

A SURVEY OF 21ST CENTURY GAY-THEMED AMERICAN

ART SONGS FOR BARITONE

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The majority of repertoire catalogs for singers, printed and digital, often list works by voice type, language, and/or genre. The 21st century has seen an emergence of online classical music catalogs where the user can seek repertoire by searching composers from underrepresented communities (i.e., women, Black, LGBTQ, Latinx). What does not currently exist is a resource that catalogs songs for solo voice dealing specifically with gay subject matter. This dissertation surveys seventeen 21st century gay-themed art songs by four living American composers: David Del Tredici, Ben Moore, Clint Borzoni, and Gary Schocker. Each chapter introduces a different composer and a select representation of their gay-themed art songs. Each entry includes text analysis based on the composer's and author's intentions and a brief analysis to determine pedagogical and musical difficulty. It is my intent that this document will facilitate a much-needed resource and encourage further study, promotion, and performance of voice works with gay themes. Moreover, I hope that it will serve as a tool for the applied voice teacher to assist in the vocal and artistic development of their students through broader repertoire choices.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | Page |
|--|------|
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS..... | iii |
| LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES..... | vi |
| LIST OF MUSICAL EXAMPLES..... | vii |
| CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION..... | 1 |
| The Selection of Composers and Repertoire | 2 |
| Annotation Guidelines for Each Composer and Their Works..... | 4 |
| CHAPTER 2. DAVID DEL TREDICI (B. 1937)..... | 7 |
| <i>Gay Life</i> | 9 |
| 1. “Ode to Wildwood” | 12 |
| 2. “In the Temple”..... | 13 |
| 3. “Personals Ad” | 14 |
| 4. “After the Big Parade” | 15 |
| 5. “Here” | 17 |
| 6. “Memory Unsettled (A Farewell)” | 20 |
| CHAPTER 3. BEN MOORE (B. 1960)..... | 25 |
| <i>Love Remained</i> | 25 |
| 1. “Hold On” | 26 |
| 2. “Uncle Ronnie” | 28 |
| 3. “Love Remained” | 30 |
| 4. “Hope” | 31 |
| CHAPTER 4. GARY SCHOCKER (B. 1959)..... | 33 |
| “Two Scared Boys”..... | 33 |
| <i>The College Poems</i> | 34 |
| 1. “Freshman” | 35 |
| 2. “Cafeteria” | 36 |
| 3. “Next” | 36 |
| 4. “Vivisectionist” | 37 |

| | |
|---|----|
| CHAPTER 5. CLINT BORZONI (B. 1981) | 38 |
| Gay-Themed Opera..... | 38 |
| Gay-Themed Art Songs | 39 |
| 1. “I Dreamed in a Dream” | 40 |
| 2. “That Shadow, My Likeness” | 42 |
| CHAPTER 6. OPPORTUNITY FOR FURTHER STUDY | 45 |
| APPENDIX A. PARTIAL CATALOG OF GAY-THEMED WORKS BY AMERICAN COMPOSERS..... | 48 |
| APPENDIX B. COMPOSERS’ NOTES | 52 |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY..... | 58 |

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

| | Page |
|---|------|
| Tables | |
| Table 1.1: Criteria for Repertoire Selection..... | 4 |
| Table 1.2: Information for Each Annotated Song Entry..... | 5 |
| Table 1.3: Musical Characteristics Discussed in Music Analysis | 5 |
| Figures | |
| Figure 1.1: Octave Designation Based on Scientific Pitch Notation | 5 |
| Figure 1.2: <i>Passaggio</i> Points for Lyric Baritone and Dramatic Baritone..... | 6 |
| Figure 1.3: General <i>Passaggio</i> Designation for Baritone | 6 |

LIST OF MUSICAL EXAMPLES

| | Page |
|---|------|
| Example 2.1: “Ode to Wildwood,” David Del Tredici, mm. 1-12. | 11 |
| Example 2.2: “Ode to Wildwood,” David Del Tredici, mm. 38-41. | 12 |
| Example 2.3: “In the Temple,” David Del Tredici, mm. 33-40..... | 13 |
| Example 2.4: “After the Big Parade,” David Del Tredici, mm. 1-10. | 16 |
| Example 2.5: “After the Big Parade,” David Del Tredici, mm. 36-45. | 17 |
| Example 2.6: “Here,” David Del Tredici, mm. 73-84 | 18 |
| Example 2.7: “Here,” David Del Tredici, mm. 88-91 | 19 |
| Example 2.8: “Memory Unsettled,” David Del Tredici, mm. 122-137..... | 21 |
| Example 2.9: “When I am Laid in Earth,” Henry Purcell, <i>Dido & Aeneas</i> , Z.626. | 22 |
| Example 2.10: “Memory Unsettled,” David Del Tredici, mm. 162-129..... | 23 |
| Example 2.11: “Liebestod,” <i>Tristan und Isolde</i> , Richard Wagner, WWV 90..... | 23 |
| Example 3.1: “Hold On,” Ben Moore, mm. 22-33 | 27 |
| Example 3.2: “Uncle Ronnie,” Ben Moore, mm. 1-9..... | 29 |
| Example 3.3: “Uncle Ronnie,” Ben Moore, mm. 32-42..... | 29 |
| Example 3.4: “Uncle Ronnie,” Ben Moore, mm. 19-26..... | 30 |
| Example 3.5: “Love Remained,” Ben Moore, mm. 48-52..... | 31 |
| Example 4.1: “Two Scared Boys,” Gary Schocker, mm. 1-6..... | 34 |
| Example 4.2: “Two Scared Boys,” Gary Schocker, mm. 17-22..... | 34 |
| Example 4.3: “Cafeteria,” Gary Schocker, mm. 30-34..... | 36 |
| Example 5.1: “I Dreamed in a Dream,” Clint Borzoni, mm. 6-14. | 40 |
| Example 5.2: “I Dreamed in a Dream,” Clint Borzoni, mm. 15-19. | 41 |
| Example 5.3: “That Shadow, My Likeness,” Clint Borzoni, mm. 1-4. | 43 |
| Example 5.4: “That Shadow, My Likeness,” Clint Borzoni, mm. 23-30. | 44 |

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

There are a number of openly gay composers, especially in the second half of the 20th century and 21st century. However, the availability and accessibility of classical voice repertoire with apparent gay themes is a relatively new occurrence. There are those who argue the existence of gay themes in a number of works by composers and poets outside the scope of this project (e.g., Reynaldo Hahn and Paul Verlaine;¹ Franz Schubert and Johann Wolfgang Goethe;² Benjamin Britten and Michelangelo³). However, the intended composition of classical voice repertoire with obvious gay themes has only begun to grow over the last few decades. Dr. Carl D. Swanson's list of voice works in "Repertoire Selection for the 10 Percent" includes a small number of art songs, but it is primarily one for the musical theater singer and less for the classical singer.

As a gay Latinx⁴ classically trained singer, I am naturally inclined to program music that is representative of my heritage and identity. Likewise, as a teacher, some of my students have approached me in search of repertoire that will allow them to connect to their individual culture or identity through their musical studies. Unfortunately, we do not always have the resources to find repertoire that could aid in such an endeavor. The majority of repertoire catalogs for singers,

¹ Carl D. Swanson, "Repertoire Selection for the Ten Percent," *Journal of Singing* 65, No. 5 (2009): 602.

² John Lauritsen, "The Lieder and Homoerotic Love," *The Gay & Lesbian Review Worldwide* 13, No. 5 (2006): 29-31, <https://libproxy.library.unt.edu/login?url=https://libproxy.library.unt.edu:2165/docview/198697620?accountid=7113> (accessed January 15, 2019).

³ David Matthews, *Britten* (London: Haus Publishing, 2005), 56.

⁴ While the label, Latinx, has served a multitude of roles, self-identification to marketing interests, I am using it as an all-inclusive term for men, women, and non-gender-conforming individuals of Latin American descent. Manuel Vargas, "Latinx Philosophy," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta (Winter 2018), <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2018/entries/latinx/> (accessed January 03, 2020).

printed and digital, often list works by voice type, language, and/or genre. Furthermore, the 21st century has seen an emergence of online classical music catalogs where the user can seek out repertoire by searching composers from underrepresented communities (i.e., women, Black, LGBTQ, and Latinx).⁵ What does not currently exist is a resource that catalogs works for singers dealing specifically with gay subject matter. It is my intent that this document will facilitate this much-needed resource and encourage further study, promotion, and performance of American art songs with obvious gay themes. Moreover, I hope that it will serve as a tool for voice teachers to assist their students in their vocal and artistic development through broader repertoire choices.

The abundance of songs that express love between two people, particularly a man and a woman, cannot be denied. There is also a range of gender-neutral songs available in the classical voice repertoire. Nevertheless, I believe that exploring works with texts that specifically describe romantic love between two men might allow a more accessible emotional interpretation for a gay male voice student than if he were to sing about his love for a woman. Providing repertoire options to our gay students that encompass the various aspects of gay identity could help them develop interpretive skills and a deeper and more authentic emotional connection to the texts. Conversely, I believe that the repertoire discussed in the preceding chapters can be studied and performed by any baritone, no matter their sexual orientation.

The Selection of Composers and Repertoire

Late 20th and 21st century American art song offers a credible selection of repertoire with gay subject matter. For instance, David Del Tredici's catalog of works includes several gay-

⁵ The Institute for Composer Diversity Database can be accessed at www.ComposerDiversity.com.

themed song cycles. The majority of the texts used in his “Gay Works”⁶ are provocative and, arguably, might be considered unsuitable for academic performance settings.⁷ However, the demanding voice lines and mature subject matter of the less controversial songs in *Gay Life* (2001) and *Three Baritone Songs* (1999) would serve as a worthy challenge for the technically-advanced baritone.

Joseph Rebman’s *He Would Not Stay* (2014) is a chamber song cycle of A.E. Housman settings chosen for their “obvious gay perspective.”⁸ Chris DeBlasio’s *All the Way Through Evening: Five Nocturnes for Baritone and Piano* (1990), set to the poetry of Perry Bass, chronicles a gay man’s life-and-death experience of living with AIDS.⁹ Dennis Tobenski, Libby Larsen, Judith Cloud, and Russel Platt have all produced song cycles and stand-alone songs with gay themes that, in my opinion, warrant a broader audience.

It is beyond the scope of this document to discuss repertoire for each male voice type, much less cover the entirety of gay-themed works currently available. In my attempt to narrow this research, I began with familiar composers such as Jake Heggie, Ricky Ian Gordon, and Ben Moore and in this process, I discovered a significant body of voice works with gay themes by other composers. I purchased published music and contacted composers in an attempt to acquire manuscripts of their unpublished works. After considering all the music I had at my disposal, I

⁶ The term/label “Gay Works” is used on David Del Tredici’s official website to reference his collective instrumental and voice works with gay themes. David Del Tredici, “The Alice Pieces of David Del Tredici,” David Del Tredici, Composer, <https://www.daviddeltredici.com/gay-works/> (accessed on January 22, 2019).

⁷ Ann Midgette, “Sex and Romanticism: A Composer Dares All,” *New York Times*, May 29, 2004.

⁸ “While the majority of his poems are not as obviously from a gay perspective, I chose these seven for their clear perspective.” Joseph Rebman, “He Would Not Stay: Seven Poems of A. E. Houseman,” Joseph Rebman: Harpist and Composer, <http://www.josephrebman.com/he-would-not-stay> (accessed January 01, 2020).

⁹ If you would like to read more about the life of Chris DeBlasio or a thorough performance guide for *All the Way Through Evening*, I highly recommend “An Introduction to the Life and Songs of Composer Chris DeBlasio, with Special Emphasis on His Cycle *All the Way Through Evening*” by Brian Bonin.

decided to focus on works that not only cover various aspects of gay culture but those that could also serve as repertoire options for baritones at different stages of their musical and technical development. Table 1.1 outlines the criteria used to select the repertoire featured in this document. The composers include David Del Tredici, Ben Moore, Clint Borzoni, and Gary Schocker.

Table 1.1: Criteria for Repertoire Selection

-
- Music is composed for the baritone voice
 - Music is composed by a living 21st century American composer
 - Music is published and available for purchase
 - Voice line is technically accessible to an upper-level undergraduate and/or graduate student
 - Text covers subject matter related to gay culture and/or history (AIDS, suicide among gay youth, love between two men, and “coming out”¹⁰ stories)
-

Annotation Guidelines for Each Composer and Their Works

Chapters 2 through 5 discuss seventeen American art songs from the 21st century with obvious gay themes for baritone and piano. Each chapter introduces a different composer and a select representation of their gay-themed voice works. Additionally, each song entry includes a description of the text/subject matter based on the composer’s and author’s intentions, as well as a brief musical analysis to determine pedagogical and musical difficulty. Table 1.2 provides a complete list of information included in each song’s annotated entry. Table 1.3 provides a general list of characteristics discussed in the musical analysis. The composers’ program notes, if available, can be found in Appendix B. A more comprehensive list of voice works with gay themes can be found in Appendix A.

¹⁰ “Coming out refers to the process that people who are LGBTQ go through as they work to accept their sexual orientation or gender identity and share that identity openly with other people.” Planned Parenthood Federation of America Inc., “What’s ‘Coming Out?’” Planned Parenthood, <https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/sexual-orientation-gender/sexual-orientation/whats-coming-out>

Table 1.2: Information for Each Annotated Song Entry

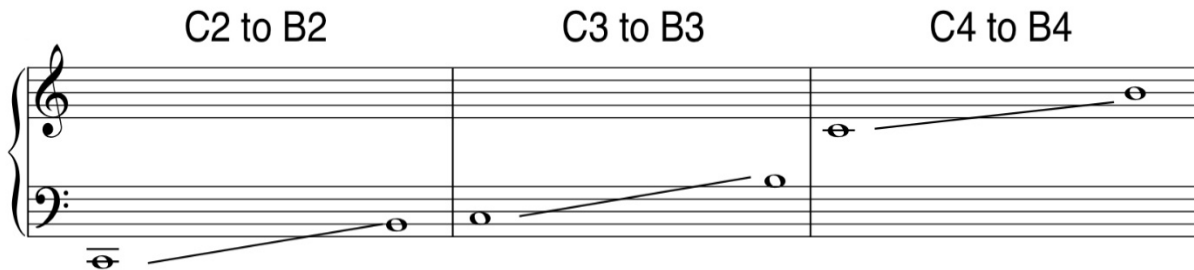
| | |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| • Title | • Range and Tessitura |
| • Author of Text | • Dedication (when applicable) |
| • Brief Musical Analysis | • Publisher and/or Selling Agent |
| • Description and Analysis of Text | • Date of Publication |

Table 1.3: Musical Characteristics Discussed in Music Analysis

| |
|---|
| • Voice Range |
| • Tessitura |
| • Complexity of rhythm, meter, articulation, and dynamics |
| • Tonality of the song and the dependence or independence of the voice part on the piano part |
| • Vocal stamina |

In defining range and tessitura, pitch identification is noted using Scientific Pitch Notation to determine octave designation. Middle C on the piano, or keyboard, is labeled C4. The octave below Middle C is labeled as C3 and so forth. Figure 1.1 illustrates the octave designation used in this document.

Figure 1.1: Octave Designation Based on Scientific Pitch Notation



The term *passaggio* in this document refers to the *zona di passaggio* as defined by Richard Miller in *The Structure of Singing: System and Art in Vocal Technique*. The *passaggio* points between the lyric baritone and dramatic baritone are separated by a half step, as seen in

Figure 1.2(a).¹¹ I use the lowest and highest *passaggio* points of each voice type to determine a general baritone *passaggio* for the purpose of this document [Figure 1.2(b)].

Figure 1.2: *Passaggio* Points for Lyric Baritone and Dramatic Baritone

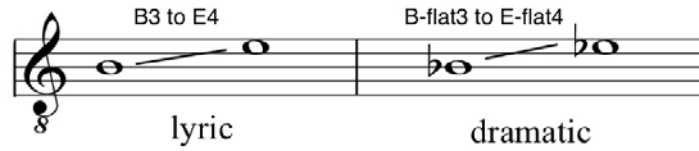


Figure 1.3: General *Passaggio* Designation for Baritone



¹¹ Richard Miller, *The Structure of Singing: System and Art in Vocal Technique* (Boston: Schirmer, Cengage Learning, 1996), 115-117.

CHAPTER 2

DAVID DEL TREDICI (B. 1937)

Described by many as the “father of Neo-Romanticism,”¹² David Del Tredici is a pioneer in the use of provocative gay-themed texts by contemporary LGBTQ authors. Del Tredici is best known for his “Alice Works,”¹³ particularly *Final Alice* (1974-75) which is based on the final two chapters of Lewis Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* (1865). His compositional output encompasses the genres of piano, chamber, and orchestral works, as well as song cycles for voice and piano. Del Tredici was the recipient of the 1980 Pulitzer Prize for Music, a Grammy nomination for Best New Classical Composition in 2006 for *Paul Revere’s Ride* (2005), a Brandeis Award in Music (1973), the Arts and Letters Award in Music (1968), the Guggenheim Fellowship (1966), and the Woodrow Wilson Fellowship (1959). He has served on the music faculties of Harvard University (1966 – 1972), Boston University (1973 – 1984), The Julliard School (1993 – 1996), and Yale University (1999). Del Tredici is currently a Distinguished Professor of Music at The City College of New York, a position he has held since 1984.

David Del Tredici is open about his sexual orientation. It was after attending a retreat through the Body Electric School in 1996 that he began to embrace his sexuality through his music compositions:

For me, the big change came in 1995, when I discovered the Body Electric School and

¹² “Though the term ‘father of neo-romanticism’ is widely associated with David Del Tredici and his composition style, the origin of the nickname is not clear. In fact, in a telephone interview (March 3, 2011) with Del Tredici, even he claimed not to know the origin and simply offered, ‘Some reviewer must have said it.’” Shelly Lenn Buchanan-Garlotte, “A Performer’s Interpretation of David Del Tredici’s Chana’s Story: A Cycle of Six Songs on Texts of Chana Block” (doctoral dissertation, Louisiana State University, 2011), 1.

¹³ The label, “Alice Works,” is used on Del Tredici’s website to group together the compositions where he took inspiration from Lewis Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*. They are also referred to as the “Alice Pieces.” David Del Tredici, “The Alice Pieces of David Del Tredici,” David Del Tredici, Composer, <https://www.daviddeltredici.com/alice/> (accessed on December 18, 2019).

attended one of their week-long workshops, where I was filled with pride at being Gay and wanting to be more out. I returned from the workshop to a residency at Yaddo, an artists' retreat in upstate New York. I brought with me several poems by workshop members that celebrated being Gay and at Wildwood (where the workshop took place), and I set them to music as a kind of homesickness remedy and a way of continuing the connection while back at Yaddo. Those settings, which became the first two songs of *Gay Life*, were in fact the first Gay poetry that I set, and from then on I began to seek out, and to set, poetry celebrating sex.¹⁴

Of all the works studied, many of Del Tredici's gay-themed art songs provide some of the most openly gay texts to be set by a composer of his stature. The songs in *Love Addiction* (2007) explore scandalous sexual excursions, while *Gay Life* presents themes from the loss of a lover to the celebration of self. In some ways, David Del Tredici has provided an opening for gay classical composers to freely express their sexuality and identity through their music.

In past interviews, David Del Tredici talked of his frustration about the prevalence of conservatism in the classical music world. The following excerpts suggest that he believes that classical music is among the last of the fine arts to truly embrace diversity in terms of explicit sexual content and gay subject matter:

And like *Gay Life*, *A Field Manual* has yet to see a recording. Is there a pattern here? "Because of the gay thing? I think that's an issue. That is an issue in classical music still. ... You can be quietly gay, but you can't crow about it!"¹⁵

I'm reminded of another piano ballad I've written – 'Ballad in Lavender.' I wrote it for another friend, also a Gay man who in fact seemed quite proud of his Gayness. When I came to title the piece, he at first objected, rather mildly saying the word "Lavender" was unnecessary. But I wanted the word precisely because of its Gay associations, which I like to have in all my pieces nowadays. After considering lots of alternatives, I finally insisted on that title (it was, after all, my piece!). It so upset the commissioner that the

¹⁴ Ray Warman, "Gay Orpheus: Ray Warman Speaks with David Del Tredici," Music, WC80 Music & Poetry, White Crane Interviews, White Crane Institute, last modified July 21, 2017, <https://www.whitecraneinstitute.org/2009/07/a-white-crane-conversation-gay-orpheusray-warman-speaks-with-david-Del-tredici-generally-recognized-as-the-father-of-the.html>.

¹⁵ Seth Colter Walls, "The 'Fetish' Thing Aside, David Del Tredici Talks About His Work, and About Gay Themes in Classical Music," Politico PRO, Published April 12, 2012, <https://www.politico.com/states/new-york/albany/story/2012/04/the-fetish-thing-aside-david-Del-tredici-talks-about-his-work-and-about-gay-themes-in-classical-music-067223>.

title would contain a word even vaguely associated with being Gay that it ended our friendship and, even though he loved the music, he refused to play the piece.¹⁶

I wanted to create works that celebrated being gay, since there are almost none, [...] Classical music is the last to move there.¹⁷

By traditional standards, the mature and candid sexual nature of several of Del Tredici's songs might be considered unsuitable for some performance settings, whether academic or professional.¹⁸ This seems to support his view that classical music audiences tend towards the conservative, particularly with regard to the choice of texts used in art songs. Of the composers featured in this document, David Del Tredici takes his use of gay texts to the next level. Not only did he use specific texts to embrace gay culture, he also dared to go where no other high-profile composer had gone:

The thing that's interesting for me as a composer, and I think for a lot of composers, is to do the thing which has not been done, [...] It's a thrill to go where nobody's gone.¹⁹

Gay Life, in my opinion, still fits within the outlines of appropriateness for study and performance in higher education.

Gay Life

Gay Life (2001) was published in 2003 by Boosey & Hawkes, Inc. The San Francisco Symphony, featuring baritone William Sharp and conducted by Michael Tilson Thomas, performed the world premiere on May 3, 2001 at Davies Symphony Hall. As a part of the Tobenski-Algera Concert Series, "Songs by Gay American Composers," the premiere of the voice and piano version was on June 19, 2007 at Elebash Hall, CUNY Graduate Center in New

¹⁶ Warman, "Gay Orpheus: Ray Warman Speaks with David Del Tredici."

¹⁷ Midgette, "Sex and Romanticism: A Composer Dares All."

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

York City. David Del Tredici joined tenors Dennis Tobenski and Robert Frankenberry at the piano.

Del Tredici describes the process of composing *Gay Life* as a “burst of gay pride,”²⁰ inspired by a weeklong retreat, “The Dear Love of Comrades,” hosted by The Body Electric School in 1996. The texts of the first two songs, “Ode to Wildwood” and “In the Temple,” were created during the retreat by other attendees. They are also Del Tredici’s first gay text settings.²¹

A key musical characteristic that sets *Gay Life* apart from the other song cycles in this document are the interludes that connect the songs together for a through-composed performance of the entire work, similar to the structure of Ludwig von Beethoven’s *An die ferne Geliebte* (1816). However, unlike Beethoven’s cycle, Del Tredici provides alternate endings so that each song may be performed independently from the rest of the song cycle.

The voice part’s extensive range requires an ease from the singer in both high and low registers. An essential element to consider when performing or suggesting one of Del Tredici’s songs to a student is the virtuosic nature of the piano parts. These songs not only require a mature, advanced singer but a pianist who has the technical ability to support the singer.

A few compositional characteristics are present in all six songs of *Gay Life*: (1) The songs contain tacit key signatures that require copious use of accidentals to facilitate chromaticism in both voice and piano parts; (2) there are frequent and specific tempo and expressive markings; (3) the voice part is largely doubled in the piano, often in the same octave, with little variation; (4) wide melodic intervals and phrases spanning an octave or more are dominant features of the melody. Most of these characteristics can be seen in Example 2.1.

²⁰ David Del Tredici, “Gay Life: A Cycle of Six Songs for Amplified Solo Baritone and Orchestra,” David Del Tredici, Composer, <https://www.daviddeltredici.com/works/gay-life/> (Accessed January 12, 2020).

²¹ Warman, “Gay Orpheus: Ray Warman Speaks with David Del Tredici.”

Example 2.1: "Ode to Wildwood," David Del Tredici, mm. 1-12.

RAG: Allegro vivace ($\text{♩} = 144$)

Abundant use of accidentals to establish tonality

Baritone

Piano

Lack of key signature

Melody doubled in the piano

Frequent expressive markings

stood with Ju-lie An-drews and... em -

braced the hearts hearts of men, and danced the clouds of sun - rise and

Gay Life (2003). Reproduced with permission from Boosey & Hawkes.

1. “Ode to Wildwood”

Text by Michael Calhoun.

Dedicated to Collin Brown and Ken Oakley.

Voice Range: G2 to G4.

This song is an homage to Del Tredici’s time at Wildwood, the Body Electric School’s retreat center. The text depicts the experiences of a gay man who finds a complete connection between mind, body and soul as he becomes one with his inner desires. The narrator describes standing beside Julie Andrews during this self-revelation, but later in the poem, we learn that he is referring to a place rather than a person. The name represents a scenic overlook at Wildwood called Julie Andrews Point.²²

The melody maintains a ragtime quality, utilizing the last note of a triplet pattern to create movement and syncopation in the voice and piano parts. At times throughout the song, the piano makes use of chords on the weaker beats, two and four, to bring out the syncopation in the melody (Example 2.2). The voice part utilizes the low and high voice registers in different parts of the song and requires a facility of singing with ease through the *passaggio*.

Example 2.2: “Ode to Wildwood,” David Del Tredici, mm. 38-41.

The image displays a musical score for the song "Ode to Wildwood" by David Del Tredici, measures 38-41. The score is written for voice and piano. The voice part is in the upper staff, and the piano part is in the lower staff. The lyrics are: "The win-dows of my ob-ser-vance rode u-pon the winds,". The piano part features a triplet pattern in the right hand and chords in the left hand. Two annotations are present: a red box at the top right states "Melodic movement on weak beats establish a ragtime quality." and a blue box at the bottom left states "Chords on the weak beats further enhance the syncopation in the melody".

Gay Life (2003). Reproduced with permission from Boosey & Hawkes.

²² Del Tredici, “Gay Life: A Cycle of Six Songs for Amplified Solo Baritone and Orchestra.”

2. “In the Temple”

Text by Wilson Hand Kidde.

Dedicated to Steven Fisher.

Range: C-flat3 to G-flat4.

The poem takes on the rhythmic texture of a religious hymn, which is further emphasized by the illusion of a modified strophic setting. The text makes a clear comparison between religious conviction and lust. To further drive this point, David Del Tredici adds his own wordplay at the end of the song, repeating the text, “Ah! Men,” to sound like “amen.”

Example 2.3: “In the Temple,” David Del Tredici, mm. 33-40.

33 *f* fire So hard to tame. *f* So hard to tame. *dim.*

37 *mf* So hard to tame. *p*

Stepwise motion of melody

Progression of intervals to build emotional intensity

ritard.

Gay Life (2003). Reproduced with permission from Boosey & Hawkes.

I believe this song is the most accessible of the six in the song cycle. With a few exceptions, the singer should find the melody and tessitura are quite manageable. Much of the time, the melody is directly doubled in the piano. When it is not, it provides ambiguous tonal support. In the more erotic parts of the text, when the narrator begins to relinquish control to lust,

the stepwise motion of the melody turns to an abrupt “progression of intervals” (Example 2.3).²³

The singer might find that the most complicated part lies in the two penultimate pages of the piece where the tessitura sits between D-flat⁴ and F-sharp⁴, requiring the singer to approach the top notes at *subito piano* or a *messa di voce* followed by a *portamento* of over an octave descent from F⁴ to D³ or F⁴ to C³.

3. “Personals Ad”

Text by Allen Ginsberg.
Dedicated to Jody Dalton.
Range: A² to A⁴.

This poem mimics the form of a personal advertisement, “a time-honored method for potential lovers to meet each other,” popular among gay men throughout the 20th century and even into the 21st century.²⁴ Although, in recent years, it has evolved into the more accessible format of the dating app. The poem is set in “a businesslike, almost comical setting,” which evolves into a “touching poem, full of tenderness.”²⁵

The tessitura, for the most part, sits in the middle range for the voice. Del Tredici establishes D Phrygian immediately with the opening descending scale in the piano and maintains it until a sudden shift to C-sharp major at measure 29. It could be said that the octave intervals in the voice line suggest a mechanical and businesslike tone, which is interrupted with subtle hints of sincerity and tenderness whenever the melody starts to have more chromatic and stepwise movement. In order to establish the sense of desperation that can occur when trying to find the perfect companion, the tonal center continues to shift, usually in semitones. The repeated

²³ Del Tredici, “Gay Life: A Cycle of Six Songs for Amplified Solo Baritone and Orchestra.”

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

rhythmic and pitch patterns in the melody during these shifts allude to the businesslike nature of the personal advertisement, while the tonal shifts develop agitated and melancholic qualities. The music returns to D Phrygian when the narrator repeats the line, “on your heart in peace,” allowing for one last moment of tenderness before reverting to the disengaged businesslike tone with the octave leaps on “I will send a picture too if you will send me one of you.”

4. “After the Big Parade”

Text by Allen Ginsberg.
Dedicated to Aaron Del Tredici.
Range: C3 to A-flat4.

The parade referenced in the poem is the Gay Pride Parade of Manhattan, NY. During the month of June, cities across the nation organize gay pride parades to commemorate the Stonewall riots of 1969, celebrating LGBTQ culture and history.²⁶ This poem references the return to everyday life, and questions whether present and future generations will remember the reasons behind such an event: the momentous effect of the Stonewall riots on the social and political movements for gay rights and the number of lives lost to AIDS.²⁷

The piano introduction sets a celebratory sound reminiscent of a marching band, utilizing a repeated descending E-flat Mixolydian scale, which is reiterated by the voice in its opening line. The *moto perpetuo* indication in the piano part steers the harmonic shifts, maintaining the same rhythmic pattern with very few exceptions. The first half of the voice line is a hypermetric

²⁶ Bianca Withe, “How the Pride Parade Became Tradition,” American Experience, <https://web.archive.org/web/20160422105803/http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/blog/2011/06/09/pride-parade/> (Accessed January 12, 2020).

²⁷ “Though the Stonewall uprising didn’t start the gay rights movement, it was a galvanizing force for LGBT political activism, leading to numerous gay rights organizations, including the Gay Liberation Front, Human Rights Campaign, GLAAD (formerly Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation), and PFLAG (formerly Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays).” History.com Editors, “Stonewall Riots: Stonewall’s Legacy,” History (A&E Television Networks), <https://www.history.com/topics/gay-rights/the-stonewall-riots> (Accessed January 13, 2020).

augmentation of the descending scales in the piano (Example 2.4).

Example 2.4: “After the Big Parade,” David Del Tredici, mm. 1-10.

The image shows a musical score for the piece "After the Big Parade" by David Del Tredici, measures 1-10. The score is in 2/4 time and features a piano accompaniment with a descending scale in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The melody is in the voice line, starting with a descending C minor pentascale. The lyrics "Mii - lions of peo - ple cheer - ing" are written below the voice line. The score includes dynamic markings such as *ff*, *sf*, and *mf*, and articulation marks like accents and slurs. Red boxes highlight specific passages in the piano and voice parts.

Gay Life (2003). Reproduced with permission from Boosey & Hawkes.

When the text shifts from the festive and begins to question the remembrance of lives lost, the melody adopts a somber color through the use of a descending C minor pentascale stretched across eight measures on “have they forgotten” until it resolves with a tritone (C3 to F-sharp3) leading into F-sharp Minor on “the Corridors of Death” (Example 2.5). It provides a stark contrast to the celebratory tone provided by the sequential modal-scale patterns in the piano part, which carried over from the opening of the piece.

Each phrase of the melody begins at or near the baritone’s upper *passaggio* in the first half of the song. In the second half of the song, the tessitura is more manageable until the very end of the piece, where Del Tredici concentrates the melody between D-flat4 and A-flat4 at *fortissimo* to *fortississimo* to *piano* for the final twelve measures of the voice line. The composer provides an *ossia* voice line, but it maintains the same tessitura with the option of a G4 for a brief moment rather than the sustained A-flat4s.

Example 2.5: “After the Big Parade,” David Del Tredici, mm. 36-45.

36 *mf* *espressivo*
Have they for - got - ten

Descending G Phrygian Scale

Tritone

41 *dim.*
Have they for - got - ten the Cor - ri - dors of Death

43 *f* *p sub.*

Gay Life (2003). Reproduced with permission from Boosey & Hawkes.

5. “Here”

Text by Paul Monette.

Dedication in memoriam to Paul Arcomano, David Del Tredici’s lover of seven years, who died of AIDS in 1993.

Range: G2 to E4.

As he lies next to the grave in shock, the narrator recalls the final painful weeks of his lover’s life.²⁸ To establish the sense of grief and emptiness one might experience with the loss of a loved one, Del Tredici writes open fifth chords in the piano part, which, when combined with

²⁸ “The tragedy grows still more personal in Paul Monette’s “Here,” [...] a man’s shell-shocked soliloquy.” Del Tredici, “*Gay Life: A Cycle of Six Songs for Amplified Solo Baritone and Orchestra.*”

the monotone quality in the voice line and constant use of the triplet pattern, masks the clarity of the pulse.

Of all the songs in this cycle, the tessitura in “Here” might be the easiest to manage, remaining in a comfortable part of the voice throughout, without utilizing the extremes of the voice range. One might consider that the most difficult section is mm. 68 through 88. Del Tredici slowly abandons the single-note pattern and adopts quicker, larger intervals that grow into repeated patterns, evolving into variations of the same group of pitches: B-flat, E, C-sharp, and G (Example 2.6) until the mood bursts into “a final wail,”²⁹ repeating the text, “all there is now is burning dark” (Example 2.7).

Example 2.6: “Here,” David Del Tredici, mm. 73-84

The musical score for Example 2.6, "Here" by David Del Tredici, measures 73-84, is presented in three sections. Section 1 (measures 73-80) features a vocal line with triplets and piano accompaniment. Section 2 (cont.) (measures 81-82) continues the vocal line with triplets. Section 3 (measures 83-84) shows the vocal line with triplets and piano accompaniment, including dynamics like *pp sub.* and *cresc.*

Section 1 (measures 73-80):
 73 *p* *f*
 the box - es gro - cery home day af - ter day the junk
 that keeps men spot - less the

Section 2 (cont.) (measures 81-82):
 76 *f*
 junk that keeps men spot - less
 but it does - n't

Section 3 (measures 83-84):
 it does - n't mat - ter now

²⁹ Ibid.

4 *f sempre* 5

79

how long they last or or the day has tak - en you

6

82

has tak - en you with it the day has tak - en you tak - en you with it and

Gay Life (2003). Reproduced with permission from Boosey & Hawkes.

Example 2.7: “Here,” David Del Tredici, mm. 88-91

Allegro ($\text{♩} = 72$)

molto *fff* con tutta forza

88

dark burn - ing dark burn - ing dark

molto *ff* *con pedale*

Gay Life (2003). Reproduced with permission from Boosey & Hawkes.

Following a long piano interlude, Del Tredici uses the open fifth chords heard in the opening of the song to suggest a withdrawn or isolated state of mind. The voice line adopts a single-pitch triplet pattern. As the piece ends, Del Tredici indicates a *decrescendo* to a whisper on a repeated A-sharp³ on the word “here.”

6. “Memory Unsettled (A Farewell)”

Text by Thom Gunn.

Dedication in memoriam to David Del Tredici’s mother, Helen Del Tredici, who passed in May 2000.

Range: B-flat² to G⁴.

While the poem is one of the shortest texts in *Gay Life*, the song is the longest in the cycle, with an average performance time of approximately fifteen and a half minutes. The poem is derived from Thom Gunn’s *A Man with Night Sweats* (1992), a volume of poetry written in response to the AIDS crisis. It is an elegy to a gay man who continued to have compassion and offered comfort to others despite his own pain and illness before he died of AIDS.

Some of the unique elements in this song are musical quotes borrowed from Henry Purcell’s “When I am laid in earth” (1689) and Isolde Liebestod from Richard Wagner’s *Tristan und Isolde* (1859). Both arias portray a different side of death, and Del Tredici mirrors these moments in his setting of Gunn’s poem. At the repeat of the first stanza, the A-section returns with a slight modification in the rhythm of the melody. However, at “remember me,” Del Tredici borrows music from the orchestral and voice parts of Purcell’s well-known aria (Example 2.9). In “Memory Unsettled,” the singer takes on two roles, the narrator and the deceased gay man. When the gay man is speaking, it is reminiscent of Dido’s request for Belinda to remember her after she is dead (Example 2.8).

Example 2.9: “When I am Laid in Earth,” Henry Purcell, *Dido & Aeneas*, Z.626.³⁰

The musical score consists of three systems. The first system shows the vocal line with the lyrics '- ate No trou - ble, no' and the beginning of the lute accompaniment. The second system continues the vocal line with 'trouble in thy breast; Re - member me, re - member me,' and the lute accompaniment, which includes dynamic markings 'pp' and 'pp'. The third system concludes the vocal line with 'but ah! . . . for - get . . . my fate. Re - member me, but ah! . . .' and the lute accompaniment, also featuring dynamic markings 'p' and 'pp'.

After an extended ‘remember me’ section, the Liebestod quote (Example 2.11) appears at the end of a lengthy piano interlude, which leads into another repetition of the first stanza. While Isolde hallucinates Tristan’s return to life, the narrator in this song still feels the presence of their deceased friend’s pain in his last moments. With the return to the main theme, one can hear that the opening pitches of the Liebestod quote are also in the original melody of the song, as seen in Example 2.10.

³⁰ London: Novello, Ewer & Co., n.d. (ca.1892), pg. 64.

Example 2.10: “Memory Unsettled,” David Del Tredici, mm. 162-129.

Liebestod quote

73

Main theme borrowed from the Liebestod quote.

Gay Life (2003). Reproduced with permission from Boosey & Hawkes.

Example 2.11: “Liebestod,” *Tristan und Isolde*, Richard Wagner, WWV 90.³¹

(Isolde sinkt, wie verklärt, in Brangänes Armen sanft auf Tristans Leiche. Große Rührung)

Is. Lust!

³¹ Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel (1909), pg. 338.

Although the singer's line may not seem difficult to learn, in part because the piano doubles the melody in an interior voice, this is arguably one of the most vocally demanding songs discussed in this document. The first sing-through of the poem and the return of the main theme fit well in the middle voice and moderately challenge the high register. It is in the 'remember me' sections where the melody makes use of repeated octave leaps, sits in the *passaggio* or above for long periods, and utilizes both lower and upper registers.

CHAPTER 3

BEN MOORE (B. 1960)

Ben Moore was born on January 02, 1960 in Syracuse, New York. His catalog includes art songs, cabaret songs, musical theater, opera, choral music, and operatic parody songs, such as “Sexy Lady” and “I’m Glad I’m Not a Tenor.” His music has been recorded by renowned Metropolitan Opera singers Susan Graham, Nathan Gunn, Lawrence Brownlee, and Deborah Voigt. In fact, two of his operatic parody songs were performed at The Metropolitan Opera’s farewell gala for Joseph Volpe in 2006.³² An avid painter with the Master of Fine Arts degree, Moore resides in New York City with his partner and serves on the faculties of the Morgan Library and the Guggenheim Museum.

Love Remained

The first edition of *Love Remained* was published on April 19, 2012, by Benjamin C. Moore Publishing. The scores can be purchased through Classical Vocal Reprints or directly from Ben Moore’s website.³³ *Love Remained* was commissioned by SongFusion and premiered by baritone Michael Kelly and pianist Jonathan Ware on October 23, 2011 at Merkin Concert Hall in New York City. The texts of *Love Remained* serve as “a plea to young gay men and women to hold on in the face of cruelty and harassment.”³⁴

While the overall range should fit most baritone voices comfortably, the tessitura is often high and requires a singer who is capable of singing in the upper register for extended periods of

³² Anthony Tommasini, “An Exit Con Gusto: More than Five Hours of Honor for the Met’s Volpe,” *New York Times*, May 22, 2006.

³³ Ben Moore, *Composer and Artist*, <https://www.mooreart.com/> (last accessed January 12, 2020).

³⁴ Ben Moore, “Composer’s Notes,” *Love Remained: Four Songs on Texts Concerning LGBT Youth* (New York: Benjamin C. Moore Publishing, 2012), 1.

time. The composition is tonal and the piano part often echoes the melody. However, because of the demanding voice lines and the mature nature of the texts, I think this cycle is best suited for an advanced upper-level undergraduate or a graduate high-lyric baritone who is able to effectively negotiate the *passaggio*.

1. “Hold On”

Text based a speech by Joel Burns.
Range: A-sharp2 – G4.

Fort Worth City Councilman, Joel Burns, recorded a speech for the “It Gets Better Project.”³⁵ In his speech, Burns shares the story of his attempted suicide in high school because of the difficulties he faced after “coming out” as a young gay man. He addresses LGBTQ youth across the country in hopes of reassuring them that no matter how hard things might seem, “it gets better.”

The song is divided into two parts, each containing a verse and a chorus with a short tag loosely quoting the opening four measures of the voice line on the text, “It gets better. It gets much better.” The verse is speech-like and the music setting maintains a *recitativo accompagnato* quality. The tessitura lies predominantly in the middle voice with a few moments in the *passaggio*. The notation in the piano part is sparse and the singer does not have the benefit of the fuller piano part that the composer writes for the chorus. The voice line in the chorus has a more lyrical melody and the piano, in addition to tonal support, reinforces the melody in the top voice. The tessitura is more expansive than in the verse due to the number of wide intervals

³⁵ “The It Gets Better Project is a nonprofit organization with a mission to uplift, empower, and connect lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer youth around the globe. Growing up isn’t easy, especially when you are trying to affirm and assert your sexual orientation and/or gender identity. It can be a challenging and isolating process – but, the good news is, no one has to do it alone.” It Gets Better Project, <https://itgetsbetter.org/about/> (accessed on January 13, 2020).

throughout, making this section seem challenging (Example 3.1).

Example 3.1: "Hold On," Ben Moore, mm. 22-33

The image shows a musical score for the song "Hold On" by Ben Moore, measures 22-33. The score is written for voice and piano. It consists of three systems of music. The first system (measures 22-25) features a vocal line starting with the lyrics "on, hold on there's so much life can offer. If on - ly I could show you You must hold on." and a piano accompaniment. A red box highlights the first measure of the vocal line. The second system (measures 26-28) features a vocal line with lyrics "You must hold on to make your mem - ories, or just to see who you will be If on ly you could know how" and a piano accompaniment. Three red boxes highlight specific phrases in the vocal line. The third system (measures 29-33) features a vocal line with lyrics "much you are like me hold on It gets bet - ter" and a piano accompaniment. A red box highlights the word "on" in the vocal line. The score includes various musical notations such as dynamics (acc., f, p, mf), articulation (acc.), and tempo markings (♩ = 80).

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2. “Uncle Ronnie”

Text based on a letter by Randy Robert Potts.³⁶
Range: B-flat² – G⁴.

In this text, Randy Robert Potts confronts his Uncle Ronnie for taking his own life. The narrator is confused, angry, and hurt by his uncle’s decision. He questions how someone could do something that would hurt those who love him. He expresses his jealousy towards his uncle; free to be all the things Potts could not: openly gay, independent, and questioning God without any sort of retribution from the family, particularly his mother. Despite the apparent emotions of anger and confusion suggested by the text, the music is tender and full of love. The opening motif in the piano is repeated throughout the piece. First, it is heard in the melody of the voice line, doubled in the piano part (Example 3.2). Then, as the text becomes more dramatic, it is heard in the piano as the voice line adopts an almost *recitativo accompagnato* melodic line (Example 3.3).

Considering that the melody sits in and above the *passaggio*, the singer might encounter demands on his vocal stamina. The piece is through-composed with moments of free, speech-like singing. Aside from the expansive tessitura, there are also large ascending and descending intervals; the most difficult, in my opinion, is the octave interval from G³ to G⁴, which happens twice in the song. The tessitura surrounding this interval sits in the *passaggio* and can be difficult for a young or lower-voiced baritone to negotiate (Example 3.4).

³⁶ Randy Robert Potts’ letter was also a part of the “It Get’s Better Project.”

Example 3.2: "Uncle Ronnie," Ben Moore, mm. 1-9.

♩ = 140 Casually

With Fond Tenderness
♩ = 130

mp

You were a light in my mo-ther's eyes e-very

mf

molto rit.

A tempo

mp

6

rit.

A tempo

time that she spoke your name

You had the po-wer to lift up her spi-rits.

A tempo

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Example 3.3: "Uncle Ronnie," Ben Moore, mm. 32-42.

32 A tempo

(sung)

thing is when you're thatbeau-ti-ful in some-one's eyes

p A tempo

rit. A tempo

37

when you're that dear and then you take...

rit. A tempo

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Example 3.4: “Uncle Ronnie,” Ben Moore, mm. 19-26.

19

ques-tion - ing God, You could stand far a-part and still she loved you. You could be true to e-very

23

part of your-self. On-ly you had that pri-vilege in our fa - mi - ly or so it seemed to me

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3. “Love Remained”

Text by Michael Kelly.
Range: C3 – G4.

Kelly shares the moment when he felt brave enough to disclose his sexual orientation to his brother. The poem covers the range of emotions Kelly might have experienced when “coming out” to his brother: fear, pain, uncertainty, and ultimately, relief. Moore sets the piece in 6/8 for the most part, with brief moments in 3/8 and a single, unaccompanied moment in 3/4 and 2/4. Even with these minor variations from the established meter, the piece remains consistent with regards to tempo and rhythmic structure. The voice line is lyrical with several large intervals throughout; the diminished 8th interval from G3 in measure 49 to a soft G4-flat in

measure 50 is likely one of the more difficult vocal moments in the entire cycle. The corresponding text is, “Now the yearning to be known, Delicate the dance of a brother’s bond...” with the interval leading into the word “Delicate.” The vulnerability that Moore captures in this moment is enhanced by the *piano* G-flat4 followed by a chromatic scale through the *passaggio*, a difficult but effective technique when executed properly (Example 3.5).

Example 3.5: “Love Remained,” Ben Moore, mm. 48-52.

The image shows a musical score for the piece "Love Remained" by Ben Moore, measures 48-52. The score is written for voice and piano. The vocal line is in the upper staff, and the piano accompaniment is in the lower staff. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 3/4. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 60. The score includes markings for "rit." (ritardando) and "p" (piano). The lyrics are: "Now the yearning to be known delicate the dance of a brother's bond ending with the words". The piano part features a chromatic scale in the right hand and a more rhythmic accompaniment in the left hand.

Love Remained (2012). Reproduced with permission from Benjamin C. Moore Pub., Inc.

4. “Hope”

Text based on Harvey Milk’s “Hope Speech.”

Range: C3 – G4.

Milk’s speech at the 1978 Gay Freedom Day Parade in San Francisco was “full of optimism and hope for the future.”³⁷ It came after his election to the 5th District of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors. Harvey Milk was the first openly gay man elected to office in the history of California. His short political career and assassination have been at the center of much speculation. Was Milk murdered for being gay, or was his killer, Dan White, simply seeking revenge for losing his seat on the Board of San Francisco Supervisors to Milk? Harvey Milk’s accomplishments during his short appointment included the passing of a bill banning

³⁷ Ben Moore, “Composer’s Notes,” 1.

discrimination in public, housing, and employment on the basis of sexual orientation and his opposition to Proposition 6, which would have required educational institutions to fire any employee who identified as gay or supported gay rights.³⁸

Much like the first piece, “Hope” is, for the most part, set in a speech-like manner, with moments of lyrical singing, staying true to the rhythmic flow and structure of the text. The melody is independent of the piano much of the time and maintains a tessitura in the middle voice with only a few moments of singing in the upper register.

³⁸ Craig A. Rimmerman, *From Identity to Politics: The Lesbian and Gay Movements in the United States* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002), 129-131.

CHAPTER 4

GARY SCHOCKER (B. 1959)

Born on October 18, 1959, American composer, Gary Schocker is known primarily for his flute compositions. A versatile composer, Schocker's catalog includes works for piano, oboe, bassoon, clarinet, horn, as well as children's musicals, theatrical works, songs for solo voice and piano, and chamber works. An active flutist, Schocker has appeared with orchestras across the United States, including the New York Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, and the Dallas Symphony. Currently, Gary Schocker serves on the faculty of New York University and maintains flute studios in New York City and Easton, Pennsylvania.

“Two Scared Boys”

Text by William Broderick.
Published in 2005 by Gary Schocker.
Selling Agent: Classical Vocal Reprints.
Range: C-sharp³ to D⁴.

The poem in “Two Scared Boys” describes the feeling of dread and fear felt by two young men as they find comfort in each other. Yet, they end up alone, terrified by the consequences of being together at a time when social norms were less accepting of gay relationships. The tessitura sits at E³ to A³. The song is composed for medium voice and is most suitable for baritone, but I believe the range and *passaggio* make this song equally accessible for a bass-baritone. In my opinion, the most interesting aspect of this song is Schocker's minimalistic approach to the piano part. It opens with a motif repeated in the treble line, later heard in the melody (Example 4.1). Due to the piano part's minimalism, the singer may have difficulty negotiating beginning pitches. The minor 7th intervals in the voice part occur in the same place in both verses on the pitches D³ to C⁴. (Example 4.2). This particular moment in the melody might serve as an ideal opportunity for a young baritone to practice singing softer

dynamics while approaching larger intervals from the lower register into the upper part of the *passaggio*.

Example 4.1: “Two Scared Boys,” Gary Schocker, mm. 1-6

♩ = 100

All we shared was dowries of dread

Ped. *Ped. sim*

2005. Reproduced with permission from the composer.

Example 4.2: “Two Scared Boys,” Gary Schocker, mm. 17-22.

17 *rit*

it felt like com fort

Ped. *Ped.* *Ped.* *Ped.* *Ped.* *rit*

2005. Reproduced with permission from the composer.

The College Poems

The College Poems was published in 2005 by Gary Schocker and can be purchased through Classical Vocal Reprints. They are settings of poems by William Broderick, describing the first-time experiences of a young man at college. In “Freshman,” he expresses a sense of

freedom to do and be whatever he wants now that he is “unobserved.”³⁹ He begins to experience a sense of anxiety about being swallowed up in the crowd in “Cafeteria.” “Next” describes his disappointment with his first lover who did not turn out to be what he expected when they first met. He then describes the sensation of being smothered by a newer, longer-term lover in the final song, “Vivisectionist.” While there is nothing explicitly “gay” about these poems, Gary Schocker suggested this song cycle when I asked if he had any compositions for baritone with gay themes. These songs can certainly be interpreted from a heteronormative perspective, but interpreting them through a gay man’s perspective adds a different undertone to the freedom to “be.” The melodies and collaborative requirements of this cycle might appear more complex than those of “Two Scared Boys.” However, due to Schocker’s minimalistic and predominantly tonal approach, the voice lines are, for the most part, accessible for an upper-level undergraduate baritone. The wide voice range and the need for a well-developed lower register are the primary technical demands involved in creating an effective performance of this cycle.

1. “Freshman”

Range: C-sharp³ to E⁴.

Since the tessitura sits comfortably in the middle voice, this first song is possibly the most approachable of the cycle. The meter fluctuates between 6/8 and 9/8 with a single, brief moment in 12/8. The tempo remains consistent throughout at a dotted quarter note = 60. The harmonic structure and melodic echoes in the piano part support the voice line throughout the piece.

³⁹ The word “unobserved” is taken directly from the text of the first movement of *The College Poems*, “Freshman.”

2. “Cafeteria”

Range: G-sharp2 – G-sharp4.

The tessitura is wider than that of the first song, but it still sits comfortably in the middle voice until the end, when the melody utilizes the outer limits of the range in a single phrase (Example 4.3). The voice line remains completely independent from the piano part. A pulse is quickly established in the beginning by a single line *ostinato* in the piano. However, the metrical fluctuations (4/4 to 5/8 to 2/4 and 4/4 to 5/4 to 7/8) throughout the piece combined with the recurring syncopated rhythmic patterns create an exciting collaboration between the singer and pianist. The minimalistic, broken ostinato approach to the piano part resembles the anxious and overwhelming feeling one might experience when surrounded by many people.

Example 4.3: “Cafeteria,” Gary Schocker, mm. 30-34.

30

And li - quid fil - ling my lungs and retch,

molto

cresc

Ped blurs

The College Poems (2005). Reproduced with permission from the composer.

3. “Next”

Range: A2 – D-sharp4.

This short song lasts approximately thirty seconds. Nonetheless, due to some of its musical and technical demands, the singer might consider it to be the most difficult song to learn in the cycle. The wide tessitura and the abundant use of accidentals might present some difficulties for the singer to hear a tonal center. The meter fluctuates between 3/4, 2/4, and 4/4,

but the quarter note remains consistent. Tempo is set at (quarter note = 88-92), and there are a few indications of *ritardando* and *rubato*. The piano also offers very little assistance to the melody and may leave the singer feeling unsupported throughout the majority of the song.

4. “Vivisectionist”

Range: G2 – E4.

The tessitura fluctuates from the lower to upper registers throughout the song, and the voice line has several sustained A2s that could create some difficulty for a young singer to successfully negotiate a relaxed, free sound through the *passaggio*. Between the meter changes from simple to complex and the frequent use of syncopated rhythms in the piano part, I believe “Vivisectionist” offers the most challenging collaboration between singer and pianist in the song cycle. Among other possible vocal demands in this song are octave intervals in the melody and moments of *a capella* singing.

CHAPTER 5

CLINT BORZONI (B. 1981)

Clint Borzoni is a composer of opera, art song, film scores, and instrumental chamber works. His music has been featured in programs such as the San Francisco Opera's Merola Opera Program, the Glimmerglass Festival, and the Bay View Music Festival. Borzoni's commissions include those from the Arizona Opera, the Delaware Art Museum, the Lesbian and Gay Big Apple Corps Symphonic Band, operamission,⁴⁰ The Sacramento Gay and Lesbian Center, and Barihunks. A student of David Del Tredici,⁴¹ Borzoni earned the Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts degrees in Music Composition from the City University of New York. He is a recipient of the Morton Feldman Award, the Boston Metro Opera Festival Award, and the Maurice Liberman Music Scholarship. As of January 2020, Clint Borzoni is the Resident Composer for Musica Marin.

Gay-Themed Opera

When Adonis Calls, Borzoni's first opera collaboration with director/librettist John de los Santos is among his gay-themed voice works. The chamber opera is based on the homoerotic poetry of Gavin Geoffrey Dillard and is composed for two baritones, two male dancers, string quartet, and percussion. The story focuses on the developing relationship between an accomplished poet struggling with writer's block and his young admirer. *Antinous and Hadrian* is a collaboration with librettist Edward Ficklin and is the third opera in Borzoni's catalog. The

⁴⁰ The organization founded by Jennifer Patterson, operamission, is not capitalized. Hence, I do not capitalize it in this document.

⁴¹ Clint Borzoni, "About," Clint Borzoni, <http://clintborzoni.com/about/> (accessed January 14, 2020).

plot revolves around the “mystery behind the tragic death of Antinous,” the love interest of the second century Roman Emperor, Hadrian.⁴²

Gay-Themed Art Songs

Borzoni’s compositions include several gay-themed art songs for baritone, bass-baritone, countertenor, and mezzo-soprano. With few exceptions, many of these songs are settings of Walt Whitman poems, particularly those from the Calamus group in *Leaves of Grass* (1855).

Whitman’s work and private life were the subject of much scrutiny due to the themes of unrequited love and erotic relationships between men in much of his poetry. When I contacted Borzoni about his songs, the Whitman settings for baritone were some of the first ones he sent me. Among them were “That Shadow, My Likeness” (2010), “I Dreamed in a Dream” (2010), and his unpublished song cycle for baritone or bass-baritone, *Live Oak Growing* (2010).

Clint Borzoni utilizes similar compositional styles in his songs as his mentor, David Del Tredici: (1) lack of key signatures, (2) frequent use of accidentals to facilitate tonality and tonal shifts, and (3) frequent shifts in time signatures (Example 5.1). Borzoni’s voice lines are readily accessible for an undergraduate baritone. The melodies, for the most part, stay within an easily managed range for the baritone voice.

⁴² “The compelling story examines the mystery behind the tragic death of Antinous. Upon his death, the distraught Emperor declared his beloved a god. Drawing on both historical sources and dramatic imagination, Clint [Borzoni] and Edward [Ficklin] have crafted a new work in the grand opera tradition.” Clint Borzoni, “Antinous and Hadrian,” Clint Borzoni, <http://clintborzoni/antinous-and-hadrian/> (accessed January 17, 2020).

Example 5.1: “I Dreamed in a Dream,” Clint Borzoni, mm. 6-14.

2010. Reproduced with permission from the composer.

1. “I Dreamed in a Dream”

Text by Walt Whitman.
 Dedicated to Michael Colbruno.
 Published in 2010 by Clint Borzoni.
 Selling Agent: NewMusicShelf.com.
 Range: B-flat2 to F4.

“I Dreamed in a Dream” was premiered by American baritone Randal Turner at the Swedenborgian Church in San Francisco, CA in the winter of 2010. The narrator describes

dreaming of a city free of negativity, a city full of love led by the looks, actions, and words of men. At the premier performance of this song, Randal Turner describes his personal experiences of being bullied for his sexual orientation, particularly in his younger years. He presents this song in hopes that we will one day be able to experience a world where LGBTQ+ people are free to live their lives without fear.⁴³

Example 5.2: “I Dreamed in a Dream,” Clint Borzoni, mm. 15-19.

The image shows a musical score for the song "I Dreamed in a Dream" by Clint Borzoni, measures 15-19. The score is written in bass clef with a common time signature. It features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The tempo is marked "A tempo" with a quarter note equal to 80. The dynamics range from pianissimo (pp) to piano (p). The lyrics are "I dreamed that was the". The score includes a ritardando (rit.) section and a change in meter from common time to 3/4 time.

2010. Reproduced with permission from the composer.

The voice part, while tonal, is mostly independent of the piano part. The tessitura sits from A3 to D4, making the piece a suitable option for an undergraduate baritone learning to manage the *passaggio*. In my opinion, the most difficult moment for the singer is the interval C4 to a *pianissimo* F4, which is held for five beats and resolves to an E-flat4, in mm. 16-18 (Example 5.2). The succeeding three measures remain in the higher part of the tessitura while maintaining the soft dynamic marking. The suspensions in the melody and the constant meter changes throughout the song allow for various moments of metric ambiguity.

⁴³ Clint Borzoni, “Randal Turner, It Gets Better,” YouTube Video, 5:20, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QMVW-j9bkAA> (accessed January 17, 2020).

2. “That Shadow, My Likeness”

Text by Walt Whitman.
Written for Randal Turner.
Published in 2010 by Clint Borzoni.
Selling Agent: NewMusicShelf.com.
Range: G-sharp2 to F-sharp4.

This song was also premiered by American baritone Randal Turner at the Swedenborgian Church in San Francisco, CA in the winter of 2010. In this poem, the narrator observes his shadow and questions his identity. What part of him is his true self; his physical being or his shadow? The times he feels most true to himself are when he is “among [his] lovers” and when he is “caroling [his] songs.”⁴⁴ While this poem can be interpreted in different ways, it is an interesting look into the emotional and mental struggles of gay men who question or struggle with their identity.

The vocal demands of this song might seem more difficult than the ones in “I Dreamed in a Dream.” The tessitura range is B3 to E4 and the phrases are lengthy, requiring good vocal stamina. In the climactic moments, the phrases end in the upper register, often with high notes that are approached through large intervals, sustained for multiple measures.

The piano helps set the mood of the piece. The chromatic shifts of the tonal center in the first section of the song combined with the rolling figure in the piano part (Example 5.3) suggest anxiety and apprehension underneath the repeated text, “That shadow, my likeness that goes to and fro, seeking a livelihood, chattering, chaffering.” With the melody completely independent of the piano part.

⁴⁴ Francis Murphy, ed., *Walt Whitman: The Complete Poems* (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1986), 167.

Example 5.3: “That Shadow, My Likeness,” Clint Borzoni, mm. 1-4.

♩ = 88

p

That

♩ = 88

p *f* *p*

3

shad - - - ow, my

* *℞*_{ed}

2010. Reproduced with permission from the composer.

In my opinion, the tonality in the middle section creates a trance-like quality with the use of an ambiguous E-minor scale in the voice. For the first time in the piece, the treble line in the piano part directly doubles the voice line. The harmonic color suggests a contemplative mood as the narrator observes his shadow’s behavior (Example 5.4). Going into the final section of the song, the rolling figure in the piano returns with a more relaxed and almost confident tone quality, alluding to a state of freedom and acceptance underneath the text, “But among my lovers, and caroling these songs, O I never doubt whether that is really me.”

Example 5.4: "That Shadow, My Likeness," Clint Borzoni, mm. 23-30.

23 *Più mosso* ♩ = 104

How of - ten I find my - self stand - ing and look - ing at

f *mf*

Più mosso ♩ = 104

26 *p* *mf*

it where it flits, How of - ten I

p *mf*

28 *rit.*

ques - tion and doubt wheth - er that is real - ly me.

rit.

2010. Reproduced with permission from the composer.

CHAPTER 6

OPPORTUNITY FOR FURTHER STUDY

With significant developments of the Equal Rights Movement, the rise of progressive activist groups, and the advancement of social-political laws and policies in recent history, the concept of cultural inclusivity and equity in educational and professional settings in many areas of study continues to evolve. In the world of classical music, opera companies are producing works about LGBTQ people, musicians and music organizations across the country are commissioning new works with LGBTQ subject matter, and a number of researchers and academics continue to publish articles and present clinics regarding effective vocal pedagogy for transgender singers going through transition.

The songs discussed in this document are only a few of the gay-themed voice works currently available. David Del Tredici has a number of other song cycles in his “Gay Works” for baritone and soprano, many with more mature subject matter than *Gay Life*. I am grateful to Clint Borzoni for providing manuscripts of his unpublished gay-themed works for baritone and bass baritone. He is in the process of securing a publisher so that these works will be available. Borzoni has seven gay-themed songs for countertenor and one for mezzo soprano. There are a number of songs by American composers featured in the different volumes of the *New Music Shelf: Anthology of New Music* that can be interpreted by any gender, and I have found composers who state on their websites that they are willing to transpose certain songs for any voice type upon request, providing excellent possibilities for repertoire choices from 21st century art songs.⁴⁵ This also brings to mind the plethora of ambiguous and gender-neutral art songs

⁴⁵ “I encourage you to look beyond the borders of the voice-type specific nature of these volumes. Many of these songs were written without gender or voice type in mind, and so are worth exploring by every singer.” Dennis Tobenski, “Editor’s Preface,” *New Music Shelf Anthology of New Music: Baritone, Vol. 1* (Astoria, NY: New Music Shelf, Inc., 2018), x.

already in the standard repertoire. There is a wealth of viable music available to help meet the educational and developmental needs of our diverse body of voice students.

My next steps to further develop this project into a more expansive catalog will be to include other gay-themed voice works by the composers discussed in this document and to continue to search for works by other 21st century composers. Additionally, I will expand the scope of the catalog to include other voice types and the arias of gay characters from 21st century operas along with brief synopses and character analyses.

Opera companies and performance organizations around the nation have begun to embrace operas with openly gay characters as protagonists of their own stories. Jake Heggie's *Three Decembers* (2008) and *Two Remain* (2016 rev. 2018), Clint Borzoni's *When Adonis Calls* (2014), and Ricky Ian Gordon's *Green Sneakers* (2008) are a few operas with gay characters which have gained attention in recent years. Charlie's Act I aria from Heggie's *Three Decembers* has become a standard audition piece for baritones.⁴⁶ Theodore Morrison⁴⁷ and Rufus Wainwright⁴⁸, among others, have contributed to the composition of principal roles for gay characters in the operatic repertoire.

As a young gay singer, I felt a disconnect at times from the repertoire studied in applied lessons and opera workshop. I understood the technical lessons of each piece, worked hard to master the music and language, and find a connection with each character. However, after years of studying and interpreting songs and arias, particularly those dealing with romance between a man and a woman, it became increasingly difficult to create authentic interpretations. I can

⁴⁶ The Wolf Trap Opera, "Audition Resources: Aria Frequency Lists," <https://opera.wolftrap.org/audition-resources/> (Accessed: December 20, 2019).

⁴⁷ Theodore Morrison is the composer of *Oscar* (2013), an opera in two acts based on the life of Oscar Wilde.

⁴⁸ Rufus Wainwright's opera, *Hadrian* (2018), is based on the love story between the second century Roman emperor, Hadrian, and the Greek youth, Antinous.

imagine that there are other singers with similar experiences. My intent is that this document will help gay baritones and their teachers discover repertoire more closely allied with their identity, in addition to that which is required by music schools, and will encourage their vocal development and more immediately foster interpretive skills.

APPENDIX A

PARTIAL CATALOG OF GAY-THEMED WORKS BY AMERICAN COMPOSERS

| COMPOSER (DATES) | WORK/OPERA (DATE) VOICE & INSTRUMENTATION | ARIAS/ SONG TITLES |
|---------------------------------|--|---|
| Borzoni, Clint (b. 1981) | Baritone & cello (2009) | “To a Stranger” |
| | <i>Live Oak Growing</i> (2010) Baritone or bass-baritone & piano | 1. Not Heat Flames 2. Long I Thought 3. I Saw 4. What Think You 5. Happy |
| | Baritone & piano (2010) | “I Dreamed in a Dream” |
| | Baritone & piano (2010) | “That Shadow, My Likeness” |
| | Countertenor & piano (2010) | “We Two Boys” |
| | Countertenor & piano (2011) | “Hours Continuing Long” |
| | Countertenor & piano (2011) | “Earth! My Likeness!” |
| | Countertenor & piano (2012) | “I Give You My Hand” |
| | Countertenor & piano (2012) | “To Lie With You” |
| | Countertenor & piano (2012) | “The Stars Don’t Move” |
| Countertenor & piano (2012) | “In Despair” | |
| Baritone, piano, & cello (2016) | “To Belong” | |
| Baritone & piano (2018) | “Safely Turn” | |
| DeBlasio, Chris (1959-1993) | <i>All the Way Through Evening</i> (1990) Baritone & piano | 1. The Disappearance of Light 2. Train Station 3. An Elegy to Paul Jacobs 4. Poussin 5. Walt Whitman 1989 |
| David Del Tredici (b. 1937) | <i>Three Baritone Songs</i> (1999) Baritone & piano | 1. Quietness 2. Drinking Song 3. Matthew Shepard |
| | <i>Gay Life</i> (2001) Baritone & piano Or Amplified baritone & orchestra | 1. Ode to Wildwood 2. In the Temple 3. Personals Ad 4. After the Bid Parade 5. Here 6. Memory Unsettled |
| | <i>My Favorite Penis Poems</i> (1998/2002) Baritone, soprano, & piano | 1. Now You Know 2. Die Forelle 3. Street Instructions: At the Crotch 4. Hot to Trot 5. Importance of Gourdcrafting 6. Please Master |

| COMPOSER (DATES) | WORK/OPERA (DATE) VOICE & INSTRUMENTATION | ARIAS/ SONG TITLES |
|--------------------------------|--|---|
| | <i>Love Addiction</i> (2007) Baritone & piano | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I I I I 2. Passion Lurking 3. These Lousy Corridors 4. The “L” Word 5. Post-Performance Discussion 6. This Solid Ground/The Best by Far 7. The State of the Soul 8. Brother |
| | <i>A Field Manuel</i> (2008) Soprano, baritone, & eight players | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Overture 2. Sonia Henie Sonnet 3. Old Acquaintance 4. The Book of Sorrow 5. Beside a Pool 6. The Countess and Sweet Gwendolyn’s Tale |
| Gordon, Ricky Ian (b. 1956) | <i>Green Sneakers</i> (2008) Baritone, empty chair, string quartet, and piano | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If Only Someone Could Have Told Me 2. In Particular 3. He Came to Houston 4. Needs 5. Shopping 6. Sportswear 7. Opening Night 8. Philadelphia 9. Stone Garden 10. Blue Dust Mask 11. Two Months Later 12. Would You Consider... 13. Operas Come and Go 14. It was as if... 15. Bonanza 16. Bus Ride 17. Provincetown 18. Epilogue – Sleep |
| Heggie, Jake (b. 1961) | <i>For a Look or a Touch</i> (2007) Baritone, actor, flute, clarinet, violin, violoncello, & Piano Or Baritone & piano * This work exists in several incarnations, including a choral work (2011) and an opera, <i>Out of Darkness: Two Remain</i> (2018). | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prelude: Do You Remember? 2. The Voice 3. Golden Years 4. A Hundred Thousand Stars 5. The Story of Joe 6. Silence 7. Der Singende Wald (The Singing Forest) 8. Remember |

| COMPOSER (DATES) | WORK/OPERA (DATE) VOICE & INSTRUMENTATION | ARIAS/ SONG TITLES |
|-----------------------------|---|---|
| | <i>Three Decembers</i> (2008) Character: Charlie (baritone) | Act I Aria: "It's O.K." Act II Aria: "Each day I write you four little lines" |
| Moore, Ben C. (b. 1960) | <i>Love Remained</i> (2011) Baritone & piano | 1. Hold On 2. Uncle Ronnie 3. Love Remained 4. Hope |
| Platt, Russell (b. 1965) | <i>Two Whitman Panels from Noon to Starry Night: A Walt Whitman Cantata</i> (2006) Baritone & piano | 1. When I Heard at the Close of the Day 2. I Saw in Louisiana a Live-Oak Growing |
| Rebman, Joseph (b. 1991) | <i>He Would Not Stay: Seven Poems of A. E. Housman</i> (2014) Baritone & piano Or Baritone, flute (doubling piccolo), clarinet in A, violin, cello, and piano | 1. He Would Not Stay 2. Shake Hands 3. The Street Sounds 4. The Truth in Hearts 5. Oh were He and I Together 6. When He's Returned 7. When I was One and Twenty |
| Schocker, Gary (b. 1959) | <i>The College Poems</i> (2004) Baritone & piano | 1. Freshman 2. Cafeteria 3. Next 4. Vivisectionist |
| | Voice & piano (2004) | "Man Overboard" |
| | Voice & piano (2004) | "Two Scared Boys" |

APPENDIX B
COMPOSERS' NOTES

David Del Tredici: *Gay Life*⁴⁹

Gay Life was initially envisioned as a cycle of eight songs, each touching on the "gay experience" from a different angle. The music came to me in a burst — a burst, really, of gay pride. It began in August 1996 as a result of my experience at The Body Electric School's weeklong retreat called "The Dear Love of Comrades." As well, I encountered the poetry serendipitously. The first two songs are settings of poetry created spontaneously by two comrades during the excitement and joy of the retreat. After a Lincoln Center concert where both Allen Ginsberg and I performed, I asked the iconoclastic poet to recommend some of his favorite erotic poetry. In his simple, Buddhist way, he responded by handing me a copy of his own poetry, dog-eared to his favorites. Paul Monette's mourning of his lover, Rog, in "Here," touched on my own loss of a lover. The brief Thom Gunn poem, fueled by my mother's sudden death, spun itself out into a fifteen-minute farewell. To bind the songs more closely, I composed interludes connecting each to the next. (Alternate endings, however, permit individual songs to be extracted as stand-alone pieces.)

The cycle begins with Michael Calhoun's "Ode to Wildwood." Wildwood is the Body Electric School's retreat center, and the ode's "Julie Andrews" allusion takes us to Julie Andrews point, a scenic overlook there that to many is reminiscent of the alpine setting of *The Sound of Music*. With major and minor tonalities rubbing elbows, "Ode to Wildwood" is a rag reminiscent of the sinewy rags of Scott Joplin. The spirited music evokes the unalloyed joy of gay men exulting in a safe environment. Near the end, a line of the poem is deconstructed: through fragmented repetitions, the words "the spirit in my being and the animal in my soul" are chanted,

⁴⁹ David Del Tredici, "Gay Life: A Cycle of Six Songs for Amplified Solo Baritone and Orchestra," David Del Tredici, Composer, <https://www.daviddeltredici.com/works/gay-life/> (Accessed January 12, 2020).

mantra-like, over and over. The song's final phrases are ecstatic, and a brief interlude follows.

"In the Temple," a poem by Wilson Hand Kidde, describes a contemplative setting in which the poet welds spirituality to eroticism. The temple in question is a beautiful sacred space at Wildwood where ritual work is taught and practiced. "In the Temple" is a hymn (ahem, a hymn! —*editor's note*) to sensual awareness. In fact, it ends with my own prayerful addition — 'Ah! Men!' The text is declaimed at a moderate tempo (*allegretto*) to a rather stately melody. Beginning stepwise after the fashion of a chat, the melody turns into a less soothing progression of intervals as the singer acknowledges "the sweet fire in my veins, so hard to tame." The interlude — a touch of counterpoint, a thinning of the instrumental texture, a sudden *fortissimo* outburst — leads to the two Allen Ginsberg settings.

Throughout the world, the "personal" advertisement provides a time-honored method for potential lovers to meet each other. In the United States, such advertisements enjoyed a vogue a century ago; when they in recent years re-emerged in popularity, the gay community embraced the "personals" with enthusiasm. In "Personals Ad," a businesslike, almost comical, setting is given to what is ultimately a touching poem, full of tenderness and the advertiser's manifest sincerity. The subsequent interlude builds from near-stasis, heating up (*incalzando*) to the festive outburst of the fourth song.

Gay Pride Weekend gets marked on the calendars of gay men and lesbians long before it occurs, late each spring. For many, the Gay Pride parades held in many cities serve as the year's most dramatic outward expression of social and political solidarity. "After the Parade" is a fast, lively song unfolding over a *moto perpetuo* accompaniment. The interludes evoke a brass band, and rowdiness seems always near. But of course, in the age of AIDS, the celebrations are necessarily bittersweet. The ebullience of the opening march music is tempered by recollection

of 'the Corridors of Death" (*subito piano* — "suddenly quiet"), sung to the pained interval of the tritone. After that, the accompaniment returns jubilantly to descending scales, passed from register to register, until the energy is finally spent.

The tragedy grows still more personal with Paul Monette's "Here," as open fifths provide a stark accompaniment to a man's shell-shocked soliloquy, intoned on a single pitch: He lies beside his lover's grave, remembering the horror of the final weeks. Emptiness is the hallmark of this quiet piece, but ultimately anger, sorrow and despair well up and are released in a final wail. "Here" is written in memory of my lover, Paul Arcomano, who died of AIDS in 1993, at thirty-four. Six-foot-three, devastatingly handsome, twenty years my junior, we were together for seven years. This song was written in one day, and I cried the whole time — the first, and only, time this has happened. The subsequent interlude's long *decrescendo* brings emotional respite.

Despite our respite, we remain in the world of sober thoughts. The cycle's finale, Thom Gunn's "Memory Unsettled (A Farewell)," is a further meditation on death, suggesting that its imminence can inspire acts of potent charity. Though "Memory Unsettled" is but four short verses, the setting is in excess of fifteen minutes — by far the longest song of *Gay Life*. It is, in fact, a farewell — to my mother, to lost lovers and friends, to all that must eventually fall away. As the song winds down, however, I allow memory to settle into ecstatic reverie...of beauty...of fragility...of the sweetness of life...of the embrace of love. The words "Remember me — We will remember you" are repeated, litany-like, throughout the piece. In fact, the singer at one point is in dialogue with himself, taking two roles — the rememberer and the remembering. Because the words, "Remember me" evoke the text of Dido's famous Lament (from Purcell's opera *Dido and Aeneas*), I quote, in very special moments, Purcell's own setting of these words. Towards the end, a gloss on the Lament shades into a quote of the concluding measures of

Wagner's *Liebestod*, under which the song's main theme returns in a communion of grief spanning three centuries and as many musical styles. At length, in a glowing haze of B-major tremolos, the song serenely dies away.

Ben Moore: *Love Remained*⁵⁰

Love Remained explores issues concerning LGBT youth. It was commissioned for baritone Michael Kelly by SongFusion with special funding provided by Simon Yates and Robert Wakefield. The first song is based on a speech by Fort Worth City Councilman Joel Burns in which he addresses recent suicides of gay teenagers as well as his own experience as a young man facing bullying at school in Crowley, Texas. It became one of the most-watched videos in the 'It Gets Better Project,' the online resource for struggling LGBT youth started by gay rights advocate Dan Savage. The second song is based on the text of another 'It Gets Better' video by evangelist Oral Roberts' grandson, Randy Robert Potts. In it, Potts confronts his complex relationship with his uncle Ronnie who was gay. The title of the cycle is taken from the third song, a setting of a poem by Michael Kelly, which describes the painful and uncertain process of coming out to a family member. The last piece quotes from the well-known "Hope Speech" of Harvey Milk, given at the 1978 Gay Freedom Day Parade in San Francisco. Milk's message of optimism and hope for the future, specifically regarding young gay people across the country, foreshadows the long-overdue statements of support by many of today's public figures in the 'It Gets Better Project.' The cycle as a whole is a plea to young gay men and women to hold on in the face of cruelty and harassment. It is also an expression of gratitude to Harvey Milk

⁵⁰ Ben Moore, *Love Remained* (2012), 1.

and other pioneers in the struggle for equality, as well as a celebration of the progress that has been made toward tolerance and justice since the 1970s.

If you need help, please visit the “It Gets Better” website, www.itgetsbetter.org, and click the ‘get help’ tab.

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