

Amber Grooms' Junior Recital

Program notes, texts, and translations

*Note: All translations are printed with the permission of the LiederNet Archive. At the *end of each set*, the translators' names are printed according to copyright © law.*

“Love in the Dictionary”

Celius Dougherty (1902-1986)

Text from *Funk and Wagnall's Students' Standard Dictionary*

“Love in the Dictionary” is a musical setting of the technical definitions of “love” as outlined in the aforementioned dictionary. Interestingly enough, though a dictionary is supposed to arbitrarily dictate what a word means in a single or few essences, the variations of “love” seem to be infinite even in a dictionary. Of course, that may be because the different cultural outlooks on the concept of love vary widely, though some may claim “love” to be a universal feeling. However, one may ask, “Is it really a feeling?” I hope to use this as a comprehensive framework for my recital, providing a “concrete” basis with which to evaluate the following pieces.

Love: A strong, complex emotion or feeling of personal attachment,
causing one to appreciate, delight in, or crave the presence
or possession of the object, and to please and promote the welfare
of that object;
devoted affection or attachment;
specifically, the feeling between husband and wife;
brother and sister;
or lover and sweetheart;
One who is beloved;
a sweetheart;
animal passion;
the personification of the love-passion;
Cupid;
in some games, as tennis, nothing.

Selections from *11 Tonadillas*

Enrique Granados (1867-1916)

Text by Fernando Periquet (1873-1940)

These selections from *11 Tonadillas* indicate Granados' interest in eighteenth-century compositional styles for the solo voice. A *tonadilla* highlights characters of everyday life and illuminates emotional and characteristic attributes through satirical and exaggerated portrayals; such a character that Granados employed was a *maja dolorosa* ("sorrowful woman"). *Majos* and *majas* were Spanish people of the lower classes in the section of Madrid called "Lavapies" in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, characterized by their elaborate dress and their unusual behavior. In these pieces, Granados paints a passionate and disquieting display of a distraught young woman who has lost her beloved *majo*. Throughout these three selections, one can observe her experiencing three different stages of grief, her emotions abating and outlook clearing more and more as each note of the music passes. By the end, she may have even encountered a potential new *majo* who may rekindle the passion that is integral in Spanish notions of love.

La maja dolorosa no. 1

¡Oh muerte cruel! ¿Por qué tú, a traición,

Mi majo arrebataste a mi pasión?

¡No quiero vivir sin él,

porque es morir, así vivir!

Oh, cruel Death! Why have you, pitilessly,

Stolen my love away from me?

I don't want to live without him,

Because it is death, to live this way!

No es posible ya sentir más dolor:

En lágrimas deshecha mi alma está.

¡Oh Dios! Torna mi amor,

Porque es morir así vivir.

It is impossible to feel more pain:

My spirit is dissolved in tears.

Oh, God! Return my love,

Because it is death to live this way.

La maja dolorosa no. 2

¡Ay majo de mi vida, no, no, tú no has
muerto!

¿Acaso yo existiese si fuera eso cierto?

¡Quiero loca besar tu boca!

Quiero segura gozar más de tu ventura,

¡Ay!, de tu ventura.

Mas, ¡Ay!, deliro, sueño: mi majo no existe.

En torno mío el mundo lloroso está y triste.

¡A mi duelo no hallo consuelo!

Más muerto y frío,

Siempre el majo será mío. ¡Ay! Siempre
mío.

Ah, man of my life, no, no - you haven't
died!

How could I continue to exist if this were
true?

I want, irrationally, to kiss your mouth!

I want, truly, to cast my lot with yours,

Ah, with yours!

Ah! Still I rant and dream; my man no
longer exists.

All about me the world is weeping and sad.

For my sorrow there is no consolation!

Even dead and cold,

My man will be mine. Ah, always mine.

La maja dolorosa no. 3

De aquel majo amante que fué mi gloria

Guardo anhelante dichosa memoria.

El me adoraba vehemente y fiel

Yo mi vida entera di a él,

Y otras mil diera si él quisiera,

Que en hondos amores

Martirios son flores.

Y al recordar mi majo amado

Vam resurgiendo ensueños

De un tiempo pasado.

Ni en el Mentidero ni en la Florida

Majo más majo paseó en la vida.

Bajo el chambergo sus ojos vi

Con toda el alma puestos en mí

Que á quien miraban enamoraban,

Pues no hallé en el mundo

Mirar más profundo.

Y al recordar mi majo amado

Vam resurgiendo ensueños

De un tiempo pasado.

Of that handsome lover that was once my
joy

I ardently keep sweet memories.

He adored me fervently and loyally.

My whole life I gave to him,

And a thousand more would I give, if he
wished it,

For in deep love

Agony is sweet.

And when I think of my beloved majo,

Dreams of a time gone by

Are rekindled.

Neither in the Mentidero, nor in the Florida,

A more handsome man ever roamed.

Under the rim of his hat I saw his eyes

Fixed upon me with all his soul.

They bewitched all those whom they beheld,

And in this world I never found a gaze

So profound.

And when I think of my beloved majo,

Dreams of a time gone by

Are rekindled.

Frauenliebe und -leben

Robert Schumann (1810-1856)

Text by Adelbert von Chamisso (1781-1838)

Frauenliebe und -leben (“A Woman’s Life and Love”) is a song cycle that outlines how a particular nineteenth-century Western woman may emotionally evolve in a relationship—in this case, love that may not be characteristic in arranged marriages, as has been the norm in Europe for hundreds of years prior. This particular song cycle also highlights the humility that women were expected to display in their relationships, regardless of social status, given that women were considered inferior to the authority of man. Robert Schumann was a composer who was profoundly affected by the norms of Romantic-era literature, and these selections from the song cycle not only highlight a woman’s perspective of love but also Schumann’s own musical conveyance of a topic that is naturally evocative at its core.

1: Seit ich ihn gesehen

Seit ich ihn gesehen,
Glaub' ich blind zu sein;
Wo ich hin nur Blicke,
Seh' ich ihn allein;
Wie im wachen Traume
Schwebt sein Bild mir vor,
Taucht aus tiefstem Dunkel,
Heller nur empor.

Sonst ist licht- und farblos
Alles um mich her,
Nach der Schwestern Spiele
Nicht begehrt' ich mehr,
Möchte lieber weinen,
Still im Kämmerlein;
Seit ich ihn gesehen,
Glaub' ich blind zu sein.

1: Since I Saw Him

Since I saw him
I believe myself to be blind,
where I but cast my gaze,
I see him alone.
as in waking dreams
his image floats before me,
dipped from deepest darkness,
brighter in ascent.

All else dark and colorless
everywhere around me,
for the games of my sisters
I no longer yearn,
I would rather weep,
silently in my little chamber,
since I saw him,
I believe myself to be blind.

2: Er, der Herrlichste von allen

Er, der Herrlichste von allen,
Wie so milde, wie so gut!
Holde Lippen, klares Auge,
Heller Sinn und fester Mut.

So wie dort in blauer Tiefe,
Hell und herrlich, jener Stern,
Also er an meinem Himmel,
Hell und herrlich, hehr und fern.

Wandle, wandle deine Bahnen;
Nur betrachten deinen Schein,
Nur in Demut ihn betrachten,
Selig nur und traurig sein!

Höre nicht mein stilles Beten,
Deinem Glücke nur geweiht;
Darfst mich niedre Magd nicht kennen,
Hoher Stern der Herrlichkeit!

Nur die Würdigste von allen
Darf beglücken deine Wahl,
Und ich will die Hohe segnen,
Viele tausendmal.

Will mich freuen dann und weinen,
Selig, selig bin ich dann,
Sollte mir das Herz auch brechen,
Brich, o Herz, was liegt daran?

2: He, the most glorious of all

He, the most glorious of all,
O how mild, so good!
lovely lips, clear eyes,
bright mind and steadfast courage.

Just as yonder in the blue depths,
bright and glorious, that star,
so he is in my heavens,
bright and glorious, lofty and distant.

Meander, meander thy paths,
but to observe thy gleam,
but to observe in meekness,
but to be blissful and sad!

Hear not my silent prayer,
consecrated only to thy happiness,
thou mayst not know me, lowly maid,
lofty star of glory!

Only the worthiest of all
may make happy thy choice,
and I will bless her, the lofty one,
many thousand times.

I will rejoice then and weep,
blissful, blissful I'll be then;
if my heart should also break,
break, O heart, what of it?

3: Ich kann's nicht fassen, nicht glauben

Ich kann's nicht fassen, nicht glauben,
Es hat ein Traum mich berückt;
Wie hätt er doch unter allen
Mich Arme erhöht und beglückt?

Mir war's, er habe gesprochen:

“Ich bin auf ewig dein”—

Mir war's—ich träume noch immer,

Es kann ja nimmer so sein.

O laß im Traume mich sterben,

Gewieget an seiner Brust,

Den seligen Tod mich schlürfen

In Tränen unendlicher Lust.

3: I can't grasp it, nor believe it

I can't grasp it, nor believe it,
a dream has bewitched me,
how should he, among all the others,
lift up and make happy poor me?

It seemed to me, as if he spoke,

"I am thine eternally",

It seemed - I dream on and on,

It could never be so.

O let me die in this dream,

cradled on his breast,

let the most blessed death drink me up

in tears of infinite bliss.

La Regata Veneziana

Gioachino Rossini (1792-1868)

Text by Count Carlo Pepoli (1796-1881)

La Regata Veneziana (“The Venetian Race”) is an exciting account of a young lady named Anzoleta, watching her Momolo compete in a Venetian gondola race. As this piece is the recounting of a Venetian event, likewise, the language of this piece is in a Venetian dialect to add to the authenticity of the context. Though this was published in Rossini’s leisurely collection of *Les soirees musicales* after his retirement, this particular set highlights an interesting element of a Western relationship: societal status and reputation. Anzoleta is insisting that Momolo rows with “heart and soul” to obtain the red flag of victory, of which “all of Venice will talk.” Not only does Momolo’s status elevate when he obtains the prize, but her status elevates too, given her position as an Italian woman at the time; therefore, one may ask, was her excitement for Momolo or for her own benefit? Emotional attachment matters, but this piece emphasizes that status and material property matter even more (to some), so love, in this case, is really just a gateway to material prosperity.

1: Anzoleta avanti la regata

Là su la machina xe la bandiera,
varda, la vedistu, vala a ciapar.
Co que la tornime in qua sta sera,
o pur a sconderte ti pol andar.
In pope, Momolo, no te incantar.
Va, voga d'anema la gondoleta,
né el primo premio te pol mancar.
Va là, recordite la to Anzoleta
che da sto pergolo te sta a vardar.
In pope, Momolo, no te incantar.
In pope, Momolo, cori a svolar.

1: Anzoleta before the regatta

There on the "machina" is the flag,
look, can you see it(?), go for it!
Come back with it tonight
or else you can run away and hide.
Once in the boat, Momolo, don't gawp!
Row the gondola with heart and soul,
then you cannot help but win the first prize.
Go, think of your Anzoleta,
who's watching you from this balcony.
Once in the boat, Momolo, don't gawp!
Once in the boat, Momolo, fly!

2: Anzoleta co passa la regata

I xe qua, i xe qua, vardeli, vardeli,
povereti i ghe da drento,
ah contrario tira el vento,
i gha l'acqua in so favor.

El mio Momolo dov'elo?
ah lo vedo, el xe secondo.
Ah! che smania! me confondo,
a tremar me sento el cuor.

Su, coraggio, voga, voga,
prima d'esser al paletto
se ti voghi, ghe scometo,
tutti indrio ti lassarà.

Caro, caro, par che el svola,
el li magna tuti quanti
meza barca l'è andà avanti,
ah capisso, el m'a vardà.

2: Anzoleta when the regatta passes

They're coming, they're coming, look, look
at them,
the poor things!, they row hard!
ah, the wind is against them,
but the tide is running their way.

My Momolo, where is he?
ah! I see him, he's the second,
Ah! I'm in a fidget! I get confused,
I feel my heart trembling.

Come on, row!, row!,
before you reach the pole,
if you keep on rowing, I'll lay a bet
you'll leave all the others behind.

Dear boy, he seems to be flying,
he's beating the others hollow,
he's gone half a length ahead,
ah, I understand: he looked at me.

3: Anzoleta dopo la regata

Ciapa un baso, un altro ancora,
caro Momolo, de cuor;
qua destrachite che xe ora
de sugarte sto sudor.

Ah t'o visto co passando
su mi l'ocio ti a butà
e go dito respirando:
un bel premio el ciaparà,

sì, un bel premio in sta bandiera,
che xe rossa de color;
gha parlà Venezia intiera,
la t'a dito vincitor.

Ciapa un baso, benedeto,
a vogar nissun te pol,
de casada, de traghetto
ti xe el megio barcarol.

3: Anzoleta after the regatta

Have a kiss!, another one!,
dear Momolo, from my heart;
rest here, for it's high time
to dry this sweat.

Ah, I saw you when, as passing,
you threw a glance at me
and I said, breathing again:
he's going to win a good prize,

indeed, the prize of this flag,
that is the red one;
the whole Venice spoke:
she declared you the winner.

Have a kiss, God bless you!,
no one rows better than you,
of all the breeds of gondoliers
you're the best.

“Love’s Philosophy”

Roger Quilter (1877-1953)

Text by Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822)

“Love’s Philosophy” is a metaphorical poem composed in the Romantic era that emphasizes the notion of free love, commingling what one perceives as divine law to natural emotions. Roger Quilter composed an energetic setting to the text, and one may sense a brisk underlying heartbeat to give the music momentum from the beginning to the end. The height and depth of the accompaniment paint an expansive scenery, in which the singer finds all of the creatures of the world (and elements above, such as the sunlight and moonbeams) in some shared experience with one another. This particular viewpoint highlights human love as an emotional conjoining of two persons, not including material motivations noticed in *La Regata Veneziana*, for example. Therefore, particular *philosophies* of love will deviate from what is defined in a dictionary, and this is inevitable for everyone, given that personal experiences constantly change how we conceive certain ideas and concepts.

The fountains mingle with the river
And the rivers with the ocean;
The winds of Heav’n mix for ever
With a sweet emotion.
Nothing in the world is single;
All things, by a law divine,
In one another's being mingle,—
Why not I with thine?

See the mountains kiss high Heav’n
And the waves clasp one another;
No sister flower would be forgiv’n
If it disdained its brother.
And the sunlight clasps the earth
And the moonbeams kiss the sea,
What are all these kissings worth,
If thou kiss not me?

This recital is completed as partial fulfillment of the Honors College requirements, which includes a final capstone project. The namesake theme of the recital, “Love’s Philosophy,” is meant to be a creative comparison of Western notions of love amongst varying solo vocal literature, spanning across several centuries and across a few different countries. Since people claim love to be a universal feeling, it is of paramount importance to understand how love is defined within different cultural contexts; this may include such elements as passion, material property, or just a sense of peace, however that may be portrayed. Moreover, an analysis of elements such as musical form, harmonies, etc. and an insight of the composers’ lives can provide a deeper context of how love is defined amongst certain Western cultures. In a music classroom, students will thrive academically and socially if they feel accepted and welcomed, and comparing societal notions of love can provide insights on how cultures operate, generally speaking, making teachers more informed of different behaviors amongst students. Though music from around the world will be the main context of a public school music classroom, the Western literature for this purpose provides insights that are applicable to other global cultures. I plan to complete the thesis either in the summer or fall of 2021.