

SAMUEL BARBER'S SONG CYCLE,
DESPITE AND STILL

PROBLEM IN LIEU OF THESIS

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INTRODUCTION

Samuel Barber wrote Despite and Still, Opus 41 (1969) late in his career. In relation to his other works for voice, this song cycle is not well known, is seldom performed, and has never been recorded. It is mentioned in major works on Barber, but an in-depth study of the cycle is not available.

Despite and Still is discussed in regard to style, form, melody, harmony, rhythm, texture, and text setting. The study includes an assessment of Barber's place among American composers, as well as a brief biographical sketch of the composer. The lives and works of the poets Robert Graves, Theodore Roethke, and James Joyce are also discussed.

The underlying assumption of the paper is that the more thoroughly a singer is acquainted with the songs, the poets, and Barber's settings of the texts, the better equipped he or she will be as a performer to project the composer's intentions.

CHAPTER I
SAMUEL BARBER

Samuel Barber was born in West Chester, Pennsylvania, on March 10, 1910. Although affected by two aspects of the atmosphere of his home town, that is, the staid solidity of Quaker stock and the sophisticated cultural life surrounding the town's most celebrated inhabitant, novelist Joseph Hergesheimer, Barber drew upon his inner life for sustenance. Generally shy and moody, he had a passion for reading and walking in the country that remained with him throughout his life.¹

Barber's father, Samuel LeRoy Barber, came from a long line of tradesmen and professional people and was the town's doctor. Barber's mother was an amateur pianist. Her sister, contralto Louise Homer, was one of the finest American singers of her time.² Louise

¹Nathan Broder, Samuel Barber (New York: G. Schirmer, 1954), 11.

²Louise Homer (1871-1947) enjoyed a long and successful career at the Metropolitan Opera, where she first sang French and Italian roles and later portrayed leading Wagnerian mezzo and contralto characters. Her rendition of Orfeo in Toscanini's 1909 revival of Gluck's opera won her acclaim, and she created the role of the

Homer's husband, Sidney Homer, was a song composer who encouraged and advised Barber on composition. Homer was perhaps better known as a song composer in his time than Barber is today. In 1927 Louise Homer included some of her nephew's songs in a recital program, and in 1943 Barber edited a selection of seventeen songs written by her husband.³

Barber began piano study with his mother at the age of six and wrote his first compositions at the age of seven. In 1924 he became a charter student at the newly-founded Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, where he was not only the youngest student, but also the first to be allowed to major in three subjects: piano, composition, and voice. His instructors were, for piano, George Boyle⁴ and Isabelle Vengerova;⁵ for composition,

Witch in Humperdinck's Königskinder in 1910. Louise Homer's last appearance at the Met was as Azucena in 1929, after which she earned a reputation as a concert and oratorio soloist.

³Broder, op. cit., 9-10.

⁴George Boyle (1886-1948) was an Australian pianist, composer, and teacher who studied with the pianist-composer Busoni in Berlin. Boyle taught at the Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore, as well as at Curtis, and also enjoyed an extensive career as a concert pianist.

⁵Isabelle Vengerova (1877-1956) was a distinguished Russian piano pedagogue. She studied in Vienna with the great Austrian pianist and teacher, Theodor Leschetizky, who was a pupil of Czerny.

Rosario Scalero;⁶ for voice, Emilio de Gogorza;⁷ and for conducting, Fritz Reiner.⁸ At the age of eighteen, Barber was recognized in each of his three major fields as one of the student body's most promising members.

Samuel Barber was one of the few composers who was able to earn his living by composition alone.⁹ From the start his music was popular, made him financially successful, and enabled him to devote himself entirely to composition and to forego the need to occupy academic positions. In 1928, at the age of eighteen, Barber entered a violin sonata in a composition contest and

⁶Rosario Scalero (1870-1956) was an eminent Italian violinist, composer, and teacher who studied with Mandycewski in Vienna. He stressed form and counterpoint and mirrored the rigor of his Germanic schooling (Mandycewski was the student of Nottenebohm, friend of Brahms, Schumann, and Mendelssohn, and the editor of the works of Haydn and Brahms) mixed with Italian flexibility and freedom from didacticism. Scalero's impact on Barber was one of incorruptable idealism and critical perception.

⁷Emilio de Gogorza (1874-1949) was a successful American concert baritone and the second husband of soprano Emma Eames.

⁸Fritz Reiner (1888-1963) was an eminent Hungarian conductor. He studied in Budapest and was appointed conductor of the Dresden Opera (1914-21). In 1922 he came to the United States, where he served as music director of the Pittsburgh and Chicago Symphony Orchestras, and later conducted at the Metropolitan Opera.

⁹Russell E. Friedewald, A Formal and Stylistic Analysis of the Published Music of Samuel Barber (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, State University of Iowa, 1957), 340.

won the first of many substantial prizes and grants¹⁰ that made it possible for him to spend every summer from 1928 through 1938 touring Europe and composing. During this time Barber often conducted his works, having made his conducting debut in Vienna in 1934.

Barber's close friend, Gian Carlo Menotti, whom he met at Curtis in 1928, travelled with him throughout Europe. The outbreak of World War II, however, put a halt to their excursions, and Barber turned briefly to teaching. From 1939 to 1942 he taught orchestration and conducted the madrigal choir at the Curtis Institute.

Barber's efforts at teaching and conducting, though successful endeavors, involved him so deeply that he felt that his composition suffered. He knew he would never be happy until he had plenty of time to compose, and wrote, "Give me a place to live in the country and a peaceful room with a piano in which to work, and I ask for nothing more."¹¹

In 1945 Barber and Menotti settled at Capricorn, a house on a large wooded estate near Mount Kisco, New York. Capricorn was a gift from the first of Barber's many benefactors, Mary Louise Curtis Bok, the founder of the

¹⁰See Appendix A for a chronology of Barber's life.

¹¹Broder, op. cit., 23.

Curtis Institute of Music.¹² The two composers spent many productive years at Capricorn, until they sold the house in 1974. There Barber wrote some of his finest scores, including the Capricorn Concerto, Opus 21 (1944) and his Piano Concerto, Opus 38 (1962), and collaborated with Menotti on his operas, Vanessa, Opus 32 (1957) and A Hand of Bridge, Opus 35 (1958).

From his youth Barber displayed a marked interest in the human voice. Among his juvenile pieces is The Rose Tree, a short opera which was performed by Barber and his sister Sara. This early venture serves as the beginning of an inclination toward vocal music.¹³ Besides the encouragement and support he received from his aunt, Louise Homer, and her husband, Sidney Homer, a composer who concentrated almost exclusively on song literature, Barber's knowledge of the human voice also stemmed from his experiences with his voice teachers, Emilio de Gogorza at Curtis and John Braun in Vienna.

Barber's baritone voice was admired by musicians (Francis Poulenc offered to write some songs for him), but his singing career was limited to a few engagements,

¹²Hans W. Heinsheimer, "Vanessa Revisited," Opera News XLII: 21 (May 1978), 25.

¹³Richard Jackson, "Samuel Barber," The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, 20 vols., ed. Stanley Sadie (London: MacMillan, 1980), II, 133.

although Dover Beach was recorded by Victor Records with Barber and the Curtis String Quartet. Barber was for a time a singer on the radio, but failed to establish a place for himself there. Broder wrote that "there seemed to be no place for Lieder on the American radio, at least as far as he was concerned."¹⁴ Barber wrote:

I had thought I would like to become a singer . . . a good way to earn a living while devoting myself to my first love, composing. But I soon found out that in order to be a great singer (and it is only amusing to be a great one) one must be either very intelligent or very stupid. I was neither.¹⁵

Just after Barber turned seventeen he took a few songs to G. Schirmer (his publisher throughout his career), which rejected most of them but took some, among them "The Daisies." Later song followed song, and cycles increased his vocal production. The song cycle Mélodies passagères, Opus 27 was written in 1950 and 1951 to French poems by Rainer Maria Rilke. The Hermit Songs, Opus 29 (1952-53) are settings of ten medieval poems translated by various poets, among them W.H. Auden, who made his translations specifically for Barber's use. During his lifetime, Samuel Barber was considered to be one of the most successful song composers in America.¹⁶

¹⁴Broder, op. cit., 23.

¹⁵Charles Turner, "The Music of Samuel Barber," Opera News XXII (January 17, 1958), 7.

During the 1950s Barber gave most of his attention to stage works.¹⁷ His opera Vanessa, Opus 32 (1957), libretto by Menotti, was very successful and won for him a Pulitzer Prize in 1958. In 1963 the composer was awarded his fourth Pulitzer Prize for his Piano Concerto, Opus 38 (1962).

Barber wrote another opera, Anthony and Cleopatra, Opus 40, with a libretto by Franco Zeffirelli after Shakespeare, for the opening of the new Metropolitan Opera House in 1966. The premiere was a fiasco, due in part to the production, directed and designed by Zeffirelli, and was also reportedly "undermined by the malfunction of the new revolving stage, the costumes that all but smothered Leontyne Price, by the general ballyhoo of the occasion."¹⁸ Hans Heinsheimer speculated that Barber,

who had known nothing but success, never really recovered from that humiliating disaster, and the long illness that took him away was only the final, logical reflection of his state of mind and soul. His creative powers seemed greatly diminished.¹⁹

Immediately after the premiere of Anthony and Cleopatra Barber retired to the Italian Alps where he spent three musically unproductive years in virtual seclusion.

¹⁶Hans W. Heinsheimer, "Adagio for Sam," Opera News XLV: 15 (March 14, 1981), 30-31.

¹⁷See Appendix B for a complete list of works.

¹⁸Heinsheimer, "Adagio," op. cit., 31. ¹⁹Ibid.

During his later years Barber actually wrote little compared to his earlier years of productivity. The song cycle Despite and Still was written for Leontyne Price in 1969. A Major choral work, the oratorio The Lovers to texts by Pablo Neruda, was completed in 1971. Three Songs, Opus 45, were commissioned by William Steinberg and the Pittsburgh Symphony for Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau in 1974. Anthony and Cleopatra was revised and the libretto reshaped by Menotti in 1975, and received a more successful premiere in Paris. In 1977 a short Ballade, Opus 46 for solo piano was composed for the Van Cliburn Piano Competition. His last completed work (he left an oboe concerto unfinished) was the Third Essay for Orchestra, Opus 47 (1978). In 1980 Barber received the Edward MacDowell Medal for his outstanding contributions to music.

Samuel Barber was an elegant, carefully-groomed, good-looking man. His appearance was often compared to that of an elder statesman and he carried himself with the pride and the self-assurance of a man well-accustomed to success.²⁰ In his biography, Broder states that the composer was withdrawn and moody as a young man.²¹ Those characteristics remained with him and perhaps intensified as he grew older.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Broder, op. cit., 11.

Hans Heinsheimer described Samuel Barber during his last years as a "sad, slightly bloated man in a loose, ill-fitting open shirt looking terribly serious, with almost frightened eyes."²² The composer was, in his opinion, marked by the catastrophe of the premiere of Anthony and Cleopatra at the Met in 1966.²³ According to friends of the composer, he spent much time during his last few weeks listening to tapes of the Paris performance of that opera.²⁴ On January 23, 1981 Samuel Barber died of cancer in New York City.

A year before his death, a survey of programming by major American orchestras for 1978-79 revealed the most-performed living composer to be Samuel Barber (followed by Aaron Copland and William Walton). Barber's Third Essay for Orchestra, Opus 47 (1978) was the work most frequently performed.²⁵ His best-known compositions include Symphony Number One, Opus 9 (1935-36, revised in 1943); Adagio for Strings, Opus 11 (1936); Essay for Orchestra, Opus 12 (1937); and Vanessa, Opus 32 (1957).

²²Heinsheimer, "Adagio," op. cit., 31.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Allan Kozinn, "Samuel Barber: The Last Interview and the Legacy," High Fidelity/Musical America XXXI (July 1981), 89.

²⁵Alan Pechansky, "Barber, Copland, Walton Win," Billboard LXL (October 27, 1979), 82.

Samuel Barber belonged to a group of composers who came to prominence in the 1930s and dominated American music thereafter. With Elliott Carter, Elie Siegmeister, Virgil Thomson, and Aaron Copland, Barber strove to end the notion that serious composition could only be an European product.²⁶

Yet Barber displayed little allegiance to twentieth-century music, and his conception of an ideal American musical idiom was different from that of his contemporaries. Marion Bauer, in Twentieth Century Music, wrote:

Samuel Barber presents a curious anomaly in an age when all the young composers, and the older ones, too, for that matter, write works that are in some way or other problematical: atonal, polytonal, folkish, jazzish, simplified, or going back to medieval methods.²⁷

Samuel Barber seemed to remain untouched by the need to keep up with experimental and stylish compositional trends. During the forties, nationalism predominated among American composers; Barber continued to develop in his own way rather than turning to folk tunes for inspiration. During the fifties and sixties, when serialism, atonality, and experimental forms prevailed, Barber kept on his own

²⁶Allan Kozinn, "Samuel Barber," International Music Guide, ed. Derek Elley (London: Tantivy Press, 1981), 9.

²⁷Marion Bauer, Twentieth Century Music (New York: C.P. Putnam's Sons, 1947), 357.

personal lyrical course, turning slightly toward a more dramatic, angular, dissonant, chromatic musical idiom.²⁸

How was Barber able to witness five decades of changing trends and forms without altering his own style significantly? Allan Kozinn provided an answer in the words of the composer:

My compositional style hasn't really changed much over the years, and people often ask me why. Well, why should I change? There's no reason why music should be difficult for an audience to understand. Even so, I don't particularly address the audience when I compose. I believe that if a piece is good enough, the audience will appreciate it. Nor do I address the performers. Or posterity. When I compose, I compose for the present, and I address myself.²⁹

Barber's works are seldom shocking, experimental, or rebellious, and reflect the strict classical training he received at Curtis. Although his compositional technique was modified somewhat over the years, Barber never rejected his early musical training.³⁰

In his discipline, sense of proportion, and strong feeling for form, Samuel Barber is a classicist. He resembles Bach and Mozart in that he worked within the

²⁸Kozinn, "Samuel Barber: The Last," op. cit., 46.

²⁹Kozinn, "Samuel Barber," op. cit., 14.

³⁰Julia Ann Lansford, The Hermit Songs of Samuel Barber (unpublished M.M. thesis, N.T.S.U., 1964), 14.

framework of traditional forms and techniques, adapting them to his own needs. Small forms are common and present a variety of designs (simple variation, binary, ternary forms, etc.), while larger compositions are firmly related in structural principles to those of the sonata form. His compositions exhibit a respect for classical structure, counterpoint, imitation, and canon, and show a great charm and refinement. Barber also relied on well-tested instrumental combinations and doublings. His orchestration is tasteful and varied, showing a keen sense for instrumental color.³¹

Barber's music is characterized by expressive, deeply personal emotional qualities and a lyricism which reveals him to be an heir of the European Romantic school. His inclination toward lyricism and romantic fullness combined with his predilection for classical organization and structure places Barber in a position in his time comparable to that of Brahms in his time. Also, although both composers wrote distinctly personal works of beauty and substance, neither was an innovator.³²

Of a total of thirty-five works, Barber wrote five sets of songs for voice and piano and three song cycles, for a total of thirty-three solo songs, as well as five

³¹ Friedewald, op. cit., 303.

³² Jackson, op. cit., 135.

works for solo voice and orchestra, three operas, and six works for chorus. Thus his vocal music, and specifically, his music for voice with piano accompaniment, stands out as the genre he cultivated most assiduously.

Barber's songs do not follow any set formal pattern. Each setting was carefully conceived and captures the mood and expression of the text. He avoided obvious text pictorialization and set moods by alluding to and embracing the spirit of the texts rather than by describing them: "[When] I'm writing music for words, then I immerse myself in those words, and I let the music flow out of them."³³

Barber's style is one of sophisticated workmanship and great refinement. He was devoted to his art and adhered to the highest musical standards. According to Broder, Barber worked slowly, attaching great importance to his themes: "The search for the right themes is often painful and drawn out, with many discarded along the way."³⁴ The composer allowed his material to germinate for months, sometimes even years, before beginning a composition and often travelled in search of an atmosphere that would stimulate a work. He polished each piece with infinite care and allowed the results of spontaniety to remain only after a period of consideration.³⁵

³³Ibid.

³⁴Broder, op. cit., 44.

³⁵Lansford, op. cit., 14.

Most elements of melodic organization, including phrase lengths, dynamics, approach to and descent from a high note, and placement of climaxes and rests, were conceived from a singer's perspective. Melodies are most often short, logically written, and quite singable.

As Barber's appreciation for and understanding of the voice enabled him to create singable melodies, so his familiarity with great literature aided him in choosing his texts and setting them to music.³⁶ While he frequently chose texts with elusive or intangible meanings, the texts are of consistently high caliber, such as the poetry of James Agee, A.E. Housman, James Stephens, Emily Dickinson, James Joyce, Gerard Manley Hopkins, Robert Graves, Jose Garcia Villa, Stephen Spender, Theodore Roethke, William Butler Yeats, Rainer Maria Rilke, Pablo Neruda, and Sören Kierkegaard.

Barber's interest in literature aided the development of his sensitivity to the natural rhythm of poetry. As a result, he often implemented complex rhythms to preserve the poet's original intent. Although melodic rhythm is inseparable from the text, accents are sometimes shifted for coloristic effect or to preserve a rhythmic pattern, and bar lines are freely used as a matter of convenience.

³⁶Linda Horowitz, "Samuel Barber's Choral Works," Choral Journal XXI: 3 (November 1980), 26.

Rhythm is often organized by ostinato patterns, and accompaniments are for the most part rhythmically complex in comparison to the singable melodic line.

In most of Barber's songs, melodic patterns are governed by tonality; melodic lines are lyrical in character, traditional in shape; and modal substitutions are frequently used. Chord structures are generally triadic, with some sevenths and added-tone chords.³⁷

Dover Beach, Opus 3 (1931), for baritone and string quartet, is representative of Barber's songs, although it was written when he was only twenty-one and still a student at Curtis. The vocal line dominates the setting of Matthew Arnold's pessimistic text and emphasizes its dramatic impact; the music of the string quartet serves mostly as an accompaniment, involved in the melodic material only when the voice is silent; the harmony is triadic and tonal, based on late nineteenth-century tradition but also embracing chromaticism and "gentle dissonance."³⁸

Many of Barber's subsequent songs have become staples of vocal repertoire. His Four Songs, Opus 13 (1940) include two of the most frequently-performed twentieth-century American songs, "A Nun Takes the Veil"

³⁷Friedewald, op. cit., 303.

³⁸Charles Hamm, Music in the New World (New York: Norton, 1983), 457.

and "Sure on this Shining Night." Although many of Barber's instrumental pieces enjoy wide popularity, his works for voice will probably remain in the performing repertoire long after the majority of his instrumental works have been forgotten.³⁹

Barber's music is a favorite of audiences who reject the sometimes impenetrable works of other composers. Among the younger generation of successful American composers, George Rochberg, David Del Tredici, and John Corigliano are taking seriously the negative reaction of the public to avant-garde music, and seem to be embracing the melodic, communicative, romantic musical style that has always characterized Barber's work.⁴⁰ Daniel Webster wrote:

History may isolate a Philadelphia school of mid-twentieth-century composers, a small ensemble of conservative craftsmen who worked in small genres. They will be seen as transitional figures, men who kept all the doors open without, finally, entering one with the passionate commitment of a pioneer or the splendor of a visionary. These men have grown around the Curtis Institute of Music, a school given to backward glances.⁴¹

Although Barber died in 1981, his music continues to sing on, to be heard and enjoyed as a permanent memorial.

³⁹Ibid., 458.

⁴⁰Kozinn, "Samuel Barber," op. cit., 9.

⁴¹Daniel Webster, "Curtis Institute: Barber Tribute," High Fidelity/Musical America XXX: 7 (July 1980), 36.

CHAPTER II

THE POETS

Robert Graves

Robert Ranke Graves was born in London on July 26, 1895. He is a poet, novelist, and critic who cultivated many of the formal traditions of English verse during a period of experimentation. His literary production of more than one hundred books also includes an historical novel, I, Claudius (1934), and controversial studies in mythology. Despite the varied nature of his writing he regards himself as a poet out of his time, belonging to no particular school.

Graves was the son of Alfred Perceval Graves, a minor figure in the Irish literary and musical revival, whose father was the Protestant Bishop of Limerick. His mother was a descendant of Leopold von Ranke (1795-1886), the great German historian. Graves has attributed the conflicting elements of his personality and work to his interestingly mixed origins.⁴²

⁴²Derwent May, Robert Graves (London: Open University Press, 1976), 11.

As a student at the London public school called Charterhouse, Graves wrote poetry, and continued to do so as an officer at the Front during the First World War. He was severely wounded in 1916 and remained deeply troubled emotionally for at least ten years after the war. He came to consider the writing of poetry as a form of emotional therapy for himself as well as for contemporary society, which he regarded as imbalanced. Though he used the same traditional forms employed by other poets, his inner conflict gave his work a deeper and more painful tone. In general, his verse embodies a romantic intensity and a pull toward clarity and order.⁴³

Author of some of the finest love poetry of the time, Graves was elected Professor of Poetry at Oxford University in 1961. His controversial translation of the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam appeared in 1967. Graves considers his most important prose work to be The White Goddess (1948).

During his early years, Graves was serious and sincere in regard to religion. While he never doubted the historical existence of Jesus, he began to ponder the question of Christ's identity, purpose, and character. His investigation led him to see Jesus as the

⁴³Robert (Ranke) Graves, " Encyclopedia Britannica, 30 vols. (Chicago: William and Helen H. Benton, 1974), IV, 688-9.

"antithesis of the genuine poetic hero: as patriarchal and fanatic rather than devoted, and terribly vulnerable to betrayal and deceit."⁴⁴

Even after his subsequent rejection of religion, Graves retained a sentimental vision of Christ as the perfect man. Inspired by this, at the age of nineteen, he wrote the poem "In the Wilderness," which appeared, along with other poems he had written as a schoolboy at Charterhouse, in his first volume of verse, Over the Brazier (1916). Most of the poems are light and romantic in tone and rather schoolboyish in spirit: whimsical and sentimental, although some show technical skill.⁴⁵

In his early works, Graves imitated Georgian poets, whose works were characterized by their ironic anticlericalism, an emphasis on plain, honest speech, and the use of natural speech rhythms.⁴⁶ Graves was also influenced

⁴⁴Martin Seymour-Smith, Robert Graves: His Life and Work (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1982), 390.

⁴⁵Michael Kirkham, The Poetry of Robert Graves (New York: Oxford, 1969), 11.

⁴⁶Georgian poetry is the work of an assortment of British poets writing in the first quarter of the twentieth century. The group was named for an anthology of contemporary verse edited by Sir Edward Marsh entitled Georgian Poetry. The anthology was first published in 1912, at the beginning of the reign of George V, and five volumes appeared between 1912 and 1922. Its contributors and other poets writing in a similar style include Rupert Brooke, Lascelles Abercrombie, John Freeman, W.H. Davies, John Masefield, Siegfried Sassoon, Walter de la Mare, D.H. Lawrence, Robert Frost, and Robert Graves.

by the Georgian convention as expressed in a nostalgia for the countryside as an escape from misery and as a haven of cultural seclusion. These Georgian characteristics are evident in Graves' poem, "In the Wilderness":

Christ of His gentleness	
Thirsting and hungering	
Walked in the wilderness;	
Soft words of grace He spoke	
Unto lost desert-folk	5
That listened wondering.	
He heard the bitterns ⁴⁷ call	
From ruined palace-wall,	
Answered them brotherly.	
He held communion	10
With the she-pelican	
Of lonely piety.	
Basilisk, ⁴⁸ cockatrice, ⁴⁹	
Flocked to His homilies,	
With mail of dread device,	15
With monstrous barbéd stings,	
With eager dragon-eyes;	
Great rats on leather wings	
And poor blind broken things,	
Foul in their miseries.	20
And ever with Him went,	
Of all His wanderings	
Comrade, with ragged coat,	
Gaunt ribs-poor innocent-	
Bleeding foot, burning throat,	25
The guileless old scapegoat;	
For forty nights and days	
Followed in Jesus' ways,	

⁴⁷A bittern is a tawny brown heron that inhabits a reedy marsh.

⁴⁸A basilisk is a serpent, lizard, or dragon which kills by its breath or look.

⁴⁹A cockatrice (final syllable pronounced like "ice") is a legendary monster with a deadly glance, hatched by a serpent from the egg of a cock, with the body of a serpent and the head, tail, and wings of a cock.

Sure guard behind Him kept,
Tears like a lover wept.⁵⁰ 30

Robert Graves has been his own worst critic. He published his first collection of poems in 1926, then discarded over half of his previously-published poetry and revised the rest. The frequent revisions of his work are a result of his insistence on a poet's need for craftsmanship, hard, careful work, and inspiration.⁵¹ Graves now disapproves of most of what he wrote before 1926, and from his first two volumes of 1916 and 17, only "In the Wilderness" survives in later collections.

For years Graves had regarded this early poem about Christ as "wet" (his word).⁵² He had written it while he was a devout Christian and rejected it when he repudiated this faith. In 1946 Graves reconsidered and decided that the poem was valid and had been written in the right spirit: he respected the Christ whom he had invented in his poem. In reinstating "In the Wilderness" he deliberately overlooked what he considered to be a serious anachronism (the difference between "his" Christ and the Savior as seen by various churches of the day).⁵³

⁵⁰Robert Graves, Over the Brazier (London: Folcroft, 1976), 16.

⁵¹May, op. cit., 12.

⁵²Seymour-Smith, op. cit., 389.

⁵³Ibid., 391.

Graves allowed the poem to stand in later collections (it appeared in his 1947 edition of Collected Poems), with minor revisions because of reservations about its merit. The following is the revised version of the poem as used by Barber in Despite and Still. The words underlined are those which differ from the original text.

<u>He</u> , of <u>his</u> gentleness,	
Thirsting and hungering	
Walked in the wilderness,	
Soft words of grace <u>he</u> spoke	
Unto lost desert-folk	5
That listened wondering,	
He heard the <u>bittern</u> call	
From ruined palace-wall,	
Answered <u>him</u> brotherly,	
He held communion	10
With the she-pelican	
Of lonely piety.	
Basilisk, cockatrice,	
Flocked to <u>his</u> homilies,	
With mail of dread device,	15
With monstrous barbéd stings,	
With eager dragon-eyes;	
Great <u>bats</u> on <u>leathern</u> wings	
And <u>old</u> , blind broken things,	
<u>Mean</u> in their miseries.	20
<u>Then</u> ever with <u>him</u> went,	
Of all <u>his</u> wanderings	
Comrade, with ragged coat,	
Gaunt ribs, poor innocent	
Bleeding foot, burning throat,	25
The guileless <u>young</u> scapegoat:	
For forty nights and days	
Followed in Jesus' ways,	
Sure guard behind <u>him</u> kept,	
Tears like a lover wept. ⁵⁴	30

⁵⁴Robert Graves, New Collected Poems (New York: Doubleday, 1977), 1.

As if stripping Christ of his holiness, making him more obscure, Graves changed the first word of the original poem, "Christ," to the pronoun "He." Subsequent pronomial references to Jesus are not capitalized.

"In the Wilderness" has a clear line of argument; the poet tells a plain tale dramatically and elegantly. The poem consists of thirty lines and contains three sentences which divide it into three dissimilar sections. The first section, describing Jesus as he walked calmly in the wilderness, is made up of four groups of three lines each. The second section of eight lines describes dramatically the beasts which "flocked" to him. The final section returns to the placid mood of the first, although it is more pathetic in its description of the "guileless young scapegoat" that followed Jesus in the wilderness. It consists of two groups of six and four lines each.

Of the scapegoat in the poem, Graves wrote that it was my own unhappiness' invention. In point of fact the Azazel Scapegoat of Jerusalem could not possibly have gone into the Galilean wilderness of the Temptation, which is a great distance away. Of course Jesus was with . . . the wild beasts but . . . these did not include goats.⁵⁵

Biblically, the scapegoat is a goat upon whose head the high priest laid the sins of the people (Leviticus 16:

⁵⁵Seymour-Smith, op. cit., 391.

8-22). The scapegoat of the poem could thus refer not to an actual animal, but may be an allegorical reference to Jesus, as the person made to bear the blame for others and to suffer in the place of others.

Apart from the obvious contrasts presented by the length and subject matter of the three sections of "In the Wilderness," the poem contains other more subtle contrasts. The gentle Christ was thirsty and hungry as he walked in the wilderness. He spoke softly; the bittern call was not soft and gentle. The great, miserable, monstrous beasts whose glances and stings could kill, gathered to hear his soft, gentle words. The sincere, innocent young scapegoat with "bleeding foot, burning throat" followed as Jesus' guard.

Graves gave grandeur to the situation he described, for all the acknowledged misery and sordidness. He used alliteration and elaborate rhymes as part of this logical elegance. The rhyme scheme is aba ccb dde ffe ghgigiih jk(i)ljll mm nn.

The meter of the poem is dactylic dimeter throughout (each foot consisting of one stressed and two unstressed syllables; two feet per line). In order to preserve this dactylic dimeter, the words "communion" (line 10) and "barbéd" (line 16) must be pronounced with four and two syllables, respectively. The rhythm of the poem is so subtle that its natural, easy effect captivates the reader.

From 1939 to 1949 Robert Graves wrote comparatively few poems, devoting most of his time to prose. The poems which were written at that time, however, reveal his high standards as well as his stylistic growth. There is a different kind of assurance, a new "poetic serenity."⁵⁶

Work in Hand, published in 1942, is a composite volume which includes works by Norman Cameron and Alan Hodge as well as eighteen poems by Graves. Poems Graves wrote during the war years were added to his poems from Work in Hand to form a volume of Poems, 1938-45, published in 1945.

Graves sounded a new lucid theme in Work in Hand. Excellence is identified with the state of mind of the true lover. Imitations of this theme had always been present in his work, first in the guise of a pastoral poem or a nursery rhyme; then more grimly as a lyrical element spurred by irony, guilt, or melodrama. The straightforward love theme of the early poems was prettified, objectified, and made wistful.⁵⁷

In Work in Hand, for the first time, the love theme emerged robustly and uninhibitedly in Graves' poetry. The old theme of guilty love was gone, to be replaced by

⁵⁶Kirkham, op. cit., 175.

⁵⁷Seymour-Smith, op. cit., 183.

one of serene and shared confidence, as exemplified in the poem, "Despite and Still," from Work in Hand:

Have you not read
 The words in my head,
 And I made part
 Of your own heart?
 We have been such as draw 5
 The losing straw -
 You of your gentleness,
 I of my rashness,
 Both of despair -
 Yet still might share 10
 This happy will:
 To love despite and still.
 Never let us deny
 The thing's necessity,
 But, O refuse 15
 To choose
 Where chance may seem to give
 Loves in alternative.⁵⁸

"Despite and Still" serves as a formal announcement of the poet's confidence in the love relationship. The directness and almost lightheartedness with which it is stated is new. As Michael Kirkham wrote:

There has not been til now such a plain, unequivocal acceptance of the dual nature of love. These poems [Work in Hand] combine an assured sense of love as an ultimately undamageable truth with an undeceived awareness that suffering is an essential part of it.⁵⁹

Love, for Graves, is of prime importance. He saw each stage of love as a part of the whole inevitable love

⁵⁸Graves, New Collected Poems, op. cit., 96.

⁵⁹Kirkham, op. cit., 183.

process, and so expressed his loyalty to an unchanging principle, an idea of the values affirmed by love in all its aspects. What is acknowledged in "Despite and Still" is "The thing's necessity" and the poet's resolve "to love despite and still." There is also an emotional affirmation that there can be a single mind between lovers.

In "Despite and Still" the line of argument is clear, with strong, forceful, urgent statements. The poem contains eighteen lines of differing lengths. The presence of an actual person is felt, and the poet asserts that despite their circumstances and differences, they still might share their love.

"Despite and Still" is a simple poem, containing both classical and romantic elements. The poet's logical elegance coexists with strong, compelling, romantic implications. Suffering and confident love stand together.

The meter of the poem is basically dactylic dimeter (each foot consisting of one stressed followed by two unstressed syllables, with two feet per line). Strict dactylic dimeter is maintained in only four lines of the poem (lines 7, 13, 17, and 18), while the remaining lines contain variations which disrupt and enliven the metrical flow of the poem.

Catalexis, the omission of unstressed syllables, is the primary type of metrical variation present in the poem. The extent to which the catalexis occurs varies.

One syllable is omitted in lines 8 and 14; two syllables, in lines 1, 2, 9, and 10; three syllables, in lines 3, 4, 5, 11, and 15. The use of catalexis lends force to the statements in which it occurs.

Compensation, the means of repairing omissions in a line of metrical verse, whereby a syllable omitted in one foot is added to another, occurs seven times in the poem, at the beginning of lines 2, 3, 4, 6, 11, 12, and 16. Anacrusis, the addition of one or more unstressed syllables at the beginning of a line, wherein the extra syllables do not count as part of the meter, occurs in lines 14 and 15. Hypercatalexis, the use of extra-metrical syllables, occurs in lines 5 and 12, with the addition of the final stressed syllable in each of the two lines. Lines 15 and 16 combine to form the meter present in lines 5 and 12, so that line 16, with only two syllables, is a run-on extension of line 15.

The rhythm is not emphatic but strong, yet subtle and natural, and the rhyme scheme is simple, with each pair of lines rhyming except lines 13 and 14 ("deny" and "necessity"), where visual rhyme occurs. Of the three Graves poems discussed here only "Despite and Still" is contained in The Poems of Robert Graves Chosen By Himself.

In the period between 1960 and 1965 Graves published four volumes of poetry, including Man Does, Woman Is (1964). The poems of that period contain a progression

of attitudes and moods which led the poet to a new perception of love. The theme and manner of the poems reveal the poet's ability to survive and then to transcend suffering. While acknowledging love's necessity, Graves asserted that love necessarily involves suffering; the only uncertainty is whether or not the lover can bear it.⁶⁰

The style of the poems of the sixties is tighter; emotion is not excluded, but held in check. The poems are syntactically simple and brief: seven to ten lines. The poet left unsaid that which was not absolutely necessary. As Michael Kirkham wrote:

What we have is the plainest of statements, but one which at every point connotes an ambience of unstated feeling. . . . While love induces gentleness in its subjects, it also requires from them the tougher qualities of boldness and endurance.⁶¹

While a mixture of pain and suffering was contained in Graves' view of the love relationship, hardship and uncertainty were central to the way of life which he valued most.

In the Foreward of his 1964 volume of poetry Graves wrote:

Man Does, Woman Is closes a three-book sequence dramatizing the vicissitudes of poetic love. Because such love walks on a knife-edge between

⁶⁰Kirkham, op. cit., 241.

⁶¹Ibid., 243.

two different fates, Parts XV and XVI - these numbers stand for additions to my Collected Poems, 1959, and to the 1961 and 1962 supplements - supply alternative endings to the sequence.⁶²

So Graves drew two conclusions, two fates for himself in the love situation. In his first "ending" he honestly gave way to despair, realistically acknowledging the loss and defeat as well as the human cost. The second "ending" contains poems of pure joy in which Graves fantasizes on the fulfillment of love.

During the gradual and painful maturing of his self-awareness, he developed a perception of man's inadequacies in the love relationship, and a conviction that woman was morally superior to man. He believed that man, and poets in particular, could find wisdom only in submission to the female principle. This led to his adoration of and search for the ideal woman, his muse.⁶³

The Foreward to Man Does, Woman Is contains the statement, "Poetic love is love that acknowledges its origins in the muse. . . ."⁶⁴ Graves was obsessed throughout his life with "getting it right" and he was used to being judged by women, lovers, and his muse.

⁶²Robert Graves, Man Does, Woman Is (New York: Doubleday, 1963), xi.

⁶³Kirkham, op. cit., 180.

⁶⁴Graves, Man Does, loc. cit.

In 1963 he wrote:

I'm glad you didn't decide to be finished with me.
As a Muse you need a poet; as a poet I need a muse.
I don't know which is the harder to find. The poet
is obliged to love whatever happens, and to tell the
truth however unacceptable. The Muse is under no
obligation to him at all. . . .⁶⁵

In "A Last Poem," from Part XV of Man Does, Woman Is, Graves expressed tireless devotion to his vision of his muse.

A last poem, and a very last, and yet another -
O, when can I give over?
Must I drive the pen until blood bursts from my nails
And my breath fails and I shake with fever,
Or sit well wrapped in a many-coloured cloak 5
Where the moon shines new through Castle Crystal?
Shall I never hear her whisper softly:
'But this is truth written by you only,
And for me only; therefore, love, have done'?⁶⁶

"A Last Poem" is short, nine lines in length, though the lines are relatively long. The poem contains phrasing which is masterly and elegant and uses repetition and contrasts in diction, alliteration, a natural and easy rhythm, and internal rhyme. The rhyme scheme is a a b a c d e f.

The meter of "A Last Poem" is complex. The nine lines of the poem vary in length, containing 14, 7, 12,

⁶⁵Seymour-Smith, op. cit., 525.

⁶⁶Graves, New Collected Poems, op. cit., 190.

10, 11, 10, 10, 10, and 10 syllables respectively. The number of feet in each line also varies, with 6, 3, 5, 4, 5, 4, 4, 5, and 5 feet per line, respectively. The poem thus contains hexameter, trimeter, pentameter, and tetrameter, with no prevailing metric pattern. The metric feet of the poem also vary, combining feet which are iambic (an unstressed followed by a stressed syllable), trochaic (a stressed, followed by an unstressed syllable), anapestic (two unstressed syllables followed by a stressed syllable), and dactylic (a stressed followed by two unstressed syllables). Metric variations contained in the poem include anacrusis, catalexis, and compensation.

"A Last Poem" is another elegant embodiment of what Graves saw as his human situation. The clear line of argument presents rich implications and perspectives. Emotion seems firmly under control, so that there is a constant pressure behind the verse. The poet's sense of futility and frustration are evident, as well as his devotion to his muse and his persistence toward his goal: that she whisper, "But this is truth written by you only,/ And for me only; therefore, love, have done."

Theodore Roethke

Theodore Roethke was born May 25, 1908 in Saginaw, Michigan, and died August 1, 1963, on Bainbridge Island, Washington. He was an accomplished and original American

poet who wrote verse characterized by intense lyricism, wit, evocation of childhood and old age, and frequently a haunting, brooding quality of the surreal and irrational. Much of his early verse contains images of horticulture and growth.⁶⁷

Roethke grew up in Michigan and graduated from the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor. After attending Harvard, he taught English at Lafayette College, Pennsylvania State University, Bennington College, and the University of Washington. His book of poems entitled The Waking (1953) won a Pulitzer Prize. Other volumes include Open House (1941), The Lost Son (1948), and I Am! Says the Lamb (1954). His lectures and essays are collected in On the Poet and His Craft (1965).

On January 3, 1953, at the age of 44, Roethke married the much younger Beatrice O'Connell. Earl Malkoff wrote, "Roethke's marriage seems to have been for him a kind of joyous reawakening. His feelings for his wife are represented in his poetry. . . ."⁶⁸

Roethke's last book of verse, The Far Field, was written from 1958 to 1963 and published posthumously in

⁶⁷"Theodore Roethke," Encyclopedia Britannica, 30 vols. (Chicago: William and Helen H. Benton, 1974), VIII, 633.

⁶⁸Karl Malkoff, Theodore Roethke: An Introduction to the Poetry (New York: Columbia, 1966), 10.

1964 (he died from a heart attack suffered in a swimming accident). The book is devoted to the perfection of old forms rather than to the development of new ones. It deals with atonement and reconciliation of final statements on themes of love, identity, death, and God.⁶⁹ The Far Field is divided into four sections entitled "North American Sequence," "Love Poems," "Mixed Sequence," and "Sequence, Sometimes Metaphysical."

In the section entitled "Love Poems," Roethke objectified his female figure as his wife, Beatrice, who served as the focus for a more personal love lyric, and enabled the development of a feminine point of view.⁷⁰

Of the thirteen poems found in this sequence, the first six are spoken by a woman, the middle poem is spoken by one whose gender is not specified by the poet, and the last six poems are spoken by a man. The poems from the female perspective are lonely and express more interest in the relationship between body and soul than between man and woman. The poems from the male point of view are also lonely. He feels the pain of separation more than she does and is darkly pessimistic about aging and death.

⁶⁹Rosemary Sullivan, Theodore Roethke: The Garden Master (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1975), 171.

⁷⁰Harry Williams, The Edge is What I Have (London: Associated University Press, 1977), 147.

His attitude toward love is sensual while hers is more platonic.

The central concern of "Love Poems" is Roethke's preoccupation with his mortality, pain, and isolation. His fear of death is stronger than love. The poet seems to have been aware that in love so much had been given only to be lost again to death.⁷¹ The last poem of the sequence, "Wish for a Young Wife," is moving in its simplicity:

My lizard, my lively writher,	
May your limbs never wither,	
May the eyes in your face	
Survive the green ice	
Of envy's mean gaze;	5
May you live out your life	
Without hate, without grief,	
And your hair ever blaze,	
In the sun, in the sun,	
When I am undone, ⁷⁴	10
When I am no one.	

The meter of the poem is anapestic dimeter (two unstressed syllables followed by a stressed syllable, per foot; two feet per line). The anapestic dimeter appears in ten of the eleven lines of the poem. The first line contains three feet, a dactyl (a stressed syllable followed by two unstressed syllables), two trochees (a

⁷¹Sullivan, op. cit., 172.

⁷²Theodore Roethke, The Far Field (New York: Doubleday, 1964), 48.

stressed syllable followed by an unstressed syllable), and an anacrusis. An extra-metrical syllable is added to the end of the second line, and catalexis occurs at the beginnings of lines 4, 5, 10, and 11.

The poem is very graceful and has a songlike quality. Roethke identified his beloved with a reptile, a creature of instinct. The age difference implicit in the title, "Wish for a Young Wife," adds to the poignant sense of impending death highlighted in the last two lines of the poem. The piece serves as a dying poet's prayer, without self-pity, for the best possible life for his wife "When I am undone,/When I am no one."

The intensities of the "Wish for a Young Wife" are produced by Roethke's careful manipulation of consonants and vowels, the tight structure, the breathless tone, the strong emotions which seem to be held in check, and the lyricism. All these qualities are characteristic of Roethke in top form. The poem serves as an effective conclusion to the section of "Love Poems."

James Joyce

James Augustine Joyce was born February 2, 1882, in Dublin and died January 13, 1941, in Zürich. As a novelist, he was a commanding influence on twentieth-century writing. His Ulysses is generally regarded as

a masterpiece of world literature. James S. Atherton wrote:

James Joyce's abilities as a novelist and his subtle yet frank portrayal of human nature coupled with his mastery of language and brilliant development of new literary methods have made him one of the most commanding influences on the writers of our time.⁷³

Joyce was educated by Jesuits. His early writings include stories published in 1914 as Dubliners. In 1904 he left Ireland and settled in Trieste, where he taught English, worked in a bank, and revised a manuscript entitled A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man (1916), a semi-autobiographical novel. During the years 1915-20, spent in Zurich, Joyce wrote Ulysses. Ulysses was published in Paris, where Joyce lived from 1920 to 1940. Finnegan's Wake (1939) is his most ambitious work.

Nearly all of Joyce's works are imaginative reconstructions of his own life and early environment, and a knowledge of his life history helps in the understanding of his work.

The characters of Ulysses are people of the lower middle class living in Dublin in 1904. The book describes what they did and thought on a certain day in June as they went about their usual business. Joyce attempted to show

⁷³James S. Atherton, "James Joyce," Encyclopedia Britannica, 30 vols. (Chicago: William and Helen H. Benton, 1974), X, 279.

exactly how the minds of his characters operate. In the Monumental Decision of the United States District Court rendered on December 6, 1933, by Hon. John M. Woolsey, lifting the ban on Ulysses, the Judge wrote:

Joyce shows how the screen of consciousness with its ever-shifting kaleidoscopic impressions carries not only what is in the focus of each man's observation of the actual things about him, but also a penumbral zone residue from the domain of the subconscious. He shows how each of these impressions affects the life and behavior of the characters which he is describing.⁷⁴

Joyce chose Ulysses, Odysseus, as the prototype for the common man's hero. Ulysses centers on a minor Odyssean character, Dr. Leopold Bloom, whom Joyce described as "a complete man, a good man."⁷⁵ Joyce reduced the macrocosmic Odyssey of the ancient Hellenic Mediterranean to a microcosmic Ulyssiad of modern Anglo-Irish Dublin. The twenty years of Odysseus' wanderings and adventures are reflected in less than twenty-four hours of Dublin city life. Joyce spent a great deal of time and effort constructing parallels with episodes, events, scenes, and objects from The Odyssey.⁷⁶

⁷⁴James Joyce, Ulysses (New York: Random House, 1934), ix.

⁷⁵Clive Hart, James Joyce's Ulysses (Sydney, Australia: Griffin Press, 1968), 37.

⁷⁶Ibid., 37-8.

Homer's story concerns the return of a father to his homeland and the search of the son to find the father. Joyce's version differs in that the father and son, Bloom and Stephen, have almost nothing to do with each other for most of the book and cannot be said to be searching for one another until the last few chapters. They have a father-son relationship, although they are not in fact related: Stephen has a real father, Simon Dedalus, and Bloom had a son, Rudy, who died in infancy.

Stephen Dedalus is twenty-two years old and lives away from home, in a Martello Tower at Sandycove on Dublin Bay some miles south of the city center. He has a temporary post in a nearby school. During the day of June 16th he is troubled by his former relationship with his mother, who is dead, his present relationship with his father, from whom he is estranged, his relationship with his country, to his church, and to his friends.

Leopold Bloom is thirty-eight years old and is a semi-educated man of middle class status. He has held a series of jobs and is currently an advertising canvasser for a newspaper. With his wife, Molly, aged thirty-three, he lives at 7 Eccles Street in northern Dublin. They have a daughter, Milly, aged fifteen, who works at Mullinger in the center of Ireland. Since the death of their son Rudy, who died in infancy eleven years previously, Bloom has been unable to maintain adequate sexual relations

with his wife. Molly Bloom, an amateur soprano, is about to go on tour to Belfast and is also about to commit adultery with the man who is running the tour. Bloom becomes aware that the act of adultery is likely to be carried out on that day, but he goes about his business as usual.

Chapter 17 (Ithaca) of Ulysses takes place at 7 Eccles Street at 2 a.m. Bloom and Stephen walk home and go to the kitchen where Bloom gives Stephen cocoa and converses about various subjects which he hopes will be of common interest. Stephen refuses the offer of a night's lodging and leaves.

The text Barber set in "Solitary Hotel" is taken from the conversation of Stephen and Bloom found in Chapter 17. It is Stephen's account of a romantic tryst at a hotel high in the hills of northwest Ireland:

Solitary hotel in mountain pass. Autumn.
Twilight. Fire lit. In dark corner young
man seated. Young woman enters. Restless.
Solitary. She sits. She goes to window.
She stands. She sits. Twilight. She thinks.
She writes. She sighs. Wheels and hoofs.
She hurries out. He comes from his dark corner.
He seizes solitary paper. He holds it toward
fire. Twilight. He reads. Solitary.

What?

In sloping upright and backhands: Queen's
Hotel, Queen's Hotel, Queen's Ho . . .⁷⁷

⁷⁷Joyce, op. cit., 684.

The seventeenth chapter of Ulysses is written in a rather dehumanized style: a sort of reductio ad absurdum of scientific question and answer.⁷⁸ The dehumanization arises from the total lack of proportion in the answers to the questions. They seem to be the answers of a computer which has not been programmed to sort out important information. Some questions about the two men are answered with great succinctness, whereas a question about the water in the tap is answered with several hundred irrelevant words. The question which precedes the excerpt above, "What suggested scene was then constructed by Stephen?" does not seem to call for an answer less complete.

Through the "computerized" questions and answers of Chapter 17 many details about the two men can be gleaned. What emerges from this mechanical chatter is that Stephen and Bloom become three-dimensional human beings.

This segment represents the novel by its fragmentary nature and its complexity. The details of these relatively unimportant lines were carefully worked out, and collectively may symbolize the actions of Bloom's wife, running off with an unknown man, while Bloom waits and watches in the shadows. The scene is one of thousands of semi-intelligible pieces which make up the whole of Joyce's work.

⁷⁸Hart, op. cit., 74.

CHAPTER III
DESPITE AND STILL

The Cycle

In 1969, after three years of musical inactivity, Samuel Barber wrote a group of songs dedicated "to my friend Leontyne Price." In calling the cycle Despite and Still, Barber displayed

a defiance that was not only aimed at the detractors of his opera [Anthony and Cleopatra] but seemed also to defend, perhaps desperately, his style of music. He was determined to stick to it, as all around him new musical ideas came to the fore, but perhaps he felt it gradually losing the power that had carried it for so long.⁷⁹

Despite and Still was published by G. Schirmer in 1969 for high (c^1 - b^{b2}) or medium (b^b - a^{b2}) voice. Though the cycle was dedicated to a soprano, the texts seem suitable for a man. That the group is available in two keys leads to the assumption that Barber did not intend to restrict the work to soprano. The edition for medium voice is used for this discussion.

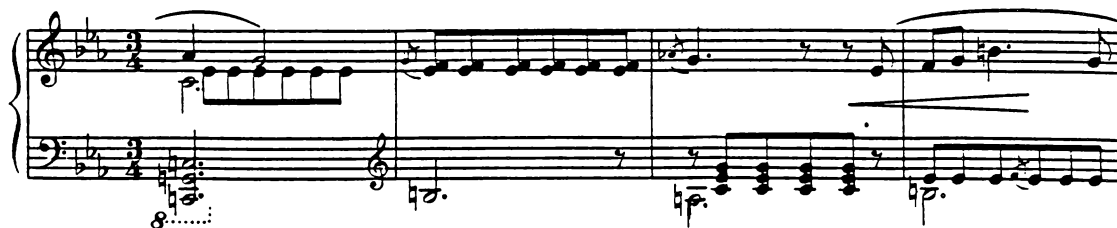
⁷⁹Heinsheimer, "Adagio," op. cit., 31.

"A Last Song"

"A Last Poem" by Robert Graves serves as the text of the first song of Despite and Still (see text, page 31). Barber changed the third word of the text as well as the title, from "poem" to "song."

"A Last Song" is thirty-two measures in length and begins with the tempo marked moderato ($\text{♩}=60$), but changes frequently from one tempo to another (animando, calmando, allargando e morendo, etc.). The metric signature also changes, alternating between $3/4$, $5/4$, $4/4$, $2/4$, and $3/2$. The vocal line extends from c^1 to $f^{\#2}$, and dynamics range between forte and piano. Grace notes are interspersed irregularly in the accompaniment, and eighth-note motion occurs throughout. While the chords of this eighth-note ostinato change, one common tone is repeated for a considerable length of time (Example 1). The eighth-note ostinato indicates a feeling of pressure behind the verse, a sense of futility and frustration pitted against devotion and persistence.

Example 1. Samuel Barber. Despite and Still, "A Last Song," piano part, measures 4-7.



The song is built in three sections which correspond to the three questions of the text, separated by interludes in a modified strophic form (Introduction, measures 1-3; A, measures 4-9; Interlude, measure 10; A', measures 11-19; Interlude, measures 20-21; A'', measures 22-32). The accompaniment contains dissonance and chromaticism and firmly supports the vocal line.

The voice part of "A Last Song" is legato and melodic in style, although some declamation occurs (Example 2). While the melodic line contains stepwise movement, it is dominated by leaps, some of which outline chord tones (Example 3).

Example 2. Samuel Barber. Despite and Still, "A Last Song," vocal line, measures 22-23.



Example 3. Samuel Barber. Despite and Still, "A Last Song," vocal line, measures 17-19.



The melodic theme lends unity to "A Last Song" and serves as a melodic basis for the piece as a whole.

Example 4 contains this theme as presented in the voice part in the opening measures of the song. The theme is divided into four parts, which are marked "A," "B," "C," and "D."

Example 4. Samuel Barber. Despite and Still, "A Last Song," vocal line, measures 3-9.

A B

poco rall. *p* *a tempo*

A last song, and a ver - y last,

C D

and yet an - oth - er O, when can I give o-ver?_

Table I contains a measure-by-measure diagram of "A Last Song," marking the occurrence of the four parts of the theme as they appear in the voice part and in the accompaniment. Examples 5-7 display the extensive use of the four parts of the theme and the interweaving of the melodic material.

"A Last Song" begins in F-sharp minor but shifts abruptly to C minor when the voice enters in the fourth measure. C minor is maintained through the A section, first brief interlude, and the first four measures of A', after which the harmony shifts abruptly back to F-sharp

Table I. Four parts of the theme of "A Last Song"
from Samuel Barber's song cycle, Despite and Still.

measure	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>
voice				A	B	C		D
piano	A	B	A A A				C	A
measure	<u>9</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>16</u>
voice		A	B		C C		C	B
piano	B		B B		C C		A A	
measure	<u>17</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>24</u>
voice	C	D				(declam.)		C
piano	D	B	B B	B		A B		C
measure	<u>25</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>28</u>	<u>29</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>31</u>	<u>32</u>
voice					D			
piano		A	D	A	C A D A		A	

minor in the piano accompaniment, while the voice is silent (Example 5). The interlude (measures 20-21) following A' uses the notes of the piano accompaniment in measure 19 to build a transition back to C minor, whereupon the voice reenters (Example 6).

Example 5. Samuel Barber. Despite and Still, "A Last Song," measures 14-15.

shake with fe - ver, Or sit well

Example 6. Samuel Barber. Despite and Still, "A Last Song," piano part, measures 19-22.

mf (*a tempo*) *mp*

In the final measures of the song a descending chromatic line appears in the vocal line in conjunction with a rhythmic augmentation moving on "weak" beats (measures 29-30) (Example 7). The forcefulness of the notes corresponding to the words, "Therefore, love" is

Example 7. Samuel Barber. Despite and Still, "A Last Song," measures 24-32.

“But this is truth — writ - ten by you on - ly, —

— And for me on - ly; There - fore, —


— love, — have done?”

poco rall. *a tempo* *allargando e morendo*

f *p mf* *p* *pp*

achieved not only by the length of the notes, their displacement to weak beats, and the crescendo indicated, but also by the accompaniment, which sounds the notes immediately before they appear in the vocal line.

The song ends with an augmented chord (D-F[#]-A[#]), which is first presented in the vocal line (measures 30-31), then appears in the accompaniment (measure 31), and finally is rewritten (G^b-B^b-D) in the last measure of the song as the piano part fades away (see Example 7 above).

The rhythm of "A Last Song" is complex, directly related to the prosodic rhythm and its meaning as interpreted by the composer. The rhythmic pattern:  is characteristic.

The text is set syllabically throughout. Barber uses increased duration of notes to stress words which are important. In the final lines, "But this is truth written by you only,/And for me only; therefore, love, have done," the words underlined are given importance by their length (see Example 7 above).

Barber made extensive use of chromaticism in "A Last Song." This is exhibited in many altered chords (see Example 7) and especially in the frequent use of a descending half-step in the opening theme (see Example 4), in the final passage (see Example 7), and in the grace note figure, although a descending whole step is also used (see Example 1).

"My Lizard"

Samuel Barber set Theodore Roethke's poem, "Wish for a Young Wife" for the second song of Despite and

Still. The composer gave the song the title, "My Lizard (Wish for a Young Love)" (see text, page 35).

"My Lizard" contains thirty-two measures and, like "A Last Song," which precedes it, opens with a wide leap in the piano part (Example 8). Marked "fast and light" ($\text{♩}=120$), the tempo alternately slows and accelerates, while the $3/4$ meter is interrupted twice by single measures in $4/4$. Dynamics range from forte to pianissimo, and the vocal range is from c^1 to f^2 , with an optional $a^{\flat 2}$. The song, like the one before it, makes extensive use of the rhythmic pattern: $\text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩}$. The tonality is G-flat major throughout.

Example 8. Samuel Barber. Despite and Still, "A Last Song," right hand of the piano part, measure 1 (A); "My Lizard," right hand of the piano part, measures 1-2 (B).



The form of "My Lizard" is modified strophic, with the melody presented in a pattern which is basically A A A': Introduction (measures 1-2), A (measures 3-13),

A (measures 14-24), A' (measures 25-32). In the introduction the first part of the melodic theme is presented in the right hand of the accompaniment. The first A section contains the complete melodic theme in the vocal line. In the second A section the theme begins in the right hand of the accompaniment (measures 14-15) and is continued by the voice (measures 16-24). The second repetition of the theme is augmented rhythmically, and the last four notes (A^b , A^{bb} , G, E^{bb}) appear an octave higher (measures 21-24). The first half of the melodic theme is presented in the vocal line of the final A section, again augmented rhythmically (measures 25-32) (Example 9).

The melody of the three sections is varied by note duration. In the first two sections the melodic variation is minimal (see Example 9). The melody of the third section, however, varies considerably from that of the first two sections (see Example 9). Two notes (b^{b1} and g^{b1}) are omitted from the first bar of the third section, measure 25, and a great deal of rhythmic augmentation occurs. Example 9 outlines the melodic rhythm of "My Lizard."

The melodic line is primarily disjunct. Only in measures 9, 11, 20, and 22 do three adjacent notes move chromatically in the melody (Example 10). Chromatic movement between two notes occurs seven times (measures 4, 6, 7, 15, 17, 19, 27). All other movement is by leap, incorporating wide intervals into the line.

Example 9. Samuel Barber. Despite and Still, "My Lizard," right hand of the piano part, Introduction, measures 1-2 (A); vocal line, A, measures 3-6 (B); right hand of the piano part and vocal line, A', measures 14-17 (C); and vocal line, A'', measures 25-30 (D).



C



Example 10. Samuel Barber. Despite and Still, "My Lizard," vocal line, measures 9-11.

Sur - vive — the green ice Of en - vy's mean

The accompaniment of the song is marked by a sixteenth-note ostinato which occurs consistently in the lower piano part and is mirrored at times by the upper piano part. The main melodic theme occurs first in the piano part above the disjunct, tremolo-like ostinato (see Example 8-B for the theme, Example 11 for the ostinato figure). An ascending D-flat major scale passage occurs in the piano part above the ostinato in measures 7-8 and 9-10 (Example 11).

Example 11. Samuel Barber. Despite and Still, "My Lizard," piano part, measures 7-8.



The ostinato in the accompaniment is made up of broken chords which are altered and contain chromaticism, lending an etude-like quality to the piano part. In the first section (measures 3-13) both parts of the accompaniment present the ostinato figure in parallel motion, with scalewise movement in the upper voice in measures 7-10 (Example 11). In the second section the upper part of the piano presents the theme, doubles the voice, imitates the voice, and then returns to the

parallel ostinato movement (Example 12). In the third section the parallel ostinato movement continues an

Example 12. Samuel Barber. Despite and Still, "My Lizard," measures 14-23.

a tempo
p cantando

mp
May you live out your life With - out

cresc. poco a poco
hate, — with - out grief, And your hair ev - er

cresc. poco a poco
poco f poco allarg.
blaze. In the sun. in the sun,

poco f, sostenuto

octave higher, to the last measure, where it disappears with the patterns of the left hand, then of the right hand, and then of the left hand two octaves higher (Example 13).

Example 13. Samuel Barber. Despite and Still, "My Lizard," piano part, measures 31-32.



The chromaticism, dissonance, and pedalling of the accompaniment result in a thick, almost "muddled" texture rich in impressionistic colors. There is much syncopation both in the melodic line and in the accompaniment (see Examples 9 and 12). Through the syncopation the sudden movement of a reptile can be visualized. The sixteenth-note ostinato figure portrays the scurrying of a lizard, as well as a lightness of mood. Barber's directives of "legatissimo" and "sostenuto" indicate the smoothness of movement and the coordination of his subject.

The musical setting of "My Lizard" seems lighter in mood and less moving and poignant than Roethke's poem, and the final lines of the song, "When I am undone,/When I am no one" fade and disappear to depict the fading of the life of the poet, as the lizard scurries out of sight.

"In the Wilderness"

Samuel Barber chose Robert Graves' poem "In the Wilderness" for the third song of Despite and Still (see text, page 22). Marked "Flowing, in 2" ($\text{♩} = 40$), the song consists of forty-four measures and contains many metrical alternations: 6/8, 9/8, 6/8, 9/8, 6/8, 9/8, 6/8, 5/8, 8/8, 6/8, 5/8, 6/8, 9/8, 6/8, 7/8, 6/8, 9/8, 5/8, 6/8. The dynamics range from pianissimo to fortissimo, and the vocal range is from b^b to f^2 .

The musical setting of "In the Wilderness" is built in three sections, following the three divisions of the poem, describing (A) Jesus walking in the wilderness (measures 3-15); (B) the beasts (measures 16-26); and (A') the scapegoat following Jesus (measures 27-40).

While the tonality of the opening and closing A sections is F minor, the accompaniment contains the descending Phrygian scale: $C-B^b-A^b-G-F-E^b-D^b-C$, which is imitated and repeated extensively, even in the vocal line, and which in fact forms the basis of the melodic material of the A sections (Example 14).

The dramatic B section, measures 10-26, contains coloristic effects, and Barber gives the instructions to the vocalist, "with terror" and "mysterious" to describe the "Great bats on leathern wings/And old blind broken things/Mean in their miseries." The accompaniment is

Example 14. Samuel Barber. Despite and Still, "In the Wilderness," measures 1-5.

Flowing, in 2 (♩. = 40) *mf*

mf He, of his gen - tle-ness,

mp

sempre legato, con pedale

Thirst-ing and hun-ger-ing Walked in the wil-der-ness,

chromatic and dissonant, with grace notes and quintal chords which cover a wide area of the keyboard (Example 15). The middle section begins in E minor (measures 16-17) and moves through G minor (measures 18-20) back to F minor (measure 21), changing keys as the text describes the great monstrous beasts.

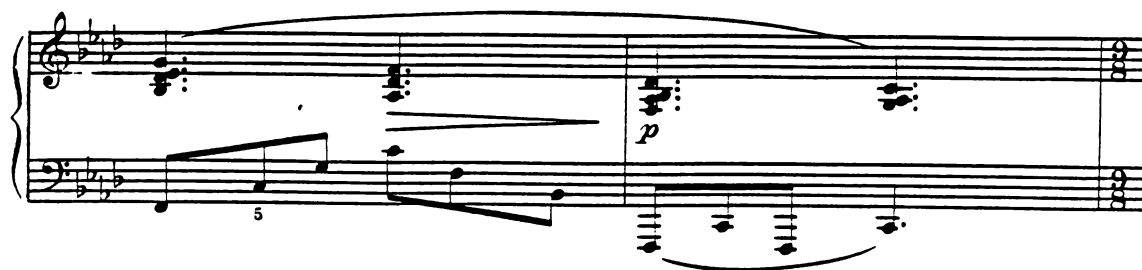
The opening and closing sections (measures 1-11 and 27-44), legato and flowing, present a sharp contrast to the dramatic middle section. Linear movement in the upper piano part is combined with an arpeggiated bass

Example 15. Samuel Barber. Despite and Still, "In the Wilderness," piano part, measures 18-20.



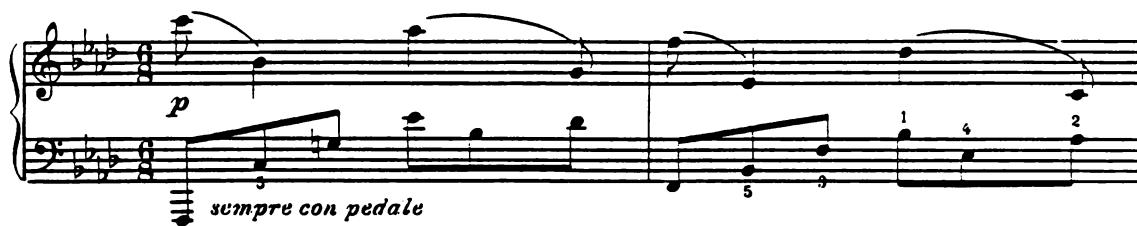
accompaniment figure in the lower piano part (see Example 14). The texture, mostly two-voiced, is comparatively thin and clean, not thick with muddiness or dissonance, resulting in a more defined tonal feeling (Phrygian). The closing section contains a more open linear movement in the accompaniment, sometimes only in the left hand with chords in the right hand (Example 16). In the opening

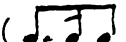
Example 16. Samuel Barber. Despite and Still, "In the Wilderness," piano part, measures 36-37.



of the final section every other note of the right hand of the accompaniment is displaced by an octave (Example 17).

Example 17. Samuel Barber. Despite and Still, "In the Wilderness," piano part, measures 27-28.



The melodic line of the A sections is legato and somewhat angular because of many leaps and dotted rhythms (). In the dramatic B section the melodic line is more disjunct and declamatory. The text is set syllabically and incorporates syncopation as well as a natural speaking rhythm. The many metric changes accommodate the shifting accentuation of the text.

The style of "In the Wilderness" is ballad-like, telling a tale made interesting by the dramatic middle section. The "bittern call" is portrayed by a sixteenth-note figure tied to a quarter note in the piano part (Example 18), and the "bleating" of the scapegoat is presented in the trilled notes of the accompaniment (Example 19). This "bleating" is heard to the end of the piece.

Example 18. Samuel Barber. Despite and Still, "In the Wilderness," measures 9-10.

mf

He heard the bit - tern call - From ru - ined pal - ace-wall.

mf

3

Example 19. Samuel Barber. Despite and Still, "In the Wilderness," measures 31-34.

poco f *allarg.* *p a tempo, dolce*

Bleeding foot, burn-ing throat, The guile-less young scape -

allarg.

poco f *p a tempo*

1 2 3 4

2 1

goat:

tr

2

"Solitary Hotel"

Barber set a portion of James Joyce's Ulysses for his song "Solitary Hotel," the fourth of the cycle (see text, page 40). Marked "Like a rather fast tango in 2" ($\text{♩}=60$), the fragments of text are set to fragments of melody. The meter of the fifty-two-measure song revolves around $2/2$ and $3/2$ with several measures marked "free" (measures 2, 25, 32, and 46). The dynamic range is pianissimo to forte, and the vocal range extends from c^1 to f^2 . The tonality is E minor throughout.

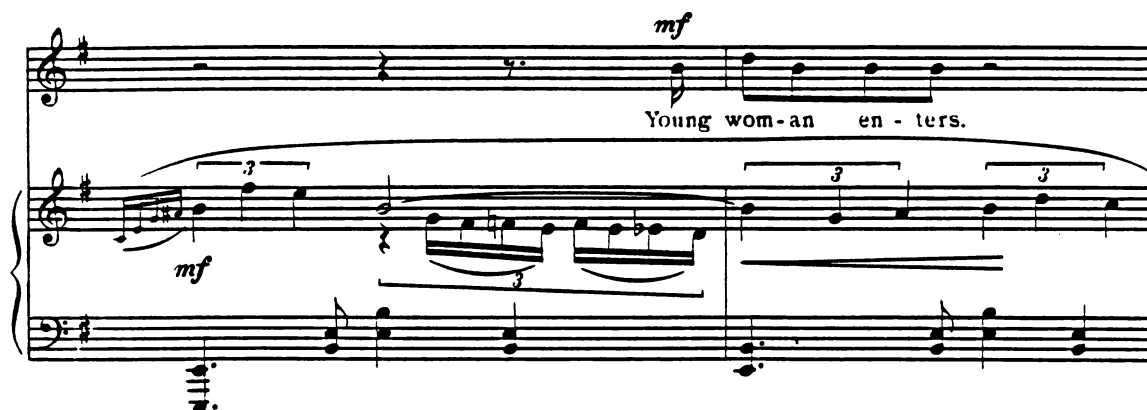
The form of "Solitary Hotel" is determined by the accompaniment: A (measures 4-18), B (measures 19-32), A (measures 33-46). Most of the accompaniment is based upon the opening tango section (beginning in measure 4), in which the upper part contains a melody and the lower part, chords in fourths and fifths in a distinctive tango rhythm (Example 20).

Example 20. Samuel Barber. Despite and Still, "Solitary Hotel," measures 4-7.

The musical score for measures 4-7 of "Solitary Hotel" is in E minor (one sharp, F#) and 2/2 time. It features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line has lyrics: "Au-tumn. Twi-light." The piano accompaniment has a melody in the right hand and chords in the left hand. The score is marked "p" (piano) and "a tempo". There are triplets in the piano part. The score ends with "ped. sim." (pedal sostenuto).

This tango is similar to the background music of the record playing in the first scene of The Consul by Menotti, but in Barber's piece the words of the text are tied to the accompaniment, which portrays the action before the words describe it. The first musical phrase of the piano part (measures 4-11) sets the scene; the second phrase (measures 12-18) describes the woman who enters with added sixteenth notes (Example 21).

Example 21. Samuel Barber. Despite and Still, "Solitary Hotel," measures 12-13.



The music of the woman's exit is particularly descriptive (Example 22). The flourish which occurs after the words "She hurries out" (measure 32) is the only example of text painting which occurs after it is stated in the text. The ascending glissando which follows the fermata acts to shift the attention back to the room itself, where the man rises from his chair in the dark corner (Example 22).

Example 22. Samuel Barber. Despite and Still, "Solitary Hotel," measures 32-34.

(free) *agitato*

f

agitato

Wheels and hoofs. She hur-ries out.

f *sf* *f*

gliss on right hand

a tempo *p*

He comes from his dark cor-ner.

pp

In the return of the A section the focus is on the man's reaction to the paper on which the woman has written "in sloping, upright and backhands: Queen's Hotel." The accompaniment contains none of the added sixteenth-notes, imitative triplet figures, or the chromaticism which was present when the text described the woman. As the song concludes the focus blurs with the return of the descending thirds of the Introduction, and the attention is again, in the Coda as in the Introduction, focused upon the solitary "Queen's Hotel" itself (Example 23).

Example 23. Samuel Barber. Despite and Still, "Solitary Hotel," measures 1-3 (A), 47-49 (B).

A Like a rather fast tango in 2 $\text{♩} = 60$
(free) *mf*

Sol-i-tar-y ho-tel in moun-tain pass.

mf held back

p rall.

legato

B

mf

sustained as before

Queen's ho-tel,

mf

mp

The piano part of "Solitary Hotel" not only sets the scene and contains the action of the song, against which the voice declaims Joyce's text, it supports the vocal line and gives it reason for existence. It also usually gives the voice its initial note (see Examples 20 and 21).

The fragmentary melody of "Solitary Hotel" presents Joyce's semi-intelligible text set syllabically. The declamatory vocal line is improvisatory in nature, quite apart from the definite rhythm of the tango in

the accompaniment. Although there is much intermingling of the voice and piano parts, the accompaniment could exist without the voice, but not vice versa.

The mood of the piece is rather objective, one step back from the action. The singer reports the facts as an observer, but the tango gives romantic coloring to the obscure text, as if blurring the focus of the picture.

The song ends with the piano finishing the melodic line of the voice, which fades away, leaving the text incomplete (Example 24).

Example 24. Samuel Barber. Despite and Still, "Solitary Hotel," measures 50-52.

The musical score for "Despite and Still" by Samuel Barber, measures 50-52, is presented in a three-staff format. The top staff is for the voice, the middle for the right piano hand, and the bottom for the left piano hand. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The vocal line begins with a triplet of eighth notes marked *mp*. Above the vocal line, the instruction *allargando sino alla fine* is written. The piano accompaniment features a triplet of eighth notes marked *p* and *mp espr.*. The lyrics "Queen's ho-tel, Queen's ho-..." are written below the vocal line. The piece concludes with a piano triplet marked *pp*.

"Despite and Still"

"Despite and Still" is a setting of Robert Graves' poem (see text, page 26). Initially marked "Fast and darkly impassioned" ($\text{♩}=120$), the song also contains such directives as "with motion," "hammered," "moving ahead,"

"impetuously," "Appassionato," and "marcatissimo."

Dynamics range from fortissimo to piano, and the vocal range extends from $c^{\#1}$ to $f^{\#2}$, while metric signatures alternate between 4/8 and 5/8. The song is thirty-three measures in length, and its form is A (measures 3-9), B (measures 10-19), B (measures 22-33). The tonality is F-sharp minor throughout.

The accompaniment is built upon elements found in the opening four measures: the "hammered" imitative material and the ascending five-note pattern and subsequent chords (Example 25).

Example 25. Samuel Barber. Despite and Still, "Despite and Still," measures 1-6.

Fast and darkly impassioned ♩ = 120

f with motion

Have you not read The

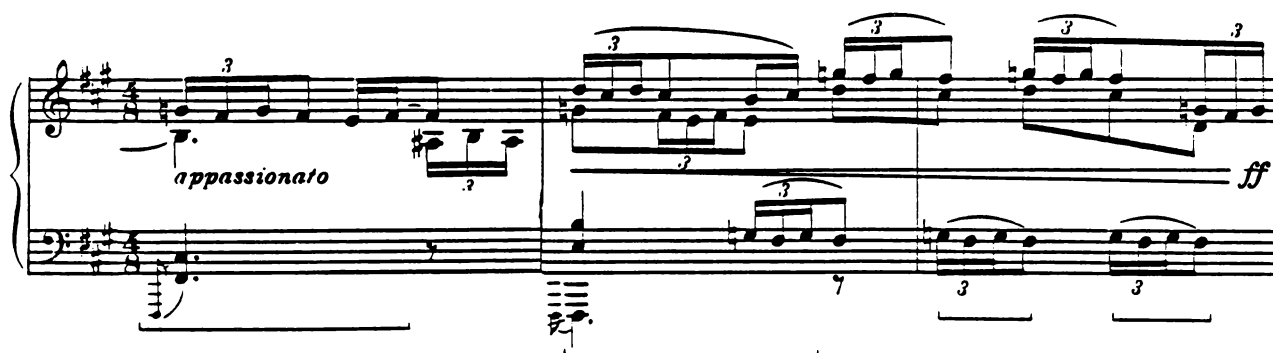
ff (hammered)

poco f

words in my head, And I made part Of your own heart?

Imitation of the first two measures occurs in measures 19-21 and measures 31-32 of the accompaniment (Example 26). The ascending five-note pattern is imitated and repeated in measures 13 and 25 (Example 27).

Example 26. Samuel Barber. Despite and Still, "Despite and Still," piano part, measures 19-21.



Example 27. Samuel Barber. Despite and Still, "Despite and Still," piano part, measure 13.



The five-note scale pattern descends in the last bar (Example 28). The accompaniment doubles and seems to propel the linear movement of the vocal line in measures 14-16 and 26-30. In the latter measures the linear notes of the voice and piano are exchanged (Example 29).

Example 28. Samuel Barber. Despite and Still, "Despite and Still," piano part, measures 31-33.

Example 28 shows the piano part for measures 31-33. The music is in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It features a complex texture with triplets, sixteenth notes, and dynamic markings including *ff* and *sf*.

Example 29. Samuel Barber. Despite and Still, "Despite and Still," measures 14-18, (A); 26-30, (B).

A

Example 29 shows the voice and piano parts for measures 14-18 (A) and 26-30 (B). The music is in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It includes lyrics and dynamic markings such as *ff*, *mf*, *p*, and *molto allarg.*

Yet still might share this hap - py will: To love de - spite and

still, To love de - spite and


Example 29. (continued)

B

very broadly *ff* *allarg.*
When chance may seem — to give Loves in al-

ff *very broadly* *allarg.*
ter - na-tive. To love de-spite and

a tempo *f* *molto allarg.*
a tempo, moving ahead *ten.* *mf* *rinf.* *sf* *ff*

The final song of the cycle is forceful and serious in mood. It contains much dissonance, the  rhythmic pattern, and an overall complex rhythm which makes coordination between the singer and the accompanist difficult. The accompaniment gives the piece strength, supports the vocal line, and lends color and firmness to the song. The five-note scale patterns have a cluster effect because

they are sustained with the pedal, resulting also in thick coloristic sonorities.

The melody of "Despite and Still" is built on the natural minor scale (F[#]-G[#]-A-B-C[#]-D-E-F[#]) and also includes G^b and D[#]. The text is declaimed and set syllabically throughout. The speech rhythms and forward movement of the vocal line give the piece impetuosity.

The song is direct in its approach, as though speaking directly to someone. In measures 17-19 Barber repeats the words, "To love despite and still," for emphasis, and then again he adds the line at the end of the song (the poem ends with the lines "When chance may seem to give/Loves in alternative. "). The song is strong and urgent, while the poem alone is more serene and light-hearted. Both are direct and confident, while the music adds darkness and a forcefulness which is near anger.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS

For the song texts of Despite and Still Samuel Barber chose three poems by Robert Graves, one poem by Theodore Roethke, and a portion of James Joyce's novel Ulysses. Although the texts vary, all are well-crafted, direct, contain emotion held in check, and present a feeling of pressure behind the verse. The overall mood is one of melancholy in relationship to love. Barber placed the songs in order to project a sense of futility, frustration, devotion, resignation, persistence, and finally impassioned resolve. The compelling strength of the texts lends force and urgency to the cycle.

The songs of Despite and Still show great stylistic refinement on the part of Samuel Barber. Each song is carefully conceived and captures the mood and expression of the text. Table II outlines the meters, form, range, and key of each of the songs (see pages 43-7, 50-51, 56, 61, and 65-6).

The organization of Barber's solo songs is based on an adaptation of traditional forms. The songs of Despite and Still are no exceptions. The small forms of the

Table II. Meters, tempo, form, range, and key
of the songs of Samuel Barber's song cycle,
Despite and Still.

<u>Song Title</u>	<u>Meters</u>	<u>Tempo</u>	<u>Form</u>
<u>Key</u>	<u>Range</u>		(measures)
"A Last Song"	3/4, 5/4, 4/4, 2/4, 3/2	moderato (♩=60)	modified strophic Introduction (1-3) A (4-9) Interlude (10) A' (11-19) Interlude (20-21) A'' (22-32)
begins in F-sharp minor ends in C minor	c ¹ -f ^{#2}		
"My Lizard"	3/4, 4/4	fast and light (♩=120)	modified strophic Introduction (1-2) A (3-13) A' (14-24) A'' (25-32)
G-flat major	c ¹ -f ²		
"In the Wilderness"	6/8, 9/8, 5/8, 8/8, 7/8	flowing, in 2 (♩=40)	ABA Introduction (1-2) A (3-15) B (16-26) A (27-40) Coda (41-44)
F minor	b ^b -f ²		
"Solitary Hotel"	2/2, 3/2	like a rather fast tango, in 2 (♩=60)	ABA Introduction (1-3) A (4-18) B (19-32) A (33-46) Coda (47-52)
E minor	c ¹ -f ²		
"Despite and Still"	4/8, 5/8	fast and darkly impassioned (♩=120)	ABB' Introduction (1-2) A (3-9) B (10-19) Interlude (19-21) B' (22-33)
F-sharp minor	c ^{#1} -f ^{#2}		

songs exhibit classical structure: modified strophic, ABA, and ABB'.

Barber's adaptation of traditional forms results from his logical and well-integrated treatment of the text and musical material. Recurring themes give the impression of continuous variation. Barber's sensitive musical setting of the texts lends a feeling that the songs are through-composed.

Barber frequently builds an entire piece upon the material presented in the introduction. The first three songs of Despite and Still contain introductions which state the theme of the songs. The opening measures of the fourth song, "Solitary Hotel," state no motive, but rather set up the quarter-note triplet motion of the accompaniment and the relative independence and freedom of the vocal line. The hammered introduction of the final song, "Despite and Still," offers material that is nowhere present in the vocal line, and is found in the accompaniment only in an interlude and in the coda.


Samuel Barber's control of rhythm is an important organizational factor in Despite and Still. The melodic rhythm of the songs is varied and complex in order to preserve the rhythm of the texts, with the exception of "Solitary Hotel," in which the melody is presented in the piano part, and the voice declaims the fragments of the text. As Barber met the inherent accentual demands of

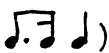
the text, the metric pulse of the music was determined, although accents are sometimes shifted for variety, coloristic effect, or to preserve a rhythmic pattern.

By changing the number of beats in consecutive measures, Barber freely alternates measures of duple, triple, compound, and complex meter. This results in an inconsistent number of equal note values within metrical groups and an absence of predictable symmetry in beat duration. In another technique, which is more subtle and does not change the emphasis of the down beat, Barber alters the metrical divisions within measures of equal duration (6/8 to 3/4, 12/8 to 6/4).

The rhythmic solidarity of the accompaniment supports and strengthens the vocal line, which is relatively inconsistent rhythmically. As Barber develops accompaniment material, an important thread of continuity emerges in the form of ostinati. In Despite and Still, rhythm is frequently organized by means of ostinati, or by patterns not so precise as ostinati, but consistent in frequency. Ostinati in the accompaniment provide a rhythmic flow which serves to move the music ahead. The alternation of accents, meter changes, and steady-driving ostinati figures lend a feeling of great urgency to the songs.

"A Last Song" contains a continuous eighth-note motion throughout the accompaniment and a pervasive rhythmic pattern of a quarter note followed by a half

note (), which is abandoned at times for variety. Sixteenth-note motion characterizes the accompaniment of "My Lizard." A rhythmic underpinning of eighth-notes is maintained in the accompaniment of both A sections of "In the Wilderness," while varied syncopated ostinati organize the accompaniment of the B section. In "Solitary Hotel" the triplet rhythm of the first measure appears in the right hand of the accompaniment, while the left hand presents a tango rhythm (see Example 20). The complex rhythmic movement of the last song, "Despite and Still," is primarily sustained by eighth notes, with sixteenth-note patterns as well as sixty-fourth-note figures (see Example 25).

A dotted pattern () is characteristic of the cycle and serves as a unifying device throughout (see Examples 4, 5, 7, 8, 12, 14, 18, 22, 23, 24, 25, and 29).

Samuel Barber employed other rhythmic devices in Despite and Still: syncopation, rhythmic imitation, and rhythmic augmentation. Syncopation occurs in each song, in the vocal line as well as in the accompaniment. Rhythmic imitation, apart from ostinati, appears throughout the cycle, either together with melodic imitation or alone (see Examples 6, 11, 13, 24, 27, and 29). Augmentation occurs when extra beats are added to a measure (see Example 14), as well as when note values are lengthened (see Examples 9 and 12).

An emphasis on angular and chromatic melody which is lyrical in content and shape characterizes the songs of Despite and Still, chromaticism and angularity being features of Barber's late style. Chromaticism results from the use of modal substitutions and altered tones.

The vocal melodies of the songs are so tightly constructed that they could stand alone (with the exception of the vocal line of "Solitary Hotel"). This is partially due to Barber's sensitivity to prosody. The syllabic text settings are effectively controlled according to speech rhythms and melodic shape, so that the lyrical melodies gain strength from rhythmic control.

The disjunct, declamatory vocal lines of Despite and Still result from the strong rhythmic orientation of the melody and the use of wide intervals. When placed above the ostinati in the accompaniments, the melodic lines emerge as a contrasting element, giving the illusion of being more lyrical than they really are. This blend of declamation and lyricism is characteristic of the cycle. Together with the ostinati of the accompaniment, the straightforward declamatory melodies lend a sense of relentlessness to the songs. Forward motion is maintained by the melody and intensified by the rhythm.

The melodies of Barber's songs were written from a singer's perspective. The overall range of the cycle is extended, with a demanding tessitura, but the logical

approach to and descent from high notes lessens the vocal demands placed upon the singer.

The recurrence of certain intervals dominates the melodic structure. The interval of the second is the most frequently used, with the minor second appearing slightly more often than the major second (Table III).

Table III. Melodic (horizontal) intervals of the songs of Samuel Barber's song cycle, Despite and Still.

<u>Interval</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	
minor second	23.4%	}
major second	20.8%	
minor third	16.8%	}
major third	11.8%	
perfect fourth	12.8%	
tritone	2.5%	
perfect fifth	5%	
minor sixth	2.4%	}
major sixth	1.5%	
minor seventh	1%	}
major seventh	1.3%	
perfect octave	.8%	
		44.2%
		28.6%
		3.9%
		2.3%

Barber's tendency to write melodic units which outline chords, especially seventh chords, serves as a bond between his earlier and later music.

Most of Barber's later works are anchored to a tonal center. In Despite and Still the composer employed many twentieth-century harmonic devices which tend to obscure tonality to the point of not being clearly identifiable to the ear. There is in this work, however, an ever-present attraction to the tonic, which is seldom a

simple triad, but may be a thick sonority of a chord built in fourths or fifths. Constructions which function as a tonic are generally built in open intervals with added tones for coloristic effect (see Table II for tonal centers).

The harmonic flow often corresponds to the structure of the melody. Transient modulations of implied tonalities are frequent in proportion to changes of textual ideas, resulting in cross-relations and in nonfunctional progressions of seemingly unrelated vertical intervals.

Barber's use of twentieth-century harmonic devices is often limited by the strong demands of the rhythmic organization of the text. Because of the many ostinato patterns in Despite and Still, harmonic patterns are frequently organized by sequential development.

Root movement in the cycle is generally traditional: the bass line of the accompaniment moves by thirds, seconds, and fifths. Although a V-I progression is present at some cadential caesuras, there is practically no feeling of cadential harmony in the traditional sense. The technique of beat deletion (i.e., 5/4 to 4/4) tends to weaken forward motion and allows the cadence to be established primarily on the basis of meter and rhythm rather than by means of harmony.

Barber often selected chords on the basis of their color. While the majority of the chords in Despite and

Still are triadic in origin, quartal and tertian harmonies are also present. Dissonances result from either triadic extension (seventh, ninth, eleventh, and thirteenth chords) or from the use of added tones. Unstable chordal structures that carry multiple dissonances lend a plaintive note to the poems' expressions of futility.

Although some of the dissonances in the cycle are resolved harmonically, many are not. Attention is not directed toward dissonance in the cycle because it is integrated so well into the harmonic movement, and the texture of the songs is sufficient to support the dissonance. Because the songs are primarily oriented to the vocal melody, dissonance is not of foremost consideration.

The harmonic movement is often the result of the juxtaposition of free-flowing contrapuntal lines, which themselves have the appearance of harmonic progressions. The chord structures formed by the confluence of contrapuntal lines grow more complex, and the harmonic texture becomes more dissonant.

The texture of the songs ranges from a thin, arpeggiated style to full, thick chords, and from a heavy, muddy coloration to one which is light and almost transparent. The texture is directly effected by Barber's use of dissonance, harmonic movement, and the motion of contrapuntal lines. All the songs of the cycle contain scalewise motion. In "A Last Song" and "Solitary Hotel"

the movement is downward and chromatic; in "My Lizard" and "Despite and Still" it is upward and diatonic; and in "In the Wilderness" it is downward and diatonic.

Complex motivic development is present in the cycle. Barber expanded and developed the motives in such a way that vocal themes often permeate the accompaniment.

The sonorities Barber chose for the piano part provide an atmosphere for the songs. Though the accompaniment sets and sustains a mood, it can also act as a musical symbol of the situation described in the text. Each song gains strength through the accompaniment, which supplies harmonic direction and rhythmic organization. A vehicle for maintaining forward motion and punctuation, the piano part also provides a rhythmic propellant for the vocal melodies. Thus the accompaniment serves as a directly supportive vehicle for the vocal line.

For the pianist, the accompaniments of Despite and Still present technical challenges one might expect from Barber's creative skills. Rhythmically complex, the accompaniment embodies a typical Barber score which is very pianistic, utilizes much of the keyboard, and demands a large reach as well as a solid technique.

The reasons why Barber chose Despite and Still as a title for the cycle are complex. The Metropolitan Opera premiere of Anthony and Cleopatra in 1966 left the composer a broken man. Barber, "who had known nothing but success,

never really recovered from that humiliating disaster. . . . His creative powers seemed greatly diminished."⁸⁰ After three unproductive years, in which critics had disparaged the composer as well as his ill-fated opera, Samuel Barber defiantly wrote Despite and Still in 1969 and dedicated it to Leontyne Price, the leading lady in the production of his opera at the Met premiere.

The initial phrase of the first song of the cycle states, "A last song and a very last. . . . O when can I give over?" and reflects the composer's feelings of frustration and futility. The second song, "My Lizard (Wish for a Young Love)," states Barber's wish that his first love, his compositions, specifically his "young" opera, live on after he was gone. The Christ of the third song symbolizes Barber himself, wandering in the wilderness with his constant companion, the scapegoat, which symbolizes his opera, carrying upon its shoulders the heavy criticism heaped upon it by critics, those great monstrous beasts whose very glances were deadly. In "Solitary Hotel" Barber watches as his opera, now personified by a young woman, enters and stands before him, unaware of his presence in the shadows, and then suddenly deserts him, leaving him alone, solitary. In the final song, "Despite and Still," the thing's necessity, to love despite and

⁸⁰Heinsheimer, "Adagio," op. cit., 31.

still, is forcefully stated. For Barber it was his desire to continue to live, to work, and most of all, to compose, despite and still. He realized and indeed set to music the necessity of the act of composition: his life's work and his first love. Suffering and confidence stand together and sum up Barber's desperate determination to continue to compose, to love, to be.

The songs are unified by subject matter, recurring intervals, and overall mood. Although it is possible for an individual song to stand in isolation from the group (i.e., "Solitary Hotel" has been recorded separately), in view of the unity and strength of the songs in sequence, each song is more significant in its place among the other songs.

The cycle can be very effective and is recommended as good work for an advanced student. The singer must have a keen ear for intervals, a flexible voice that moves easily from low register to high, and a superior sense of both lyric and declamatory style. The songs contain many directives which clearly indicate the composer's intentions regarding tempo, dynamics, style, and mood. Imperative for performance are clarity of diction and an ability to convey the precise mood.

The overall style of Despite and Still is one of great refinement. Barber's control of rhythm, the recurrence of the interval of the second, and the composer's

affinity for language and its sensitive musical setting emerge as paramount factors in organization. The self-imposed limitations of harmonic practices further unify the work.

Essentially, Barber's achievement in Despite and Still is the transformation of a romantic idiom into a modern one, and

the fusion of his lyricism with twentieth-century compositional techniques has created a musical style which is reflective of our time and age. For his ability to communicate emotion with eloquence and charm, Samuel Barber stands out among the composers of his generation.⁸¹

⁸¹Broder, op. cit., 47.

APPENDIX A

CHRONOLOGY OF THE LIFE OF SAMUEL BARBER

- 1910 Born, March 10, West Chester, Pennsylvania.
- 1916 Began piano study.
- 1924 Became charter student, Curtis Institute of Music, Philadelphia.
- 1928 Won Bearns Prize offered by Columbia University for an as yet unpublished violin sonata. First trip abroad.
- 1930 First commissioned work: Suite for Edward Bok's pink marble carillon at Mount Lakes Bird Sanctuary in Florida.
- 1931 Wrote Dover Beach, Opus 3.
Awarded second Bearns Prize for Overture to "The School for Scandal", Opus 5.
- 1932 Awarded Pulitzer Prize for Sonata for Cello and Piano, Opus 6.
- 1933 Awarded second Pulitzer Prize for Music for a Scene from Shelley, Opus 7. (Barber was the first composer to receive the Pulitzer Prize in two successive years.)
- 1934 Received B.M., Curtis.
Debut as a conductor, Vienna.
Won Pulitzer Travelling Scholarship.
- 1935 Recorded Dover Beach for Victor Records with the Curtis String Quartet.
Won Prix de Rome for Sonata for Cello and Piano, Opus 6 and Music for a Scene from Shelley, Opus 7.
- 1936 Won second Prix de Rome for Symphony in One Movement, Opus 9.

- 1938 Toscanini conducted first performance of Adagio for Strings, Opus 11 and Essay for Orchestra, Opus 12. (These are the first American pieces played by the N.B.C. Orchestra under Toscanini.)
- 1939-42 Taught at Curtis.
- 1943 Inducted into the Army.
Second commissioned work: Commando March for the Army Air Forces Band.
- 1945 Released from the Army.
Awarded Post Service Fellowship by the Guggenheim Foundation.
Settled, with Menotti, at Capricorn, near Mount Kisco, New York.
- 1946 Medea, Opus 23 premiered by Martha Graham Company under the title The Serpent Heart.
- 1947 Knoxville, Summer of 1915, Opus 24, premiered by Eleanor Steber with the Boston Symphony under Koussevitzky.
- 1950 Vladimir Horowitz introduced Barber's Piano Sonata, Opus 26, in Havana, Cuba.
- 1950-51 Mélodies passagères, Opus 27.
- 1952-53 Hermit Songs, Opus 29.
- 1957 Vanessa, Opus 32, libretto by Menotti.
- 1958 Pulitzer Prize for Vanessa, Opus 32.
- 1959 A Hand of Bridge, Opus 35, libretto by Menotti.
- 1962 Piano Concerto, Opus 38.
- 1963 Pulitzer Prize for Piano Concerto, Opus 38.
- 1966 Anthony and Cleopatra, Opus 40, for the opening of the Metropolitan Opera, libretto by Zeffirelli.
- 1969 Despite and Still, Opus 41.
- 1974 Sold Capricorn.
- 1975 Anthony and Cleopatra revised.

- 1977 Ballade, Opus 46, for Van Cliburn Competition.
- 1978 Third Essay for Orchestra, Opus 47, for New
York Philharmonic Orchestra.
- 1980 Anthony and Cleopatra, revised form, premiered
in San Francisco and Paris.
Received the Edward MacDowell Medal for his
outstanding contributions to music.
- 1981 Died, January 23, New York City.

APPENDIX B

WORKS OF SAMUEL BARBER

OPERAS

- Opus 32 Vanessa (1957)
- 35 A Hand of Bridge (1959)
for four solo voices and chamber orchestra
- 40 Anthony and Cleopatra (1966)
commissioned for the opening of the new
Metropolitan Opera Association at Lincoln
Center

WORKS FOR VOICE AND ORCHESTRA

- Opus 15 A Stopwatch and an Ordnance Map (1940)
for male chorus and orchestra
- 24 Knoxville: Summer of 1915 (1947)
commissioned by soprano Eleanor Steber
- 30 Prayers of Kierkegaard (1954)
for soprano, chorus, and orchestra
- 37 Die Natali (1960)
choral preludes for Christmas
- 39 Andromache's Farewell (1962)
for soprano and chorus
- 43 The Lovers (1971)
for baritone, chorus, and orchestra
- 45 Three Songs (1974)
commissioned by the Pittsburgh Symphony and
William Steinberg for Dietrich Fischer Dieskau
- 1 "Now I have Fed and Eaten Up"
- 2 "A Green Lowland of Pianos"
- 3 "O Boundless, Boundless Evening"

WORKS FOR ORCHESTRA

- Opus 5 Overture to "The School for Scandal" (1931)
- 7 Music for a Scene from Shelley (1933)
- 9 Symphony Number 1 (1936, revised 1943)
- 11 Adagio for Strings (1936)
- 12 Essay for Orchestra (1937)
- 14 Concerto for Violin and Orchestra (1939)
- 17 Second Essay for Orchestra (1942)
- Commando March (1943)
for symphonic band
commissioned by the Army Air Forces
- 19 Symphony Number 2 (1944, revised 1947)
commissioned by the Army Air Forces
- 21 Capricorn Concerto (1944)
for flute, oboe, trumpet, and strings
- 22 Concerto for Violoncello and Orchestra (1945)
commissioned by John Nicholas Brown of
Providence, Rhode Island for Raya Garbousova
- 44 Fadograph of a Yestern Scene (1971)
- 47 Third Essay for Orchestra (1978)

MUSIC FOR PIANO

- Opus 20 Excursions (1944)
- 26 Piano Sonata (1948)
commissioned by the League of Composers
- 33 Nocturne (Homage to John Field) (1958)
- 38 Piano Concerto (1962)
- 46 Ballade (1977)
composed for the Van Cliburn Piano Competition

WORKS FOR ORGAN

- Opus 34 Wondrous Love (1958)
- 36 Toccata Festiva (1960)
for organ and orchestra

CHAMBER MUSIC

- Opus 1 Serenade (1929)
for string quartet
- Five Pieces for a Singing Tower (1930)
commissioned by Edward Bok for his pink marble
carillon at Mount Lakes Bird Sanctuary in Florida
- 3 Dover Beach (1931)
for voice and string quartet
- 4 Sonata for Violin (1931)
- 6 Sonata for Violoncello and Piano (1932)
- 11 String Quartet Number 1 (1936)
- String Quartet Number 2 (1948)
- 31 Summer Music (1956)
for woodwind quintet
commissioned by the Chamber Music Society of
Detroit
- 38 Canzone (1962)
arranged from the second movement of the
Piano Concerto, for flute and piano
- Mutations from Bach (1968)
for brass choir and timpani
- String Quartet (1973)

BALLET

- Opus 23 Medea (1946)
commissioned by the Alice M. Ditson Fund of
Columbia University for Martha Graham
- 28 Souvenirs (1952)
commissioned by the Ballet Society

WORKS FOR VOICE AND PIANO

- Opus 2 1 "The Daisies" (1930)
 2 "With rue my heart is laden" (1930)
 3 "Bessie Bobtail" (1930)
- 10 1 "Rain has fallen" (1936)
 2 "Sleep now" (1936)
 3 "I hear an army" (1936)
- 13 1 "A Nun Takes the Veil" (1938)
 2 "The Secrets of the Old" (1938)
 3 "Sure on this shining night" (1938)
 4 "Nocturne" (1938)
- 18 1 "The queen's face on a summery coin" (1943)
 2 "Monks and Raisins" (1943)
- 25 "Nuvoletta" (1947)
- 27 Mélodies passagères (1950-51)
 "Puisque tout passe"
 "Un cygne"
 "Tombeau dans un parc"
 "Le clocher chante"
 "Départ"
- 29 Hermit Songs (1952-53)
 "At Saint Patrick's Purgatory"
 "Church Bell at Night"
 "St. Ita's Vision"
 "Heavenly Banquet"
 "The Crucifixion"
 "Sea-Snatch"
 "Promiscuity"
 "The Monk and His Cat"
 "The Praises of God"
 "The Desire for Hermitage"
- 41 Despite and Still (1969)
 "A Last Song"
 "My Lizard (Wish for a Young Love)"
 "In the Wilderness"
 "Solitary Hotel"
 "Despite and Still"

WORKS FOR CHORUS

- Opus 8 1 "The Virgin Martyrs" (1936)
 2 "Let Down the Bars, O Death" (1936)
- 11 Agnus Dei (1967)
 arrangement of Adagio, from String Quartet
 Number 1 (1936)
- 16 Reincarnations (1940)
- Chorale for Ascension Day (1964)

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