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## **Bells in tower at evening toll : a performer's guide to the songs of David P. Rossow on the texts of William Shakespeare and A. E. Housman for baritone voice and piano**

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BELLS IN TOWER AT EVENING TOLL:  
A PERFORMER'S GUIDE TO THE SONGS OF DAVID P. ROSSOW  
ON THE TEXTS OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE AND A. E. HOUSMAN  
FOR BARITONE VOICE AND PIANO

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
Louisiana State University and  
Agricultural and Mechanical College  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Musical Arts

in

The School of Music

by,  
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## ABSTRACT

David P. Rossow (b. 1975) is a contemporary American composer and arranger of choral works, music for jazz ensemble, and most recently, songs for solo voice and piano. This document serves as a performer's guide to Rossow's songs for baritone/low male voice and piano, *Three Shakespeare Sonnets* and *Three A.E. Housman Songs*. Chapter 1 is comprised of relevant biographical information about the composer from early childhood to present (2014). Chapters 2 and 3 are performance guides to *Three Shakespeare Sonnets* and *Three A.E. Housman Songs*, respectively. Included in these chapters are the following: date of composition; source of poetry; harmonic structure and features; range and tessitura; meter/changing meters; dynamic ranges; shape of vocal line with recommended approaches; and interpretive suggestions for performance. Chapter 4 contains summary/concluding remarks as well as information pertaining to compositional style. Following the bibliography are the appendices containing transcriptions of interviews with the composer, a listing of Rossow's works to-date, and a letter of permission.

Readers of this document will gain further insight into the life and compositional style of American composer, David P. Rossow, as well as an in-depth survey of his *Three Shakespeare Sonnets* and *Three A.E. Housman Songs* for the purposes of future research, further study, preparation, and performance. It is this author's hope that the information found herein will inspire teachers and singers alike to adopt this repertoire as a permanent fixture when programming contemporary American music.

## INTRODUCTION

The concert song is a stepchild of contemporary American music. Most of our prominent present-day composers who have distinguished themselves in instrumental music have written hardly any songs, quite often none whatsoever. There are of course exceptions, but they are few indeed . . . the apparent apathy of so many serious American composers toward the concert song is a condition that affects contemporary music in general.

—Sergius Kagen, *The Juilliard Review*

The above observation by Sergius Kagen appeared in a 1954 publication of *The Juilliard Review*. A similar, more contemporary complaint from an interview with composer, Ned Rorem, appeared in a May 2005 publication of *The Windy City Times*. Rorem stated that “the world of vocal music is in a worse state than it ever was. Nobody writes songs anymore.”<sup>1</sup> How remarkably things have changed since Kagen penned his notion nearly sixty years ago, and it appears that Rorem is lamenting an apparent lack of interest in the classical song model in particular. Nevertheless, contemporary American art songs continue to gain popularity among scholars and academics searching for fresh musical material to program on concert recitals and potential recording projects. Keith Clifton confirms the aforementioned sentiment in his reactionary statement to Ned Rorem’s grievance: “With all due respect to Mr. Rorem, American song *is* very much alive and there *are* composers writing songs. Unfortunately, what is often lacking are singers to sing them and audiences to hear them.”<sup>2</sup> Clifton’s latter sentiment perhaps captures the plague of the American song genre, as it competes for growing popularity and awareness in the musical world. Nevertheless, it seems that a recent surge of interest in American song continues to satisfy the curiosity of many of today’s singing artists.

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<sup>1</sup> Keith E. Clifton, *Recent American Art Song: A Guide* (Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, 2008), xi.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

The evolution of the American song spans a long, rich history replete with stylistic progress, unending textual inspiration, and marked individuality. According to Carol Kimball, the history of American classical music “is as eclectic as the cultures that make up America’s population. From the earliest parlor songs of Stephen Foster to the appealing melodies of Richard Hundley, American song has passed through a number of transformations, but its style continues to mirror the American credo of individualism above all.”<sup>3</sup> Indeed, America’s art music is a kaleidoscope of diverse colors, styles, moods, and characters. Stephen C. Foster, who is often considered America’s first great composer of song, penned 287 works throughout his lifetime.<sup>4</sup> His songs embody notions of sentimentality and yearning—much akin to those of the Irish song ballad as found in the numerous works of Irish composer and poet, Thomas Moore. Citing Thomas Moore as Foster’s chief inspiration for his parlor song idiom, Crawford states, “Foster drew . . . on Irish melody of the kind popularized by poet Thomas Moore in several volumes of Irish song published in both the British Isles and America.”<sup>5</sup> Much of America’s early art music was fashioned thus—taking its inspiration from European counterparts spanning the British Isles, Germany, and France. In the middle of the nineteenth century, America’s song model began to take on an entirely new dimension from the early Irish ballad popularized by Stephen Foster. Many American composers from this period studied composition in Europe—particularly in Germany; thus, their pieces were frequently fashioned in the style of German Romanticism though they clung to notions of sentimentality. In addition, later nineteenth century and early twentieth century composers found artistic inspiration in the French compositional

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<sup>3</sup> Carol Kimball, *Song: A Guide to Art Song Style and Literature* (Milwaukee: Hal Leonard, Co., 2006), 245.

<sup>4</sup> Deane L. Root, “Foster, Stephen C.,” *Grove Music Online*, *Oxford Music Online*, ed. Deane Root, <http://oxfordmusiconline.com:80/subscriber/article/grove/music/10040> (accessed October 10, 2013).

<sup>5</sup> Richard Crawford, *America’s Musical Life – A History* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001).

song style of the *mélodie*. It was not until the mid-twentieth century that American song composers broke ties from European influence and endeavored to compose songs in a style all their own, one which embodied “a richer, more expressive voice”<sup>6</sup> than their predecessors, as found in the compositions of Barber, Copland, Duke, Rorem, Argento, and Hoiby, among others.

From the latter half of the twentieth century and into the first two decades of the twenty-first century, the American song has found particular prominence in the hands of composers such as Bolcom, Larsen, Heggie, Laitman, Walker, and Gordon. Indeed, “American Art Song has changed substantially in the past two decades. With the increased popularity of rock and roll, jazz, and musical theater, song composers have adopted their styles to the musical climate of the time, in many cases redefining the meaning of *art song* in the process.”<sup>7</sup> As a result, certain trends exist among contemporary American songs, including but not limited to the following: a “wide variety of musical styles, including tonal music, atonal music, spoken text, musical theater, popular music, and jazz. In works such as William Bolcom’s *Cabaret Songs* or the songs of Gene Scheer, the traditional boundaries between art song and popular music are blurred.”<sup>8</sup> Consequently, “art songs today present unique challenges to the performer, who must not only sing well, but also assume the role of a singing actor.”<sup>9</sup>

While the genre of American song continues to bolster in interest and awareness, new American composers strive to find original, eclectic means for artistic expression. As a result, two important questions arise: 1) who are the most recent composers making contributions to the

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<sup>6</sup> Carol Kimball, 245.

<sup>7</sup> Keith Clifton, xi-xii.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.



song genre in the twenty-first century; and 2) what efforts are in place to document and disperse this ever-expanding musical art form? In recent years, the task of identifying and documenting contemporary American song composers and their works has primarily belonged to scholars and researchers pursuing unique topics for dissertations or theses, such as this one. In addition, a handful of books have been published regarding the topic of contemporary American song. Furthermore, the Hampsong Foundation, founded by legendary American baritone, Thomas Hampson, has made unprecedented strides in the compilation, documentation, and dissemination of American classical song since launching its *Song of America* project in 2009. Beginning in 2005, the endeavor was a collaborative effort between Hampson and the Library of Congress as a means of examining “connections between poetry and music, between history and culture, through the work of American composers and poets.”<sup>10</sup> It serves as a database where researchers can listen to recordings, peruse scores, and search for or identify lyrics of American songs throughout history. One of the varied purposes of this research project will be to create greater awareness of lesser-known American composers awaiting documentation.

One such contemporary American composer is David P. Rossow, who recently made his initial contribution to the solo song repertoire with his *Three Shakespeare Sonnets* for baritone voice and piano, which I premiered in January 2013. The ensuing research will culminate in a two-fold project. The first is this performer’s guide to Rossow’s oeuvre of vocal compositions for low voice and piano, namely the *Three Shakespeare Sonnets* and *Three Housman Settings*. Scholarly information was collected from a variety of sources, including published books and articles relevant to the proposed research topic, detailed personal interviews with the composer, and musical/textual analyses of the selected pieces.

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<sup>10</sup> “Home: Welcome,” Song of America, accessed October 22, 2013, <http://www.songofamerica.net/cgi-bin/iowa/home/index.html>.

The second product of this research endeavor will result in a professional, published recording of *Three Shakespeare Sonnets* and *Three Housman Settings* in combination with additional sets from contemporary American composer, Sy Brandon. The recording will be published on the Emeritus Recordings Label and is made possible by means of a recording grant through its partner publishing company, the Co-op Press. The recording sessions are slated for the summer of 2014 and will be recorded at Louisiana State University with Mr. Rossow in-residence during the recording sessions. The anticipated release date of the recording is late Fall 2014. In addition to the distribution afforded by the Emeritus label, the author plans to submit these recordings and scores (with the permission of the composers) to the Hampsong Foundation for documentation purposes as a means of further disseminating the new repertoire to contemporaneous singers of American song.

In summary, the proposed research project offers singers and teachers alike an introduction to the song compositions of David P. Rossow, thereby providing additional resource material for teaching and study. This informed resource document, serving as a performer's guide to David Rossow's *Three Shakespeare Sonnets* and *Three Housman Settings*, as well as a professionally published recording will be a valuable resource and contribute to the genre and study of art song. If Keith Clifton is correct in his assertion that a lack of interest in contemporary American song stems from an insufficient supply of singers to sing them and audiences to hear them, then we are tasked with remedying the issue by creating an awareness of the repertoire. This awareness can only be achieved by those whom endeavor to document and distribute said material to the masses.

## CHAPTER 1: The Life of David P. Rossow

### Early Childhood and Musical Beginnings

David Paul Rossow was born August 7, 1975 in Plantation, FL. He is the second of two children born to David John and Susan Rossow of Pittsburgh and Massapequa Park, Long Island, respectively. His parents met in New York while both were employed by American Airlines; his father was an aircraft mechanic, and his mother worked in the office. His elder sister, Pamela, was born two years prior in 1973. Rossow lived with his family in the area of west Boca Raton known as Sandal Cliff for approximately two years before the family moved to a more central location of Boca, where his parents still currently reside.

Rossow was introduced to music and composition at a very early age. In addition to his mother singing about the house regularly, his grandfather, Paul Charles D’Andrea, was a recreational composer and avid performer. An accountant for the United Parcel Service (UPS) by profession, D’Andrea composed and performed in his spare time and regularly accompanied himself at the piano (Figure 1.1). According to Rossow, his grandfather had a tremendous sense of humor and composed primarily comical songs, parodies, some serious music, and even a musical entitled, *Hell’s Kitchen*. Although most of D’Andrea’s compositions were never published, he had written “the complete score for several of the musical shows which United Parcel [had] produced, and in February 1952, he appeared on ‘Songs for Sale’ when one of his compositions was sung by Margaret Whiting . . . he also appeared on the Tommy Dorsey radio

show and won second prize for another of his original songs.”<sup>11</sup> One songwriting competition in 1953, however, would change his luck forever.

According to an article in the *Massapequa Post*, D’Andrea “heard that the Anti-Defamation League of B’nai B’rith was conducting a song writing contest on brotherhood.”<sup>12</sup> He entered his song entitled, “Judge A Human,” for which he wrote the lyrics and music, into the Brotherhood Song Contest sponsored by the Lodges and Chapters in Nassau and Suffolk counties. The song was selected by the Nassau-Suffolk B’nai B’rith as its first prize winner. The lyrics, which are centered on issues pertaining to race and creed, are interposed with age-old sayings—you may judge a book by its cover or a ship by its speed—and one recurring warning: “Never judge a human by his color, race, or creed.” In addition to an all-expense-paid trip to Miami, D’Andrea received a standard songwriter’s contract and publication by Charles H. Hansen Music Co. of New York (Figure 1.2). Correspondingly, “Never Judge A Human by His Color, Race, or Creed” was premiered on Thursday, February 19, 1953 on NBC Network’s Herb Shelton show, where it was sung by Don Rooney of the NBC staff.<sup>13</sup>

Rossow and his sister spent an enormous amount of time around their grandparents as children. His Italian grandmother, Carmella D’Andrea, was the doting type and always found ways to slip money or candy into the children’s hands. He fondly recalls time spent at his grandparents’ house and the many vacations they took as a family. In particular, they went on several cruises together, during which Rossow remembers his grandfather frequently getting up and performing his own songs on various occasions. According to Rossow, D’Andrea cherished

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<sup>11</sup> Anti-Defamation League of B’nai B’rith to The Public, press release.

<sup>12</sup> “Park Man Gets Florida Trip As Brotherhood Song Prize,” *Massapequa Post*, February 19, 1953.

<sup>13</sup> Anti-Defamation League.

performing his own material. He also recalls his grandfather showing him things at the piano, performing songs for them, and sometimes challenging Rossow to play some of his compositions from sight. At the time, however, Rossow was too young and inexperienced musically to make much sense of it all. At that time, he could not fully comprehend the profound impact his grandfather would eventually have on shaping his life as a professional musician. Looking back, however, he distinguishes his grandfather as the single most important inspirational figure of his musical life.



Figure 1.1: Rossow's grandfather, Paul Charles D'Andrea, at the piano.

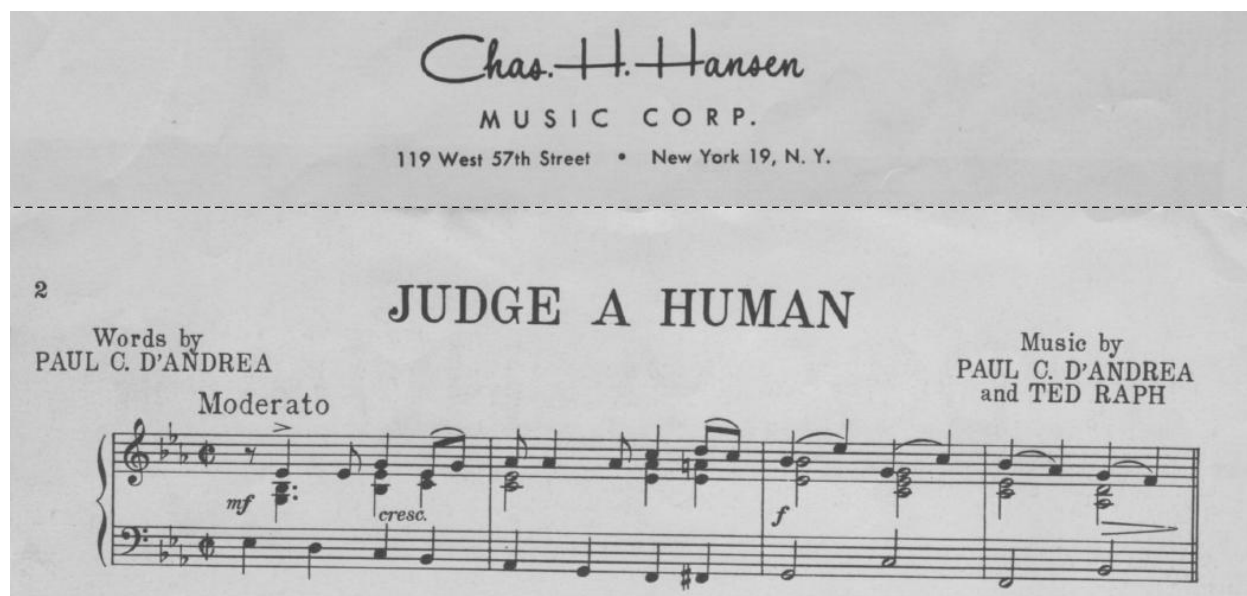


Figure 1.2: D'Andrea's composition, "Judge A Human," published by Charles H. Hansen of New York, 1953.

Beginning at approximately the ages of seven and nine respectively, Rossow's parents—taking note of each child's innate creative tendencies and interests in music—enrolled him and his sister in private piano lessons with a local music teacher, Jean Cleveland. They each took one-hour weekly lessons, and Rossow continued to study piano with Cleveland for the next eight or nine years. He attributes all of his basic musicianship skills and passion for playing the piano to her. Cleveland taught Rossow the essential rudiments of music: from note names to music reading, basic fingering patterns, and all of the scales. Rossow fondly recalls her exceptional teaching abilities—she was compassionate, loving, and encouraging—and claims that if it was not for her, he likely would not have continued musical studies. According to him, she made everything fun and always encouraged whatever the children attempted musically. She held annual studio piano recitals at her home and various venues, where Rossow recalls he and his sister often performed duets together, as well as solo piano works (Figure 1.3).



Figure 1.3: Rossow and his sister, Pam, playing four-hands for an annual recital at Jean Cleveland's house.

Unfortunately for young Rossow, additional outlets for further musical study and opportunities to perform were not abundant. As a student of St. Joan of Arc School located in Boca Raton for primary school and St. Jude School (also in Boca Raton) for middle school, his options were further limited, as neither school had an established music program—choral, instrumental, or otherwise. This trend persisted throughout his secondary studies at Pope John Paul II High School in Boca Raton as well. As a result, Rossow's early performances primarily surfaced from opportunities to perform in local competitions, school talent shows, and studio recital hours. After approximately two years of formal study, his teacher began entering him in various local and regional competitions, for which he frequently won awards and honors. He recalls performing all across town for musical showcases at venues such as the Towne Center mall and for competitions sponsored by the local piano store (Figure 1.4).



Figure 1.4: Rossow pictured with his first piano teacher, Jean Cleveland (left). Rossow playing at one of various musical showcases across town (right).

At approximately nine years of age, Rossow's parents recognized his ever-growing passion for music and piano playing. As Pam's interests waned, his surged. He frequently visited the local music store, where he would spend hours trying every piano on the shop floor. As a result, they decided to purchase an upright piano for the home, so Rossow could adequately practice—and he did (Figure 1.5). For the next couple of years, he would set an early alarm each morning in order to practice before school while his sister was getting ready for the day. Since he truly enjoyed it, he endeavored to practice daily and often devoted one to two hours each morning to rehearsing. Eventually, Rossow's parents purchased a second upright piano of finer quality, which is the piano Rossow still uses in his home today.





Figure 1.5: Rossow pictured with his first upright piano, 1983.

### Adolescence and Growing Interests

While Rossow was attending eighth grade, St. Jude School put on a musical production of *You're A Good Man, Charlie Brown!* He was cast in the role of Schroeder, for which he played the piano and sang. Incidentally, Rossow served as musical director for the same production nearly twenty years later for the Little Palm Family Theatre in Boca Raton.

Opportunities like this were rare, however, and due to the lack of musical outlets afforded him by both middle and high schools, Rossow began searching for additional music-making opportunities within the community. He continued participating in local competitions throughout the duration of his private piano studies with Jean Cleveland, which culminated around 1990 at age 15. During approximately the same time, Rossow and his sister began regularly attending church youth group meetings at St. Joan of Arc Catholic Church. They were members there for nearly two years before transferring to the youth group at San Isidro Catholic Church in

Pompano Beach, FL. While actively involved in the youth group there, Rossow befriended one Mike Schweisthal, a musician and mentor who would leave a lasting impression on Rossow's musical outlook from this point forward. Rossow says, "without him, too, who knows where I would have ended up?"<sup>14</sup>

Beginning around 13 or 14 years old, Rossow's interests expanded from strictly playing piano to studying other musical instruments. He began taking private guitar lessons regularly at Florida Atlantic University (FAU) with the applied guitar teacher at the time, who was incidentally a bass player by profession. Rossow acquired his own guitar and bass guitar, which he began playing regularly. Schweisthal immediately recognized Rossow's aptitude for music and encouraged him to consider playing with the San Isidro praise band, which at the time, provided music for the weekly youth group meetings only. However, when Schweisthal was promoted to music director, the praise band's responsibilities expanded to include one weekly Saturday vigil Mass in addition to the weekly youth meetings. He recalls the Saturday vigil Mass being quite a production at San Isidro since the Mass typically lasted an hour and a half, and the band played 20-30 minutes of praise music prior to each liturgy. Rossow became a permanent fixture of the praise band and regularly lent his talents to playing piano, guitar, and bass. At this age, he was not yet familiar with reading chord symbols and charts due to the strictly classical nature of his piano studies with Cleveland. As a result, Schweisthal, who was also a well-rounded musician proficient on several instruments, became a mentor for Rossow by often demonstrating jazz chord voicings for him on both piano and guitar. After much experimentation and self-motivated study with books lent to him by Schweisthal, Rossow acquired a knack for

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<sup>14</sup> David P. Rossow, interview by author, Boca Raton, FL, February 11, 2014.

reading chords and symbols—one he would not officially cultivate until his undergraduate studies in jazz piano performance years later.

During his early adolescent years, Rossow's musical milieu was primarily comprised of church music and the musicians/bands of the very early Contemporary Christian movement: Michael W. Smith, Newsboys, and Code of Ethics, to name a few. A product of his era, however, Rossow also developed a taste for 80s rock music and 90s alternative bands as the years progressed: Def Leppard, Van Halen, Pearl Jam, Nirvana, as well as others. During this same period, he became enthralled with jazz music and jazz fusion after being introduced to it by friend and mentor, Schweisthal, who gave him a cassette tape of jazz recordings by various artists to sample—a tape Rossow keeps in his office to this day as a reminder of how his passion for jazz began (Figure 1.6). According to Rossow, his affinity for jazz permeated the musical environment, and jazz coexisted with the other genres during this period. He attributes said concurrency with the fact that jazz fusion draws upon many of the same elements as the other genres, which led him to be impartial. He was particularly drawn to the fusion jazz music of guitarist Allan Holdworth and pianists Chick Corea and Keith Jarrett—his personal favorite.

Rossow discontinued private piano lessons at the age of 15 not because he was losing interest in further developing his musicianship skills; on the contrary, his interests were merely shifting from purely classical to popular and jazz styles. He knew that Cleveland would not be able to assist him in making this transition, and though he intermittently sought the guidance of other instructors for jazz techniques, it was not until college that Rossow would realize his full potential as a jazz pianist.

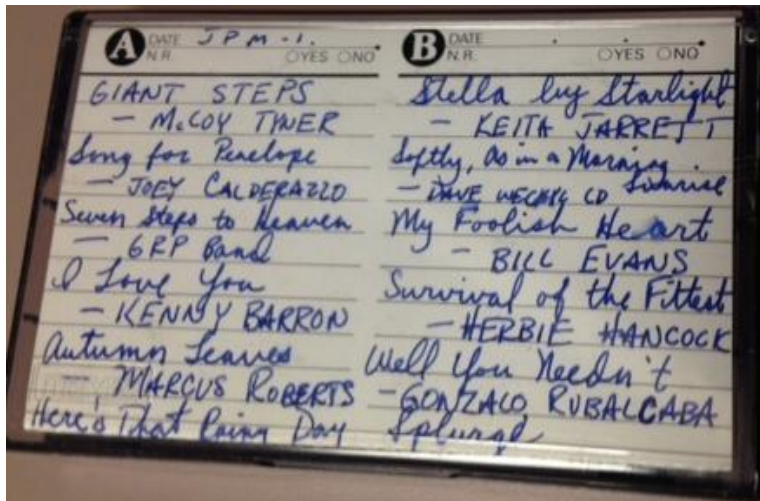


Figure 1.6: Rossow's first encounter with jazz and jazz fusion came in the form of a cassette tape given by friend and mentor, Schweisthal. He keeps it in his office to this day.

### College Years and Studies in Jazz

When Rossow graduated from Pope John Paul II High School in 1993, he applied for admission to and was accepted at Florida Atlantic University. His first two years at FAU were spent as a Computer Science major; Rossow was an active participant in his high school computer club and frequently dabbled in DOS-based interface programming, so he felt compelled to pursue an undergraduate degree in the subject area with the eventual hope of working within the profession. Nonetheless, he was destined for greater things. Throughout his first two years of college, Rossow often contemplated auditioning for the music department in order to pursue a minor in music. He was still actively playing keyboards in regional bands—a Brazilian band and a country cover band, respectively. Likewise, he played bass guitar and piano on Sunday mornings at First Christian Church of Boca Raton. And although Rossow was not formally studying music or jazz at this time, he regularly performed various genres and styles within the community. As a result, his passion for further, advanced musical studies remained

insatiate while fulfilling the requirements of his undergraduate degree. At the conclusion of his second year, however, everything would change substantially.

Rossow had struggled in two of the required courses for his degree—Calculus and Analytical Geometry II. His first attempt at these courses was unsuccessful, and his second attempt was not markedly better. He finally inquired of himself, “What am I doing?”<sup>15</sup> After admitting that he could not see himself contentedly completing the degree in Computer Science, Rossow resigned the prospect and immediately visited the music department seeking information regarding a change of major. When asked why he chose music, Rossow admits it was something he always loved to do, and he was resolved to do what he loved.<sup>16</sup> He continues, “There was nothing else I really saw myself doing . . . and I just decided I would do music full-time.”<sup>17</sup> Rossow was granted an audition with the piano faculty at FAU, for which he played two selections—one classical and one jazz. The faculty rejected Rossow for classical studies but admitted him to the Jazz Studies program. This decision did not come as a surprise to him, for he had abandoned classical studies several years prior and merely attempted to play one of the last pieces he studied with Cleveland for the FAU audition, which was either a Bach two-part invention or a piano sonata. Nevertheless, he was ecstatic to be accepted into the program in jazz studies since this was truly where his passions lied. According to Rossow, he strictly wanted to do jazz, and he wanted nothing more than to be a jazz pianist/performer.

When Rossow began the Jazz Studies program at FAU, he was essentially starting from the beginning. Although he had begun the process of learning to read chords and symbols from

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<sup>15</sup> Rossow, interview.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

his experiences in local bands, his knowledge about jazz scales, modes, chord extensions, and voicings was severely lacking. He recalls one of his first applied lessons with jazz piano instructor, David Hammer, who placed a lead-sheet in front of Rossow and asked him to sight-read it. Rossow admits stumbling through the piece with much difficulty and frustration. Likewise, he found himself transplanted into several student ensembles, namely jazz band and jazz combo, in which he struggled to keep up with other, more advanced students. He continues, “I still remember the first semester in Dr. Walters’ combo when I had NO idea what I was doing. I couldn’t even play a voicing on the piano—I had no idea.”<sup>18</sup> Rossow knew the path would be arduous and painstaking, but he was committed to excellence and self-betterment.

Rossow’s early lessons with jazz pianist and applied teacher, David Hammer, consisted primarily of the basic elements of jazz: harmonic progressions, piano voicings, chord extensions, scales, and modes. Because Rossow could already play piano as a result of his studies in classical music, Hammer was not tasked with teaching Rossow how to read music. Nonetheless, Rossow required much practice in reading and understanding jazz chord symbols and charts. He spent at least two hours in practice rooms every day in order to progress and equalize his skills with those of other students in the program. His hard work, indeed, paid off. Approximately a year and a half later and while still an undergraduate, Rossow was asked to join a faculty-student jazz combo led by Dr. Timothy Walters, who took note of Rossow’s hard work and determination. The combo, who called themselves The Fruitflies, primarily covered songs and standards in the style of American jazz fusion/smooth jazz quartet, The Yellowjackets. According to Rossow, “I

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<sup>18</sup> Rossow, interview.

was playing with a master's student and faculty, so you really couldn't ask for a better environment in which to push yourself.”<sup>19</sup>

Rossow attributes the majority of his acquired skills in jazz theory and performance to his time spent under the tutelage of David Hammer. Nevertheless, there were two additional important factors which contributed to his education and eventual success at becoming a jazz musician. Firstly, Rossow had the fortune of working with then-graduate student, Adrian Re, who was also an active music educator in the Miami-Dade area of south Florida. According to Rossow, Re was an outstanding jazz saxophonist, who was equally capable of playing a variety of additional instruments. Re was a graduate teaching assistant at FAU during this time, and Rossow took courses in jazz improvisation as well as others taught by him. They played together in a student-led combo, where Re frequently coached Rossow in jazz piano technique, style, and improvisation. Re pushed and encouraged Rossow throughout his musical studies, and his exquisite performing skills became a model for Rossow to emulate. The second impulse is correlated to his encounters with Re coupled with his involvement in the jazz combo, The Fruitflies. Rossow sought every opportunity to challenge himself and improve his craft. Thus, he was actively involved in multiple ensembles during his studies at FAU. The combo with Adrian Re for which Rossow played piano, for instance, was a recruiting ensemble. Rossow recalls, “We went out and played probably hundreds of high schools over those couple of years—recruiting, playing, doing some original things and jazz standards. I think that's the other thing, I had the opportunity to perform a lot.”<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Rossow, interview.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

Opportunities were, indeed, abundant, and Rossow was able to complete his entire undergraduate music coursework in three years. It required much diligence and patience on his part, but in the end, Rossow reaped the rewards of unwavering hard work and painstaking dedication. His undergraduate recital of 1998 consisted mostly of graduate student and faculty collaborators, which was a unique occurrence for Rossow and a testament of his efforts. But something new was on the horizon for Rossow—something he did not predict nor perhaps could he control. Rossow had dabbled with composing, arranging, and transcribing during his undergraduate studies. Several of his compositions and arrangements were premiered on his senior recital: “If You Only Knew,” “Ciesta,” and “Remember Me” were originals; “Spiral,” and “I Love You” were arrangements of Barron and Porter tunes, respectively; and “Vista” was a transcription of a tune by Tom Harrell. These were steeped in jazz theory and harmony; they were, after all, intended to be performed by a jazz combo. Yet Rossow did not comprehend then that he was on the brink of something new—something which would change his life forever.

### Graduate School and Early Compositions

When Rossow earned the Bachelor of Music degree in Jazz Studies in 1998 from FAU, he was faced with one recurring dilemma: what next? According to him, “There wasn’t anything.”<sup>21</sup> Unsure of his future, yet recognizing the necessity of making a living, Rossow decided to abandon music almost entirely for approximately the next two years. Other than a few steady accompanying opportunities and a handful of private parties for which he played background jazz piano music, he relinquished creative prospects in order to pursue a profession

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<sup>21</sup> Rossow, interview.



in finance. Rossow became a certified stockbroker and was employed by a couple of private firms, during which time his primary responsibilities included cold calling prospective clients and opening new accounts for them. The first brokerage firm for which he worked was eventually shut down for unspecified reasons. Rossow then teamed with the head broker from that firm, who opened his own private company, and spent the duration of this period working for him. Rossow grew weary of his mundane profession in finance and decided he was destined for something altogether different:

And then, I just got tired of it; it was annoying. It would be one thing if I was a financial planner, and if I had to do it again, that's probably the route I would have taken. But it was mainly trying to drum up business from accounts that already existed, where people didn't even realize they had them because somebody had cold-called them and gotten them to open one. I still remember telling him I couldn't do it anymore. He asked what I wanted to do, and I told him I was going back to school.<sup>22</sup>

Rossow had contemplated returning to FAU to pursue a master's degree in music prior to leaving his finance vocation. In the fall of 1999, he enrolled in the graduate music education course, a requirement for the Master of Arts (MA) degree at the time. He would not return to music full-time until one year later, however, when he officially matriculated as a degree-seeking graduate student in the fall of 2000. Rossow's decision to return to school was the result of a two-fold curiosity. Firstly, as previously mentioned, he had composed three jazz selections for his undergraduate recital and was anxious to explore the medium further in an effort to ascertain whether he had a talent for composition beyond his initial endeavors. Secondly, he was solicited by his good friend (and future wife!), Stacie Niehaus, to accompany the FAU Women's Chorus, which she co-directed as part of her teaching assistantship responsibilities for the master's degree. Rossow's inquisitiveness overwhelmed him, so he seized the awaiting opportunities.

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<sup>22</sup> Rossow, interview.

The flexibility of the MA degree was an attractive feature for Rossow. At the time, degree tracks were non-specified beyond the required core curriculum: Introduction to Graduate Research; Seminar in Theoretical Styles; Seminar in Theory Pedagogy; Seminar in Music History; and Seminar in Music Education. As a result, the degree could be tailored to the individual according to his/her needs or aspirations. Rossow recalls enrolling in three to four applied courses simultaneously throughout his graduate studies: applied piano; applied voice; composition; and choral conducting. Although his initial interests extended beyond any single musical avenue, his magnetism toward composition would soon take precedence.

As a graduate teaching assistant at FAU, Rossow was involved in a variety of vocal ensembles encompassing numerous styles and genres. In addition to his accompanying duties with the Women's Chorus, he served as accompanist for the Vocal Jazz ensemble, Women's Pop/Jazz chorus, Men's Chorus, Vocal Performance Troupe, and he sang baritone for the Chamber Singers, FAU's premier mixed ensemble. His experiences from these various ensembles opened a channel in Rossow's creative mind that had previously remained unexplored:

It just opened up my ears to whole new host of sounds I hadn't listened to before then . . . Primarily it was because of Chamber Singers and singing in that group—hearing that sound . . . I just liked that sound, and I think that's why I started writing. Being involved in those groups, I just wanted to explore that medium . . . I was drawn to the use of . . . the involvement of text and having the ability to transmit the emotional connection to the text in a musical setting. I was hearing that, and being in those ensembles and playing for those ensembles just fueled that interest.<sup>23</sup>

Correspondingly, Rossow began regularly composing choral settings for women's and mixed voices. He now knew that composition was his passion, and he decided it would be the

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<sup>23</sup> Rossow, interview.

focal point of the remainder of his graduate studies at FAU. Rossow studied composition under the tutelage of Dr. Stuart Glazer, a published composer, documentary film scorer, visual artist, and then-Chair of the Department of Music. Recognizing Rossow's tendencies toward jazz harmonies, modality, and exotic choral sounds, Glazer turned Rossow onto to the choral compositions of Francis Poulenc. Rossow continues, "Glazer had recommended I listen to Poulenc, so I was listening to him a lot in the beginning—the *Gloria* and that sort of writing—so there's probably elements of that in there somewhere because I was constantly listening to that style—to him, in particular."<sup>24</sup> Additionally, Rossow had studied Schubert's *Mass* in E<sup>b</sup> as part of his applied choral conducting lessons at the time and took that as partial inspiration for some of his earliest compositional sketches. Like many aspiring composers, however, Rossow's initial renderings were deemed too 'classical' and unoriginal by Glazer—a mere imitation of what he was hearing and lacking his own, original stamp. In retrospect, Rossow agrees they were too plain, basic, and harmonically limited. Glazer encouraged Rossow to try something original rather than duplicating something that had already been done.

Rossow began searching for texts which would inspire originality and ingenuity in his compositions. He found them in the poetic texts of his sister, Pam, who was actively writing poetry at the time. The finished project yielded three songs for SATB *a cappella* chorus entitled, *From Dusk To Dawn*: "The Darkness," "The Moonbeam," and "Early Dawn." These three mark Rossow's first definitive imprint as a composer of choral music, as they reveal elements of his later, mature style: mixed meters, experimentation with mixed tonalities, and instances of text painting (Figure 1.7). According to Rossow, *From Dusk to Dawn* was "probably my own more than anything else . . . so if there's anything foreshadowing my style, there are probably elements

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<sup>24</sup> Rossow, interview.

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S. then, as qui - et - ly and quick - ly as it came, it is gone, gone to hide be - hind

A. then, as qui - et - ly and quick - ly as it came, it is gone, gone to hide be - hind

T. then, as qui - et - ly and quick - ly as it came, it is gone, gone to hide be - hind

B. then, as qui - et - ly and quick - ly as it came, it is gone, gone to hide be - hind

Pnr. then, as qui - et - ly and quick - ly as it came, it is gone, gone to hide be - hind

S. pass - ing clouds un - til the ve - st night, when it steals si - lent - ly pp a - cross the floor

A. pass - ing clouds un - til the ve - st night, when it steals si - lent - ly pp a - cross the floor

T. pass - ing clouds un - til the ve - st night, when it steals si - lent - ly pp a - cross the floor

B. pass - ing clouds un - til the ve - st night, when it steals si - lent - ly pp a - cross the floor

Pno. pass - ing clouds un - til the ve - st night, when it steals si - lent - ly pp a - cross the floor

As time passed and Rossow gained greater experience as a composer of choral music, his confidence in leaving his own unique mark in the realm of composition also grew. The next two pieces, “Set Me As A Seal” and “It Was A Quiet Way,” represent the first two instances Rossow was completely satisfied with his finished product. The former was based on the biblical text from “Song of Solomon” and is available for SSAA or SATB voicing with string quintet, piano, and organ. The latter was inspired by a poem of the same title written by Emily Dickinson and is available for SATB chorus, string quintet, piano, and organ. Both pieces were composed in 2001, as Rossow’s compositional techniques continued to evolve. “Set Me As A Seal” was composed in May, while “It Was A Quiet Way” was composed during the events surrounding September 11<sup>th</sup>. Rossow recalls the process leading to successful completion of these pieces was not trouble-free, however, as one of them was almost entirely abandoned:

... that was the first time I remember saying, “That’s pretty good.” And it [It Was A Quiet Way] almost got scrapped. I started off, and I kind of got stuck on the first page—the first idea—and Glazer, being the teacher that he is, was able to say, “Why? Just try this,” as he sat down at the piano and plunked out notes, you know, it was watching a genius at work. I couldn’t exactly grasp what he was doing; I don’t think anybody ever can. It was just one of those turning points—particularly with that song—but it almost didn’t get off the ground.<sup>27</sup>

Rossow has shopped both pieces to numerous publishing companies, but neither has been accepted for publication as of yet. He remains encouraged, however, as he understands the publication process is entirely subjective and can often be a lengthy, dispiriting endeavor. In response to a comment made by the author regarding the surprising lack of interest in publishing these two pieces, Rossow comments, “Yeah, I don’t know . . . at some point maybe it will come

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<sup>27</sup> Rossow, interview.

back around.”<sup>28</sup> Nevertheless, both pieces have received much recognition and numerous accolades from various presentations at university choral concerts and, in the case of “It Was A Quiet Way,” from a distinguished performance given by the FAU Chamber Singers at the Florida Music Educators Association In-State Clinic and Conference during 2005.

Rossow’s culminating major project for the MA degree was the *Mass for Women*, which he scored for SSAA, piano four-hands, and percussion. To this day, the Mass represents the most successful by-product of Rossow’s advanced studies in composition at FAU. Completed in the early months of 2002, it took nearly six years post-graduation for the pieces to receive deserved recognition. In the spring of 2008, Rossow’s wife, Stacie Lee Rossow, was completing a doctorate degree in choral conducting at the University of Miami. She submitted one of the movements, “Sanctus,” as part of a repertoire assignment for a choral pedagogy class. Dr. Jo Michael Scheibe, Director of Choral Activities at the time, asked to see additional samples of Rossow’s work.<sup>29</sup> Scheibe encouraged Rossow to submit two of the movements to Santa Barbara Music Publishing, which he did. In turn, the “Sanctus” and “Agnus Dei” were both accepted for publication and appeared in the company’s 2008 choral catalogue. Since their publication, the pieces have received a great deal of recognition and are frequently featured on distinguished choral concert programs. In 2009, the pieces were performed by the Manitou Singers women’s chorus, one of St. Olaf College’s “most popular music organizations.”<sup>30</sup> Additionally, the pieces were featured in 2010 on the Southern Division of the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) Women’s Honor Choir concert, conducted by Sigrid Johnson.

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<sup>28</sup> Rossow, interview.

<sup>29</sup> Rossow, telephone interview by author, March 7, 2014.

<sup>30</sup> “About the Manitou Singers,” St. Olaf College, last modified 2014, accessed 7 March 2014, <http://wp.stolaf.edu/manitou/about-the-manitou-singers/>.

In addition to his numerous composition projects, Rossow was frequently sought for his talents in arranging and transcribing. The faculty took note of his prowess during Rossow's undergraduate jazz piano recital, for which he performed several original arrangements and transcriptions. Consequently, in the fall of 2000, Rossow was asked to inscribe an arrangement of "Gabriel's Message" for women's chorus, which was slated for performance on the seasonal concert that same year. In 2001, he was commissioned by the FAU Foundation to arrange a Motown medley for their Capital Campaign Gala. Rossow provided SATB arrangements for "I Heard It Through the Grapevine" and "Shout" for the gala performance. Finally, in 2003, approximately one year after graduating from the master's program, Rossow received the distinguished invitation to arrange a patriotic number for the inauguration of FAU's fifth president, Frank Brogan. Rossow completed *An American Tribute* scored for SATB chorus and wind ensemble for the occasion. The medley was comprised of excerpts from three familiar patriotic tunes: "The Star Spangled Banner," "This Is My Country," and "God Bless America." Unfortunately, Rossow is unable to submit the work for publication based on copyright restrictions for "This Is My Country."<sup>31</sup>

Rossow earned the Master of Arts degree in Music with an emphasis in Composition from Florida Atlantic University in the spring of 2002. His entire musical output from this period consisted of choral settings with varying or no accompaniment. Rossow's diverse background in accompanying, ensemble singing, choral conducting, and applied voice was inevitably the major contributing factor of his approach to composition. He was inspired by the sounds which surrounded him, and he sought to capture the unique communicative properties afforded by the singing human voice.

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<sup>31</sup> Rossow, phone interview.

### Family Life, Career, and Writing Activity

During the course of his studies at FAU, Rossow befriended fellow student and graduate teaching assistant, Stacie Lee Niehaus. Niehaus earned the Bachelor of Music degree in Vocal Performance and the Master of Arts in Music with an emphasis in Choral Conducting from FAU. She would go on to earn the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Choral Conducting from the University of Miami in 2008. The two cultivated a close friendship during their academic studies together at FAU, and in the summer of 2000, their friendship evolved into something greater—courtship. Approximately one year later, the couple became engaged in July of 2001. During this time, Rossow completed his setting of “Set Me As A Seal,” for which he attributes the inspiration of setting the “Song of Solomon” text to his beloved, Stacie Niehaus. Rossow continues, “I have to say ‘Set Me As A Seal’ was really written for Stacie . . . and we actually had it inscribed in our wedding bands, so that text was important to us.”<sup>32</sup> The couple married one year later on July 5, 2002. The wedding took place at St. Michael the Archangel Catholic Church on Siesta Key in Sarasota, FL. Less than one year after the wedding, Rossow welcomed his first-born child and son, David Hohlt Rossow, who was born May 4, 2003. The following year, his second-born child and daughter, Emma Layton Rossow, was born September 14, 2004.

For approximately seven years (2002-2009), Rossow spent very little time composing music. He had been teaching as an adjunct instructor at FAU during the period of 2002-2004, and in the fall of 2004, he was promoted to the full-time rank of instructor at the university. Additionally, he began working at St. Pius X Catholic Church in Ft. Lauderdale, FL in 2005, where he is still currently employed as Director of Music. His professional responsibilities in combination with the time constraints of starting a family at home (Figure 1.8) made it virtually

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<sup>32</sup> Rossow, interview.



impossible for Rossow to find time to be creative. He adds, “I would have to say because of life . . . that’s definitely why I was on hiatus. And in 2005, I ended up with the church job too, so I was working two jobs at the time. There just wasn’t a whole lot of time . . . and at that time I just didn’t feel compelled to write anything. There was so much going on.”<sup>33</sup> Recognizing the error of his judgment, however, and admitting the necessity to stay practiced and fresh in his creative endeavors, Rossow continues: “But I’ve come to realize that has to change. Even if I don’t want to, you have to treat it like an instrument, you know, if you don’t do it, it’s so hard to pick up and get back into it again; it’s mind-numbing.”<sup>34</sup> Though Rossow faced difficulty composing throughout this period, everything would change for him beginning in 2009.



Figure 1.8: Rossow (top left) pictured with wife Stacie, daughter Emma, and son David.

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<sup>33</sup> Rossow, interview.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

## Recent Compositions and Prospective Outlooks

When Rossow began attending concerts given by the Jazz Rats Big Band in 2009, he did not realize then that his creative outlook would soon change. According to the Music Department website at FAU, “The Jazz Rats Big Band was formed in 1995 by faculty members Jamie Roth and Tim Walters in order to have a professional group to read their compositions and arrangements.”<sup>35</sup> Furthermore, they give particular preference to jazz compositions and arrangements by current/former band members and local composers.<sup>36</sup> Walters, recalling Rossow’s abilities in jazz arranging and composition, implored Rossow to compose a piece for the ensemble to premier. It was exactly the encouragement Rossow needed. In 2010, Rossow proffered his first composition in almost eight years, “Exit 101.” He recalls the process with much delight:

I remember the first thing I wrote for that group was a piece called, “Exit 101.” That was one of the times I was traversing between Sarasota and here [Boca Raton], and I happened to finish that on the road during one of those trips. The exit happened to be in right in Naples—Exit 101—so I figured that would be interesting . . . It was the fall of 2010 when I started exploring that . . . And Dr. Walters kept pushing me. He said, “Oh, that was good. Why don’t you write something else?” And still, every time I see him, he asks if I have anything new for them. He’s always asking, and so I guess it’s been good. It’s been a good push to do something in that realm.<sup>37</sup>

From that point forward, Rossow has been actively composing and arranging on a steady basis. He frequently offers new pieces to the Jazz Rats, and recently received the honor of having one of his pieces recorded on their forthcoming Indie CD, *Mosaix*. The title of the piece is “Day Tide,” which is scored for jazz dectet. Additonally, Rossow recently delved into the realm of

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<sup>35</sup> “Jazz Rats Big Band,” Florida Atlantic University, last modified November 11, 2011, accessed March 8, 2014, [http://www.fau.edu/music/ens\\_jazz\\_rats.php](http://www.fau.edu/music/ens_jazz_rats.php).

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Rossow, interview.

composing songs for solo voice and piano. The two sets which will receive in-depth exploration and discussion throughout the remainder of this paper, *Three Shakespeare Sonnets* and *Three A.E. Housman Songs*, were completed in 2012 and 2013, respectively. He also completed a set for soprano voice and piano in 2013 entitled, *Four Thomas Moore Songs*. The final movement, “Then Fare Thee Well,” was premiered in 2013, but the set as a whole is currently awaiting a premier. In 2010, Rossow composed a new Mass setting, *Mass of Salvation*, in concurrence with the publication of the third edition of *The Roman Missal*. The Mass is scored for SATB, piano/organ/brass quartet/flute/cello. Other recent choral works include his setting of “O vos omnes” for SATB *a cappella* chorus and a 2012 setting of the “Ave Maria” prayer scored for SSAA *a cappella*. A complete list of the composer’s works to-date will appear in the Appendices section of this dissertation.

In summary, Rossow’s outlook on future projects in composition and arranging remains positive and spirited. He currently has several titles in-progress including an original major work for SATB chorus and orchestra entitled, *Missa Brevis*, which he hopes to complete by year’s end. In addition, numerous jazz compositions and choral arrangements are currently awaiting completion. When asked about future prospective songs for solo voice and piano, his reply is as follows: “Yes, definitely. There’s no doubt I’m going to write more . . . In terms of solo settings, I need to find something to write on, but it’s in the plan . . . I definitely see more.”<sup>38</sup> It is the hope of this author that Rossow will continue to produce songs and settings the likes of *Three Shakespeare Sonnets*, *Three A.E. Housman Songs*, and *Four Thomas Moore Songs*. His innate talent for vocal writing juxtaposed with his colorful, exotic harmonic canvas makes for songs worth deeper inspection and further contemplation, as the ensuing chapters will reveal.

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<sup>38</sup> Rossow, interview.

## CHAPTER 2: *Three Shakespeare Sonnets*

The works of William Shakespeare can be found in myriad musical examples spanning nearly half the past millennium. Phyllis Hartnoll eloquently states, “There is probably no writer who has inspired more music, from musicians of widely differing nationalities and dispositions, than Shakespeare.”<sup>39</sup> Emmons and Lewis confirm and support this claim by supplying a list of representative composers, which is not exhaustive, who have composed music to Shakespearean texts:

The poetry of William Shakespeare has been set by composers of every nationality both in the original and in translation. Among these are: Schumann, Mendelssohn, Haydn, Strauss, Schubert, Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco, Charles Ives, Benjamin Britten, Roger Quilter, Thomas Arne, Henry Purcell, Thomas Morley, Ralph Vaughan Williams, Ivor Gurney, Peter Warlock, Gerald Finzi, Mervyn Horder, Geoffrey Bush, Henry Bishop, Arthur Sullivan, William Schumann, Richard Hundley, Dominick Argento, Richard Cumming, David Diamond, Amy Beach, Marc Blitzstein, Theodor Chanler, Ernst Bacon, Douglas Moore, Virgil Thomson, John Edmunds, Ross Lee Finney, Dudley Buck, Richard Faith, Frederic Ayres, Thomas Pasatieri, Mary Howe, Hale Smith, John La Montaine, Wolfgang Fortner, Ernest Chausson, Jacques Leguerney, and Dmitri Kabalevsky.<sup>40</sup>

Hartnoll speaks to the peculiarity of Shakespeare’s world-wide appeal thus:

It is one of the paradoxes of Shakespearean music that some of its finest examples have no connection with the theatre, and were written by composers who knew no English. We are so accustomed to think of Shakespeare’s greatness in terms of his poetry that it is difficult to conceive of a strong and lasting inspiration received only through a translation, which may be unpoetic, unfaithful, or subtly orientated away from the original intention. Yet such is the force of Shakespeare’s genius . . .<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Phyllis Hartnoll, ed., *Shakespeare In Music* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1964), vii.

<sup>40</sup> Shirlee Emmons and Wilbur Watkin Lewis, *Researching the Song: A Lexicon* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 412.

<sup>41</sup> Hartnoll, vii.

The majority of music composed to Shakespearean texts appears to be inspired by his numerous plays. In particular, the major operas and most familiar Shakespearean songs emerge from theatrical works such as: *As You Like It*, *Cymbeline*, *Hamlet*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *Macbeth*, *Measure for Measure*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and countless others.<sup>42</sup> However, when Rossow undertook the opportunity to compose his first set for solo voice and piano, he turned to Shakespeare's 154 *Sonnets* for inspiration rather than the theatrical works. He read through the entire collection and initially selected five sonnets to comprise the set: Sonnet 46, Sonnet 116, Sonnet 66, Sonnet 150, and Sonnet 51. An examination of his original text printouts reveals Rossow began the machinations of counting syllables and brainstorming on rhythmic, melodic, and harmonic ideas for the selected verse (Figures 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3). In the end, however, Rossow would eliminate Sonnets 46, 66, and 51 from consideration in favor of the remaining two with the addition of one previously unconsidered text—Sonnet 73.

Figure 2.1: Rossow's initial rhythmic ideas for Sonnet 46, which was eventually discarded.

(B)

1c

1A

Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.

Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,

But bears it out ev'n to the edge of doom: -

✧ If this be error, and upon me proved,  
I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

$\gamma \beta \alpha \lambda \mu \nu \xi$

1 O, from what power hast thou this powerful might  
2 With insufficiency my heart to sway?  
3 To make me give the lie to my true sight,  
4 And swear that brightness doth not grace the day?  
5 Whence hast thou this becoming of things ill,  
6 That in the very refuse of thy deeds  
7 There is such strength and warrantize of skill  
8 That, in my mind, thy worst all best exceeds?  
9 Who taught thee how to make me love thee more  
10 The more I hear and see just cause of hate?  
11 O, though I love what others do abhor,  
12 With others thou shouldst not abhor my state:  
13 If thy unworthiness raised love in me,  
14 More worthy I to be beloved of thee. Some

[illegible]

some melody as lines 142

33

According to Emmons and Lewis, the Shakespearean sonnets “are very personal and show a wide range of variations within their basic form.”<sup>43</sup> Scott-Kilvert adds, “Some are lyrical, some express a lover’s humility, some are meditations on eternal poetic themes, the transience of beauty and love, some are on the power of art, the inevitability of death, some are intellectual, witty workings out of poetic conceits, some are tortured, introspective self-communings.”<sup>44</sup> The texts comprising Rossow’s *Three Shakespeare Sonnets* embody several of these very characteristics, and although Rossow did not originally envision these pieces to function as a cohesive unit, further inspection into the relation of textual and musical elements throughout the set reveals that they do.

Rossow’s *Three Shakespeare Sonnets* will now be explored from a performer’s perspective. Each song will be examined, discussed, and illustrated according to the following criteria: title information; date of composition; poetic source(s); appropriate voice type; harmonic structure; scope of range; median tessitura; musical elements (meter, tempo, dynamics, length); the nature of the vocal line; and suggested ideas for preparation and performance. For the purpose of this study, the Scientific Pitch Notation system will be utilized; thus, middle C is represented as C<sub>4</sub>. Commentary pertaining to diction will utilize the International Phonetic Alphabet. Finally, due to the complexity of Shakespearean texts as compared to modern-day English texts (those of Housman, for example), each sonnet will be replicated in the section on poetry for the sake of analysis and discussion, as they are represented in Edward Hubler’s, *The Riddle of Shakespeare’s Sonnets*.

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<sup>43</sup> Emmons and Lewis, 412.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

TITLE: I. Sonnet 116 – Let me not to the marriage of true minds

DATE OF COMPOSITION: Fall 2012

SOURCE OF POETRY: William Shakespeare, Sonnet 116

LET me not to the marriage of true minds  
Admit impediments. Love is not love  
Which alters when it alteration finds,  
Or bends with the remover to remove:  
O, no! it is an ever-fixed mark  
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;  
It is the star to every wandering bark,  
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.  
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks  
Within his bending sickle's compass come;  
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,  
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.  
    If this be error and upon me proved,  
    I never writ, nor no man ever loved.<sup>45</sup>

This sonnet is believed to have been written sometime between September 1 and December 1, 1588.<sup>46</sup> Helen Vendler asserts that most people understand this sonnet to represent the description of true love—though she refutes the accuracy of this supposition.<sup>47</sup> Nevertheless, for the purposes of the sonnet's functionality within Rossow's set, this predilection will suffice. To further substantiate this preference, Campbell summarizes the sonnet as follows: "It is a marriage of the mind which no marriage-law can forbid; no desertion by the other can make it change heart; if there is any such thing, it defies time to the end (116)."<sup>48</sup> In essence, the overarching theme throughout the poem is that a love which stands the test of time differentiates

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<sup>45</sup> Edward Hubler, *The Riddle of Shakespeare's Sonnets* (New York: Basic Books, 1962), 317.

<sup>46</sup> Samuel Butler, *Shakespeare's Sonnets Reconsidered* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1927), 296.

<sup>47</sup> Helen Vendler, *The Art of Shakespeare's Sonnets* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press, 1997), 488.

<sup>48</sup> S.C. Campbell, ed., *Shakespeare's Sonnets* (London: Bell & Hyman, 1978), xxxv.



between true, spiritual love and fleshly lust.<sup>49</sup> As such, the impediments referenced in line 2 refer to the line found in the marriage service portion of the Book of Common Prayer: ‘If any of you know cause, or just impediment, why these two persons should not be joined together in holy matrimony, ye are to declare it.’<sup>50</sup> In addition, impediments could represent the hurdles lovers sometimes face during the course of a marriage, which cannot obstruct this archetypical love that “can survive even the other’s loss of love.”<sup>51</sup> The remover referenced in line 4, therefore, represents the potentially inconstant lover, and the words “to remove” may better be understood as “to depart.”<sup>52</sup> Lines 2-4 could thus be understood as follows: “Love is not love Which alters when it alteration finds, Or bends with the [inconstant lover] to [depart],” which means if one of the two lovers is unfaithful or changes heart, the other is incapable of the same. The star referenced in line 7 represents true love: “i.e. true love is like a guiding star by whose altitude a navigator may direct his course, but whose full value and potentialities can never be completely known.”<sup>53</sup> The edge of doom referenced in line 12 is an allusion to final judgment day.<sup>54</sup> Finally, Shakespeare attests to his own fidelity in lines 13-14, citing his case as evidence. Ingram and Redpath confirm this: “If nothing but the correctness of the judgment were in question, the ending would be less strong. The poet is asserting not merely that his definition of true love is right but also that true love exists, as proved by his own case.”<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Campbell, 145.

<sup>50</sup> W.G. Ingram and Theodore Redpath, eds., *Shakespeare’s Sonnets* (London: University of London Press, 1964), 268.

<sup>51</sup> Campbell, 145.

<sup>52</sup> Edward Bliss Reed, ed., *Shakespeare’s Sonnets* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1923), 58.

<sup>53</sup> Ingram and Redpath, 268.

<sup>54</sup> Reed, 58.

<sup>55</sup> Ingram and Redpath, 269.

VOICE TYPE: Baritone, Low

HARMONIC STRUCTURE: Tonal/Modal

No key signature is provided. The presence or absence of a key signature is a technique often employed by Rossow for the sake of avoiding an overabundance of accidentals, which sometimes makes the learning process more challenging.<sup>56</sup> The piece is mostly tonal with several instances of modality and jazz chord spellings found throughout. The structure of the song resembles modified Arch form with sections divided accordingly: ABCB<sup>1</sup>A<sup>1</sup>. The A section is contained to mm. 1-9; the B section can be found in mm. 10-22 through beat 3; the C section begins at the pickup notes to mm. 24-31; the B<sup>1</sup> section is found between mm. 32-39 through beat 2; and the A<sup>1</sup> section begins on beat 3 of mm. 39-end, mm. 47. The recurring tonality of both A sections is B<sup>b</sup>-Major with modal interjections found in the culminating measures of each. Similarly, the C section is contained to G-Major with the same modal cluster chord found in the final three measures. The B sections, however, move through shifting tonalities and contain several instances of jazz harmonies throughout.

Rossow provides two unifying harmonic motives in this piece, which foster cohesion both within the song itself and the set as a whole. The first instance can be found in the three measures of introductory material, which are of the latter variety; they serve to unify this movement with the final (Figure 2.4). This will be discussed further later in the chapter. The other instance stems from the modal cluster chord found in the culminating measures of both A sections and the C section. The chord cluster found in mm. 8, 29, and 44 (Figure 2.5) in combination with the arpeggiated piano figure in mm. 9, 31, and 45-46 (Figure 2.6) are both based on the E<sup>b</sup>-Dorian ♭7 mode (Figure 2.7). These two measures appear twice more during the

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<sup>56</sup> David P. Rossow, interview by author, Boca Raton, FL, February 4, 2014.

course of the piece and seem intended by Rossow to serve as unifying transitional figures according to the dramatic nature of the text. For example, each time the cluster chord appears, the ensuing text reflects a negative thought by the lover: “admit impediments,” “within his [Death’s] bending sickle’s compass come,” and “nor no man ever loved.” Conversely, the arpeggiated figure transitions away from each discouraging thought to one of textual and/or musical resolve. They serve as transitional links between sections A-B and C-B, respectively. Thus, in the first two instances, the arpeggiated figure transitions toward three measures of descending major tonalities before settling on two measures of a ringing jazz chord (Figure 2.8). During its final occurrence, however, the arpeggiated figure is perpetuated one additional measure before resolving the piece to a close on a B<sup>b</sup>-Major chord in root position (Figure 2.9). On a final note, Rossow applies the Dorian  $\natural 7$  cluster chord liberally throughout the rest of the set, thus codifying it as a cohesive harmonic gesture, which ties the set together.

Figure 2.4: Illustrates the harmonic motive which unifies the entire set, repeated in a transposed form in the third movement, mm. 1-3.



Figure 2.5: Illustrates Rossow's first statement of the Dorian ♭7 cluster chord on E<sup>♭</sup>, mm. 8.

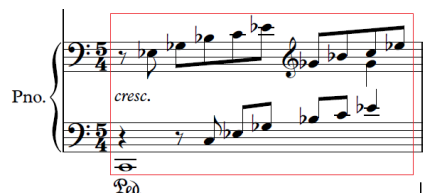


Figure 2.6: Illustrates arpeggiated transitional figure also based on the E<sup>♭</sup>-Dorian ♭7, mm. 9.



Figure 2.7: Illustrates the Dorian ♭7 mode with intervals between notes, C as the root.

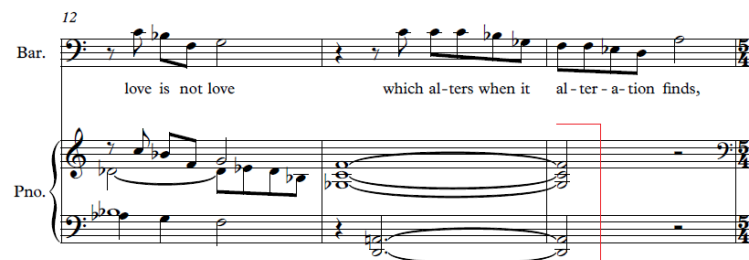


Figure 2.8: Illustrates the transitional nature of the arpeggiated figure into descending major tonalities which result in a D<sup>7♯9</sup> jazz chord (enharmonically spelt), mm. 9-14.

Figure 2.9: The arpeggiated figure is perpetuated one additional measure before resolving the piece on a B<sup>b</sup>-Major chord, mm. 45-47.

RANGE: B<sub>2</sub>—E<sup>b</sup><sub>4</sub>

TESSITURA: D<sub>3</sub>—C<sub>4</sub>

METER: 5/4, 3/4, 4/4, 6/4, 2/4

TEMPO MARKING: Adagio ♩=74

DYNAMIC RANGE: *p*—*f*

LENGTH: 48 measures, approximately 3:55

VOCAL LINE: Moderately difficult

The vocal line is a balanced mixture of leaps combined with step-wise motion. There are several occurrences of leaps of a fifth or greater—both ascending and descending—in addition to chromatic elements within the step-wise segments, all of which may present tuning challenges for less-advanced singers. The overall range and *tessitura* of the vocal line are mostly accessible, though there are many instances where the vocal line approaches the *passaggio* of the baritone

voice on the notes D<sub>4</sub> and E<sup>b</sup><sub>4</sub>. In most cases Rossow diligently assigned these notes to words which facilitate helpful resonance strategies for the vocalist via the following vowels: [ɔ], [o], and [u]. There are two examples occurring on E<sup>b</sup><sub>4</sub>, however, where the singer is encouraged to employ slight vowel modification and to avoid over-spreading or over-opening the aperture. The first occurs in mm. 6 on the word “let.” While the spoken vowel for this word is [ɛ], the singer should employ the slightly more closed/forward vowel [ɪ] in combination with slight lip rounding (Figure 2.10). The second occurs in mm. 42 on the pronoun “I.” Rather than singing the diphthong [aɪ] as is typically used when speaking this word, the singer is encouraged to sing the combination [Λɪ] due to the slightly higher tongue position the [Λ] vowel affords (Figure 2.11).

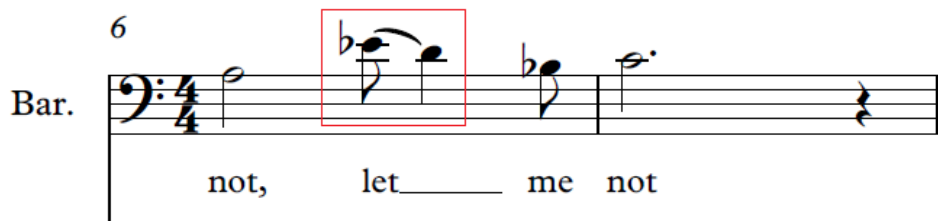


Figure 2.10: Singer should modify vowel to [ɪ] with slight lip-rounding on E<sup>b</sup><sub>4</sub>, mm. 6.



Figure 2.11: Singer should modify diphthong to [Λɪ] without over-opening the aperture on E<sup>b</sup><sub>4</sub>, mm. 42.

## PERFORMANCE SUGGESTIONS:

This first song of the set is the most personal of the three. Although it is clear that the poet is preoccupied with thoughts of his lover and contemplates the veracity of their love vs. the fleeting nature of lust, the lover is never officially mentioned or directly spoken to throughout the course of this sonnet. As such, the singer should embody sentiments of introspection, blissful thoughts, tormented rantings, and firm resolve according to the shifting temperaments of text and music throughout the various sections of the piece. As a means of evoking an atmosphere of drifting thoughts and notions of introspection, the pianist should employ slight *rubato* throughout the entire 3-measure introduction before returning to tempo in mm. 4. In general, when the piano and voice move together, the composer's tempo marking of *Adagio* ♩=74 should be observed.

This will prevent the piece from becoming too lethargic or stagnant. On the other hand, whenever the voice is unaccompanied, sings over ringing chords, or where the piano is independent of the voice, each performer should employ slight *rubato*, which will provide the necessary ebb and flow according to the changing thought patterns therein. Figure 2.12 exemplifies each of these ideas.

Rossow employs text repetition for dramatic emphasis during several moments throughout the song. In each case, the repetition indicates a denial on the part of the poet to accept that the love he shares with his lover is anything but true and constant: "Let me not," "Love is not," "O no!," "Love alters not," "I never," and "nor no man ever." Each repetition, therefore, should be sung with greater emphasis than the initial statement of text—yielding a more believable elucidation of his insistence. Furthermore, there are three examples of text painting, which deserve further consideration. The first example can be found in mm. 15, where Rossow provides ascending triplet figures in both the voice and piano parts to reflect the text "Or

bends” (Figure 2.13). The ensemble should feel free to ‘bend’ the tempo of this measure in order to best affect this idea. The next instance occurs in mm. 29-30. Rossow purposefully leaves the final two beats of mm. 30 unaccompanied to reflect the fatal, corporeal nature implied by the text, “within his bending sickle’s compass come”—an obvious reference to Death and mortality. The pianist must not carry over the ringing chord past the first three beats of the measure; otherwise, the tone painting concept is null (Figure 2.14). Similarly, the final instance can be found in mm. 38-39. Rossow provides a *fermata* in the downbeat of mm. 39, and it is imperative that the ensemble synchronize their cut-off here to reflect the text, “even to the edge of doom,” which is another obvious reference to death and final judgment. In order to best affect this mood, the ensemble is encouraged to employ a slight *caesura* after the *fermata* to imply a momentary spatial void (Figure 2.15).

Finally, it is crucial that the ensemble not become preoccupied with changing meters nor the singer allow rests to interfere with the dramatic intent. The ensemble should be aware of this recurring issue particularly for this piece and the third movement. According to Rossow, the time signatures were added as an afterthought in order to provide structure and measure to the songs, but his rhythmic treatment of the melody mimics that of spoken dialogue.<sup>57</sup> Thus, the most important idea to convey is believability of the text, and it is the task of the ensemble to preserve his intention.

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<sup>57</sup> Rossow, interview.



6

33 *mf*

Bar. Love al - ters not, love al - ters not

Pno.

35 *rit.* *p*

Bar. with his brief hours and weeks, but bears it out

Pno. *rit.*

38 *A tempo accel.*

Bar. e-ven to the edge of doom.

Pno. *A tempo accel.*

8<sup>th</sup>

Figure 2.12: Red denotes where the voice and piano should move strictly in tempo. Green indicates where the vocal line may be sung freely over ringing chord or unaccompanied measure. Purple illustrates where the piano may proceed freely, independent of the voice, mm. 33-39.

15

Bar. Or be - nds, or be - nds

Pno. 3 cresc. 3

Figure 2.13: Illustrates Rossow's first instance of text painting, mm.15.

29

Bar. cheeks— with - in his bend - ing sick - le's com - pass come:

Pno. mp

Figure 2.14: Rossow's second example of text painting. The pianist should be diligent in leaving the final two beats unaccompanied, mm. 29-30.

38

Bar. e - ven to the edge of doom.

Pno. p

Figure 2.15: Illustrates the final occurrence of text painting with suggested caesura before proceeding to the A<sup>1</sup> section, mm. 38-39.

TITLE: II. Sonnet 73 – That time of year thou mayst in me behold

DATE OF COMPOSITION: Fall 2012

SOURCE OF POETRY: William Shakespeare, Sonnet 73

THAT time of year thou mayst in me behold  
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang  
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,  
Bare ruin'd choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.  
In me thou see'st the twilight of such day  
As after sunset fadeth in the west,  
Which by and by black night doth take away,  
Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.  
In me thou see'st the glowing of such fire  
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,  
As the death-bed whereon it must expire  
Consumed with that which it was nourish'd by.  
This thou perceivest, which makes thy love more strong,  
To love that well which thou must leave ere long.<sup>58</sup>

Sonnet 73 is presumed to have been written in early Winter, 1585.<sup>59</sup> Vendler eloquently outlines the progression of poetic themes from the point of the narrator:

Three models of life are proffered by the speaker . . . the first two models are linear ones—spring, summer, autumn, winter; morning, noon, afternoon, sunset, twilight, night . . . In the first model, the speaker has placed himself, in the time-line of the year, at autumn. We notice that the moment in the time-span where the speaker places himself advances in the second model: twilight is later in the course of the day than autumn is in the course of the seasons . . . This cannot be said of the third quatrain, which abandons the linearity—early to late—of its predecessors in favor of a stratified verticality. A glowing fire lies on top of (*upon*) the ashes of youth, its eventual deathbed . . . He is the *glowing*—a positive word, unlike *ruin* or *fade*—of a *fire*. He is not the ashes of a fire, or the embers of a fire—he is no longer . . . a noun, but rather a verbal, an action, a *glowing* (not a dying) . . . and by Q<sub>3</sub> *youth* is viewed not as the phase of sweet birds singing—its past reality—but in its present reality, which is *ashes*. Once it is admitted that youth wanes, it is clear that the only locus of true life is the present, which can now truthfully be called by a positive name, *glowing* . . . [and] the third quatrain, released from a self-image as victim, can see, accurately, that there is no villain to be blamed: one dies simply of having lived, as the fire is *consumed with that [heat] which is was nourished by*.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Hubler, 295.

<sup>59</sup> Butler, 253.

<sup>60</sup> Vendler, 334-5.

These detailed sentiments capture nearly every dramatic facet of the poem, but there are a few additional aspects which deserve further clarification. The bare ruined choirs referenced in line 4 represent “a highly compressed metaphor in which Shakespeare visualizes the ruined arches of churches . . . the memory of singing voices still echoing in them, and compares this with the nearly naked boughs of early winter with which he identifies himself.”<sup>61</sup> Additionally, in line 14 the word “leave” is meant as “relinquish,” and the word “ere” translates to mean “before.” Finally, the last couplet gives credence to the dramatic ideas outlined in the preceding three quatrains: “In each quatrain Shakespeare not only delineates an autumnal, twilight, or glowing present, but foreshadows a winter, night, or coming extinction; both elements are reflected in the final couplet, and constitute its point.”<sup>62</sup>

VOICE TYPE: Baritone, Low

HARMONIC STRUCTURE:

A key signature of B<sup>b</sup>-Minor is given, and although the piece proceeds mostly through minor tonalities, elements of modality exist therein as will be identified and discussed further in this section. According to Rossow, this was the simplest of the three songs to compose—having completed it within only 2-3 days.<sup>63</sup> The harmonic structure reflects this simplicity, as it is clearly found in three-part form: A, B<sup>1-2</sup>, A<sup>1</sup>. The A section begins at the pickup to mm. 1 and continues through mm. 18. The B<sup>1</sup> section is contained within mm. 19-26, while B<sup>2</sup> can be found in mm. 27-34. Finally, the A<sup>1</sup> section belongs to mm. 35-48 (*fine*).

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<sup>61</sup> Martin Seymour-Smith, ed., *Shakespeare's Sonnets* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1966), 149-50.

<sup>62</sup> Ingram and Redpath, 169.

<sup>63</sup> Rossow, interview.

There exist two harmonic motives particular to the A sections. The first is found in mm. 1 with the B<sup>b</sup>-Minor cluster chords, which are found in various transpositions throughout (Figure 2.16) and comprise the prevailing harmonic scheme for these sections. The secondary motive can be found in various modal transpositions within both A sections. For the purpose of identification and classification, it suffices to say that these secondary motives are modal-derived, given Rossow's preference for modality in terms of harmonic coloring. Thus, the following example illustrates Rossow's use of the G<sup>b</sup>-Lydian mode for one of the secondary motives (Figure 2.17). This G<sup>b</sup>-Lydian motive also serves as a unifying factor within the song, as it is restated in an expanded form in mm. 45-47 at the culminating measures of the A<sup>1</sup> section (Figure 2.18).



Figure 2.16: Illustrates the first and prevailing harmonic motive of the A sections, mm. 1



Figure 2.17: Illustrates the secondary motive found in various modal transpositions, mm. 11.

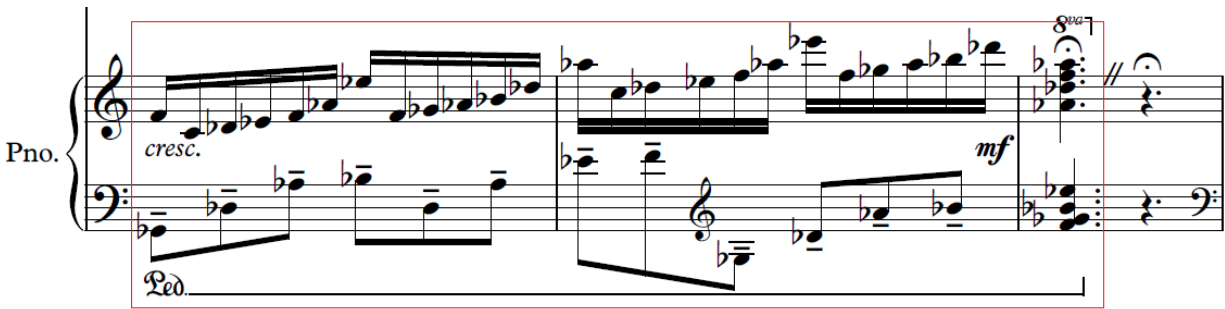


Figure 2.18: Extended version of the  $G^b$ -Lydian secondary motive used for harmonic unification, mm. 45-47.

The B section can be divided into two parts, and it is in this section where we find Rossow's next example of the Dorian  $\natural 7$  mode. The first two measures of  $B^1$  are in C-Minor, and the next two measures are transposed down one half-step to B-Minor. The next four measures, however, are cast in  $F^\sharp$ -Dorian  $\natural 7$  (Figure 2.19). One may recall that this is a unifying harmonic gesture employed by Rossow, which can be found in each movement of the set. The  $B^2$  section proceeds in A-Lydian  $\sharp 5$  for the first four measures, and the next two measures, mm. 31-32, reveal the same Lydian motive transposed down one half-step—thus mimicking the harmonic nature of the first six measures of the  $B^1$  section. The final two measures of the  $B^2$  section are in C-Minor, which is the predominant tonality of the final  $A^1$  section.

TESSITURA:  $B^b_2$ — $G_3$

METER: 6/8

TEMPO MARKING: Moderato  $\text{♩} = 60$

DYNAMIC RANGE:  $p$ — $ff$

LENGTH: 50 measures, approximately 2:25

RANGE:  $A^b_2$ — $C_4$

The image displays a musical score for a piano and vocal ensemble. The piano part (Pno.) is written in treble and bass staves. The first system is marked 'molto accel.' and features a red box highlighting a cluster chord and scale. The second system is marked 'Piu mosso' and includes the lyrics 'In me thou see'st the'. The vocal part (Bar.) is written in a single staff and includes the lyrics 'In me thou see'st the'. The tempo is marked 'Piu mosso' with a tempo of 66. The piano part includes a red box highlighting a cluster chord and scale. The vocal part includes a red box highlighting a cluster chord and scale.

Figure 2.19: Illustrates Rossow's use of F<sup>#</sup>-Dorian ♭7 cluster chord and scale for harmonic cohesion within the set.

#### VOCAL LINE: Moderately easy

The overall vocal range is not challenging for this piece—given that the lowest and highest pitches fall within the comfortable singing range of most lyric baritones. The melody is easily accessible and generally proceeds through ascending or descending thirds with several skips of a fourth or fifth throughout. There is also one leap of a minor-sixth in mm. 22-23. What may be of particular difficulty, however, is the *tessitura*, which is mostly confined to the lower third of the lyric baritone voice. As such, the singer is encouraged to expend extra energy and breath through voiced and voiceless consonants so that no statement of text is lost or misunderstood during singing. Furthermore, it is entirely up to the singer whether or not he

wishes to employ voiced vs. voiceless “wh” while singing these Shakespearean texts, but it is this author’s opinion that the voiceless quality [ʍ] is better suited for the purposes of articulation, communication, and authenticity. The voiceless fricative was common practice during Shakespeare’s time, and to further substantiate the claim, Shakespearean texts transcribed with IPA frequently reveal this as the transcription of choice. Finally, due to the fluctuating and modulating tonal/modal nature of the song, some chromatic sections of the melody may be challenging to less advanced singers.

#### PERFORMANCE SUGGESTIONS:

In this second piece, another person is introduced into the conversation—the poet’s lover. And although the entire sonnet is built around his speaking to said lover, he never asks questions or solicits participation; thus, the conversation is one-sided. As such, the singer is encouraged to sing this text in a declamatory, rhetorical fashion. To further elicit this atmosphere, the pianist is encouraged to play the primary motive (cluster chord figure) of each A section in a stoic, impervious manner.

Furthermore, the piece is replete with examples of text painting and text foreshadowing. The first instance can be found in the piano figure of mm. 5-6, which foreshadows the ensuing text: “upon those boughs which shake against the cold.” The pianist may wish to employ slight elements of *crescendo* and *accelerando* during these two measures to induce the wintry ambiance implied by the text (Figure 2.20). The entire B<sup>1</sup> section is an example of text painting, as the ensemble progressively descends through tonalities/modalities—reflecting the transient nature of humanity and the inevitable subterranean final resting place. Rossow indicates *molto accelerando* above the ascending scale pattern on F<sup>#</sup>-Dorian ♮7 for the ensemble in mm. 23-26.



Thus, the pianist is encouraged to play this section as quickly as possible, and the singer should synchronize his cut-off with the chord cluster at the downbeat of mm. 26 (Figure 2.21). The cluster chord should ring freely as indicated by the *fermata*, and it is suggested that a slight *caesura* be implemented before beginning the B<sup>2</sup> section. Correspondingly, the entire B<sup>2</sup> section is an illustration of text foreshadowing and text painting. The piano figure based on A-Lydian #5 in mm. 27-30 exemplifies a particularly ‘glowing’ quality and thus foreshadows the ensuing text: “In me thou see’st the glowing of such fire.” Similarly, the descending A<sup>b</sup>-Lydian #5 motive (enharmonically spelt) in mm. 31-32 combined with the descending eighth-note figures in the left hand of the piano in mm. 33-34 imply the dying nature of the fire, thus reflecting the text: “that on the ashes of his youth doth lie” (Figure 2.22). The final instance of text painting occurs in the last six measures of the piece. The word “long” is extended over two full measures with the prolongation of the G<sup>b</sup>-Lydian motive mentioned earlier in this chapter. In addition, Rossow indicates a *caesura* before beat 3 of mm. 47; the ensemble should observe this quite liberally to reflect the impending mortality implied by the text: “this thou perceivest, which makes thy love more strong, to love that well which thou must leave ere long.” Correspondingly, Rossow assigns accented *tenuto* markings on the downbeat of each of the final three measures. These function as death-bell tolls and should, as such, emerge quite noticeably from the rest of the line.

Bar. or none, or few, do hang u - pon those boughs which

Pno.

Ped

8

Bar. shake a-against the cold, bare rui-n'd choirs, where late the sweet birds

Pno.

Figure 2.20: Illustrates the first instance of text foreshadowing in this piece, mm. 5-8.

23 *molto accel.* *ff*

Bar. rest. *molto accel.*

Pno. *ff*

Ped

26 *Piu mosso*  $\text{♩} = 66$  *p*

Bar. In me thou see'st the

Pno. *Piu mosso*  $\text{♩} = 66 *p*$

Ped

Figure 2.21: Pianist is encouraged to play the ascending scale pattern as rapidly as able. Singer should align his cut-off with the cluster chord at the downbeat of mm. 26, and ensemble should implement suggested *caesura* as outlined, mm. 23-26.

Figure 2.22: Illustrates elements of text painting via descending Lydian #5 motives (A—A<sup>b</sup>) and descending figures in the left hand of the piano, mm. 30-34.

TITLE: III. Sonnet 150 – O, from what power hast thou this powerful might

DATE OF COMPOSITION: Fall 2012

SOURCE OF POETRY: William Shakespeare, Sonnet 150

O, from what power hast thou this powerful might  
 With insufficiency my heart to sway?  
 To make me give the lie to my true sight,  
 And swear that brightness doth not grace the day?  
 Whence hast thou this becoming of things ill,  
 That in the very refuse of thy deeds  
 There is such strength and warrantise of skill  
 That, in my mind, thy worst all best exceeds?  
 Who taught thee how to make me love thee more  
 The more I hear and see just case of hate?  
 O, though I love what others do abhor,  
 With others thou shouldst not abhor my state:  
     If thy unworthiness raised love in me,  
     More worthy I to be beloved of thee.<sup>64</sup>

<sup>64</sup> Hubler, 334.

Similar to the first sonnet of Rossow's set, it is speculated that Sonnet 150 was also written sometime between September 1 and December 1, 1588.<sup>65</sup> According to Helen Vendler, the sonnet represents a woman's "quasi-magical might, bestowed on her by some yet more powerful agency, so that even she acts only as the conduit of a force greater than herself. In this construction of his state, the lover is indeed wholly overpowered."<sup>66</sup> As a result of the woman's mystical power, the lover's perception of reality is skewed: "you make me dispraise the Sun and see defect as merit."<sup>67</sup> Thus, the first quatrain may be better understood according to the following translation: "Oh, from what 'supernatural power' do you get this powerful might that 'by your very defects' my heart is swayed, and which makes me lie to myself saying that it is not brightness which makes for a great day?"<sup>68</sup> The becoming of things ill referenced in line 5 represents the woman's ability of making ugly things seem graceful and becoming.<sup>69</sup> The word "warrantise" found in line 7 is translated to mean "assurance"<sup>70</sup> or "guarantee,"<sup>71</sup> while the word "skill" from the same line is translated to mean "wisdom"<sup>72</sup> or "expertise."<sup>73</sup> Thus, the second quatrain could be understood as follows: "From where do you get the gift to make ugly things seem graceful, that in the rubbish of your deeds there is such strength and promise of expertise,

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<sup>65</sup> Butler, 302.

<sup>66</sup> Vendler, 633.

<sup>67</sup> Campbell, xxxiii.

<sup>68</sup> Ingram and Redpath, 346.

<sup>69</sup> Seymour-Smith, 189.

<sup>70</sup> Ingram and Redpath, 346.

<sup>71</sup> Seymour-Smith, 189.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Ingram and Redpath.

so that in my mind, your worst is better than everyone else's best?" The poet ponders similar questions in lines 9-10 and then warns society and the maiden not to condemn him for loving her, who is condemned. But all of this begs the question: why is the maiden abhorred by society—what has she done to earn such ill repute? She is presumed to have been a whore. This claim is further substantiated by Vendler's reasoning: "We now see the complex play . . . on *worst* (8), *abhor*/[*whore*] (11-12), and [*worth*] [-y] [-*iness*] (13-14), manifesting the letters *wor-/hor-/wor-h-*, which, together with the phoneme *hōr*, make the word *whore* flicker through the poem."<sup>74</sup> Campbell supports Vendler's position: "*abhor* may rely on assonance; they do so because she is a whore."<sup>75</sup> Finally, the phallic double entendre found in lines 13-14 suggest that since "Shakespeare unworthily loves the Mistress for her unworthiness then all the more reason for her to love him"<sup>76</sup> in return.

VOICE TYPE: Baritone, Low

HARMONIC STRUCTURE: Tonal

A key signature of D<sup>b</sup>-Major is given—though the predominant perceived tonality is A<sup>b</sup>-Major. The song is cast in three part form with sections divided thus: ABA<sup>1</sup>. The A section can be found in mm. 1-7. The B section begins at mm. 8 and proceeds through mm. 22. And the final A<sup>1</sup> section is contained to mm. 23-34 (*fine*). There are several unifying harmonic motives throughout the song which are derived from or transpositions of ones from the previous two songs. In particular, harmonic themes from the first movement are interposed abundantly

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<sup>74</sup> Vendler, 634.

<sup>75</sup> Campbell, 124.

<sup>76</sup> Seymour-Smith, 189.

throughout this song. As such, this movement is the most cohesive of the set—tying all three of the pieces together functionally.

The A section is independent of the other two in terms of harmonic motivic quotation and contains entirely new material. The prevailing tonality is A<sup>b</sup>-Major until mm. 5-7, where we find the first instance of a tonal pull to D<sup>b</sup>-Major by means of a IV-I-V<sup>sus4-7</sup> progression, which transitions to the B section. The B section originates in D<sup>b</sup>-Major for one measure but quickly transitions to A-Minor for the next three measures. The first harmonic quotation is then revealed in mm. 12-14 with the ascending scale pattern, which is an exact quotation of the Dorian ♮7 motive found in mm. 23-25 of the previous piece—this time transposed down one half-step to F-Dorian ♮7. Similarly, the scale pattern culminates in an F-Dorian ♮7 cluster chord, the voicing of which exactly mimics the E<sup>b</sup> version found several occurrences in the first piece (Figure 2.23).

The next example of harmonic quotation can be found in mm. 16. Here the left hand of the piano plays a variation to the opening theme of the set (Figure 2.24). Not only is this an instance of harmonic cohesion, but it is also a foreshadowing of what will follow. Beginning in mm. 19-21, Rossow interjects yet another harmonic motive from the first song—the descending major tonalities comprising the first three measures of each B section. In this example, however, the measures appear transposed up a minor-third—making the descending motive E<sup>b</sup>—D<sup>b</sup>—C<sup>b</sup> (Figure 2.25). Finally, Rossow concludes the piece (and the set) with a transposed quotation of the opening motif in D<sup>b</sup>-Major (Figure 2.26). This gesture is unique for two reasons: 1) it is the first and last thing we hear of the set; and 2) these two instances are the only time we hear this theme in its entirety. Thus, the pieces are cohesive and function as a unified whole.

The image displays a musical score for piano (Pno.) and voice (Bar.) across three measures (12, 13, and 14). The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 4/4.

- Measure 12:** The piano part features a Dorian b7 scale in the bass (F, G, A, B-flat, C, D, E-flat, F) and a cluster chord in the treble (F, G, A, B-flat, C, D, E-flat, F). The tempo marking is *molto accel.* and the dynamic is *ff*. A red box highlights the piano introduction.
- Measure 13:** The vocal line (Bar.) has a slur over the first two notes. The piano part (Pno.) has a slur over the first two notes. A red box highlights the piano accompaniment.
- Measure 14:** The vocal line (Bar.) has the lyrics "that, in my mind, thy worst all best ex - ceeds?". The piano part (Pno.) has a slur over the first two notes. A red box highlights the piano accompaniment.

Figure 2.23: Illustrates harmonic quotation of Dorian  $\flat 7$  scale and cluster chord on F, each derived from the second and first pieces, respectively, mm. 12-14.



Figure 2.24: Illustrates variation of the opening theme in left hand of the piano, mm. 16.

20

Bar. *molto rit.* *pp*

the more I hear and see just cause of hate?

Pno. *molto rit.* *pp*

Figure 2.25: Illustrates Rossow's second interposition of harmonic quotation from the first piece of the set, mm. 17-19.



18

Figure 2.26: Illustrates the final statement of the opening theme transposed to  $D^b$ -Major, mm. 32-34.

RANGE:  $A^b_2$ — $E_4$

TESSITURA:  $B^b_2$ — $C_4$

METER: 5/4, 4/4, 6/4, 3/4, 7/4, 2/4

TEMPO MARKING: Larghetto  $\text{♩}=66$

DYNAMIC RANGE: *pp*—*ff*

LENGTH: 34 measures, approximately 3:50

## VOCAL LINE: Moderately difficult

The overall range and *tessitura* are accessible to the baritone voice; however, there are several instances where the singer is asked to resonate sustained pitches which are quite low, namely B<sup>b</sup><sub>2</sub> and A<sup>b</sup><sub>2</sub>. In the first case, it is imperative for the sake of resonance that the singer maintains the bright [a] for the diphthong [aI] of the word “sight”, mm. 5. If the [a] vowel is too far back or dark, as in [ɑ], the resonance strategy will be compromised. Likewise, in mm. 7 and mm. 22, the singer is encouraged to maintain the slightly closed vowel [e] for the diphthong [eI] appearing in the words “day” and “hate.” The B<sup>b</sup><sub>2</sub> appearing in mm. 19 does not merit special consideration, as the vowel [ɔ] for the word “more” is agreeable for singing in this part of the range, provided the singer maintains slight lip-rounding. Similarly, the [i] vowel for the words “me” and “thee” appearing in mm. 27 and mm. 32 should pose no issue, provided the tongue is in a high-arched, forward position. Furthermore, there is one instance where the singer is tasked with singing E<sub>4</sub> and sustaining D<sub>4</sub> over two full measures in 5/4. The vowel [I] of the word “skill” is quite agreeable for singing in this part of the range, but it is imperative that the singer not anticipate the [I] to hastily, lest it interfere with the resonance of the closed/forward vowel.

## PERFORMANCE SUGGESTIONS:

Of the three sonnets comprising the set, this one is the most outwardly engaging. Not only is the lover present in this moment, but the poet extends an invitation to participate in the conversation with multiple solicitations concerning the nature of their love and the lover’s powerful influence over his inexorable attraction. As such, the singer is encouraged to sing this text in a profoundly curious, playfully contemplative, yet resolute manner. In particular, each of the aforementioned qualities should be applied respectively to the three sections comprising the

piece—ABA<sup>1</sup>. Furthermore, although this sonnet falls within the parameters of the traditional English sonnet—three quatrains and a rhyming couplet to finish—there are but three overarching ideas found throughout, and Rossow diligently crafted his musical sections to match them.

The first main idea is entirely contained within the A section. The ensemble may recall as discussed earlier in this chapter that the A section mostly favors A<sup>b</sup>-Major, and that the transition to D<sup>b</sup>-Major is not sensed until the culminating measures. Rossow did this for the sake of musical and textual cohesion—that the first major idea would belong to one tonality and the shifting idea into the B section, another tonality. It suffices to say, then, that the notion of profound curiosity regarding the lover’s mystical power over the poet should be embodied for the duration of the A section. Strict adherence to Rossow’s tempo marking, *Larghetto* ♩=66, will help suggest this atmosphere provided the ensemble maintains the forward moving quality inherent to *larghetto*.

At the beginning of the B section in mm. 8, Rossow stipulates the following: *A tempo Più mosso*. In an attempt to affect the playfully contemplative nature of this section during which the poet ponders the irony of his state, the ensemble should embrace Rossow’s adjustment and move the ensuing measures with greater persistence and expectancy. For the *molto accelerando* in mm. 12-13, the pianist is once again asked to play the ascending Dorian ♯7 scale pattern as quickly as possible, and the singer should coordinate his release with the downbeat of mm. 14 on the F-Dorian ♯7 cluster chord. This time, Rossow implements a *caesura* before beat two; thus, the singer should allow a considerable amount of time before singing the next two measures freely, with much *rubato* (Figure 2.27). This is the most powerful statement in the entire movement, and Rossow left it unaccompanied due to its profundity. He did not want it to seem restrained and

simply felt the vocal part did not need anything else—that it could stand on its own.<sup>77</sup> In similar fashion, the voice sings over ringing chords in mm. 18-19, so the singer should proceed freely with the rhythms for this declamation of text. These two examples should be treated as distinctive moments which epitomize the dramatic intention of the entire piece.

Finally, the song culminates with the A<sup>1</sup> section, in which one finds repetition of thematic material from the previous A section. The ensemble should proceed in the original tempo, but the overall sentiment for this section should be one of steadfast resolve and permanence. Simply singing the text with conviction and self-assuredness should assist in evoking this sentiment. Additionally, the singer is permitted to employ a *portamento* in mm. 27 from the B<sup>b</sup><sub>2</sub>—D<sup>b</sup><sub>4</sub> of mm. 28 for dramatic emphasis (Figure 2.28).<sup>78</sup> The only instance of text repetition occurs in mm. 30-32, which Rossow intended for emphatic purpose. As such, the singer should sing the repeated text freely over the ringing chords in the piano part (Figure 2.29). Equally resounding are the final three measures of the postlude, which is a restatement of the opening theme of the set in transposed form and steadily descends to the final D<sup>b</sup> chord in root position—thus bringing cohesion and closure to the set.

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<sup>77</sup> Rossow, interview.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

The figure displays a musical score for a vocal and piano duet, spanning measures 12 to 15. The vocal part is written in a single staff, and the piano part is in grand staff (treble and bass clefs).

- Measure 12:** The vocal part begins with the word "skill" and a fermata. The piano part starts with a forte (*ff*) dynamic and a "molto accel." marking. A red box highlights the first few notes of the piano part.
- Measure 13:** The vocal part continues with a fermata. The piano part continues with a "molto accel." marking. A red box highlights the piano part.
- Measure 14:** The vocal part has the lyrics "that, in my mind, thy worst all best ex - ceeds?". The piano part features a "rubato" marking and a cluster chord. A red box highlights this cluster chord. The piano part also has a "rubato" marking.
- Measure 15:** The vocal part continues with a fermata. The piano part continues with a "rubato" marking.

Figure 2.27: Illustrates molto accelerando on F-Dorian  $\natural 7$  scale in piano part, synchronized vocal cut-off with cluster chord at downbeat of mm. 14, and caesura in vocal part before singing unaccompanied text, mm. 12-15.

27

Bar.

*Portamento*

*mf*

3

*rit.*

*mp*

me, more wor-ty I to be be-loved of thee,

Figure 2.28: Illustrates permissible *portamento* between notes, mm. 27-28.

30

Bar.

**A tempo**

more wor-ty I to be be -loved of thee.

Pno.

**A tempo**

*mp* L.H.

Figure 2.29: Illustrates repetitive text to be sung freely over ringing piano chords, mm. 30-32.

### CHAPTER 3: *Three A.E. Housman Songs*

Similar to the texts of William Shakespeare, the works of A.E. Housman are found in numerous musical settings for voice and piano. The most frequently set Housman texts include those from his sixty-three poem collection entitled, *A Shropshire Lad*. Many composers have found musical inspiration within this collection, most notably British composers George Butterworth, Ralph Vaughan Williams<sup>79</sup>, and Arthur Somervell. American composers Samuel Barber, John Duke, and Ben Moore have also successfully set poems from the same collection. In addition, many composers the world over have found musical inspiration from Housman's other poetic collections: *Last Poems*, *More Poems*, and *Additional Poems*. When Rossow decided to compose his first works for solo voice and piano, Shakespeare was not his initial source for textual inspiration—though the Shakespeare songs were completed first. Rather, he happened upon a copy of Henry Holt and Company's publication, *Complete Poems: A. E. Housman Centennial Edition*, and began perusing the various collections found therein. Rossow was drawn to the texts of A.E. Housman; in particular, he was drawn to the following five poems: "If truth in hearts that perish" from *A Shropshire Lad*, XXXIII; "The half-moon westers low, my love" from *Last Poems*, XXVI; "It is no gift I tender" from *Additional Poems*, IV; "I promise nothing: friends will part" from *More Poems*, XXII; and "White in the moon the long road lies" also from *A Shropshire Lad*, XXXVI.<sup>80</sup> In the end, only three poems would remain—one of which was never part of the original mix, "Bells in tower at evening toll," from *More*

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<sup>79</sup> Shirlee Emmons and Wilbur Watkin Lewis, *Researching the Song* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 416.

<sup>80</sup> David P. Rossow, telephone interview by author, February 17, 2014.

*Poems*, XVII.<sup>81</sup> Rossow initially intended to compose these pieces as individual entities, yet further inspection reveals that they function quite well together thematically to form a cohesive unit. Rossow's *Three A.E. Housman Songs* will now be explored from a performer's perspective. The same process utilized in Chapter 2 will be applied here. Thus, each song will be examined, discussed, and illustrated according to the following criteria: title information; date of composition; poetic source(s); appropriate voice type; harmonic structure; scope of range; median tessitura; musical elements (meter, tempo, dynamics, length); the nature of the vocal line; and suggested ideas for preparation and performance. For the purpose of this study, the Scientific Pitch Notation system will be utilized; thus, middle C is represented as C<sub>4</sub>. Furthermore, commentary pertaining to diction will utilize the International Phonetic Alphabet.

TITLE: Bells in Tower at Evening Toll

DATE OF COMPOSITION: April 2013

SOURCE OF POETRY: A.E. Housman, from *More Poems*, XVII

*More Poems* is a collection of forty-eight A.E. Housman texts which were published posthumously. According to Laurence Housman, A.E. Housman's brother, this collection of poems was never intended for publication by the author. Rather, A.E. Housman left the decision about publication to the discretion of his brother:

This final selection of A. E. Housman's poems is published by his permission, not by his wish. His instructions, allowing them to appear, while committing other material to a less fortunate fate, were as follows: 'I direct my brother, Laurence Housman, to destroy all my prose manuscripts in whatever language, and I permit him but do not enjoin him to select from my verse manuscript writing, and to publish, any poems which appear to him to be completed and to be not inferior to the average of my published poems; and I direct him to destroy all other poems and fragments of verse.'<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Rossow, telephone interview, February 17, 2014.

<sup>82</sup> Laurence Housman, preface to *More Poems*, by A.E. Housman (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1936), v.



“Bells in tower at evening toll” was not Rossow’s initial choice for this piece. He began and completed the same first eight measures (musically) to a different poem, “White in the moon the long road lies” which appears in Housman’s, *A Shropshire Lad*. However, upon hearing a performance of Somervell’s setting of *A Shropshire Lad* in which the same text is utilized, Rossow lost interest in and no longer felt compelled to complete his own musical setting of the poem.<sup>83</sup> He quickly abandoned the piece and began working on the other two Housman poems. Ironically, this piece was the last of the three to be completed, yet it required the least amount of time, as Rossow completed the song in two days once he acquired the proper text.

One additional consideration concerning the text will now be addressed. Two of the forty-eight poems found in *More Poems* contain alternative readings—one of which is number XVII. Rossow chose to set the alternative text to this poem rather than the original. Two words were changed with the alternative publication. For instance, in line 2 of the poem, the original text states, “And the light forsakes the soul;” whereas in the alternate publication, the word “light” is changed to “day” (Figure 3.1). Similarly, line 5 of the original text states, “Blame not thou the faulting light;” whereas in the alternate publication, the word “faulting” is changed to “blinded” (Figure 3.2).<sup>84</sup>

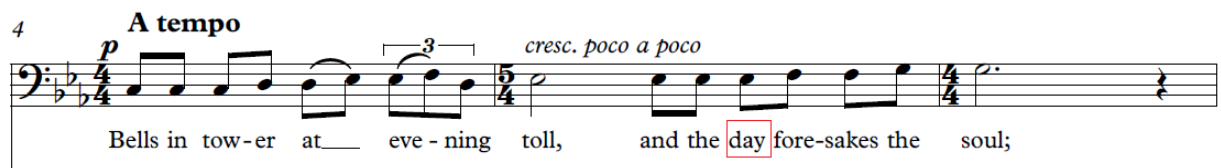


Figure 3.1: Illustrates Rossow’s use of the alternative text on the word “day,” mm. 5.

<sup>83</sup> David P. Rossow, interview by author, Boca Raton, FL, February 7, 2014.

<sup>84</sup> A.E. Housman, *More Poems* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1936), 71.

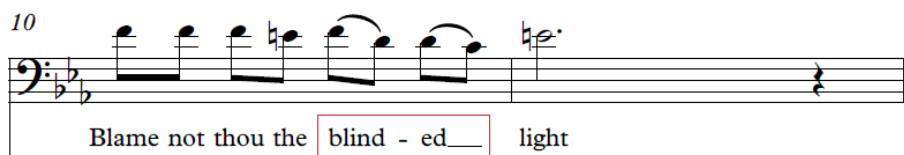


Figure 3.2: Illustrates Rossow's use of the alternative text on the word "blinded," mm. 10.

VOICE TYPE: Low, Baritone

HARMONIC STRUCTURE: Tonal/Modal

A key signature of  $A^b$  is given, but the piece does not proceed in the  $A^b$ -Major tonality. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Rossow typically employs this device in an effort to avoid an unnecessary overabundance of accidentals for the sake of clarity to the musicians.<sup>85</sup> The piece is through-composed with repetition of introductory thematic material in the final eight measures. The 3-measure introduction begins in  $E^b$ -Dorian and is harmonically dense. Quarter-note patterns assigned with *tenuto* markings represent the death toll of the beloved and Death's relentless, inescapable pursuit, while the descending eighth-note patterns containing sharp minor-2<sup>nds</sup> illustrate the painful reality of one's own mortality (Figure 3.3).



Figure 3.3: Introduction illustrating the death toll and descending death theme, mm. 1-3.

<sup>85</sup> David P. Rossow, interview by author, Boca Raton, FL, February 4, 2014.

The first three measures of the vocal line, which begins at mm. 4, are set in C-minor. Beginning at mm. 7-15, the harmonic structure shifts through several minor tonalities, one modal measure, and one brief measure of major at mm. 12, respectively: F-minor, G-minor, D-minor (for two measures), A-minor, F-Lydian, the parallel F-minor, D-minor again, and culminates on a B<sup>b</sup>-minor chord extended to the thirteenth. The next measure, mm. 16, is unaccompanied and will be discussed in the section devoted to performance guidelines. Beginning at mm. 17-19, the introductory material in E<sup>b</sup>-Dorian is repeated—this time with text. Measures 20-22 contain a combination of transposed introductory material in F-Dorian, F-minor, and back to F-Dorian. Rossow concludes the piece in D<sup>b</sup>-Lydian, which will serve as a unifying musical factor throughout the set. The D<sup>b</sup>-Lydian motif is left unresolved, creating an eerie sensation of emptiness, hopelessness, and desolation—all of which embody the overall character of the piece (Figure 3.4).

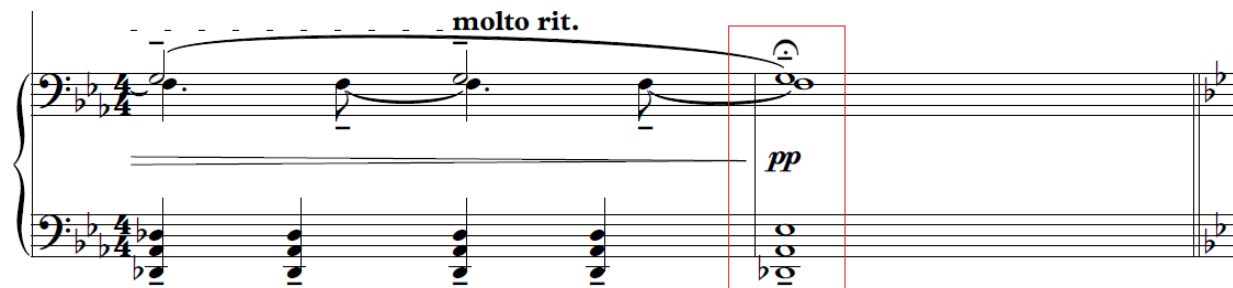


Figure 3.4: Illustrates the unresolved nature of the D<sup>b</sup>-Lydian harmonic structure, mm. 23-24.

RANGE: F<sub>2</sub> (optional C<sub>3</sub>)—F<sub>4</sub>

TESSITURA: C<sub>3</sub>—C<sub>4</sub>

METER: 4/4, 5/4, 6/4

TEMPO MARKING: Largo, ♩=44

DYNAMIC RANGE: *pp*—*f*

LENGTH: 24 measures, approximately 2:40

VOCAL LINE: Moderately difficult

The vocal line is mostly step-wise and, as such, is easily accessible to the singer. However, it may present a few challenges to less experienced singers. There is one very wide leap from E<sub>4</sub>—A<sub>2</sub>, which Rossow employs for dramatic emphasis (Figure 3.5), the nature of which will be further explored in the section devoted to performance suggestions. In addition, the range extensions of the piece may be challenging for young singers, as there are two full measures which rest in the *passaggio* of the baritone voice, mm. 9-10. The *tessitura* of these two measures hovers primarily around F<sub>4</sub> and E<sub>4</sub>. The vowel choice [ɔ] for the word “on” in mm. 9 is particularly helpful for the singer, yet the abundance of text found in mm. 10-11 may be of certain difficulty given the range (Figure 3.6). The singer is encouraged to maintain a smaller aperture and to employ slight vowel modification toward closed vowels throughout these two measures for optimum resonance results.

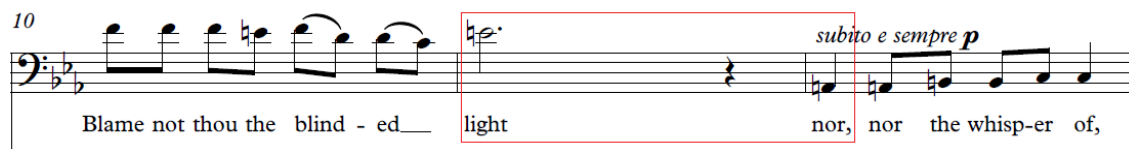


Figure 3.5: Illustrates the descending leap of a twelfth found in mm. 11-12.

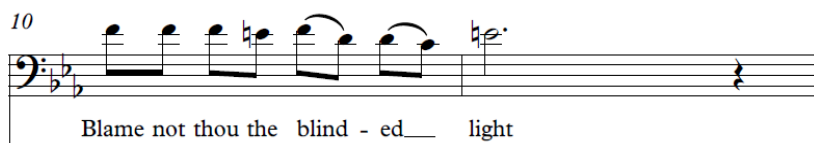


Figure 3.6: Illustrates the high tessitura set to several words of text found in mm. 10-11.

Beginning at mm. 16-20, the overall characteristic of the vocal line follows a descending pattern to the end of the piece. In mm. 20, Rossow set the word “ill” on a low F<sub>2</sub>; however, the composer has deemed it permissible for the singer to sing the same word on the pitch C<sub>3</sub> if the F<sub>2</sub> lies outside the singer’s comfortable range. Should the singer opt to sing the C<sub>3</sub> in lieu of the F<sub>2</sub>, the composer requests that the C<sub>3</sub> be extended one additional beat to complete the measure.<sup>86</sup>

#### PERFORMANCE SUGGESTIONS:

When considered within the grand scheme of how the three pieces work cohesively as a whole, this movement represents the funeral episode of a lover who has recently lost his soul mate. As such, the piece can suitably be sub-identified as the “graveside” or “funeral” movement. The overall sensation for the singer should be one of isolation, hopelessness, and emptiness. Strict adherence to the composer’s initial tempo marking of *Largo* ♩=44 will aid in establishing such an atmosphere. Although the composer suggests a dynamic mark of *piano* for the singer’s opening text, one should avoid singing too softly. The singer is encouraged to maintain core in the vocal sound and to put a great deal of energy through consonant articulation to best effect a sense of indignation and lost hope. Beginning at mm. 5-9, the composer indicates a dynamic marking of *cresc. poco a poco*. The singer should not expand the dynamic level too hastily, however, as there are four full, languid measures for the singer to move from *piano* to *forte* at the arrival of mm. 9. In addition, one may note that the dynamic expansion compliments the ascending nature of the vocal line to a climactic F<sub>4</sub>, also at mm. 9 (Figure 3.7). Furthermore, the composer has indicated that if the pianist struggles to reach the extensions found in the left-

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<sup>86</sup> Rossow, interview, February 7, 2014.

hand, he/she may roll the chord upward, but every endeavor should be attempted to avoid this for the sake of the toll-like quality inherent in the open intervals.

The image displays a musical score for a vocal and piano ensemble. The vocal line is in the upper staff, and the piano accompaniment is in the lower staff. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats), and the time signature is 4/4. The tempo is marked 'A tempo'. The score is divided into two systems. The first system (measures 4-6) features a vocal line with a triplet of eighth notes (B-flat, A, G) and a piano accompaniment with a triplet of eighth notes (B-flat, A, G). The second system (measures 7-9) features a vocal line with a triplet of eighth notes (F, E, D) and a piano accompaniment with a triplet of eighth notes (F, E, D). A red bracket highlights the multi-measure crescendo in measures 5-9, which matches the ascending nature of the vocal line. The crescendo is marked 'cresc. poco a poco' and 'f' (forte) at the end of the phrase.

Figure 3.7: The multi-measure *crescendo* matches the ascending nature of the vocal line, mm. 5-9.

As previously mentioned, Rossow employs a descending leap of a twelfth in mm. 11-12 for dramatic emphasis. In addition to the *tessitura* jump, he indicates a dynamic marking of *subito e sempre piano*. The justification for this is found in his treatment of the text, “nor the whisper of the night.” In this instance, Rossow employs text painting. The sudden drop in range and dynamic illustrate the hushed quality the text suggests. Furthermore, he imposes repetition of text not found in the original poem, again for dramatic emphasis. The singer should approach each repetition as a *poco decrescendo*, thus enabling the resultant *pianissimo* found in mm. 15 (Figure 3.8).

2

10

Blame not thou the blind - ed light

nor, nor the whisp-er of,

*subito e sempre p*

13

nor, nor the whisp-er of, nor, nor the whisp-er of the night: \_\_\_\_\_

*pp*

*pp*

*2<sup>da</sup> 3*

Figure 3.8: mm. 12-15.

Measure 16 was left unaccompanied by Rossow, which is befitting, as this is the moment in the text where the subject is faced with the realization that he is alone in the world—that the death of his lover is permanent, and the lover will never return. Rossow provides a *rubato* marking above the vocal line; thus, the measure may be freely sung (Figure 3.9).

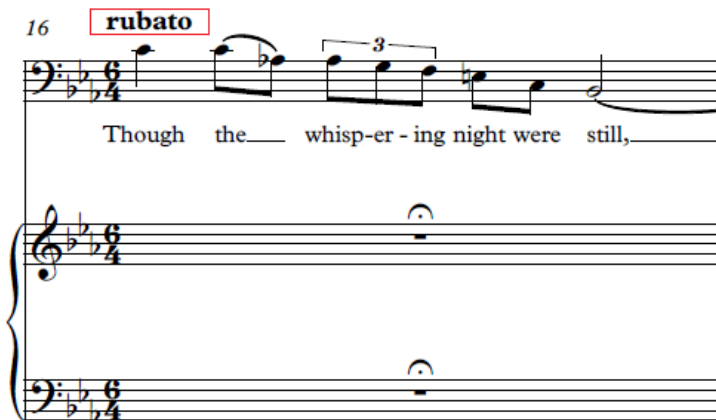


Figure 3.9: Illustrates the unaccompanied 6/4 measure marked *rubato*, mm. 16.

For the final two declamations of text found in mm. 18-20, every attempt should be made on the part of the singer to invoke a sense of reluctant acceptance. This may be achieved by observing the composer's dynamic markings of *piano* and *pianissimo*, respectively—thus creating a sense of internal resolve. In addition, the pianist may contribute to these sentiments by observing not only the dynamic markings but also the tempo fluctuations found in mm. 17-24. In particular, the pianist must observe Rossow's markings of *molto rit.* and *pianissimo* found in mm. 23, as they codify the hollow, desolate atmosphere inherent in the piece as a whole.

TITLE: The Half-Moon Westers Low

DATE OF COMPOSITION: February 2013

SOURCE OF POETRY: A.E. Housman, from *Last Poems*, XXVI

According to Ian Scott-Kilvert, Housman's *Last Poems* represent "the gleanings of several harvests . . . inspired by his declared farewell to poetry, [touching] a note of elegiac



tenderness richer than anything he had written before.”<sup>87</sup> Housman’s own introductory remarks found in the 1922 publication of *Last Poems* confirm the aforementioned notions: “I publish these poems, few though they are, because it is not likely that I shall ever be impelled to write much more. I can no longer expect to be revisited by the continuous excitement under which in the early months of 1895 I wrote the greater part of my other book, nor indeed could I well sustain it if it came.”<sup>88</sup> Nevertheless, Scott-Kilvert aptly captures the over-arching sentiment inherent to the forty-eight *Last Poems* in his following remark: “Yet the style is more completely Housman’s own, and the language at its best still more inevitable, so that the reader at times is scarcely conscious of description, so completely are the words identified with the mood and scene they create.”<sup>89</sup> A better poetic example of Scott-Kilvert’s latter position could not be found than that which Rossow took as his inspiration for the second movement of the *Three A.E. Housman Songs*—“The half-moon westers low, my love.”

VOICE TYPE: Low, Baritone

HARMONIC STRUCTURE: Modal

A key signature of G-minor is provided, yet that particular tonality only appears justifiably in the final measure of the piece. Rossow conceived this movement in the C-Dorian #4 mode (Figure 3.10), and the key signature of G-minor is another illustration of Rossow’s convention of avoiding an overabundance of accidentals. The C-Dorian #4 modality pervades the piece, and though it never deviates from said modality, there are numerous moments of tonal/modal ambiguity and unrest contained therein. The 4-measure introduction firmly

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<sup>87</sup> Ian Scott-Kilvert, *A. E. Housman* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1955), 29.

<sup>88</sup> A.E. Housman, *Last Poems* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1922), 5.

<sup>89</sup> Scott-Kilvert, 29.

establishes the C-Dorian #4 mode (Figure 3.11), and Rossow claims that his introduction was partially inspired by Arthur Somervell's introduction to "White in the moon the long road lies," from *A Shropshire Lad*. This can be seen particularly in terms of rhythmic ambiguity, exotic scale patterns with elements of chromaticism, and the method of resolution via 4-3 suspension (Figure 3.12).



Figure 3.10: An illustration of the notes and intervals comprising the Dorian #4 mode as represented in Ron Miller's, *Modal Jazz Composition and Harmony*, vol. 1.

Adagio rubato ♩=54

*pp* *f* *mf*

*con pedal*

5

*p* *mp*

The half-moon wes-ters low, my love, my love, and the

*p*

Figure 3.11: Red markings illustrate Rossow's establishment of the C-Dorian #4 mode, utilizing all of the notes which comprise it. Green markings indicate parallels drawn between Rossow's introduction and those of Somervell's introduction as represented in the next example: rhythmic ambiguity; exotic scale patterns infused with chromaticism; and the resolution of introductory material via 4-3 suspension, respectively; mm. 1-5.



Figure 3.12: Arthur Somervell's introduction to "White in the moon the long road lies" from *A Shropshire Lad*. Green markings indicate factors which inspired Rossow's introduction to "The Half-Moon Westers Low" as indicated in the previous example.

The piece is through-composed with elements of motivic repetition in both the piano and voice parts. Nevertheless, each coupling of text is given a unique melodic invention by Rossow, and even in moments of motivic repetition, none of the melodic themes are ever repeated in their entirety. Rossow achieves this by altering meters, note durations, and pitches in order to avoid exact repetition of any melodic material. An example of this can be found by comparing the melodic passage of mm. 5 to that of mm. 31. Although similar, Rossow alters the time signature and the rhythm of the text in the second passage to avoid repetition (Figures 3.13 and 3.14). Likewise, one finds the same treatment of melodic ingenuity when comparing mm. 13-14 to mm. 32-33. At first it appears the melody will be an exact repetition. In the original sketch, Rossow resolved the C<sub>4</sub> back down to B<sup>b</sup><sub>3</sub> albeit with rhythmic alteration (Figure 3.15). Nevertheless, Rossow decided to alter the final note of the second phrase upward for the sake of melodic variance (Figures 3.16 and 3.17).

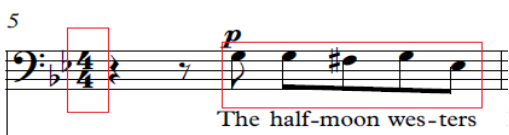


Figure 3.13: Illustrates Rossow's initial statement of this melodic motive, mm 5.



Figure 3.14: Illustrates Rossow's second usage of the same melodic idea but with altered time signature and note values to avoid exact repetition, mm. 31.

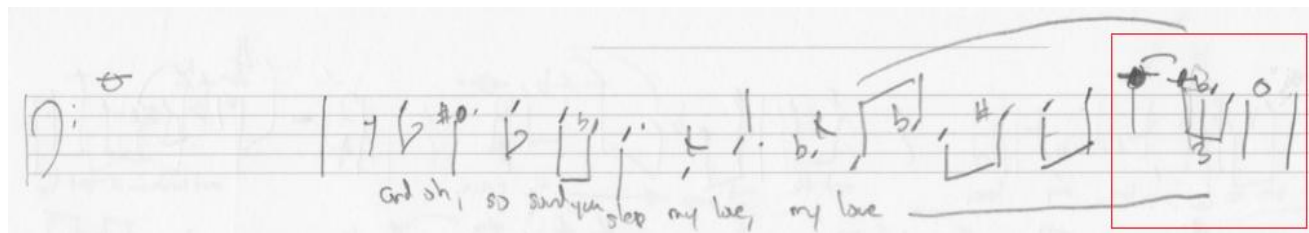


Figure 3.15: Original sketch illustrates Rossow's initial inclination to resolve the C<sub>4</sub> downward to B<sub>3</sub> via rhythmic variation, mm. 33.



Figure 3.16: Illustrates Rossow's initial statement of this melodic motive resolving downward, mm. 13-14.



Figure 3.17: Illustrates Rossow's second usage of the same melodic idea but with altered resolution upward, mm. 32-33.

Just as each coupling of text is given a unique melodic stamp by Rossow, as though they are self-contained entities comprising a whole, likewise, each text coupling contains a unique harmonic setting, which distinguishes one from another. As such, it is helpful to identify where the distinctive harmonic properties of each text coupling lie within the piece. The following is a suggested guideline for identifying said properties: the harmonic material from mm. 1-9 belongs to the first coupling; the harmonic material from the pick-up to mm. 9-15 belongs to the second coupling; the harmonic material beginning at mm. 17-27 (up to the *A tempo*) belong to the third coupling; and the harmonic material beginning with the *A tempo* in mm. 27-38 (*fine*) belongs to the fourth coupling.

Finally, the piece is unified harmonically by a recurring motive appearing in the piano part, yet Rossow alters the root and re-voices each statement of the motive every time it is employed—maintaining the C-Dorian #4 modal structure throughout. Incidentally, he decidedly placed the unifying motivic material at key points during the piece: the beginning, mm. 1-2; the middle, mm. 17-18; and the conclusion, mm. 35-37 (Figures 3.18, 3.19, and 3.20).



Figure 3.18: Rossow's initial statement of recurring harmonic motive, mm. 1-2.

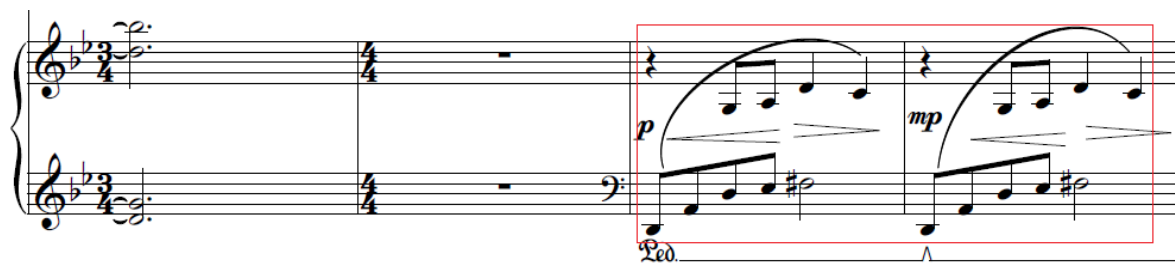


Figure 3.19: Rossow's second statement of the recurring harmonic motive with altered root beginning on D<sub>1</sub>, mm. 17-18.



Figure 3.20: Rossow's third and final statement of the recurring harmonic motive with altered root of G<sub>3</sub> and re-voicing.

One additional unifying factor mentioned earlier in this chapter is Rossow's frequent use of the Lydian mode, particularly for its idiosyncratic harmonic coloring. Though it appears infrequently in this particular piece, the case can be made that Rossow employs the Lydian  $\flat 3$  mode at two crucial moments for the sake of harmonic cohesion between songs. Rossow juxtaposes the C-Lydian  $\flat 3$  mode with the C-Dorian  $\sharp 4$  mode in the first two measures and in the final measure preceding the G-minor triad in root position, which concludes the piece. Two factors contribute to the plausibility of this theory: first, the seventh scale degree is absent in both instances, so it cannot be used to negate the claim (Figure 3.21); and second, the fact that Lydian-based cluster chords are heard in all three pieces lends support to the claim that Rossow intended for this particular sound to be identified with the overarching harmonic fusion throughout the set.



Figure 3.21: Illustrates respective seventh scale degrees of each mode, which are omitted from Rossow's cluster chords in mm. 1-2 and mm. 38, thereby lending support to the claim of modal juxtaposition. Musical examples were taken from Ron Miller's, *Modal Jazz Composition and Harmony, vol. 1*.

RANGE: G<sub>2</sub>—E<sub>4</sub>

TESSITURA: A<sub>2</sub>—C<sub>4</sub>

METER: 6/4, 4/4, 2/4, 3/4, 5/4

TEMPO MARKING: Adagio rubato, ♩=54

DYNAMIC RANGE: *pp*—*mf*

LENGTH: 38 Measures, approximately 3:20

VOCAL LINE: Moderately difficult

In terms of the overall range and *tessitura* of the piece, the vocal line is accessible. There are only two instances of leaps greater than a fifth—mm. 8 and mm. 11 (Figure 3.22). In the first instance, the vowel choice [Λ] for the word “up” should suffice as a resonance strategy for the singer on D<sub>4</sub>. Similarly, the singer is encouraged not to open the aperture too widely for the E<sup>b</sup><sub>4</sub> on the word “wide” in mm. 11. in an effort to sing a pure [a]. Rather, he should maintain a similar vowel strategy to that in mm. 8—employing slight vowel modification toward the close vowel [Λ] for the E<sup>b</sup><sub>4</sub> only, as it lies within the baritone *passaggio*. Furthermore, there are eight instances of skips encompassing a fifth, all of which occur between D<sub>3</sub>—G<sub>2</sub>, A<sub>3</sub>—D<sub>3</sub>, and A<sub>2</sub>—E<sup>b</sup><sub>3</sub>.

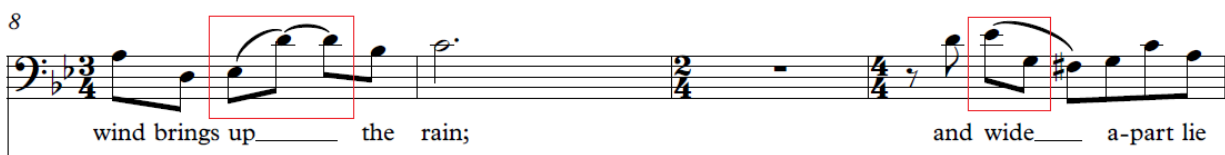


Figure 3.22: Illustrates the two instances in this piece where the vocal line contains skips greater than a fifth, mm. 8 and mm. 11.

Perhaps the most challenging facets of the vocal line are the exotic scale patterns of Rossow's melody, which are rooted in the C-Dorian  $\sharp 4$  mode. The scale patterns of this modality are often foreign to singers of the Western classical tradition. In particular, the recurring augmented 2<sup>nds</sup> between E<sup>b</sup>—F<sup>#</sup> and the diminished 5<sup>ths</sup> between A—E<sup>b</sup> can be especially challenging (Figures 3.23 and 3.24). The singer is encouraged to devote extra time in the initial stages of learning this piece to tuning the augmented 2<sup>nds</sup> and diminished 5<sup>ths</sup> both aurally and vocally.



Figure 3.23: Red illustrates the recurring augmented 2<sup>nds</sup>. Green illustrates the recurring diminished 5<sup>ths</sup>, mm. 13.

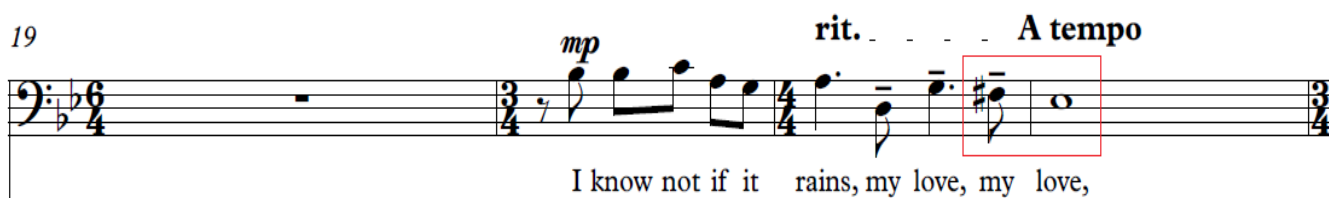


Figure 3.24: Illustrates another instance of recurring augmented 2<sup>nds</sup>, mm. 21-22.



## PERFORMANCE SUGGESTIONS:

There are two potential methods of interpretation which would facilitate cohesion of this piece to the others within the set: the first would be to classify this movement under the sub-heading, “graveside visitation;” the other would be to sub-identify this piece as “distant longing.” In either case, the idea of time-passed between the “funeral” movement and this one is essential. The singer should endeavor to convey sensations of yearning, separation, and detachment. The composer gives a tempo marking of *Adagio rubato* ♩=54. In an effort to capture the *rubato* nature of the piece, the pianist is encouraged to embrace the stretching gesture found in the 4-measure introduction somewhat freely and without any semblance of haste (Figure 3.25). Likewise, in measures where there is no moving accompaniment with the vocal line, the singer is encouraged to sing said measures in a freely detached manner (Figure 3.26). However, where musical rests indicate breath marks for the singer, it is crucial to maintain continuous flow of text and dramatic intent through the rests if the text is a prolongation of the preceding thought; in other words, do not allow the breaths to interrupt the stream of consciousness (Figure 3.27). Furthermore, in moments where Rossow imposes text repetition on the words, “my love” and “the twain,” the singer should employ a slight lift between each utterance of the text for dramatic emphasis.



Figure 3.25: Illustrates the 4-measure introduction with *rubato* tempo marking, mm. 1-4.

5

*p*

The half-moon wes-ters low, my love, my love, and the

*mp*

*p*

*Red.*

Figure 3.26: Illustrates instances where the unaccompanied vocal line should be sung freely and detached, mm. 5 and mm. 7.

and seas be - tv

Figure 3.27: The musical rest serves as a breath mark but should not interrupt the dramatic intent, as the ensuing text is a continuation of the preceding: “and wide apart lie we, my love, and seas between the twain,” mm. 15.

There are several examples of text painting and one instance of text foreshadowing contained throughout the piece. The first can be found in mm. 8, as the vocal line ascends by leap of a major-7<sup>th</sup> on the word “up.” Also in the same measure, Rossow employs rhythmic dissonance to evoke a stormy quality, which matches the text, “and the wind brings up the rain” (Figure 3.28). The next instance of text painting occurs in mm. 13-14, where Rossow gives the

vocal line an expansive quality referencing the text, “and wide apart lie we, my love.” Another example can be found in mm. 24-25, where the vocal line descends the span of an octave referencing the eternal resting place of the lover’s soul mate according to the text, “in the land where you do lie” (Figure 3.29). The single instance of text foreshadowing occurs in mm. 27-30. The piano part is understood to represent a dream sequence referencing the ensuing text, “and oh, so sound you sleep, my love” (Figure 3.30). The *A tempo* at mm. 27 suggests the pianist once again employ elements of *rubato* in an effort to create the surreal atmosphere of eternal rest.

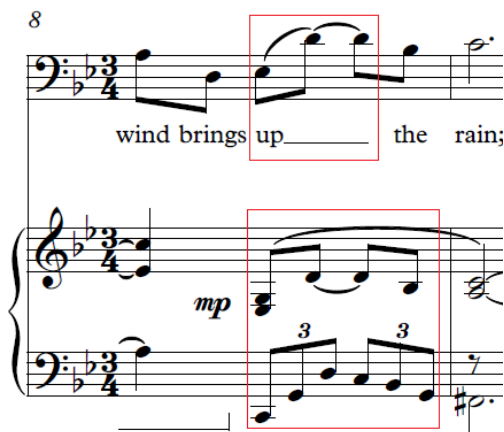


Figure 3.28: Rossow’s use of text painting in both vocal and piano parts, mm. 8.



Figure 3.29: Illustrates text painting on octave descent from A<sub>3</sub>—A<sub>2</sub>, mm. 24-25.



Figure 3.30: Illustrates text foreshadowing in which the piano part establishes the atmosphere for the subsequent line of text, mm. 27-30.

In conclusion, only a few additional performance criteria observations bear mentioning. Firstly, every effort should be made by the ensemble to adhere to Rossow's frequent fluctuations in dynamics and tempos throughout the piece. Some dynamic markings inevitably assist the singer vocally, as in the *crescendo* found in mm. 7 and mm. 13. Nevertheless, each dynamic contrast is carefully assigned for the purpose of dramatic intention and interpretation. For instance, the *decrescendo* found in mm. 15 and mm. 33 yield a sense of separation and yearning—particularly when taken freely. Similarly, each contrast in tempo creates an ebb and flow imperative for the conveyance of ideologies expressed earlier in this section: time-passed, longing, and detachment from the beloved.

TITLE: It Is No Gift I Tender

DATE OF COMPOSITION: January 2013

SOURCE OF POETRY: A.E. Housman, from *Additional Poems*, IV

*Additional Poems* is the second collection of A.E. Housman texts published posthumously. The definitive version totaling twenty-three poems appears in the 1939 Jonathan Cape publication, *The Collected Poems of A. E. Housman*. The first eighteen, however, were first

published as “Poems,” a chapter found in Laurence Housman’s 1938 publication, *My Brother, A. E. Housman: Personal Recollections Together with Thirty Hitherto Unpublished Poems*. Similar to the texts of *More Poems*, these additional poems combined with some light verse and parodies were bequeathed to L. Housman with specific instruction from his brother “to include nothing which I considered inferior to anything that had already appeared.”<sup>90</sup> L. Housman continues:

But I have, to the best of my judgment, included nothing in the two selections for which I am responsible – *More Poems* and those which here follow – of a lower standard than that which he indicated. But since I am now publishing a second selection, it may be well for me to explain why I am doing so. My anxiety not to leave out anything that might reasonably be regarded as sufficiently complete and up to standard was naturally very great; but I was equally anxious not to include in my selection too many poems of a borderline character, or of a brevity which might have the effect of making the whole appear somewhat fragmentary. But as the three books of published poems may now be regarded as constituting the canon of my brother’s poetry, I feel myself freer to make these few additions . . .<sup>91</sup>

As earlier discussed, the recurring impulse of the previous two texts is one of yearning and longing—“even more simply to engage with another being, to achieve communion or wholeness before the grave’s embrace.”<sup>92</sup> Thus, they are “profoundly lonely poems, among the loneliest in the language.”<sup>93</sup> Conversely, this text reveals an alternate persona of Housman’s poetry. Nick Laird explains that although the later publication “lacks the coherence of *A Shropshire Lad*, the thought often becomes harder and leaner, more fully revealed, the tone more controlled, and the sentence sounds dovetail perfectly in the shape of the stanzas. This is a different Housman; rational, clipped, clear-eyed, and writing poems to make the skin bristle ‘so

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<sup>90</sup> Laurence Housman, *My Brother, A. E. Housman: Personal Recollections Together with Thirty Hitherto Unpublished Poems* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1938), 211.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 211-12.

<sup>92</sup> Nick Laird, introduction to *A Shropshire Lad and Other Poems: The Collected Poems of A. E. Housman*, ed. by Archie Burnett (London: The Penguin Group, 2010).

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*

the razor ceases to act.”<sup>94</sup> He then provides an example of this same poem to epitomize his claim.

VOICE TYPE: Low, Baritone

HARMONIC STRUCTURE: Tonal/Modal

A key signature of G-Major with a harmonic transition to A<sup>b</sup>-Major is given. The piece is in modified ternary in form with sections divided as follows: A<sup>1-2</sup>, B, and A<sup>2-1</sup>. Each section represents one stanza of the poem. The delineation of major keys satisfies the tonal structure of both A sections; however, the B section is comprised of modulating measures based around the Lydian mode in various transpositions. The overarching tonal structure appears to be a harmonic extension of the *Three Shakespeare Sonnets*, which, given the chronology of composition, makes sense since this piece was the first of this set to be composed immediately following Rossow’s completion of the Shakespeare songs.

The A section is subdivided into two parts as a result of tonal shifts between major and minor for textual emphasis. The first five measures comprising A<sup>1</sup> are cast in G-Major, but a shift to the parallel minor during mm. 6-7 and quickly back to G-Major for mm. 8 represents the sub-section, A<sup>2</sup> (Figure 3.31). Rossow returns to this harmonic idea in the recurrence of the A section in mm. 19-23, but he inverts the relations to minor-major. His original conception of this sectional return was that it would mirror exactly the previous A section, but Rossow decided against it and swapped the order of tonalities, again due to textual elements.<sup>95</sup> Thus, the return of the A material begins in A<sup>b</sup>-Major for the first two measures of piano, switches tonalities to the

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<sup>94</sup> Nick Laird, introduction.

<sup>95</sup> Rossow, interview.

parallel A<sup>b</sup>-Minor for two measures in concurrence with the vocal line, and quickly returns to A<sup>b</sup>-Major in mm. 23. As a result, A<sup>2-1</sup> suffices to represent Rossow's harmonic inversion at the return of the A material (Figure 3.32).

The figure displays three systems of musical notation, each consisting of a vocal line (soprano) and a piano accompaniment (treble and bass staves). The key signature is A-flat major (two flats). The tempo is marked 'Adagio' with a quarter note equal to 54 beats per minute.

- System 1:** The vocal line begins with the lyrics 'It is no gift I ten-der, a loan is all I can;'. The piano part features a red bracket under the first two measures, indicating a shift to parallel minor (A-flat minor).
- System 2:** The vocal line continues with 'a loan is all I can; but do not scorn the len der;— man gets no more from man,'. The piano part has a red bracket under the first two measures and a green bracket under the next two measures, indicating a shift from major to parallel minor and back to major.
- System 3:** The vocal line continues with 'man getsno more from man. Oh, mor-tal man may bor-row what mor-tal man can'. The piano part has a red bracket under the first two measures, indicating a shift to parallel minor.

Dynamic markings include *p* (piano), *mp* (mezzo-piano), *cresc.* (crescendo), and *mf* (mezzo-forte). Tempo markings include 'poco rit.' (ritardando) and 'A tempo'.

Figure 3.31: Illustrates Rossow's harmonic shifts from major (red) to parallel minor (green) for textual emphasis, mm 1-8.

19 **A tempo**

*mf*

If death and time are stron-ger, \_

**A tempo**

*mf*

---

10

22 *f*

a love may yet be strong, a love may yet be strong; The world will last for lon-ger, \_

*mf*

*f*

*mf*

Figure 3.32: Illustrates Rossow's inversion of harmonic variance at return of the A section material for textual emphasis, mm. 19-24.

The B section begins on mm. 9 in concurrence with Stanza 2 of the poem, and it is here one finds a shift from tonality to modality. Rossow chose the Lydian mode in various permutations for the remainder of this section. The first three measures occur in C-Lydian, and beginning at mm. 12, Rossow makes a harmonic diversion to A<sup>b</sup>-Lydian for the next five measures. For the concluding two measures of the section, Rossow casts the harmonic and melodic material in D<sup>b</sup>-Lydian, in first inversion and root position, respectively. And although



the final A section is mostly contained to A<sup>b</sup>-Major, there is one final instance of the Lydian mode found in the penultimate measure, as Rossow returns to A<sup>b</sup>-Lydian before concluding the piece on an A<sup>b</sup>-Major triad in root position (Figure 3.32). It is important to recall that Rossow intended the Lydian mode to serve as a cohesive factor throughout the set, and this piece, the first to be completed, is replete with occurrences of it.

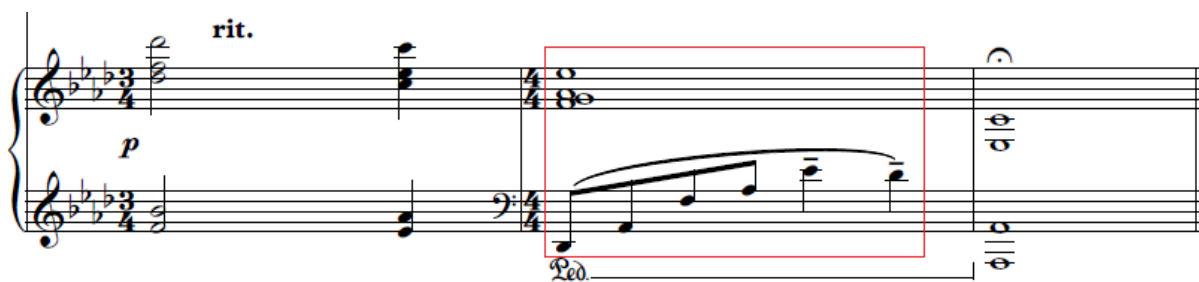


Figure 3.32: Illustrates Rossow's final quotation of the Lydian mode as a unifying factor for the set, shown here as D<sup>b</sup>-Lydian, mm. 28.

RANGE: A<sup>b</sup><sub>2</sub>—E<sup>b</sup><sub>4</sub>

TESSITURA: D<sub>3</sub>—D<sup>b</sup><sub>4</sub>

METER: 5/4, 4/4, 7/4, 3/4

TEMPO MARKING: Adagio ♩=54

DYNAMIC RANGE: *p*—*f*

LENGTH: 29 measures, approximately 3:20

VOCAL LINE: Moderate

The vocal line is mostly step-wise with leaps mainly limited to a third or a fourth. There is only one occurrence of a leap of a fifth in mm. 16. As a result, the melody is generally

accessible to baritones/low voices of medium-advanced skill—particularly within the A sections. The only potentially problematic areas in these sections may be found in the overall *tessitura*, which repeatedly approaches the pre-*passaggio* of the baritone voice, C<sub>4</sub>—E<sub>4</sub> (Figure 3.33). The B section, on the other hand, is slightly more challenging due to the inherent qualities of the shifting Lydian modalities—particularly mm. 12-18 (Figure 3.34).

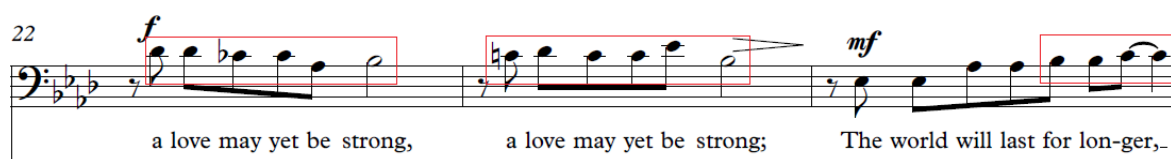


Figure 3.33: Illustrates frequent occurrence of *tessitura* in baritone pre-*passaggio*, mm. 22-24.

Figure 3.34 shows a musical score for a piano and vocal part. The piano part is in bass clef and the vocal part is in treble clef. The key signature has three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat). The score is divided into two systems. The first system starts at measure 11 and ends at measure 14. It includes a tempo change from "rit." to "A tempo". The piano part has dynamics of *mp* and *sim.* (sustained). The vocal part has dynamics of *mp* and *And 'twill not end to-mor-*. The second system starts at measure 15 and ends at measure 18. It includes a tempo change from "rit." to "molto rit.". The piano part has dynamics of *cresc.* and *mf*. The vocal part has dynamics of *mf* and *mp*. Red boxes highlight specific melodic phrases in the piano part: one box covers measures 11-12, and another box covers measures 15-16.

Figure 3.34: Second half of B section illustrates shifting modalities of Lydian, mm. 12-18.

## PERFORMANCE SUGGESTIONS:

Given the nature of this text as discussed in the section on poetry, this piece codifies the interrelationship of dramatic themes represented in the set; as such, this song could be sub-classified as “moving on” or “life will go on.” Although there is nothing particularly joyful or cheerful about this piece, there is a sense of peaceful acceptance and willful resolve, as the singer accepts the loss of his beloved and swears eternal loyalty to their love. This may further explain why Rossow conceived it in a major tonality. In an effort to preserve the solemn nature of the piece without sounding too jovial, the performers are encouraged to strictly adhere to Rossow’s tempo marking of *Adagio* ♩=54. For textual emphasis, the singer should place slight accented *tenuto* markings over the words, “gift,” “loan,” “scorn,” and “more” in the first stanza of text. Similarly, at the start of the B section in mm. 9, the singer is encouraged to apply a *tenuto* marking over the word “Oh” and to freely sing the ensuing text above the ringing C-Lydian chord in the piano (Figure 3.35) yet quickly return to tempo in the following measure. At the harmonic diversion in mm. 12, the pianist is asked to maintain strict tempo through the remaining duration of the B section. Note that Rossow employs exactly the same piano accompaniment for a total of five measures here; this is a purposeful instance of monotonous repetition for the sake of emphasizing the idea that death is inescapable and that all earthly bliss must come to an end. This is one example of Rossow’s gesture of text painting in the piece. The idea of finality is further perpetuated by the *decrescendo* marked in the vocal line at mm. 17 and the *molto ritardando* and *caesura* found in mm. 18. The voice is permitted to spill over the measure while tapering off, and the pianist is encouraged to maintain silence until it is no longer bearable before beginning the recurrence of the A theme (Figure 3.36).

8

man gets no more from man. Oh, mor-tal man may bor-row what mor-tal man can

Figure 3.35: Illustrates text to be freely sung over ringing C-Lydian chord in piano part, mm. 9.

11

rit. A tempo

lend; And 'twill not end to-mor-

mp

rit. A tempo

decresc. mp

sim.

15

cresc. rit. molto rit. . . .

row, though sure e-nough 'twill end.

rit. molto rit. . . .

cresc. mp

mp

Ped

Figure 3.36: Examples of text painting and dynamic markings which denote sensations of finality and mortality, mm. 12-18.

At the return of the A material, the singer may wish to apply accented *tenuto* markings over the following words of text: “stronger,” and “yet” in mm. 21-23. In a similar fashion, the words “longer” and “this” in mm. 24-27 should receive equal treatment. Finally, one last example of text painting supplied by Rossow for the sake of dramatic emphasis can be found in his repetitious setting of the phrase, “but this will last for long,” which he scored a total of three times. Each time, the word “long” is set to a greater note value, which perpetuates the idea of everlasting love (Figure 3.37). The ensemble is encouraged to treat each repetition as a fading thought, the final of which expires with a synchronized cut-off—thus bringing the set to a close.

The image displays two systems of musical notation. The first system, labeled with measure numbers 25 and 26, shows a vocal line in the upper staff and piano accompaniment in the lower staff. The vocal line contains the lyrics "but this will last for long," repeated twice. In each instance, the word "long," is enclosed in a red rectangular box, highlighting its elongated note value. The piano accompaniment is marked with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic. The second system, labeled with measure numbers 27 and 28, continues the vocal and piano parts. The vocal line again repeats "but this will last for long," with "long," highlighted in a red box. The piano accompaniment is marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic and a ritardando (*rit.*) instruction. Both systems conclude with a double bar line.

Figure 3.37: Illustrates Rossow’s use of text painting by elongating the value of each repetition of the word, “long,” mm. 25-29.

## CHAPTER 4: Summary, Conclusions, and Compositional Style

These first two sets by David P. Rossow for solo baritone/low voice and piano represent an evolving style and technique the composer's own. Rossow's studies in jazz piano and classical composition inform and permeate the pieces as evidenced by the frequent juxtaposition of tonal and modal harmonic and melodic motives, which serve as unifying, cohesive musical gestures. Correspondingly, chord extensions of the 9<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, and/or 13<sup>th</sup> combined with modal cluster chords are found copiously throughout the pieces and represent a hallmark of Rossow's musical language. Rossow attributes the concurrence of jazz and classical genres to instinctual habitude and disavows any concentrated effort to bridge the two idioms: "I never set out to do that. I think it's just inherent; it shows itself without me trying. It's just part of my musical language; it's just there. To me, there's no separation. Whether I'm writing something jazz or classical, I'm writing what I'm feeling at that moment, and there's no direct thought as to whether one is jazz or not, or classical or not . . . but in terms of a process . . . no."<sup>96</sup>

Rossow's harmonic and melodic settings are at once exotic and foreign, yet at the same time familiar, comprehensible, and attainable. There is hardly an instance of tonal/modal ambiguity, even when one finds an occasional chromatic passage or exotic modal motif. Appertaining to these pieces, Rossow particularly favors major and minor tonalities combined with frequent occurrences of the Dorian and Lydian modes in their various permutations, chiefly: Dorian #4, Dorian ♮7, Lydian +, and Lydian ♭3. Additionally, his predilection toward tonal/modal structures for the sake of musical coherence is a decided feature of Rossow's compositional style:

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<sup>96</sup> Rossow, interview by author, Boca Raton, FL, February 11, 2014.

Yes, there's always a tonal center in there. I never envision myself writing any other way. I just can't. The pieces are never key specific; if there is a key change in there, it was an afterthought—kind of like the bar lines—just at that moment I moved onto something different . . . But yeah, there's never a sense of no tonal center or ambiguity . . . Most of the writing I do is modal. It's not tied to any key signature—just wherever I decide to take it in that moment, it lends itself to going in that direction.<sup>97</sup>

Textually, Rossow is typically drawn to poems and texts less lengthy in nature.

According to him, “I can't see myself writing anything on an extended poem—anything over five to six stanzas—I don't want to have to contain myself to that text for that amount of time. I tend to gravitate toward shorter things.”<sup>98</sup> Furthermore, communication of the text and dramatic intention are of utmost importance to Rossow. He repeatedly fluctuates between time signatures for the sake of textual fluidity in an effort to mimic natural speech patterns. As such, his texts are primarily syllabic with occasional instances of melismatic passages. Elements of text painting can be found throughout, which he typically employs for the sake of dramatic variance. In terms of formal musical structure, text is often the informing device delineating sections accordingly. Nonetheless, Rossow cautions the ensemble not to allow shifting meters and irregular text breaks to stand in the way of textual communication dramatic delivery:

When this was first written, there weren't any bar lines at all . . . the bar lines were dictated by the text . . . In all my sketches, I fitted in the bar lines after. If there's a lot of meter changes, it's because I felt certain cadence points at the moment or at those sections, but overall, it shouldn't give the impression that it's changing meter. It's based on what happens with the text—it should just flow.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> David P. Rossow, interview by author, Boca Raton, FL, February 4, 2014.

<sup>98</sup> Rossow, interview, Feb. 11.

<sup>99</sup> Rossow, interview, Feb. 4.

The *Three Shakespeare Sonnets* are reasonably attainable for singers and pianists of medium to advanced technical skill; however, the *Three A.E. Housman Songs* should be performed by graduate to professional-level singers only due to range extensions and interpretive aspects. Rossow's sensitivity to the voice is evident throughout his melodic lines, as he rarely makes strenuous demands of the baritone voice. At times, the *tessitura* rests somewhat low (approximately around A<sup>b</sup><sub>2</sub>—B<sup>b</sup><sub>2</sub>) with occasional dips to F<sub>2</sub> and G<sub>2</sub>. The highest range extensions touch E<sub>4</sub> and F<sub>4</sub> of the baritone *passaggio*, the occurrences of which are few; thus, Rossow never solicits unrealistic demands of the singer. Correspondingly, the texts assigned to the highest and lowest notes of each piece are often reserved for dramatic emphasis and regularly contain vowels which assist the singer in negotiating resonance strategies.

Rossow's sets for solo voice and piano are currently found for low/baritone voice and soprano voice only. The *Three Shakespeare Sonnets* and *Three A.E. Housman Songs* are reserved for baritone/low voice, while the *Four Thomas Moore Songs* were conceived for soprano. Regarding the possibility of offering these sets in transposed versions for alternate voice types, Rossow is agreeable to the idea of transposing the *Four Thomas Moore Songs* down for medium-low voice types. However, he is hesitant to transpose the *Three Shakespeare Sonnets* and *Three A.E. Housman Songs* up for higher voice types due to the following reasons: "I don't know, I'm torn, quite honestly. When I write it, I'm thinking about a specific voice. The three for you [Daniels] I wrote specifically for *that* sound, so I don't know. To hear it not in that voice type, I don't know if it would have the same intent as when I wrote it—or if it would convey the same emotional intent."<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Rossow, interview, February 11.



An artistic rendering of Rossow's music requires a broad range of dynamic contrasts and dramatic characters. The pieces typically range in dynamics from *pianissimo* to *fortissimo*, which are often found in close proximity to each other within the music. Similarly, dramatic intentions range from desolate hopelessness to steadfast resolve, from death to new life, and from bitter pessimism and resentment to blissful optimism and faith-filled anticipation. Dramatic personae typically evolve throughout the course of Rossow's sets in correspondence to the diversified nature of the texts. As such, the singer and pianist are required to have an arsenal of musical and dramatic options at their disposal to successfully deliver an imaginative, inventive performance.

In summary, the works of David P. Rossow reveal a diverse musical milieu encompassing multiple styles and techniques—particularly those of jazz and classical idioms—whose coexistence is articulated in nearly all of his compositions from the earliest graduate studies to present. While the choral works represent the bulk of his musical output thus far, Rossow's compositions and arrangements for jazz ensemble are also found in abundance. His sets for solo voice and piano are least in number, as they represent Rossow's latest foray into the art of composing—though the total sum of individual songs rivals those of the other genres when considered out of context. Nevertheless, Rossow intends to bolster his song output in the coming months and years. He has initiated the process by perusing fresh poetic sources for his next endeavors, and the forthcoming projects will no doubt merit further research and curiosity from singers and teachers of singing alike. It is hoped that the information contained in this document will spawn future research on David P. Rossow and his music, and that singers and teachers will find themselves inspired to adopt and program these pieces as part of their standard repertoire—thus lending credence to Housman's verse: "The world will last for longer, but this will last for long."

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APPENDIX A:  
Transcript of Interview: Biographical Information

Date: February 11, 2014      |      Location: Boca Raton, FL

MD=Matthew Daniels  
DR= David Rossow

MD: Thus, we begin {B<sup>b</sup> FEA}. Alright . . . so . . . let's talk about your life. David Rossow was born in 1975 in Plantation, FL. What's your actual birthday?

DR: Actual birth-date? August 7, 1975.

MD: Born the son of?

DR: David John Rossow . . . tends to confuse everyone completely. And I bequeathed that on my son {he laughs}. And Susan Rossow, formerly of Massapequa Park.

MD: Where the hell is that? {Laughter}

DR: Long Island. My dad was from Pittsburgh.

MD: Wow! Interesting. How did they meet?

DR: They met working at . . . my dad was an airline mechanic at American Airlines. My mom worked in the office there.

MD: Awesome. So Pam . . .

DR: Pam, yes, dear sister Pam . . .

MD: Pamela came along in 1973 I guess?

DR: 1973.

MD: When did your parents get married?

DR: Umm . . .

MD: Well, was Pam sort of an immediate thing? Or were they married for a while before they had her?

DR: They were married a few years before. How did this work out? Yeah, I believe my mom was 28 when they had Pam and 30 when she had me.

MD: Yes, it's the same for my parents. I'm 30 years apart from them. So you were born in Plantation . . .

DR: They were living in Boca Raton already though. There was nothing in Boca during that time. It was a place called Sandal Cliff in west Boca. We only lived there for a couple of years, and they were building a house—the same house where they currently live.

MD: Oh wow! So the house you grew up in, you were there your whole life until you moved out?

DR: Yeah.

MD: So did anyone else in your family have any . . . any other musicians in the family? I mean how did you start?

DR: Umm . . . I believe if I had to say it was a person, it would probably be my mom's dad—my grandfather. He worked in an office; however, he used to write music.

MD: Oh, interesting.

DR: Yeah. He wrote songs all the time.

MD: Just on the side?

DR: Yeah, on the side. I think he still has a musical he wrote. It was called *Hell's Kitchen*, I believe. He wrote it on his own.

MD: Wow! What was his name?

DR: Charles. We used to call him Pop-pop, you know? {Laughter} His real name was Charles D'Andrea. And Carmella was my grandmother. Speaking of that, this is his picture, and that's why I have his picture; Pam gave me his picture. {Shows picture of grandfather at the piano}

MD: Oh wow! That's awesome!

DR: Yeah. So if I had to say anybody . . . my mom will attest to that too because neither my dad . . . I mean, my mom would always sing, and I could always carry a tune, so we always used to sing the car, at church, and sing whatever. So at one point she said, "We should probably get piano lessons." So thank mom for that!

MD: So mom sang a lot?

DR: Yeah, I mean enough!

MD: And you just sort of mimicked that, and someone said, “Oh, he might have a talent for music?”

DR: Yeah.

MD: What about Pam? Did she ever factor into that at all?

DR: Pam did too, yeah! She could always sing too, and we both took piano lessons. However, she stopped. Even though every occasion she still gets the . . . she can still remember the last song she did, so she always sits down and tortures us and plays it. {Laughter erupts} So she still plays . . .

MD: Getting back to your grandfather for a second . . . What kind of business was he in? He had an office job, you said.

DR: I never saw it because they had already retired by the time they moved down [to Florida]. My grandparents moved down to FL first; I don’t know what year. They were here for a couple of years, and my parents came to visit them and decided they would much prefer that than New York as well. My grandparents lived in Highland Beach for as long as I can remember.

MD: Did he ever play his stuff for you?

DR: Oh yeah. You know, it’s unfortunate because I still remember . . . I was still too young, and I couldn’t read music . . . but I still remember he had some things written out and some lead-sheets of things. I remember at the time I was not able to play them yet because I was still too young. But I remember he used to sing songs, and he used to show me stuff all the time.

MD: What type of genre? Would you say American standards?

DR: He had a great sense of humor, so most of the songs he wrote were, I don’t want to call them parodies, but they were funny. I’ll have to see if I can find . . . I know my mom probably still has some of them. I’d like to look at them again, for sure. I remember the name of one of the songs, for instance, was “Pete, Pete, the Parakeet.” That was the one song I still remember from him. It was just funny. But he did write serious things too.

MD: And you mostly just remember funny songs?

DR: The two I remember off the top of my head were that one, and then he wrote a song about grandparents. It was more serious . . . you know, about grandkids and such. Though I’m sure there was probably something funny in there too.

MD: Was any of his stuff ever published?

DR: Not that I know of. But he used to perform them a lot himself; he used to sing and perform. I remember they used to go on cruises all the time, and he would get up and perform his own stuff. We used to go with them quite a bit on trips. He loved to perform.

MD: So you spent a lot of time around him as a kid?

DR: Oh gosh, all the time, yes! We were over there constantly. Grandmother always had that perpetual twenty-dollar bill that would always end up in your hand. {Laughter} And the one place where she always had candy . . . she was, of course, Italian, so . . . *Mangia, mangia!* But yeah, we used to stay over there all the time at the condo in Highland Beach. I still remember it.

MD: A lot of time around the piano when you were a kid?

DR: Not really . . . Well, because my grandfather never really had a piano at this place. I think at one time he got a keyboard. But I don't remember him sitting at the piano and writing. I think he just wrote it in his head and was able to write it down. Or I do remember, in terms of some of the arrangements, he had people write out a piano part or write out different parts he had on a couple of songs. Honestly, I don't really have a lot of memories of him sitting at the piano . . . like that picture . . . I don't remember too much of that. I remember this little keyboard he used to have; I still remember it had green letter names on the keys {laughter}. The thing was maybe two octaves, you know, and it had a little handle and a case. But that's all I really remember. I don't remember seeing him there actually composing anything. It was usually, "Oh here . . . I wrote this," you know. Or "Try and play that," but at the time I couldn't.

MD: So you would say he had quite an influence on you?

DR: Oh, I'm sure. If there's anyone whom I could say in the family gave me that ability, it would be him without a doubt. My dad really didn't have attention for that at all. Mom would sing but never played an instrument really, I don't think. So I think, in some respects, it skipped a generation.

MD: As it often does.

DR: But I think Pam and I both did. Because, as I said, she still has an ear . . . she can still play; she just never carried on. But she has a creative side too in writing.

MD: Really? But in writing literature or . . . ?

DR: Literature. That's all she's doing now.

MD: So how old were you when somebody said, "Let's get this kid piano lessons?"

DR: 7 I believe, is when I started.

MD: Did you and Pam start together?

DR: Yeah, we started together.

MD: So she was like 9?

DR: Yeah, I think she stopped when we got to high school. She didn't continue on. Jean Cleveland, that was the first teacher. Really that was the only teacher; I had a few others in between . . . well, after. I think I took lessons with her until I was about 15 or 16. She was just a great teacher. If I hadn't had her as a teacher, I probably wouldn't have gone on. She always made it fun; there was always something fun. She encouraged anything we did.

MD: Compassionate, loving . . . ?

DR: Oh yeah. I hope you get to talk to her because you'll be able to tell. Just always the nicest lady, no doubt.

MD: So what kind of things did you learn from her? Did you start with *Teaching Little Fingers to Play*, or . . . ?

DR: ALL the basics . . . from basic fingerings, scales, notes, reading music . . . every basic thing was from her. And that went so far as . . . you know, I did play in a lot of competitions and things. She had many other students, and at the end of every year, we would all play together for a little recital hour. I would always play for those, and Pam and I would do things together sometimes—duets and such—it was fun! I think that's why I stayed with it because she always made it fun.

MD: That's great because a lot of people like me just kind of stop because it's not fun.

DR: Right. The reason I stopped wasn't because of her. I had a friend who was listening to a lot of jazz, and she wasn't able to teach me that. That was the only reason why. I could have stayed with her for classical for sure. But yes, a lot of classical showcase things and performances and competitions . . .

MD: How far in were you before you started competing?

DR: A couple of years I think.

MD: Did you win competitions?

DR: Yeah, I had a few. I can't remember for the life of me what. {Laughter} I remember there were some in there . . . at least honors or whatever they used to call it depending on the competition.

MD: Do you have any trophies or anything?

DR: I got certificates, I know. I got a lot.

MD: Did Pam also do competitions?



DR: I believe she did too, but I was mainly the one who did them. She, unfortunately, didn't really practice too much. I think she was too busy getting ready in the morning. {Laughter} And so, of course, I already was [ready] and practicing in the morning; I still remember practicing before school.

MD: How old were you??

DR: 9, 10, 11 . . .

MD: Practicing before school? That's unheard of!

DR: Yep! I know . . . what was wrong with me? {Laughter}

MD: You had a piano in the home?

DR: Yes, we had two uprights . . . the one that's actually in our house now is the same one we had.

MD: The one that's in *your* house?

DR: Yes. You know, it's a big investment. They bought one, and it was ok to learn on. Once I think they realized I would keep going with it, they ended up purchasing that piano . . . but I used to play everywhere. I remember they used to have things at Towne Center Mall . . . showcase things I remember playing. The big one though was at this piano store . . . they used to have competitions there all the time. I did that for a number of years. It was kind of like a Steinway gallery—similar to that—they had all kinds of pianos, and they had a big competition every year. I remember doing those things. But I didn't get too far, classically. I remember the last really big things were Bach two-part inventions and maybe a few sonatas; I didn't really do too much beyond that.

MD: Did you spend a lot of time in the music store as a kid? Is that somewhere you liked to frequent? I know I did. {Laughter}

DR: Yes, I do remember stopping there quite a bit and trying every single piano in the store and driving everybody crazy. {Laughter}

MD: You mentioned up until about 15 or 16 you were studying. Were you taking the usual weekly lessons for an hour or half-hour?

DR: An hour a week.

MD: How often did you practice—or try to practice?

DR: It was probably almost every day.

MD: Did your parents have to get on your case about it?

DR: Not really, I just liked it.

MD: So you were drawn?

DR: Yeah, I must have liked it. Like you said, who practices before school? I think as it got further along, it was probably less because at that point I was trying new things.

MD: Coming into your own?

DR: Yes, thinking about new things . . .

MD: What school did you go to for grade school?

DR: I started at St. Joan of Arc for a few years until St. Jude was built; then I started at St. Jude. And, unfortunately, at both of those schools—at the time—there was no music program. And even at Pope high school, there was nothing.

MD: How far did you get at St. Joan?

DR: I believe I was there through 4<sup>th</sup> grade; I believe I started St. Jude in 5<sup>th</sup> grade . . . 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>. But that's the reason I was taking private lessons. If there was something at school, I would have done something.

MD: No choir? No band?

DR: No choir, no band, nothing.

MD: At all three schools?

DR: Yep.

MD: And this was Pope John Paul II, right?

DR: Yes.

MD: And you stayed there your entire high school career?

DR: Yes.

MD: Even though there wasn't any music, did you do anything musically there?

DR: When I was about 13 or 14, we were involved in a couple of different youth groups. St. Joan of Arc for a little while . . . I had a friend who was there . . . and then we heard about the youth group at San Isidro, and we used to go down there for their meetings during the week. Eventually, they started having music there at the meetings.

MD: What about at St. Joan, did you do anything there?

DR: Not so much. I wasn't there for that long—only a couple of years, I think.

MD: So San Isidro was an outlet for you then at 13 or 14?

DR: Yes. I was playing for the youth group meetings.

MD: What kind of music?

DR: Contemporary Christian. And my friend got the job as music director, so we eventually started playing at Mass. We had our own little band. I was around 15 or 16. We were down there for about four or so years until I was about 18. We played one Saturday Mass regularly, and it was a production. Mass at San Isidro typically lasted about one and a half hours, and we would play praise music for approximately 20-30 minutes before Mass as well. At one point I was playing guitar and bass for that too. I took guitar lessons.

MD: Let's talk about that. Give me two seconds here. What was your friend's name?

DR: Mike Schweisthal.

MD: And he was the one who was promoted to music director?

DR: Yeah, and without him too, who knows where I would have ended up? He loved jazz . . . I probably still have cassette tapes. I remember him giving me recordings of things to listen to and kind of mentoring me in the jazz thing. He was a great musician.

MD: Would you say he's the one who sort of turned you onto jazz?

DR: Absolutely. Definitely. He used to show me things . . . books . . .

MD: So he was a jazzer?

DR: Yeah, he did both. He had a great ear . . . perfect pitch . . . he was one of those people. He played piano, bass, guitar—he played all of them. And it influenced me; I played guitar. The funny thing is, I was taking guitar lessons here at FAU. Whoever was teaching applied guitar here at the time . . . actually, he was a bass player/teacher . . . but he taught guitar as well. I still remember coming to FAU into this building and taking guitar lessons for a couple of years.

MD: How old were you roughly?

DR: I was probably 13 or 14. I couldn't drive yet, and I remember my mom was still driving me here to take lessons. It was only for a year and a half—maybe two years. But I ended up with a guitar . . . ended up with a bass . . . {Laughter}

MD: Did you take bass lessons too?

DR: No, bass I kind of picked up on my own. My friend, Mike, showed me things.

MD: Now, did you read music, or were you mostly playing jazz charts?

DR: That's the great thing, the guitar teacher . . . I was reading. I didn't really start reading lead-sheets and charts until college. I could always read, which was a blessing because going back and doing it the other way would have been so much harder.

MD: That's why I don't do it. {Laughter}

DR: That's what thing Jean Cleveland made sure of—that we could read. And the guitar teacher, too, I remember.

MD: So you picked up guitar and bass on your own, and took them to church and played?

DR: Yes, Mike played piano too, so most of the time he was playing piano, and I was playing guitar. Once in awhile, we'd swap.

MD: And you actually played the bass line of the song?

DR: Nah, most of the tunes . . . I guess in that respect, I was already inventing my own thing. Most of the time, those tunes did have chord symbols. They were mostly copies of words with guitar chords. I would say, on bass and guitar I was reading chord symbols before I was on piano. That wasn't until later; I didn't really start learning that until college.

MD: Would you say that helped you in the long run?

DR: Yes, I'm sure it did. And my friend, Mike, could read chord symbols, so I learned a lot from him. He showed me voicings and things on the piano—lent me books—all kinds of things. I think I was starting at that time, but I wasn't actually taught it from a teacher until I began college. There was a stretch, too, where I didn't take any lessons from about 2-3 years. Maybe more because I didn't start in the music program until I was two years into college. I tried a couple of jazz teachers around at local music schools, but eh . . .

MD: Sometimes you have to be careful with those . . .

DR: There was one more thing—a summer thing—and it was a classical teacher, who only accepted a very limited number of students. I think I studied with her over the course of one summer. I don't remember what year that was, but I guess I must have been decent at the time. {Laughter} I was about 12 or 13.

MD: Was that locally, or did you have to travel?

DR: It was local. I remember she was a very eccentric teacher. {Laughter}

MD: So going back to grade school, middle school, and high school . . . no music outlets? What else did you do other than San Isidro? Were you ever given a chance to play anything at school?

DR: Yes, I still remember playing for a talent show at St. Jude a few times. I remember the song I played wasn't anything classical; it was "Livin' On a Prayer" by Bon Jovi! {Laughter} But that's what I mean; that was the great thing about Jean Cleveland—she let us play whatever. As long as we could read it and play it, go for it!

MD: That takes me right into my next question: as a child, as an adolescent, what was your musical milieu? What were you drawn to?

DR: The first thing I remember being drawn to was jazz.

MD: As a kid?

DR: As a kid. I mean, earlier on I don't recall us listening to too much classical music—I hate to say. My parents didn't listen to it. The beginning of contemporary Christian music, I remember we had records that we'd listen to, but it was mainly the very early contemporary Christian artists: Michael W. Smith, Newsboys, Code of Ethics. We used to go to Night of Joy all the time; we went a number of times to that. But definitely the EARLY Christian stuff—that was probably the first. But as I said, my friend, Mike . . . we listened to a lot of stuff—jazz players—the guitar work of Allan Holdworth—great guitar player. In the beginning, it was a lot of fusion. He had me listening to a lot of Chick Corea. It was a lot of jazz fusion in the beginning.

MD: But even at a younger age, you were already enthralled with jazz?

DR: Nah, that was mainly from 13 or 14 on. Most of what I remember was mostly contemporary Christian artists and things from church. If I had to say we listened to anything the most, it was probably that. Then heavy metal came later. {Laughter}

MD: I was going to say, what about popular music?

DR: 80s rock, you know . . . Pam's favorite was Huey Lewis and the News. I remember I liked it too, I mean . . . it was the 80s, you know?

MD: But was this part of your youth?

DR: No, I'd say it came a bit later—maybe from 11 or 12 on.

MD: Hair bands? That type of stuff?

DR: Oh yes, definitely when I was 16 or 17 onward . . . Van Halen, Def Leppard, definitely a lot of 80s hair bands . . . even into the 90s, I remember Alternative bands like Pearl Jam, Nirvana, all that stuff.

MD: But all the while that this is happening . . .

DR: This is coexisting with the jazz stuff too. Fusion jazz draws upon many of the same elements, which is probably why I liked them both.

MD: So all of these things got you through high school?

DR: Yes.

MD: And you stopped piano lessons around 15 or 16?

DR: I did. And I didn't really have any additional set piano lessons again until college. Luckily, from what I learned from Mike and others, I could play enough jazz piano stuff for my FAU audition. I remember I auditioned for both—classical and jazz piano. If I remember, I don't believe I would have been accepted for classical since I hadn't played classical for a number of years. It was probably something I was just trying to do for the . . . it was probably one of those two-part inventions. But I was accepted on the jazz side of things.

MD: So you were rejected in the classical?

DR: Yes, if I remember correctly, I don't think I would have made it in the classical program. Here's the tape I still have that Mike gave me with a whole bunch of different piano players I started listening to; that tape was the start of it all. {Laughter}

MD: Should we take pause and talk about the transition into college when we return?

DR: Yes, we can do that.

MD: Alright, we're back from a quick lunch and coffee break.

DR: Cheers!

MD: So when Mike turned you onto jazz, was there one pianist in particular who tickled your fancy?

DR: Chick Corea in the beginning. Allan Holdsworth was fusion guitar . . . he played this strange guitar called the synth axe. He had great breath control.

MD: Breath control?

DR: It was kind of like the Peter Frampton talk box. You could articulate like a wind player . . . you could do swells and things on each note that you couldn't do otherwise. He was great. But definitely Chick Corea in the beginning. And Keith Jarrett after that; he's still probably my favorite out of all of them.

MD: In high school there wasn't a ton going on musically, right?

DR: No . . . I was in a band with Mike—a contemporary Christian band—I played keyboards. I think we played about three concerts, and that was it; it was done.

MD: What happened?

DR: It just didn't work. I don't think we got enough response to it.

MD: Were you all doing cover songs or originals?

DR: Originals actually in that group. There was one other guy who came to San Isidro; his name was Jim Whelan. He used to write a lot of songs too—contemporary Christian stuff. I remember doing those songs. I think I still have him on Facebook. {Laughter} But other than that, there was a little stretch where I played for a Sunday afternoon Mass at Our Lady of Lourdes. That was it until college . . . I played for a couple of bands—two of them. The one band was with a Brazilian lady; we did one gig. That was really cool though because we were playing Brazilian music and such. Then there was a country band; we did covers. I have to say, that was kind of fun! They didn't have charts, so I mostly had to learn by ear. Then I played bass for a little while at another church with Dave Hammer; he was my teacher here. I played piano at times and bass on Sunday mornings at First Christian Church in Boca.

MD: Ok. You graduate high school; you go to college. What happens?

DR: My major at the time when I entered was computer science.

MD: At FAU?

DR: Yes. Two years into that degree . . . Well, I was looking into doing a minor in music anyway; that was the plan . . . but the official moment was twice over in Calculus and Analytical Geometry II. I made it through the first one, got into the second, and ran into a wall. After I think I failed it or got a D the first time and the second time, I was thinking, "what am I doing?" So I still remember deciding at that point, "I can't see myself doing that." And that was kind of it.

MD: So why music?

DR: Well, it was always something I loved to do, so I figured I might as well do something I loved to do. I still remember telling my parents, and lucky enough, they said to do whatever made me happy. It was great too because I was working at a job that gave us scholarships that paid for books and such, and it was just great; it was what I wanted to do. There was nothing else I really saw myself doing. It's interesting where I am now; I never saw myself teaching music.

MD: So you said, "I want to make this music thing a 'go'"?

DR: Yes, I can't remember which came first . . . I'll have to look at my file. I was either thinking about doing the audition or had already done it for the minor, and I just decided I would do music full-time. And at the time they still offered jazz studies.

MD: Do they no longer offer that?

DR: No now, not for the last few years; the demand for it waned. But yeah, I saw myself playing—being a performer at that point.

MD: In piano?

DR: Yes.

MD: So when you came in did you say, “I want to do jazz piano?” Or did you think you’d try one of each and see what happens?

DR: I wanted to do jazz. At that point I had lost interest in doing classical music. I’m glad it was there because of the technique and reading skills, so I think it made the transition easier.

MD: OK, so you audition for the music department, and they say your classical chops aren’t up to par, but you have a knack for jazz?

DR: Yeah, well, at least enough to get through the audition! {Laughter} Because I didn’t have any lessons in jazz; there were no official lessons in jazz.

MD: So talk to me about this process. How did it go? What did you learn? What did you hate or love?

DR: Well, Dave Hammer, who was my teacher through undergrad and a little bit of my master’s, no doubt anything I learned from that point on came from him—just a great, great teacher—always knew how to explain things. He was just an incredible teacher. Anything I learned from that point forward, jazz-related, was from him. I mean, I worked my butt off . . . I was practicing every single day for at least a couple of hours.

MD: How did you start? How did he get you in the loop?

DR: Well, in the beginning, it’s mainly learning the basic progressions and voicing them on the piano, and learning scales and modes. You have to start with the basics of jazz. I could already play, so it wasn’t a matter of teaching me how to read or anything. Granted, it was definitely learning to read chord symbols better than I was, extensions on the piano, and being able to read that stuff was attributed to him. I remember going in, and he was like, “Can you read this?” It was a lead-sheet out of the Real Book, and I hacked my way through it somehow. But we started at the beginning. But I remember I was not that good at jazz when I came in anyway. I learned a lot—every lesson was something new. In fact, I still have some of those things written down somewhere. I’m surprised it only took me three years to finish. It took me five years with the whole switch and everything. But I remember playing in every single thing I could: I was in jazz band, I was in a combo, and I remember I was in a faculty-student combo with myself, Dr. Walters, and Jamie Roth; we did a lot of covers of Yellojackets tunes—we called ourselves The Fruitflies. {Laughter} We were striving to attain that sound. And we still talk about it to this day;



we were just talking about it the other day, in fact. Jamie is still around and still plays in Tim's group. And Jamie had his own studio and did sequencing. We did tracks and things we played along with—at the time, they were DAT tapes. And he still has them! He mentioned we should play some of those again.

MD: And you guys covered Yellojackets tunes?

DR: Yeah, that was the main staple. It was just a fun group. At the time, I was still and undergrad, and I was playing with a master's student and faculty, so you couldn't ask for a better environment in which to push yourself. But I still remember the first semester in Dr. Walters' combo when I had NO idea what I was doing. I couldn't even play a voicing on the piano—I had no idea. Then a year and a half later I was playing with him in a group. I guess it's kind of funny.

MD: It is funny. It shows what diligence, patience, and hard work can do.

DR: Definitely.

MD: Did you do any classical stuff in your undergrad—just jazz?

DR: No. During the master's I did some accompanying. That was when I really started doing the accompanying, starting voice lessons, and over the years I picked up some side jobs playing and accompanying. I'm still doing this one job—it's been 11 years—for this one school, Congress Middle School, doing state S&E and MPAs.

MD: So let's talk about that transition.

DR: Oh, one other teacher in undergrad—Adrian Re. He was the one who was also pushing me a lot. I was in combo with him; he was a master's student at the time. He played saxophone. He was also a great teacher. He was a master's student, but he was teaching all over Miami-Dade and heavily involved in education. One of our combos was a recruiting group under his charge, and we went out and played probably hundreds of high schools over those couple of years—recruiting, playing, doing some original things and jazz standards. I think that's the other thing, I had the opportunity to perform a lot.

MD: Did he teach you anything? Or just gave you a lot of experience?

DR: Oh yeah, a lot. I think he taught jazz improv or a couple of other classes too at the time, so I learned a lot from him. And he was a great player, so I learned a lot from him that way too.

MD: Did he play piano too, or just sax?

DR: Yeah, he played piano too. He was pretty good at piano.

MD: So you learned a lot of jazz improv from him then?

DR: Yes, definitely.

MD: Which is something you're really great at.

DR: Hey played on my senior recital too. I was lucky. I had faculty members playing on it—not students.

MD: So when you finished your undergrad, what were you thinking? What was next for you?

DR: That's the problem—there wasn't anything! {Laughter} I finished, and I was like, "Great. What now?"

MD: So transitioning to Master's . . .

DR: Yes, there was a hiatus there too for about a year and half—almost two years. I remember coming back to take . . . Well, I didn't leave music completely, but I wasn't doing much that year and a half, music-wise.

MD: Were you playing, or . . . ?

DR: Yeah, I would still get calls and had steady accompanying gigs each year.

MD: What *were* you doing?

DR: I was completely outside of music. I ended up going into the finance world for a little while. There was a brief stint as a stockbroker for a couple of years. Yes, I got licensed for that and was doing for about a year and half to two years. But I was still playing. At the time, there was still some kind of jazz scene around, so you could still get a gig once in a while playing jazz, so I still remember playing private parties, that sort of thing.

MD: But you were making a living as a stockbroker?

DR: Yes. Well, before that . . . during my undergrad, I was in the restaurant business for a while too. I remember quitting and why I quit—because it was coming up to my senior recital, and I didn't have time to practice, so I quit that job.

MD: Were you a waiter or something?

DR: I was a line cook at The Cheesecake Factory. I had done that for a couple of years. I also had been at this other job since I was twelve and worked there for about eight years.

MD: Where was that?

DR: St. Andrew's Estates North. I was a waiter, and then I was in the kitchen for a couple of years. Then I went over to The Cheesecake Factory during the undergrad and worked there for a couple of years. But I remember thinking, "I have a recital coming up," and it was just way too much to work and try to do that . . . and get rehearsals. The good thing is it wasn't a solo recital. I

had a group, but then it's more aggravating because you have to rehearse together. I remember the summer after graduation, I didn't do too much that summer. Mac Okubo . . . we both finished about the same time . . . so we took a road trip over the summer, came back, and I thought: "What now?" That's when I said, "Ok, this looks interesting." [referring to the Master's degree]

MD: This was after your year and a half stint?

DR: Well, I graduated, went on that trip, and during that year and a half is when I went into stock broking. I was basically cold-calling people basically; it was great. {Laughter} And then, I guess you could say I was looking at coming back for a master's because I thought, "What else am I going to do?" I had written a couple of things—jazz tunes—and performed them on my undergrad recital. It seemed fun, so I thought I might see what happens with that. And Stacie was involved in that because she asked me to accompany the women's chorus. I think that was before I decided to go back to school; I was doing that for a little while, and I thought, "Oh, what the heck, I'll just go back."

MD: Well, now how did you know Stacie?

DR: From undergrad. We met during undergrad. And at the time, the brokerage firm I was working for . . . something happened, and they came in and shut the place down! {Laughter} Then the head broker there went and started his own company, and I worked with him for a year or so. It was just the two of us in that office because we took all the accounts that were at the previous firm. And then, I just got tired of it; it was annoying. It would be one thing if I was a financial planner, and if I had to do it again, that's probably the route I would have taken. But it was mainly trying to drum up business from accounts that already existed, where people didn't even realize they had them because somebody had cold-called them and gotten them to open one. I still remember telling him I couldn't do it anymore. He asked what I wanted to do, and I told him I was going back to school.

MD: So were you and Stacie friends during your undergrad? How did she get to tugging you in to play?

DR: Yeah, we were friends. I remember going to her senior recital. You know, we were friends throughout that. And if I remember correctly, I think I was taking a class or going part-time for the master's—taking one class here and there—and somehow, I guess they needed somebody, and I was like, "Sure, I'll do it."

MD: Great! So you said, "I'm going back to school."

DR: Yep.

MD: And did you know when you came back for the master's . . . were your eyes set on composition? How did you get involved in that? Was there some type of jazz thing you were looking at doing?

DR: I think once I got involved with that sound . . . not only Women's Chorus because I was also singing in Chamber Singers too . . . I just liked that sound, and I think that's why I started writing. Being involved in those groups, I just wanted to explore that medium.

MD: Interesting, so why were you in an ensemble? Why were you in Chamber Singers?

DR: Well, the long and short of it . . . {Laughter} The reason I got into singing initially was because . . . I hate to say it . . . we were going on tour. Chamber Singers was doing a tour that summer! {Laughter}

MD: To Prague?

DR: To Prague. {Laughter} I was already planning to attend for the other group, so Doc [Dr. Fleitas] was like, "Why don't you sing? We're going on tour; it would be fun." I was like, "Sign me up!" But it was such a great experience—being in there. I'm glad I was in there singing. It just opened up my ears to whole new host of sounds I hadn't listened to before then. Just a great experience.

MD: So when you came in, Dr. Glazer was the Chair at the time, right?

DR: Yes.

MD: When you came in for your master's, he must have asked you what you want to do—what your applied instrument would be. What did you say? Was there a jazz studies graduate program?

DR: No. I think there was just the general Master of Arts in Music. I remember it was a very flexible degree. At the time, I was taking three to four applied lessons. I started off only with piano; then I was taking composition with Glazer; then I had conducting with Doc; and I had voice with Doc too.

MD: Was that something that attracted you to the degree—the flexibility of it?

DR: Yes, because I still wanted to do piano, and then I wanted to get into composition. I think that started toward the end of my undergrad when I started writing some jazz stuff. And then Pam, too, had written . . . some of the early choral stuff was on things she had written.

MD: Interesting. So you wrote to her texts?

DR: Yeah, those were on my master's recital. A couple of things were on the master's recital for which she wrote the texts. But exactly why I went into composition? Primarily it was because of Chamber Singers and singing in that group—hearing that sound.

MD: Was Stacie conducting the Women's Chorus yet?

DR: Yes. Actually, Stacie was doing her master's. It was her and Gary Packwood who were in charge of that group at the time.

MD: And you said that just from being involved with these ensembles opened a whole new . . .

DR: Yeah, I just liked that sound and started exploring it.

MD: So when would you say you actually began studying composition?

DR: I'd say 2000.

MD: Did your master's take three years to complete?

DR: Yes, because I started part-time, and I remember only taking a couple of general course requirements in 1999. But I finished in 2002, so it really only took two years once I started full-time.

MD: Why Dr. Glazer? Did you express an interest and he asked you to study with him?

DR: At the time, he was the only one who was teaching any kind of classically-oriented composition. So that was the only option at the time. There was nobody else who was actually teaching that. {Looks at transcript} Yes, I took one class in the Fall of 1999, and then I didn't take anything else until the Fall of 2000, and I already had composition on there, so . . . I didn't realize I took that much voice; I took voice every semester.

MD: So you got into composing, and you were really inspired by the ensemble sounds.

DR: Yes.

MD: But you had already dabbled with some jazz composition. Was your goal to bridge those two worlds? Or were you just enthralled with the ensemble sound?

DR: I was drawn to the use of . . . the involvement of text and having the ability to transmit the emotional connection to the text in a musical setting. I was hearing that, and being in those ensembles and playing for those ensembles just fueled that interest.

MD: Other than the jazz pieces, were your first pieces choral?

DR: Yes, I started right away with Glazer. I still remember the first thing I was working on . . . Glazer had recommended I listen to Poulenc, so I was listening to him a lot in the beginning—the *Gloria* and that sort of writing—so there's probably elements of that in there somewhere because I was constantly listening to that style—to him, in particular. I remember the first piece I was experimenting with was . . . I remember Glazer saying that it was too classical and why not see what happens on my own rather than simply trying to imitate what I was listening to. I was also listening to Schubert and his Masses, and I think it started to sound like that, and Glazer said, "That's good, but why duplicate that? It's already been done."

MD: So he encouraged you to try something on your own and see what happens?

DR: Yes.

MD: And then what happened?

DR: The first successful piece with Glazer was “It Was a Quiet Way.”

MD: What a great piece!

DR: I think I had written a couple of other things too, but that was the first one I really remember working on with him and finishing it—and feeling like there was a finished product. Because the first ones I wrote were settings on Pam’s texts, and when I look back, you can tell it was the first thing I had ever written. It wasn’t anything that stood out. It was fine; it was whatever. But that piece—“It Was a Quiet Way”—that was the first time I remember saying, “That’s pretty good.” And it almost got scrapped. I started off, and I kind of got stuck on the first page—the first idea—and Glazer, being the teacher that he is, was able to say, “Why? Just try this,” as he sat down at the piano and plunked out notes, you know, it was watching a genius at work. I couldn’t exactly grasp what he was doing; I don’t think anybody ever can. {Laughter} It was just one of those turning points—particularly with that song—but it almost didn’t get off the ground. But I never . . . And I think this is a long response to the question of whether or not there was a transition or an attempt to meld the jazz world and the classical . . . We’ve kind of talked about this with the pieces . . . I never set out to do that. I think it’s just inherent; it shows itself without me trying. It’s just part of my musical language; it’s just there. To me, there’s no separation. Whether I’m writing something jazz or classical, I’m writing what I’m feeling at that moment, and there’s no direct thought as to whether one is jazz or not, or classical or not. Now obviously in terms of instrumentation, things are kind of limited to what you’re writing to at that moment, but in terms of a process . . . {Shrugs} No.

MD: Would you say that you found your inherent voice when Glazer challenged you to be yourself?

DR: I would say, yes. The first experiments were too . . . plain . . . root, third fifth—no extensions or additional notes or harmonies in there. It was harmonically limited.

MD: Would you say that was the case for the pieces on Pam’s texts? Would those demonstrate that transition between the original you and . . .

DR: Probably some. Even in those, there were moments in there where it does show a little bit.

MD: What do you mean? What shows, *your* voice?

DR: Yes. There are hints of it in there.

MD: But would you say those were more steeped in the classical, too familiar sound?

DR: No. There were one or two things that I started and never finished because I completely abandoned the idea to them and went in a completely different direction. I don't remember ever finishing what I was working on when I received those comments from Glazer; I don't remember ever finishing those ideas. It might have been that I started working with Pam's texts that way then totally scrapped them and started over. But I never finished those initial germs of an idea. So I think there are elements in those few early ones that are foreshadowing . . .

MD: You mean in Pam's?

DR: In Pam's, yes. {Shuffling papers} Actually, I remember being satisfied with "Set Me As a Seal" prior to "It Was a Quiet Way." That was from May 2001, "Set Me As a Seal," and I finished "It Was a Quiet Way" right after the events of September 11<sup>th</sup>—right around that time. That was a powerful situation to be in. And the last thing I remember doing was the *Mass for Women*. That was the last thing. {Shuffling papers} Oh, the other big influence on my choral writing was Morten Lauridsen. If anything, in terms of an influence on that style of writing—the choral style—no doubt, it was his music. This piece here [Rossow's "Pater Noster"] probably demonstrates that influence the most. These three though [Pam's texts] were more probably my own more than anything else because I wrote these before I was listening to Morten Lauridsen, so if there's anything foreshadowing my style, there are probably elements of that which would evolve out of there.

MD: I mean, I'm already seeing mixed meters, multiple key signatures . . . this is hinting towards your . . .

DR: Yes, I chose that because in the beginning I was wondering who or what I could write on. And Pam was writing poetry at the time, so I thought I might see what I could do with that. That's how that started.

MD: These were all part of the process during your master's?

DR: Yes, all of these pieces were from my master's.

MD: *Mass for Women* was the last thing?

DR: That was definitely the last. I specifically remember finishing that a couple of months before the recital. And obviously something was right in those, or I had advanced enough in my writing, that later on the last two movements were accepted for publication. Out of the two published things I have, they came out of that Mass.

MD: The last two movements?

DR: Yes, the "Sanctus" and "Agnus Dei."

MD: Have you submitted other things for publication?

DR: Yes, I've submitted a lot. It took a long time even to get those published. They weren't published until 2008. Stacie was back at UM with Scheibe [Jo Michael Scheibe]. She had performed a couple of the movements with the women's group she was working with down there, and Scheibe heard them and suggested I send them to Santa Barbara Publishing to see what happens. But I had been sending out . . . I probably sent "It Was a Quiet Way" to eight or nine different publishers and never got anything. Same thing with some of the other ones in there too.

MD: That's weird because I think that piece is just enthralling.

DR: It took a long time. Yeah, I don't know . . . at some point maybe it will come back around.

MD: So you finished the master's. Would you say pretty much everything you did here for your master's was choral?

DR: Yes. Actually, everything was really. There wasn't too much outside of that realm.

MD: Now, let's talk about post-master's. What's going through your brain?

DR: Well, actually there were a couple of other things written in between. I did an arrangement of "Gabriel's Message" for women's chorus. That was the first arrangement I did. Then I was asked quite a number of times, in addition to the stuff I was writing, to do arrangements for things on campus.

MD: This is post-master's?

DR: No, actually during. There was the one arrangement called "American Tribute." I believe it was for Brogan's [former president of FAU, Frank Brogan] presidential acceptance. That was an arrangement done for SATB and Wind Ensemble. But post-master's . . . quite honestly, there were only a few things after that. There wasn't a lot. I did another "Ave Maria" for the women—it was for SSAA. At that time, I think I needed a break. There was a little stretch in there I just didn't feel like writing.

MD: Does that happen to you sometimes?

DR: Oh yeah, definitely. And quite honestly, up until your project, there was quite a lengthy hiatus in between writing anything really.

MD: From, say, when? How long?

DR: The last thing I remember writing before that was "O vos omnes," which was for SATB. It was probably a good one and a half to two years. It was quite a while.

MD: Had you already completed the *Mass of Salvation* before "O vos omnes?"



DR: No. That was after . . . that was the summer of 2010. I wrote it that summer specifically for the purpose of the change in the *Roman Missal*. So I guess . . . there's a stretch from 2002 until 2009 . . . in between there I had only written one or two things, I think.

MD: And then 2010 was the *Mass of Salvation*.

DR: Yes, and that was more out of necessity. I felt compelled to do that because I was looking at what was out there and didn't like any of it. {Laughter}

MD: 2012 were the Shakespeare songs, right? And then 2013 were the other ones.

DR: Yes. {B<sup>b</sup> FEA}

MD: Why the hiatuses? Was it family-related?

DR: Yes—life, family, kids.

MD: When did you and Stacie start dating?

DR: 2000.

MD: But you knew her?

DR: Yes.

MD: You were friends first?

DR: Yes, we had been friends for a long while. We were already good friends.

MD: When were you engaged?

DR: July of 2001.

MD: When were you married?

DR: July 5, 2002. We got married in Sarasota because all of her family was there, and we had gone a couple of summers before that to their place on the beach, so we thought it would be nice during that time since everybody was usually there anyway.

MD: Any original compositions at the wedding?

DR: No.

MD: When was David born?

DR: May 4, 2003. Well, I have to say "Set Me As A Seal" was really written for Stacie.

MD: And that was during the master's, correct?

DR: Yes, that was written in 2001.

MD: So it was inspired . . .

DR: Yes, and we actually had it inscribed in our wedding bands, so that text was important to us.

MD: What about Emma?

DR: Emma was born September 14, 2004.

MD: What's her full name?

DR: Emma Layton, L-A-Y-T-O-N.

MD: And David is David John?

DR: No, David Hohlt, H-O-H-L-T. Family names.

MD: And Stacie was Stacie Lee . . .

DR: Niehaus. N-I-E-H-A-U-S. So yeah, I would have to say because of life . . . that's definitely why I was on hiatus. And in 2005, I ended up with the church job too, so I was working two jobs at the time. There just wasn't a whole lot of time.

MD: What's the name of the church again?

DR: St. Pius X.

MD: What church were you all married in?

DR: St. Michael's in Sarasota on Siesta Key.

MD: So time constraints, family, two jobs . . .

DR: Yes, and at that time I just didn't feel compelled to write anything. There was so much going on.

MD: I mean, I'm an amateur composer—especially compared to you—but I have spells too where I don't write anything.

DR: But I've come to realize that has to change. Even if I don't want to, you have to treat it like an instrument, you know, if you don't do it, it's so hard to pick up and get back into it again; it's mind-numbing.

MD: So songs for solo voice . . . you hadn't really considered it much, correct?

DR: No.

MD: Is that something I sort of baited you to do?

DR: Oh absolutely, yes. And I thank you for that because if you hadn't asked me, I probably would have never started writing them. At the time, I had no thought of going in that direction. But I was writing at least . . . for the last couple of years before that, I was mainly writing jazz stuff.

MD: So when did you get into jazz writing and arranging?

DR: Well, I had attended a couple of concerts by Tim's [Dr. Tim Walters] group, the Jazz Rats, and he was writing stuff . . . he, too, has always encouraged me to write something; he pushed me in that direction as well.

MD: When was that?

DR: I remember the first thing I wrote for that group was a piece called, "Exit 101." That was one of the times I was traversing between Sarasota and here, and I happened to finish that on the road during one of those trips. The exit happened to be in right in Naples—Exit 101—so I figured that would be interesting. {Laughter} It was the fall of 2010 when I started exploring that. I had a few things, you know, and luckily with the advent of the smart-phone, really that changed the way I started writing music. And Dr. Walters kept pushing me. He said, "Oh, that was good. Why don't you write something else?" And still, every time I see him, he asks if I have anything new for them. He's always asking, and so I guess it's been good. It's been a good push to do something in that realm.

MD: Would you say you've been regularly writing jazz charts and arrangements since 2010?

DR: Yes, and one of those pieces was recorded on a CD . . . they recorded a CD . . . and I have a piece on that CD, which should be coming out any day now. So I'd say it's been a constant thing. That piece was played first in October 2011, and I think they recorded it that following summer.

MD: Which one is it?

DR: It's called "Day Tide."

MD: And that's a JazzRats CD? Forthcoming?

DR: Yes. The CD is called, *Mosaix*. And Jamie Roth, who was one of my influences, his tune on there is "Mosaix."

MD: Is this a published recording?

DR: Not yet.

MD: Are they hoping to?

DR: Well, the licensing, everything's done. Literally, he's just waiting on the physical copies. It's been pressed. I think they did a 500 lot. And that's what we were talking about—his necessity to sell as many copies as possible to finance the next one. {Laughter} It should be out soon.

MD: But it's an Indie release, correct? Not a label?

DR: Yes, it's Indie—not a label.

MD: So your hiatus, then, was mostly from choral music, or vocal music, but you were still involved with jazz?

DR: Yes, since 2010 I've been writing or arranging pretty consistently for that group.

MD: So you did the two sets I baited you with. Then you went further. You did a Thomas Moore set.

DR: Well, I had done the three for you—the Shakespeare. Then I started the last one of the Moore set, “Then Fare Thee Well,” in November/December of that year—2012. I had started that, never finished it, and then Megan [Megan Crowder, soprano] was set to graduate and asked whether I had written anything else. So I finished that one because she wanted something for her recital, so I figured I could finish that one since I was more than half-way done with it, and it only took me about a week or so to finish anyway. Then it was the Housman in between those. Then I finished . . . I added more to the Moore. {Laughter} We had a joke, the title was going to be *Four Moore Songs*. {Laughter} But I liked it; she sang it on her recital, and I remember liking it.

MD: Did she only do one?

DR: She only did the one because that's all there was of the set at that point—the last one. And I thought I could add something to that. You know, I really wanted to submit the Shakespeare set to the NATS competition, but it wasn't long enough, and I couldn't see myself adding anything to that. To add anything would have been a disservice to that set. So I thought I could do something else. And that one [the Moore set] was one I could see adding onto.

MD: Ok so dates . . . Shakespeare was October of 2012?

DR: October/November.

MD: And Housman was 2013?

DR: Yes.

MD: When August? No April?

DR: I want to say March/April maybe? {Looks at sketches} February. “It is no gift” was early February, but I had an idea for that back in November 2012—though I didn’t finish that one until February 18, 2013. I guess you could say the Housman was February/March of 2013.

MD: When did you add the other Moore pieces?

DR: Those were in May.

MD: 2013?

DR: Yeah, I pretty much finished that set in May.

MD: And there are four total?

DR: There are four.

MD: Four Moore Songs . . . is that what it’s called?

DR: At the moment I’m just calling it *Four Thomas Moore Songs*.

MD: Did you personally dedicate any of those to Megan? Or did she just sing the one on her recital?

DR: I guess you could say the last one . . . even though my original intent—I was writing them for Rose [Roseann Mannino, soprano], really. After I had done the ones for you, I was thinking I should really write something for soprano. That started off being that set. The initial culmination of the idea, I was thinking about writing them for Rose. That was my intent for starting that set anyway. And even along the whole thing, I kept thinking I would love for her to sing them.

MD: Ok, so I just have a couple of more blanket questions. Do you have any vision of transposing the Moore set for low voice, or do you want to keep it as a soprano set? Or vice versa for any of the other sets?

DR: I’d have to look at them. When you mentioned the idea [I previously asked him about transposition options], I was trying to work through the text in my mind to see if it would actually make that transition. But when I’m looking at it, it would. What would be interesting to see is how the range would fall. There are quite a number of G<sup>#</sup>s in the soprano part, so that would maybe be . . . I don’t know.

MD: Well, F<sup>#</sup>s are within the scope of a medium-low, like a baritone or an alto.

DR: So it probably would work. I think it could. So at some point probably. And the Shakespeare . . . I don't know, I'm torn, quite honestly. When I write it, I'm thinking about a specific voice. The three for you I wrote specifically for *that* sound, so I don't know. To hear it not in that voice type, I don't know if it would have the same intent as when I wrote it—or if it would convey the same emotional intent.

MD: In terms of solo music, where do we go from here? Do you have any aspirations of . . .

DR: Yes, definitely. There's no doubt I'm going to write more. And I think what really solidified that was when I finished the Moore set, each one of them took less than a week to complete on average. Now, it's been a few months, so I'm sure when I go back to it, it will be a transition period again. But I was really happy with the Moore set too. I definitely see more.

MD: Obviously, song-composing is coming easier for you now.

DR: Yes, and I do have voice memos of things too. For the Shakespeare, I probably have thirty or forty memos. Some of it worked, and some of it didn't. The second piece came out of a five-second blurb in one of those random recordings. But it just got easier. The transition became easier.

MD: In addition to solo songs, what else do you want to write? You mentioned a musical at one point.

DR: Yes. I was half serious. I started another project at some point I need to finish. At some point I decided it was time to do a major work for SATB. So I started a *Missa Brevis* for SATB and orchestra; I have two movements of it complete, so at some point I have to finish that. And I have about three to five ideas for jazz stuff; I'm working on three things currently—compositions. And there's another arrangement for SATB that is not quite finished. There are quite a few things. And there are scraps of things I've started over the years and never finished; I need to go back and revisit those. In terms of solo settings, I need to find something to write on, but it's in the plan.

MD: Christina Rossetti—OR her brother. {Laughter} Or Pam, you could take some of her newer poetry.

DR: Most of her stuff now is prose, and that's a whole other animal to me. I can't see myself writing anything on an extended poem—anything over five to six stanzas—I don't want to have to contain myself to that text for that amount of time. I tend to gravitate toward shorter things.

MD: Last question: Obviously God and the Church had a lot to do with your childhood, teen years, etc., how would you say it informs or affects you as a composer?

DR: No doubt it played a huge part of the choral stuff because the majority is on sacred texts, so if I had to say anything, it would be that—you know, the Mass, "Set Me As A Seal"—most of the choral texts are religious texts, so I'd have to say that's where it shows the most. And I like Latin as a language, it's such a great language to compose to, and to me you cannot separate that

language from that influence. It was part of my upbringing. It was part of the Church. That's probably the major thing.

MD: Is there anything else you want to tell me?

DR: Not really. {Laughter}

APPENDIX B:  
Transcript of Interview: *Three Shakespeare Sonnets*

Date: February 4, 2014

| Location: Boca Raton, FL

MD=Matthew Daniels  
DR=David Rossow

MD: I notice the first movement has an introduction, but none of the others do. However, I noticed the last movement recalls the introduction—or motives of the introduction.

DR: Actually, that was my intention. I didn't want to have that same introduction again. I wanted it to be the closing statement of the whole thing. So the only time you hear the introduction material, in the piano anyway, is at the end again. I thought it worked out kind of cool because it gave it shape; the end and the beginning were the same. And the third one [movement] has material from the first two. There are motives in the third one from both the first and the second.

MD: I'm noticing in bar 8 here of the third piece . . . {hums the melody}

DR: The opening is the same as the beginning of the first one. It's the same idea. I changed the rhythm a little because of the text, but the first bar is pretty much the same. I thought I would bring that idea back for the third piece. And the "warrantize of skill" was the same as the idea in the second piece. The piano is the same exact part but transposed. It's the same thing but down a half-step. It was great because I think all I did was copy and paste. {Laughter} The chord is the same too; that whole piano part is the same.

MD: That brings me to my next question. Did you envision this to be cyclic in nature, or did you envision these as a set rather than a unified cycle? I mean, there's obvious unity throughout.

DR: Well, my intent was to write three. That number was in there from the beginning.

MD: Any particular reason?

DR: No, I just wanted that structure. And the third one was originally begun with different text, but I abandoned it. Something just wasn't right.

MD: A totally different sonnet altogether?

DR: Yes, a totally different sonnet altogether. And I just stumbled on that one. I literally went through each sonnet one by one. I originally printed off five or six, and then I went back and looked through them again . . . ALL of them . . . I went through every last one. There was just nothing happening with the third movement. I probably still have which one it was.

MD: I'd love to know.



DR: I kept them all together. Actually, I remember looking at the texts first and coming up with rhythmic ideas—even before I had a melodic idea.

MD: Do you do that often? Well, this was your first time.

DR: This was the first one, so I guess I really don't know.

MD: What about in the choral pieces?

DR: Most of the time, it's trial and error. I'll sit down and play, and I'll record it. Then I'll go back and listen to it. I mean, I do try to by what's there textually—how it flows verbally. Most of the time, it kind of fits in there as you would speak it too, which is the whole point. I wanted it to feel, rhythmically, that it would match how you would speak it. I remember on that first sheet I printed off, I have just rhythms written on there above the text or next to the text.

MD: Do you have any of those copies?

DR: Yes, I'm pretty sure I do. I printed off what I thought was going to be the three. Yeah, I kept all of that stuff.

MD: That's really interesting. So you find the text and just play with rhythms first?

DR: Well, in this one, yes. In the other one, the Housman, no. That's a whole other topic. And even in the recent one, the Moore, I didn't do that either.

MD: Have you done that with the choral pieces in the past?

DR: No. This was a first because I think I really wanted . . . you know, it's Shakespeare.

MD: Yeah, it seems like it worked out incredibly well because there is just a natural ebb and flow, in my opinion, to the text with music or music to text. It seems like it's a very speech-like delivery, but I hesitate to say that because it almost seems like it takes away from it, in a way, but I don't mean that.

DR: I didn't want the rhythm to impede the delivery of the texts. And somehow it worked out.  
{Laughter}

MD: You mentioned you perused the entire sonnet collection. That's interesting. What drew you to the sonnets? Because I know a lot of composers . . . I mean, Shakespeare is not new to music, but most of your predecessors, from my understanding, took things from the plays. What drew you to the sonnets?

DR: Initially, this set was not even going to be Shakespeare. It started off as a Housman set. I remember working on some stuff, but it just wasn't working. And that's what happened to the

third one of this one—the text just wasn't working. There's no definitive reason as to why I chose those texts. Those were just the ones that . . .

MD: It's funny because at a first glance, these texts seem to stand apart from each other—on their own. But if you really dig into the texts, you can build unifying factors between the three. Which brings us back to that question—whether or not you had a vision of unity, or if it was sort of just . . . I know you said you wanted three.

DR: No, I think the end result just miraculously worked. {Laughter} And I believe, too, that I think I had them in a different order initially. I think two and three were switched around. And what was the third at the time; I don't remember which it was exactly . . . But then 73 [sonnet], too, that was an interesting one because it was the easiest one to write of all three of them. And I finished it before I finished the first one. I remember driving in the car down to church—somewhere around Federal and Atlantic—I was playing something that was an idea for the first one, but there was one little thing in there that I played that somehow turned into the second one. It was that first little idea. {Plays first couple of measures of second movement} That idea.

MD: And you originally envisioned that idea for the first movement?

DR: It was sandwiched in one of the recordings [on his smart phone] from ideas I had for the first one. It presented itself in that respect. I had a half hour before a rehearsal with the Jazz Rats, and I had the whole thing pretty much sketched out in that half hour. That one was the easiest of the three.

MD: Wow.

DR: The introduction was the last thing I wrote in the first one. I had finished the first one and knew I wanted an introduction. I had finished the second one, finished the middle part of the first, and then I remember writing the introduction for the first one after the whole thing. And that was also trial and error. As I said, most of the time I sit down and play . . . and record it. And if I like it, I'll listen to it and think of something else . . . or change it. But yes, the introduction was actually the last thing of the first one I ended up finishing.

MD: As a singer, I'm always trying to figure out how every aspect of the music and text lends itself to storytelling. And maybe you can shed your thoughts on this as well, but the way I envision this introduction and outro or postlude [of the third movement] is . . . because these sonnets are, all three of them, introspective in terms of the narrator/singer. To me, it's one guy who's contemplating, deep in thought, pensive, so the way I envision this introduction is the wafting of his thoughts, as he's either trying to verbalize them or pen them. The introduction is really sort of delicate and just seems to fall out of the air. I don't how to better describe it, but . . . it almost seems like that first ray of sunshine in the morning before the day starts, you know . . .

DR: That's accurate. It kind of just spills out.

MD: Right—the ray of the poet’s thoughts, and then he either verbalizes or pens them—in the case of singing, we’ll say verbalizes—and then the postlude acts in the same way as closure. It’s a sort of wrapping-up of those thoughts.

DR: That’s why I chose . . . I was originally going to have an introduction for the second one, and then I chose not to have an introduction for the third one either because, to me, it would have interrupted the flow of the three together. But then I brought it back at the end because I wanted it to be the first thing you heard and the last thing you heard. It was just a matter of whatever key I landed in there. {Laughter} I just transposed it, and it turns out it worked out that way. I believe the third one, at one point, I had sketched out the ending and was going to bring back the ending of the second one because I really liked that idea, but I just thought it would be really cool to bring back the introduction.

MD: And in a visual aspect, the whole postlude has this constant descending motion—again, lending itself to some type of closure—unified closure to the piece. Just as we began, we also end this way.

DR: Yes, you’re right.

MD: Ok great. So we were talking about text earlier and how sometimes you alter . . . I notice that repetition is found in these pieces, but to me it seems to happen when you’re really trying to make a musical statement. Is that true?

DR: Yes. If I’m not mistaken, I think there are only two times that I actually repeat the text. I don’t think it happens that often. The first time, I had the melodic idea, and I was selfish, so I changed Shakespeare to fit the melodic idea. {Laughter} There are more than I thought, but I think it’s only in the first one. I don’t think there’s any repetition in the second one, and I don’t think there’s any in the third—except the last statement, which at that point, yes, it was about making a statement at the end. I hate to call it a tag, but a musical tag sort of, to bring closure to the end. Also, in the second and the third, I was becoming more comfortable with the text itself, so I didn’t have to adapt it to what I was doing at the moment. The musical ideas that came out of the second and third came out as one unit, rather than trying to piece it into something that was pre-existent.

MD: In the instance of the third movement or piece, textually, this certainly gives closure, but it also seems like a moment of resolve for the poet. It’s that final realization or moment of utter resolve and acceptance in a way.

DR: And I think the last statement kind of sums up the whole set—if you want to talk about a textual idea. Yes, it’s a self-realization at that moment.

MD: Back to what I was saying . . . as a singer trying to think textually and musically again, this first statement is very powerful: “Let me not to the marriage of true minds, let me *not*, let me not admit impediments.” To me it gives so much more . . .

DR: Emphasis?

MD: Yeah.

DR: On that line, that's why I chose to stay with it . . . because I think it did work out.

MD: It just makes that text statement that much more powerful because we've just reiterated this, "I will not, I will not, I will not" idea. That same idea carries over to "Love is not love, love is not love, which alters when it alteration finds." To me, these repetitions are empowering the text that follows. I love what you did here, these triple patterns . . .

DR: Well, that was supposed to be a verbal play on the text.

MD: Bending, right? I love it. Awesome. And when Krisztina [Krisztina Kover, pianist] and I were prepared the pieces, that's what we were going for . . . text painting. "Oh no, oh *no*, oh no."

DR: That's probably the most repeated in the whole thing.

MD: Yes, three times. What do you make of that? Was that by choice?

DR: That was a definite choice. I just thought those two words were a powerful statement.

MD: And the way you set them—the rising motion—makes it more powerful.

DR: And at that point, it's at the top of the range for the piece. I just thought it was a very declamatory statement, so I chose to repeat it.

MD: I have here, and maybe this is something we coached, but I have definitive lifts between each one of these statements ["Oh no"]. Is that something you want?

DR: Yes.

MD: And you didn't write a *crescendo*, but because of the *tessitura* it naturally lends itself to growing.

DR: Yes, I didn't think I needed to. Sometimes I hate writing too much in there because if the music doesn't say it then . . . quite honestly, for you, I probably didn't have to write any dynamics and you would have done it fine. As it stands, it naturally follows that dynamic pattern. I didn't write in everything; I just didn't feel the need. It should gravitate that way.

MD: Is that a general practice for you? You let the music and the text inform the presentation?

DR: Yes, unless there's something specific at the moment or a starting dynamic after a break or a pause or something. Most of the time, yes, I feel . . . Interestingly enough too, that's also my philosophy on bar lines. When this was first written, there weren't any bar lines at all. But I couldn't put something in print and have it just be without them, but in a sense, that's the whole intent behind the whole thing; the bar lines were dictated by the text or by that melodic idea of the moment, not the other way around. In all my sketches, I fitted in the bar lines after. If there's

a lot of meter changes, it's because I felt certain cadence points at the moment or at those sections, but overall, it shouldn't give the impression that it's changing meter. It's based on what happens with the text—it should just flow. But to write it that way and have anyone be able to perform it would be difficult.

MD: I gave myself dashed slur lines—these were mental notes to myself.

DR: But even the introduction—anything—I just wrote it down and fit it into a time signature later.

MD: And it's really important, I think, for whoever sings these to make sure that whatever they do, they stay connected to the momentary thought because I think the tendency, especially for amateur singers, would be: "here's a rest, here's a rest . . . new idea." But it's not. It's a continuation.

DR: It's a continuation of that first idea.

MD: Which is more of what you were saying about everything having that flow . . . When I write the actual paper, I'll probably caution amateur singers to spend a lot of time with the text and make sure they stay connected in thought.

DR: Yes, and even in this first one, when you look at it from the perspective of the one speaking the text, you could view the repetitions in the first movement as uncertainty . . . or when the idea is interrupted and doesn't quite flow into the next, maybe he's taking a moment to think about something. Maybe that's why the first one seems a bit more sporadic in terms of melodic ideas and the thought process behind them.

MD: But to me that gives more credence to the text, in a way . . . not credence . . . spontaneity—it gives a lot more spontaneity to the text as though the singer himself is the poet who's having these thoughts in the moment.

DR: Or as a whole then, too, the last one is more of a declaration than a thought process, so maybe it's more self-confident. As you go through them, the last one is a turning point in the text when he realizes how it should be. It was never conceived that way, but it works. {Laughter}

MD: All of these interludes are, to me, they're just gushing forth of the poet's thoughts. It's as though it's all just coming to him. To me the first one is the most spontaneous. It's as though he's really in the moment scripting it or speaking it to himself.

DR: Yes.

MD: And he gets more and more comfortable going into the third piece, and by the end of the third piece, all of it comes down to that one powerful statement, which ties all three of these together.

DR: There's that, and there's also my own . . . I was growing more comfortable writing in that style. Even for myself . . . the first one was kind of a learning curve. Then it got easier in the second one, and in the third one I had figured it out.

MD: So in a sense, you sort of, in a way, became the poet. {Laughter}

DR: Yes. I know it's kind of weird.

MD: Talk to me a little bit about your sense of . . . most of what you're writing, at least the six that I'm covering, are pretty tonal in nature—but with lots of colorful chords—but never to the point where you lose the definitive tonal sense of the piece.

DR: Yes, there's always a tonal center in there. I never envision myself writing any other way. I just can't. The pieces are never key specific; if there is a key change in there, it was an afterthought—kind of like the bar lines—just at that moment I moved onto something different. To me, they're modal; it's modal. The Moore set is definitely modal. Most of them are Lydian; that's the prominent mode in all four of them.

MD: Did you intend that to lend itself to more of a Celtic nature, or is that just how it happened?

DR: No, again, that's just the way it happened. But yeah, there's never a sense of no tonal center or ambiguity. There are little sections . . . like this little part [*piu mosso*, mm. 27 of second movement] that's kind of out there . . . I don't know where that came from, it just really fit the text there, and I liked it. But it's still tonal.

MD: It sounds sort of pentatonic or whole-tone.

DR: It's Lydian-based. It's Lydian augmented. And most of the time . . . if jazz hadn't been a part of my background, I think my compositional style would have been a lot different than it is. But now they're inseparable. I'm not consciously thinking that I'm writing in classical sense. Most of the writing I do is modal. It's not tied to any key signature—just wherever I decide to take it in that moment, it lends itself to going in that direction. Without jazz though, this would probably be completely different because I wouldn't have that harmony embedded in the back of my brain.

MD: That's great. So when you sit down to sketch out something, are you consciously thinking of jazz harmonies, or is it truly spontaneous?

DR: No, at this point in my life the two are the same. I'm probably more inclined to go in that direction [jazz harmonies]. Often times, I would sing the melodies to myself first, but I could already hear what it was going to be like harmonically. Then it was just a matter of sitting down at the piano and figuring out what it is. There's no separation; I think I might tend to go in that direction more if I'm playing an idea because that's part of my background.

MD: Certainly the scale patterns scream modality.

DR: This sound {plays modal cluster chord} I just had to bring back a few times. I just loved this sound. And this little idea {plays jazz chord} to me is totally a jazz chord. It reminds me of our old choral days, remember the Joio piece . . . what is it called?

MD: Some kind of love thing . . . “Come to me in the night . . .”

DR: Yes, and when I stumbled on this chord, it brought back memories of that piece.

MD: So what is that chord?

DR: It’s a D7#9.

MD: An enharmonic spelling?

DR: Yes, enharmonically it is.

MD: That chord . . . I never heard it until you isolated it, but it reminds me of a piece from *Godspell*, “You Are the Light of the World.” It’s almost the same chord Schwartz used. I was going to say, scale pattern-wise, modality reigns supreme. But there are moments where there are chords . . . there are a lot of 2<sup>nd</sup> chords I see.

DR: Yes, actually it’s interesting—you could say that for all three of them.

MD: To me it’s a recurring thing.

DR: It could be a harmonic motive between the songs.

MD: Even in the opening theme of the set.

DR: Yes.

MD: I could almost make a stylistic argument for this set that it’s something we see a lot of. And that probably stems from your jazz training as well.

DR: Probably. If you look harmonically, you probably could analyze every chord, but there’s no doubt there are extensions all over the place—9ths, 11ths, and 13ths. It’s kind of my vocabulary. Just like it’s modal, it’s harmonically that too.

MD: If we had to put some type of label or branding on it, would you say melodically you’re mostly modal and harmonically, you mostly use chordal extensions?

DR: Yes, definitely.

MD: Particularly in these pieces anyway.

DR: In everything, really. The line between the jazz side and this stuff—and even the choral—it's still that. It's the same language just interpreted differently.

MD: I notice this is the only one of the three pieces [second movement] that has zero time signature changes whatsoever. Now the first piece, you don't have a key signature, but we already discussed where it was going.

DR: I think in the first section [first movement], I almost put it in B<sup>b</sup>, but then it changed so rapidly that it became very difficult to read. And that's my problem with keys lately—at some point every other measure was cluttered with accidentals, which I think would also impede delivery.

MD: Not the case in the second piece though.

DR: No, and that one is definitely B<sup>b</sup> natural minor, really. But the clusters obscure that a little bit; it doesn't sound like natural minor. Then there's these little interludes in G<sup>b</sup> Lydian. But if you look at the notes, it's mostly modal. We would call this B<sup>b</sup> Aeolian, and there segments in there when it's G<sup>b</sup> Lydian—depending on the root, even though they're the same notes—then there are times when it's actually D<sup>b</sup> Ionian. {Laughter} But it's all the same notes! And that's why it's modal because the notes are all the same, but if you change the root, it changes the mode you're in at that moment. But it's all dictated by the text.

MD: But here is something totally different [mm. 19].

DR: C minor there. Minor triad with the major 7. This section to me is one of those moments that's harmonically out there. I was thinking C minor-ish here.

MD: And then two measures later, it's transposed to a B minor thing.

DR: Yes, it's down a step. It's the same melodic idea down a half-step. But in this section [mm. 27 again], I remember I had already finished the end of the piece, and I was trying to figure a way to get back to this key {plays ending motive}, so I moved the Lydian augmented section down a half-step to help get there, and that brings it back to the A<sup>1</sup> section in C minor. The mode is the same as the beginning, C natural minor—or Aeolian. And the word “long” I wanted to be longer, so that's an extension of . . . this one-measure idea [mm. 43] is the second motive of the piece, and the first one is the first measure. And the ending is just an extension of the second motive.

MD: Would we call that tonal painting?

DR: Yes, it is. It was an effort to bring closure to the last statement.

MD: To make the text definitive?



DR: Yes. And I think the ending of that one is my favorite idea of the whole thing. I just like that motive. I was tempted to bring that back as the ending of the set. It was the same notes, I was just changing the root. {Plays the original sketch ending}

MD: It sounds a bit more major.

DR: Yes. And that idea never worked out that way. But out of anything in the whole set, that ending of the second one I like the best out of everything. I just like the overtones in that little idea. And in that ending, I would write *decrescendos* in the piano part for each one if I was going to add any edits at all. I always wanted that first note to be the loudest in the whole measure; that's why I put a *tenuto* and an accent. And I remember your comment that it was kind of like the bell tolling, which I hadn't considered, but it totally makes sense. I thought that was cool.

MD: The death bell, yeah.

DR: Yeah, it just fits. I remember sitting at home with the TV blaring, and I came up with that. It was the easiest one to write, and there are a lot of interesting harmonic things in there that I didn't really have to work at to try and get out; it just worked.

MD: So this was the easiest for you?

DR: Yeah, by far. The first one was the most difficult. But once I had the first melodic idea for the third one, it didn't take long for that one either.

MD: And the first one was difficult for you why? Just getting your feet wet?

DR: I guess. It was a new style of writing, so it took some time . . . it was like training. It was the hardest one to write. But I stuck with it, unlike the third one where I scrapped the text and looked for something different. There were too many good things in there already. I had the beginning and the ending. The middle was going to be something totally different. I had this {Plays}, some other little idea, which never made it in there. It sounded too much like Star Wars. {Laughter} So I ended up changing it. {Plays Princess Leia's theme} I liked it, I really did! {Laughter} But I kept thinking, "I can't do that. Every time I hear it I'll think of Princess Leia."

MD: So this brings us to the third one. This question may be premature, but let's skip to the end. What made you decide to bring the original theme back in?

DR: For the ending you mean?

MD: The very end. What made you abandon the D<sup>b</sup> Lydian theme for the one you kept? How would that have transitioned?

DR: I had it written out. {Plays original sketch with D<sup>b</sup> Lydian motive from sketch}

MD: Interesting!

DR: That was going to be the ending. I really liked that idea, but I really don't know why I changed it. I think I just wanted it [introduction from first movement] to be the first thing you heard and the last. It's the only time you would hear that introduction or ending in its entirety throughout the whole set. And I thought it would be really cool to bring it back in the end. And it would give the whole thing a sense of form and unity. It does have that arch. And I think that's why I picked three because my intention was that the first and third would have related material. There are elements of the second one in the third one as well. I still remember finishing it [the set]. I jumped up and down in my office. I was like, "yes!" When I changed the ending and brought back the introduction—I still remember that moment. I was really happy with the whole thing at that moment.

MD: It felt like it sealed the . . .

DR: Yeah, I felt like I was finally finished, and I didn't have to do anything else to it. To me, that was the most satisfying. And that's why I purposely didn't put an introduction in the second and third. Originally, I wanted to; I was going to. But it worked out well without them. It's kind of the same way with the Moore set. The first and the last one have an introduction, while the middle two don't. But the ending note is always the first note of the next one because I didn't want it to have to be re-keyed. Now, the tonality changes, but it's always the same. I did that with this set too. The first one ends in B<sup>b</sup> Major and goes to the parallel minor. Then we end the second one in C minor, and the last note is the same as the starting note of the third one.

MD: I and singers of the future will thank you forever for doing that. {Laughter}

DR: That's something I will always do. If there's no introduction, I don't want you to have to re-pitch to a different key. To me, it would totally ruin the sequence. Now, the Housman set is different because I didn't envision that one as a whole being a set.

MD: Not as a unified flow . . .

DR: No. They work together somehow, but it's not the same as this. It's totally different.

MD: Ok, so here we are [third movement]. You give us another tonal center albeit with some colorful notes. What do we make of this? We're starting in A<sup>b</sup> Major in a way. Or should we call it A<sup>b</sup> Ionian.

DR: Yes, it pretty much is. The key signature makes you think it's in D<sup>b</sup>, but it isn't. After I was done with it, I went back and determined what would be the easiest to read because it changes so. But this [mm. 9] is an interesting harmonic shift—I don't know why I went from D<sup>b</sup> to A minor. It's kind of a weird jump. But that idea repeats in the last movement of the Moore. It works, but I don't know why it works. {Laughter} Maybe at some point later on in my life, someone will identify it as a harmonic element or something. {Laughter} And then I purposely wanted to bring back that chromatic figure from the second one.

MD: This is definitely an instance of second piece-derived [mm. 12]. But it's down a half-step?

DR: Yes, F ♯. It's interesting how it worked out. In the earlier one, it's in 6/8, but here it's in 5/4. I had to do the meter change to make it work. It came out equal somehow. In terms of metric equivalency, I had to finagle it a little bit. This whole section was actually something completely different too. But it didn't work, so I changed it to that [its current state].

MD: Unlike the last one, this one [third movement] returns to several meter changes. But if you had you druthers, you wouldn't even put the bar line.

DR: No. The general concept is the same—no bar lines, no meter, modal.

MD: *Si canta come si parla*. The way you would speak this is the way you envision it to sound musically?

DR: Yes. If you just sing it without thinking of the meter changes, that's what makes it kind of cool. The meter doesn't get in the way.

MD: When I was learning these, I hardly looked at the meters or the bar lines. I kind of learned it—in essence—the way you scored it. This is the text, this is the flow of the text, this gets more weight here, etc. And I think that might be a good piece of advice for singers looking to learn this set.

DR: Yes. Or just as a preparatory guide, simply read the text before you even look at the score because metrically, poetically, musically it's the same.

MD: Don't let the meter changes and the bar lines get in the way.

DR: Yes. If you just speak it, it shouldn't get in the way. As a performer, it shouldn't be about measures and time signatures; otherwise, it would sound like that.

MD: Totally. This line [mm. 14] was very profound to me: “that in my mind, thy worst all best exceeds.”

DR: Yes, and I think that's why I left it unaccompanied there. That's probably the most powerful statement in the whole thing. And I purposely didn't want anything else along with that line. That's the moment of realization in the whole thing.

MD: It stands on its own.

DR: Yeah, it doesn't need anything else. And that's one of the only times in the whole set, where there isn't any accompaniment. There are things where the piano is holding a certain tonality or chord, but to me that's still accompaniment—something happening. I could see that that was the most important line of the whole piece.

MD: I will probably advise performers to not get caught up here. It's totally on its own; it's completely out of context. The note durations are sort of just a guide. When I did it, I really wanted to exaggerate it a bit.

DR: Yes, the rhythms are a guide, but that's how you would speak the line. It's just a mirror of the text—the punctuation and syllables of that line. I purposely wrote *rubato* there because I didn't want it to be restrained. Hopefully that's how it will happen because that's how that line reads anyway. And the next little thing in the piano [mm. 16] is a reappearance of that first theme.

MD: It hints at it.

DR: Yes, it's part of—a version of—that first theme.

MD: So we're in G Major for a couple of measures.

DR: I remember these few measures took me a while. From mm. 15, I was trying to get back to mm. 23. I had part of the ending done already, but it took a little while to negotiate the transitions.

MD: And that's another harkening to the first movement [mm. 19-22].

DR: That's right.

MD: Then we get back to A<sup>b</sup> via a D<sup>b</sup> spelling for ease of reading.

DR: Yes.

MD: Now I remember when I performed these, we had discussed no break here [mm. 27].

DR: And you did a *portamento* on that, which I liked; I thought it was great.

MD: And a natural *crescendo* because of where it's going.

DR: Yes.

MD: And, again, here repetition is key for textual emphasis. [mm. 30-32].

DR: Yes.

MD: So as we wrap up these three pieces, I just have one last question: is there any bit of advice you wish to tell any performers who take on these pieces? Any final thoughts?

DR: It kind of goes back to what we've been harping on the most. Don't let what's on the page interfere with the expression of the text that's there; don't let that get in the way. If you treat it as a poetic language, I think the performance of it will be that much better. Obviously, do some research, and understand the text and where it's coming from. Take it as a separate entity initially from the music, but it should be a seamless transition from one to the other. Don't get caught up in what's on the page; it should just flow from one to the next.

APPENDIX C:  
Transcript of Interview: *Three A.E. Housman Songs*

Date: February 7, 2014

| Location: Boca Raton, FL

MD=Matthew Daniels  
DR=David Rossow

MD: Let's start with the text. I noticed when I was looking through these that they were all taken from several poetic series. For instance, the first one is taken from *More Poems*, the second one is taken from *Last Poems*, and the third one is taken from *Additional Poems*. My first question is: how did you get there? Last time with the Shakespeare sonnets, you mentioned you read through every sonnet and kept some but tossed the rest. And didn't you mention there was another sonnet you originally intended for one of the pieces?

DR: Yes, actually "Bells in Tower" started off as "White in the moon the long road lies."

MD: Ah, ok, which is from the *Shropshire Lad* settings.

DR: Yes, it's funny because when you had mentioned I take a look at Housman, that happened to be one I picked out of the lot for some reason or another.

MD: It was certainly one of my favorites from the *Shropshire Lad* setting by Somervell.

DR: Yes, and once I knew that was from that set, I just sort of stopped because I figured there was no point in doing it if it was in that set anyway.

MD: I suppose you could have done an excerpted version.

DR: I could have, but at some point I stumbled on that other text and decided that one would be the one. What I had started already [musically] would work better with that text versus the original one.

MD: Was it the same melodic material?

DR: Yes, it was supposed to be "White in the moon . . ." {Plays opening motive} I think I had gotten through bar 8 or 9 with that text. I had it written in, but I erased it. I just started over with the new text, changed a few rhythms, amended a few syllables. But harmonically it worked, so I adapted it to go in that direction.

MD: What about the other two?

DR: Well, the first one I wrote was actually the last one again, "It Is No Gift."

MD: Out of the whole Housman set?

DR: Yes, that was the very first one. That text was the same from the beginning. I started it in November 2012 but didn't write it until February of the next year. I had something down—the first part of the melody—and then didn't finish it until February.

MD: Which one came next?

DR: The second.

MD: So totally in retrograde?

DR: Yes, and I don't know that I ever meant these three . . . it wasn't like the Shakespeare, where I had the idea of three. I think I was planning on doing more, but at that point, I ran out of time or something. They're not quite as . . . there's no recurring material between the three of them. There's nothing that brings them all together other than the text itself being from the same author.

MD: What was it about the various poem collections that drew you?

DR: I did the same thing as the Shakespeare—I read through them. One book had all three books in there, so really I just went through all of them at one point or another.

MD: Yes, I have that book—the collected poems book.

DR: I had also looked online. Some are public domain, while others are not. "It Is No Gift" is in public domain, I believe. I still have the permissions page at home, and that one was not on there. The others are not public domain, however.

MD: One of these . . . "The Half-Moon Westers Low," I believe . . . has multiple settings by various notable composers. But the other ones had only been set once or twice by somebody else. So basically you took the same approach—you went through the book and kept some.

DR: Yes. Some of the poems just wouldn't work for me. If I don't relate to that text, then I won't try; there's no point.

MD: Talk to me about the process then. In the Shakespeare songs you were kind of getting your feet wet—we talked about that the other day—especially the first piece you felt was experimental in nature, and then things really started to come together. Did you have a similar course of action with these, or did they all just seem to flow?

DR: The first and the last I remember not having too many edits. I didn't have to do too much with those. The one [third movement] I had been hashing out for a few months, so it was already somewhat written. I did take an approach to "The Half-Moon"—I had sections on there in terms of the text. And the first one, "Bells In Tower," I remember after changing the text, that one was done in two days. It really just worked well. This one [third movement] was a couple of weeks,

but I don't think I had a lot of time at that moment, so it was more sporadic. "Half-Moon" I started on the 21<sup>st</sup> of February, but I don't know when I finished it because I didn't write it down.

MD: And the third one to be written but the first of the set took two days?

DR: Yes, two or three days. I didn't go the same route as the Shakespeare though. I didn't sit down and think about rhythms. I remember recording a few ideas and going back to them.

MD: So you didn't sit down with the text and write rhythms like you did with the Shakespeare?

DR: No, I didn't go that route this time.

MD: Any reason?

DR: I didn't feel like I needed to.

MD: Maybe we'll start with the last one then, since it's the first one you wrote, and we'll proceed in retrograde. It's interesting because when I was studying these pieces, I found that this one was stylistically the most similar to the Shakespeare texts—particularly the last Shakespeare song. There's a certain definitive tonal pull there most of the time, but even pianistically and vocally, it seemed like it came out of your thought process from the other.

DR: It was an extension of the other three. If I think about the timing, I had just finished the Shakespeare in October or November. And, as I said, I had ideas for "It Is No Gift" in late November, so it probably was in some respects an extension of that. Even harmonically it has the same approach.

MD: Does that ever happen to you in other writing as well? Like the choral pieces . . .

DR: No. Well, the harmonic language is probably still the same. I don't think I'm ever going to write atonal music; I just couldn't do that. I mean, I could. But to me, just to play random things to make it sound that way, I have no desire. But all of them have the same sort of thing—they're never key-specific; they move around between keys and modes, but they're never tied to a key. But there's always some kind of tonal center in there.

MD: This one, to me, screams G Major up until about bar six. And then we switch to sort of a G minor or modal . . . for a moment. And then we come back out of that, but it's always sort of shifting; we don't want to get too comfortable for too long.

DR: I remember I changed keys purposely there because of the words that were there.

MD: You mean on "but do not scorn the lender?"

DR: Yes, on that phrase it needed a different sound. Also at the end—I originally was going to do the same order with the major sound first then the minor, but in the end I switched them

around based on the text that was there. I couldn't have "if death and time are stronger" being major—it just didn't make too much sense. {Laughter}

MD: But then you do give it credence on "a love may yet be strong"—it has a definitive agreeable feeling to it, textually.

DR: Yes. The form is in large form again. We end with what we started, so you have theme A, then A<sup>1</sup>, then B, then A<sup>1</sup>, then A again. The form of it is symmetrical.

MD: Right. That's exactly what I noticed as I was studying them. I saw a tertiary pull there or maybe even more. What I was getting for sure though was from measures . . . up until the word "Oh"—to me that was a full A section and the entire first stanza of the poem. Then the pick-up notes going into "Oh" is the start of the B section—because it is totally different at that point—going all the way up until we migrate to the A<sup>b</sup> tonality at the bottom of the second page, and that happens to be the entire second stanza. And then when we return to that A theme, we finish out with the entire third stanza. That's what I was looking at form-wise.

DR: Right.

MD: Do you have ideas of further divided form?

DR: No, overall it's ABA. It's almost like A<sup>1</sup>, A<sup>2</sup>, B, A<sup>2</sup>, A<sup>1</sup> because of the tonality in the A sections. But you could look at it as three big sections based simply on the stanzas of the poem anyway, so it could be three overall sections. And, yes, there is that shift on "Oh, mortal man" because that's new material. It's nothing we've seen before.

MD: It's deceiving because it seems like it could be linked previously . . .

DR: Yes, it kind of comes out of the other A, but there's no real separation there with a piano interlude or anything—even though that happens in that stanza anyway—because of the text there.

MD: At a first listen, you might think there's a B section at the *A tempo*. But when you look textually, the B section actually starts with the text "Oh," and it's all previously unheard material. That's what I pieced together.

DR: Yes.

MD: The other day we were talking about text and repetition. "It is no gift I tender, a loan is all I can . . . a loan is all I can." I think it's really powerful that you used repetition there because it highlights the necessity of the poet to expect something in return. To me, it's really powerful that you highlighted that twice. Was that sort of what you were thinking?

DR: Yes. {B<sup>b</sup> FEA}



MD: “But do not scorn the lender, man gets no more from man.” I simply view that as the way of the world—when you lend something, you expect someone to pay you in return.

DR: Yes, and that’s why I chose it initially; that’s how I perceived it.

MD: It took me a minute to figure that out though. I kept looking at it thinking there was something deep and profound in that statement, but I couldn’t quite figure it out. And then I thought, “Well, a gift is something you give freely without a return. A loan you expect reciprocation.” Wow, this is great. Again, the repetition for me here gives more meaning to the fact that this is the way it’s supposed to be—this is what we would expect from others, so this is what I expect from you [subtext].

DR: Yes.

MD: “And ‘twill not end tomorrow”—obviously we have a massive tonal shift here.

DR: Yes, it’s a harmonic diversion. There are similar things in the Shakespeare. That tonality is Lydian again—A<sup>b</sup> Lydian.

MD: You really like that Lydian sound.

DR: I do.

MD: It’s very colorful.

DR: That’s also the tonality at the very end—that last chord. It’s the same idea from bar 18. I liked that sound in the middle and brought it back at the end. It’s Lydian again. {Plays both}

MD: Any particular reason you went to A<sup>b</sup> Major in mm. 81?

DR: It just worked coming out of that transition. I liked the sound.

MD: It’s so interesting because if I wasn’t looking at it, I would have no idea that we migrated from G Major to A<sup>b</sup> because it works so well as a transition. To me it would sound like a nice, colorful harmonic middle section that came back to the original. I thought you crafted that so well. The first few times I read through this, I thought, “Oh, he came back.” Then I looked again and the modulation. I see the first “a love may yet be strong” holds onto the minor idea at first but then transitions back to the major.

DR: Yes, it does go right back.

MD: Would you say that your choice to repeat that in major reveals a hesitant declaration to a resolved idea.

DR: I wish I could say I thought that; however, I’m pretty sure I just copied the same idea. {Laughter}

MD: I'll write that as a performer's note to encourage the performers to look at it that way.

DR: You could definitely look at it that way. But those two bars are pretty much the same as the earlier sequence—just transposed. I repeated it because I needed to finish that idea.

MD: Looking at it from a performer's perspective, it makes total sense because in the previous one, it was the same thing. Textually, it works the same way—this is the way it should be; no, this is the way it should be. [subtext]

DR: Yes, and in the end, I purposely repeated that last phrase three times versus the others, which were only twice.

MD: Any tie to the number three?

DR: No.

MD: Just very emphatic?

DR: Yes.

MD: And I notice each one gradually decays in dynamics to the end. And each time you set the word “long,” you make it slightly longer on each repetition.

DR: Yes, and I purposely wanted that last note to be longer. I guess it's word painting.

MD: Yes, the idea grows longer and longer each time. That didn't happen anywhere else. With the dual repetitions, it was pretty much the same.

DR: It was the same rhythmic value.

MD: Would you say these tonal shifts here [ $A^1$ — $A^2$ ], is it ok to call them G Major to G minor? Or should I call it something else?

DR: In those two measures, yes, you have that shift for three or four beats. It's definitely G minor for that measure and a half.

MD: And then the V of the last two beats of that measure [mm. 7] brings us back to G Major.

DR: Yes. Now, this is interesting . . . {Plays cluster chord in mm. 9} that sound is played as a block there, but it's the same sound that opens the B section, closes the B section, and concludes the piece.

MD: That sort of Lydian mix.

DR: Yes.

MD: I'll probably suggest to the performer to place a slight *tenuto* accent over the words "gift," "loan," and "loan" to highlight the importance of those words. Are you agreeable to that even though it's not marked in the score?

DR: Yes, I would.

MD: Is there anything else in this song we should talk about before proceeding? Again, shifting meters . . .

DR: Actually, the whole B section is in Lydian. The B section is kind of in two parts. We go from C Lydian to A<sup>b</sup> Lydian. The last two bars of the B section are theoretically in D<sup>b</sup> Lydian. The second to last measure is more like F minor—though it's the same notes as D<sup>b</sup> Lydian.

MD: Ok, so working backward—or forward, in the case of composition . . . We spoke a little about the text repetition on "my love."

DR: Yes, when I finished this one [second movement], I thought it sounded most like the *Shropshire Lad* set by Somervell. This one reminded me of "White in the moon." I'm not sure why—I suppose I had been listening to your recital and hearing that sound.

MD: So would you say this one was partially inspired by the Somervell setting?

DR: Yes, you could say that. This one is a little bit more harmonically out there than the other one.

MD: More complex. But speaking to that idea of "my love, my love"—what was your inspiration to always repeat that text?

DR: I think I purposely chose to repeat that text even though it isn't that way in the poem just for emphasis. And that one idea—the extended phrase—comes back a couple of times too.

MD: Definitely text painting—"and wide apart lie we."

DR: That was definitely on purpose.

MD: Text painting on the extended "my love."

DR: Also purposely on "and the wind brings up" [mm. 8]—"up" was supposed to reflect that.

MD: So you're saying that's also an example of text painting?

DR: Yes, that was too.

MD: That's funny, I didn't even notice that part, but I did notice this [piano accompaniment in mm. 8] almost sounds thunderous—like wind—a stormy quality.

DR: Yes, the whole thing has harmonic unrest. The third one is the simplest in terms of harmonic structure. But this one and the first one—there's more chromaticism.

MD: I almost hear a Phrygian quality or something.

DR: I think it's called the Hungarian minor mode. {Plays scale}

MD: Yes, I hear that in a lot of Turkish music I listen to, and stuff like that. To me, that's the quality this kind of has.

DR: Yes. {Consults book} Actually, it has a Dorian sound—Dorian #4.

MD: It's not altogether foreign to our ears. It's something we've heard, in a way.

DR: Yes. Again, that #4 is Lydian too, in a sense. It's just sort of a minor version of it. It's not completely foreign; it's not atonal. It's modal.

MD: As a personal aside, that's one of the most thrilling sounds to me. In Spain they use that sound too. The thing I notice about this piece is that nothing really repeats. It's almost through-composed—although there are moments of repetition.

DR: Yes, the only repetition in there really is that phrase [“my love”], but it's not the same.

MD: It changes each time.

DR: We come back to that original key in the end . . . for the last A, but it doesn't end that way either. It ends in G minor.

MD: G minor, which takes us to the parallel major for the last piece. Now, you said you hadn't originally intended these to function as a set?

DR: No. I think I had four or five picked out, and somehow these three ended up together. I had them numbered . . . “It Is No Gift” was definitely going to be the last one. This one [“The Half Moon Westers Low”] was going to be the fourth one. The third was going to be something else, two was going to be something else, and one was going to be something else I never did. {Laughter} But two and three were conceived back-to-back—even though originally they would have been four and five. But I always thought these would be the last two no matter how many I ended up with. I liked the transition from G minor to G Major for the last two.

MD: I noticed the last one only has the final bar line. So have you sort of changed your mind? Do you want these sung as a group now?

DR: I didn't intend for them to be at first, but after I went back to them, yes, they work together as a group. There's no issue singing these straight through as a set or cycle. It works.

MD: Now harmonically and melodically, it seems that each text coupling, in my opinion, has its own, unique idea. {Indicates to Rossow where he sees formal sections divided} Now, there are moments of quasi-repetition in there, but each one kind of has its own identity.

DR: Yes. The whole thing is the same mode—it just depends on what happens to be in the root at the moment.

MD: Right. We never abandon the Dorian #4 mode.

DR: No.

MD: And although there are hints of repetition throughout, it seems truly through-composed to me, and each coupling of text has its own life in my opinion.

DR: You're right. There's not a whole lot of repetition in there—nothing like the last one. The only time I repeated any idea was in “my love, my love” on the longer phrase.

MD: Top of page 6—all of the piano stuff before the text—I consider that a dream sequence of sorts hinting at the next statement of text.

DR: Yes, I would say that.

MD: It's *pianissimo* . . . the ensuing text talks about sleeping . . .

DR: I would say yes.

MD: To me it's another example of text painting, but in this way, it's a foreshadowing.

DR: Yes. The piano part is foreshadowing what is going to happen in the text rather than representing something in the text at that moment.

MD: Interesting choice, going up to the high note [mm. 33] you want the dynamic to *decrescendo*. Any particular reason?

DR: I just want it to taper off. I know it's ascending, but I didn't want it to be louder. The tendency would be to get louder on that note, and I wanted the next section to be quieter and purposely more emphatic, which is why I put the *tenuto* markings there—and also, you can sing that phrase *rubato*—take as much time as you want on each one of those notes.

MD: So take a breath, but don't let the idea become interrupted there.

DR: Yes. And I always thought there would be a little life between each repetition of the text “my love, my love.”

MD: I was planning to do that.

DR: I figured you had. And like we said, the only things that repeat are the opening motive of the first bar and those instances of text. [“my love, my love”]

MD: Speaking about harmonic language—lots of chord extensions—I think that’s obvious in these pieces in addition to the Shakespeare.

DR: Yes. Another common element between this piece and the last one is . . . this opening sound {Plays opening motive as cluster chord} is actually the minor version of the C Lydian motive in “It Is No Gift.” It is a minor version of that same chord. [it was later determined that this could be called Lydian  $\flat 3$ ]

MD: Oh, that’s cool. To me there’s a very mysterious, absent quality harmonically—a painful quality. We never get a warm, tingly sensation this whole time.

DR: No, no warm fuzzies. The whole text is not very uplifting. Harmonically, I purposely tried to communicate that.

MD: And, of course, “Bells In Tower” is sort of the precursor to these. It’s like a whole story that unfolds in three songs. “Bells In Tower” opens the story, the middle song is his coming to terms with everything—the loss of his beloved, and the last song represents his resolve. Which is funny because, once again, although these weren’t originally intended to work cohesively, they certainly can and do.

DR: Yes, they do.

MD: Anything else we need to discuss about this one [second movement] before moving onto the first? Anything from your sketches we should discuss?

DR: Not really. Just the ending . . . I was going to do it differently at first, but I ended up going to the higher note. {Plays original sketch} I think that’s what I was going to do initially, but I changed it. I didn’t want it to end on the same note as the previous one, so I ended up changing it to the higher note. I crossed out the original and put the D in there.

MD: Ok. “Bells In Tower At Evening Toll”—so this was the third to be written. This one, you said, was originally conceived as “White in the moon” from the *Shropshire Lad* settings, but you stopped because you just didn’t want to excerpt one of those texts, or . . .?

DR: I just didn’t want to repeat that text again. I didn’t feel the need.

MD: You weren’t inspired to?

DR: No. It’s interesting because I hadn’t written the introduction to it yet while it was still “White in the moon.” I think I had seven or eight measures completed with that text. And I think I wrote the introduction somewhere in the middle of it. This one is like the last [third] in that there’s repetition within the sections that are there.

MD: Certainly pianistically, the text and the melody kind of stay independent, but at the *A tempo*, the piano part comes back to the original motive even though the text doesn't.

DR: I remember specifically thinking I wanted to come back to that opening introduction. I somehow thought I could use that and duplicate what was happening in inner voice. I wanted to repeat that little section at the beginning because I liked it harmonically. And, to me, the rhythm is purposely the way it is because I was thinking about a tolling bell.

MD: Right, text painting.

DR: Yes, that's why there's a lot of quarter-note emphasis throughout the whole thing.

MD: Right, I think it maintains that death toll . . .

DR: Pulse . . .

MD: It's also relentless. It stabs you.

DR: Yes, there's always that pulse.

MD: As far as those moving eighth-note patterns against the quarter-note tolls, do you also see those as bells?

DR: I don't know if I would consider those still bells, I was just thinking that as a melodic idea for that moment while the bells still toll in the background. I would say it's something else.

MD: What do you think—Death's coming? I'm always thinking in terms of the storyteller. The melodic idea is also relentless like the tolling bells. You can't escape it in a way.

DR: There are a lot of repeated notes—or phrases with repeated notes in them. This one cycles through a couple of different modes as well. But yes, the melody could represent Death itself—or a death theme because it's always descending.

MD: I hadn't thought of that.

DR: Me either. {Laughter} {Plays the introduction} That's where I started [mm. 4]—the introduction came later.

MD: If we can fast-forward to the end where that theme comes again—this time transposed. It's like we have a moment of repose, but it isn't a happy one.

DR: No.

MD: It's a bit more optimistic, but . . .

DR: It doesn't last very long. But I have to say the tonality of the end of this is actually the same as the ending of "It Is No Gift." It's the same kind of D<sup>b</sup> Lydian sound. If there's anything that shows up in all of them, it's that sound—definitely one and three have elements of each other in them.

MD: So what do you envision these last five measures as? Is this the last idea of hope before moving to the next piece, which is where he really comes to terms with the fact that the beloved is gone? Because it has an anticipatory, growing . . .

DR: I kind of view it like you do—a funeral movement. To me, this sounds like a funeral march.

MD: Yes, funeral—visitation—and moving on. [sequence of pieces]

DR: Yes, I agree—that works. And this one is a lot more dense. There are a lot more chromatic clusters of notes—just dense.

MD: Harmonically you mean?

DR: Yes.

MD: So let's walk through together harmonically. We're starting in . . .

DR: E<sup>b</sup> Dorian . . . then we end up definitely in C minor.

MD: Harmonic minor.

DR: Yes. And depending on who's playing it, there are some big intervals in the piano part in the left hand—for instance, mm. 5-6—my intent was for it to sound simultaneously, but there could be a little roll in there if necessary. It is a tenth.

MD: I'll make a note of that.

DR: And there are a lot of minor 2nds throughout as well—or inversions of them.

MD: A very sharp quality.

DR: Yes, in many of the chords . . . and a lot of extensions—particularly 9ths.

MD: So would you say the A section lasts until "soon"? [mm. 7]

DR: This one's really short.

MD: It didn't scream sections to me.



DR: No, it's more like the second. I don't want to say through-composed, but harmonically it only returns for three measures back to that opening theme. I guess you could kind of look at it as having two sections, but there's so little of A again.

MD: Particularly in the vocal line.

DR: There's not at all. I wouldn't put it into a form.

MD: Gotcha. I also wanted to ask you—*subito e sempre piano* [mm. 12]. So you want it suddenly hushed and tapering down almost . . .

DR: Right.

MD: Each one continually softer to the *pianissimo*?

DR: Right, yes.

MD: Yes because we're coming out of . . . thank you, by the way, for giving us *forte* in mm. 10 . . . {Laughter}

DR: Yeah, I thought there's no way an F will be soft.

MD: Is it possible, yeah. Is it probable, no. {Laughter}

DR: I figured it worked for the declamatory nature of the text, and, of course, where it fell in the range. It would be hard for that to be quiet.

MD: I'll probably advise performers to make a gradual *crescendo* leading up to that point.

DR: Yeah, I didn't write a *crescendo* in there, but from mm. 7-9, there could be a *crescendo* because of the ascending nature of the line. But actually, in mm. 5 a *crescendo* starts, so maintain that throughout the whole thing leading up to the *forte*.

MD: Now, back to *subito e sempre piano*, I'm assuming you want that to embody a whispery quality—not necessarily off the voice.

DR: Yes, and when the text repeats, take a slight lift. But I would definitely say yes, mimic that quality [whisper quality].

MD: I will also encourage singers to sing the unvoiced [ʍ] version in order to help convey that.

DR: Yes, and maintain control going up the scale; it's the opposite of what you would tend to do.

MD: Yes. Now, "Though the whispering night were still"—to me, that's the point where he finally realizes he's alone in the world, so to me it makes sense you would leave that unaccompanied.

DR: Yes, I purposely focused in on the word “still.” I wanted it to be completely isolated without any accompaniment. But then the toll comes back in.

MD: A reminder than no one escapes death.

DR: Yes, exactly.

MD: “Yet the heart would counsel ill”—now here we discussed making this a C<sub>3</sub> [mm. 20] rather than an F<sub>2</sub>.

DR: Yes, I knew it would be low.

MD: I’ll definitely mention that in the writing.

DR: If you make it a C, I would suggest you carry it through the whole measure—but only that measure. And to me, this one never resolves.

MD: Exactly—it leaves us hanging.

DR: Yeah, I didn’t want it to resolve there.

MD: It leaves us empty in a way—alone. It has that feeling of desolation.

DR: Right, there is no hope at that moment. I purposely gave it that unresolved quality. And, as I said, the last two measures are the same harmonic idea as the last one, yet the last one resolves.

MD: And the D<sup>b</sup> Lydian is really the first moment we have a statement of a unifying factor we’ll hear throughout the rest of the set. So in a way, if you look at the set as a whole, it tells us there’s more to come.

DR: Yes, because it never resolves.

MD: Final question: is there anything you’d like to tell aspiring singers?

DR: It’s the same as the others. You have to be intimately involved with the text. As opposed to the Shakespeare set, these are the other end of the spectrum. Whereas those are somewhat happy, these are totally opposite. So be sure that you understand the text that’s there, and be sure it’s reflected in the style in which you sing them. The energy is not a positive energy, but there’s still energy there. It’s not happy energy.

MD: It’s channeled a different way.

DR: Exactly.

APPENDIX D:  
List of Compositions by David P. Rossow

Solo Voice and Piano

*Three Shakespeare Sonnets*

Baritone/Low voice and piano

- I. Sonnet 116 - Let me not to the marriage of true minds
- II. Sonnet 73 - That time of year thou mayst in me behold
- III. Sonnet 150 – O, from what power has thou this powerful might

*Three A.E. Housman Songs*

Baritone/Low voice and piano

- I. Bells in tower at evening toll
- II. The half-moon westers low
- III. It is no gift I tender

*Four Thomas Moore Songs*

Soprano/High voice and piano

- I. Our first young love
- II. Ask not if I still love
- III. No, leave my heart to rest
- IV. Then, fare thee well

Choral

*An American Tribute*

SATB, wind ensemble

*Ave Maria*

SSAA, a cappella

*Alma Madrigal (FAU)*

SATB, a cappella, arr. for Madrigal Dinners

*From Dusk to Dawn*

SATB, a cappella

- I. The Darkness
- II. The Moonbeam
- III. Early Dawn

*Gabriel's Message*

SSAA, piano

*God Bless America*

SATB, a cappella

Impassioned Traces	SATB, piano
It Was A Quiet Way	SATB, string quintet/piano/organ
<i>Mass of Salvation</i>	SATB, piano/organ/brass quartet/flute/cello
<i>Mass for Women</i>	SSAA, piano 4-hands and percussion
I. Kyrie	
II. Gloria	
III. Credo	
IV. Sanctus*	
V. Agnus Dei*	*published by Santa Barbara Music Publishing
<i>Missa Brevis</i>	SATB, orchestra * in progress
O Vos Omnes	SATB, a cappella
Pater Noster	SATB, a cappella
Set Me As A Seal	SSAA and SATB string quintet/piano/organ
Still, Still, Still	SATB, piano * in progress

### Jazz Ensemble

Allan Juneally	Jazz 4 Brass/4WW/Rhythm *in progress
Day Tide	Jazz Dectet
Exit 101	Jazz Sextet
Four	Big Band arr.
I Love You	Big Band arr.
Someday	Jazz Dectet with lyrics by Chloe Dolandis
Sweet Butta' Funk	Jazz Dectet
The Perceptions of One	Jazz Dectet

APPENDIX E:  
Letter of Permission

David P. Rossow

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Re:

Three A. E. Housman Songs  
Three Shakespeare Sonnets

From Dusk to Dawn

3/9/2014

This letter is to certify that **Matthew J. Daniels** has been issued permission to reprint, in their entirety, the following scores and sketches as referenced above, personal photos, and transcripts of interviews in his Doctoral Thesis titled *BELLS IN TOWER AT EVENING TOLL: A PERFORMER'S GUIDE TO THE SONGS OF DAVID P. ROSSOW ON THE TEXTS OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE AND A.E. HOUSMAN FOR BARITONE VOICE AND PIANO*.

Sincerely,

## VITA

Baritone Matthew J. Daniels recently completed the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Vocal Performance at Louisiana State University, where he studies voice and vocal pedagogy with Dr. Loraine Sims. He holds additional degrees from Florida Atlantic University (MA, BMus in Vocal Performance), where he studied with Dr. Patricia Fleitas. Prior to attending LSU, Daniels was on the adjunct voice faculties of Florida Atlantic University and Indian River State College. Additionally, he served as director of music at John Carroll Catholic High School in Fort Pierce, and he spent ten years as director of music at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church in Port St. Lucie.

In October of 2012, Daniels was awarded a recording grant from the Co-op Press Fund and its subsidiary label, Emeritus Recordings, to record a CD featuring the music of contemporary American composers David P. Rossow and Sy Brandon. In addition to teaching, performing, and music ministry, Daniels is an active composer/songwriter of contemporary sacred music. Several of his songs were recently accepted for publication with International Liturgy Publications ([www.ILPmusic.org](http://www.ILPmusic.org)). Upon graduating with the DMA degree in May 2014, Dr. Daniels intends to return to teaching, music ministry, and performing. In addition to the forthcoming CD with Emeritus Recordings, he anticipates recording another collection of original contemporary sacred music during the summer months of 2014 in hopes of publishing additional titles with ILP.