performing arts with one of the most beautiful, well-known Neapolitan songs of all time. Cardillo was born in Naples where he studied piano and composition before emigrating in 1903 to the United States.¹¹ He spent most of his life songwriting and composing score for film, although there is not much to which he is accredited. *Core 'ngrato* was adapted by tenor Enrico Caruso, and it is speculated that he commissioned Cardillo and lyricist Riccardo Cordiferro to compose the piece. The song is recognized as the first nationally renowned Neapolitan song written in America.

In *Core 'ngrato* the singer portrays his torment upon losing his love, Catari. He begs her not to forget that he has given her his heart, but in leaving, she has “taken his life.” In a second verse, which is commonly omitted, he reveals that he has shared his emotion with a priest, who implores him to let her go and find peace.

Catari, Catari
Pecche me dici sti parole amare
Pecche me parle e 'o core
Me turmiento Catari?

Caterina, Caterina, why do you say those
bitter words?
Why do you speak and torment my
heart, Caterina?

Nun te scurda ca t'aggio date 'o core,
Catari
Nun te scurda

Don't forget, I gave you my heart,
Caterina,
don't forget.

Catari, Catari, che vene a dicere
Stu parla, che me da spaseme?

Caterina, Caterina, why do you come
and say those words that hurt me so

Tu nun'nce pienze a stu dolore mio
Tu nun'nce pienze tu nun te ne cura

You don't think of my pain,
you don't think, you don't care.

¹¹ Goffredo Plastino and Joseph Sciorra, eds., *Neapolitan Postcards: The Canzone Napoletana as Transnational Subject* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2016).

Core, core 'ngrato
T'aie pigliato 'a vita mia
Tutt'è passato
E nun'nce pienze cchiu

Ungrateful heart,
you have stolen my life.
Everything is finished
and you don't care anymore!

Translation by Dellamarir via
lyricstranslate.com

Malià

Francesco Paolo Tosti (April 9, 1846-December 2, 1916) is a celebrated Italian composer known for his songs written for voice. Much like Donaudy's compositions, Tosti's music features natural, accessible melodies. He composed art songs as well as those in the traditional Neapolitan style.

Tosti, like many of the Canzone Napoletana composers, gained popularity in the *Belle Époque* or "The Beautiful Era," approximately 1871-1914. The *Belle Époque* was a period in which much of the western world was sustaining an era of peace and economic stability.¹² Much of Tosti's music is described as "salon music," i.e., music written in a romantic style, often performed by the composer at events known as "Salons." These compositions were relatively short, often featuring grand piano writing with easily singable melodies that an amateur singer could perform. Much of Tosti's music depicts a more virtuosic composer, notably in his collection of *Canti popolari Abruzzesi*, or "Folk Songs of Abruzzo (A region of southern Italy)."¹³

¹² "10 Fascinating Facts About the Belle Époque," *5-Minute History* (blog), March 12, 2016, accessed November 18, 2018, <http://fiveminutehistory.com/10-fascinating-facts-about-the-belle-epoque/>.

¹³ "Canti Popolari Abruzzesi (Tosti, Francesco Paolo) - IMSLP/Petrucci Music Library: Free Public Domain Sheet Music," accessed November 18, 2018, [https://imslp.org/wiki/Canti_popolari_abruzzesi_\(Tosti%2C_Francesco_Paolo\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/Canti_popolari_abruzzesi_(Tosti%2C_Francesco_Paolo)).

Tosti wrote particularly accessible music for the voice, encouraging *bel canto* interpretation and style for classically trained singers. A vast amount of his music can be found on classic Ricordi albums sung by the world's most celebrated performers. Other than *Malia*, popular songs include *Serenata*, *Marechiare*, and *Addio*, commonly performed in the English language as "Goodbye."

Tosti was raised in the coastal town of Ortona, Italy, though he received much of his training at the Naples Conservatory. Poverty was an ongoing issue for much of his young life, until his fortune improved upon moving to London, England at the age of 29. In London, he made many influential friends that would eventually make him a musical icon at drawing rooms and salons. His compositions were immensely popular with the English citizens, and he was contracted as singing master to the Royal Family. By 1885 he was the most popular composer of song in England. Tosti's publishers kept him on a significant retainer in order to encourage him to compose as much music as possible. He eventually joined the Royal Academy of Music as a professor, and in 1906, he became a British citizen.¹⁴

Cosa c'era ne 'l fior che m'hai dato?
forse un filtro, Un arcano poter?
Nel toccarlo, il mio core ha tremato,
m'ha l'olezzo turbato il pensier.
Ne le vaghe movenze, che ci hai?
Un incanto vien forse con te?
Freme l'aria per dove tu vai,
spunta un fiore ove passa 'l tuo piè.

What was in the flower you gave me?
perhaps a filter, a mysterious power?
As I touched it, my heart trembled,
its perfume unsettled my thoughts.
What is it in your lovely movements?
Do you bring a magic charm with you?
The air trembles where ever you go,
a flower springs up where you tread.

¹⁴ Sadie, Stanley, *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (Macmillan Publishers, 1980).

Io non chiedo qual plaga beata
fino adesso soggiorno ti fu:
non ti chiedo se Ninfa, se Fata,
se una bionda parvenza sei tu!
Ma che c'è nel tuo sguardo fatale ?
Cosa ci hai nel tuo magico dir?
Se mi guardi, un'ebbrezza m'assale,

Se mi parli, mi sento morir!

I do not ask in which blessed dominion
until now I have sojourned to you:
I do not ask if you are a nymph, a siren,
or a fair apparition!
But what is it in your fateful glance?
What is it in your magical speech?
If you look at me, intoxication
overwhelms me,
If you speak to me, I would die!

Translation by Gregory Scott Stuart

Maria, mari

Eduardo Di Capua was born in Naples on May 12, 1865. His father was a professional musician and was responsible for much of his son's training. Eduardo did, however, attend the Neapolitan Conservatory for a short period.¹⁵ He is best known for composing what may be considered the most famous of all Neapolitan songs in '*O Sole Mio*. He composed *Maria, mari* in 1899, a year after his prized composition, as he became more financially stable. Though he began to achieve notoriety and some international recognition, Di Capua still struggled to an extent, maintaining a side job accompanying the screening of silent films.¹⁶ *Maria, mari* is a charming serenade of a young man strumming his guitar outside of his love's apartment. He implores her to open her window so that he can "sleep in her arms for just a little while."

Arápete fenesta!
Famme affacciá a Maria,
ca stóngo 'mmiez'â via
speruto d' 'a vedé.

Open yourself window!
Let me see Maria,
'cause I'm in the middle of the street
yearning to see her.

¹⁵ "DI CAPUA, Eduardo in 'Dizionario Biografico,'" accessed November 18, 2018, [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/eduardo-di-capua_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/eduardo-di-capua_(Dizionario-Biografico)).

¹⁶ "DI CAPUA, Eduardo in 'Dizionario Biografico.'

Nun trovo n'ora 'e pace!
'A notte 'a faccio juorno,
sempe pe' stá ccá attuorno,
speranno 'e ce parlá.

Oje Marí', oje Marí',
quanta suonno ca perdo pe'tté!
Famme addurmí
abbracciato nu poco cu'tté.
Oje Marí', oje Marí'.
Quanta suonno ca perdo pe'tté.

Famme addurmí,
oje Marí', oje Marí'!

Pare che già s'arape
na sénga 'e fenestella.
Maria cu 'a manella,
nu segno a me mme fa.
Sòna chitarra mia,
Maria s'è scetata.
Na bella serenata
Na scicca serenata, facímmole sentí.

I can't find a moment of peace!
The night becomes day,
I'm always here waiting,
hoping she would speak to me.

Oh Maria, oh Maria,
how much sleep have I lost over you!
Let me sleep
Just a while in your arms.
Oh Maria, oh Maria,
how much sleep have I lost over you!

Let me sleep
Oh Mary, oh Mary!

It looks as if it's opening already
a crack in that window.
Maria with her dear hand,
is giving me a sign.
Play, guitar of mine,
Maria is awake!
Let's play a beautiful serenade
for her to hear.

Translation by evfokas via
lyricstranslate.com

Pecche?

Gaetano Enrico Pennino (1892-1952) composed this beautiful song in 1913. It became a standard of tenors Luciano Pavarotti and Enrico Caruso.¹⁷ Franco Corelli delivers an especially dramatic interpretation. There is very little information published about the composer's life.

¹⁷ Pecché?,” *Wikipedia*, July 25, 2018, accessed November 18, 2018
<https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Pecch%C3%A9&oldid=851960413>.

Canta ll'auciello dint' 'a casa antica
addó' primma cantave pure tu.
E sento pure 'a voce 'e n'ata amica

ca mme cunziglia 'e nun te penzà cchiù.

The birds sing in the old house
Where you used to sing as well
And I also hear the voice of some other
friend
she's advising me to stop thinking about
you

Carmè',
si aggio lassato a mamma mia pe' te,
si t'hê pigliato 'a primma giuventù,
pecché nun tuorne a me?

Carmela,
since I've left my mother for you,
since you've seized your first youth,
why won't you come back to me?

Mme pare ca è cagnata 'sta fenesta

'a dó' vuttaste 'o primmo sciore a me.

It seems to me that this window has
changed
through which you threw the first flower
to me.

E n'ata rosa, 'a dint'a n'ata testa

mo mme cunziglia 'e nun te penzà cchiù.

And some other rose, there in some other
head,
advising me now to stop thinking about
you

Translation by evfokas via
lyricstranslate.com

'O sole mio

'O sole mio was written in 1898 by Eduardo di Capua and Alfredo Mazzucchi.

The lyrics were written by Giovanni Capurro. For over a hundred years, the song was attributed to Eduardo di Capua alone. The melody however, was an elaboration of one of the many melodies that di Capua had purchased from Alfredo Mazzucchi.¹⁸

Soon after her father's death, Mazzucchi's daughter went to the Italian courts, seeking accreditation for her father as co-composer of many of di Capua's songs, including *'O sole mio*. In 2002, a judge upheld the decision, stating that Mazzucchi had

¹⁸ "O Sole Mio Ha Un Nuovo PapÀ" (Con Una Premessa Del Settembre 1997) - Belviveremedia.Com," August 9, 2017, accessed November 18,

indeed been a legitimate co-composer of some 18 songs. The judge concluded that Mazzucchi composed the melodies and sold them to di Capua in June of 1897, with a written authorization for the latter to make free use of them.¹⁹

With the song's tremendous popularity, Luciano Pavarotti included '*O sole mio* in many recitals and won the 1980 Grammy for Best Classical Vocal Performance for his recording featuring the song and other Neapolitan favorites. Elvis Presley's *It's Now or Never* provided a new English version of the song with lyrics written by Aaron Schroeder and Wally Gold. It went on to become his highest selling single. At the opening ceremony of the 1920 Summer Olympics in Antwerp, '*O sole mio* was played in place of the Italian national anthem, whose score mistakenly had not been delivered to the band.²⁰

Che bella cosa na jurnata 'e sole,
n'aria serena doppo na tempesta!
Pe' ll'aria fresca pare già na festa...

What a wonderful thing a sunny day
The serene air after a thunderstorm
The fresh air, and a party is already
going on...

Che bella cosa na jurnata 'e sole.

What a beautiful thing on a sunny day

Ma n'atu sole
cchiù bello, oje ne'.
O sole mio
sta 'nfronte a te!

But another sun,
that's brighter still
It's my own sun
that's in your face!

Quanno fa notte e 'o sole se ne scenne,
me vene quase 'na malincunia;
sotto 'a fenesta toia restarria
quanno fa notte e 'o sole se ne scenne.

When night comes and the sun's gone
down,
I start feeling blue;
I'd stay below your window
When night comes and the sun's gone
down.

¹⁹ "O Sole Mio Ha Un Nuovo PapÀ" (Con Una Premessa Del Settembre 1997) - Belviveremedia.Com," August 9, 2017, accessed November 18, 2018 <https://web.archive.org/web/20170809211930/https://www.belviveremedia.com/amadeus/o-sole-mio-ha-un-nuovo-papa-con-una-premessa-del-settembre-1997>.

²⁰ "O Sole Mio," Donzelli Editore, accessed November 18, 2018, <https://www.donzelli.it/libro/9788860360649>.

Ma n'atu sole
cchiù bello, oje ne'.
O sole mio
sta 'nfronte a te!

But another sun,
that's brighter still
It's my own sun
that's in your face!

Translation by Aaron Greene

CHAPTER II

Five Songs of Laurence Hope by H.T. Burleigh

Biography

Henry Thacker Burleigh, also known as “Harry,” or “H.T.,” was an African-American composer, arranger, and professional singer. He is known as one of the first African-American composers to develop a distinct American form of classical music. Burleigh’s music was presented to formally trained musicians, and he introduced them to spirituals, which he arranged in his own classical vision.

Burleigh was born on December 2, 1866 in Erie, Pennsylvania. He was the son of Henry Thacker and Elizabeth Burleigh. His grandfather, Hamilton Waters, was freed from slavery in Somerset County, Maryland in 1835. Once freed, Waters, along with his mother, moved to Ithaca, New York. Waters married Lucinda Duncanson and the two moved to Lansing, New York. Lucinda gave birth to a daughter, Elizabeth, (H.T. Burleigh’s mother) in 1838. The family again relocated to Erie, Pennsylvania where they would spend most of their lives.²¹

Elizabeth Burleigh received a degree from Avery College, a historically African-American institution in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; it ceased operations in 1873. Elizabeth

²¹ Snyder, Jean. *Harry T. Burleigh: From the Spiritual to the Harlem Renaissance*. Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2016.

was employed as a domestic worker. She was unable to secure a teaching position despite her college education and fluency in Greek and French. Burleigh's father, Henry Thacker, Sr., was a navy veteran who fought in the Civil War. Later he became the first black juror in Erie County.²² Henry Sr. passed away when H.T. was only 7, and his mother remarried in 1875. Her second husband, John Elmendorf, was also a veteran of the Union Navy.

With H.T.'s father passing at such a young age, his grandfather became the male role model in his life. Hamilton was employed as town crier and lamplighter, known for his beautiful voice. Sometimes as he worked, he sang traditional spirituals and plantation songs to young H.T., who often helped light the gas street lamps.²³ This signified the passing on of the music, the "Negro Spiritual," that Burleigh would make universally known.

Burleigh's mother worked part time as a maid for Elizabeth Russell, a bank messenger. On many nights the Russell home played host to popular musical gatherings which were organized by the family. Burleigh's mother convinced Russell to hire him as a doorman for these events. It was here that he was exposed to performances by internationally renowned musicians including Venezuelan pianist, Teresa Carreño and Italian tenor Italo Campanini.²⁴

In 1884, musician George Brierly resigned from his position at the Burdett Organ Company in order to lead the music program at the First Methodist Church in Burleigh's hometown of Erie.²⁵ Elizabeth was a Sunday school teacher there, and over time,

²² Snyder. *Harry T. Burleigh: From the Spiritual to the Harlem Renaissance*

²³ Snyder. *Harry T. Burleigh: From the Spiritual to the Harlem Renaissance*

²⁴ Snyder, Jean. "A great and noble school of music: Dvořák, Harry T. Burleigh, and the African American Spiritual". In Tibbetts, John C. (ed.), *Dvořák in America: 1892-1895*. Portland, OR: Amadeus Press, 1993, p. 131.

²⁵ Snyder, Jean. "Harry T. Burleigh, 'One of Erie's Most Popular Church Singers.'" *Black Music Research Journal*, vol. 24, no. 2, 2004, pp. 195–225. *JSTOR*, JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/4145491.

Burleigh began to gain Brierly's attention. It was quite evident that Burleigh had inherited his grandfather's musical talent and possessed a tremendous baritone voice of his own. He would study voice with Brierly throughout high school and became known as one of Erie's most gifted classical singers. Burleigh was accepted, with scholarship, to the prestigious National Conservatory of Music in New York at the age of 26.

The conservatory originally rejected Burleigh's entrance, noting low academic marks. Frances MacDowell (mother of composer Edward MacDowell, and the Conservatory's registrar) insisted that he study and retake his entrance exam, and days later he received a scholarship.²⁶ During his studies Burleigh worked for Mrs. MacDowell cleaning, performing maintenance work, as well as other odd jobs. While cleaning the Conservatory halls, Burleigh would often sing spirituals, much like his grandfather. It was here that he drew the attention of famous Czech composer Antonín Dvořák, who served as the director of the Conservatory.

Dvořák came to the United States in 1892 as the new director of the conservatory.²⁷ He was exposed to the spiritual through his work with Burleigh. He commented that: ". . . inspiration for truly national music might be derived from the Negro melodies or Indian chants. I was led to take this view partly by the fact that the so-called plantation songs are indeed the most striking and appealing melodies that have yet been found on this side of the water, but largely by the observation that this seems to be recognized, though often unconsciously, by most Americans. . . . The most potent as well as most beautiful among them, according to my estimation, are certain of the so-called

²⁶ Snyder. "A great and noble school of music: Dvořák, Harry T. Burleigh, and the African American Spiritual"

²⁷ Snyder. "A great and noble school of music: Dvořák, Harry T. Burleigh, and the African American Spiritual"

plantation melodies and slave songs, all of which are distinguished by unusual and subtle harmonies, the like of which I have found in no other songs but those of old Scotland and Ireland.”²⁸

Dvořák took Burleigh under his wing and the two worked very closely together for years. It was Dvořák that implored Burleigh to formally organize and arrange the folk tradition of his slave ancestors. In 1898, Burleigh’s first three songs were published by G. Schirmer.²⁹ By 1911, he was working as an editor for the Ricordi publishing company. Burleigh went on to compose nearly 300 songs. His most well-known composition is an arrangement of *Deep River*. This was followed with the popular *By an’ By, Go Down Moses, Swing Low, Sweet Chariot*, and his *Old Songs Hymnal* in 1929.

The success of these arrangements created an encouraging space for Burleigh to compose original songs (non-spirituals). Burleigh’s gift for solo vocal writing is well represented in his original song cycles. Commonly performed works include the *Saracen Songs, Passionale*, and *Five Songs of Laurence Hope*.

Five Songs of Laurence Hope

Burleigh and Dvořák shared an inspired interest and passion for folk music, regardless of the region. Burleigh, specifically, had a fascination with the cultures of East and Southeast Asia. His interest in lyrics and musical procedures described as “Orientalist” were motivated by his enthusiasm for folk music with distinct musical

²⁸ Jones, Randye. “H. T. Burleigh (1866-1949).” *AFROCENTRIC VOICES: H. T. Burleigh Biography*, 11 June 2015, accessed November 18, 2018, www.afrovoices.com/burleigh.html.

²⁹ “H. T. Burleigh (1866-1949).” *Library of Congress Information Bulletin*, Victor, accessed November 18, 2018, www.loc.gov/item/ihas.200035730.

identities such as Irish, English, and Swedish in addition to the pseudo-Persian and East Indian lyrics that inspired the *Five Songs of Laurence Hope*.³⁰

Laurence Hope is the pseudonym of Adele Florence Nicolson Corey, whose “exotic Orientalist” love lyrics were immensely popular in the early twentieth century, and even more so after her suicide in 1904.³¹ Hope was born in Gloucestershire in 1865, and at the age of sixteen she joined her father who was stationed in India. Her first volume of poetry, *The Garden of Kama, and Other Love Lyrics from India*, was published in 1901, and the last, *Indian Love*, was published in 1905.³²

Hope’s poetry is a model example of the sensual imagery that was increasingly intriguing to the Western hemisphere. The late 19th century revealed this cultural phenomenon that had many literary, musical, and societal awakenings. In Germany, the premiere of Richard Strauss’s controversial opera *Salome* with its “Dance of the Seven Veils” provided a shocking final scene where Salome embraces the severed head of John the Baptist. At the 1893 Chicago World’s Fair, Egyptian belly dancers thrilled Victorian visitors. And in France, Massenet was composing his opera *Thaïs*, the story of an Egyptian monk that attempts to convert Thaïs to Christianity, but discovers that his obsession with her is actually rooted in lust.

Burleigh and his contemporaries did not rely on exotic texts solely for their sensuality, but perhaps the audacious sensuality of these texts freed them from a reserved Victorian nature, covering the surface of political society.³³

³⁰ Snyder. *Harry T. Burleigh: From the Spiritual to the Harlem Renaissance*

³¹ Brown, Susan, et al. “Laurence Hope.” *Orlando: Women’s Writing - Documentation*, accessed November 18, 2018, orlando.cambridge.org/public/svPeople?person_id=hopela.

³² “Laurence Hope.” *Poetry Foundation*, Poetry Foundation, accessed November 18, 2018 www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/laurence-hope.

³³ Snyder. *Harry T. Burleigh: From the Spiritual to the Harlem Renaissance*

Although it is his spirituals which are most widely recognized, Burleigh's choice of lyrics and oriental tonal/harmonic procedures found in the *Five Songs Laurence Hope* songs is quite remarkable,³⁴ especially to those unfamiliar with his original work. Some scholars consider the five songs to be some of Burleigh's best work. In these songs, we find a different sound and originality, and contrary to his spirituals, the talented Burleigh was now free to deviate from an already established melody.

The five songs, in their own right, are quite difficult, not to be attempted by an untrained singer. They were originally written for tenor or soprano, however, the vocal range spans almost two octaves. The songs feature long, alluring vocal lines with an exotic accompaniment, which is equally difficult.

Worth While

The cycle opens with *Worth While*, in which the poet asks the question "I asked my desolate, shipwrecked soul...Wouldst thou rather never have met the one whom thou lovedst beyond control, and whom thou adorest yet?" To which the senses, heart, and brain respond, "What matter the price? We would pay it again. We have had, we have loved, we have known!" The opening question marked *affetuoso*, (with affection and tenderness) is asked with a gloomy, syncopated minor accompaniment. As the senses, heart, and brain prepare to respond, the music reveals its first *forte* marking and the key modulates to an "uplifting" F major, with thicker orchestration. The exact date that the poem was written is undocumented, but it is featured in Hope's collection *Stars of the Desert* published in 1903. It is very possible that her husband was quite ill during the

³⁴ Snyder. *Harry T. Burleigh: From the Spiritual to the Harlem Renaissance*

time, revealing her belief that a life without love has gone wasted. Proving the text more tragic, her husband died the shortly after *Stars of the Desert* was published, and Hope would commit suicide two months later.

I asked of my desolate shipwrecked soul
“Wouldst thou rather never have met
The one whom thou lovedst beyond control
And whom thou adorest yet?”
Back from the senses, the heart, the brain,
Came the answer swiftly thrown,
“What matter the price? We would pay it again,
We have had, we have loved, we have known!”

The Jungle Flower

The Jungle Flower from Hope’s *Last Poems* were published after Hope’s death. She often wrote of stars, nature, and exotic flowers, and the text is quite suggestive here. In his article, “Deep River Popularizes a Composer,” H.K.M. states that *The Jungle Flower* gains distinction from the exotic pulsating syncopation that throbs beneath.³⁵ The poet reveals that “fate was gentle to me for a too brief hour.”

Thou art one of the jungle flowers, strange and fierce and fair,
Palest amber, perfect lines, and scented with champa flower.
Lie back and frame thy face in the gloom of thy loosened hair;
Sweet thou art and loved — ay, loved — for an hour.

But thought flies far, ah, far, to another breast,
Whose whiteness breaks to the rose of a twin pink flower,
Where wind the azure veins that my lips caressed
When Fate was gentle to me for a too-brief hour.

³⁵ H. K. M. “‘Deep River’ Popularizes a Composer.” *The Black Perspective in Music*, vol. 2, no. 1, 1974, pp. 75–79. *JSTOR*, JSTOR, accessed November 18, 2018 www.jstor.org/stable/1214152.

Kashmiri Song

The third installment in the cycle, *Kashmiri Song* is one of Hope's most well-known poems. It is a risqué lament, full of sensual imagery, and dramatic emotion of a lost love. From Hope's *India's Love Lyrics*, Burleigh shows tremendous sensitivity to the text and singer. He places fermatas between the staves rather than on specific beats. This typically occurs after particularly dramatic text or demanding vocal lines. Burleigh almost suggests that the performer requires time to collect themselves and to interpret silence on a personal level. Referring to the former lover's hands, the piece comes to climax with the lyrics "I would have rather felt you round my throat, crushing out life, than waving me farewell!" The voice elevates to a fortissimo high A-natural, on the word "throat;" and with an immediate decrescendo, as if defeated, the performer asks softly, marked *pianissimo*, "Pale hands I loved, where are you now?"

Pale hands I loved beside the Shalimar,
Where are you now? [Who lies beneath your spell?]¹
Whom do you lead on Rapture's roadway, far,
Before you agonise them in farewell?

Oh, pale dispensers of my Joys and Pains,
Holding the doors of Heaven and of Hell,
How the hot blood rushed wildly through the veins
Beneath your touch, until you waved farewell.

Pale hands, pink tipped, like Lotus buds that float
On those cool waters where we used to dwell,
I would have rather felt you round my throat,
Crushing out life, than waving me farewell!

Among the Fuchsias

Hope often depicts the voices of Indian dancers and slaves to engage themes of passionate love and loss.³⁶ The fourth song in the set, *Among the Fuchsias* is a tale of temptation, most likely a forbidden love. The beginning trilling pattern in the piano's left hand is suggestive of bells, perhaps referencing a sense of "being summoned." The opening line of text reveals that this love is secret, and later implores "Ah, tempt me not, for I am not strong!" The accompaniment has a very "Eastern" feel to it, and in the climax of the piece, almost every note in the score is accented. Likely the most chromatic song in the cycle, *Among the Fuchsias* employs many modal changes.

Call me not to a secret place
when daylight dies away,
tempt me not with thine eager face
and words thou shouldst not say.

Entice me not with a child of thine,
ah, God, if such might be,
for surely a man is half divine
who adds another link to the line
whose last link none may see.

Call me not to the Lotus lake
where drooping fuchsias hide,
what if my latent youth awakes
and will not be denied?
Ah, tempt me not for I am not strong
(thy mouth is a budded kiss)

My days are empty, my nights are long;
ah, why is a thing so sweet so wrong,
why is a thing so sweet so wrong
as thy temptation is?

³⁶ "Laurence Hope." *Poetry Foundation*, Poetry Foundation, www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/laurence-hope.

Till I Wake

Till I Wake, from the Hope's *Garden of Karma*, is the final piece of the cycle. Open to interpretation, it is unclear whether the performer is speaking figuratively or literally in the opening phrase "When I am dying..." This is the first time that a minimal, repetitive arpeggiation is featured in the accompaniment, similar to a more traditional art song. The piano writing is very conducive to the vocal line and inspires the most legato singing in the entire set. *Till I Wake* features the highest tessitura of all the songs, and Burleigh employs a fantastic text to finish the cycle with Hope's romantic verse, "So I may when I wake - if there be an awakening, keep what lulled me to sleep...The touch of your lips on my mouth."

The original score is prefaced by musicologist H.E. Kriebel. He acknowledged the five songs are "a pleasure to the connoisseur in their reading as well as refreshment and delight to both performer and hearer."³⁷ He continues, "We have had occasion to learn how adept Mr. Burleigh is in imbuing music with his own national voice, and it is a pleasure to observe that the idiom of the East is also at his command."³⁸

When I am dying, lean over me tenderly, softly...
Stoop, as the yellow roses droop
In the wind from the south;
So I may when I wake – if there be an awakening –
Keep what lulled me to sleep –
The touch of your lips on my mouth.

³⁷ Burleigh, H.T. *Five Songs of Laurence Hope*. 1915. New York: G Ricordi, 1915

³⁸ Burleigh, H.T. *Five Songs of Laurence Hope*

CHAPTER III

Selections from the opera *Werther*, by Jules Massenet.

Biography

French Composer Jules Massenet is known as the leading French operatic composer of his time. He wrote more than forty staged compositions, many of which are still performed in the standard repertoire. Massenet's operas reflect a sense of lyricism and sensuality that resonates with audiences. The Royal Opera House's biography states that "Massenet's innate lyric gift and his ability to evoke time, place, mood, and character through music made him the archetypal composer of late 19th-century French opera. His vast body of work testifies to his lifelong passion for work, while every piece of his exhibits a highly professional understanding of the practicalities of music making."³⁹

Massenet was born on May 12, 1842 in Montaud, France; an east-central settlement now part of the city of Saint-Étienne. He was introduced to music by his mother, a piano teacher who also composed. His father, an ironmaster, moved his wife and four children (Jules, the youngest) to Paris when Jules was a young boy. At age 11, he was admitted to the Paris Conservatoire.⁴⁰

³⁹ "Jules Massenet - Royal Opera House." *Royal Opera House*, accessed November 18, 2018 www.roh.org.uk/people/jules-massenet.

⁴⁰ Irvine, Demar. *Massenet: A Chronicle of His Life and Times*. Amadeus Press, 1994.

At the conservatoire, he began his studies with Ambroise Thomas, who would later go on to compose his famed operas *Mignon* and *Hamlet*. His studies were briefly interrupted when his father relocated the family south of France due to growing health concerns. Massenet returned to the conservatoire roughly two years later. Due to expensive medical bills, Massenet was forced to support himself. He played percussion in theatre orchestras as well as taught piano students. It was in the theater that Jules would familiarize himself with the operas of Charles Gounod, composer of *Faust*, and *Romeo et Juliette*.⁴¹

Upon graduating his composition class, Massenet was entered into the "*Prix de Rome*," a prestigious French scholarship for students of the arts established in 1663, during the reign of Louis XIV of France.⁴² Massenet's musical idol, composer Hector Berlioz, was one of the judges on the deciding panel and when Massenet's cantata received the prize in 1863, he was astounded. In winning the competition, he was granted a three year, subsidized study, most of which was spent at the French Academy in Rome. Massenet spent much of his time at the academy studying the work of Handel and Bach.⁴³

In 1866, Massenet returned to Paris and married Louise-Constance "Ninon" de Gressy, the daughter of one of pianist/composer Franz Liszt's patrons. Massenet taught Ninon piano in Rome and the two fell in love, however, they decided to wait until Massenet was more financially stable before marrying. At this time he was making an earnest living teaching piano and publishing music. However, in 1870, the Franco-

⁴¹ Irvine, Demar. *Massenet: A Chronicle of His Life and Times*. Amadeus Press, 1994.

⁴² Irvine

⁴³ Irvine

Prussian war disrupted his musical life as he served in the National Guard, along with fellow composer Georges Bizet.⁴⁴

As soon as order was restored in Paris, Massenet returned and in 1872 he finished his first large-scale stage work, *Don César de Bazan*, a four act *opéra comique* (a genre of French opera that contains spoken dialogue and arias). He achieved little to no success with the opera, but was successful with other incidental music and oratorio. Massenet finally achieved operatic success in 1877 with the premiere of his *Le roi de Lahore* or “The King of Lahore.” *Le roi* debuted at the Palais Garnier, the newly erected opera house commissioned for the Paris Opera. The opera, set in eleventh century Pakistan, reflects the European’s “Orientalism,” the fascination with Asian culture that was also gaining popularity in the nineteenth century with H.T. Burleigh and the American arts. Within a year of the premiere, *Le roi* was commissioned in Turin, Rome, Bologna, and Venice.⁴⁵

In 1878, Massenet was appointed professor of counterpoint, fugue and composition at the Paris Conservatoire. He was well respected and popular with students Reynaldo Hahn and Amédée-Ernest Chausson, who would become well respected composers of their own.⁴⁶

Massenet’s reputation as a composer was growing at this point in his life, as was his progressive nature in choosing libretti. He did not go out of his way to write operas ridden with Nationalism, he instead chose stories with levels of high sensuality, featuring characters many saw as “unsentimental.” He strayed from the popular Italian notion that

⁴⁴ Irvine

⁴⁵ Macdonald, Hugh, et al. “Massenet, Jules.”

⁴⁶ Irvine

the tenor character must be strong and heroic. In his 1877 opera *Hérodiade*, the depiction of Salome and John the Baptist as lovers no doubt struck many as sacrilegious. The director of the Paris Opera refused to stage the work and it wasn't debuted until 1881 in Brussels. The opera wasn't performed in Paris until February of 1884, the month after Massenet's prized opera *Manon* was premiered.⁴⁷

With the success of *Manon*, Massenet had established himself as the leading French opera composer of the time. The opera was immediately commissioned with productions at the major opera houses in Europe and the United States and is known as a staple in the French opera repertoire. Massenet reached success again with his opera *Le Cid* (the Spanish soldier or warrior) the following year. He achieved minimal success with 1889's *Esclarmonde* which is considered Massenet's most ambitious work for the stage and is his most *Wagnerian* in style.⁴⁸ The piece is rarely performed today due to the virtuosic difficulty of the title role.

Massenet worked on his opera *Werther* in the time between *Manon* and *Esclarmonde* but the Opéra-Comique refused to stage it due to its dark subject matter and intense tragedy. *Werther* didn't receive its first performance until 1892, when the Vienna State Opera asked Massenet for a new work, due to the well-received Austrian premiere of *Manon*. It was finally performed in Paris the following year.⁴⁹

La Navarraise was premiered in 1894 at the Covent Garden in London. In this piece, Massenet notably adopted the “*verismo*” style (from the Italian word “*vero*,” meaning true) similar to works such as Mascagni's *Cavalleria rusticana*, Leoncavallo's

⁴⁷ Randel, Don Michael. *The Harvard Biographical Dictionary of Music*. Harvard University Press, 1996.

⁴⁸ Macdonald, Hugh, et al. “Massenet, Jules.”

⁴⁹ Macdonald, Hugh, et al. “Massenet, Jules.”

Pagliacci, and Puccini's *Il tabarro*. Like naturalism, the *verismo* literary movement sought to portray the world with a greater realism. This period saw a major shift in artistic, especially literary tastes. Massenet's opera *Thaïs*, written the same year, was deemed a success, but not until its revision in 1898.

Aside from composition, Massenet enjoyed his home life in Paris, and at his country home in Égreville. After his mentor Ambroise Thomas passed away in 1896, Massenet was offered the Director of the Paris Conservatoire, which he ultimately rejected. It is perceived that he wanted to focus on composition solely, and at this point in his life, Massenet had a new opera being debuted every year at the major opera houses. Aside from being a homebody, he was relatively put off by Parisian society, and later in his life, he often was absent for the premieres of his own operas.

Massenet continued to compose opera for the rest of his life with varying success. He maintained tremendous popularity at the Opéra de Monte-Carlo where seven of his final ten operas were premiered.⁵⁰ Most of his later operas are no longer in standard repertory with the exception of *Don Quichotte* (1899) and *Cendrillon* (1910).

Towards the end of his life, Massenet battled abdominal cancer, but his symptoms did not seem imminently life-threatening until a particularly painful day in August of 1912.⁵¹ Massenet traveled back to Paris to see his doctor, he received unfortunate news and within a few days his condition worsened quite rapidly. His wife and family rushed to Paris, and were with him when he passed away at age seventy. Massenet was buried

⁵⁰ Macdonald, Hugh, et al. "Massenet, Jules."

⁵¹ Macdonald, Hugh, et al. "Massenet, Jules."

during a service with no music per his wishes. The service was held privately near his country home at Égreville, where he is buried in the churchyard.⁵²

Werther

Massenet's *Werther* was completed 1887, and is based on Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's 1774 novel, *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* or "The Sorrows of Young Werther." Massenet, who was never afraid of darker subject matter, chose this tragedy, a story of the suicide of a young man who was in love with a married woman. Goethe's novel consists mainly of letters from Werther to his love, Charlotte. However, in reworking the novel for the operatic stage, French librettists Édouard Blau, Paul Milliet and Georges Hartmann would require more extended material better suited for the operatic stage. While there is plenty of character development and solo material for other characters, the novel and the opera both make clear that this is Werther's story, and *his* tragedy.

From the very beginning of the novel, we discover Werther is a very emotional person. He is emotional about his surroundings, the weather, and the people he meets. He is a man full of passion, and doesn't react to things rationally. Werther's current dilemma of unrequited love furthers his depression and extreme perception of reality. Werther's initial depression is described more elaborately in the novel than in the opera. Massenet, however opens the opera with a haunting prelude with foreshadowing thematic material.

The novel further reveals Werther as indulgent in his emotions, as if his emotional state at any given time was so overwhelming that nothing else mattered. He ignores

⁵² Irvine

friendships and admirers. He doesn't search for meaningful employment, he instead paints or plays with children in the fields. Goethe's story doesn't reveal Werther's non-conformist nature as lazy or pathetic, but more so indicates his frustration with the strictness of society.⁵³

The opera, like many of Massenet's compositions, begins with a prelude, which contains a motif of distress. This is repeated throughout the opera and used to express pain while foreshadowing tragedy. Massenet, notably, was an avid fan of Richard Wagner's use of motivic material.

Act 1 begins in Charlotte's home. Her father, the widowed Bailiff along with a children's chorus, are rehearsing a Christmas carol, uncharacteristically out of season, in July. This seems to foreshadow Werther's impending suicide on Christmas Eve. Charlotte, the eldest daughter, prepares supper for her siblings and dresses for a ball. Since her fiancé Albert is away, she is to be escorted by the young Werther, whom the Bailiff and his friends don't particularly care for. Werther enters, praising the beauty of nature and watches Charlotte care for her siblings. In his aria *O nature pleine de grâce*, we instantly see Werther's tendency to be overcome by an emotional high as he sings (translated in English), "Mysterious silence!... O solemn calm! Everything attracts me and pleases me!... This wall and this dark corner... This limpid spring and the coolness of the shade; there's not a hedge, there's not a bush where a flower doesn't burst forth, where a shiver doesn't pass by!"

⁵³ Pustejovsky, John S. "Terminal Genius: Dimensions of Suffering in 'Die Leiden Des Jungen Werther.'" *The South Central Bulletin*, vol. 39, no. 4, 1979, pp. 146–148. JSTOR, JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/3188499.

Later, we find Werther and Charlotte returning from the ball and he proclaims his undying love for her. She somewhat reluctantly returns his affections. Werther is unaware of Charlotte and Albert's engagement, he supposedly has never heard of the latter prior to the Bailiff announcing Albert's early return. Werther shockingly tells Charlotte that he will die if she marries another.

In Act II, three months have passed and Charlotte and Albert are now married. They walk hand in hand to church to celebrate the minister's 50th wedding anniversary. Werther and Albert have a brief conversation in which Albert reveals that he has known of Werther's feelings for Charlotte. He empathizes with the pain Werther is obviously experiencing. Shortly after, Werther confronts Charlotte outside the church and a beautiful, passionate duet ensues. The orchestra provides a nostalgic waltz while Werther sings, imploring Charlotte to remember the first time that they met. Reminiscing, Werther asks, "How far off is the day full of intimate sweetness, where my gaze met yours for the first time...Where we, the two of us, remained such a long time... so close...without saying anything to each other...Nevertheless, there fell from the heavens a supreme ray which seemed like a smile upon our silent emotion!" Charlotte, feeling hopeless, implores him to think of her as a friend. He is overcome with emotion and leaves.

Lorsque l'enfant revient

Werther, now in a dangerous mental state, contemplates suicide. In the aria *Lorsque l'enfant revient*, Werther raises the question, here paraphrased, "When a child returns from a journey ahead of time, instead of resenting him, does the father not embrace him? Oh God, who created me... would you be less merciful." This is an obvious metaphor for Werther taking his own life, imploring God to welcome him into heaven.

The orchestra provides in the key of B Major a simplistic, gentle, almost child-like accompaniment under the ascending melody, perhaps portraying the ascension into heaven. Werther's emotional plea suddenly turns to anger. The orchestration abruptly moves to the parallel key of B Minor, the tempo quickly increases speed and the strings provide a series of sweeping, storm-like 32nd notes that personify Werther's whirlwind emotion. He seems to have answered his own question with "No! You could not, hidden under your veils, reject in the night your wretched son! Your son!" The aria concludes with a dramatic, fortissimo B-natural above the staff (approaching the limit of most tenors' ranges) in which Werther cries to God, "Speak to my heart! Call me (to heaven)!"

Oui, ce qu'elle m'ordonne
Pour son repos, je le ferai;
et si la force m'abandonne,
Ah! C'est moi qui pour toujours
me reposerai!

Yes, what she orders of me
For her peace of mind, I will do it.
And if strength abandons me,
Ah, it is I who forever will rest.

Pourquoi trembler devant la mort...
Devant lanôtre?
On lève le rideau,
puis on passe de l'autre côté!
Voilà ce qu'on nomme mourir.
Offensons-nous le ciel en cessant de
souffrir?

Why tremble before death...
before our own?
You raise the curtain,
then you pass to the other side.
That is what one calls dying.
Do we offend heaven by ceasing to
suffer?

Lorsque l'enfant revient d'un voyage
avant l'heure,
bien loin de lui garder quelque
ressentiment,
au seul bruit de ses pas tressaille la
demeure,
et le père joyeux l'embrasse longuement.

When a child returns from a trip ahead
of time,
far from keeping some resentment
toward him,
at the mere sound of his steps, the house
quivers,
And the joyful father embraces him a
long time.

O Dieu qui m'as créé, serais-tu moins
clément?
Non! Tu ne saurais pas, dérobé sous tes
voiles,

O God, who created me, would you be
less merciful?
No! You could not, hidden under your
veils,

rejecter dans la nuit ton fils infortuné!
Ton fils!
Devinant ton sourire au travers des
étoiles,
Il reviendrait vers toi, d'avance
pardonné!
Père! Père! Père que je ne connais pas,

en qui pourtant j'ai foi, parle à mon
coeur,
Appelle-moi! appelle-moi! appelle-
moi!

Reject in the night your wretched son!
Your son!
Guessing your smile through the stars,
He would come back to you, forgiven in
advance!

Father! Father! Father, whom I don't
know,
In whom I, nonetheless, have faith,
speak to my heart,
Call to me! Call to me! to Call me!

Translation by Lea Frey

Act III begins with Charlotte reading letters from Werther as she grows increasingly uneasy, since he has made clear his intent to kill himself. Charlotte's sister Sophie enters, attempting to console her. In the aria *Va! laisse couler mes larmes*, Charlotte begs Sophie to leave, declaring, "The tears which one does not cry, will fall again inside our soul, all of them...and with their patient drops, they hammer at the heart, sad and weary."

Pourquoi me réveiller

Werther unexpectedly appears, confessing once more that he will not live without her. He is visibly quite upset, and in an attempt to calm him, Charlotte shows him a manuscript of Ossian poetry that he translated. In the aria *Pourquoi me réveiller*, Werther asks, "Why awaken me, oh breath of spring?" as he knows that he is doomed sadness.

Pourquoi me réveiller, ô souffle du
printemps?
Pourquoi me réveiller?
Sur mon front je sens tes caresses,
et pourtant bien proche est le temps
des orages et des tristesses!

Why do you awaken me?
O breath of Spring?
Why do you awaken me?
On my forehead I feel your caresses,
and yet very near is the time
of storms and sorrows!

Pourquoi me réveiller, ô souffle du printemps?

Demain dans le vallon
viendra le voyageur
se souvenant de ma gloire première.
Et ses yeux vainement
chercheront ma splendeur.

Ils ne trouveront plus que deuil
et que misère! Hélas!
Pourquoi me réveiller, ô souffle du printemps?

Why do you awaken me? O breath of Spring?

Tomorrow, into the valley
will come the traveler
remembering my early glory
and his eyes in vain
will look for my splendor.

They will find no more than grief and misery. Alas!
Why do you awaken me?
O breath of Spring?

Translation by Randall Garrou

Charlotte and Werther embrace for a brief moment, but she then quickly bids him farewell. Werther reaches out to Albert, asking to borrow his pistols for a journey and the act closes with Albert granting his request. An orchestral intermezzo, *La nuit de Noël* leads to the final act.

In Act IV, Charlotte has arrived too late to stop Werther from shooting himself; he lies in his apartment dying. She consoles him by declaring her love while he begs for her forgiveness. In the last moments of his life, Werther makes known his wish of being buried underneath two lime trees at the cemetery. He goes on, "If this were refused to me, if Christian ground is forbidden for this body of a poor wretch....then near the road or in the lonely valley, go to place my tomb!....By turning away his eyes, a priest will pass by...But, in secret, a certain woman will come to visit the exile, and by one sweet tear, fallen on his shadow...the dead man, the poor ghost, will feel himself blessed!" Charlotte faints.

The final act of Massenet's opera includes little to no stage direction. The Ossian motif heard during *Pourquoi me réveiller* is tragically repeated as Werther lies dying.

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