

379
N81
NO. 4432

THE SONGS OF SIDNEY HOMER, WITH THREE RECITALS
OF SELECTED WORKS BY VERDI, HANDEL,
BRAHMS, POULENC, IVES,
LOEWE, FAURÉ, FLOYD
AND OTHERS

DISSERTATION

Presented to the Graduate Council of the
University of North Texas in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

DOCTOR OF MUSICAL ARTS

By

Jeffrey Snider, B. Mus., M. Mus.

Denton, Texas

December, 1996

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Snider, Jeffrey, The Songs of Sidney Homer. Doctor of Musical Arts (Performance), December, 1996, 91 pp., 39 musical examples, appendix, bibliography, 32 titles.

Now all but forgotten, the songs of Sidney Homer (1864–1953) were at one time well-regarded and often performed. Married to the great American contralto Louise Homer, he was in a unique position to have his songs performed by the great artists of the time.

Unlike the cloying “parlor songs” of many of his contemporaries, his works consistently demonstrate a respect for both the great poets as well as the European art-song tradition. One of the most cosmopolitan of the American composers of his day, his involvement with Louise’s career brought him into contact with many of the great composers and performers of the day including Massenet, Puccini, Humperdinck, Mahler, Toscanini and Caruso.

When viewed in their entirety, his songs reveal not only a tremendous variety, but also the maturation of his compositional style.

Tape recordings of all performances submitted as dissertation requirements are on deposit in the University of North Texas Library.

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Giuseppe Verdi's
LUISA MILLER

Tragic Melodrama in Three Acts
by Salvatore Cammarano
after Schiller's drama "Kabale und Liebe"
("Intrigue and Love")
English version by Dennis W. Wakeling

Director and Designer Dennis Wakeling
Conductor Serge Zehnacker
(November 8 and 9)
Associate Director Jeannine Crader
Assistant Conductor David Saunders
(November 10)
Lighting Designer Bill Boswell
Chorus Master Jan Hanson

CAST

Luisa Miller Pamela Cates (November 8 and 10)
Kim Kronenberg (November 9)
Miller, her father,
a retired military bandmaster,
now town musician Stafford Turner (November 8 and 10)
Jeffrey Snider (November 9)
Count von Walter Brad Holmes
Rodolfo, his son Jim Bell (November 8 and 10)
Richard Green (November 9)
Federica, Duchess of Ostheim,
the count's niece Janet Sanders
Wurm, the count's steward William Sinclair
Laura, a village girl Patricia Racette (November 8 and 10)
Anita Willis (November 9)
A peasant Owen Duggan
Understudy to Luisa Kay George
The action takes place in the Tyrol. Epoch: the turn of the 19th century.

North Texas State University
School of Music

Graduate Recital

JEFFREY SNIDER, Baritone

Assisted by

Keith Whitmore, Piano

Monday, April 28, 1986 8:15 p.m. Concert Hall

Cantata, Dalla Guerra Amorosa. . . George Frideric Handel

Recitative: Dalla guerra amorosa (1685-1759)

Aria: Non v'alletti un occhio nero

Recitative: Fuggite, si fuggite

Aria: La bellezza è come un fiore

Aria: Fuggite, si fuggite

Keith Whitmore, Harpsichord
Stuart Cheney, Viola da Gamba

Vier Ernste Gesänge, Op. 121. Johannes Brahms

Denn es gehet dem Menschen (1833-1897)

Ich wandte mich

O Tod, wie bitter bist du

Wenn ich mit Menschen und Engelszungen

Intermission

"No! Possibil non è"

from Le Villi (1883). Giacomo Puccini
(1858-1924)

University of North Texas

College of Music

presents

A Graduate Recital

JEFFREY SNIDER, baritone

accompanied by
David Cloutier, piano

Monday, April 22, 1996

5:00 pm

Concert Hall

Rivolgete a lui lo sguardo Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
(Alternate aria for *COSÌ FAN TUTTE*) (1756-1791)

Drei Lieder, Opus 97 Carl Loewe
Der Mohrenfürst (1796-1869)
Die Mohrenfürstin
Der Mohrenfürst auf der Messe

--- Intermission ---

From *Mazeppa* (1884) Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky
Mazeppa's Arioso ("O Marija, Marija") (1840-1893)

L'Horizon Chimérique, Opus 118 Gabriel Fauré
La mer est infinie (1845-1924)
Je me suis embarqué
Diane, Séléné
Vaisseaux, nous vous aurons aimés

Pilgrimage Carlisle Floyd
Man that is born of a woman (Job 14) (b. 1926)
Save me, O Lord, for the waters are come into my soul (Psalm 69)
O Lord, Thou hast searched me and known me (Psalm 139)
Praise the Lord, O my soul (Psalms 148-149)
For I am persuaded (Romans 8)

Presented in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Musical Arts

University of North Texas

College of Music

presents

A Graduate Lecture Recital

JEFFREY SNIDER, *baritone*

accompanied by
David Cloutier, *piano*

Monday, October 28, 1996

6:30 pm

Recital Hall

“THE SONGS OF SIDNEY HOMER”

- Trost der Nacht*, op. 3 Sidney Homer
(1864-1953)
- Break, break, break*, op. 6, no. 1
- From *Six songs from “Underwoods,”* op. 15
Sing me a song of a lad that is gone, no. 1
- Michael Rebartes Bids his Beloved be at Peace*, op. 17, no. 3
- From *Seventeen Lyrics from “Sing-Song,”* op. 19
Lullaby, oh lullaby!, part 2, no. 5
- From *Bandanna Ballads*, op. 22
A Banjo Song, no. 4
- From *Two Songs of Experience*, op. 26
The Sick Rose, no. 1
- Sheep and Lambs*, op. 31
- From *Four Modern Poems*, op. 34
The King of the Fairy Men, no. 1
When Death to either shall come, no. 2

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thanks must go to Rollins College's Kate Reich, Special Collections Librarian, and Dr. John Sinclair, Music Department Chair, who furnished materials from their collections. Dr. Timothy McKinney of the University of Texas at Arlington provided insightful harmonic analysis. Dorothy MacDonald graciously made available materials in her possession related to her 1963 thesis, *Sidney Homer, Song Composer*.

Above all, thanks must be given to Katharine Homer Fryer, daughter of Sidney and Louise Homer for her extensive correspondence and providing otherwise unavailable materials. Her lifelong maintenance of her parents' archives has made possible not only this project, but future projects as well.

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INTRODUCTION

“Sidney Homer has a nice gift of melody; one that has caught the popular fancy. His *Banjo Song*, *The Song of the Shirt*, *Sing to Me*, *Sing*, and the *Songs from Mother Goose* are but a few of the many songs that are known to singers and their audiences all over the country.”¹ This passage from John Tasker Howard’s *Our American Music* is one of many similar references written between 1900 and 1950. Indeed, during this period, some of Homer’s songs were very widely known.

While Homer’s success was overshadowed by that of his wife, the great American contralto Louise Homer, his songs achieved prominence as Louise and many of her colleagues performed them. Largely freed from financial responsibility by the success of Louise’s career, Homer did not need to worry about the popular appeal of his songs. Instead, he usually dealt with mature, often difficult subject matter.

While many composers of his time were writing sentimental ballads to mediocre poetry, Homer consistently used poems of high literary quality,

¹ John Tasker Howard, *Our American Music*, 3rd ed. (New York: Thomas Crowell, 1946), 568.

often giving them distinguished settings. During his lifetime it was said that he "never puts to music anything that is not verse of a respectable calibre."²

While rarely experimental, Homer's songs are quite often inventive and innovative. All of his songs demonstrate care and craftsmanship and even in the songs written in a more popular style, there is the unmistakable mark of a trained, talented composer.

Homer was one of the most cosmopolitan of the American composers of his day. Well traveled and well read, his involvement with Louise's career brought him into contact with many of the great composers and performers of the day including Massenet, Puccini, Humperdinck, Mahler, Toscanini and Caruso. When viewed in their entirety, his songs reveal not only the extent of his external influences, but also the development of his compositional style.

² A. Walter Kramer, "The Things We Set to Music," *Musical Quarterly* 7 (1921) : 313.

CHAPTER I

BIOGRAPHY

Sidney Homer was born in Boston in 1864. His parents were both deaf, his mother since the age of three and his father from the age of ten. Because of his parent's deafness, music was not a part of the Homer household. When his sister began to take piano lessons, however, he became interested in music.¹

From an early age Homer was interested in English literature, and in the fall of 1881, he went to London to further his education. There he came into contact with the music critic of the London Daily News, a "Mr. Green" who discovered his aptitude for music and suggested he study in Leipzig.²

In the German city, Homer met other American students and absorbed as much music as he could. At the Gewandhaus he heard the music of Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann, and Mendelssohn, and he first heard the music of Wagner at a Leipzig Opera Wagner festival. In June he returned to Boston, determined to pursue music as a career.

¹ Sidney Homer, *My Wife and I* (New York: Macmillan, 1939), 1-10.

² Harry Colin Thorpe, "The Songs of Sidney Homer," *The Musical Quarterly* 17 (1931) : 55.

In October of 1882 he returned to Leipzig and enrolled in the conservatory. He studied piano and harmony with Carl Hauser. That fall he heard a complete performance of Schubert's *Winterreise*. Of the experience he wrote, "We were transported. What is a song anyway? Why is it so powerful? What is the magic of lyric art? A thousand people held spellbound by an inexplicable beauty."³

During this stay in Leipzig he suffered a case of shingles and was advised by a German physician that a music career would be an unbearable strain on his fragile nervous system. He returned to Boston unsure of his future. At nineteen, Homer began studying organ and composition with George Chadwick who was teaching in Boston. His confidence grew and Chadwick suggested that he study with Rheinberger in Munich.

Homer was admitted to the Royal Music School in Munich and studied there for three years. The study under Rheinberger was rigid, and little composing was done by the students. Nevertheless, Homer found the experience exhilarating. Under Rheinberger he had learned only the basics of counterpoint and harmony and when he went back to the United States he intended to stay only a short while before returning to Munich to complete his musical training. (He had not studied orchestration and hoped to do so

³ S. Homer, 28-29.

with Brahms in Vienna.) The financial burden of providing for his family after his father's death, however, thwarted his plans to continue his studies in Europe.⁴

He had few options for employment. Chadwick suggested that he seek a church organist position, but he disliked the idea. Instead, he chose to teach classes in harmony out of a hotel studio room in Boston.⁵ In 1893 a young contralto from Pennsylvania named Louise Beatty enrolled in his class. They began to see each frequently, studying music and attending operas and concerts together. In January of 1895 they were married.⁶

Their first year of marriage was filled with activity. Sidney's classes were going well, but Louise was experiencing difficulties with her voice. Her frustration was offset by the birth of their first child, Louise, Jr.⁷ Sidney devised a plan to borrow money from friends and go to Paris so Louise could

⁴ Anne Homer, *Louise Homer and the Golden Age of Opera* (New York: William Morrow, 1973), 103.

⁵ S. Homer, 41-42.

⁶ A. Homer, 83-113.

⁷ Louise, Jr. (as she was called by the Homer family) was called "Baby" as a child. (A. Homer, 115.)

further her vocal studies. Louise resisted at first, but finally consented, hoping this trip would give Sidney more opportunity to compose.⁸

During a side trip to Lucerne they were befriended by French composer Antonin Savard and his wife. Savard encouraged Sidney and composed the song "Le Crépuscule" for Louise. (Louise later performed this song at the concert in Paris at which Dukas's *L'Apprenti Sorcier* was premiered.)⁹

In Paris Louise studied French, drama, and singing, while Sidney focused on his composing. In 1897 Louise was engaged for the Vichy Opera summer season, and her operatic career had begun. After Vichy she sang for a season in Angers and then for eleven weeks with the Royal Opera House in London. After this, she was engaged by the well-regarded La Monnaie company in Brussels.¹⁰

While in London, Sidney met with a representative of the German publishing house of B. Schott's Söhne. Arrangements were made for them to meet with the head of the house, Dr. Strecker, while they were in Belgium.

⁸ Shirlee Emmons, "Voices from the Past: Louise Homer," *The NATS Journal* (March/April 1985), 31.

⁹ A. Homer, 120-124.

¹⁰ S. Homer 70-95. Louise Homer's operatic career is well documented in Sidney's and Anne Homer's books as well as in numerous other sources. Only those details bearing most directly on Sidney's songs will be cited in this document.

Dr. Strecker heard Louise sing Sidney's songs and he offered to publish all of them, with German and English texts, for a flat cash fee. Sidney was excited at the offer and the recognition it meant but declined, both because he preferred an American publisher and hoped to receive royalties for the songs.¹¹

While singing in Brussels Louise was offered a contract with the Metropolitan Opera in New York, and she and Sidney made plans to return to the U. S. During Louise's first Metropolitan season in 1900, they visited the publishing house of G. Schirmer and performed Sidney's songs for Gustave Schirmer, son of the president and founder of the firm. He agreed to publish the songs and arranged a contract with royalties.¹²

As Louise continued to sing at the Metropolitan, Sidney continued to compose songs. His songs were programmed not only by Louise, but by such prominent singers as Johanna Gadski, Lillian Nordica, Herbert Witherspoon, David Bispham, and Emilio de Gogorza.¹³

¹¹ A. Homer, 165-166.

¹² S. Homer, 120.

¹³ These performers are listed in many sources including G. Schirmer promotional material provided to the author by Katharine Homer Fryer.

Sidney, Jr., was born in 1902 and, in 1903, Louise first began recording for Victor.¹⁴ At first reluctant to experiment with the new medium of sound recording, Louise found the experience vocally exhausting but financially rewarding. The recordings (which included some of Sidney's songs) brought her nationwide fame. In 1907, the twin girls Katharine and Anne, were born, and almost immediately they became the darlings of the press.¹⁵ Sidney balanced his composing with taking care of the children and assisting Louise's career.

In November of 1909, Louise performed a benefit recital at the MacDowell Club in New York that was devoted entirely to Sidney's songs. Sidney was in ill health at the time but agreed to accompany her, taking the precaution of having his friend Richard Hageman turn pages so he could take over if necessary. The performance was sold out and the program was generally well received.¹⁶

Louise's sister, Daisy Beatty Barber, gave birth to her son Samuel, in 1910, and he reportedly began inventing tunes on the piano at age two. As he grew, his musical talents were encouraged by his aunt and uncle. (It is

¹⁴ S. Homer (179) incorrectly lists her first recordings as taking place in 1907, but A. Homer (216-217) correctly places the event in 1903.

¹⁵ A. Homer, 265-66.

¹⁶ S. Homer, 195-97.

reported that in his youth Barber would visit his uncle and go over Bach inventions and other classics.)¹⁷

Another daughter, Hester, was born to Sidney and Louise in 1911. Their sixth and last child, Helen Joy, was born in 1914. During this year Louise's mother died, and Louise opted not to sing at the Metropolitan during the 1914–1915 season.¹⁸

America's entry into World War I in 1917 had a tremendous impact on the Homer family. Louise was involved in patriotic ceremonies, and Sidney wrote a song about the war, "Homeland," that was printed in its entirety in *The New York Times*.¹⁹ That year, young Louise made her singing debut. She often programmed her father's songs and before long was appearing in recitals with her mother.²⁰

¹⁷ The relationship between Sidney Homer and Samuel Barber is explored in depth in Barbara B. Heyman's *Samuel Barber: The Composer and His Music*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992.)

¹⁸ A. Homer, 329.

¹⁹ A. Homer, 342-51. The press distinguished between the two by referring to them as "Mme." and "Miss" Louise Homer. Richard Aldrich, "Mme. and Miss Louise Homer Sing," *New York Times*, 13 March 1921, 3.

²⁰ S. Homer, 231-32.

At this time Louise decided to retire from the Metropolitan, and 1919 was her last regular season.²¹ For the next few years she continued to sing concerts and as guest artist at various opera houses, while Sidney continued to compose. During this time he composed some instrumental pieces and the set of thirty-five "Songs from Mother Goose."²²

In December of 1927 Louise returned to the Metropolitan for a few performances. The following February she and Sidney went on a Mediterranean cruise during which he became gravely ill. By September he had recovered sufficiently to return to the U. S. ²³ Louise's final Metropolitan performance took place in 1929. She and Sidney began dividing their time between their Lake George home and Palm Beach, Florida. They were often visited by Samuel Barber and his fellow Curtis Institute student, Gian-Carlo Menotti.²⁴ Sidney turned his attention to instrumental compositions, while Louise began to teach.²⁵

²¹ A. Homer, 362-63; S. Homer, 232.

²² S. Homer, 235-37.

²³ A. Homer, 389-94.

²⁴ A. Homer, 395-99.

²⁵ S. Homer, 267-69.

Macmillan published Sidney's book, *My Wife and I* in 1939.²⁶ The following year Sidney and Louise moved to Winter Park, Florida, where they became associated with Rollins College. In 1943, Schirmer published seventeen of Sidney's songs selected by Samuel Barber (who by this time was an established composer.)

Their golden wedding anniversary in 1945 was a festive occasion, featuring original compositions by Barber and Menotti and letters of congratulation from Toscanini, Geraldine Farrar, Gustave Schirmer, and others.²⁷ Louise suffered a heart attack in 1947 and died shortly thereafter. Homer spent his remaining years working with the musicologist and pianist Phyllis Sias to establish metronome markings for his songs. He died in his sleep in 1953, a few days after completing this project.²⁸

²⁶ A. Homer, 406-11. Here the publication of *My Wife and I* is incorrectly dated February, 1938. All other sources place the publication date in 1939.

²⁷ "Homers Celebrate 50th Anniversary," *New York Times*, 10 January 1945, 40.

²⁸ A. Homer, 416-26.

CHAPTER II

SONGS WRITTEN BEFORE 1904 (OP. 3–15)

“Trost der Nacht,” Op. 3, (ca. 1884), and “Four Slavic Poems” Op. 5, (ca. 1897)

Sidney Homer began composing songs to German texts during his student days in Germany. While he evidently wrote a number of songs during this time, none of them were published and only one has survived in manuscript. When Louise first began to study with him, he went through several of his songs with her.¹ One of these, “Trost der Nacht,” Op. 3, was especially loved by Louise, and, over the years, she urged Sidney to write it out. Shortly before her death, he dictated the song to his son-in-law Douglas Fryer.²

This short song of only 19 measures shows Homer’s melodic gift and the influence of late romantic *Lieder* composers. The poem, by Carl Phillip Spitta (1801-1859), is one of calm reassurance. The simple harmony and melody help capture its mood.

¹ Anne Homer, *Louise Homer and the Golden Age of Opera* (New York: William Morrow, 1973), 89.

² Katharine Homer Fryer, letter to author, 7 August 1996.

Example 1, Sidney Homer, "Trost der Nacht, Op. 3, measures 1–4.

The musical score for "Trost der Nacht, Op. 3, measures 1–4" is presented in two systems: Voice and Piano. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major), and the time signature is 3/4. The tempo and dynamics markings are as follows:

- Voice:** Starts with *Andante mf*. It includes a *rit.* (ritardando) marking over the second measure and an *a tempo* marking over the third measure.
- Piano:** Starts with *mf*. It includes a *rit.* marking over the second measure and an *a tempo* marking over the third measure.

The lyrics for the voice part are: "Kla - ge Nicht be - trüb - tes Kind, kla - ge nicht um's jun - ge Le - ben."

About these early songs, Homer wrote,

I had begun to write songs in Munich. . . always using German poems, or poems from eastern countries translated into German. I associated music with the German language. There were [sic] a sonority and emphasis and an emotional sincerity in German that seemed to demand music.³

The "Four Slavic Poems," Op. 5, are settings of German translations of Slavic and Bohemian folk poems. These songs were written during the Homers' stay in Europe from 1896 to 1899. They were not published until 1911 and are his only published settings of German texts. Harry Colin Thorpe (whose 1931 *Musical Quarterly* article, "The Songs of Sidney Homer," is the most substantial discussion of Homer's songs) called them "virile,

³ Sidney Homer, *My Wife and I* (New York: Macmillan, 1939), 3.

straightforward and sincere—true and powerful interpretations of mood and situation.”⁴

The first of these songs, “Der Kosak,” is a dramatic dialogue in which a Cossack tries to convince an abused wife to flee with him. Homer set several dramatic dialogues of this type. The recitative-like section, in which the wife expresses her reservations about joining the Cossack shows Homer’s tendency to set text in a declamatory rather than lyrical manner.

Example 2, “Der Kosak,” Op. 5, No. 1, measures 34–39.

Lento
p

Voice

Und wo - hin willst du mich füh - ren, da du kei - ne

Piano

⁴ Harry Colin Thorpe, “The Songs of Sidney Homer,” *The Musical Quarterly* 17 (1931) : 52.

rit.

Hüt - te hast? da du kei - ne Hüt - te hast?

rit.

Eight Poems by Tennyson, Op. 6–9, (1896–1897)

Homer's eight settings of Tennyson were his first to be published.

Some of Tennyson's most famous poems were used, including "Crossing the Bar" and "Sweet and Low." Tennyson's poems were often set in the latter part of the nineteenth century, although which of these Homer was familiar with is not known.

"Break, break, break" is an imposing setting of Tennyson's poem. The chromatic accompaniment and the thickness of texture are typical of Homer's writing, especially in his serious pieces. The four stanzas of text are each set in even eight measure phrases, divided into three main sections.

	Text	Key	Meter	Measures
A	"Break, break, break"	G minor	4/4	3–11
B	"Oh well for the fisherman's boy"	E-flat major	3/4	12–27
A'	"Break, break, break"	G minor	4/4	28–36

Example 3. "Break, break, break," Op. 6, No. 1, measures 1–6

Adagio non molto
With sadness. (not dragging)

Voice

Piano

mf molto legato

Break.

break, break On thy cold grey stones, O Sea! And I

The musical score consists of two systems. The first system shows the beginning of the piece with the voice line starting on a whole note G4 and the piano accompaniment starting with a half note G4 in the right hand and a half note G2 in the left hand. The second system shows the continuation of the piece with the voice line singing the lyrics and the piano accompaniment providing harmonic support.

"Sweet and low," from Tennyson's epic poem *The Princess*, is one of many lullabies found in Homer's song output. (One can imagine that as father of six he put them to good use!) The rocking 6/8 meter, with recurring D-flat pedal tones in the bass, enhance the placid mood of the poem.

Example 4. "Sweet and low," Op. 7, No. 1, measures 9–14.

mf
Voice
O - ver the roll - ing wa - ter: go, Come from the dy - ing

Piano
mf
p
p
p

moon and blow, Blow him a - gain to me.

A few of the Tennyson settings brought Homer early critical acclaim. In 1906, Lawrence Gilman wrote in *The Musician* magazine,

He is very nearly at his best. . . in *Home they brought her warrior dead*, from Tennyson's *The Princess*. Here the richness of the harmonic color, the dignity of the melodic design, and the vigorous rhythmical structure convey with excellent effect the sincerity and continence of the musical conception.⁵

⁵ Lawrence Gilman, "The Songs of Sidney Homer," *The Musician* (January, 1906) : 17.

The *New York Times* review of Louise's 1909 performance at the MacDowell Club in New York commented, "He has done little that is more seizing than his setting of the eight lines of Tennyson's 'Thy Voice is Heard.'"⁶

"Minnie and Winnie" and "The City Child" from Tennyson's *Child Songs* were the first examples of his career-long interest in poems for and about children. While the melodic lines of these songs are flowing and graceful, there are complex musical structures supporting them. For example, the piano interlude and postlude of "The City Child" employ a brief canonic passage and each phrase of "Minnie and Winnie" goes through a series of distantly related harmonies before returning to the tonic.

Example 5. "The City Child," Op. 8, No. 1, measures 11–14.

⁶ "Sidney Homer's Songs," *New York Times*, 2 November 1909, 11.

Example 6. "Minnie and Winnie," Op. 8, No. 2, measures 1-5.

The image shows a musical score for the song "Minnie and Winnie" in 6/8 time. It consists of two systems of music. The first system includes a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line starts with the tempo marking "Vivace" and the performance instruction "With fancy." It begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic and ends with a *dimin.* (diminuendo) marking. The piano accompaniment also starts with a forte (*f*) dynamic and ends with a *dimin.* marking. The lyrics for the first system are: "Min - nie and Win - nie slept in a shell. Sleep, lit - tle la - dies,". The second system continues the vocal line with the lyrics "Sleep lit - tle la - dies, And they slept well!" and is marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic and a *ritard.* (ritardando) instruction. The piano accompaniment for the second system also features a piano (*p*) dynamic and a *ritard.* instruction.

These songs were originally written in low keys (with Louise's voice in mind). Homer preferred for his songs to be performed in their original keys, but was aware of the realities of publication and consented to have his songs published in both original and transposed keys. (Songs written in the high keys were often transposed at Louise's request.)⁷

⁷ Katharine Homer Fryer, interview with the author, 11 June 1996.

Three Poems of Thomas Hood, Op. 10, and Two Songs, Op. 11, (1899–1903)

Three settings of Thomas Hood make up Homer's Op. 10, written between 1899 and 1900 while Louise performed at Covent Garden in London and La Monnaie in Brussels. Together Sidney and Louise would go over each new song and "experiment with the tempi, the phrasing and the interpretation."⁸ These were the last songs written before Homer met with B. Schott's representative Dr. Strecker.

From these songs "A lake and a fairy boat" was used in recital by Louise and "It was the time of roses" was programmed by the great American baritone David Bispham.⁹ In a letter to a friend, Louise wrote, "Sidney just called me to his room to hear a new song, It is *beautiful!* to a Hood poem called *Autumn*."¹⁰ The rapid arpeggiated accompaniment and flowing melody are reminiscent of Fauré's "L'Hiver a cessé." (Homer had heard songs of Fauré performed during his time in Paris.¹¹) The harmony is largely diatonic, although the use of some chromaticism provides musical interest.

⁸ A. Homer, 165–166

⁹ "Sidney Homer's Songs on the Programmes of Prominent Singers," G. Schirmer promotional material, nd.

¹⁰ A. Homer, 165.

¹¹ S. Homer, 59.

Example 7. "Autumn," Op. 10, No. 2, measures 6–10.

mf

Solo

These arc but streams of

mf

Piano

win ter cold. And

p

paint ed mists that quench the



Two songs, "Daybreak" and "Baby's Outing" make up Homer's Op. 11. "Daybreak," to a poem of Whittier, is a brisk description of the new day with a final slow section which hints at the prospect of the day of judgement.

Three Poems of Browning, Op. 12, and Op. 13–14, (1901–1902)

In the first years after signing his Schirmer contract, Homer composed some of his most famous songs. He found a trip to Louise's relatives in West Chester, Pennsylvania, to be particularly conducive to his composing. During this period he wrote the three settings of Browning, Op. 12, and "The Poor Man's Song," Op. 13. "A Woman's Last Word" was performed by Louise and the great dramatic soprano Lillian Nordica. "Prospice" was programmed by baritone Francis Rogers, bass Herbert Witherspoon and others.¹² After Witherspoon sang "Prospice" for him, Homer wrote to Louise, "The way he

¹² Ibid., 48.

sang it took my breath away. It was tremendous! The whole man went into the song, heart and soul. If he sings it this way in public it will be a sensation. . ."¹³

The setting of Browning's "Prospice" caused disagreement among the critics. Described by one author as "an uncommonly noble and impressive achievement,"¹⁴ another wrote that it "seemed hardly to sound the depths of the poet's meaning."¹⁵ The opening recitative-like section is an example of Homer's tendency to allow the text to dictate the rhythm and melodic contour.

Example 8. "Prospice," Op. 12, No. 3, measures 1-17.

Vivace. Impetuously.

Voice

f *p*

Frankath? to feel the fog in my throat, The

Piano

ff

¹³ A. Homer, 236.

¹⁴ Gilman, 16

¹⁵ "Mme. Homer sings," *New York Tribune*, 2 November 1909, 7.

cresc.
mist in my face, When the snows be- gin, and the blasts de- note I am near- ing the place,

cresc.
f

cresc.
The pow'r of the night, the press of the storm, the post of the foe; Where he

cresc.

ff *delesc.* *più lento*
stands, The Arch-Fear in a vi- si- ble form, Yet the strong man must go:

ff *delesc.* *più lento*

This manner of setting text in a declamatory fashion was often cited as characteristic of Homer's style. In 1909 The critic of the *New York Times* wrote:

He has gained some of his strongest and best effects in the employment of a free declamatory style, or of short or loosely modeled melodic figures for the voice, united to the accompaniment whose independent facture, characteristic expressiveness, and pregnant harmonies, often dissonant and of unconventional progression, is skillfully employed to

heighten the emotional coloring given to the poem.¹⁶

“The Poor Man’s Song,” Op. 13, is a setting of an anonymous poem.

Homer set several texts related to the plight of the lower classes. His interest in poems related to injustice and poverty can be explained by this description of an experience from his time in Leipzig:

I was standing at my window watching the black crowd, far below, pushing along the narrow sidewalk. Suddenly I sank to my knees and prayed to God that I might do something, however small, for humanity. I was not in the habit of praying and could not explain my action. But from that moment human beings seemed but helpless souls, grouped around their homes, unaware of gathering storm clouds and unable to protect themselves from subtle forces and cruel destinies. The very poor seemed inarticulate; those better off, blinded in complacency; those still more powerful, hopelessly engulfed in selfishness and isolation. Humanity seemed a pitiful thing, needing help but unable to cry out; filled with desire but without hope or strength. These feelings have remained with me, and I always see mankind struggling in bonds.¹⁷

“The Last Leaf,” Op. 14, is a setting of a poem by his fellow Bostonian Oliver Wendell Holmes (father of the Supreme Court justice.) The song is dedicated to American sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens, who was married to

¹⁶ “Sidney Homer’s Songs,” 11.

¹⁷ S. Homer, 29.

Homer's cousin Augusta. This humorous poem is one of many set by Homer and he recorded in his autobiography, "Some fellow composers have told me that it was not a suitable poem for a song, but I have no regrets. I may have brought the poem to the attention of some who had never read it, and that is enough."¹⁸ In 1929 Louise performed this song at the dedication of the bust of Holmes at the Hall of Fame.¹⁹

Six Songs from *Underwoods* by Robert Louis Stevenson, Op. 15, (1902–1903)

Homer began his settings from Robert Louis Stevenson's *Underwoods* during a summer in Lake Placid and completed them while nursing his sick family back in West Chester.²⁰ "Sing me a song of a lad that is gone" became one of his most celebrated songs, described by William Treat Upton as "redolent of the sea and the sky, and whose rollicking style is delightfully characteristic."²¹ Another wrote, "He has seldom opened a vein of melodic

¹⁸ Ibid., 149.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid, 149–50.

²¹ William Treat Upton, *Art Song in America*. (Boston: Oliver Ditson, 1930) : 132.

invention so free as that of his setting of Stevenson's 'Sing me a song of a lad that is gone. . .'²²

Example 9. "Sing me a song of a lad that is gone," Op. 15, no 1, measures 1-9.

Allegro Spirited *f*

voice

Sing me a song of a lad that is gone. Say, could that lad be I?

Piano

While Stevenson's poem repeats the opening stanza before each of the three others, Homer repeats it a final time to create a rondo form. The final section repeats the opening material, but slows and stretches it to 9/8 meter to enhance the idea of longing for lost youth. The framework of the song is as follows:

	Text	Tempo	Key	Meter	Measures
A	"Sing me a song"	Allegro	E-flat	6/8	2-9
B	"Mull was astern"		G minor	6/8	11-18
A	"Sing me a song"		E-flat	6/8	19-26

²² "Sidney Homer's Songs," 11.

C	"Give me again"			9/8	27-34
A	"Sing me a song"		E-flat	6/8	35-42
D	"Billow and breeze"	Più lento	E-flat minor	6/8	44-51
A	"Sing me a song"	Meno mosso	E-flat	9/8, 6/8	52-59

Although the limited range, simple melody, and supportive accompaniment made "Requiem" an ideal song for young singers, it was also used by leading artists of Homer's time such as Emilio de Gogorza and Heinrich Meyn.²³ It proved to be a best seller with over 3700 copies sold in one six-month period some ten years after its first publication.²⁴ It remains the one song still readily available, found in collections designed for young singers.

"The Unforgotten" is one of Homer's few songs dealing with lost love. Thorpe referred to it as a "song to be avoided by all singers who cannot command simple but poignant feeling."²⁵ The pedal point on b played on the off-beats in each but the last two measures of each phrase seems to represent a persistent memory.

²³ "Sidney Homer's Songs on the Programmes of Prominent Singers," G. Schirmer promotional material, nd.

²⁴ G. Schirmer statement of Homer royalties for the period November 1, 1914 to April 1, 1915, given to the author by Katharine Homer Fryer.

²⁵ Thorpe, 59.

Example 10. "The Unforgotten," Op. 15, No. 4, measures 1-5.

Andante. *Simply, not dragging.*

Voice

She rest - ed by the Bro - ken Brook. She

Piano

molto legato

drank of Wear - y Well, She

The image shows a musical score for a voice and piano piece. The score is in G major (one sharp) and common time (C). The tempo is marked 'Andante' and the performance instruction is 'Simply, not dragging.' The voice part is in 3/4 time, and the piano accompaniment is in 9/8 time. The lyrics are: 'She rest - ed by the Bro - ken Brook. She drank of Wear - y Well, She'. The piano part is marked 'molto legato'.

"The Stormy Evening" is another dramatic setting. The accompaniment in 9/8 meter portrays the raging storm while the legato vocal line in 3/4 meter represents a woman's defiance of the storm since her lover has returned safely from the sea. "The Country of the Camisards" was another song about which the critics disagreed. Gilman wrote of it: "There is. . .monotony of effect where there should have been the bite of sudden

dramatic contrast.”²⁶ Thorpe found it “a powerful if subtle protest against war.”²⁷

The intensely spiritual “Evensong” brought from Homer a melody of incredible beauty and harmonic interest. As was often the case in his writing, he used tonally ambiguous harmonies to suggest uncertainty in the face of death.

Example 11. “Evensong,” Op. 15, No. 6, measures 13–19.

Solo

shrill. So far have I been led, Lord, by thy will. So

Piano

²⁶ Gilman, 17.

²⁷ Thorpe, 59.

dimin. e rit.

far I have fol - low'd, Lord, and won - der'd still.

dimin. e rit.

Three songs from Robert Louis Stevenson's
A Child's Garden of Verses, Op. 16, (pub. 1906)

Homer's interest in songs about children is evident in his settings of three poems from Robert Louis Stevenson's familiar *A Child's Garden of Verses*. In *A History of Song*, Hans Nathan asserts that "Pirate Story," Op. 16, No.1, "anticipates sophisticated examples of popular music of the 'twenties and 'thirties."²⁸ "Young Night Thought," Op. 16, No. 2, was performed by Heinrich Meyn²⁹ but none of this group became well-known or widely performed.

²⁸ Hans Nathan, "United States of America," *A History of Song*, rev. ed. ed. Denis Stevens (New York: W.W. Norton, 1970), 431.

²⁹ "Sidney Homer's Songs on the Programmes of Prominent Singers," G. Schirmer promotional material, nd.

CHAPTER III
SONGS COMPOSED BETWEEN 1904–1914
(OP. 17–32)

Homer's fame as a song composer increased dramatically in the first few years after Louise's Metropolitan Opera debut. He composed not only for Louise, but for her colleagues as well. He wrote about the summer of 1906, "By this time David Bispham, Herbert Witherspoon, and Francis Rogers had begun to use my songs on their programs; and I wanted to give them some new things."¹

Four Songs, Op. 17, (1904–1905)

"How's my Boy?", Op. 17, No. 1, became one of Sidney Homer's most celebrated songs. He referred to it as "one of my few mascots"² and Louise sang it often, usually using it to close a group of his songs.³ The text (by Sydney Dobell) is a highly dramatic scene in which a sailor's mother finds out that her son's ship has gone down with all hands.

¹ Sidney Homer, *My Wife and I* (New York: Macmillan, 1939), 169.

² S. Homer, 135.

Thorpe called this song “one of the most powerful and original songs ever written by an American.”⁴ Homer used radical changes in tempo, key and dynamics to heighten the dramatic confrontation between the sailor with the unfortunate news and the proud mother.

Example 12. “How’s My Boy?” Op. 17, No. 1, measures 1–4.

Allegro
With spirit.

Voice *f*

“Ho, Sai - lor of the sea! How’s my boy, my boy?”

Piano *f*

mf *Gravely*
più lento

“What’s your boy’s name, good wifc. And in what good ship sail’d he?”

³ Ibid, 170.

⁴ Thorpe, 54.

Homer expressed disappointment “Michael Robartes Bids His Beloved Be at Peace,” Op. 17 No. 3, was largely ignored by performers.⁵ He gave the complex text by William Butler Yeats one of his most intricate musical settings. A brief, recurring motive in the left hand of the accompaniment and dissonant chords in the right hand depict Yeats’ “shadowy horses.”

Example 13. “Michael Robartes Bids His Beloved Be at Peace,” Op. 17, No. 3, measures 1–2.

Allegro molto
With passion

Voice

Piano

f *legato*

con pedale

⁵ S. Homer, 182.

hear the shad - o - wy Hor - ses, their long — mares a - shake,

The piece begins and ends in G minor. The second section begins in E-flat minor and the transition back to G minor shows Homer's fondness for chromatic mediant relationships, which he often used when setting complex texts.

Example 14. "Michael Robartes Bids His Beloved Be at Peace," Op. 17, No. 3, measures 20–24.

Voice

The South is pour - ing down ros - es

Piano

pp

of crim - son fire; O van - i - ty of Sleep.

Hope, Dream, end - less De - sire! The

Lento. with deep feeling
p

The third section begins in E-flat major and goes through several secondary key areas before concluding in G minor. Alternating 4/4 and 3/4 meters give a feeling of restlessness despite the *Tranquillo* tempo marking. The piece ends with the opening theme presented softly and quietly.

During the summer of 1906 Homer composed in a studio on the beach on Cape Cod. He wrote of the situation, "The wind howled and blew the sand,

and the breakers pounded. Naturally I wrote noisy songs like 'How's My Boy?' and 'To Russia.' These two songs. . .were among the fortunate ones."⁶

The text of "To Russia," Op. 17, No. 4, is Joaquin Miller's bitter indictment of Czarist Russia's anti-Semitism from the point of view of a "hated Jew." Homer reports that when Toscanini heard this song he made Louise sing it for him "three times running without a pause."⁷

Three Songs, Op. 18, (pub. 1908)

"The Sick Child," Op. 18, No. 2, is another dramatic dialogue—this time between an anxious child and his reassuring mother. The contrast between mother and child is achieved through mode, meter and tempo changes. The second section goes briefly from F minor to B minor and a series of chromatically-related harmonies returns to F major.

⁶ Ibid., 162.

⁷ Ibid., 135

Example 15. "The Sick Child," Op. 18, No. 2, measures 26-30.

Voice *f* *cresc.*

I have a fear that I can - not say.

Piano *f* *cresc.*

ff

What have I done, and what do I fear, And

dim. *mf rit.*

why are you cry - ing, moth - er dear?

dim. *mf rit.*

“The Pauper’s Drive,” Op. 18, No. 3, has been compared to Schubert’s “Erlkönig.”⁸ Like “Erlkönig” repeated notes in the accompaniment represent hoofbeats—in this case those of a horse-drawn hearse bearing a pauper’s corpse to the graveyard.

Example 16. “The Pauper’s Drive,” Op. 18, no 3, measures 1–9.

Vivace, quasi presto *f* with grim humor

Voice

There's a grim one-horse hearse in a jol-ly round trot To the

Piano

church - yard a pau - per is go - ing I wot; The road it is rough, and the

⁸ Felix Deyo, “The Neglected Songs of an American Composer,” *International Lyric Courier* (July, 1949) : 6.

bearse has no springs: And hark to the dirge which the sad driv - er sings:

The first four stanzas of the poem are set to the same melody with a refrain. Through the four stanzas the dynamic level increases, and the accompaniment becomes more complex. In the last stanza, the mood becomes reflective and the previous melody is varied in tempo, meter, and mode. The immediacy of the text and the dramatic vocal writing (up to a dynamic marking of *Fortississimo*) appealed to leading male singers of the period such as Heinrich Meyn, David Bispham, and Herbert Witherspoon.⁹

Seventeen Lyrics from *Sing-Song*, Op. 19, (pub. 1908)

When working on a setting of Christina Rossetti's "When Wind-Flowers Blossom on the Sea" (Op. 18, No. 1), Homer came upon her *Sing-*

⁹ S. Homer, 182.

song and found the children's poems "fascinating, exquisite and spiritual."¹⁰ He set seventeen of them and they were published in one volume with two parts, These songs were performed by Louise, Johanna Gadski, and Christine Niessen-Stone.¹¹ A review of Louise's 1909 performance at the MacDowell Club in New York described them as "the slightest of Mr. Homer's work, and not that which brings his best qualities into play."¹² Thorpe, on the other hand, comments that Homer "created musical settings that enshrine so many of childhood's moods and fancies."¹³

Most of the settings are brief, taking no more than one or two pages. The melodies and accompaniments are generally simple (with a few exceptions) but are nonetheless quite effective. "Lullaby, oh lullaby!" part II, no. 5, uses a simple descending scale to create the placid mood.

¹⁰ Ibid., 173.

¹¹ "Sidney Homer's Songs on the Programmes of Prominent Singers," G. Schirmer promotional material, nd.

¹² "Sidney Homer's Songs," *New York Times*, 2 November 1909, 11.

¹³ Thorpe, 56.

Example 17. "Lullaby, oh lullaby!" Op. 19, part II, No. 5, measures 1-4.

Molto lento
p sustained, with deep feeling

Voice

Lul - la - by, oh lul - la - by! Flow'rs are closed and lambs are sleep - ing;

Piano

p molto legato

A wide range, syllabic text setting, and rapid tempo make "Dancing on the hilltops" one of the more challenging songs of the set. Phyllis Sias reported that the only fault Louise ever found with her husband's songs was a lack of rests between phrases so the singer could breathe.¹⁴ This is certainly the case here as it is necessary to fit a quick breath in between the rapid eighth notes.

¹⁴ Phyllis Sias, Letter to Dorothy MacDonald, 12 September 1962. Transcript in Dorothy MacDonald, "Sidney Homer, Song Composer" (M. Ed. thesis, University of North Carolina-Greensboro, 1963), 108.

Example 18. "Dancing on the hilltops," Op. 19, part II, No. 2, measures 1–8.

Animato
mf with grace and affection

Voice

Dan - cing on the hill - tops, Sing - ing in the val - leys,

Piano

mf

dim. *p* *rit.*

Laugh - ing with the e - choes Mer - ry lit - tle Al - ice.

dim. *p* *rit.*

The image shows a musical score for a voice and piano piece. The score is in 3/4 time and G major. The voice part has a melody that is mostly eighth notes. The piano accompaniment consists of a simple harmonic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The score is divided into two systems. The first system covers measures 1-4, and the second system covers measures 5-8. The tempo is marked 'Animato' and the dynamic is 'mf with grace and affection'. The lyrics are: 'Dan - cing on the hill - tops, Sing - ing in the val - leys, Laugh - ing with the e - choes Mer - ry lit - tle Al - ice.' The score includes dynamic markings such as 'dim.', 'p', and 'rit.'.

A hymn-like setting helps "Dead in the cold, a song-singing thrush" achieve its vivid portrayal of a child's experience with death. "Boats sail on the rivers" uses a legato melody and simple harmony to describe the wonders of nature. "Who has seen the wind?" uses a continuously moving bass line to represent the motion of the wind.

Example 19. "Who has seen the wind?" Op. 19, part II, No. 1, measures 1–4.

Andante con moto

p with imagination

Voice

Who has seen the wind? Nei - ther I nor you. But

Piano

p legato

The final song in the set, "Minnie and Mattie and fat little May," is the longest and the most complex harmonically. The song builds to an exciting climax as the accompaniment becomes more involved and the dynamic level rises to *fortissimo*.

Example 20. "Minnie and Mattie and fat little May," Op. 19, part II, No. 7, measures 34–41.

Voice

p

Vio - lets and prim - ros - es Bloss - om to - day For

Piano

p

rit. ----- *f*

Min - nie and Mat - tie And fat lit - tie May, For

ff with breadth

Min - nie and Mat - tie And fat lit - tie

ff with breadth

Voice

May.

Piano

Songs Op. 20–21, (pub. 1909–1910)

Sidney Homer, Jr., reported that his father was particularly proud of the innovations in “The Fiddler of Dooney,” Op. 20.¹⁵ Homer was inspired by Yeats’s poem of a boastful musician to write a lively melody using the natural form of the G minor scale.

Homer dedicated the two songs of Op. 21, “The Eternal Goodness” and “There’s Heaven Above,” to his father and mother. He wrote, “These poems seemed to me most expressive of some of the grand qualities which they possessed.”¹⁶ Thorpe commented, “I have an idea that ‘The Eternal Goodness’ expresses Homer’s religious emotions about as adequately as it does those of Whittier himself, for certainly the tense, sustained feeling of this noble music springs from a flowing sympathy with the rapt utterances of the poet.”¹⁷

¹⁵ Sidney Homer, Jr., letter to Nancy Whitney, 2 February 1972. Transcript in Nancy Whitney, “The Art Song Style of Sidney Homer” (Senior honors thesis, Rollins College, 1972), 83.

¹⁶ S. Homer, 182.

¹⁷ Thorpe, 62.

Bandanna Ballads, Op. 22, (1910)

Helen Paxton, a lifelong friend of the Homers, suggested that Sidney set some of Maria Howard Weeden's poems to music.¹⁸ The poems, depicting life among freed slaves in the Reconstruction-era South, inspired some of Homer's most unusual songs. The five songs were published both as a set and individually and a few of them became immensely popular.

The irregular alternation between meters helps give "Mammy's Lullaby" an improvisatory quality. Samuel Barber considered it a "careless rhythm. . .as artfully contrived as certain parts of Stravinsky's *Les Noces*."¹⁹

Example 21. "Mammy's Lullaby," Op. 22, No. 1, measures 1–6.

Andante con moto

Voice

p

"Swing low, swing

Piano

p *molto legato*

¹⁸ S. Homer, 136.

¹⁹ Samuel Barber, preface to *Seventeen Songs of Sidney Homer*, (New York: G. Schirmer, 1943).

The image shows a musical score for the song "Uncle Rome" (subtitled "The Old Boatman"). It consists of two systems of music. Each system includes a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line is written in a treble clef with a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat) and a common time signature. The piano accompaniment is written in a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The lyrics are: "low, sweet Cha-riot, low e-nough To give some heav'n-ly rest To dis poor rest-less lit-tle one Dat sobs on Mam-my's breast. "Swing". The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note pattern in the bass line and chords in the treble line.

"Uncle Rome" (subtitled "The Old Boatman") attracted the attention of leading singers of its day and was recorded by Clarence Whitehill and John Charles Thomas.²⁰ The poem describes a freed slave who expresses a certain nostalgia for his former master. This type of subject was common for Weeden, who was herself a Southern landowner impoverished by the Civil War.²¹

²⁰ Institute for Studies in American Music, *American Music Recordings* (Brooklyn, NY: Conservatory of Music, Brooklyn College of the City University of New York, 1982), 162.

²¹ "Weeden House Museum" (accessed 15 September 1996); available from http://iquest.com/~cvb/at_weeden.html; Internet.

When Homer first showed "A Banjo Song" to colleagues Kurt Schindler and Hans Morgenstern they reluctantly told him they thought it would ruin his reputation.²² Homer himself considered it "a little cheap and a little dressy" but wrote that he was glad he had written it.²³

This song became immensely popular—its sales greatly surpassing not only the other songs of the set, but most of the rest of his songs as well. During her first recital Louise, Jr., sang it as an encore in response to audience demand.²⁴ While it is perhaps unfortunate that this song, which is hardly representative of Homer's style, should become popular at the expense of the rest of his songs, the syncopated accompaniment and the form with four eight-measure phrases anticipates the style of some of the masters of musical theater such as Jerome Kern and George Gershwin.

²² Anne Homer, *Louise Homer and the Golden Age of Opera*, (New York: William Morrow, 1973), 301

²³ S. Homer, 193.

²⁴ A. Homer, 365.

Example 22. "A Banjo Song" Op. 22, no 4, measures 1-5.

Molto moderato With marked rhythm

Voice *mf*

I plays de ban - jo bet-ter now Dan

Piano *mf* *legato*

him dat taught me do, Be - case he plays for

cresc. rit. *f a tempo*

all de worl', An' I jes' plays for you. He

cresc. rit. *a tempo*

Songs Op. 23–26, (pub. 1910–1913)

Samuel Barber himself sang “April, April,” Op. 23, No. 1.²⁵ “Ferry me across the water,” Op. 23, No. 2, is another dialogue—this one a brief humorous conversation between an attractive young woman and a boatman who is more interested in collecting her fare than in her physical charms.

For the most part, Homer avoided the staple of the song composer, the love song. One of the few of his songs to fit this category, “Dearest,” Op. 24, was widely performed by both male and female singers for many years. The sweeping vocal line and elaborate accompaniment create a familiar, sentimental style.

The plight of a sweatshop worker is the subject of “The Song of the Shirt.” Homer’s longest song, it took him years to complete. He records,

I thought I had finished it, only to discover. . .that there was a weak spot. Nine years later I wrote a new theme for this passage and sent the song to my publisher, while my wife placed it on her first program of the approaching season. Then I discovered that my new theme spoiled the homogeneity of the song and ruined it; so I recalled the song from Schirmer’s, and Mrs. Homer took it off her program. The following summer I was able to finish the song in a few minutes, in a very simple way; obvious when I found it, but elusive for a long time.²⁶

²⁵ S. Homer, 182. Barber had a fine baritone voice and performed often early in his career.

²⁶ S. Homer, 135.

Louise sang this song at a Metropolitan Opera Sunday evening concert (with an orchestral accompaniment written by Frederick Stock.) The *New York Times* review noted, “A printed leaflet gave the English words, to the evident satisfaction of many who look for another English opera at the Metropolitan this year.”²⁷ The relentless rhythmic pulse and repetitive melody represent the monotonous nature of the seamstress’s work.

Example 23. “The Song of the Shirt,” Op. 25, measures 1–5.

The musical score for "The Song of the Shirt" (measures 1-5) is presented in a two-staff format. The top staff is for the Voice, and the bottom staff is for the Piano. The time signature is 12/8. The tempo is marked "Andante" and the dynamics are "p with deepest compassion". The lyrics are: "With fin-gers wea-ry and worn, With eye-lids hea-vy and red, A". The piano accompaniment consists of a steady eighth-note pulse in the right hand and a similar pulse in the left hand, with chords in the right hand.

²⁷ *New York Times*, 8 January 1917, 11.

wom - an sat in un - wom - an - ly rags, Ply - ing her nee - dle and thread-

Extremes of dynamic contrast vividly portray the woman's despair at her situation. The meter changes regularly, including the rare meter signature of 18/8.

Two songs from William Blake's *Songs of Experience* make up Homer's Op. 26. These are the only serious poems written before the nineteenth century to be used by Homer. "The Sick Rose" was Samuel Barber's favorite of his uncle's songs.²⁸ It is dedicated to Homer's sister Georgiana, who often suggested poems for him to set.²⁹ While two pages long, it is one of Homer's most harmonically complex songs making considerable use of augmented chords and enharmonic re-spelling. The largely diatonic bass line, however, establishes the overall structure of the piece.

²⁸ Barbara B. Heyman, *Samuel Barber: The Composer and His Music*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 109.

²⁹ Katharine Homer Fryer, letter to author, 4 September 1996.

Example 24. "The Sick Rose," Op. 26, No. 1, measures 1-4

Voice: O Rose, thou art sick! The in - vis - i - ble worm, That
 Piano: *cresc.*
 flies in the night, In the howl - ing storm, Has
 Piano: *cresc.*

Songs of the Old South, Op. 27, (pub. 1914)

Five more Weeden poems make up the *Songs of the Old South*, Op. 27.

Barber describes the first, "Way down South," as having "all the color of the

landscape without a trace of self-consciousness."³⁰ As with the *Bandanna Ballads*, Homer's familiar musical language provides a popular flavor.

Songs Op. 28–32

Both Louise and Louise, Jr., programmed "Sing to me, sing," Op. 28, on their recitals. A brilliant showpiece, it features an expansive vocal line supported by a virtuosic accompaniment. "Babylon the Great," Op. 29, is an almost violent setting of Christina Rossetti's poem.

Homer wrote few sacred songs. Homer was a self-declared agnostic at the time of his courtship with Louise, and early in his career he was unwilling to take a church position—almost the only employment opportunity available for a young organist and composer.³¹ Homer's reasons for this reluctance were both philosophical and musical. He wrote,

I . . . loathed the sentimental, sanctimonious atmosphere that music was supposed to create. After the Bach preludes and fugues and the sonatas of Mendelssohn and Rheinberger, anything less majestic and profound than these seemed a profanation of that great and holy instrument, the organ.³²

³⁰ Samuel Barber, preface to *Seventeen Songs of Sidney Homer*, (New York: G. Schirmer, 1943).

³¹ A. Homer, 91.

³² S. Homer, 41.

“Sheep and Lambs,” Op. 31, was Homer’s only sacred song to achieve popularity. While written in a familiar style, it nonetheless contains some interesting harmonic writing including some unusual enharmonic spellings.

Example 25. “Sheep and Lambs, Op. 31, measures 7–8.

The musical score is for the song "Sheep and Lambs" by Homer, Op. 31, measures 7-8. It is written in common time (C) and has a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat). The score is divided into two systems. The first system (measures 7-8) features a voice part and a piano accompaniment. The voice part begins with the lyrics "All in an A - pril eve - ning I" and ends with a fermata. The piano accompaniment consists of a right hand with a melodic line and a left hand with a bass line. Dynamics include *poco rit.* and *dim.*. The second system (measures 9-10) continues the voice part with the lyrics "thought on the Lamb of God. The" and the piano accompaniment. Dynamics include *p*.

Southey’s poem “The Battle of Blenheim” is a satire on the senselessness of war. Homer set this poem in 1914 after the outbreak of World War I. That he should choose this poem is understandable given his opinions of both this war and war in general. He explained,

To me, who had lived five years in Germany, three years in France, a

year in Belgium, and months in England and Italy, war represented just one thing: the spleen of inefficient leaders. Inefficient leadership is the only trouble with the world at all times. The rank and file of men and women are superior to history.³³

Louise programmed this song shortly after it was written, and its timeliness was not lost on the critics. The critic of the *New York Sun* said,

To quote the poet's own words, "it was a famous victory" that the first of the stars, Louise Homer won in Brooklyn last night when she made her husband, Sidney Homer, a far from silent partner as composer of a "Battle of Blenheim" fit to set before a king. Old Southey's plain tale of the wars of Marlborough might have been a bedtime story to the opera singer's own children. She acted charmingly its prattle of questions from innocent Peterkin, and its pantomime of wild-eyed Wilhelmine. An Academy audience half in tears and then all in a riot, showed that you can take your war songs quite seriously enough this year by mixing them with a little fun.³⁴

³³ S. Homer, 225.

³⁴ *New York Sun*, October 16, 1914, quoted in S. Homer, 222.

CHAPTER IV
SONGS COMPOSED AFTER 1914
(OP. 33-43)

Homer continued to write songs as Louise's operatic career slowed down. Gradually becoming less concerned about providing her with new recital material, he often dealt with new and unusual subject matter. He wrote of his songs from this period:

Few of my later songs ever really got into the concert repertoire. . . . Most singers preferred the better known songs. Many song writers have this experience. Certain earlier songs will be taken up, but later songs, neglected. Earlier songs are apt to be fresher and more spontaneous, later songs more thoughtful. Songs have different experiences. Some pass to the concert stage, thence to the studio, and then to the home. Others pass directly to the studio, and still others are known only in the home. Every composer has the delight of having some obscure song mentioned in a remote town where he least expects it.¹

¹ Sidney Homer, *My Wife and I* (New York: Macmillan, 1939), 238. The popularity of earlier versus later songs is by no means uncommon. The early songs of Schumann and Fauré, for example, are performed far more often than their later songs.

Three Scotch Poems, Op. 33,² (pub. 1917)

Settings of Scottish–dialect poems by James Fergusson, John Dunlop, and Alexander Anderson make up Homer’s Op. 33. Thorpe said of the first, “. . . ‘Dinna ask me’ must impel a composer toward the inevitable type of Scottish love song.”³ The second of the group, “Auld Daddy Darkness,” is yet another graceful lullaby to come from Homer’s pen. A mother’s frustrated attempts to put her children to bed is the basis for the third song, “Cuddle Doon.” (One imagines this situation might have been experienced in the Homer household!) The text begins, “The bairnies cuddle doon at nicht / Wi’ muckle faucht an’ din,” and the song is dedicated “To the bairnies” (presumably his own children.)

Four Modern Poems, Op. 34, (pub. 1917)

In *A Singer’s Guide to the American Art Song* Victoria Villamil calls “The King of the Fairy Men,” Op. 34, No. 1 “a startling little song.”⁴ The

² The term “Scotch” (rather than “Scottish”) is found in various G. Schirmer listings of Homer’s songs.

³ Thorpe, 67.

⁴ Victoria Etnier Villamil, *A Singer’s Guide to the American Art Song: 1870–1980*. (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1993), 205. In the preface, Villamil credits the discovery of the *Seventeen Songs of Sidney Homer* on a library shelf with the inspiration for her book.

sparse accompaniment is quite a departure from Homer's usual style. For the most part there is a single line in each hand, one of which doubles the vocal line almost exactly. The insertion of a 2/4 bar in the first section creates a feeling of discomfort consistent with the text.

Example 26. "The King of the Fairy Men," Op. 34, No. 1, measures 1-8.

Allegro energico (with fine irony)

The musical score consists of two systems. The first system shows measures 1-4. The voice line begins with a treble clef and a 2/4 time signature. The piano accompaniment is in 2/4 time, with a dynamic marking of *f marcato*. The lyrics are: "I know the man with - out a soul. He is hap - py as the". The second system shows measures 5-8. The voice line continues with the lyrics: "day. He is hap - py peo - ple say." The piano accompaniment continues with a similar rhythmic pattern.

mf

He is hap - py so they say.

mf

The choice of the poem "When Death to either shall come" proved to be an ironic one. Homer, owing to his ill health, was long convinced that he would die before Louise, and when she died, he was reported to have said, "I never dreamed she would go first!"⁵ The musical style of the song is simple and gentle without lapsing into the cloying style of the parlor songs of the day.

While the text of "Mary's Baby," Op. 34, No. 3, is religious, lines such as "God was never crucified, / Only Mary's baby died / For the hope of humankind" are certainly difficult to understand and quite possibly controversial. (Thorpe refers to the Irene Rutherford McLeod poem as

⁵ Anne Homer, *Louise Homer and the Golden Age of Opera*, (New York: William Morrow, 1973), 422.

“theologically shocking.”)⁶ Homer nonetheless gave the poem an interesting setting using the ternary form common in his songs.

The first section begins in the minor mode and alternates between 3/4 and 2/4 measures. The second section (only four measures) is in the parallel major and 4/4. The third section returns to the minor key and the metrical structure of the opening.

Example 27. “Mary’s Baby,” Op. 34, No. 3, measures 1–4.

Andante (clear, eloquent)
mf

Voice

Light came forth from Ma - ry's womb,

Piano

Christ was born in Ma - ry's pain.

⁶ Thorpe, 62.

"Homeland," Op. 35, (1918)

In September of 1918 *The New York Times* printed both text and music to "Homeland," Op. 35. The headline read,

"Homeland," song by Sidney Homer, to be sung by Louise Homer. Words of this hitherto unpublished work, also by the well-known American composer, express the thoughts of one of our soldiers in France—Composer's wife, famous Metropolitan Opera star, will sing the song at the Worcester Festival next month.⁷

This was the only time Homer used his own poetry in a published song. The text, while "patriotic," is not militaristic but rather portrays the longing of a soldier to leave the bloody field of battle and return home. Louise sang the song on a Metropolitan Opera Sunday evening concert and it was published by Harold Flammer.⁸ Sidney and Louise had purchased a home on Lake George, and after this song was written began calling it "Homeland."⁹ (The home still stands, and Katharine Homer Fryer reports that it is the only

⁷ *New York Times* 29 September 1918 4.

⁸ William H. Seltsam, *Metropolitan Opera Annals* (New York: H. W. Wilson, 1947), 326

⁹ A. Homer, 351.

estate on Lake George that remains a private residence and has not been converted to a hotel.)¹⁰

Songs from Mother Goose, Op. 36, (pub. 1920)

In the foreword to the Macmillan edition of *Songs from Mother Goose*, Op. 36, Homer wrote,

My editor insists that I say something about the circumstances which led to the writing of these songs. They were written in response to a frequently repeated request from my wife for some songs that "the whole family could sing together." As we are a large family and the youngest member, Joy, is but four years old, it did not seem possible that anything that she could grasp would appeal to the others.

But one day in the midst of other work, I came across some selections from Mother Goose. I realized that here was something which could be equally enjoyed by children of all ages, and even by "grown ups" who are children at heart, and from this resulted the present set of songs. They were written without any particular age in mind. Thus, little Joy sings most of them by heart, while at the same time Mrs. Homer and our eldest daughter, Louise, have found a place for them in their song recitals.

Mother Goose has something for everybody. The wit, humor, and affectionate spirit which fill these rhymes help to show us how much we all have in common and what an artificial and unnecessary barrier age is, anyway.¹¹

¹⁰ Katharine Homer Fryer, letter to author, 15 August 1996.

¹¹ Sidney Homer, foreword to *Songs from Mother Goose*, Op. 35 (New York: Macmillan, 1920).

The thirty-five songs were published complete in one volume by book publisher Macmillan. Homer felt that songs should be sold in bookstores as well as music shops and wrote, "I hoped this venture with Macmillan would help a little to bring this about."¹² Seventeen of the songs were also printed in high and low keys by John Church. (Two groups of eight each were published and "The House That Jack Built" was issued separately.)

The songs won immediate critical acclaim. The *New York Times* music critic Richard Aldrich wrote,

Sidney Homer is a prolific composer of songs, but he has put forward few that are more genial or that will give more pleasure than the collection of "Songs from Mother Goose" which has recently appeared. . . The tunes are simple, as are the accompaniments, but they have character, and the cheerful spirit of the verse is expressed tunefully, often pungently and suggestively in a not too limited range of harmony.¹³

Despite the juvenile nature of the texts, Homer put some of his most creative writing into these songs. The first eight songs of the Macmillan edition segue from one to another without pause. (This is the only instance in any of Homer's songs where this is the case.)

¹² S. Homer, 237.

¹³ Richard Aldrich, "Music: New Musical Publications," *New York Times*, 24 October 1920, sec. VI, p. 3.

Example 28. excerpt from *Songs from Mother Goose*, Op. 35, "Pease-pudding Hot, Pease-pudding Cold," measures 5-6, "Hey, Diddle Diddle," m. 1.

The image displays two musical excerpts. The first excerpt, for "Pease-pudding Hot, Pease-pudding Cold," features a voice line and a piano accompaniment in 5/4 time. The voice part has the lyrics "Some like it in the pot, nine days old." The piano accompaniment includes a fermata over the first six measures. The second excerpt, for "Hey, Diddle Diddle," is in 12/8 time and includes a voice line with the lyrics "Hey, did - dle did - dle, the cat and the fid - dle, The" and a piano accompaniment. The piano part is marked with *p* and includes the performance directions *Vivace* and *rollicking*.

Some of the songs, such as "Ding, Dong, Bell," contain moments of real beauty. The accompaniment of this song exquisitely represents the ringing of three sets of bells.

Example 29. "Ding Dong, Bell" from Songs from Mother Goose, Op. 35, measures 1–4.

Allegro
impressively

Voice

Ding, dong, bell, Pus-sy's in the well!

Piano

con pedale

Who put her in? Lit-tle Tom-myGreen.

sfz

Louise performed "The House That Jack Built" on one of her recitals with Louise, Jr. The *New York Times* critic Richard Aldrich commented, "The 'cumulative' song of 'the House That Jack Built' gave special pleasure, as cumulative folksongs have done for so many hundred years."¹⁴

¹⁴ Richard Aldrich, "Mme. and Miss Louise Homer Sing," *New York Times*, 13 March 1921, 3.

Some of the songs contain musical novelties. A descending whole-tone scale makes an appearance at the end of "Hickory, Dickory, Dock," and "I went Up One Pair of Stairs" is not only written in 5/4 but requires the response "Just like me" to complete each phrase.

Example 30. excerpt from *Songs from Mother Goose*, Op. 35, "I went up one pair of stairs," measure. 1.

Andante con moto
mf artfully

The musical score is for the song "I went up one pair of stairs" in 5/4 time, marked "Andante con moto" and "mf artfully". It consists of three staves. The top staff is the vocal line, starting with the lyrics "I went up one pair of stairs." followed by a rest and then "I". The middle staff is a vocal line with a rest for the first two measures, followed by the lyrics "Just like me." The bottom staff is the piano accompaniment, starting with a rest for the first two measures, then playing a descending whole-tone scale (G4, F4, E4, D4, C4) marked "mf".

***Six Cheerful Songs to Poems of American Humor*, Op. 37, (pub. 1920)**

Homer continued in a lighter vein with his *Six Cheerful Songs to Poems of American Humor*, Op. 37. The first of the songs, "Spacially Jim," portrays a woman who finds the only way to deter her most avid suitor is to marry him. It was sung by Louise, Jr., and Richard Aldrich noted that her

performance “had so much of its arch and blithe spirit that she was obliged at once to repeat it.”¹⁵

Ernest Lawrence Thayer’s “Casey at the Bat” is undeniably one of the most famous poems in all of American popular literature. Homer’s pompous musical treatment brilliantly matches the flowery language Thayer’s mock-serious poem. For example, in the section where Casey calms the unruly crowd, the serene accompaniment effectively captures the near religious reverence felt for the fictional athlete.

Example 31. “Casey at the Bat,” Op. 37, No. 3, measures 39–40.

The musical score for "Casey at the Bat" measures 39–40 is presented in two systems. The first system (measures 39–40) features a voice line with the lyrics "smile of Chris-tian car-i-ty great Ca-sey's vis-age shone; He" and a piano accompaniment marked *pp più lento*. The second system (measures 41–42) features a voice line with the lyrics "still'd the ris-ing tu-mult, he bade the game go on; He" and a piano accompaniment marked *cantabile*. The piano part consists of a steady, flowing accompaniment in the right hand and a more rhythmic accompaniment in the left hand.

¹⁵ Ibid.

The Old South is again the topic in "A Plantation Ditty." Oliver Wendell Holmes' "The Height of the Ridiculous" and the anonymous "Christmas Chimes" complete the set.

Songs Op. 38, (pub. 1926) –43, (ca. 1913, pub. 1929)

Homer's setting of Vachel Lindsay's "General William Booth Enters into Heaven," Op. 38, has been eclipsed by Charles Ives' labyrinthine version. Unlike Ives, however, Homer set Lindsay's entire poem. Lindsay's wife, Elizabeth, was nearly moved to tears by Louise's performance of the song at Carnegie Hall.¹⁶ Lindsay himself, however, disliked the setting it was given and compared it to "pasting wall paper on carved wood."¹⁷

Lindsay may have been disappointed that Homer ignored his indication that the text was "to be sung to the tune of 'The Blood of the Lamb,'" but instead created an entirely new melody (Ives does not quote this hymn tune,

¹⁶ Eleanor Ruggles, *The West-Going Heart: A Life of Vachel Lindsay* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1959), 351. This account mentions Louise Homer, but does not mention Sidney. Undoubtedly it was his setting of the poem that was heard at this performance.

¹⁷ Vachel Lindsay, quoted in "News Notes," *Poetry* (August, 1927) : 295-96.

but "Cleansing Fountain," which is used with the text "There is a fountain filled with blood.")

Homer does follow Lindsay's structure, however. Each of the poem's main sections are set to contrasting thematic material and the dramatic scene of Booth's legion of converts juxtaposed with the heavenly throng is enhanced by a change from a brisk march to a subdued hymn-like passage and back again.

Example 32. "General William Booth Enters into Heaven," Op. 38, measures 29-33.

The musical score consists of two systems. The first system shows measures 29-32. The voice part begins with a *mf* dynamic and the lyrics "Beard a-fly-ing, air of high com-mand Un-a-". The piano accompaniment features a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand, both marked *mf*. The second system shows measures 33-34. The voice part continues with the lyrics "ba-ted in that ho-ly land." The piano accompaniment continues with a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand, both marked *mf*. The score concludes with a final cadence in measure 34.

Tempo I

p *più animato*
p *not dragging*

Je - sus came from out the court - house door,

p *più animato* *legato*

In 1929 Oscar Sonneck, president of G. Schirmer at the time, persuaded Homer to allow "The Everlasting Mercy," Op. 42, "The Lay of the Laborer," Op. 43, and "The Widow in the Bye Street" to be published. Although written much earlier (around 1913), Homer had withheld them from publication for reasons which were never given.¹⁸

The Widow in the Bye Street, no opus number, (1913, pub. 1929)

As Homer was working on "The Widow in the Bye Street," Louise wrote to her mother that he was setting "passages from the works of John Masefield, an English poet we have recently discovered."¹⁹ This group of three songs is Homer's only set to have an overarching narrative. The first

¹⁸ S. Homer, 237.

¹⁹ A. Homer, 326.

song describes a widow's life and the sacrifices she makes to provide for her son. In the second, the widow visits her grown son in prison as he awaits execution for manslaughter following a jealous quarrel. The final song depicts the widow's madness following her son's death.

This set may be Homer's masterpiece. The best elements of his style are present. Inventive use of harmony and dramatic vocal lines indicate Homer's respect for the drama inherent in the text. While Thorpe refers to the first song as "the plainest sort of narrative, lacking either emotional or aesthetic appeal,"²⁰ a close examination reveals a wealth of musical interest.

The song is in a modified-strophic form with three identical stanzas followed by a coda. Each stanza is divided into three sections in different keys and tempos. The coda is based on the opening material.

	Text	Tempo	Key	Meter	Measures
A	"Down Bye Street"	Allegro	D minor	2/4, 3/4	2-20
B	"Her little son"	Più lento	transitional	2/4	21-29
C	"A glimpse of that dead Husband"	Andante	F-#	6/8	30-33
A'	"And so she stitched"	Allegro	D minor	2/4, 3/4	34-42
B'	"Her love"	Più lento	transitional	2/4	43-51
C'	"Another hunger"	Andante	F-#	6/8	52-55
A''	"To make him plump"	Allegro	D minor	2/4, 3/4	56-64

²⁰ Thorpe, 67.

B''	"So years went on"	Più lento	transitional	2/4	65-74
C''	"And then the widow's loving heart"	Andante	F-#	6/8	75-78
Coda	"And all the years"	"exulting"	D minor	2/4	79-99

A religious fervor permeates "The Widow's Prayer." In this piece Homer is at his most lyrical. The expansive accompaniment builds to an almost ecstatic climax.

Although Homer wrote no operas, "The Widow's Song" is reminiscent of the great operatic mad scenes. The chromatic melody is presented to a lively rhythm, deftly creating an image of the widow's deluded song. The piece begins and ends on a B# half-diminished chord and the establishment of a clear tonal center is avoided throughout much of the piece. The meter changes from 6/8 to 4/4 and back again as the focus of the text shifts back and forth from the widow to life around her.

Example 33. "The Widow's Song," measures 3-5.

mf *poco rit.*

Voice

Sing - ing her cra - zy song the moth - er goes.

Piano

mf *poco rit.*

Three Songs from the Slums, no opus number, (date unknown) ²¹

Homer set three poems of Toyohiko Kagawa, who was a social activist in the slums of Kobe, Japan, from 1910 to 1924.²² These are the only poems from outside Europe or the United States he set. The songs remain unpublished, although Samuel Barber may have tried to get G. Schirmer to publish them shortly after Homer's death in 1953.²³

In the first song, "Snowy Morning," the tragic picture of a poor girl in the snow is starkly drawn with a simple melody and harmony. As in many of his songs, there is recitative-like vocal writing. What is radically different, however, is the complete absence of any lyrical melodic sections.

²¹ The manuscripts of these songs were made available to the author by Katharine Homer Fryer.

²² James Kiefer, "Calendar of Christian Historical Biographies," (accessed 15 September 1996); available from [http://www.louisville.edu/~bscurr01/christia /chrcal.htm](http://www.louisville.edu/~bscurr01/christia/chrcal.htm); Internet.

²³ Katharine Homer Fryer, Letter to author, September 4, 1996.

Example 34. "Snowy Morning," measures 1–6.

Adagio

Voice

Six in the morn - ing; It is dark and cold. A

Piano

p *sostenuto*

cresc. *dim.*

lit - tle fig - ure stands by the - sa - ke shop, Her head bowed down A - gainst an emp - ty cart.

cresc. *dim.*

Like many songs on Asian themes of the period, the second song, "Little Sister," makes use of the pentatonic scale. The repetitive, stark accompaniment vividly depicts a young girl's mundane job in a factory.

Example 35. "Little Sister," measures 1–6.

Andante con moto

Voice

She leaves her bed At five; And it is

Piano

mf *dim.*

The image shows a musical score for a piece titled "Spring Night". It consists of two staves: a vocal line on top and a piano accompaniment on the bottom. The key signature has three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The vocal line is marked with dynamics *p*, *rit.*, and *a tempo*. The piano accompaniment is also marked with *p*, *rit.*, and *a tempo*. The lyrics are: "ten at night When she comes home a - gain."

In "Spring Night" a bright accompaniment contrasted with a legato vocal line points up the contrast between a brightly-lit restaurant and the two young koto players who are forced to work there.

CONCLUSIONS

Felix Deyo, writing in 1949, referred to Homer as a "forgotten composer."¹ (In this same article he also prematurely described Homer as deceased!) That his songs should go from wide popularity to near obscurity in less than a generation is an unfortunately common occurrence.

G. Schirmer records from 1914 and 1915 show that many of Homer's best songs sold few, if any, copies.² No doubt as the popularity of his more famous songs dwindled, they were not reprinted. His most popular songs were those that appealed to the general public such as "A Banjo Song," "Dearest," "Requiem," and "Sheep and Lambs," and many of his more difficult songs were never widely performed. Homer's entire output, then, has been judged on the basis of a few songs which are hardly his finest or even representative of his compositional style.

Hans Nathan suggested that Homer's songs are "largely forgotten. . .because they tend too often to the facile and commonplace."³ In

¹ Felix Deyo, "The Neglected Songs of an American Composer," *International Lyric Courier*, (July, 1949) : 6.

² G. Schirmer statement of Homer royalties for the period November 1, 1914, to April 1, 1915, given to the author by Katharine Homer Fryer.

the preface to his edition of Homers songs, Barber asserted that some of the songs were "written for dramatic voices which rarely exist today; like the ballads of Löwe, there would seem to be little place for them in present day recitals."⁴ Neither of these staments, however, adequately explain the disappearance of his songs from the recital stage.

As more American composers began producing high-quality songs, older songs such as Homer's were simply displaced. Even a cursory glance at recital programs throughout this century will reveal that while new works in French, Italian and German have been continually added to the established repertoire, older American songs have generally been replaced by newer compositions.

With Louise and her colleagues to perform them, Homer's songs quickly became famous. As Louise's career wound down, however, most vanished just as quickly from the recital stage. Many of the better songs are difficult for amateur performers and leading professionals of subsequent generations turned their attention to newer songs.

³ Hans Nathan, "United States of America," *A History of Song*, rev. ed. ed. Denis Stevens (New York: W.W. Norton, 1970), 431.

⁴ Samuel Barber, preface to *Seventeen Songs of Sidney Homer*, (New York: G. Schirmer, 1943).

The songs of Sidney Homer and other leading American composers of his time represent an important step toward the establishment of an American art song tradition. This is not to suggest that Homer's songs remain mere "museum pieces." Many of his songs such as "Evensong," "Michael Robarted Bid His Beloved be at Peace," "The Sick Rose," and "General William Booth Enters into Heaven," are effective, well-written for the voice, and often display genuine beauty, charm and dramatic flair and are as viable for performance today as they were during the early decades of this century.

APPENDIX

COMPLETE LIST OF SIDNEY HOMER'S SONGS

Songs by Sidney Homer

Title	Poet	Publisher
Trost der Nacht, op. 3	Carl Spitta	N/A
Four Old Slavic Poems, op. 5	Anonymous	
Der Kosak		GS
Der Verlorene Schäfer		GS
Der Schreiber		GS
Der Jünglings Abschied in den Krieg		GS
Eight Poems by Tennyson	Alfred, Lord Tennyson	RP
Break, break, break, op. 6, no. 1		GS
Crossing the Bar, op. 6, no. 2		GS
Sweet and low, op. 7, no. 1		GS
Thy voice is heard thro' rolling drums, op. 7, no. 2		GS
Home they brought her warrior dead, op. 7, no. 3		GS
The City Child, op. 8, no. 1		GS
Minnie and Winnie, op. 8, no. 2		GS
Enid's Song, op. 9		GS/CVR
Three Poems of Thomas Hood, op. 10	Thomas Hood	
It was the time of roses		GS
Autumn		GS
A Lake and a Fairy Boat		GS
[Two songs], op. 11		
Daybreak	Henry Wadsworth Longfellow	GS
Baby's Outing	Mary Riddell Corfey	GS
Three Poems of Browning, op. 12	Robert Browning	
My Star		GS
A Woman's Last Word		GS/CVR
Prospice		GS
The Poor Man's Song, op. 13	Anonymous	GS
The Last Leaf, op. 14	Oliver Wendell Holmes	GS/CVR

Six poems from "Underwoods," op. 15	Robert Louis Stevenson	RP
Sing me a song of a lad that is gone		GS/CVR
Requiem		GS*/CVR
The Unforgotten		GS/CVR
The Stormy Evening		GS
The Country of the Camisards		GS/CVR
Evensong		GS
Three songs from "A Child's Garden of Verses," op. 16	Robert Louis Stevenson	
Pirate Story		GS/CVR
Young Night Thought		GS
Singing		GS
[Four songs], op. 17		
How's my boy?	Sydney Dobell	GS
From the brake the nightingale	William Ernest Henley	GS
Michael Robartes Bids his Beloved be at Peace	William Butler Yeats	GS/CVR
To Russia	Joaquin Miller	GS
[Three Songs], op. 18		
When windflowers blossom on the sea	Christina Georgina Rossetti	GS
The Sick Child	Robert Louis Stevenson	GS
The Pauper's Drive	T. Noel	GS
Seventeen Lyrics from "Sing-song," op. 19	Christina Georgina Rossetti	GS/CVR
Part 1		
Eight O'clock: the postman's knock!		
Baby cry—Oh fie!		
Dead in the cold, a song-singing thrush		
Love me—I love you		
Kookoorookoo! kookoorookoo!		
Boats sail on the rivers		
In the meadow—what in the meadow?		
The dog lies in his kennel		
Lie abed, sleepy head		
Mix a pancake, stir a pancake		
Part 2		
Who has seen the wind?		
Dancing on the hilltops		
A Pocket handkerchief to hem		
A Motherless soft lambkin		
Lullaby, oh Lullaby!		
Hurt no living thing		
Minnie and Mattie and fat little May		
The Fiddler of Dooney, op. 20	William Butler Yeats	GS
[Two songs], op. 21		
The Eternal Goodness	John Greenleaf Whittier	GS
There's Heaven above	Robert Browning	GS

* Currently available in the following anthologies:

Van A. Christy, ed. *Expressive Singing Anthology*, vol. 1, 2nd ed., Wm. C. Brown, 1983.

Van A. Christy, ed. *Foundations in Singing*, Wm. C. Brown Music, 1979.

Richard D. Row, ed. *The Young Singer: Tenor*, Row Music (Carl Fischer), 1965.

Richard D. Row, ed. *The Young Singer: Baritone*, Row Music (Carl Fischer), 1965.

Bandanna Ballads, op. 22	Maria Howard Weeden	GS
Mammy's Lullaby		GS
Uncle Rome		GS
A Plantation Hymn		GS
A Banjo Song		GS
Two Lovers and Lizette		GS
[Two songs], op. 23		
April, April	William Watson	GS
Ferry me across the Water	Christina Georgina Rossetti	GS
Dearest op. 24	William Ernest Henley	GS
The Song of the Shirt, op. 25	Thomas Hood	GS
Two "Songs of Experience," op. 26	William Blake	
The Sick Rose		GS/CVR
Infant Sorrow		GS/CVR
Six Songs of the Old South, op. 27	Maria Howard Weeden	
Way down South		GS
The Song of the Watcher		GS
When the Angels Call		GS
Long Ago		GS
At Last		GS
Old Watt and the Rabbits		GS
Sing to me, sing, op. 28	William Ernest Henley	GS
Babylon the Great, op. 29	Christina Georgina Rossetti	GS
Sheep and Lambs, op. 31	Katharine Tynan Hinkson	GS*/CVR
The Battle of Blenheim, op. 32	Robert Southey	GS
Three Scotch Poems, op. 33		
Dinna ask me	John Dunlop	GS
Auld Daddy Darkness	James Fergusson	GS
Cuddle Doon	Alexander Anderson	GS
Four Modern Poems, op. 34		
The King of the Fairy Men	James Stephens	GS
When Death to either shall come	Robert Bridges	GS
Mary's Baby	Irene Rutherford McLeod	GS
Lone Dog	Irene Rutherford McLeod	GS
Homeland, op. 35	Sidney Homer	HF
Songs from Mother Goose, op. 36	"Mother Goose"	Mac [†]
Pease-Pudding Hot, Pease-Pudding Cold		
Hey, Diddle Diddle		
Little Jack Horner		JC-1
Little Miss Muffet		JC-1
There Was a Crooked Man		

* Currently available from G. Schirmer

† The complete set was published by Macmillan. John Church published two sets of eight each (listed here as "JC-1" and "JC-2") and "The House that Jack Built" separately.

Songs from Mother Goose, op. 36 (con't.)		
Little Polly Flinders		
Barber, Barber, Shave a Pig		JC-1
Little Boy Blue		JC-1
Ding Dong Bell		
Pussy Cat, Pussy Cat, Where Have You been?		
Old King Cole		JC-1
Tommy Snooks and Bessie Brooks		
Rock-A-Bye, Baby		JC-1
I Had a Little Husband		JC-1
The Queen of Hearts		
Solomon Grundy		JC-1
The House that Jack Built		JC
Mistress Mary, Quite Contrary		JC-2
Hickory, Dickory, Dock		JC-2
There Was a Little Man		JC-2
Dance to Your Daddy		JC-2
See-Saw Sacradown		JC-2
Little Willie Winkle		JC-2
Simple Simon		JC-2
I Went Up One Pair of Stairs		
To Market, To Market		
One Misty, Moisty Morning		
Humpty Dumpty sat on a Wall		JC-2
I love Six-pence, Pretty Little Six-pence		
If All the World were Apple-pie		
Old Father Gray Beard		
The North Wind Doth Blow		
Baa, Baa, Black Sheep		
Margaret Wrote a Letter		
Poor Dog Bright		
Six Cheerful Songs to Poems of American Humor, op. 37		
Spacially Jim	Bessie Morgan	GS
An Idaho Ball	Anonymous	GS
Casey at the Bat	Ernest Lawrence Thayer	GS
A Plantation Ditty	Frank Lebby Stanton	GS
The Height of the Ridiculous	Oliver Wendell Holmes	GS
Christmas Chimes	Anonymous	GS
General William Booth Enters into Heaven, op. 38		
The Everlasting Mercy, op. 42	Vachel Lindsay	GS
The Lay of the Laborer, op. 43	John Masefield	GS
	Thomas Hood	GS
The Widow in the Bye Street (no opus number)		
Down Bye Street	John Masefield	GS
The Widow's Prayer		GS†
The Widow's Song		CVR
		CVR
Three Songs from the Slums (no opus number)		
Snowy Morning	Toyohiko Kagawa	N/A
Spring Night		
Little Sister		

† Currently available in the volume *New Anthology of American Song*, G. Schirmer, 1958.

Publisher codes: (all are out of print, except where otherwise noted)

CVR	Classical Vocal Reprints*	GS	G. Schirmer
HF	Harold Flammer	JC	John Church
RP	Recital Publications*	Mac	Macmillan
N/A	unpublished (in the collection of Katharine Homer Fryer)		

* Songs from these publishers are reprints from the originals and are currently available. Other Homer titles may be added to their catalogues in the future.

Publishers listed next to collections have published that group in one volume.

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