“DO YOU REMEMBER?”: REMEMBERING GAY VICTIMS OF THE HOLOCAUST THROUGH JAKE HEGGIE’S THEATER PIECE, *FOR A LOOK OR A TOUCH*

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American composer Jake Heggie’s *For a Look or a Touch* exists as the only classical music work of remembrance based on the topic of remembering homosexual victims of the Holocaust. The composer, after being approached by Mina Miller, wrote this 2007 composition as part of the Music of Remembrance concert series. The music of this work varies in style from a blazing swing dance to a haunting vocalise on “oo.” Gene Scheer created the text, delivered in the work by the characters Manfred Lewin and Gad Beck, as a compilation of many influential stories from the documentary film *Paragraph 175*. *For a Look or a Touch* chronicles the horrendous treatment of homosexuals before, during, and after World War II.

Chapters include an introduction to homosexual persecution during Hitler’s reign, a look at current works of remembrance and how *For a Look or a Touch* came to fruition, an explanation of the texts created by Gene Scheer, a discussion on Jake Heggie’s musical setting of this text, and avenues for possible future research. Appendices include text of the German anti-sodomy laws as written in Paragraph 175, the mission statement for the organization Music of Remembrance, transcripts from personal interviews with both Jake Heggie and Gene Scheer, correspondence with Heggie, and the source delineation of Gene Scheer’s text.
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by

Joseph Warren Rinaldi
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I would like to express my deepest gratitude for what Jake Heggie and Gene Scheer have offered the world through their talents. Without them, this project would not have been possible. Despite their extremely busy schedules, they each gave freely of their time and support. For this, I will always be thankful. Working with these men has truly shaped me as an artist and an individual. Their encouragement will always be remembered.

I would also like to thank the librarians at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum for assisting me throughout the research process. Their willingness to gather and share archival information was invaluable for this project.

Excerpts from *For a Look or a Touch*, music by Jake Heggie, libretto by Gene Scheer. Copyright © 2007 by Bent Penn Music, Inc. All rights reserved. Used by permission.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Monumental historical events are often defined not by how they unfold but rather by how they are remembered. Subsequently, it is through an act of remembrance that such events are forever shaped in the eyes of the world. History is relived, reexamined, and ultimately relearned as a means of improving the future through these acts; there are many ways in which such historical events can be remembered. From the output of newspapers, television programs, movies, and film to the instruction given in an academic course, each shares the responsibility of disseminating information that will remember the past. Musical acts of remembrance, perhaps, are charged with an even greater task because of their versatility. They can entertain, supplement other art mediums, or even be used as educational tools. Though it is difficult to define music’s educational purposes, music often instructs by creating emotionally enhanced, and often transcendent, experiences. In particular, staged musical works help to recreate historical events for current and future audiences.

Such acts of remembrance contribute greatly to the process of remembering the Holocaust and Hitler’s Nazi Germany. Over the course of the past several decades, the act of remembering victims of this period has taken several different directions. This project will examine a work of remembrance, Jake Heggie’s *For a Look or a Touch*, as it is part of a larger body of art that deals with the similar theme of homosexual persecution during the Holocaust.

A wave of Holocaust-related research and exploration began almost immediately
following the fall of Hitler’s regime.\textsuperscript{1} Although many victims of the Holocaust were invited to share their experiences from this horrendous time, the extent of Holocaust studies has remained primarily focused on the millions of Jewish victims, representing the majority of those persecuted under Hitler’s rule. The website for the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (www.ushmm.org) has been an invaluable resource for gathering facts regarding the Jewish persecution as well as other Holocaust-related information. The website offers this daunting statistic: of the nine million European Jews living prior to Hitler’s reign, nearly two of every three were killed as part of the “Final Solution,” which decimated the original Jewish population.\textsuperscript{2}

Even though these numbers provide a glimpse at the magnitude of Hitler’s actions, they only represent the Jewish victims of the Holocaust. Where it is seemingly appropriate that the largest portion of Holocaust research and remembrance has focused on the Jewish Holocaust, countless others were also victimized. These victims—representing various social, political, or ideological groups—included Socialists, Communists, Jehovah’s Witnesses, homosexuals, and others.\textsuperscript{3} Though homosexual victims comprise a relatively small percentage of the millions persecuted during the Holocaust, remembering their experiences has become a relatively new avenue of Holocaust research.

\textsuperscript{1} Anita Grossmann, “Victims, Villains, and Survivors: Gendered Perceptions and Self-Perceptions of Jewish Displaced Persons in Occupied Postwar Germany,” in Sexuality and German Fascism. ed.

\textsuperscript{2} United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. “The Holocaust.” Holocaust Encyclopedia. http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/?ModuleId=10005143. (accessed on 12 January 2011). “Final Solution” refers to the acts of mass genocide that Hitler eventually implemented under his dictatorship. Originally, Jewish members of the population were sanctioned only to perform works of labor, most often at no cost to the German government. However, in Hitler’s pursuit of the master, Aryan, race, he saw it necessary to instill the “Final Solution,” or the Nazi rule of order to annihilate the Jews of Europe.

\textsuperscript{3} Ibid.
The German anti-sodomy laws, as outlined in paragraph 175 (§175), were written in 1871 and provided the legal basis for much of Adolf Hitler’s agenda. Hitler’s active pursuit of German supremacy through the Aryan race led him to the belief that any member of society that he saw as being socially, morally, or genetically defective should be removed or, worse, killed. Hitler’s elite guard, the Schutzstaffel (SS) led by Heinrich Himmler, sought to apprehend homosexuals. In his book *Sex Crimes Under the Wehrmacht*, scholar David Snyder offers these viewpoints of homosexuality perceived during Hitler’s reign:

First, homosexuality endangered the German nation. By renouncing their duty to procreate, homosexuals deprived Germany of valuable offspring, putting the Aryan race’s future at risk. Second, the true homosexual endeavored to seduce every youth with whom he came into contact. Himmler and other theorists believed that youths seduced by homosexuals developed “degenerate personalities.” They, in turn, became seducers themselves, spreading homosexuality like a virulent contagion.4

The study of the homosexual Holocaust presents a unique opportunity for research because the story of this group is only beginning to find its voice among contemporary scholars.

In 1986, Richard Plant gave the first comprehensive English account of homosexuals living in Nazi Germany, but he only did so more than forty years following the end of the war. In this groundbreaking work, Plant, a refugee from Nazi Germany, offers many first-hand accounts, interviews, and personal histories in a book that “seeks to throw some light in a corner of modern history that has thus far remained too much in the shadows.”5 Plant also suggests that the silence held by many homosexual victims

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4 David Raub Snyder, *Sex Crimes under the Wehrmacht*. (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2007), 105.
in the years following the war occurred for two reasons. First, the nature and intimacy of homosexuals' "crimes" prevented many from wanting to willingly share their experiences. The second, and more pressing, factor was that the German anti-sodomy laws written in 1871 remained in effect until 1969, more than twenty years following the war. This German law that stifled the immediate testimonies of many homosexuals also served as a barricade for serious research into the matter. Such silence has proven difficult to penetrate, but acts of remembrance have recently started to commemorate homosexual victims, retelling their stories.
CHAPTER 2

WORKS OF REMEMBRANCE

The act of remembrance is challenged with remembering those victims who might otherwise have been forgotten. This is especially pertinent when considering the remembrance of gay victims, but it has not been until fairly recently that homosexual victims have been portrayed in works of remembrance. Dorthe Seifert’s article “Between Silence and License” studies the trend in the artistic representation of homosexual Holocaust victims that followed Martin Sherman’s 1979 play *Bent*.6 Seifert comments that:

The need to remember and commemorate the homosexual victims by writing about their sufferings under the Nazi regime without making judgments about their sexuality was only articulated more than twenty years after the collapse of the Nazi regime, at a time when the opportunities for collecting survivor memoirs were disappearing rapidly and the memories of the National Socialist period were already strongly influenced by the impressions of the postwar period.7

*Bent* was set to portray the time following “The Night of the Long Knives,” a night in Nazi history used for a series of political executions. Hitler had, up until that point, employed Ernst Röhm as the leader of the Sturmabteilung (SA), an actively brutal police force. Röhm, a loosely closeted homosexual, and other members of his SA troop were the main targets on this night of political executions.8 Max, the homosexual main character in *Bent*, claims Jewish heritage upon his arrival at the concentration camp in order to avoid the fate associated with the pink triangle, the symbol sewn onto the

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6 Martin Sherman, *Bent*, DVD. Directed by Sean Mathias. (Los Angeles, CA: Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1997). *Bent*, is a fictional story revolving around the persecution of homosexuals in Nazi Germany. The main character, Max, denies his homosexuality in the concentration camp, claiming that he was Jewish in hopes of less severe treatment.


8 “Fourth Floor Exhibit.” United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. 100 Raoul Wallenberg Place, SW Washington, DC 20024-2126. (29 December 2010).
jackets of gays. Inmates of Hitler’s prisons and concentration camps were labeled with a series of multicolored triangles, bands and dots. There existed “a pink triangle for homosexuals, a green triangle for criminals, a red for political prisoners, black for asocials, brown for Gypsies, purple for Jehovah’s Witnesses, and for Jews a yellow triangle or the star of David.” The homosexuals ranked at the bottom of prisoner hierarchy. Bent paved the way for other works and compositions to bear great validity in the entertainment and scholarly worlds, but most importantly it started the much-needed trend of homosexual remembrance. When commenting about the importance of remembrance, Seifert states, “The very act of testifying to historical events…is not only a way of drawing public attention to the injustices done to homosexuals. It also becomes a means of ‘rescuing’ a historical experience from oblivion.”

The process of creating my dissertation involved several visits to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) in Washington, DC. Immediately upon entering the museum, one is consumed with an overwhelming sense of sadness. Each visitor receives an identification card—my first card identified me as Frank Meissner of Trest, Czechoslovakia—which they must carry throughout the four floors of the museum. Crammed into an elevator shaft, the tour guide escorts you to the fourth floor to start your downward journey through the building. Pictures, movie reels, and artifacts adorn the walls of each floor, but the museum is much more than a collection of objects. It is a portal into a time that most people simply cannot fathom.

The museum does a remarkable job of creating an organized journey through the timeline of historical events. From Hitler’s rise to power to the atrocities committed in

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9 Paragraph 175, directed by Rob Epstein and Jeffrey Friedmann, New Yorker Video, 2000.
10 Seifert, 98.
the camps, the USHMM truly captures the essence of this dark time in human history. As you descend through the floors, strikingly poignant displays are strategically placed along each of the passageways. One such display is the collection of shoes that line one of the corridors. The museum director, Sara Bloomfield, commented that, “These shoes are iconic symbols of the Holocaust since they are personal and each represents an innocent life. Our millions of visitors tell us overwhelmingly that the display of victims’ shoes was the most unforgettable part of their Museum experience.”

Although the museum’s inclusion of such exhibits is not limited to the study of Jewish victims, they receive the largest percentage of representation. Homosexuals, as well as other groups, were indeed represented well in the museum, but their stories were not a focal point. It is therefore the responsibility of others to remember these victims.

Music has served a great purpose in remembering victims of the Holocaust. Mina Miller founded the organization Music of Remembrance (MOR) in 1998, and acting as both the president and artistic director since that time, MOR has presented two concerts each year. One marks the anniversary of Kristallnacht (Night of Broken Glass) during the fall season, and the other marks Holocaust Remembrance Day each spring. Since its formation, the group has focused on presenting both old and new musical works to its audience in an attempt to aid the proliferation of Holocaust remembrance. The mission statement for Music of Remembrance expresses an inclusive viewpoint of this goal.

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12 Music of Remembrance. “About Us.” http://www.musicofremembrance.org/about (accessed 12 January 2011). The Night of Broken Glass refers to the pogrom taken against Jews throughout Nazi Germany. On this particular night, Jewish synagogues and businesses were destroyed as part of the Nazi’s display of power.
Though Music of Remembrance focuses much of its attention on the remembrance of Jewish victims, the series is also dedicated to commemorating other stories of the Holocaust. As expressed in earnest on their website, Miller had always hoped to find a way of musically representing the plight that the homosexual population underwent during and after the war. In order to accomplish such a feat, Miller and MOR turned to Jake Heggie for the commissioning of *For a Look or a Touch*. The composition was first performed as part of the Music of Remembrance series in 2007 with baritone Morgan Smith and actor Julian Patrick.¹³ Jake Heggie’s composition provides an intensely emotional and musical dramatization of the horrific events that occurred to homosexuals during the Holocaust. Heggie, an openly gay American composer, has made a name for himself in both the realms of opera and art song for such compositions as *Dead Man Walking* (2000), *The Deepest Desire* (2002), *Three Decembers* (2008), and most recently *Moby Dick* (2010).¹⁴ When commenting on the acceptance of Miller’s request, Heggie offered that, “[The] project had deep resonance for me as a gay man, somebody who grew up in fear of being mocked, ridiculed and physically harmed because of my sexual orientation.”¹⁵

In an interview, Heggie expressed that the initial stages of this composition were filled with a general period of research about the homosexual Holocaust.¹⁶ He looked at memoirs, journals, books, and the exhibits at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

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¹⁶ Jake Heggie. Interview by author. (16 November 2010).
Museum in order to gain inspiration. Perhaps the most influential source was Rob Epstein and Jeffrey Friedmann’s monumental documentary *Paragraph 175*, which chronicles the lives of several homosexual survivors of the Holocaust. A seemingly inherent challenge in creating a story about many individualized, and often unrelated, victims was to distill their stories in a way that was both logical and meaningful. Among those interviewed in the documentary was Gad Beck. Gad, who also tells his story through personal memoirs *An Underground Life: Memoirs of a Gay Jew in Nazi Berlin*, recalls his first true love, Manfred Lewin, who was killed alongside the rest of his family in the death camp at Auschwitz. These two lovers represented an ideal that hope and love would one day prevail and save them from the horrors of the war. Jake Heggie and librettist Gene Scheer worked to synthesize a story that would recreate the love of these two characters and yet still pay homage to the thousands that fell victim to Hitler’s barbarity.

*For a Look or a Touch* is the only vocal composition that serves to remember homosexual victims in a staged, musical medium. Mina Miller and Music of Remembrance’s mission provided the impetus for such a work to be created. When comparing *For a Look or a Touch* to the advent of Martin Sherman’s *Bent*, which represents a work of fiction, the love story told in Heggie’s work is based on non-fiction events, adding to its didactic qualities. *Bent*, however, started the trend in theater pieces based on this subject material. Martin Sherman provides his motivation for writing *Bent*:

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17 Jake Heggie. Interview by author. (16 November 2010).
I saw a subject that was important to me as a gay man and as a Jew. When orthodox Jews were going around saying homosexuals should be killed, it seemed to me to say, “if you are not politically free, you’re not free at all.” Germany was full of similar illusions that could be wiped away in a second.

Some people are reluctant to share the suffering, particularly with a group that they have problems with, that they think denigrates the experience. But that’s one of the reasons it was an important play to write: As a Jew, I think we have the responsibility to understand everybody's suffering.¹⁹

Furthering the cause of this play, Heggie combined the world of speech, following in the path of Bent, with the world of song. Through these married elements, For a Look or a Touch finds strength as being one of the only compositions of its kind, working harmoniously to create a transcendent experience that serves as a means of remembrance. When asked about the commission of For a Look or a Touch, Heggie provided that:

I was so moved when Mina asked me—entrusted me—to do this piece. Do you know of another classical chamber work that takes on the subject of gays in the Holocaust? I don’t. And certainly did not at that time...so it was a deeply meaningful and momentous piece. Also, because it's basically a love story—there had to be a sense of romance, longing and sensuality throughout. The important thing at the end is that it’s a HUMAN love story—not that it's a gay love story. I'm very proud of it.²⁰

Research about works of remembrance is crucial to the proliferation of information about topics that might otherwise be forgotten. The experiences involved with performing and listening to works of music, particularly those meant for the stage, are capable of enhancing one’s emotional and intellectual well-being. Jake Heggie’s For a Look or a Touch presents a unique avenue for research in that it combines the elements of love and the power of words with music in order to help define a significant historical event.

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¹⁹ Seifert, 108.
²⁰ Jake Heggie. Email to author. (18 March 2011).
CHAPTER 3
SOURCES FOR THE TEXTS

Pierre Bonnard once stated: “There is a formula that perfectly fits painting: lots of little lies for the sake of one big truth.” 21 Where this formula specifically addressed his personal craft, the principal tenet is certainly applicable to all of the arts. The text in For a Look or a Touch is one such compilation of little lies that make up a larger truth. Although the composition only implements the characters of Manfred and Gad, the stories they tell encompass many more than their own. Most of the testimonies heard in Epstein’s Paragraph 175 find new life in the text of For a Look or a Touch. Among those individuals included by almost direct quotation are Heinz F, Gad Beck, Pierre Seel, Heinz Dörmer, Annette Eick, Albrecht Becker, and Phillippe Swaab. In this explicit documentary, viewers are taken on a painful historical journey through memories that have been repressed by each of the interviewees. Their fragmented memories bear a common emotional thread of pain, humiliation, suffering, and heartbreak. 22

The first decision made by Scheer was to set the text in English, not German or any of the other languages spoken inside the concentration camps. Dorthe Seifert references Judaic Studies scholar Sidra Ezrahi, saying that English is a natural choice for works portraying historical events. She states:

[English] retains a kind of autonomy and purity that only a language which was not spoken in the concentrationary universe, and was therefore never tainted by the Holocaust vocabulary, could claim. 23

English’s neutrality also allows a wider audience to be drawn towards the intimacy of this topic. Where this minor detail may be accepted as commonplace in most contemporary fictional films, the decision to set *For a Look or a Touch* in English greatly adds to its appeal and universality. This was also important in the creation of Richard Plant’s book. The interviews, memoirs, and testimonies collected by Plant have all been translated into English, emphasizing the appeal for this language in *For a Look or a Touch*.

In addition to the interviews provided in Epstein’s documentary, Manfred Lewin’s journal, now on display as an online exhibit at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, was incredibly impactful on the creation of *For a Look or a Touch*. Manfred’s journal, which was given to Gad when they were both 19, documents some of the lovers’ interactions with each other as well as with their youth group and culture. Among the other activities in which the boys partook, they first met during their youth group’s production of Friedrich von Schiller’s *Don Carlos*. The archivist Klaus Müller provides the following quote from that play in order to explain the young boys’ ideals:

“No matter what you plan on doing, will you promise to undertake no act without your friend? Will you make me this promise?”

The journal’s cover is adorned with the words “Do You Remember, When,” and it contains what might be considered appropriate texts for a concentration camp inmate.

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25 Ibid.
26 Ibid.
The somewhat prophetic journal, however, was given to Gad Beck shortly before the Lewin family was arrested. The inscription inside the journal reads:

Dear, kind Gad, I owe you a present, no I want to give you one, not just so that you get something from me that you can glance through, and then lay aside forever, but something that will make you happy whenever you pick it up.\(^{28}\)

It is ironic how quickly the original intention of this journal would be completely shifted to something that Gad would one day wish to repress and forget out of sheer pain. Scheer and Heggie used prose from Manfred’s journal (ex. 3.1) as the basis for “Prelude: Do You Remember?” as well as in “1. The Voice,” and “6. Remember.”

Example 3.1, Translated selections from Manfred Lewin’s journal.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>German</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Night exists for more than sleep which is why, my love, we stayed awake so often.(^{29})</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A void opens within me</td>
<td>It was the voice of a sacred power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spirit and body suddenly are lame</td>
<td>It was the sound of souls in harmony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The time that follows is torture</td>
<td>It was the essence of our humanity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In which I seek out the strength to go on living</td>
<td>The quality we must never lose.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often I saw myself standing at the edge of an abyss</td>
<td>When in a single move destiny unleashes its terrible game</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felt my utter abandonment</td>
<td>And sweeps you away to some far distant land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And the dizziness when I let my eyes look down</td>
<td>When our exile stretches ever further</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And the sudden draining of blood from my cheeks</td>
<td>Will the last bonds of our community be torn apart?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>But suddenly from the blackest depths</td>
<td>Then don’t lament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A gentle voice came echoing</td>
<td>Even though the fire torments your heart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looking down I wondered who might be calling out to me</td>
<td>For there is one sure support?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A voice that we call friendship.(^{30})</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The journal offers much more than a few borrowed lines; it represents the hope of a 19-year-old gay male that one day the war would end and peace would return, even if only by a single act of love. The music and dialogue found in “6. Remember” are based on Manfred’s journal but also actively draw on Gad Beck’s interview and memoirs. In each of these sources, Beck recalls in great detail the night that Gad and Manfred separated. This story, which may be found in a later chapter, is the most descriptive history that Gad and Manfred express in For a Look or a Touch.

As the piece progresses, the interviews shared in Paragraph 175 take on a more central role in the inspiration of Scheer’s text and Heggie’s music. The movement titled “2. Golden Years” is based on the accounts of Annette Eick, Heinz F, and Gad Beck, but the overall mood of the number—a joyful swing dance—represents the memory of Weimar Berlin after World War I at a time when the city was seen as a gay Mecca. Though not expressly represented in Heggie’s composition, the filmed version of Bent includes a significant scene that highlights Berlin’s gay subculture. In Paragraph 175, Epstein’s narration commented that Berliners largely ignored the anti-sodomy laws that were in existence since 1871, but it also goes on to say that, “…as long as the law existed, so did the threat of blackmail and prison.”

Despite this constant threat, Eick, Beck, and Heinz F offer a fairly positive image of the times they experienced in Berlin. Annette Eick, the only lesbian interviewed in the documentary, referenced three different clubs in Berlin, each of which attracted a

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31 The story presented in Beck’s memoirs is presented in context with the entire war experience, where the interview given specifically addresses the events of that night. Both accounts bear the same message.
33 Paragraph 175, directed by Rob Epstein and Jeffrey Friedmann, New Yorker Video, 2000.
certain clientele. Of particular interest to Eick was a club situated in the north of the city where proletarian girls donned their Sunday best and smoking costumes; it was here where she met the woman who would eventually prove to save her life by providing her safe passage to England. Heinz F, who later offers a much more painful testimony, speaks of the Schwanenberg, a conventional bar that was often rented to the homosexuals. He remembers the joy, the dancing, the screaming, as well as the overwhelming “topsy turvy” feeling that ignited after World War I. Laughingly, he recalls how some of the patrons would shout “Police!” causing chaos in the bar—from the lifting of skirts to the running of the queens. Heinz F fondly refers to these as: “die goldenen Jahre.”

Regardless of the amount of joy these homosexuals had, they were soon to face a strikingly different reality. Gad Beck, who also comments on the joy of the time, presents the irony of shouting “police.” During his interview, he recalls going to a Christian gay bar, and through his humorous personality, he lightens the mood as he comments on the fear that kept each of the men constantly checking over their shoulders. In his surmise, the bars were merely open to round up the homosexuals, a tactic that would later be used for the collection of Jews. Gad offers: “They’d let them keep their meeting places...so they could snatch them up.” The police, more specifically Hitler’s Schutzstaffel, did eventually come.

One of the strongest personalities documented in Paragraph 175 is that of Pierre Seel. Seel, who prior to this film had written his memoirs Liberation Was For Others, shares a more graphic version of the atrocities committed while in the camps at Alsace,

34 Paragraph 175, directed by Rob Epstein and Jeffrey Friedmann, New Yorker Video, 2000.
35 Ibid.
36 Paragraph 175, directed by Rob Epstein and Jeffrey Friedmann, New Yorker Video, 2000.
specifically that of Schirmeck-Vorbrüch. In the acknowledgements section of his memoirs, Seel writes:

> During the writing of this book my memory has been put through a harsh ordeal. These painful episodes could arouse similar equally doleful memories among certain readers. Please forgive me, for this book also constitutes an urgent appeal to witnesses and historians. There is a terrible dearth of writing on this subject. I hope I no longer have to be the only person testifying to the Nazi deportation of homosexuals.  

For a Look or a Touch draws on a particular story of Seel, the story of his friend Jo, to whom his memoirs are dedicated. The dedication reads: “To my friend Jo, Murdered in 1941, and to all the victims of the Nazi barbarity.” Barbarity can only begin to describe the inhumane acts committed in the camps.

“3. The Story of Joe” draws directly from these memoirs as well as Paragraph 175. Seel, who was still discovering himself socially, met Jo (Joe) in 1940. A young man he describes as being “kind and good,” Jo and Pierre would often isolate themselves for long periods of time in which “[they] developed a very powerful bond that neither time nor suffering nor death has erased from my memory.” As the war progressed, both Pierre and Jo found themselves in the concentration camp, although not jointly.

Seel recalls that one day, a special roll call was announced over the loudspeakers. The prisoners were to form a square and stand at attention as they normally did for the morning roll call. The SS officers always carried lists of orders, insults, and threats, but on the list for this particular roll call was much worse: an execution. While standing at attention, Seel immediately recognized his loving friend

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38 Seel, dedication page.
39 Seel, 17.
Jo, only eighteen at the time. Seel was no stranger to the merciless SS treatment.

During his interview in Paragraph 175, Seel shared that he was left nearly 90% disabled from the war because the Nazis found it amusing at one point to stick 25 centimeters of splintered wood into his rectum. Frozen in terror, the once tortured Seel remembers praying that Jo would escape their brutality. Jo was first sodomized in front of the inmates; soon after, he was tortured to the point of death.\textsuperscript{40} Painfully, Seel tells the following:

Then the loudspeakers broadcast some noisy classical music while the SS stripped him naked and shoved a tin pail over his head. Next they sicced their ferocious German shepherds on him: the guard dogs first bit into his groin and thighs, then devoured him right in front of us. His shrieks of pain were distorted and amplified by the pail in which his head was trapped. My rigid body reeled, my eyes gaped at so much horror, tears poured down my cheeks, I fervently prayed that he would black out quickly.\textsuperscript{41}

This horrific story was, unfortunately, not a single occurrence. Brutality was commonplace in the concentration camps. Inhumane behavior was accepted. It is because of these injustices that such a powerful story has found its way into \textit{For a Look or a Touch}.

Markedly different from his rather joyful memory of \textit{die goldenen Jahre}, Heinz F shares an extremely moving story of the post war events which serves as the primary source for “4. Silence.” Heinz F, who spent nearly eight and a quarter years in different concentration camps, recalls the feeling of utter abandonment left by the war. He went on a trip after one of his releases from the camp and remembers being followed by a woman as he walked to get some food. On his walk, he was approached by a hustler, pulled into the bushes, and before he could push the hustler away, he heard, “You are

\textsuperscript{40} Paragraph 175, directed by Rob Epstein and Jeffrey Friedmann, New Yorker Video, 2000.

\textsuperscript{41} Seel, 43.
under arrest.” Heinz F was put back on trial, mere days before the war had ended. After his final departure from the camps, Heinz F had no one to talk to. His mother feared of upsetting him, and he was constantly greeted by friends and family members with “nobody [wants] to hear about that,” because for many, the war was over. The only person Heinz F wanted to speak with was his father, who sadly had passed before the war’s end. Shame kept Heinz F silent for years. Humbly he says, “It’s all about patiently carrying one’s burden….Now for me too…it’s all over.”

Another chilling story, told by Heinz Dörmer, serves as the basis for “5. Der Singende Wald.” As Dörmer begins this section of his interview, one cannot help but notice the distant look in his eyes. The memory of these singing forests is painful, to say the least. Dörmer says, “Der singende Wald…that gave us all goose bumps.” As if reliving the memory in his mind, he goes on to provide that, “In the ground there were holes. Concrete holes. Everyone who was sentenced…would be lifted up…onto the hook….The howling and screaming were inhuman…der singende…Wald.” Heinz Dörmer can barely utter the last words of his painful testimony as the emotions swell within him.

Although Heggie’s *For a Look or a Touch* revolves around only two characters, Manfred and Gad, they represent the emotional stories of the nearly 15,000 homosexuals who were exterminated in the Nazi concentration camps as well as the countless number of homosexuals who were shamed into silence in the decades following the war. Heggie and Sheer’s collaboration provides more than music and text

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42 Seel, 43.
43 *Paragraph 175*, directed by Rob Epstein and Jeffrey Friedmann, New Yorker Video, 2000.
44 Ibid.
45 Ibid.
to study; it remembers a group of people who experienced some of the harshest brutality during Hitler’s rule. Scheer’s seamless integration of these fragmented recollections provides a storyline that is not clouded by pretense and is never minimized for the sake of theater; the words are genuine and heartfelt. In a phone interview with the librettist, Scheer offered, “The first thing is that as a point of departure what Jake and I were doing is creating a work of art, not doing a documentary.” Scheer’s masterfully crafted libretto allowed these two characters to serve as the vessel through which to tell these stories, and it is in Jake Heggie’s music that each of these stories is given new life.

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46 Gene Scheer. Interview by author. (20 February 2011).
CHAPTER 4

THE MUSIC OF FOR A LOOK OR A TOUCH

Jake Heggie commented that the title for this piece comes from a line in Epstein’s documentary Paragraph 175. The quotation from the documentary reads: “Men could be arrested as homosexual for simply a touch, a gesture, a look.” For a Look or a Touch currently exists as a music drama, essentially an opera for a chamber group. The role of Manfred, sung by a baritone, is portrayed as a 19-year-old ghost, and the role of Gad, performed by an actor, is portrayed as his 80-year-old, present day self. The composition was originally conceived in a different manner, though. In an interview with Gene Scheer, the librettist shared that initial planning stages designed For a Look or a Touch as a song cycle. Heggie and Scheer later discussed the idea of including a narrator with the work. The character of Gad, the actor, developed from this idea. With the exception of the final hum in mm. 602-607, the role of Gad is entirely spoken.

The orchestration utilized in For a Look or a Touch evokes a 1920’s cabaret bar scene. The collection of flute, clarinet, violin, cello, and piano emulates the types of informal musical combos that scattered throughout much of Europe and the United States. These instruments, from the percussiveness of the piano to the mellow sounds of the cello, offered Heggie many orchestral colors, enabling him to create different vignettes in each of the movements. The songs range from a joyful swing

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48 Paragraph 175, directed by Rob Epstein and Jeffrey Friedmann, New Yorker Video, 2000.
50 Gene Scheer. Interview by author. (20 February 2011).
dance to a lyrical vocalise. Heggie does this in his composition in order to allow the music to convey the meaning of the text created by Gene Scheer.

From working with the composer, it became evident that in addition to the heavy emotional toll that *For a Look or a Touch* carries, skilled vocalism is required to effectively express the piece’s various messages. Each of the movements is written in a slightly different style that requires full use of the voice. Ranging in techniques from crooning in “2. Golden Years” to the sustained vocalise in “4. Silence,” the piece demands that a singer utilize the nuances available to the human voice. Heggie offered in one of our coaching sessions that this piece, as well as many of his others, bridges the gap between more popular and more classical idioms. As one becomes familiar with the composer’s output, the style becomes recognizable as Heggie’s. Each of the following movements provides its own unique musical contribution to the complete work of *For a Look or a Touch*.

**Prelude: Do You Remember?**

GAD
Who’s there?

MANFRED
Do you remember?
Do you remember when night was for more than sleep?
Oh, my love.

GAD
You? Manfred! A ghost! Why are you here?
What do you want?

MANFRED
Remember?
Remember?

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GAD
Look at you, Manfred. My God. It’s been 60 years. You’re as handsome as the day when. That day when. You’ll always be 19 and beautiful, won’t you? Look at me. Alive. Falling apart. The world is a different place, I guess. Maybe we’d be ok now. Who knows? So much is slipping away. It’s so late. You should go away. I need to sleep.

MANFRED
Remember?
Remember when night was for more than sleep?
Oh my love, my love,
We stayed awake so often!

GAD
You’re not going away, are you?

MANFRED
Remember!

GAD
You want me to remember. Darling, I have done everything I can to forget It’s too hard, Manfred. I survived the Holocaust. I had to find a way to live. There was so much shame after the war and I had nothing. Nothing but your journal: the poetry of the beautiful, 19-year old boy I loved. Fragments. Sometimes, I look through it and cry and curse and smile. Oh, but go now, Manfred. Let me forget.

Recalling that the cover of Manfred Lewin’s diary is embossed with the words “Do You Remember, When,” it comes as no surprise that the first words to be sung are “Do you remember?” The journal continues a few pages later, on page 8, saying that, “night exists for more than sleep which is why, my love, we stayed awake so often.”
Even though each of the movements in For a Look or a Touch is written in a different musical language, they all center on the text, and subsequently the ascending musical line “Do you remember?” This line of text and music that unifies the entire work also

serves a higher purpose. By placing musical and textual emphasis on the words “Do you remember?” Heggie instills that no matter how happy the music—as is the case with “2. Golden Years”—the underlying theme is one of victimized homosexuals: they want to be remembered.

The “Do You Remember” motive exists in the first vocal line of the piece, immediately following Manfred’s arrival (ex. 4.1). The motive, which is presented in five note fragments in the piano part, is doubled in the voice part with an added syllable for the word “remember” in m. 20. Gad is, among other things, shocked at Manfred’s presence in his sitting room. Although Gad refers to Manfred as a “ghost” in m. 24, Manfred appears to be the manifestation Gad’s of repressed memories. Jake Heggie’s affinity for words and theater allowed him to create a memorable melody that served the purpose of both the drama and the text. He commented that the motive “needed to have nostalgia, yearning and romance in it. The rhythm is established by the actual words—but the rise and fall of it, the feel of it, is from the emotional content.”

Example 4.1, Prelude: Do You Remember: “Do You Remember” motive, mm. 19-21.

55 Jake Heggie. Email to author. (18 March 2011).
The entire quintet is used in varying simple and compound meters throughout the movement, giving a feeling of both uncertainty and mystery. Heggie attributed his use of these meter changes to the demands of the drama. He suggests that, “It has to do with the storytelling—the unexpected turns of phrases because of unexpected emotional turns. There’s so much that is tenuous, uncertain and unstable emotionally in this first part, so I guess the compound meters are reflective of that.”\textsuperscript{56} Heggie’s musical treatment of Scheer’s text is much like the effective underscoring of a contemporary film project. Both elements work together harmoniously in order to create the final product.

The piano, which often doubles the vocal line, also bears an important rhythmic motive that starts as early as m. 2 and continues sporadically throughout the movement (ex. 4.2); these occur mostly at times of Gad’s speech. Jake Heggie refers to the dropping third in this motive as the “Goodbye Joe” theme that occurs in “3. The Story of Joe” (ex. 4.3). The composer offers this about the motive: “The angular quality of it recalls the war to me—and the spacing of it indicates something disparate and not consonant. The dropping third is the ‘Goodbye Joe’ theme from The Story of Joe, too. It’s there throughout the piece.”\textsuperscript{57}

Example 4.2, Prelude: Do You Remember? Piano motive with “Goodbye Joe” theme, mm. 1-5.

\textsuperscript{56} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{57} Jake Heggie. Email to author. (18 March 2011).
Example 4.3, The Story of Joe: “Goodbye Joe” theme, mm. 353-357.

Another important motive, and one that immediately becomes useful in the “1. The Voice,” first occurs in the clarinet part at m. 5. A sustained note leads to a sixteenth note run, eventually resolving up a fourth from where it began (ex. 4.4).

Example 4.4, Prelude: Do You Remember: The sixteenth note as played first by the clarinet in Bb, mm. 1-5.

Though the intervallic relationships vary within the motive from one occurrence to the next, the general shape of the figure remains as an important part of the composition. “Prelude: Do You Remember?” paves the way for the emotional and musical journey that is soon to come in the rest of the composition. Though the key signature indicates a tonality of b minor, Heggie is hardly restrained to that marking. Manfred’s constant repetitions of “remember” are often met with resistance from Gad in this movement, and
Heggie captured this resistance musically. One such musical encounter occurs in m. 32 where the strings begin to play a march-like rhythm, as if to suggest the memories of the Nazi troops marching in the street (ex. 4.5). These images are ones that Gad, up until this point, has repressed, but the presence of Manfred is once again drawing all of them into existence.

Example 4.5, Prelude: Do You Remember: Marching rhythms, mm. 32-35.

The texture of the chamber group, often thinnest during the “Do You Remember” motive, provides a constant ethereal background to the drama happening on the stage. Heggie, realizing the necessity for Gad to remember, includes the marking “more urgently” with the single entrances of “remember?” The voice finishes in m. 61 with a softer and slower uttering of that word; the orchestra continues as Gad delivers his final text. The last measure of the movement includes one final occurrence of the important piano rhythm introduced in the second measure, informing the listener that there is much more to come in this story.

Vocally, this movement requires the singer to maintain an extremely legato line so as to sinuously navigate the most important motive of the composition. The repetitive uses of the word “remember” demands that the singer find new meanings to support each of their occurrences. Jake Heggie indicates some to be more urgent,

some more loving, and some slower than others, but the singer must interpret these in a way that varies their emotional messages; this is supported by the changes in underlying music.

1. The Voice

MANFRED
A void consumes me.
My spirit and body are suddenly lame.
Terror fills the time that follows.
Will each new day be the same?

Often I feel utterly abandoned
See myself on the edge of an abyss,
And I become dizzy as I look down,
With blood-drained cheeks that you would kiss.

Suddenly from the darkest depths,
A loving voice echoes and seeks me out.
I look down and ask: “Who is calling?”
And I hear a voice that ends all doubt.

It is the voice of a sanctified power,
The sacred place where fears dissolve.
The unyielding blessing, the generous heart
The voice of souls in perfect resolve.

GAD
A sanctified power? Souls in perfect resolve? Hm I don’t know. Nice poetry. I used to think that was possible, but I’m old now. Really old. I’ve seen such horror and cruelty. After the war, we men who wore the pink triangle and survived—we returned to a world that did not want to hear of our suffering. But how can I speak to you of suffering? A sanctified power? Such a lovely, hopeful, naïve thought. But then, you were 19. So was I, once. Everything seemed possible then. That’s how it felt when I met you. Those golden years in Berlin. Die Goldenen Jahre.

In “1. The Voice,” Manfred delivers a text almost completely derived from the historical figure’s journal. Heggie uses the sixteenth note clarinet motive first introduced in the prelude as the basis for the musical material of the vocal line in this movement. A cello vamp starts “1. The Voice” in order to allow Gad the chance to finish his dialogue.
as well as shift from one movement to the next. Heggie varies the types of transitions that he uses between movements. At times a transitional dialogue will set up a movement, but in this movement, the cello part springs out of the preceding prelude. 

“1. The Voice” is initially written as a 3/4 meter, but Heggie immediately draws upon syncopation to portray the feelings of abandonment and loss. The flute part in m. 80 presents the first of many syncopations.

The initial key signature is in the key of a minor, maintained mostly by the repeated bass-like cello line, but adherence to this key is only loosely observed. At the onset of the text “blood-drained cheeks that you would kiss,” Heggie changes the indicated key signature to four flats. The A is made natural in m. 109 at the mention of a loving voice’s echo. The A continues to be in its natural state in the flute part, which serves as the echo, until m. 116. It is at this moment that Heggie relies on texture to create the rest of the scene “1. The Voice.”

Now with a key signature of one sharp, Heggie begins a sixteenth note pattern in the piano that outlines an e minor triad. He then adds the other instruments, measure by measure, until the voice joins at the final explosion on “and I hear a voice that ends at doubt,” with a fermata on the word “voice” in m. 123. The ensemble then charges head first at m. 124 until arriving at the 6/8 section in m. 129. The orchestration is reduced to sustained pitches in the upper voices and a rippling effect in the right hand of the piano. The feeling of uncertainty and of a spiritual, sanctified power is represented by the orchestral texture. The upper voices in the quintet begin to join the motion of the piano’s right hand in m. 135 until Manfred sings the word “souls” in m. 140, marked “freely.” Moving onwards, the voice resolves into a major sonority on the word “resolve”
in m. 143. For aural effect, Heggie writes the final note of the movement to be played “inside the piano” giving this section a mysterious end.\textsuperscript{59}

Following in much the same vocal method as the prelude, “1. The Voice” requires a slight extension in vocal technique because of the increased volume and range. A sinuous quality still exists in the vocal line for much of this movement, but the singer should be cautious not to over accent the melismatic setting of some words, such as the word “body” in m. 85. Heggie’s use of the sixteenth note motive at varying pitch levels increases the movement’s overall continuity but also allows the singer to effectively convey Manfred’s emotions. From the moment of “and I hear a voice that ends all doubt” in m. 122 until the end of the piece, a fuller voice should be employed to balance the texture and volume of the quintet. The vocal line climbs throughout the 6/8 section until the movement’s highest note at m. 140 on the word “souls.” Allowing the sound to clear, the singer continues on to m. 142 in a fashion similar to the beginning of the movement, as if remembering the hope that Manfred has always carried.

\textbf{2. Golden Years}

\textbf{MANFRED}
Wild. Free
We are wild! We are free!
Topsy turvy, joyful Berlin.

You are free! You are wild!
Topsy turvy child of Berlin.
Golden years. Golden years.

Give me a look or a touch and I’ll know.
A nod or a wink or a glance—mm mm—We don’t need words. Just stand very close.
Let’s not miss out on a chance for love tonight.

A look or a touch and I'll know you're the one.
A grin or a smile—mm mm—
Just for a while, tonight or a lifetime,
Let's not miss out on a chance for love right now.

Dance with me.
This is the Schwanenberg,
hottest club in Berlin.
Meet and greet and eat and cheat and swing.

What a band! What a crowd at Schwanenberg!
Take my hand, dance all night at Schwanenberg!
Let's have a laugh now. Let's have some fun.
Shout: “Police!”
Then watch 'em pull their skirts up and run!

Everybody's running around.
Screaming! Laughing!
Giddy from the joy of this town
And these Golden years. Golden years.

While we are young, wild and free let's keep dancing.
Let's not miss out on a thing.
And if we should find we're of the same mind,
A look or a touch could lead to a precious night of love.

“Police!”

GAD
We had so much fun! Crazy boys. Crazy queens. What a wonderful family. It would never end! Then the police did come. The clubs were closed and the Nazis trampled the joy. You could be arrested for a look or a touch. And yet most of our stories have been lost because we were too afraid and ashamed. Nobody to talk to. Nobody to tell. Oh Manfred, I'll never know what you witnessed. What horrors you must have experienced.

“2. Golden Years” contains perhaps the most memorable music in For a Look or a Touch. During Heinz F's interview in Paragraph 175, emblematic music of the 1920's served as the soundtrack while black and white photographs of nightclubs and patrons panned across the screen. The Schwanenberg, a nightclub described by Heinz F as
being a “normal bar,” was often rented to homosexuals.60 “2. Golden Years” occurs shortly after the arrival of Manfred in Gad’s apartment. In a statement of reminiscence, Gad recalls the pre-Nazi, golden years in Berlin, a time marked by joy and sheer exuberance. Gad’s dialogue acts as a transition from “1. The Voice” into this movement. He reflects on the ideas that Manfred expressed in “1. The Voice” and after referring to a time when both boys were nineteen, he recalls the fun they had.

“2. Golden Years” introduces the music of a very lighthearted, but seductive, swing dance. A passionate, sexy, and provocative jazz clarinet solo begins at the conclusion of Gad’s dialogue. Though not expressly written, Jake Heggie encouraged the clarinetist to have fun with the solo by adding glissandos and taking time throughout the selection to really sell its inherent sensuality.61 Immediately following the clarinet’s last and highest note, the ensemble enters with feverishly quick chromatics in the piano at m. 164. Each of these chromatic scales is capped by one of three words sung by Manfred: wild, free, or we. As might be expected, he leads into a more lyrical rendition of these opening words at m. 168. It is important to note that the quintet is now diegetic; it is not merely an accompanying entity. Manfred and Gad are able, and encouraged, to interact with the instrumentalists. The “combo” is the most important aspect of this scene. A break of the barrier between vocalist and instrumentalist is very effective in “2. Golden Years.”

When the voice arrives at the refrain, Heggie implements a swung vocal line and accompaniment to represent the dance and at the same time evoke a bit of nostalgia (ex. 4.6). There lies great irony in the way this text is set, though. The words “Give me

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60 Paragraph 175, directed by Rob Epstein and Jeffrey Friedmann, New Yorker Video, 2000.
a look or a touch and I'll know," bounce playfully from the singer's deliverance starting in m. 180. However, these words foreshadowed the fate of homosexuals in Germany because as the documentary *Paragraph 175* demonstrates, “One could be arrested for a look or a touch; under the Nazis, innuendo was enough to convict a person.”\(^6^2\)

Heggie immediately capitalizes on his abilities as an effective theater composer to give various layers of meaning to a seemingly joyful text.

Example 4.6, Golden Years: Swing rhythms, mm. 180-182.

The clarinet returns for another bout of fun at m. 202, this time set over a steady bass line shared by the cello and piano. Immediately following the clarinet’s second solo, Manfred joins the ensemble, asking Gad to dance with him. Manfred shares the rhythm of the bass line at m. 213, only stopping on the words “and swing” which are suggestively performed with an upward glissando, implying the double entendre of the word “swing.” Following this sexual innuendo, Heggie introduces one of two six-measure dance breaks. The violin begins this dance by playing an upward scale at m. 217. The remaining instruments join the violin in succession. Still heavily in the dance

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\(^6^2\) *Paragraph 175*, directed by Rob Epstein and Jeffrey Friedmann, New Yorker Video, 2000.
rhythm, Manfred starts to sings a prescribed scat solo until the point when the music explodes in “Pom, Pom, Pom” at m. 229. These percussive outbursts define the overwhelming joy experienced during this time period.

Manfred provides another moment of irony as he sings, and ultimately shouts “Police!” in m 236; this also occurs in the last measure of the movement. As earlier discussed, the joke of shouting this word soon became a threatening reality. However, “2. Golden Years” was designed to provide a bit of relief, a glimpse of hope for dark times. Heggie underscored the word “Police” with an orchestral tremolo that can be construed as being either fun or frightening. The second half continues much in the same way as the beginning portion, including the same dance break.

Jake Heggie commented that this movement was “meant to be explosively fun, sexy, and filled with a vigorous kind of life and energy. It was very important to me that this movement happen early on in the work because it gives us a very human sense of the joy that was crushed and lost.”

Some of the most challenging singing occurs in “2. Golden Years” because the movement is written in a style that extends classical use of the voice. The singer is asked to croon throughout parts of the movement, stylistically adding to the seductive joy of that time. Above all else, the singer must have fun with the swing rhythms and effectively deliver the text as effortlessly as possible. Jake Heggie suggested that the singer “swing from the hips!”

“2. Golden Years” is one of the few moments in For a Look or at Touch that grants relief to the audience from the emotional subject matter.

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63 Jake Heggie. Email to author. 18 March 2011
64 Jake Heggie. Coaching session with author. 22 February 2011.
3. The Story of Joe

MANDFRED
Horror and savagery are the law.
I am a silent, obedient shadow.
Dead to myself. Dead to the world.
A silent, obedient shadow.

Lined up for roll call,
They pull out Joe,
A loving friend, 18 years old.
Good boy. He’s a good boy, Joe.

What has he done?
What is his crime?
His jacket bears a pink triangle.
Be still. Just keep in line.
Be a good boy, Joe. Be obedient, Joe.

They strip him naked,
Put a bucket on his head,
Then sic their dogs on him.
They bite his body,
Tear at his thighs,
Blood everywhere.

His screams and cries
Amplified by the bucket on his head.
Ah! Ah!

Goodbye, Joe.

And on the speakers
They play a waltz.
Back to work.
Silent, obedient shadows.

GAD
Silent. So many years of silence. Now there are so few of us left. But you couldn’t talk after the war. We were still criminals! Who would I have told, if I could? After the war. After it was all over. When the shame and new anguish was beginning. Who would I tell?
Laughing, Gad briefly retains the mood set forth in “2. Golden Years.” He breaks from the joy, though, in the dialogue that follows the song. The inverted meanings of “police” and “for a look or a touch” become increasingly prominent in Gad’s speech. The dialogue acts as a transition, and in it he recalls, “The Police did come. The clubs were closed and the Nazis trampled the joy. You could be arrested for a look or a touch.” Gad’s speech strips the atmosphere of the joyful times of *die goldenen Jahre* and quickly replaces it with a very dark inquiry towards Manfred’s experiences.

“3. The Story of Joe” represents the artful integration of the story about Pierre Seel’s former lover, Jo, into Manfred’s memory. Through this account, Gene Scheer successfully represented the horrific treatment that many underwent in the camps. This story of an 18-year-old being eaten alive by ferocious dogs is depicted musically in a vastly different way than the preceding movement. When asked about the contrasting nature of this movement, Heggie commented:

Yes, it's meant to be brutal and harsh. I almost think of it as "dance macabre." Again, the job of the music theatrically is to establish an emotional and psychological undercurrent—to give us a sense of place, time, motion, etc. This is a heartbreaking story of brutality—so the music is not sympathetic at all to the plight of the singer. He is left there naked and scarred and alone.

In this movement, Heggie draws on elements of shock and terror by including outbursts in the vocal line on “Horror” in m. 275. The music bears the marking of “stark and brutal.” One can hear the constant whips and lashings in the strong bass accents provided by the piano. With an upward flourish in the piano at m. 278, the voice and accompaniment launch into what Heggie prescribes as being performed with “colorless

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66 Paragraph 175, directed by Rob Epstein and Jeffrey Friedmann, New Yorker Video, 2000.
67 Jake Heggie. Email to author. (18 March 2011).
tone, no vibrato,” on the words “I am a silent, obedient shadow.” Heggie shifts between these contrasting sections of recognizable outbursts with stark colorless tones throughout the entire movement.

As Manfred describes the horrific fate of Joe, his emotions funnel into a scream on the voiced, “Ah” in m. 345 and m. 347. Presumably, Joe has blacked out, and the music comes to a screeching halt in m. 353. The violin and cello sustain vibrato-less A’s as Manfred gasps “Goodbye, Joe.” As mentioned in the earlier discussion about the prelude, Heggie referred to the falling third on these words as the “Goodbye Joe” theme, a theme that finds itself throughout much of For a Look or a Touch. After this moment, Heggie moves into an “easy waltz” in m. 362, which recalls Pierre Seel’s memory of classical music being blasted on the speakers during this brutality. Realizing how dramatic this is, Heggie provided that, “the waltz at the end is somehow the most tragic part of it. So cold and removed from the truth of the situation. And yet, even at that, it's a pretty tune.” Manfred, now completely disengaged, utters his final words of this movement as a silent, obedient shadow. The clarinet and flute accompany these lifeless sayings with a chillingly sweet duet as the movement closes.

One of the largest inherent vocal challenges in “3. The Story of Joe” is effectively finding the difference between the introverted and extroverted episodes. The movement starts with some of the fullest singing in the composition, but it is immediately contrasted with the task of producing a shadow-like sound. These constant shifts must be observed so as to truly portray the emotional upheaval that is transpiring inside of

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69 Jake Heggie. Email to author. (18 March 2011).
Manfred. It is especially important that the singer finds the colorless tone in the waltz section of the movement in order to achieve the haunting juxtaposition of the seemingly happy waltz with the severely horrified voice.

4. Silence

GAD

It was so long ago. After my father died, I went on a trip. I left the hotel one night and a woman was following me. Down by the river, a hustler approached me. He pulled me into the bushes. “We’re being watched,” I said. “No one is there,” he said. And that’s when it happened, perfectly planned. “You are under arrest.” I did not understand. I was sent away to the camp. Why? Paragraph 175 was written in large letters on our jackets. Later, it was the pink triangle. A yellow star for Jews; a red star for political prisoners; a black star for the mentally retarded; a purple star for Jehovah’s witnesses; a pink triangle for homosexuals. Hard labor—backbreaking labor—brutality—torture—starvation—death. Death and suffering everywhere. Why? Why? What have I done?


What happened to you, Manfred?

One of the most effective pieces in For a Look or a Touch is the fourth movement, “4. Silence.” This is essentially a vocalise for Manfred, who is instructed to sing a constant “oo” or “hum” over the cello’s contrapuntal line. When coaching with the composer, he suggested that the “oo” provided a better acoustical effect than the hum, but the choice should be made depending on the individual situation at hand. This movement is also the equivalent of what would be considered an aria for Gad. Although told in the first person, this haunting display of vocalism offers Gad the chance to share the story of Heinz F. However, this story represents more than the plight of a single person; it relives the shame shared by many of the homosexual survivors of the
Holocaust because the anti-sodomy law, which was written in 1871, lasted until 1969 in parts of Germany.  

Jake Heggie viewed this movement as the chance for Manfred to reach out to Gad in a loving, but haunting way. Heggie’s style of composition is extremely organic in that the composer relies heavily on the idea of the music “feeling right.” He does so impeccably, creating music that both supports and enhances the drama. The singer’s responsibility in this movement is to serve the message of Gad’s words. Though beautiful, the movement is an extremely challenging display of vocal technique. The “oo” vowel should not distract from Gad but instead blend seamlessly with the cello line. If attainable, a mixed falsetto provides an appropriate color for what the composer intended. Heggie included some expressive markings in the cello part but only included an initial marking of “piano” in the vocal line. The singer should express the natural swells of the line, phrasing each of the sections in the way the composer indicated with the slur markings.

5. Der Singende Wald (The Singing Forest)

MANFRED
Der Singende Wald.
What is it?

**Der Singende Wald.**

There are holes in the ground,
In each, a tall pole with a hook on top.
Your hands tied behind your back
Your wrists slung over the hook
You are lifted up, posted high.
Your shoulders snap and break
And you swing and hang and scream.

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70 Paragraph 175, directed by Rob Epstein and Jeffrey Friedmann, New Yorker Video, 2000.
71 Jake Heggie. Email to author. (18 March 2011).
"5. Der Singende Wald" expresses the story from Heinz Dörmer’s memory, a story he could barely tell during the interview in Paragraph 175. It was almost as if he were reliving a memory from which he had distanced himself. Heggie developed a musical language derived from Dörmer’s emotions. This movement is connected to “4. Silence” by the continuous cello line. After Gad asks, “what happened to you, Manfred?” the rest of the ensemble joins the cello with the music of “5. Der Singende Wald.” The orchestration captures Dörmer’s emotions through the cello’s open fifth and the octave cries in the flute and clarinet (ex. 4.7). Each of these musical devices helps to depict Dörmer’s feelings of emptiness and shock. Heggie instructs the pianist to play the strings inside of the piano for the last three beats of the 9/8 measure, starting in m. 465, adding a more open texture to the ensemble. When asked about this non-conventional use of the piano, he offered, “It was the right color for this place. A haunting, otherworldly, eerie sound.”

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72 Paragraph 175, directed by Rob Epstein and Jeffrey Friedmann, New Yorker Video, 2000.
73 Jake Heggie. Email to author. (18 March 2011).
Example 4.7, Der Singende Wald: Plucked piano with flute and clarinet cries, mm. 465-468.

The voice creeps in and poses the first sung words of the movement as a question: “Der singende Wald. What is it?” The answer that Manfred provides describes the nightmarish sentence of being hung in the air until your shoulders snapped, and you fell to the ground. Heggie underscores the act of being lifted up with an upward orchestral flourish (ex. 4.8).
In a similar fashion, Heggie utilized a large sweeping gesture in m. 490 on the word “scream.” The orchestral texture thins as Manfred talks of hearing the victims’ cries, and the same crying gesture presented in m. 466 reappears in m. 503. Heggie conceived the swelling of orchestral textures to represent the increasing realizations by the audience and Gad of what actually happened in these forests. On the final word “comprehension,” the composer’s musical language in the orchestra closely resembles the “Do You Remember” motive. By including this musical idea, he paves the way for the final movement to occur.

The tessitura for “5. Der Singende Wald” feels slightly higher than that of the other movements because of the constant “lifting up” of the voice. The dynamic markings, particularly the decrescendo on the word “high” in m. 485, add to the difficulty.

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74 Jake Heggie. Email to author. (18 March 2011).
of the movement by requiring subtlety and control of the voice. At the composer’s suggestion, the singer needs to step outside of all levels of comfort for this piece.\textsuperscript{75} The eerie qualities associated with the movement need to also be reflected in the voice as Manfred envelops Gad with these horrible images. \textit{For a Look or a Touch} finds one of its highest climactic points during “5. Der Singende Wald.”

6. Remember

GAD
I went to spend the night at your house. Your brother told me that you and most of your family had been arrested that day. I went to your boss. I was desperate. He asked me, “do you have courage?” “Yes, I have courage.” “My son is your size. He has a Hitler Youth uniform. Put it on and get Manfred out.” My heart was pounding as I went in and saluted. “Heil Hitler! I must speak with the Obersturmbannfuhrer.” He came at once.

“Manfred Lewin was brought here yesterday.” He worked for us and is a saboteur! He has keys to several of the apartments we are renovating. My father sent me here to get him so we can go back to work.” Within moments, you and I were free, walking down the street. I said, “Go to Uncle Wobbi’s. I’ll call and meet you there.” You looked at me:

MANFRED & GAD
“No, I can’t go with you, Gad. If I leave my family now, I’ll never be free again. I have to go with them. I am the strong one.”

GAD
We never said goodbye. You turned and walked away, and I walked in the other direction. I wasn’t able to think. But, I knew something was forever broken.

MANFRED
Oh my love, my love…

GAD
I’m so tired. Manfred. So old. And I want so much to believe in what you believed. The sacred place where fears dissolve. The generous heart. Your journal is so full of hope—but I feel so hopeless.

\textsuperscript{76} Jake Heggie. Coaching session with author. (22 February 2011).
MANFRED
Do you remember when...
Night was for more than sleep?
Oh my love, my love
We stayed away so often.

GAD
Yes. Yes, I remember! Everything, my love.
Holding you. Kissing you. On the roof. In the forests outside Berlin. Sharing your little
bed upstairs from your parents. I remember all of it. I remember.

MANFRED
A single move. Destiny unleashes its terrible game
And sweeps you away to some distant land
where nothing will ever be the same.

Will the last bonds of our community be torn apart?
No. Do not lament.
Even though the fire torments your heart,
There is one sure support:
The voice of our love. Our love.

GAD
Take me with you, Manfred.

MANFRED
Love

GAD
I remember. A look or a touch. Dance with me again?

As if rounding out the cyclical nature of the piece, the last movement closely
resembles the prelude of For a Look or a Touch. Unlike the prelude, though,
“6. Remember” is the first movement to begin with Gad’s spoken text, and it includes
Manfred’s only spoken line in the entire piece. The “Do You Remember” motive is
shared between the voice and the piano in the beginning of the movement, until it is
fully restated in m. 532. Although the orchestra varies slightly from this point onward,
there is very little newly composed music in this movement. In m. 555 Manfred’s line
presents music that was first sung in “1. The Voice.” The music continues to remain
largely borrowed from “1. The Voice,” with the same expansive descent into the 6/8 section at m. 573. It is not until after the climax in m. 586 that the composition returns to the music presented in the first few measures of For a Look or a Touch. After Gad asks “dance with me again?” the two characters hum the “Do You Remember” motive together, resolving that Gad has finally embraced the manifestation of his memory.

Jake Heggie conceived the final movement as being the answer to the problem posed in the very beginning of For a Look or a Touch: Gad desires to forget Manfred, but Manfred yearns to be remembered. The composer suggests that, “Ultimately, Gad realizes that the only way to find peace is to remember and to embrace that memory fully.” The vocal challenges in this movement are very similar to those in both the prelude and “1. The Voice.” However, “6. Remember” should be delivered with a new air of resolution. Through the painful journey that Manfred describes, Gad has finally been able to remember both the bad and the good events of his past. It is the good memories that finally bring Gad peace.

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76 Jake Heggie. Email to author. (18 March 2011).
CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Jake Heggie is a composer who works by instinct and feeling.\textsuperscript{77} It is, perhaps, these exact qualities that make his music accessible to a wide audience of listeners and performers. His personable character, as well as his willingness to work with performers of varying levels, has truly added to the value and experiences of this project. Jake Heggie’s \textit{For a Look or a Touch} has rightfully seen great success over the last few years. Its sensitive subject matter goes beyond the story of gay love and tragedy. The composition aims to express the ideals of human love and the injustices inflicted on all victims of the Holocaust. The main message of \textit{For a Look or a Touch} is universal: love will conquer and prevail. The composition is a highly valued contribution to the greater pool of works of remembrance.

Heggie’s composition is intimately set for baritone, actor, and quintet, but in the near future the composer plans to rework the piece as a second version for the Seattle Gay Men’s Chorus. Aside from streaming the chorus throughout the piece, Heggie will add a new a cappella chorus number, “A Hundred Thousand Stars.”\textsuperscript{78} Other details on this work are forthcoming, but a comparative study of the two versions and the implications that the added chorus has on the text would be an extremely valuable avenue of discourse. As the piece stands, it is quite performable at the university or community level due to the relatively low number of required performers. A comparison of the performable nature of the choral version at the collegiate level would also be most helpful.

\textsuperscript{77} Jake Heggie. Email to author. (18 March 2011).
\textsuperscript{78} Jake Heggie. Email to author. (3 March 2011).
Although this project aimed to primarily discuss Jake Heggie’s *For a Look or a Touch* as a musical remembrance, there is a much larger pool of homosexual-related Holocaust studies that is open for research. One of the issues that consistently presented itself throughout the course of this study was that there were so few gay victims willing to speak about their experiences. Where it may be now true that many of these victims are no longer living, their stories still need to be discovered and told. It may be that the theater, especially music theater, best suits the charge of remembering these victims. A different approach, and one that may be taken up in future research, would look at the music of gay composers who lived during World War II. Although survivors of the camps may be reluctant, or even impossible, to approach, their stories still exist and need to be told.

Jake Heggie’s monumental composition *For a Look or a Touch* is a significant contribution as a work of remembrance. The characters of Gad and Manfred represent the stories of thousands. The piece should not stand alone as the only work of remembrance written about the persecution of homosexuals. Jake Heggie continues to serve as a large source of personal inspiration, and it is with great hope that other composers and artists will begin to portray this entirely too forgotten group of individuals.
APPENDIX A

GERMAN ANTI-SODOMY LAW
§175 of the German Law, outlawing homosexuality reads as follows:

175. A male who commits lewd and lascivious acts with another male or permits himself to be so abused for lewd and lascivious acts, shall be punished by imprisonment. In a case of a participant under 21 years of age at the time of the commission of the act, the court may, in especially slight cases, refrain from punishment.

175a. Confinement in a penitentiary not to exceed ten years and, under extenuating circumstances, imprisonment for not less than three months shall be imposed:

1. Upon a male who, with force or with threat of imminent danger to life and limb, compels another male to commit lewd and lascivious acts with him or compels the other party to submit to abuse for lewd and lascivious acts;

2. Upon a male who, by abuse of a relationship of dependence upon him, in consequence of service, employment, or subordination, induces another male to commit lewd and lascivious acts with him or to submit to being abused for such acts;

3. Upon a male who being over 21 years of age induces another male under 21 years of age to commit lewd and lascivious acts with him or to submit to abuse for lewd and lascivious acts;

4. Upon a male who professionally engages in lewd and lascivious acts with other men, or submits to such abuse by other men, or offers himself for lewd and lascivious acts with other men.

175b. Lewd and lascivious acts contrary to nature between human beings and animals shall be punished by imprisonment; loss of civil rights may also be imposed.

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79 United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. “Paragraph 175.”
APPENDIX B

MISSION STATEMENT OF MUSIC OF REMEMBRANCE

(Obtained from www.musicofremembrance.org)
Music of Remembrance fills a unique spiritual and cultural role in Seattle and throughout the world by remembering Holocaust musicians and their art through musical performances, educational activities, musical recordings, and commissions of new works.

It is well known that the Nazi regime banned performances of music by living and historical Jewish composers, and by many others they deemed degenerate. But there were courageous musicians who dared to create even in the ghettos and camps. It is a priceless gift that much of this music has survived as moral and artistic defiance in the face of catastrophe. We must ensure that these voices of musical witness be heard.

The Music of Remembrance mission is not religious, nor is its scope limited to Jewish music. Although the Holocaust was an assault on Jewish people and culture, others suffered as well in what was history's most potent instance of totalitarian suppression of intellectual and creative work. Musicians' resistance took many forms, and crossed many national and religious boundaries. This resistance cannot have been in vain. We must remember these musicians by preserving and performing their music. From the depths of human suffering comes the healing beauty of hope and renewal.
JR: Do you have any general comments about the piece?

JH: Well, you know, I mean it came about because the woman that runs MOR (Music of Remembrance), Mina Miller, called me and this was a very important piece to her. It was for the 8th or 9th season of her group, which she founded on her own and just kept going. From the start, one of the things she wanted to do was to be sure to have a work that referred to the persecution of homosexuals during the Holocaust. And, I guess she had done her research; she had called a lot of colleagues and different people and asked who it should be and they all pointed to me. I told her I was really honored and proud and everything, and she contacted me almost two years before the premiere.

JR: Did this run concurrently with Moby Dick?

JH: No, because I wrote this...this premiered in 2007 and she would have asked me in the fall of 2005. So I was already thinking about Moby, and I was also thinking about Three Decembers, which is a chamber opera. That was also my first collaboration with Gene, the fall of 2005. So I had just started working with Gene, we were doing a cycle called Statuesque. And that was the year we did that. I was in Seattle that fall because of the production of my opera The End of the Affair, being done at Seattle Opera, so I met Mina and we talked. And at first I thought I was going to be able to do it with existing texts, and that was my goal, to weave existing texts together. But I think you know the story of what happened, there were no texts from the period. Step-by-step I bought a lot of books online about the whole thing and I still wasn’t finding the sort-of key, and then I found that documentary. And the whole thing opened up and I realized I was going to need a whole new libretto, and that it was going to be a theatre piece. But, I have to say right at the beginning I was a little daunted and I kept putting it off because it seemed a little daunting. Because I realized, is there another piece in the opera or chamber music world that deals with that particular subject? I don’t know of it. There might be, but I looked around and I didn’t see anything, so I felt like it was a very important piece and I was very grateful to be the one to do it. I kind of avoided it for a while, but once I locked into that zone, I realized what needed to be done and that’s when I called Gene. And in general that piece is a theatre piece. It’s not just a song cycle.

JR: There was a review, I believe it was Opera News, in which they referred to it as a “song cycle with an actor”, and I couldn’t believe that you had referred to it as that.

JH: No. What do I call it? Do I call it a lyric drama? Either a lyric drama or, it’s on the website I think, it says what it is. It’s very hard to keep it all straight. But I always thought of it as a theater piece. That it was going to be a theatrical presentation and that to really do it, you had to do some staging. And that, I mean to just stand and sing the actual numbers doesn’t really work because there is a real narrative involved. So that was clear from the beginning, especially after I realized I needed a librettist and we needed an original text, and we needed something to link all these stories together. So it’s a really theatrical impulse for the whole thing. But I wrote it, actually very quickly. I thought about it for a long time but then I wrote it in about a month.
JR: Did you always know that Morgan [Smith] was going to sing, or did that come after?

JH (paraphrase): No, I didn’t know that. Mina really liked Morgan and he had been a young artist with the Seattle Opera and he had sung up there. I had never heard him, and so she flew him down for me to hear him sing. He must have been, just about thirty. So he was a really young artist, and he sang for me and I talked to him about it, I knew he was nervous. How nerve-racking is that? He was at our house and he was all dressed up. He really started working and took all the things that I had to say to heart and he was completely stunning. And it was after he did that when we were casting Moby Dick, both Gene and Jonathan and I all thought he would be great and he just keeps getting…I mean he was stunning as Starbuck, right? He was great; he was like definitive. You can’t imagine it being done much of better, and he looked the part too. It was just so right. So that was a big surprise, because when I first heard him I really wasn’t sure.

JR: I watched the documentary several times…

JH: Isn’t it wrenching?

JR: At first, it struck me as being very light hearted, because of the music in the background.

JH: The music is terrible.

JR: And then when you get towards the end with Pierre, the story of Joe. You just realize it’s very heavy…

JH: The three that really got me were Pierre Seel, also the old man talking about “Perhaps my father…” and remembering that, that killed me. To see that old guy finally able to express something that nobody wanted to hear about. And here he is at the end of his life. The thing that’s so touching to me is suddenly they become those 18, 19, 20 year olds that were so wounded. And that’s amazing to me. And then the other one was the really old guy who was in the wheel chair who did the “der singende Wald”, just the way he told that whole story. I thought it was just so haunting. I found all the stories really haunting. And also it made that whole period come to life, because these were the real people. We are so lucky those guys did that documentary and captured those stories, because most of those people are already dead.

JR: Because I think it came out in 2000.

JH: It’s already ten years.

JR: When you were spinning all this around were there any, just as far as background, monumental things? You said you purchased some books...what really stuck out to you as being a great source of information?
JH: Well, the movie was the greatest source for me, but I did read a book called I think, *The Men Who Wore the Pink Triangle*. There were a number of books about that period, and Pierre Seel wrote a lot of memoirs, so I read those. And I also read the play *Bent*, which was very informative. I never realized what an important play that was, but it was written shortly after homosexuality was finally made legal, which was 1969 in Germany. And that coincided with the whole Stonewall revolution, so it was a very important play, and very bold. Anything else...I honestly can’t remember, because I’ve written so much other music since then and done so much other research. Oh, and I went to the Holocaust Museum in D.C. It was my first time.

JR: I’m planning on going over break because I’m from that area, from Philadelphia.

JH: Well, give yourself three or four hours to go through and don’t plan anything else for the rest of the day. It’s so amazingly well laid out that it just takes you on this journey and just brings you deeper and deeper into the reality of it. I found that also very inspiring because, again, it’s a very theatrical presentation of truth. And people are suckers for theater. I’m a sucker for theater, it always works for me, as long as I don’t have to suspend disbelief too much and I didn’t have to suspend any disbelief in there because it’s all true. That trip was really powerful.

JR: Talking about the piece in general, had you always conceived this as being for baritone?

JH: Vincent Cole was going to do it initially. Vincent Cole was Mina’s original idea. And I had a meeting with him and I liked him very much as a person but he pulled out of it on his own. That’s when Mina thought of Morgan, and I was wide open at that point. So it was after it didn’t work out with Vincent, that Mina had suggested Morgan, and at that time I was still trying to figure it out, so I didn’t know who it was going to be. I just knew there was going to be a singer. And I liked that Morgan was a young baritone, and like I said, after I had worked with him he was open, and didn’t have any trouble embracing any part of the story, or whatever it was going to be. You know, Mina is very involved in the commissions she does. It’s not like she says, “Here’s the project, go.” She wants to be helpful and connected to the whole part, and actually that was very helpful to me.

JR: Now about the libretto...

JH: It was when Gene watched the documentary, because I knew the stories had to be involved, but we still didn’t have the sort of storyline. And then he read Manfred’s diary and was so excited about the poetry of it and then he realized that Manfred and Gad had this connection and that’s when he realized that maybe that was the storyline. I don’t remember whose idea it was to have Manfred come back as a ghost but it could be that sort of storyline and it just kind of evolved. I know that the keystones were finding *Paragraph 175* and also Manfred’s diary in the Holocaust museum.

JR: Had you at all you looked at Gad’s autobiography?
JH: No. And I know he is still alive and I think living in Berlin, or I don’t know where. Maybe he’s back in Israel already but I did read Pierre Seel. But it really was those stories in the movie that made all the difference for me.

JR: Do you know if Gad knows of this?

JH: I don’t know. I don’t know if anyone has been able to reach him or if they know where he is. Once we found the story and everything, by then it was already, “I’ve got to write,” and I was working on a couple of other pieces at the same time. So once we figured it out, then it was very clear how I was going to write it.

JR: When you were conceiving the ensemble for this, how did that speak to you?

JH: I didn’t want it to get so big that is was like trying to be a small orchestra. I still wanted it to have that intimacy and I wanted it to be something that could give the effect of that cabaret feel. Like what instruments would be around that you could throw together. And the piano trio seemed obvious, the clarinet was really obvious for the sort of jazz inflection, and the flute as another woodwind and to take care of higher registers. That sort of came together. I had thought about percussion, and then I thought no, I could do enough with the piano and then I thought about saxophone, then I thought, no, I still want to keep it keep it in that chamber music vein, but then definitely explore with it.

JR: Have you been following the productions of this?

JH: You know, I hear about them. I know it’s been done at Eastman, and a couple of other colleges, and then professional productions; there have only been a few. But I actually don’t know. I know it gets done.

JR: It’s the perfect collegiate setting, because it’s short and the forces are relatively accessible.

JH: Yes, the hard part is finding the right actor for Gad.

JR: What is the audience like for the Music of Remembrance series that Mina does? Because you talked about, in one of your interviews, thinking about the audience.

JH: When I mean thinking about the audience, I mean, if I was in the audience. Being aware that there are people watching this. How does it look? What’s going to be the general flow? Is there enough variety to pull the ear along and keep the ear engaged as well as the heart and brain? Is there enough variety? Is it the right length? All of that stuff. It’s not that I’m thinking of a particular audience. And I went to a Music of Remembrance thing and I was blown away by the diversity of the audience, young, old, and everything in between. And a goal that Gene and I had in this, was that this is a love story, it just happens to be between two men. It doesn’t actually matter that it’s
between two men, which was very important to us. That it just happens to be in this case, and it wasn’t like carrying a banner or a torch or trying to do a polemic. It was really just telling their story. And I was really swept away by how many people; nobody had any problem with the fact that it was two men. They were so swept up by the heart connection that they felt. And that was incredibly rewarding.

JR: As I was thinking about it, this is very representational of the entire experience of the Holocaust.

JH: Yes, the whole thing is, Gad has spent his whole life just trying to put it behind him because he had been told afterwards that no one wants to hear about it. Leave it alone. It’s over. It’s done with. Move on with your life. And because of the stigma of being gay, because it was still illegal in Germany, and that whole idea that after the war they were still considered criminals and could be arrested. And Gene found a harrowing statistic that they think about 100,000 people were arrested and interned for being gay in the holocaust. They’re not sure because they might have been gay and Jewish, they might have been gay and something else, but they’re sure it’s about 100,000 and at least 15,000 of them were murdered. A lot of them were used for scientific experimentation, or other things like that, or castrated, etc. But about 100,000 and Gene found out after the war and up until 1970, another 100,000 at least were arrested and interned. So it didn’t stop, you know? Well that’s why these people fled, or went away, or disappeared, or didn’t even give a clue. So Gad has, for all those years, been trying to push that down. Partly from fear, partly from shame, partly from, you know, all of those things. It’s just too hard. He kept saying it’s too hard. But Manfred is that youthful, hopeful, optimistic person that doesn’t want to be forgotten. He wants to be remembered. Ultimately, if we can acknowledge what has happened to us and where we’ve been and just incorporate it into our fabric-work, we are much more whole as a person. And that’s sort of the lesson of the piece.

JR: In your 2006 interview with Sean Teets, you said your top five compositions to date were Dead Man Walking, To Hell and Back, Deepest Desires, Holy the Firm and Here and Gone. Has that changed?

JH: Well Moby Dick is definitely in there. This piece is definitely in there. I have to say five? Because I love all of those plus I truly love Three Decembers, this one, and the cycles that Gene and I have done together, Friendly Persuasions and Statuesque. I have to say that as I get older and I learn more about my craft, just by doing pieces and figuring out what works on the stage, and what works for me, and what doesn’t. I’m really very fond of pretty much ever piece I write now. Whereas earlier on, to me, there were a lot that I just never want to hear again. Not that they’re bad, it’s just that I feel like I’m a different person now, creatively. But I would definitely add the major stage works. I mean all of them I’m just really, really proud of, and the major song cycles too.

JR: As you continue to write, are you drawn to any one type of medium, genre, or style?
JH: I'm drawn to stories, and then finding the right way to tell them. So definitely I'm drawn towards telling things on the stage and with voices, that is kind of a given for me. I'm not as interested in writing purely abstract instrumental music. I really want a narrative. The minute someone suggests a new piece, whether it's a song cycle or something, I'm picturing a stage, I'm picturing people on the stage and imagining what is the transformative journey from A to Z, and what are the stops along the way. And to me that's why I love to work with singing actors always, because they are going to bring that element to it. But definitely looking for the right subject or story that sets something off in my brain that there is something there I really want to explore and tell, because I feel like there is a real journey and there is some kind of transformation that happens in the course of that journey. Whether it's a huge opera, or whether it's a song cycle, or whether it's a simple song. There has to be some kind of journey. So that's what draws me instantly. First it's the story and the opportunity to tell a story, and then it's imagining the sound world and what that involves, whether it's an orchestra, or just a piano, or a chamber, or a group of instruments. That initially, and then putting faces on the singers that are going to have whatever roles we create. I think all of that is the most stimulating part of it.

JR: You mentioned that you didn't necessarily have the singer before creating this. Are you at a point now where you...

JH: No, I actually hadn't figured out the piece when I met Morgan. I just new kind of what it was going to be about, because initially, it was going to be Vincent Cole. I met with Vincent and when he withdrew Mina sent Morgan. She didn't have a big budget, so she needed it to be a local singer and she wanted to make sure she had him booked. Because you know how it is, people get booked up and then you don't have anybody. So I knew before we came up with what it was actually going to be, that it was going to be for Morgan. That's unusual. Usually I know what the story is first, or how we're going to do it and then start to assign roles.

JR: Do you prefer to know, it could be limiting, but do you prefer to know the exact singer and their capabilities when you're creating?

JH: It really helps. It's not limiting at all. What's great is that, because I'm very visual when writing I need to be able to picture it and knowing who the people are just, it's like I'm writing for the role and the character, but knowing who I'm dressing that on is incredibly helpful. If you're writing for a violin you pretty much know what the violin sounds like but the violinist's personality is going to bring so much to it. If you're writing a role for a singer, knowing who that person is and the special things that they can bring to it, and imagining because you know them how they're going to interact with other people, that actually stimulates my imagination rather than limiting it. Thinking I'm writing for a generic soprano or a generic baritone is actually much harder. Much, much harder. So I've always learned that, say for example I am asked to write a song cycle, and they're not sure who the singer is going to be, I'll immediately think of who I'd love to write it for. Then it winds up being someone different, at least I'm on the track. Like
with Dead Man Walking, we didn’t have Susan Graham right away and Terrence McNally said to me, “So who’s a singer you would imagine?” And I said, “Well when she was still in her prime Janet Baker: ideal.” And he said, “Okay, I get it. I know exactly what you’re thinking.” And that helped him write too. It’s just important, creatively, for me to know.

JR: Have you, throughout your years of working with singers, met any that have resisted your ideas and how do you work with collaborating with someone who may have their own strong ideas of doing something?

JH: I have been very lucky. For initial productions of works, I usually have a very big say in who is going to be cast and we’re not going to cast anyone who isn’t 100 percent on board, all in, and really willing to go there. And then we will have discussions definitely, about aspects of the character and why that music or is there another way of expressing that. I’m wide open to that. That’s what’s exciting to me, because composers spend so much time alone. And if it’s someone that I really respect and who I love it’s great. The only time I’ve had resistance to ideas is when it was a subsequent production and people I had never worked with who were very resistant to what I had to say or thought I was asking them to compromise vocal technique, which I would never do. And that’s always a little jarring.

JR: Well especially because your lines are very singable.

JH: Well, I work very hard to make sure that not only are they singable but that you can get the words across, and that the part is giving you the opportunity not only physically, but vocally to inhabit a character, and find a through-line for a character. But that has never really been a big issue for me, because I’ve been so lucky to work with really great singers in the initial phase.

JR: In reference to your 2006 interview. You mentioned that at the time you were in a position where you could turn things away and recommend other composers, and I know that this project spoke very strongly to you, but I’m wondering if this had come to you two years later in the midst of writing Moby Dick and you didn’t have to take it, would you?

JH: I would probably have just a quiet conversation with Mina and tell her people who came to mind, and she might already have other people who came to mind for her. But I would have recommended people who were definitely theatre people, who have that real sense of storytelling in narrative. She might have decided to go a totally different direction. I also, because I also really wanted to do it, would have asked her if we could have postponed it a year or two so that I could do the project. If a project really, really speaks to me, I’m going to do everything I can to do it. It’s the projects that don’t speak to me that I’m lucky enough to be able to turn down, and then I’m thrilled if, if it didn’t speak to me it might speak really loudly to someone else. And then I’m thrilled to recommend a whole bunch of other composers. I don’t know who it would be right now or back then, I’d have to think.
JR: Thank you so much for taking the time to speak with me.

JH: You're very welcome, and I'm looking forward to you working on this project.
APPENDIX D

GENE SCHEER INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTION, 20 FEBRUARY 2011
JR: Do you have any general comments or thoughts about the whole process of compiling this narrative for *For a Look or a Touch*?

GS: No there’s nothing that comes to mind except for the fact that this is a story that I didn’t know going into this process and I’m a relatively well-educated person. I mean, I knew that the gays had been persecuted but I didn’t really know the details, the extent of it, and the way that their stories played out through the war and then after the war. Such, for example, that being gay was illegal until the 60’s in West Germany. And so, it was a whole educational process for me doing this piece and I thought it was a great way of bringing this historical issue to life using music and the theatre. The overarching comment is that I was really pretty ignorant going into this, of the issues involved and once I started digging into it, it became a very good calling, and a powerful, moving subject.

JR: How did you go about selecting and crafting the stories from Paragraph 175 and the journal into this narrative, because the narrative that’s being told in the piece is a compilation of all of the stories? How did you go about choosing those?

GS: The first thing is that as a point of departure what Jake and I were doing is creating a work of art, not doing a documentary. And that is significant because it allowed us to take these stories and to weave them together in a way that had a sort of artistic and emotional power and arch to them. Because the real important thing to remember is for us was that we were not trying to tell the whole story as a documentary. What I’m trying to say is that once we freed ourselves from the idea of telling just Gad’s story, then it became clear that we could weave this evening together using the various stories from the various guys. It was allowing ourselves to create a work of art and not a documentary. So how we crafted it was based on the theatrical needs of the piece rather than trying to make sure that every “i” was dotted or “t” was crossed. So for people who are watching the piece, they might think that all of these experiences we had by just these two people, and of course that’s not the case there.

JR: When you were crafting the libretto, were you thinking or working directly with Jake, for example I’ll use the second one, “The Gold Years,” of how that would sound? Or did you just create the libretto and then he went about making the music? Was it a process that you both did together?

GS: The libretto came first, and then he did the music afterwards. Our normal process together is that I write the libretto, I write an outline, however, we talk about it. We met in New York and discussed how this piece would work. Originally this was going to be a song cycle, if I recall. We were going to do a song cycle. And I remember sitting with Jake at a diner in New York saying, “You know, to give these stories some sort of context maybe we should used a narrator.” Actually my first thought was that we would have a person speaking and a person singing because the original idea was sort of to do this as a song cycle. And then from that, with sort of talking, I don’t remember exactly how it emerged, but from the narrator came the idea of maybe using an actor. And that was sort of born at a breakfast that Jake and I had in New York, or a lunch,
whatever it was. So we talked about this idea. And once that sort of hatched, other possibilities started to emerge in terms of how we could tell the story. And then again, once that idea emerged, the notion to free ourselves from trying to tell the stories as historians and rather to tell the stories as artists allowed us to weave these stories together in a way that would work for music and for this theatrical project that we did. I keep coming back to that point, because it’s actually rather significant, at least to me. When you try to tell something historically, I’m doing it right now, I’m writing a piece about 9/11, and when you’re trying to depict something that happened historically I think it’s easy to forget that you’re writing music or a libretto and that what you try and do is create a piece that communicates the emotions of the experience that you’re depicting rather than the details and the facts. Because that’s what music does best. Once we sort of became aware of the fact that we weren’t going to try to be telling, “this happened and then this happened and then this,” but rather sort of give it an emotional journey and that the music could allow people to feel what these people felt. It was either the love they had, the love that was denied, the terror that they experienced in the camp, and the sense of loss and fear that they experienced after the war, those who survived because of the stigma of being gay after the war and that it was still actually illegal to be gay. There was one guy that actually told story, I don’t know if this was in the piece or the film, but he was arrested two or three times after he left the camp and was in jail for the next like 10 years of his life. It’s an amazingly heartbreaking story. So those were the various tributaries which helped us chose and get to a point where we could write the piece. Does that help you?

JR: Yes, this recital for me is March 5, two weeks away, as I’ve been trying to get into my character, on the academic side of having to write about it, have struggled with wondering how much in my characterization I need to recall what was fact and what was art. So it’s very refreshing to hear you say that it really is an art piece, because that is how I was viewing it. My whole spin on my dissertation was “works of remembrance.” Because from what I read, a lot of this is factual, it just isn’t necessarily factual for these two individuals, but it’s still truth.

GS: I’ll tell you Joe, one of my favorite lines by the painter Pierre Bonnard is, “Art is lot’s of little lies making up one great truth.” Of course what we were depicting in the piece is true; the story of Joe is true. Gad Beck putting on the Nazi uniform and going to try to get Manfred is true.

JR: As I was going through it and reading through it and reading about it, everything happened. I was just wondering how you went about making the narrative and it’s nice to see that even in the abandonment of, “Oh we’re going to present this in historical chronological order,” it still is true.

GS: In terms of how the piece emerged, it was Jake’s idea to do this first of all. Jake approached me with this subject; this is not a subject that I came up with. It was an idea that Jake and Mina Miller discussed and then when Jake approached me with it and I saw the film, got very interested and so forth. Then I did more research and I found the diary at the Holocaust museum. That was the next major sort of event in the
crafting of the piece. So when I found that, I got really excited and told Jake that I discovered it. You know, luckily I speak German because I lived there for a long time. So I did a poetic translation of that first, that’s the only thing I think that’s actually from the diary. But that also was very, very poignant and also sort of beautiful for a young person to write what he wrote. So I did this poetic translation of that opening song and I think it was then that Jake and I started talking and I was like, “You know I think it would be really good to give this some sort of historical context. I think these songs are lost without it.” And then the narrator morphed into an actor and then we talked about focusing on Gad Beck, and I think Jake was really pleased. So to just focus on Gad and weave the other stories in and that’s what we did.

JR: From your perspective, what is the resolution at the end? From your writing, what do you intend to be the resolution at the end, or is there a resolution?

GS: For me, first of all, just because Jake and I wrote it doesn’t mean that what we intend is necessarily what someone else has to take away from it. That’s the first thing to say. But I think what’s obvious for me is that Gad Beck, at least the character of Gad Beck, this is not the real Gad Beck, but the Gad Beck that’s on stage, who is this hybrid of all these different characters, is at the end of his life. That’s something to remember I think and so he has been, the character of Gad Beck, not the human being, has been trying to forget the Holocaust and move on throughout his life and this ghost appears, and of course the ghost is not necessarily real. The ghost is something that’s born out of him; you can certainly argue that. And what it’s arguing is that there are certain things that need to be remembered, and do not forget what happened, lest it happen again. And also, at the end of his life to remember this very profound love that he had when he was young and I think that was sort of transformative for him in some ways or just certainly was insanely important, or very, very important. So I think at the end he’s having trouble to suppress the memory; he embraces it. And part of that is the memory of the Holocaust and part of that is the memory of the profound love that he had when he was a young person. I don’t know if you know because you’re a young person still, but there’s something about the very, very important first love that you have in your life as you get older. You know it’s definitely eclipsed by a deep relationship you have with someone which is just the kind of experience that can last 20, 30, 40, 50 years or whatever. There is a kind of vulnerability and sweetness to the first time that you fall in love and I think that Gad Beck the character that we portray is also feeling that at the end of his life and it is sort of a return to the memory of that as well.

JR: I was thinking how to stage and how to walk through the end of this. So that was just for my benefit. Just to hear what you thought. I see the two of them for the first time really connecting and joining in that last number. In that this is the first time that Gad has embraced the memory of himself and the memory of Manfred so they are now together. Whatever happened in 2, the dance, that’s just a different memory, but this is actually the joining of their two paths again. That’s how I had seen it and I wanted to see.

GS: That seems like a really good reading of it. Yes.
JR: I know that in “Silence,” where Manfred is “oo-ing” or humming over Gad that he talks about his father and it ends with the text “It’s over and done with. Would I have wanted to speak? Perhaps, perhaps, perhaps with my father?”, which comes from the documentary. How important was that? The whole soliloquy or monologue, how important was that to you that it was set the way it was, over this “oo-ing”?

GS: First of all, that was completely Jake’s idea as a way to do that, which I thought was just great. I think it’s so effective. And I will say this, I think of all the stories that are in the documentary; that is the one that moved me the most. And it was the idea of giving that gentleman, I’ve forgotten his name now honestly, his story to Gad Beck that’s what I was babbling incoherently about at the beginning of the conversation. That’s what I was trying to talk about. The imaginative leap that allowed us to merge that guy’s story into Gad Beck’s voice was actually one of the pivotal moments in the creation of the piece, because we allowed it to be factually accurate and yet emotionally accurate. But in terms of why that story, that story to me was profoundly moving because if I’m not mistaken that guy was in a camp for eight or nine years, it was just an insane amount of time he spent in the camp. He was also the guy that was set up, that they conspired to do something that would identify him and then they could send him off to a camp. So then he goes off to the camp and he comes out of the camp and his mother can’t even acknowledge him. He could never ask them a single question. And his father had passed away. You know you asked me in the beginning why this piece was compelling to me, secrets that are finally allowed to be revealed are a very theatrical experience and that sort of defines this entire subject, which is that these guys were forced to keep their sexuality secret. And you’d think that after the war and the horrors of the Holocaust and all this crap that they experienced and that so many of their brethren had been killed in the camps, not to mention the rest of humanity, and then after all of that to come home and not be able to tell your family because you’re gay, you know, they feel a sense of shame because they have experienced this. And then looking for a light, he sees his father and that it’s too late because his father has passed away, this one person. It just was so moving to me. And that’s why we communicated it, why we put it in the piece. But the idea as to how it was set, that was completely Jake’s idea. I think it just was beautiful.

JR: As I was working through I was touched by that story when I watched the documentary because of the relationship I have with my father. So, I was personally touched. The fact that it has made it in, and in such a poignant way. Because this is as much of an aria that an actor can have; this the actor’s aria and so it’s nice to be able to sit back and “oo” your way through while these words are pouring over you. It was not a good first experience going through because I could not make it with a dry eye.

GS: It’s such a powerful moment. And it’s so beautiful too, what Jake did with the cello, and the voice, and the actor telling the story. It really is a beautiful moment. I knew I wanted to use that story because it meant so much to me as I just described. How we did it was completely Jake’s artistry.
JR: Going into the second one, which is for me the most difficult as far as staging. This is a very specific question, I don't know if you will have an answer. I don't know if these were part of the libretto, because the words that I'm about to ask you about are not in the [printed] libretto but they are in the score. They are in one of the little dance breaks. Manfred’s character says “Pom! Pom! Pom!” I just wanted to know if they were your words or if you had an intention for those.

GS: They were Jake’s words. Jake added things as he went along. He always checks with me to see if it’s okay with me when he fiddles with the texts. But he’s been doing this a long time and he also knows what he responds to. I think those were these percussive kinds of excited sort of outbursts that he was looking for. But Jake added those, you should ask him about them. That’s our process. I write it and as he’s working on it he'll fiddle with the text sometimes and he'll talk with me about it, but then he always checks with me to see. Sometimes that will cause me to rework something, but in this case it was sort of this exuberance. The idea there again, is that dramatically you need to portray the joy. It’s one thing for people to say, “I'm sad. I'm sad,” but if you can actually experience, see them in love and having fun and being joyful then, of course, then, when that’s taken away, it gives it a lot more gravitas. That’s what architecturally that song is meant to accomplish. Not to mention it’s a mood shift and a tempo shift and such. But emotionally, there’s no question, it’s one thing to watch people in a movie just break up but if you’ve never see them in love it adds oomph.

JR: In that same number, the whole thing of double meanings was brought into perspective with a look or touch. For almost the entire song it’s a good thing, a look or a touch can lead to a good thing and then in the dialogue directly following that, it’s revealed that it’s actually a bad thing; it’s what you can be arrested for.

These are my readings of this, and I guess I’m looking for guidance, but how hedonistic or fun did you intend the text for that song to be? How retracted are we into that time period?

GS: I think it’s fun. Yeah, fun. I think it’s joy. It’s the years after WWI. You also have to remember why the twenties were the twenties; they had experienced WWI. The turn of the century kind of matters, and protocol, and class and a lot of concessions got thrown out the window after people went through with the trenches of WWI. It was, “let’s live now because we can die at any moment.” Also Berlin was one of the cities that was most accommodating for gays and lesbians. It was a very free time, within reason of course, but certainly those stories come from the guys themselves. So I think the answer to you is yes, it’s joy. And hedonism, I don’t know if I would describe it as hedonism, I would describe it as joy. I mean, it’s sex, and if you’re thinking of hedonism as just sex then that’s fine, but it definitely was joyful, sexy fun and then it ended.

JR: Do you have any suggestions as far as approaching this in the best way possible, to give the best story possible?
GS: Well, the only advice I would give is just play each moment, don’t worry about playing the piece. Don’t think about playing, this is what I would say to an actor, don’t worry about what the piece means, just worry about what each moment means and what the piece’s meaning is will emerge out of that. Just be in the moment. You have a great voice so you’ll be fantastic, man, you’ll be great. The only mistake you don’t want to make, when you’re writing a paper about it, it’s different when you have to talk about whatever you want to talk about and whatever your angle is, but when you’re performing it, just be in the moment and let the next moment happen out of that the whole way through. Don’t think about how to assert what the piece means. Stay in the moment, and it will become truthful and that’s all you can do. The only other thing I’ll say is that the music is what carries this, I mean the words are obviously important and the structure of it, the only other advice I have is if you wonder what something means just listen to the music. That’s where the gold is in the piece, it’s in Jake’s music, if you want to know what something means, you can analyze the words but listen to the music and that will tell you what it means. And I think “The Golden Years” for example means joy. That’s why he put those “Pow! Pom! Boom!” in there. It’s almost beyond language.

JR: Thank you so much for taking the time to speak with me.

GS: My pleasure. If you have any other questions, just give me a call.
APPENDIX E

CORRESPONDENCE WITH JAKE HEGGIE, 3 MARCH 2011
Hi Jake,

Three more quick questions if you get a chance. Is there any significance to the way "do you remember" is set rhythmically? The first time there are quarter notes for the words "re MEM ber" and "night," with a little tiny pause before the repeat of "do you remember when night was for more than sleep." Just curious.

2.) Gene walked me through a bit of the process of how this work may have started in its inception as a song cycle with no added voice originally. Would you comment on how the current piece’s format was developed from that original song cycle idea?

3.) Would you be willing to share any info about the re-working of this piece for the Men's chorus? I don't have to include information on this if you don't want me to, but I'm considering placing it into the obligatory "further research" chapter and I don't want to get any details of the upcoming work (if you want me to put it in at all, that is.).

Thank you!!

Joe

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Hey Joe-

Great to hear from you. Wow. You are closing in on the performance, aren't you!?!? I'm SO excited for you! It's going to be great.

The piece always involved a singer and chamber group. The idea of having the actor and making it into a real stage work came early on - when Gene and I were talking about how to share all these stories in an effective and theatrical way. My first thought was to ask Armistead Maupin to be the actor—and he initially said yes, until he found out how much he'd have to travel back & forth for rehearsals, performance, recording…and he was in the midst of writing a new book. But, his personality really inspired me in the way I was thinking of the character of Gad…and I think gave me a real sense of what the drama of the piece would be like.

The revised version with chorus is attached. There is one new a cappella chorus number: "A Hundred Thousand Stars" —and then there is chorus material throughout. I added a chamber choir to Golden Years — and a new section in the middle of that piece. The choir sings "Silence" instead of Manfred — except at the very end. And in the ensemble, I added a percussionist.

Hope that helps!!

Jake
APPENDIX F

CORRESPONDENCE WITH JAKE HEGGIE, 18 MARCH 2011
Hi Jake,

I hope you're well! I wanted to ask some musical questions regarding FALOAT that I don't know if there are easy answers for. I'm going to try to keep them in order of movement/musical idea, in hopes that it doesn't get too confusing. Thank you for your patience with all of my questions.

Prelude:
1.) How did you come up with the "theme" for "do you remember?"
2.) How were the meter changes influenced in this movement, as well as others? You often move in and out of compound meters. Do you see them as having different meaning than non-compound?
3.) I referenced a "march rhythm" at m. 32...is that anywhere close to what you were thinking? (I went on a limb, but I didn't know if it was at all supported)

The voice:
1.) This movement again shows strong juxtaposition in meter changes, specifically with the onset of the section marked "passionately" at m. 129 in 6/8. How did you view this meter change?
2.) I talked only briefly about tonality, but do you have any general comments on how you thought of the musical language of this piece tonally? Do these key areas mean something to you?
3.) How do you go about deciding when to use the strings of the piano in a non "traditional" way in this piece and later on?

Golden years:
1.) I commented a bit on some "word painting" things such as the word "swing." This question applies to more than this movement, but how did you go about "painting" this text? Did certain words or ideas call out to you?

The Story of Joe:
1.) I mentioned the whip-like nature of the music. Do you see the two measure introduction that appears throughout the movement as bearing this idea of being beaten?
2.) As a performer the marking of being colorless/vibrato-less seemed very introverted. Did you intend for introversion, or did you perceive it as being restrained by camp rules? Did these juxtapositions shape your musical language?
3.) Aside from the quick entrance into the 5/8 + 4/8 measures, this piece largely remained in some 2/4, 3/4, 4/4 combination. Is there any reason for the lack of the compound meter?

Silence:
1.) How did you go about deciding to set this piece in this way? The background "oo" or "hmm" is quite effective, and I'm just curious as to how the idea of setting Gad's speech on top of this came about.
Der Singende Wald:
1.) This addresses the question of the plucked piano again. How/why did you decide to use it in this movement?
2.) The texture of this piece is quite thin in the beginning, growing in density as the piece progresses. How do you imagine the growing texture, in particular the upward passages in the piano part?

Remember:
1.) This movement takes elements from both the prelude and the story of Joe. How did you conceive/perceive this final movement's structure?
2.) Including the "remember" theme helped to elicit a point, and then the piece launched into the same ideas, with the expansive compound meter section. Did this have musical significance to you?
3.) The piano music that is presented in the second measure of the piece repeats throughout most of the work, finishing for the last time in m. 592. Did that motion have any meaning to you?

General comments:
I know this piece spoke to you personally and so a lot of the ideas resonated on a different level than maybe some other commissions you've accepted. Do you have any comments on how the music of this piece was inspired? It's such beautiful music, and I truly was blessed to be able to sing it, and I hope to represent it, and your thoughts, most accurately in this paper.

Many Thanks,

Joe

See below for the answers! Thanks for your patience, Joe.

Jake

Prelude:
1.) How did you come up with the "theme" for "do you remember?"

JH: It needed to have nostalgia, yearning and romance in it. The rhythm is established by the actual words – but the rise and fall of it, the feel of it, is from the emotional content.

2.) How were the meter changes influenced in this movement, as well as others? You often move in and out of compound meters. Do you see them as having different meaning than non compound?
JH: It has to do with the storytelling - the unexpected turns of phrases because of unexpected emotional turns. There's so much that is tenuous, uncertain and unstable emotionally in this first part, so I guess the compound meters are reflective of that.

3.) I referenced a "march rhythm" at m. 32...is that anywhere close to what you were thinking? (I went on a limb, but I didn't know if it was at all supported)

JH: Yes. It's meant to be reminiscent of the war.

The voice:
1.) This movement again shows strong juxtaposition in meter changes, specifically with onset of the section marked "passionately" at m. 129 in 6/8. How did you view this meter change?

JH: I honestly don't view it at all—it just FEELS right to me. I go by gut instinct all the time. And I'm a firm believer that the creator of a work has no idea why or of what all is in there ... I just write and trust that something meaningful is happening.

2.) I talked only briefly about tonality, but do you have any general comments on how you thought of the musical language of this piece tonally? Do these key areas mean something to you?

JH: Again, they FEEL right to me. And the key changes, shifts, etc, feel right. I go by instinct on things like this. I also try to be aware of what is better for the voice as well as the different instruments. But it is all instinctive to me.

3.) How do you go about deciding when to use the strings of the piano in a non "traditional" way in this piece and later on?

JH: The color felt right to me for that moment.

Golden years:
1.) I commented a bit on some "word painting" things such as the word "swing." This question applies to more than this movement, but how did you go about "painting" this text? Did certain words or ideas call out to you?

JH: It's meant to be explosively fun, sexy, and filled with a vigorous kind of life and energy. It was very important to me that this movement happen early on in the work because it gives us a very human sense of the joy that was crushed and lost. We have a reference point for the kind of sexy, youthful fun that these guys enjoyed—and that was taken from them. And yes, yes, yes I paint words all the time.
The Story of Joe:
1.) I mentioned the whip-like nature of the music. Do you see the two measure introduction that appears throughout the movement as bearing this idea of being beaten?

JH: Yes, it's meant to be brutal and harsh. I almost think of it as "dance macabre." Again, the job of the music theatrically is to establish an emotional and psychological undercurrent—to give us a sense of place, time, motion, etc. This is a heartbreaking story of brutality—so the music is not sympathetic at all to the plight of the singer. He is left there naked and scarred and alone.

2.) As a performer the marking of being colorless/vibrato-less seemed very introverted. Did you intend for introversion, or did you perceive it as being restrained by camp rules? Did these juxtapositions shape your musical language?

JH: To me it feels resigned and hopeless – like all energy and joy has been taken away.

3.) Aside from the quick entrance into the 5/8 + 4/8 measures, this piece largely remained in some 2/4, 3/4, 4/4 combination. Is there any reason for the lack of the compound meter?

JH: Felt right. Predictable and brutal. And yet – the waltz at the end is somehow the most tragic part of it. So cold and removed from the truth of the situation. And yet, even at that, it's a pretty tune. Again, the music here is unsympathetic to the plight of the individuals—in fact it is opposite.

Silence:
1.) How did you go about deciding to set this piece in this way? The background "oo" or "hmm" is quite effective, and I'm just curious as to how the idea of setting Gad's speech on top of this came about.

JH: It seemed like the time when Manfred would reach out to comfort Gad in this haunting, loving way. It just occurred to me—and you'll get tired of me saying this, but it felt right.

Der Singende Wald:
1.) This addresses the question of the plucked piano again. How/why did you decide to use it in this movement?

JH: It was the right color for this place. A haunting otherworldly eerie sound.
2.) The texture of this piece is quite thin in the beginning, growing in density as the piece progresses. How do you imagine the growing texture, in particular the upward passages in the piano part?

JH: The intensity grows as we realize what is actually happening - as Manfred tells us the truth of the situation – and as Gad realizes it.

Remember:
1.) This movement takes elements from both the prelude and the story of Joe. How did you conceive/perceive this final movement's structure?

JH: It is the answer to the question from the beginning of the piece. Gad wants to forget – Manfred only wants to be remembered. Ultimately, Gad realizes that the only way to find peace is to remember and to embrace that memory fully.

2.) Including the "remember" theme helped to elicit a point, and then the piece launched into the same ideas, with the expansive compound meter section. Did this have musical significance to you?

JH: Yes OF COURSE! It means that there is resolution in Gad's mind. Manfred keeps posing the question and Gad finally answers: YES!

3.) The piano music that is presented in the second measure of the piece repeats throughout most of the work, finishing for the last time in m. 592. Did that motion have any meaning to you?

JH: Of course it has meaning to me. Does it have meaning to you? :-D The angular quality of it recalls the war to me—and the spacing of it indicates something disparate and not consonant. The dropping third is the "Goodbye Joe" theme from The Story of Joe, too. It's there throughout the piece.

General comments:
JH: I know this piece spoke to you personally and so a lot of the ideas resonated on a different level than maybe some other commissions you've accepted. Do you have any comments on how the music of this piece was inspired? It's such beautiful music, and I truly was blessed to be able to sing it, and I hope to represent it, and your thoughts, most accurately in this paper.

I was so moved when Mina asked me—entrusted me—to do this piece. Do you know of another classical chamber work that takes on the subject of gays in the Holocaust? I don't. And certainly did not at that time…so it was a deeply meaningful and momentous piece. Also, because it's basically a love story – there had to be a sense of romance, longing and sensuality throughout. The important thing at the end is that it's a HUMAN love story – not that it's a gay love story. I'm very proud of it…I loved writing it and am so proud that you worked so hard on it, Joe.
APPENDIX G

SOURCE DELINEATION IN FOR A LOOK OR A TOUCH
**Prelude: Do you Remember?**

GAD
Who’s there?

MANFRED
Do you remember?
Do you remember when night was for more than sleep?
Oh, my love.

GAD
You? Manfred! A ghost! Why are you here?
What do you want?

MANFRED
Remember?
Remember?

GAD
Look at you, Manfred. My God. It’s been 60 years. You’re as handsome as the day when. That day when. You’ll always be 19 and beautiful, won’t you? Look at me. Alive. Falling apart. The world is a different place, I guess. Maybe we’d be ok now. Who knows? So much is slipping away. It’s so late. You should go away. I need to sleep.

MANFRED
Remember?
Remember when night was for more than sleep?
Oh my love, my love,
We stayed awake so often!

GAD
You’re not going away, are you?

MANFRED
Remember!

GAD
You want me to remember. Darling, I have done everything I can to forget it’s too hard, Manfred. I survived the Holocaust. I had to find a way to live. There was so much shame after the war and I had nothing. Nothing but your journal: the poetry of the beautiful, 19-year old boy I loved. Fragments. Sometimes, I look through it and cry and curse and smile. Oh, but go now, Manfred. Let me forget.
1. The Voice

MANFRED
A void consumes me.
My spirit and body are suddenly lame.
Terror fills the time that follows.
Will each new day be the same?

Often I feel utterly abandoned
See myself on the edge of an abyss,
And I become dizzy as I look down,
With blood-drained cheeks that you would kiss.

Suddenly from the darkest depths,
A loving voice echoes and seeks me out.
I look down and ask: “Who is calling?”
And I hear a voice that ends all doubt.

It is the voice of a sanctified power,
The sacred place where fears dissolve.
The unyielding blessing, the generous heart
The voice of souls in perfect resolve.

GAD
A sanctified power? Souls in perfect resolve? Hm I don’t know. Nice poetry. I used to think that was possible, but I’m old now. Really old. I’ve seen such horror and cruelty. After the war, we men who wore the pink triangle and survived—we returned to a world that did not want to hear of our suffering. But how can I speak to you of suffering? A sanctified power? Such a lovely, hopeful, naïve thought. But then, you were 19. So was I, once. Everything seemed possible then. That’s how it felt when I met you. Those golden years in Berlin. Die Goldenen Jahre.
2. Golden Years

MANFRED
Wild. Free
We are wild! We are free!
Topsy turvy, joyful Berlin.

You are free! You are wild!
Topsy turvy child of Berlin.
Golden years. Golden years.

Give me a look or a touch and I’ll know.
A nod or a wink or a glance—mm mm—We don’t need words. Just
stand very close. Let’s not miss out on a chance for love tonight.

A look or a touch and I’ll know you’re the one.
A grin or a smile—mm mm—
Just for a while, tonight or a lifetime,
Let’s not miss out on a chance for love right now.

Dance with me.
This is the Schwanenberg,
hottest club in Berlin.
Meet and greet and eat and cheat and swing.

What a band! What a crowd at Schwanenberg!
Take my hand, dance all night at Schwanenberg!
Let’s have a laugh now. Let’s have some fun.
Shout: “Police!”
Then watch ‘em pull their skirts up and run!

Everybody’s running around.
Screaming! Laughing!
Giddy from the joy of this town
And these Golden years. Golden years.

While we are young, wild and free let’s keep dancing.
Let’s not miss out on a thing.
And if we should find we’re of the same mind,
A look or a touch could lead to a precious night of love.

“Police!”

GAD
We had so much fun! Crazy boys. Crazy queens. What a wonderful
family. It would never end! [Then the police did come. The clubs
were closed and the Nazis trampled the joy. You could be arrested
for a look or a touch.] And yet most of our stories have been lost
because we were too afraid and ashamed. [Nobody to talk to.
Nobody to tell.] Oh Manfred, I’ll never know what you witnessed.
What horrors you must have experienced.
3. The Story of Joe

MANDFRED
Horror and savagery are the law.
I am a silent, obedient shadow.
Dead to myself. Dead to the world.
A silent, obedient shadow.

Lined up for roll call,
They pull out Joe,
A loving friend, 18 years old.
Good boy. He’s a good boy, Joe.

What has he done?
What is his crime?
His jacket bears a pink triangle.
Be still. Just keep in line.
Be a good boy, Joe. Be obedient, Joe.

They strip him naked,
Put a bucket on his head,
Then sic their dogs on him.
They bite his body,
Tear at his thighs,
Blood everywhere.

His screams and cries
Amplified by the bucket on his head.
Ah! Ah!

Goodbye, Joe.

And on the speakers
They play a waltz.
Back to work.
Silent, obedient shadows.

GAD
Silent. So many years of silence. Now there are so few of us left.
But you couldn’t talk after the war. We were still criminals! Who
would I have told, if I could? After the war. After it was all over.
When the shame and new anguish was beginning. Who would I tell?
4. Silence

GAD

[It was so long ago. After my father died, I went on a trip. I left the hotel one night and a woman was following me. Down by the river, a hustler approached me. He pulled me into the bushes. “We’re being watched,” I said. “No one is there,” he said. And that’s when it happened, perfectly planned. “You are under arrest.” I did not understand. I was sent away to the camp.] Why?

Paragraph 175 was written in large letters on our jackets. [Later, it was the pink triangle. A yellow star for Jews; a red star for political prisoners; a black star for the mentally retarded; a purple star for Jehovah’s witnesses; a pink triangle for homosexuals.] Hard labor—backbreaking labor—brutality—torture—starvation—death. Death and suffering everywhere. Why? Why? What have I done?


What happened to you, Manfred?

5. Der Singende Wald
(The Singing Forest)

MANFRED
Der Singende Wald.
What is it?

Paragraph 175, Heinz Dörmer interview.

Der Singende Wald.

There are holes in the ground,
In each, a tall pole with a hook on top.
Your hands tied behind your back
Your wrists slung over the hook
You are lifted up, posted high.
Your shoulders snap and break
And you swing and hang and scream.

Der Singende Wald!
Der Singende Wald!

They swing and hang.
All can hear their cries.
Inexplicable.
Beyond comprehension.
6. Remember

GAD
I went to spend the night at your house. Your brother told me that you and most of your family had been arrested that day. I went to your boss. I was desperate. He asked me, “do you have courage?” “Yes, I have courage.” “My son is your size. He has a Hitler Youth uniform. Put it on and get Manfred out.” My heart was pounding as I went in and saluted. “Heil Hitler! I must speak with the Obersturmbannfuhrer.” He came at once.

“Manfred Lewin was brought here yesterday.” He worked for us and is a saboteur! He has keys to several of the apartments we are renovating. My father sent me here to get him so we can go back to work.” Within moments, you and I were free, walking down the street. I said, “Go to Uncle Wobbi’s. I’ll call and meet you there.” You looked at me:

MANFRED & GAD
“No, I can’t go with you, Gad. If I leave my family now, I’ll never be free again. I have to go with them. I am the strong one.”

GAD
We never said goodbye. You turned and walked away, and I walked in the other direction. I wasn’t able to think. But, I knew something was forever broken.

MANFRED
Oh my love, my love...

GAD
I’m so tired. Manfred. So old. And I want so much to believe in what you believed. The sacred place where fears dissolve. The generous heart. Your journal is so full of hope—but I feel so hopeless.

MANFRED
Do you remember when...
Night was for more than sleep?
Oh my love, my love
We stayed away so often.

GAD
Yes. Yes, I remember! Everything, my love.

MANFRED
A single move. Destiny unleashes its terrible game
And sweeps you away to some distant land
where nothing will ever be the same.

Will the last bonds of our community be torn apart?
No. Do not lament.
Even though the fire torments your heart,
There is one sure support:
The voice of our love. Our love.

GAD
Take me with you, Manfred.

MANFRED
Love

GAD
I remember. A look or a touch. Dance with me again?
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