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Lori Laitman and Sara Teasdale: a performer's guide to The Metropolitan Tower and Other Songs, Mystery, and The Years

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LORI LAITMAN AND SARA TEASDALE:
A PERFORMER'S GUIDE TO *THE METROPOLITAN TOWER AND OTHER SONGS*,
MYSTERY, AND *THE YEARS*

A Monograph

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

in

The School of Music

by
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B.S., Samford University, 1999
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December, 2009

Dedication

To my beautiful Grandmother, Norma Mueller, who left this life September 25, 2009.

May she rest in the peace of the Lord with all my love, forever.

Acknowledgments

First of all, I would like to thank my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, without His strength, none of this would have been possible.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude and appreciation to Dr Lori Bade, chair of my committee. Your encouragement and support have meant the world to me throughout this process and I certainly could not have done any of this without you. Thank you also to Dr. Loraine Sims, Professor Patricia O'Neill, and Professor Robert Grayson, not only for your willingness to serve on my committee, but for your support and guidance throughout my LSU career. Thank you also to Dr. Andrea Morris for acting as the Dean's representative on my committee.

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Abstract

American composer, Lori Laitman, has published over fifty works for solo voice and piano. She has become an important contributor to contemporary art song composition, the genre in which she primarily focused her compositional efforts. Laitman may, at any time, be working on a variety of projects, predominately commissions. Though not an extensive amount of information has been published about her creative life, over the past eight years much interest has arisen in her repertoire, both artistically and scholastically. This paper will focus on Laitman's settings of the Sara Teasdale poetry including three song sets: *The Metropolitan Tower and Other Songs*, for soprano and piano (this set includes Laitman's first art song along with five other songs); *Mystery*, for mezzo-soprano or baritone and piano (five songs); and *The Years*, for soprano and piano (five songs).

The purpose of this study is twofold: to serve as an introduction to a contemporary composer who is becoming important to the genre of art song composition and to provide a performance guide for the song repertoire discussed. Chapter One provides biographical information on Lori Laitman. Chapter Two includes biographical information about Sara Teasdale. Chapter Three gives a thorough examination of the sixteen song texts. Chapter Four consists of an examination of the musical settings. Conclusions will be drawn and contained in Chapter Five, where, among other points, the usefulness, beauty and importance of these songs from both the pedagogical and recital programming perspective is discussed.

KEYWORDS: Lori Laitman, Sara Teasdale, song cycle

Chapter 1

Biography – Lori Laitman

American composer, Lori Laitman, has published over fifty works for solo voice and piano and written over a hundred. Since 1991 she has become an important contributor to contemporary art song composition, the genre in which she has primarily focused her compositional efforts. Gregory Berg states “Lori Laitman deservedly stands shoulder to shoulder with Ned Rorem for uncommon sensitivity to text, her loving attention to the human voice and its capabilities, and her extraordinary palette of musical colors and gestures.”¹ Laitman may, at any time, be working on a variety of projects, predominately commissions. Though not an extensive amount of information has been published about her creative life, over the past eight years much interest in her repertoire has arisen, both artistically and scholastically. Recently, an article discussing Laitman’s music was presented by Carol Lines in the National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS) *Journal of Singing*. The article, entitled “The Songs of Lori Laitman,” discusses Laitman’s music for voice and piano.

Lori Laitman was born to a musical family on January 12, 1955, in Long Beach, New York. Her mother, Josephine Propp, was a singer, pianist and violinist while her father, Milton Abraham, was a Lieutenant Colonel. Both of Laitman’s older sisters were musicians as well, the oldest a pianist and the other a violinist. In fact, her “entire extended family on [her] mother’s side was musical, so anytime there was a family event, everyone performed.”² Laitman attributes her families’ love and interest in music to her maternal grandmother, Dina Cantor Propp,

¹ Gregory Berg, “The Listener’s Gallery” review of *Dreaming – Songs of Lori Laitman*, *Journal of Singing* (January/February 2004): 321.

² Lori Laitman, email to author, April 12, 2009.

“although she herself did not play any instruments.”³ Laitman also traces her love of “stories and songs” to her early childhood,

I grew up listening to many recordings over and over: *Peter and the Wolf*, *Bongo the Bear*, *PeeWee the Piccolo*, and *Tubby the Tuba* are the ones that I remember vividly. I think this early exposure to stories and songs must have had a deep impact on me, although I did not realize this until recently, when I was answering questions to an interview by Lucy Hoyt.⁴

Laitman began studying piano at the age of five and flute at age seven, when her family relocated to New Rochelle, NY. She graduated from high school at the age of sixteen and matriculated to Yale University as a flute performance major.

During her sophomore year at Yale, Laitman decided to explore composition and dedicated her efforts toward that endeavor. Her first compositions were for the piano in the style of ragtime. Laitman says she chose this style “not only because I loved to play ragtime on the piano, but because there was a certain structure to ragtime, and having certain aspects of a piece mapped out for you allowed you to concentrate on developing your compositional skills.”⁵ Her first composition teacher was Jonathan Kramer whom Laitman calls “a wonderful teacher” who “guided me keeping my natural inclinations in mind.”⁶ At the end of Laitman's sophomore year, her mother insisted she engage in musical activity during her summer break. She was given two choices: travel to France and study composition with Nadia Boulanger or attend Interlochen Music Camp in Michigan to study flute. She chose the latter and it was there, at Interlochen, that she met Lauren Wagner, a soprano who would later have a significant influence on Laitman's compositional career. It was at Interlochen that Laitman composed her first art song, a “crazy piece in an ‘avant-garde’ style,” which required the singer “to make all sorts of weird sounds,

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

singing the words ‘yo-yo-yo-yo’ to some leaping intervals. A tape of this composition exists somewhere, but I will be very content if it is never unearthed.”⁷

Upon her return to Yale, Laitman continued to compose, completed the Bachelor of Music degree, graduating magna cum laude, and remained on the campus to pursue the Master of Music degree at the Yale School of Music. Laitman remained a flute performance major during her graduate studies at Yale; however, she also enrolled in composition classes. One of these composition classes was with Frank Lewin, which focused on composition for film and theatre. Laitman sites Lewin as her “biggest influence.”

It was in his class that I developed a craft: learning how to recognize different moods in theatre and film works, and how to effectively create dramatic music to accompany these moods. I use these techniques every time I compose, and approach each of my works with a sense of drama.⁸

Upon graduation, on June 20, 1976, she married her college boyfriend, Bruce Rosenblum and together they moved to Williamstown, MA where they taught music at a small private high school and Laitman played the flute with the Vermont Symphony. A year later they moved to New York City so that Bruce could enroll at the Columbia School of Law. It was during their time in New York that Laitman began composing for film. She became the composer for the Dick Roberts Film Company and in 1980, wrote the score for *The Taming of the Shrew* at Folger Theatre in Washington, D.C.⁹

The birth of her first child, James, in 1980 impacted the amount of available time for film compositions and thus she began concentrating on composing chamber music. She continued to teach flute during this time but also met koto player Miyuki Yoshikami. The two musicians formed a partnership and began to perform the compositions Laitman created for koto and flute.

⁷ Lori Laitman, www.artsongs.com. Available from <http://www.artsongs.com/meet/chattybio>. Accessed March 24, 2009.

⁸ Lori Laitman, email to author, April 12, 2009.

⁹ Lori Laitman, www.artsongs.com.

After the birth of two additional children, Diana and Andrew, Laitman's motherhood duties began to take precedence over her career as a composer.¹⁰

In 1991, when Laitman received a call from an excited old friend, Lauren Wagner, a turning point occurred. Wagner invited Laitman to compose songs for a solo compact disc. Eager, but unsure of her ability to write art songs, Laitman began to examine poetic resources and became drawn to the works of Sara Teasdale. When asked what about Teasdale's poetry appealed to her the most, Laitman responded:

I think, as with any great piece of art, that one can understand it upon first hearing but still return to it again and again to discover more about it. I felt that the lyricism of the words and the accessibility of her subjects were particularly suitable for song. Audiences can usually grasp the poems meaning (at least to some extent) upon first hearing.¹¹

Laitman's first journey into a musical setting of Teasdale's poetry was with "The Metropolitan Tower," which, Laitman says is her favorite of all her works "because it has a beautiful, magical sound," and "of course" for sentimental reasons.¹² The writing of the vocal line blossomed quickly, so quickly in fact, that she did not trust it and continued to make revisions. Laitman found the task of adding the piano accompaniment to be difficult and was filled with anxiety at the thought of sharing the composition with anyone. However, the compositions were premiered in New York on December 16, 1991 to rave reviews. Ever since, Laitman has composed exclusively for the voice.

Since 1991, Laitman completed a fellowship at The Charles Ives Center for American Music; won the Maryland State Arts Council Individual Artist Award in Vocal Composition three times; won the Boston Art Song Competition in 2000; and was the Nebraska Music Teachers Association Composer of the Year in 2002. She also won Best Song with "Men with

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Lori Laitman, email to author, April 12, 2009.

¹² Ibid.

Small Heads” in the 2004 American Art Song Competition sponsored by the San Francisco Song Festival.¹³ Laitman’s music has been performed all over the United States in many of the most respected performing venues in the country: Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall (NY), Alice Tully Hall (NY), Jordan Hall (Boston), The Ohio Theatre (Cleveland), Benaroya Hall (Seattle), Shriver Hall (Maryland), The Library of Congress (DC), The US Holocaust Museum (DC), and The Kennedy Center (DC).¹⁴

Stylistic Overview

Laitman began her compositional career with piano music, chamber music and music for film and theatre. Since 1991 her output has included thirty-six song cycles, ten of which are for voice and instrument; seventeen songs; *Come to Me in Dreams*, a one act opera created from her songs; and *The Scarlett Letter*, her only full-length opera. She has also reworked many of her compositions to fit different voice types or instrumentations as well as arranging several for chorus. Laitman says that she “found [her] voice in writing for voice.”¹⁵ She notes what draws her to the style:

I always had a natural lyricism, so when I finally got around to composing art song, it was as if everything “clicked” and I discovered what I could do naturally. Even despite my confidence issues, it was pretty apparent to me that these songs were on a totally different level than my previous compositions. I’d say my previous compositions were competent and had moments of beauty but they were mediocre at best. I thought my songs were extraordinary.¹⁶

Laitman describes her compositional style as “lyrical” and says that she is “clearly driven by melody more than anything else.”¹⁷ She believes her early musical endeavors influenced her ideals in that “Flute is a melody instrument, so all my life I’ve been focused on melody. I think it

¹³ Kathleen Watt, “An acclaimed art song composer takes the opera stage,” USOperaWeb, available at <http://kewatt.com/LoriLaitman.html>.

¹⁴ Lori Laitman, www.artsongs.com.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Lori Laitman, email to author April 13, 2009.

¹⁷ Ibid.

provided me with a certain mindset.”¹⁸ Laitman’s first influence when she began composing art song was her friend, Lauren Wagner. From her, Laitman learned “how to effectively write a vocal line.”¹⁹ She listened to the songs that Wagner sang and found herself “drawn to the songs with beautiful melodies,” particularly the songs of Paul Bowles.²⁰

In addition to lyrical melodies, it is the words, more specifically the expression of those words, which fascinates Laitman. She explains, “my desire to be true and kind to the words influences everything I do compositionally.”²¹ Laitman further explains that she has

an instinctual feel for setting words to music and my music is very lyrical. I always treat the words with the utmost respect. All of my ideas stem from the text – I never cram words into a musical phrase, but always structure the phrase so that the words are set to their best advantage.²²

Gregory Berg agrees, stating in the May/June 2007 issue of *The Journal of Singing*,

It is difficult to think of anyone before the public today who equals her exceptional gifts for embracing a poetic text and giving it new and deeper life through music. She has an unerring way of enhancing a text’s beauty and meaning while not obscuring the text through artifice or excess.²³

Laitman divides her vocal works into two categories: Holocaust and Non-Holocaust. In 1995, Laitman became fascinated with the poetry of the Holocaust and since that time has been particularly “committed to making her music a voice for the victims of the Nazi Holocaust of World War II.”²⁴ She has composed 5 Holocaust cycles, including *I Never Saw Another Butterfly. Come to Me in Dreams*, a one act Holocaust Opera, utilizes her previously composed songs both Holocaust and Non-Holocaust. It tells the story of a man who has survived World War II, as he remembers his wife and daughter who did not. He shares these memories with his

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² John Campbell and Steve Brockman, “Artsong Update” Issue 34.

²³ Gregory Berg, “The Listener’s Guide,” review of *Becoming a Redwood: Songs of Lori Laitman*, *Journal of Singing* 63, no.5 (May/June 2007): 612.

²⁴ Watt.

surviving daughter while ultimately coming to terms with the past.²⁵ The opera was a project she did in conjunction with David Bamberger and The Cleveland Opera. Laitman had to “change some of the keys, so they would flow from one into another. And in the last song [she] wrote some new things so that all the instruments could come in together.”²⁶ The poetry used in her Holocaust songs is all written by Holocaust survivors or, in the case of *I Never Saw Another Butterfly*, its victims.

Regarding the Non-Holocaust works, Laitman has set a wide variety of poets over the years including Emily Dickinson, Christina Rossetti, Mary Oliver, Paul Muldoon, Sylvia Plath, Thomas Lux, Dana Gioia, and, of course, Sara Teasdale. When choosing poetry, Laitman says

Sometimes I am brought to a group of poems or a poem through a commission and someone else’s love for that subject or poetry. When I am choosing the poetry myself, it’s more emotional, although it is also with an eye as to whether the poem might be suitable for music. Not all poems are suitable for music. It’s good if the poem isn’t too short or too long (although I have set both very long and very short poems). It’s good if there aren’t too many homonyms; it’s good if there’s a story; and it’s good if the poem isn’t so complex that an audience won’t be able to grasp it without further study. It’s good if there’s an emotional underpinning, so that the music can come in and comment on what’s behind the words.²⁷

While the setting of poetry that is in the public domain is certainly convenient, Laitman particularly enjoys setting the poetry of living poets.

It’s nice to have feedback from a living poet. If I have questions about a poem, it’s a treat to be able to email or contact the poet directly. Sometimes the poet will have a certain suggestion that can change the course of my composition. I love meeting new poets and exploring new poetry and it’s wonderful to have the opportunity to introduce their poems to a musical audience.²⁸

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Lori Laitman, email to author, April 13, 2009.

²⁸ Lori Laitman, www.artsongs.com.

Laitman's combination of lyrical melodies driven by sensitive text setting, which have been described as "idiomatic for the voice," and caused, so many to compare her with the likes of Ned Rorem, is reason enough to further explore the works of this gifted composer.²⁹

Compositional Process

When Laitman began composing art song, she was "very self-conscious, as [she] did not have any degrees in composition," and relied completely on her "intuition" and the advice of three people, Lauren Wagner, her husband Bruce, and her former professor Frank Lewin.³⁰ Through the years, Laitman has taken what she has learned "about singers and what works well for their voices" and applied it to her writing.³¹

When composing a new piece, Laitman says she has no "preconceived notions about the form or the melody" and that "each piece is an organic whole."³² She begins with the text and the voice:

I always compose the vocal line first, and I take great care to custom construct a melody that will work well for the human voice, but that will also highlight what I happen to consider important words in the phrase or poem, and also be something that I consider beautiful. You can certainly have effective songs that are not "beautiful" and, of course, beauty is in the eye of the beholder, but my aim is to couple beauty with effectiveness.³³

In regards to "highlighting" words, Laitman says

There are many ways to accomplish the highlighting of words. You can highlight something with an elongated rhythm, or other rhythmic means; by means of pitch; by approach to a word (a dramatic leap rather than a stepwise approach is going to make more of a statement), but you can also dramatize a particular word by underscoring it effectively with the accompaniment. I always make sure that the stresses on the words are correct – I am always surprised when I hear other composers who do not do this – and also I have an intuitive sense about the dramatic arc of a good melody.³⁴

²⁹ Joan Reinthaler, "A review of Lisa Shaw's concert of Lori Laitman songs, June 19, 2004," *The Washington Post*, June 21, 2004.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Lori Laitman, email to author, April 13, 2009.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

Laitman does not always compose her vocal lines at the piano; in fact, she “experiments a great deal” in her head and out loud until she finds what she considers a “perfect solution.”³⁵ While writing a vocal line, Laitman works only with the melody at first

Everything is scrunched together. I don’t have meters written, I’m just working with the melody and rhythms themselves, coloring the emotional content of the words with a bare bones idea of the harmonies. These are fairly simple means, certainly not original: sad ideas generally translate into minor; complicated ideas have more dissonance, happy into major, etc.³⁶

Once Laitman feels satisfied with the vocal line, she proceeds to the accompaniment, “using each aspect to further add a layer of interpretation to the text.”³⁷ It is during the accompaniment composition that some breathing space begins to enter into the melodic line, which then spreads out to integrate with the accompaniment.”³⁸ When composing the accompaniment, Laitman works mainly at the piano, but also in her head. She writes everything out by hand at first, sometimes on staff paper, but other times, when inspiration strikes and staff paper is not handy, she “scribbles, in a shorthand (the letter E for the note E, etc.) the ‘solutions’ to my problems. I’ve used the backs of receipts, tissue boxes, anything at all that’s nearby.”³⁹ Once she has gathered a “mess of papers” and she grows concerned that she may not be able to decipher all of her copious notes, she transfers everything to the computer using Finale. Laitman says “this is always a big day for me, as things become clearer once I’ve put the first draft onto the computer. Then I can modify the drafts, and often there are several versions on my computer before I am satisfied.”⁴⁰

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

Chapter 2

Biography – Sara Teasdale

Early Years (1884 – 1903)

Sara Teasdale was born Sarah Trevor Teasdale in St. Louis, Missouri, on August 8, 1884. She was the “late-arriving child” of a wealthy salesman, John Warren, and his forty-year old wife, Mary, who were extremely over-protective of their youngest daughter.⁴¹ Called ‘Sadie’ by her family, the youngest Teasdale was “granted every luxury and, unlike most girls of her generation, was never expected to perform any domestic chores.”⁴² However, being sixteen years younger than her closest sibling, Teasdale had a very lonely childhood and was often expected to act in a manner more befitting the adults with whom she was surrounded.⁴³ Some believe that the dichotomy created between her natural youthful exuberance and the mature, subdued manner expected of her is what led Teasdale to both her future psychological struggles as well as her “impulse to poetry.”⁴⁴ Her parents focused their attention on young Sara’s “poor” health, though most historians believe her health was fine. However, their “morbid concern for her physical well-being” also affected her mental health as she matured.⁴⁵

Teasdale’s introduction to poetry came from her older sister, Mamie, who read her the poems of Christina Rossetti. Rossetti would become one of Teasdale’s greatest influences. Teasdale was first educated at home, mostly by her sister, until the age of nine. Later she entered a private girl’s school, Hosmer Hall, in St. Louis from which she graduated in 1903.⁴⁶ She was not known as a particularly outstanding student, but she was recognized for her “literary talents”

⁴¹ William Drake, *The First Wave: Women Poets in America 1915-194*,. New York: MacMillan Publishing Company, 1987, 13.

⁴² Carol Schoen, *Sara Teasdale*, Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1986, 5.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ MacMillan, *Sara Teasdale*, New York, NY: Macmillan Co., 1937, 4.

by her teachers.⁴⁷ Teasdale was taught, which was customary of this time, to keep an organized notebook noting every book she read. She maintained this habit throughout her life and, in fact, carried it over into her writing as well, where she kept small red notebooks that contained the final copies of her poetry.⁴⁸ This “extreme orderliness” contrasted sharply with her “sensuous love of light, color, and particularly music” providing yet further evidence of the duality with which Teasdale struggled throughout her life.⁴⁹

The Potters (1903 – 1907)

In 1903, Teasdale became associated with a group of creative women in St. Louis known as the Potters. There were ten women in the group and all were interested in various artistic endeavors including literature, sculpture, music, acting, painting, and photography.⁵⁰ “The driving force of the group” was Williamina Parrish, who apparently excelled in many areas, but was particularly known for her photography. Parrish remained a great influence on Teasdale throughout her life. Other members of the group were: Vine Colby, Inez Dutro, Celia Harris, Grace Parrish, Guida Richey, Caroline Risque, Petronelle Sombart, and Edna Wahlert. The women of the Potters dressed for their meetings, not in their Sunday best, “but as characters from *Alice in Wonderland*, as visitors to Beethoven, as children from literary works or ‘grubby chimney sweeps’.”⁵¹ The Potters were well-versed in the classics, but also “showed an awareness of the new antimodernist currents of the times.”⁵² The women were particularly interested in medievalism. To them the time represented a period when people were able to experience

⁴⁷ Carol Schoen, 6.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 7.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 9.

⁵¹ Ibid., 11.

⁵² Ibid.

emotion freely, which opposed greatly the expectations of emotional control during the Victorian Era in which they were raised.

Teasdale was greatly influenced by works about this period. She read multiple versions of *Tristan and Isolde* including those by Belloc, Swinburne, and Wagner, as well as Bédier, Austin, and Crump. “The story of Francesca and Paolo shows up in her reading notebook in works by Shelley, D’Annunzio, Leigh Hunt, Stephen Phillips, George Boker and even Dante.”⁵³ Another favorite story was that of Guenevere, works of which she read by Tennyson, William Morris and, in particular, Richard Hovey. In fact, one of her first published works is a poem entitled “Guenevere.”

The women of the Potters were also significantly influenced by the famous actresses of the time, in particular, Julia Marlowe, Olga Nethersole, Maude Adams, Nazimova, and Eleonora Duse. Duse was a famous Italian actress from the late 19th and early 20th Centuries, often referred to as the Italian Sarah Bernhardt, whom Teasdale greatly admired, and who represented many things the poet found fascinating including her fame, her physical beauty and, most especially, “the passion of her love affair with the playwright D’Annunzio.”⁵⁴ For Teasdale, the women of medieval literature as well as the modern day actress were linked by “the combination of their beauty, their passion, and their tragedies as victims of love.”⁵⁵ She was, therefore, inevitably drawn to depictions of women throughout history, literature, and art that upheld these ideals, including Venus and Helen of Troy. These passionate figures were all in sharp contrast to the expectation that women of Teasdale’s time were chaste, innocent creatures incapable of passion, another representation of the duality that was always at odds within her.⁵⁶

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 13.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

The Potters produced a monthly publication entitled *The Potter's Wheel*. It was completely hand-crafted and bound by the women of the group, who also contributed the majority of the material it contained. They produced three complete volumes beginning in November of 1904 and concluding in October of 1907. The magazine was comprised of original prose, poetry, plays, design, drawings, and photography as well as famous quotations. Originally, the magazine was also accompanied by a collection of criticism which allowed the women to critique each other's works; later, the criticism pages were discontinued.

In 1907, Marion Reddy published Teasdale's "Guenevere" in his weekly St. Louis newspaper, the *Mirror*. In addition, her first collection, *Sonnets to Duse and Other Poems* was published by the Poet Lore Company, though her parents paid for the printing.⁵⁷ The poems for the collection were selected, with the help of Williamina Parrish, from those she had written for the *Potter's Wheel*.⁵⁸ The "Sonnets" received a warm reception, though critics do not consider this poetry Teasdale's best.⁵⁹ Teasdale, in fact, only included nine of the twenty-nine poems from this collection in her *Collected Poems*.

After the critical acceptance of her first publication, Teasdale's poetry was published in many respectable magazines and, in 1911; she published her second collection of poems, *Helen of Troy and Other Poems*. The "Helen of Troy" collection was highly praised and remains a favorite among Teasdale scholars.⁶⁰ In it she composed verse in honor of some of literature's greatest heroines such as, Helen of Troy, Beatrice, Sappho, and Guenevere. It is also in this

⁵⁷ MacMillan, 5.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 15.

⁵⁹ Drawn from criticisms collected in *Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism*, Vol. 4, 424-432.

⁶⁰ MacMillan, 5.

collection that Teasdale included the first of her love songs; including “The Kiss,” which is one of the poems Laitman chose to set.⁶¹

The Years of Love (1911 – 1915)

Beginning in 1908, Teasdale engaged in a written flirtation with the poet John Myers O’Hara. However, in 1911, upon their meeting during her first trip to New York City, it became apparent that “he was unprepared for serious commitment.”⁶² She was slightly disappointed as well as angry at his lack of passion but, possibly, more upset for allowing herself to be put in a situation in which she was forced to experience the embarrassment of rejection.

In 1912, Teasdale embarked on a trip to Europe with her dear friend and fellow poet, Jessie Rittenhouse. On the return voyage, Teasdale became entangled in a romance with an Englishman, Stafford Hatfield. Though she remained in New York City for weeks after their arrival in order to be with him, he returned to England without her. A devastated Teasdale was ushered home by her old friend, Williamina Parrish, and it was at this time that the first accounts of Teasdale’s serious depression surfaced.⁶³

In 1913, Teasdale first met the poet and editor John Wheelock Hall. Earlier, in St. Louis, Hall had written to Teasdale praising *Helen of Troy*.⁶⁴ Though he called on her repeatedly during her trips to New York, he apparently never harbored romantic feelings for the poet. She, however, was deeply in love with him. Though the romance never blossomed into that for which Teasdale longed, Wheelock remained her closet friend and confidant throughout her life.⁶⁵

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Schoen, 57.

⁶³ Ibid., 58.

⁶⁴ Margaret Haley Carpenter, *Sara Teasdale: A Biography*, New York, NY: Schulte Publishing Co., 1960, 143.

⁶⁵ Schoen, 58-59.

In the summer of 1913, Teasdale began a correspondence with the poet Vachel Lindsay. Their relationship grew significantly during the next year. He visited her in St Louis several times and they also traveled to Chicago and New York City to be together. Lindsay bombarded Teasdale with voluminous letters, some upward of twenty pages and, though the relationship began as a platonic friendship, it eventually became romantic. The two found in each other kindred, poetic spirits, and Lindsay certainly was full of the kind of passion that had always intrigued and excited Teasdale. They were, however, also very different. Teasdale having been born into a wealthy family, never wanting for anything, was sharply in contrast with Lindsay who was, by choice, penniless and enjoyed the romanticism of being tied to nothing but the earth and his God. His zest for life and boundless energy excited Teasdale, but also exhausted her. It was not uncommon for her to spend weeks in bed after one of his visits.⁶⁶

In 1914, Teasdale was also introduced to Ernst Filsinger. From the beginning, Filsinger was clear of his intentions towards Teasdale. He had “loved Sara for years through her poems,” and once he met her, began to pursue her eagerly.⁶⁷ Once Filsinger entered the picture, Lindsay’s feelings and intentions were made clear to Teasdale through passionate letters describing thoughts of marriage. He was vocal in his jealousy of both Filsinger and Wheelock. In June of 1914, Lindsay purchased an engagement ring for Sara and told her “to send for it just as soon as she was ready to accept it.”⁶⁸ Though Lindsay continued to ply her with passionate letters and visited her in New York City in July of 1914, she remained concerned that Lindsay’s tremendous vitality and poor financial situation were too much for her to overcome.

⁶⁶ Carpenter, 169-197.

⁶⁷ Qtd. in Carpenter, 196.

⁶⁸ Carpenter, 200.

Not long after Lindsay left New York, Filsinger arrived to see Teasdale. They spent time together and, finally, Teasdale invited him to accompany her to visit her family at Lake Michigan. It was there that she made her decision.

Teasdale married Ernst Filsinger on December 19, 1914 and they moved to New York City. However, the marriage ended in divorce in 1929. Lindsay was heart-broken, but continued to write Teasdale for the rest of her life. Though he had not won her heart, he still held her in his highest esteem and longed for her thoughts and opinions about his work.⁶⁹

Years of Poetic Success (1915 – 1920)

In 1915, Teasdale published *Rivers to the Sea*, which critics agree is the beginning of her more mature work.⁷⁰ It was very successful and, by 1917, had no fewer than four printings.

In 1917, eager to keep her name in the public eye but not ready to publish any of her newer works, Teasdale published *The Answering Voice*, its contents included one hundred love poems written by women and collected by Teasdale. Later in 1917, Teasdale published *Love Songs* which earned her the Poetry Society of America Prize for the best collection of poems published that year. For poetry, this award is equivalent to a Pulitzer Prize. *Love Songs* is widely considered the most successful and typical Teasdale poetry.⁷¹ During this period, Teasdale's "technique was revised to produce sharper, more compressed images within a looser structure and, instead of the wistful melancholy of her earlier work, there is now a clear-eyed facing of the pains of life."⁷² *Love Songs* contains a smaller group entitled "Songs of Sorrow." It is this group that may best illustrate the strides Teasdale had made in her poetic technique.⁷³ Though the title, *Love Songs*, invokes images of wedded bliss, the verse it contained more often reflected

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Drawn from criticisms collected in *Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism*, Vol. 4, 424-432.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Schoen, 95.

⁷³ Ibid., 105.

Teasdale's desire to be independent and free and her dismay over the realization that marriage was not what she expected it to be.⁷⁴

Flame and Shadow, published in 1920, was praised by critics and poetry lovers alike and revealed a more mature and subtle Teasdale. It contains 92 poems in twelve sections that follow a natural progression.⁷⁵ Teasdale was known for the careful ordering of the poetry in her collections. It was during this time that she had fallen in love with the poetry of W.B. Yeats, declaring him "the greatest living poet without the shadow of doubt."⁷⁶ Yeats' shared many of Teasdale's interests and his "poetic career had traced many of the same paths as Teasdale's, from the hazy medievalism of the late nineteenth century to the sharper, more natural diction with an emphasis on the expression of the poet's sensibility rather than concern with moral uplift and preachiness."⁷⁷ She had experimented with the technique of "non-scanable metrical lines" which represented "a significant shift from the absolute precision that had marked her earlier work."⁷⁸

Years of Mental Decline (1921 – 1933)

During the years 1921-1933, Teasdale lost both of her parents. The mental and emotional strain kept her poetry notebooks rather bare. Rather than try to compile another volume of her original work, Teasdale decided to publish, in 1923, a new collection, *Rainbow Gold*. This was a collection of English and American poetry for children. The "volume would include no poems written especially for children but would consist of standard English classics and a few contemporary poems, with the intent of appealing to children between the ages of 10 and 14 and

⁷⁴ Ibid., 106-110.

⁷⁵ Drake, 203.

⁷⁶ Qtd. in Schoen., 111.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 112.

helping to shape their taste for good poetry.”⁷⁹ In this collection Teasdale included her favorite Christina Rossetti poem, “Christmas Carol” or “In the Bleak Midwinter.” The *Rainbow Gold* collection remains a wildly popular and important contribution to the world of children’s literature.

In 1926, after a four year period of no forthcoming compilations, Teasdale published a new collection of her poetry entitled *Dark of the Moon*. This collection was received with critical acclaim and appeared on the year’s “best sellers” lists. The verse formed in this collection was described as lyrical and musical, but also somehow deeper and more thoughtful than her previous work.⁸⁰ The poems were ordered in nine sections reflecting “the darkness of night and the darkness of death” and alternated “between the world of nature and the world of humanity, and in each case she [was] intent on portraying both the light that comes from dark and the dark that comes from light.”⁸¹

In the time after the publication of *Dark of the Moon*, Teasdale seemed to be seized by her declining mental state. Depression and fear overwhelmed her. When one of her friends, the poet Amy Lowell, died of a stroke, Teasdale became consumed with the fear that she would succumb to the same fate. Also, several of her friends committed suicide. In 1929, Teasdale suddenly traveled to Reno, Nevada to attain a divorce from Filsinger. He was apparently unaware of her intentions until after the deed was done.⁸²

In 1930, Teasdale published a book of her children’s poetry under the title, *Stars Tonight*. The publication includes illustrations by Dorothy Lathrop. A number of the poems had been

⁷⁹ Drake, 206.

⁸⁰ MacMillan, 7-9.

⁸¹ Schoen, 128.

⁸² Ibid., 154-156.

published in previous collections, though the collection also included new poems.⁸³ The collection included twenty-five poems, three of which were newly written, seven “were reclaimed from among the unpublished ones in her notebook,” and the remaining gathered from previous volumes.⁸⁴

In 1931, Vachel Lindsay committed suicide, one month after visiting Teasdale in New York. John Wheelock believed that this event is what set Teasdale on her final path. Tragically, Sara Teasdale committed suicide, in her home in New York City, on January 29, 1933. At the time of her death she was working on a biography of Christina Rossetti. Teasdale is buried in St. Louis, Missouri. In 1933, Teasdale’s previously unpublished poetry was published posthumously under the title, *Strange Victory*, and *The Collected Poems of Sara Teasdale* was published in 1937 containing all of Teasdale’s published works.⁸⁵ In 1994, Sara Teasdale was inducted into the St. Louis Walk of Fame.

⁸³ Macmillan, 9.

⁸⁴ Schoen, 160.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 170.

Chapter 3

Poetic Examination

As a poet, Sara Teasdale never achieved the kind of fame that some of her contemporaries did. She is not studied as an Emily Dickinson or Edna St. Vincent Millay might be today, but her contribution, particularly to American women poets, is still broadly recognized today.⁸⁶ “After Teasdale’s appearance, it became fashionable for women poets to write poems like hers with short lines of three or four stresses.”⁸⁷ She was certainly not the first to write in this style, but her commitment to it definitely helped to solidify the movement away from iambic pentameter.⁸⁸ She was considered very modern for her time because she chose to utilize more conversational language and simple poetic structures.⁸⁹ While no critic would dare to call Sara Teasdale revolutionary, they do agree that she possessed “an exquisite lyrical gift.”⁹⁰

“Sara Teasdale made seven volumes of verse, delicately but firmly wrought, simply but authoritatively stated.”⁹¹ Lori Laitman was drawn to the poetry of Sara Teasdale because of its delicate simplicity.⁹² This chapter is dedicated to examining some of that verse. The texts will be examined using specific poetic devices such as; tone, theme, shift, imagery, and figurative language.

⁸⁶ Cheryl Walker, *Masks Outrageous and Austere*, “Women and Selfhood: Sara Teasdale and the Passionate Virgin Persona,” Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1991, p 44 – 46.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Rosemary Sprague, *Imaginary Gardens: A Study of Five American Poets*, “Sara Teasdale,” Philadelphia, PA: Chilton Book Company, 1969, p 99.

⁹¹ Rica Brenner, *Poets of Our Time*, “Sara Teasdale,” New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company, 1941, p 207.

⁹² Lori Laitman, email to author, April 12, 2009.

The Metropolitan Tower and Other Songs

The Metropolitan Tower

(from *Helen of Troy and Other Poems*, 1911)

We walked together in the dusk
To watch the tower grow dimly white,
And saw it lift against the sky
Its flower of amber light.

You talked of half a hundred things,
I kept each hurried word you said;
And when at last the hour was full,
I saw the light turn red.

You did not know the time had come,
You did not see the sudden flower,
Nor know that in my heart Love's birth
Was reckoned from that hour.

In this poem, Teasdale uses the first person point of view to explore the theme of awakening love. Though there are two people present in this poem, the reader is only privy to the speaker's thoughts and feelings. The tone established by Teasdale is one of excitement and romance. She sets a sunset scene, complete with descriptions of the changing light, to paint a clear picture for the reader of the time of day as well as the speaker's experience. The setting of the sun serves as the shift in this poem. After the sun sets, the speaker becomes aware of her feelings rather than her surroundings. Teasdale utilizes the "flower" as the image for this awakening. The first mention of a "flower" is in stanza one, in reference to the contrast of the tower against the sky. In stanza three, however, Teasdale uses "flower" as an image to describe the speaker's blossoming love. In both instances it is important to note that "flower" is used as a verb and not a noun. The use of "flower" as a verb provides a different kind of imagery for the reader. Rather than a beautiful "thing," it is the graceful growth or blossoming of light or love in which Teasdale is interested. Light also plays a pivotal role in the poem. Here the word has a

dual meaning. Literally, the light sets the scene providing the reader with a time of day, an image of the scenery, and an overall tone that is associated with those literal depictions. Figuratively, however, Teasdale uses the light to represent the love which is awakening. So while the “flower” is the act of awakening, the “light” is the love which is awakened.

A Winter Night

(from *Helen of Troy and Other Poems*, 1911)

My window-pane is starred with frost,
The world is bitter cold to-night,
The moon is cruel, and the wind
Is like a two-edged sword to smite.

God pity all the homeless ones,
The beggars pacing to and fro,
God pity all the poor to-night
Who walk the lamp-lit streets of snow.

My room is like a bit of June,
Warm and close-curtained fold on fold,
But somewhere, like a homeless child,
My heart is crying in the cold.

In stark contrast to the tone of the previous poem, “A Winter Night” sets a frigid scene both literally and figuratively. One does not need to work hard to grasp the imagery used in this poem. Again using the first person point of view, Teasdale equates the cold weather to her cold heart; the homeless and poor to her lonely heart. Where “The Metropolitan Tower” explored awakening love, “A Winter Night” depicts the unloved. The theme here is unrequited love. The poem can be interpreted two ways: the speaker had love and lost it or she never had it at all. Either reading works here and does not really affect the overall interpretation of the poem. The romantic “moon is cruel.” The wind is not just cold, but is “a two-edged sword to smite” the speaker. Throughout stanza one, the speaker expresses her feeling that the weather is mocking her pain. In the second stanza, the speaker attempts to remember that she is blessed and should

be grateful to God, but, as is the human condition, finds a way, even in her thankfulness, to make it about her suffering. There is a shift at the beginning of the third stanza when the warmth and comfort of the speaker's room is described, but the shift in mood is short-lived and the cold once again prevails. By the end of the poem, no longer are the cold weather and lonely beggar mocking her, but instead are outward representations of the state of her heart.

Old Tunes

(from *Flame and Shadow*, 1920)

As the waves of perfume, heliotrope, rose,
Float in the garden when no wind blows,
Come to us, go from us, whence no one knows;

So the old tunes float in my mind,
And go from me leaving no trace behind,
Like fragrance bourne on the hush of the wind.

But in the instant the airs remain
I know the laughter and the pain
Of times that will not come again.

I try to catch at many a tune
Like petals of light fallen from the moon,
Broken and bright on a dark lagoon.

But they float away – for who can hold
Youth, or perfume or the moon's gold?

This is the first example of later Teasdale poetry. Here Teasdale explores the use of new forms. Instead of her usual four-line stanzas, she uses three-lines and an un-matching two-line stanza at the close of the poem. It could be an adaptation of the Sonnet form, which uses three four-line stanzas and an ending couplet. Instead of her typical 3 stanza poems, she has five. This change in form was intentional by the poet. It was during this time that she was exploring new techniques in her poetry. More importantly, however, is what the new form brings to the

meaning and lyricism of the poem itself. Do the three lines, rather than four, add another layer of meaning to the text? Could it be that the unused fourth line represents something that is missing?

The tone of “Old Tunes” is one of nostalgia, bittersweet remembrance, tinged with melancholy. The imagery is strong. In the first stanza, it is easy to see the garden Teasdale has depicted; to smell the flowers and feel the thickness of the perfume in the air. Teasdale means to create a strong image here so as to connect the familiarity to something less tangible in the second stanza. Here she moves from a concrete experience to a conceptual one. The remembrance of “old tunes” and, more importantly, what those “tunes” represent floats in and out of her mind just as the perfume’s thick aroma wafts to and from the garden. It is apparent that the “tunes” themselves are not the most significant memory, but instead it is of what the tunes remind her. The third stanza confirms this interpretation. In the moment that the “tunes” or “airs” drift into her mind, so too does the recollection of the joy and pain associated with those tunes, and more importantly, the memory of the person to whom the tunes are attached. In the fourth stanza, she is desperately trying to hold onto her memories. She effectively utilizes light imagery to depict the frivolousness of trying to grasp something as elusive as a memory. This idea she solidifies in the final, briefer stanza reinforcing the theme: all things that people endeavor to capture for themselves, whether it be memories, love, youth, or beauty, are ephemeral.

The Strong House

(first published in Pictorial Review, 1919)

Our love is like a strong house
Well roofed against the wind and rain
Who passes darkly in the sun again and again?

The doors are fast, the lamps are lit,
We sit together talking low
Who is it in the ghostly dusk goes to and fro?

Surely ours is a strong house,
I will not trouble any more
But who comes stealing at midnight
To try the locked door?

Teasdale opens this poem with a simile. By equating love to a “strong house,” the reader is presented with a clear image from the very beginning. Not only is the house strong, but the roof is as well. Teasdale uses this language to evoke a specific reaction from the reader and to set up the third line of the stanza in which the presence of another is suggested. The second stanza is the speaker’s attempt to reassure herself in the safety of her home and the love of her husband. The reader can easily sense the anxiety of the speaker which is only magnified in the third line of the stanza. The final stanza turns the simile from the opening of the poem into a metaphor. Now the speaker is equating her marriage to a “strong house,” where “house” has the double meaning of marriage and home. With the anxious tone running high, the speaker tries to reassure herself, only to have her fears intrude on her reality by trying “the locked door.”

In first person, Teasdale again employs stanzas of varying lengths in “The Strong House.” While the first two stanzas have three lines, the final stanza has the more expected four. It is apparent that Teasdale could have combined the last two lines of the final stanza into one, creating symmetry in all stanzas. Why did she not and what, if anything, do the varying lengths represent? Where the absent fourth line in “Old Tunes” represented something that was missing, here the anticipation created by the missing fourth line signifies the extra presence alluded to in the poem. It also creates an anxious pause while the speaker waits for an answer to the question she has asked. Even more, the missing line symbolizes the answers that never come. In the third stanza, the presence the speaker has felt intrudes into her reality by trying “the locked door.” The added fourth line serves to increase the anxiety and tension of the poem. No longer could it be her imagination. The fourth line indicates the presence of a third party.

The Hour
(1922)

Was it foreknown, was it foredoomed
Before I drew my first small breath?
Will it be with me to the end,
Will it go down with me to death?

Or was it chance, would it have been
Another if it was not you?
Could any other voice or hands
Have done for me what yours can do?

Now without sorrow and without elation
I say the day I found you was foreknown,
Let the years blow like sand around that hour,
Changeless and fixed as Memnon carved in stone.

This is an oddly romantic poem. While Teasdale has returned to her most common form of three four-line stanzas, the approach to romance is different than her early work. The tone is not overtly romantic in the traditional sense, but the theme is certainly love. However, this love is different than Teasdale's earlier works as well. In "The Hour" we find a woman looking back on her romantic relationship instead of forward. She wonders if it was predestined before her birth, but also uses the unusual word, "foredoomed." What does she mean by this? The speaker is no longer merely enamored of her lover. This is a relationship that has stood the test of time and involves a deeper kind of love, one that is more realistic and knows loves good times and bad. She also wonders if this is a relationship that will last until the end of her life. Is this her one, true love?

In the second stanza the woman ponders the common question, was it fate or by chance? Did it just so happen that she met this man instead of that one? Would she have been equally as happy married to another? She answers these questions in the third stanza "without sorrow and without elation," again an allusion to her evenness of temper regarding her relationship. Only in

the final three lines of the poem does the speaker finally sound completely romantic. Not only does she believe that it was fated for the two to meet and fall in love, but, just in case, wants the day set in stone so that nothing could possibly change the outcome.

This poem is most interesting when considered within the context of Teasdale's own marriage. In 1922 she celebrated her eighth wedding anniversary. She would have been in a place similar to the speaker in this poem. It was also during this time that her husband's work was taking him away more often and their relationship began to decline. While Teasdale did not seek a divorce for another six years, it is now common knowledge that she struggled with her identity throughout her marriage, always fighting between her need to be independent and her desire to be in love. Taking this knowledge into account, Teasdale's poem seems more personal and not just a commentary on life.

To A Loose Woman
(1926)

My dear, your face is lovely,
And you have lovely eyes,
I do not cavil at your life,
But only at your lies.
You are not brave,
You are not wild,
You merely ride the crest of fashion;
Ambition is your special ware
And you have dared to call it passion

Greatly differing from the previous poems, "To A Loose Woman" is the first poem to not be written in multiple stanzas. Also it is the first poem to have no theme revolving around the relationship between a man and woman. There is a definite tone of spitefulness tinged with sarcasm. It is, for all intent and purpose, a poetic catfight. There are certainly two people present, the speaker and the one to whom she is speaking. What has the second woman done to deserve such a tongue-lashing?

The poem opens with the speaker listing the attributes of the other woman. She is obviously beautiful and the speaker does not want her to think that she has not noticed or that her beauty is the reason for the tirade. In the second half of the poem, it becomes more apparent that it is not who the other woman is, but what she has done. She has lied. She has misrepresented herself as brave. She has tried to convince others that she is merely having fun. The poet, however, is determined to let the woman know exactly what she is and is not. Here the reader gets an even better idea of what this other woman may have done. The speaker tells the other woman that no matter what label she chooses to put on her behavior, she is merely a social climber using her womanly wiles to get her way. The speaker is backhandedly identifying the other woman as a well-dressed whore.

Is the speaker disgusted with the other woman's behavior on general principal or has the woman gone one step too far and involved herself with the speaker's significant other? Whether or not the woman's questionable behavior has intruded on the speaker's life in a personal way is not necessarily clear, and either reading works. There is, however, no record of Teasdale's husband ever having had an affair. Additionally, it has been well-established that Teasdale had very traditional Victorian values. It is most likely then that Teasdale was not directly affected by a woman such as the one in the poem but, indirectly, most likely through friends.

The Years

Jewels

(from *Love Songs*, 1917)

If I should see your eyes again,
I know how far their look would go –
Back to a morning in the park
With sapphire shadows on the snow.

Or back to oak trees in the spring
When you unloosed my hair and kissed
The head that lay against your knees
In the leaf shadow's amethyst.

And still another shining place
We would remember – how the dun
Wild mountain held us on its crest
One diamond morning white with sun.

But I will turn my eyes from you
As women turn to put away
The jewels they have worn at night
And cannot wear in sober day.

This is one of Teasdale's earlier works. Written in first person, Teasdale utilizes her early style of 4 line stanzas. The poem is another love song in which the poem's speaker is communicating directly with the object of her affection, though the person is not present. The speaker imagines that she knows what her lover's eyes would say were they to meet again. The first three stanzas recall wonderful moments the two had spent together relishing their love. The speaker covers three seasons of their romance; winter, spring, and summer. It is important to note that all of the memories of their love involve nature: a snowy morning, a spring evening under an oak tree, and a summer morning in the mountains. Teasdale often used nature imagery when speaking of love and romance.

In the fourth stanza, it is not nature imagery, but humanity and the objects associated with that humanity, which serve to underscore the emotional shift. The speaker decides that, though he will have all of these wonderful memories in his eyes, she will not look. She has moved on and will not look back. The relationship is like "jewels they have worn at night/ And can not wear in sober day;" a wonderful memory, but not a relationship with a future. One can only wonder if this poem was inspired by the events of Teasdale's own relationship with Vachel Lindsay. As

much as she loved and admired him, the relationship was never a realistic option for the frail poet.

To-Night
(from *Love Songs*, 1917)

The moon is a curving flower of gold,
The sky is still and blue;
The moon was made for the sky to hold,
And I for you.

The moon is a flower without a stem,
The sky is luminous;
Eternity was made for them,
To-night for us.

Here is the overtly romantic poem that one would expect to find in a collection entitled, Love Songs. Teasdale employs metaphors heavily in this poem. The speaker, seemingly outside, describes the moon as a “curving flower of gold” and a “flower without a stem.” The flowering moon is in a “still, blue” and “luminous” sky. Teasdale compares the relationship between the moon and sky to that of the two lovers.

This is another example of typical early Teasdale: first person point of view, four-line stanzas. However, one might expect Teasdale to have a third stanza in which there would be a shift to something more melancholy and less overtly romantic, but she does not proceed in that direction. The only hint of romantic sadness is found in the last two lines. The relationship of the moon and sky is eternal, but the lovers are only promised “to-night.”

Barter
(from *Love Songs*, 1917)

Life has loveliness to sell,
All beautiful and splendid things,
Blue waves whitened on a cliff,
Soaring fire that sways and sings,
And children’s faces looking up
Holding wonder like a cup.

Life has loveliness to sell,
Music like a curve of gold,
Scent of pine trees in the rain,
Eyes that love you, arms that hold,
And for your spirit's still delight,
Holy thoughts that star the night.

Spend all you have for loveliness,
Buy it and never count the cost;
For one white singing hour of peace
Count many a year of strife well lost,
And for a breath of ecstasy
Give all you have been, or could be.

Considered one of Teasdale's most famous poems, "Barter" has also been lauded by critics as one of Teasdale's best.⁹³ Another poem from Teasdale's 1917 publication, Love Songs, it is immediately apparent that it is different from the other examples presented thus far. While "Barter" is still told from the first person point of view, unlike her other poems in which the speaker addresses one other person, here she addresses all. It is Teasdale's message to mankind. Instead of a commentary on a relationship, this is Teasdale's commentary on life. The line "Life has loveliness to sell" is repeated as the opening line for the first two stanzas. An odd sentiment, the lovely things of life are not merely to be enjoyed or appreciated, but must be bought. It seems even stranger when she begins to list the lovely things: "blue waves," "soaring fire," "children's faces," "music," the "scent of pine trees in the rain," love and prayers. All of the things mentioned in the poem are typically considered free and available to all. The fact that these things are accessible to everyone is both the reason they are considered beautiful and the reason why many forget to be thankful for this loveliness in their lives. Could that be Teasdale's point? "Spend all you have on loveliness." That enjoying every gift, every moment of "loveliness" is worth whatever the cost whether the cost be time, effort, money, relationships, or anything else.

⁹³ Schoen, p 108-09.

That is a rather romantic notion. Sacrifice “all you have been, or could be” for “one hour of peace,” “one breath of ecstasy.” Happiness is found in the appreciation of the beauty of the things that are available to everyone and that the pursuit of this happiness should come at any cost.

Faults

(from *Sonnets to Duse and other poems*, 1907)

They came to tell your faults to me,
They named them over one by one;
I laughed aloud when they were done,
I knew them all so well before, –
Oh, they were blind, too blind to see
Your faults had made me love you more.

From Teasdale’s first published collection, “Faults” has a younger, lighter tone than “Barter.” One simple stanza in an abbcac rhyme scheme with the last two lines set off by a caesura. The theme is true love. More specifically, true love sees all faults and loves even more. There is no complicated imagery, no metaphors or similes. This is just a straightforward declaration of love with a little hint of humor.

The Years

(from *Rivers to the Sea*, 1915)

To-night I close my eyes and see
A strange procession passing me –
The years before I saw your face
Go by me with a wistful grace;
They pass, the sensitive, shy years,
As one who strives to dance, half blind with tears.

The years went by and never knew
That each one brought me nearer you;
Their path was narrow and apart
And yet it led me to your heart –
Oh, sensitive, shy year, oh, lonely years,
That strove to sing with voices drowned in tears.

“The Years,” from Teasdale’s third collection Rivers to the Sea, is a beautiful commentary on true love. The speaker experiences the realization that all of the years of her life served to lead her to the one with whom she was meant to be. The poem is full of imagery. First of all, her life passes as a “strange procession.” This seems the poetic equivalent of her “life passing before her eyes.” She describes the years as “sensitive” and “shy,” but instead of their passing being painful, now she sees them as “wistful.” The understanding that all she has been through has led her to where she wants to be. She likens the passing “as one who strives to dance, half blind with tears.” In other words, a person who attempts to put on a brave face in the midst of sorrow. At the time, she recalls, it was not easy. The second stanza becomes even more romantic. The years came and went not knowing what the future might hold. The road was sometimes difficult, but it was worth all the strife for it brought her to her love. Now she praises the difficult years. At the time she felt as if she were drowning in sorrow and loneliness, but now she can be grateful for all that she endured.

Mystery

Nightfall

(from *Flame and Shadow*, 1920)

We will never walk again
As we used to walk at night,
Watching our shadows lengthen
Under the gold street-light
When the snow was new and white.

We will never walk again
Slowly, we two,
In spring when the park is sweet
With midnight and with dew
And the passers-by are few.

I sit and think of it all,
And the blue June twilight dies, –
Down in the clanging square
A street-piano cries
And stars come out in the skies.

The tone of this poem is certainly sorrowful and full of nostalgia, which is common of later Teasdale poetry. The speaker is speaking to herself, a technique not used in any of the other poems examined thus far. However, one does not necessarily realize this until reaching the final stanza. The first two stanzas recall the past seasons of a romance that will never be again. A winter spent walking in the snow and a spring in which midnight strolls free from the prying eyes of others was the secret joy of a couple in love. The shift occurs in the third stanza. In the soberness of summer, the speaker realizes that the relationship is over and will never be again. Another evening, but instead of one filled with love and romance, it is filled with sorrow and the realization that no matter the pain from which she suffers, life goes on for everyone else. The imagery Teasdale employs here is interesting as well. She describes the noise from the square as “clanging” and mentions that the “street-piano cries.” Not only does life seem to go on despite her pain, it goes on in spite of it.

Spray

(from *Flame and Shadow*, 1920)

I knew you thought of me all night,
I knew, though you were far away;
I felt your love blow over me
As if a dark wind-riven sea
Drenched me with quivering spray.

There are so many ways to love
And each one has its own delight –
Then be content to come to me
Only as spray the beating sea
Drives inland through the night.

Another poem from Teasdale's later work *Flame and Shadow*, "Spray" has a darker tone than her earlier work. The title itself is the image Teasdale uses in the poem to describe the relationship between the speaker and her lover. In the first stanza, the speaker tells her lover that she knows he has thought of her "all night" even though they were apart. His feelings for her are so strong that she can sense them, feel them. She uses simile to equate the image of a stormy sea soaking her with its spray to the feeling of his love washing over her. In the second stanza, the shift is more surprising. From the first stanza, one might think that Teasdale was once again headed for a romantic statement imbued with the imagery of nature. She certainly creates some passionate images to open the poem. Instead, the speaker tells her lover that she might not be able to give him exactly what he wants from her. She does not want a typical romance, but rather for him to "be content to come to me/ only as spray the beating sea/ drives inland through the night." This simile has several meanings. First of all, she wants a relationship that is not constant, but instead for her lover to "be content" with what it is she is offering. In reality, what she is offering is the other meaning of the simile. She wants to skip the everyday parts of the relationship; to pass over the times when the sea is calm or common. She is only interested in the wild, stormy sea beating the shore with, not just waves, but "spray." She only wants the passion. The poem seems ahead of its time and very unusual for a woman who was known for her Victorian values. One can easily see a 21st century woman making such a statement, but this was quite an assertion for 1920.

The Kiss

(from *Helen of Troy and Other Poems*, 1911)

I hoped that he would love me,
And he has kissed my mouth,
But I am like a stricken bird
That cannot reach the south.

For though I know he loves me,
To-night my heart is sad;
His kiss was not so wonderful
As all the dreams I had.

Another critic favorite, “The Kiss” is a wonderful example of Teasdale’s early work.⁹⁴ Certainly the most humorous of the poems examined so far, there is no secondary meaning here. Teasdale uses imagery only at the end of the first stanza when she compares herself to a “stricken bird/ that cannot reach the south,” a sick bird that cannot fly south for the winter, an interesting choice of imagery to describe a kiss. After receiving that for which she was hoping, she felt sick. In the second stanza, the reason is revealed. Though the kiss confirmed his feelings for her, it did not live up to her expectations. She had been dreaming of the kiss but, in reality, it was a disappointment.

The Mystery
(from *Flame and Shadow*, 1920)

Your eyes drink of me,
Love makes them shine,
Your eyes that lean
So close to mine.

We have long been lovers,
We know the range
Of each other’s moods
And how they change

But when we look
At each other so
Then we feel
How little we know;

The spirit eludes us,
Timid and free –
Can I ever know you
Or you know me?

⁹⁴ Walker, p 46.

The title of this poem alludes to its theme, the mystery of love. It is an intimate moment between two lovers. Face to face, she notices how his eyes reflect their love. Their relationship is not new. They have been together long enough that they know each other well. They understand each other's emotional capacity. However, she realizes that no matter how much time they spend together, no matter how well they think they know each other; there will always be things that they do not know about each other. Interestingly, the poem ends with a question. Teasdale does not answer the question directly within the poem, but the title alludes to her intended answer. Can two people ever really know each other completely? Teasdale does not think so. Her romantic side insists that there must be some mystery between lovers.

The Rose
(from *Rivers to the Sea*, 1915)

Beneath my chamber window
Pierrot was singing, singing;
 I heard his lute the whole night thru
 Until the east was red.
Alas, alas, Pierrot
I had no rose for flinging
 Save one that drank my tears for dew
 Before its leaves were dead.

I found it in the darkness,
I kissed it once and threw it,
 The petals scattered over him,
 His song was turned to joy;
And he will never know –
Alas, the one who knew it! –
 The rose was plucked when dusk was dim
 Beside a laughing boy.

“The Rose” is a wonderful example of early Teasdale poetry. The only poem examined in this study which hints of Teasdale's origins as a poet. Using the classic character of Pierrot illustrates Teasdale's interest in the theatre. The entire poem has a theatrical tone. In the first stanza Pierrot is performing “the whole night thru” underneath the speaker's bedroom window.

Pierrot is not actually a character but instead represents a new suitor who is serenading the speaker in an attempt to woo her. As the sun rises, she realizes she has “no rose for flinging,” no way of lauding his performance or excepting his advances, except a dead one into which she has once cried. This dead rose is a remembrance from a previous relationship. The second stanza is all about this rose. While searching in the dark for something to throw in response to “Pierrot’s” declarations of love, which would adequately display her eagerness to accept his feelings, she discovers this long forgotten memento. She quickly decides to use it anyway, despite its hidden history. She throws it down to her new suitor and he is overjoyed. She is secretly thrilled that she is the only one who will ever know that the rose she has thrown was picked originally with another boy. This is a common theme in Teasdale’s poetry: women hold the power in relationships. She is very interested in all things romantic, but somehow is often held back from complete romantic abandon by reality. In this poem, the reality is fun and silly, but as was shown in previous examples, sometimes that reality is very sobering.

In all of the examples examined in this study there are several common threads. First of all, the themes, in one way or another, all involve relationships. Even “Barter,” which does not involve a relationship between two people, involves the relationship between mankind and its environment, the universe. Secondly, they all deal with love in one way or another. Whether it is a passionate relationship between lovers as in “Spray”, the memory of a lost love as in “Old Tunes”, or the love of all things beautiful as in “Barter,” Teasdale thoroughly explores this powerful human emotion. Finally, Teasdale illustrates that there is not only one-way to explore this emotion or one-way to express it. She uses many poetic forms to express her thoughts. These poems wonderfully exemplify Teasdale’s niche in the poetic history of America. She is “one of the most delicate artists America has yet produced; a poet eminently good to know, and –

because of the naturalness of her expression, the simplicity of her technique – a good stylistic model for young poet's learning their trade.”⁹⁵

None of the word-musicians has more completely and melodiously mastered her craft than Sara Teasdale. With the utmost simplicity of phrase and style, she achieves effects that are little short of magical; her stanzas, often without a single figure of speech, are more eloquent than a poem crammed with tropes and highly spiced similes.⁹⁶

⁹⁵ George Brandon Saul, “A Delicate Fabric of Bird Song: The Verse of Sara Teasdale,” *The Arizona Quarterly*, Vol. 13, no. 1, Spring, 1957, p 66.

⁹⁶ Louis Untermeyer, “Sara Teasdale,” *American Poetry since 1900*, Henry Holt, 1923, p 206.

Chapter 4

Musical Examination

In the January/February 2004 edition of the *Journal of Singing*, Greg Berg stated, “Lori Laitman deservedly stands shoulder to shoulder with Ned Rorem for her uncommon sensitivity to text, her loving attention to the human voice and its capabilities, and her extraordinary palate of musical colors and gestures.”⁹⁷ The comparison to Ned Rorem is not only due to the quality of Laitman’s music, but also the style. Like Rorem, Laitman’s songs are text-driven: “Everything I do, every melody I write is absolutely derived from the words.”⁹⁸ Like Rorem, this attention to the text manifests itself both melodically and rhythmically: “I always treat the words with the utmost respect. All of my ideas stem from the text. I never cram words into a musical phrase, but always structure the phrase so that the words are set to their best advantage.”⁹⁹ Unlike Rorem, however, Laitman also pays close attention to the meaning and emotion of the poem. “The Laitman settings are centered on the sense and meaning of the words. The emotional range of the poetry dictates the musical language” in contrast to Rorem whose “settings are grander, more emotionally remote. They are tied to the rhythms of the poetry, rather than the words.”¹⁰⁰ In addition to her sensitive text-setting, Laitman’s hallmarks include lyrical melodies, accompaniments that “partner the voice yet are independently interesting,” post-modern harmonies, textures that comment on the mood of the text, constantly shifting meters, as well as intervals and rhythmic figures used as unifying material.¹⁰¹ All of these things are present in the

⁹⁷ Berg, *Journal of Singing*, “The Listener’s Guide,” January/February Vol. No. 2004, p 321.

⁹⁸ Kathleen Watt, “An acclaimed art song composer takes the opera stage: Kathleen Watt speaks with composer Lori Laitman.” *US Operaweb*, available <http://kewatt.com/LoriLaitman.html>.

⁹⁹ John Campbell and Steve Brockman, *Artsong Update*, Issue 34, available at http://artsong.com/meet/reviews/artsong-update_dreaming.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ Maya Freeman Hoover, “Reaching into Untapped Resources: Some Overlooked Treasures of Song Literature.” *Classical Singer* 2001, available at <http://www.artsongs.com/meet/reviews/classical2001>.

three song cycles being examined here: *The Metropolitan Tower and Other Songs*, *The Years*, and *Mystery*.

The Metropolitan Tower and Other Songs

The Metropolitan Tower and Other Songs is the first song cycle completed by Laitman and, as previously mentioned, contains Laitman's first art song, "The Metropolitan Tower," which was composed for her friend, soprano, Lauren Wagner. Laitman says that the cycle "was originally only going to have 4 songs" but that she "added 2 more, as an afterthought. Mainly because [she] thought it would make for a better cycle length."¹⁰² Maya Freeman Hoover says "*The Metropolitan Tower and Other Songs* with texts by Sara Teasdale...are as worthy of inclusion as any standard Rorem or Barber song studied in the classroom or performed in the recital arena."¹⁰³ Because the set is not unified in poetic theme, Laitman utilizes some of her own tools to unite the set. In *The Metropolitan Tower and Other Songs*, Laitman uses the interval of a fourth as well as a successive eighth note motivic figure to tie the work together. Most apparent in Laitman's first song cycle is her gift for sensitive text setting. "She has an unerring way of enhancing a text's beauty and meaning while not obscuring the text through artifice or excess."¹⁰⁴ In this cycle, as well as the others, she sets the texts almost exclusively syllabically. Due to her devotion to the words, within each song of the cycle Laitman utilizes meter shifts to accommodate their natural rhythms.

¹⁰² Lori Laitman, e-mail to author, September 10, 2009.

¹⁰³ Hoover.

¹⁰⁴ Gregory Berg, "The Listener's Gallery, review of *Becoming a Redwood: Songs of Lori Laitman*," *Journal of Singing* Vol. 63, No. 5 (May/June 2007): 612.

The Metropolitan Tower

Range: D \flat ₄ – F \sharp ₅

Tessitura: A₄- D₅

The first song in the set is “The Metropolitan Tower.” Laitman says she modeled the song after “Secret Words” by Paul Bowles.¹⁰⁵ The vocal line is “predominately gently arched” covering a range of just over an octave.¹⁰⁶ The accompaniment is not particularly difficult and mostly doubles the voice while the texture remains mostly thin, stressing the lyrical beauty of the vocal line in this ABA' song. One of the few pieces in which Laitman uses key signatures, “The Metropolitan Tower” begins in A \flat Major passes through several tonal centers in the B section and settles into A Major in the return of A.

The vocal line is derived from the accompaniment: “the first two measures of the left hand of the piano are taken as a point of departure for the first two phrases of the vocal line.”¹⁰⁷ This early example highlights what Laitman does well all through this piece, which is to share and “exchange material between piano and vocal line”¹⁰⁸ (See example 1)

Also present in the introductory piano material is the successive eighth note rhythmic motive that Laitman will use as a unifying motive throughout this cycle. As in other pieces, Laitman utilizes these eighth notes to create motion which here represent the walking of the lovers. In this piece, the left hand’s introductory material also serves as a sort of rhythmic ostinato throughout both the A section and its reprise.

¹⁰⁵ Lori Laitman, *The Metropolitan Tower and Other Songs*, Riverdale, NY: Classical Vocal Reprints, 1991.

¹⁰⁶ Carol Lines, “The Songs of Lori Laitman,” *Journal of Singing*, Vol. 64, No.1 (Sept/Oct 2007): 32.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

♩ = 84 Lyrical, Legato

Magical, legato

mf

poco rit. *mf* *a tempo*

We walked to - geth - er in the dusk To watch the

poco rit. *a tempo* (bring out melody)

tow - er grow dim - ly white, and saw it lift a -

Example 1: The Metropolitan Tower, mm. 1-9; voice and piano exchange material

All through the cycle, Laitman employs the interval of the 4th as another way to unite the pieces. She uses the interval, both descending and ascending, to comment on the text. In this piece “the descending fourth of the piano right hand, measure 3, is heard first in measure 5 in the

voice and several times thereafter.”¹⁰⁹ The ascending 4th is a subtle part of the left hand piano part, but the first example of an ascending fourth found in the vocal line is in measure 6. (See example 2)

Example 2: The Metropolitan Tower, mm. 3-6; perfect 4th used as unifying material

Laitman continues the conversation between the voice and piano in the B section where the vocal line comes directly from the inner voice of the right hand piano part in measure 5.¹¹⁰ (See example 3)

Example 3: The Metropolitan Tower, mm. 5, 18; voice and piano exchange material

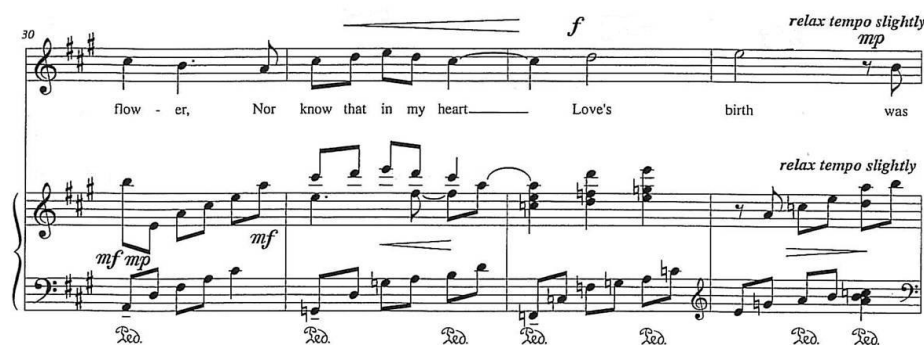
While the melody remains lyrical, the B section is tonally unstable, passing through three key changes in just four phrases. The constantly shifting tonal center is a commentary on the emotion of the poem. Though not stated by the narrator, it is in this section of the poem that she realizes her feelings and Laitman’s shifting keys illuminate those feelings to the listener. “Also of interest are the more closed textures of the accompaniment in section B, perhaps for the more intimate

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

recollection of conversation, and the change of prosody, with each phrase beginning after the downbeat, in contrast to A.”¹¹¹ Certainly, Laitman uses the harmonic structure and texture to underscore the poetic shift of section B.

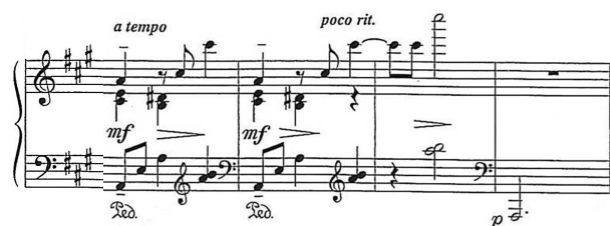
In the return of A, the key has settled in A Major. In this restatement of the A material, “Laitman captures the recollection of the beginning of love with a hemiola” in order to extend the moment of “Love’s birth.”¹¹² (See example 4)



Example 4: The Metropolitan Tower, mm. 30-33; hemiola

It is another example of how Laitman makes use of longer rhythmic durations to emphasize important text both musically and dramatically giving “the impression that each of those sustained moments is captured and tenderly embraced by the memory.”¹¹³

The postlude recalls the introductory material but doubles in length and introduces another interval used often by Laitman, the octave, as a conclusion. (See example 5)



Example 5: The Metropolitan Tower, mm. 40-43; postlude recalls introduction

Lines calls the postlude “a satisfying sense of completeness.”¹¹⁴

¹¹¹ Ibid., 33.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid.

A Winter's Night

Range: D \flat ₄ – G₅

Tessitura: B₄ – D₅

The second song in the cycle is “A Winter’s Night.” A stark contrast to “The Metropolitan Tower,” this poem speaks of unrequited or lost love. Laitman uses no key signature to allow for easier shifting of tonal centers. The overall harmonic structure gives a melancholy tone to the piece, which is an appropriate interpretation of Teasdale’s poetry. “The sparse piano accompaniment in ‘A Winter’s Night’ portrays the cold, bare winter.”¹¹⁵ This texture also creates “a distinct contrast musically and dramatically” from the previous piece.¹¹⁶ The form is a simple three-sectioned piece, ABC, with the beginning and ending of each section clearly delineated both visually and aurally in the music.

The short introduction establishes both the starting pitch and rhythm of the vocal line, which enters in measure 5. The melody of the introduction covers only a minor third over repeating F Major and E \flat minor chords. Once the voice enters in measure 5, the left hand of the accompaniment continues this pattern of alternating chords in different tonalities. The outer voice of the accompaniment in measure 5 doubles the rhythm of the vocal line, but not the pitch. (See example 6)

The musical score for 'A Winter's Night' is presented in common time (C). The tempo is marked 'Lyrical' with a quarter note equal to 69 (♩ = 69). The score begins with a vocal line that is silent for the first four measures. In measure 5, the vocal line enters with the lyrics 'My win - dow - pane is'. The piano accompaniment consists of alternating chords in the left hand and a single note in the right hand. The dynamic is marked 'mp' (mezzo-piano). A red circle highlights the first note of the vocal line, which is a G4.

Example 6: A Winter Night, mm. 1-5; introduction establishes vocal line entrance

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Lori Laitman, *The Metropolitan Tower and Other Songs*.

¹¹⁶ Lori Laitman, e-mail to author, September 10, 2009.

With the first entrance of the voice at measure 5, Laitman also first uses the descending 4th interval. (See example 6)

The text setting is mostly syllabic, with the rhythms and meters determined by the rhythm and meter of the poetry. Measures 9 through 11 illustrate Laitman's use of shifting meters to fit the poetic text. (See example 7)

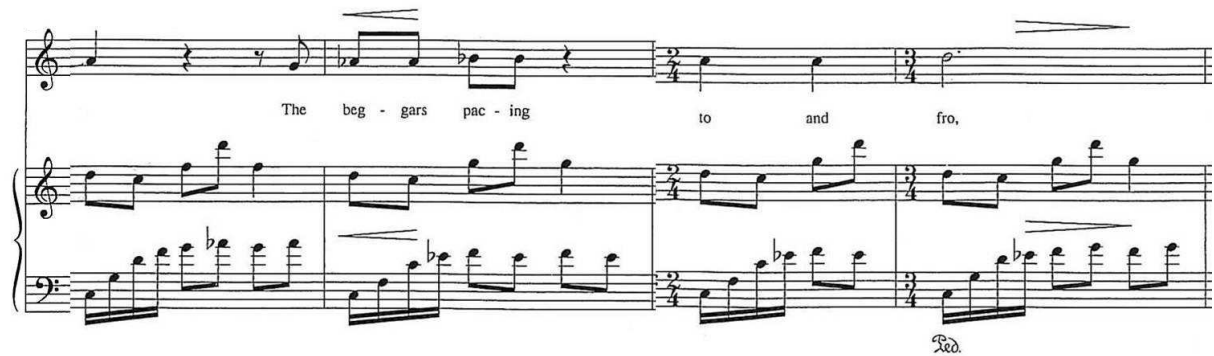
The image shows a musical score for three measures of a song. The top staff is for the voice, and the bottom staff is for the piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "The moon is cruel, and the wind Is like a two-edged sword to smite.—". The score includes dynamic markings such as *poco accel.*, *f*, *sub. mp*, and *f*. The piano part features a descending line in the bass register, marked with *Red.* (Reduction) and *sub. mp* (subito mezzo-piano). The meter shifts from 4/4 to 5/4 in measure 10 and then to 3/4 in measure 11.

Example 7: A Winter Night, mm. 9-11; shifting meters to fit poetic text

Beginning in 4/4, she shifts to 5/4 in measure 10 to allow enough of a stress on “wind,” which is both important poetically and the end of the poetic line, and enough of a lift to stay true to the form of Teasdale's poetry. The rest of the 5/4 measure sensitively follows the rhythm of the words and Laitman shifts meters again, to 3/4, in measure 11 where she uncharacteristically sets a one syllable word using two notes. Because this is atypical of Laitman, the choice really emphasizes the word. She additionally uses the highest pitches of the piece here creating a sort of initial climax which leads into the B section. Consequently, Laitman also chooses to double the voice in the accompaniment for these measures drawing further attention to their poetic importance.

In the B section, Laitman maintains the 3/4 meter she had established at the end of A. The accompaniment changes to comment more accurately on the text, “the beggars pacing to and fro” and “walking the lamp-lit streets of snow.” In fact, Laitman says that “the accompaniment in

the middle section hovers between two chords and the underlying rhythmic pattern depicts the ‘beggars pacing to and fro’”¹¹⁷ (See example 8)



Example 8: A Winter Night, mm. 16-19

The successive eighth note figures are very apparent beginning in measure 13 and there is an implied C pedal throughout the B section beneath the alternating chords of C minor and G minor.

“Lusher harmonies appear under ‘my room is like a bit of June’ before returning to a dirge-like ending.”¹¹⁸ These lush harmonies cover the third section, where, again, the left hand accompaniment is rhythmically reminiscent of the A section, but both harmonically and melodically altered. In measure 38, Laitman uses the accompaniment to illustrate the text “My heart is crying” on beat 4. (See example 9)



Example 9: A Winter Night, mm. 38; text painting

¹¹⁷ Lori Laitman, *The Metropolitan Tower and Other Songs*.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

The postlude is marked “dirge-like” and is an adaptation of the introduction an octave plus a 5th lower. The choice seems to underscore Teasdale’s meaning and emphasize the speaker’s despair.

Old Tunes

Range: C#₄ – G#₅

Tessitura: A₄ – C#₅

The third piece in the cycle is by far the longest. The form is ABA', in which the five strophes are divided by two-one-two to fit the three-part form. Laitman notes, atop the music, that “the pedal markings are very important creating the effect of sounds floating.”¹¹⁹ The “lyricism and blending of sounds” creates a “textural contrast to the previous songs” and provides great incite into Laitman’s intentions for this piece, which is certainly in alignment with Teasdale’s theme of remembering past love.¹²⁰

Within Laitman’s four measure introduction, she notates four tempo changes. These changes further specify Laitman’s intent to capture the mood of Teasdale’s poetry by creating the tension associated with recalling a memory that is tinged with both happiness and sadness. It also creates the image of the “waves of perfume” and “fragrance bourne on the hush of the wind.”

The musical score for 'Old Tunes' is presented in 3/4 time with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The tempo is marked as 112 (as the base tempo). The score features a four-measure introduction followed by a series of musical phrases. The tempo changes are indicated by markings above the staff: 'poco accel.' (poco accelerando), 'poco rit.' (poco ritardando), 'slight' (slight ritardando), 'poco accel.', and 'poco rit. slight'. The dynamic marking 'mf' (mezzo-forte) is used throughout. The score includes a 'ped.' (pedal) marking at the beginning of the first phrase and another 'ped.' marking at the beginning of the second phrase. Red circles are drawn around specific musical phrases in the score, highlighting the use of perfect 4th intervals. The score ends with a double bar line and a small asterisk.

Example 10: Old Tunes, mm. 1-4; tempo changes, use of perfect 4ths

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Lori Laitman, e-mail to author, September 10, 2009.

It is in the introduction the she first introduces the descending 4th interval, in measure 2. She also uses an ascending 4th in the introduction beginning in measure 1. The 4th begins to play an even more important role in this piece. (See example 4)

The vocal line enters in measure 5 with instructions from the composer to sing "as from a distance," another example of Laitman's intent to create the mood of remembrance. The constant tempo changes continue throughout the piece, though Laitman notes that "strict adherence" is not what she is after, rather a "passionate and musical performance."¹²¹ However, she is adamant about faithfulness to her pedal markings, "'Old Tunes' is very atmospheric and the use of the piano pedal deliberately creates sounds that merge and linger in the air just as 'the waves of perfume...float in the garden where no wind blows.'"¹²² The texture of the accompaniment remains rather thin throughout the piece to accommodate the pedaling, allowing the "sounds to merge" without becoming overly saturated. In this first verse Laitman also introduces a triplet figure in measure 7, which she will use throughout the piece to represent the "memories" or "old tunes." (See example 11)



Example 11: Old Tunes, mm. 7; triplet figure

Her text setting continues to be almost exclusively syllabic.

Laitman begins in A Major, choosing to utilize a key signature for this piece. At measure 5, she introduces a D# to suggest a shift to E Major, but settles back into A Major before ending the A section. Once the piece settles into A Major, Laitman introduces the eighth note figuration

¹²¹ Lori Laitman, *The Metropolitan Tower and Other Songs*.

¹²² Ibid.

that she uses throughout the cycle in measure 25. As in the other times that this figure is employed, it effectively represents the atmosphere of the poem, her representing “the hush of the wind.” The interlude in measures 33 through 37 recalls the opening vocal line and begins to shift the tonality from A Major to suggest F minor, rather than F# minor, for the beginning of section B. However, F minor is not solidly established without a D \flat . Laitman continues to blur the tonality throughout the B section seemingly passing between the major and minor modes in alternate measures. Throughout the B section the triplet figuration from measure 6 of the opening vocal line is repeated in the right hand of the accompaniment, the “old tune” reminding the speaker “of times that will not come again.” To set that text, Laitman uses a minor 7th, which serves to underscore the sadness of the speaker. (See example 12)

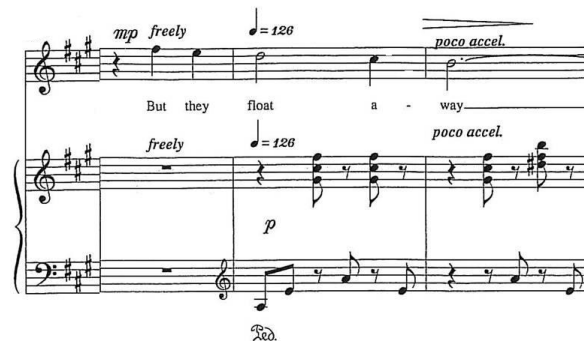


Example 12: Old Tunes, mm. 44; text painting

In the interlude between B and A', Laitman passes through B Major, though instead of suggesting it with use of the V chord, she utilizes the IV to emphasize the important intervallic relationship and stress the interval which is a unifier within the cycle. The B section ends with a simple perfect 4th that is three measures long with a fermata, serving to solidify its importance.

A' returns to the key signature of A Major, though as in the original statement of A, E Major is suggested with the addition of D#. A difference in the return of A is a time signature of 7/8 in the three measures prior to the entrance of the vocal line. The additional right hand chord

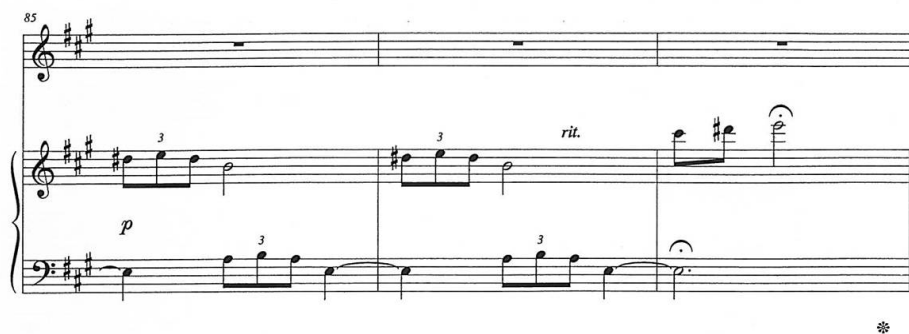
serves to further the merging sounds that Laitman desired. Beginning in measure 74, a new figure appears in the accompaniment, a play on the typical eighth note figure used by Laitman in this set. The eighths pass back and forth between hands creating a lighter, airy atmosphere in addition to the floating effect that has already been established. (See example 13)



Example 13: Old Tunes, mm. 73-75; eighth note figure

The vocal line ends, unusually on a G \flat_5 , rather than the G# of the key signature or ending key scheme. The harmony outlined in the accompaniment suggests E minor and takes its material from the introduction. The last vocal gesture is an octave leap, utilizing another of Laitman's regular melodic tools.

The postlude in measure 85-87 is dominated by the triplet figure from the opening vocal line, continuing to signify the "tune" that haunts the memory of the speaker. After having suggested E Major several times throughout, the piece finally arrives there for the conclusion. (See example 14)



Example 14: Old Tunes, mm. 85-87; triplet figure

The Strong House

Range: D₄ – G₅

Tessitura: G₄ – D₄

“In ‘The Strong House’ shifting harmonies create a feeling of instability as a commentary on the text.”¹²³ Laitman says this song “afforded [her] the opportunity to create a different sort of harmonic language in order to best portray the narrator’s fleeting thoughts of infidelity.”¹²⁴ Laitman also uses three time signatures in the first three measures. These shifting meters offer further commentary on Teasdale’s poetry, which centers on the theme of insecure love or infidelity. The piece is through-composed, which suits the differing strophe lengths and the accompaniment utilizes the unifying eighth note figure throughout the piece. The opening gesture is a D Major chord with a perfect 4th on top followed by the 4th being sounded melodically. This unifying interval has extra meaning in this piece, where it not only has the connotation of love, but also the questioning of that love. (See example 15)



Example 15: The Strong House, mm.1; use of perfect 4th

Laitman sticks to syllabic text setting in this piece, but begins to explore the use of intervals in a new way. The opening vocal line begins with an upward leap of a major 6th on the words “our love.” This is one of the only ascending intervals used in the vocal line and seems to represent

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Lori Laitman, e-mail to author, September 10, 2009.

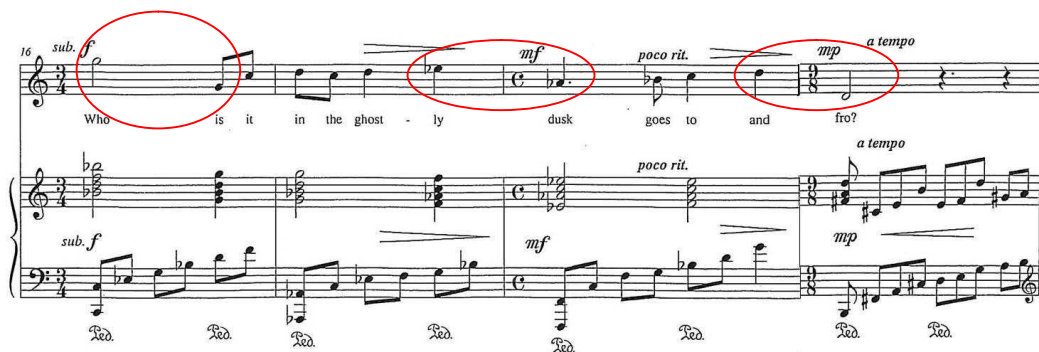
the speaker's initial confidence in her relationship. In the third vocal line, measures 8 and 9, Laitman uses the descending minor 6th to set "the sun." (See example 16)

Example 16: The Strong House, mm. 7-9; text painting

She uses this interval again in measure 14 and 15 to embody the two characters "talking low." (See example 17)

Example 17: The Strong House, mm. 14-15; text painting

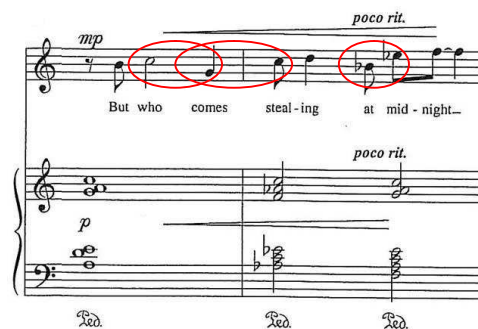
The next vocal phrase employs three descending intervals to stress the poetic tension. First, in measure 16, a descending octave to question "who is it?" Then, in the next two measures, a descending perfect 5th symbolizes the "ghostly dusk." Finally, another descending octave asks, who "goes to and fro" in measures 18 and 19. (See example 18)



Example 18: The Strong House, mm. 16-19; use of octaves, text painting

Laitman uses the octave in measure 16 to effectively express the extreme emotion of the speaker, the fear and disbelief.

Measure 21 ushers in the final stanza. The perfect 5th is again used to represent the love that is like a “strong house.” The accompaniment continues with consecutive eighth notes suggesting the sneaking around of “the other woman.” The motion halts in measure 25 with the speaker’s questioning of “who comes stealing at midnight.” Laitman uses two ascending perfect 4^{ths} in this phrase emphasizing the speaker’s belief in her relationship. Both of the 4^{ths} resolve outward to perfect 5^{ths}, the interval associated with their “strong house.” (See example 19)



Example 19: The Strong House, mm. 25-26; use of perfect 4th

In the final vocal phrase, measure 27 and 28, Laitman again uses the ascending perfect 4th and the descending octave. The octave is again used dramatically to imply the fear, shock and sorrow of the speaker. The final note of the vocal line is marked, *subito mp*. This dynamic change combined with the octave change serves to emphasize this point.

Example 20: The Strong House, mm. 27-28; text painting

The piece concludes with a two measure postlude comprised of ascending eighth notes all in the treble clef. These represent the rising anxiety of the speaker as well as possibly her prayers. The final musical gesture is a perfect 4th from B₅ to E₆ set against a D₅. The dissonance created by the harmony accentuates the questioning of the stability of the “strong house.” (See example 21)

Example 21: The Strong House: m28-30; accompaniment comments on poem

The Hour

Range: C₄ – G₅

Tessitura: G₄ – D₅

“Lush harmonies are the hallmark of ‘The Hour,’ which, like ‘The Metropolitan Tower,’ is a reflection on woman’s first discovery of love.”¹²⁵ “The Hour” is one of Laitman’s favorite

¹²⁵ Lori Laitman, *The Metropolitan Tower and Other Songs*.

poems and she considers the setting “lyrical and...quite French sounding.”¹²⁶ She wants the song to have a “push and relax” tempo similar to “Old Tunes,” however, in “The Hour” the pedal markings are “guidelines” rather than strict instructions.¹²⁷ She continues to employ syllabic text setting, which is a featured characteristic of this set as well as shifting meters and tonality. She uses no key signatures in the piece which is through-composed.

After a two measure introduction, the voice enters over an accompaniment that is a restatement of the introduction. The second vocal phrase is an exact repeat of the first and outlines a G minor 7th chord. Laitman’s sensitive text setting is made evident in measure 7, “will it be with me to the end,” in which she carefully follows the natural word stresses both rhythmically and melodically. (See example 22)



Example 22: The Hour, mm. 7-8; sensitive text setting

These measures also contain the first real stepwise motion of the vocal line. The first three phrases containing mostly skips, including an ascending perfect 4th followed by a descending octave in measure 5 and 6, Laitman’s choices in measure 7 are both sensitive to the rhythm of the text and its nature. In measure 9, Laitman employs text-painting for the words “go down” utilizing the descending major 6th. (See example 23)

¹²⁶ Lori Laitman, e-mail to author, September 10, 2009.

¹²⁷ Lori Laitman, *The Metropolitan Tower and Other Song*, p24.



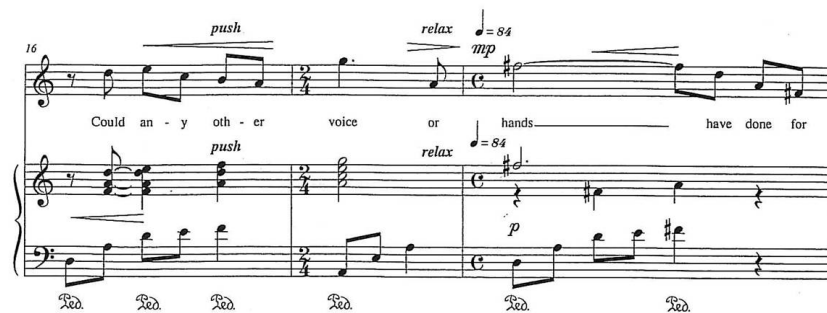
Example 23: The Hour, mm. 8-10; text painting

The second stanza begins in 3/4, as the piece began, but the tempo begins to increase leading to a section of constantly shifting meters. The meter changes serve the text and further emphasize Laitman's "remarkable gift for setting words to music."¹²⁸ (See example 24)

Example 24: The Hour, mm. 12-15; tempo and meter shifts used for effective text setting

The simple melody, in measures 12 through 15, leads to a secondary climatic moment of the piece in measures 16 through 18. "Note the way she stresses the words 'voice or hands' climatically" using pitch and rhythm as well as approach and resolution. The word "voice" is set utilizing the highest pitch in the piece with a dotted-quarter note and is approached by an ascending minor 7th leap. It then resolves back down the minor 7th only to leap up a major 6th on the word "hands," which uses a half note tied to an eighth note for added stress. (See example 25)

¹²⁸ Carol Kimball, *Song*, "Lori Laitman," 340.



Example 25: The Hour, mm. 16-18; duration and pitch used for emphasis

In measure 20, the repetitive eighth note pattern common to all of these pieces, picks up in earnest and leads to the opening of the final verse. The accompaniment begins to double the voice, the two coming together in the realization of fated love. Now in 4/4, at a tempo somewhere between the slowness of the opening and the animated middle section, Laitman employs a melodic line that perfectly suits Teasdale's poetic line, "Now without sorrow and without elation." Poetry that suggests no extreme emotional connection is set using only three notes. (See example 26)



Example 26: The Hour, mm. 22-25; melody used to comment on text

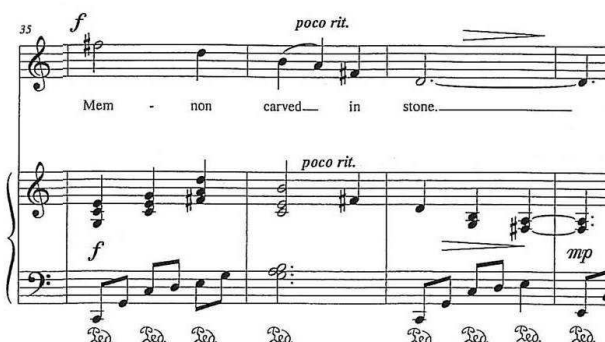
This setting serves as an effective lead into the climax of the piece beginning in measure 25. As in the beginning of the piece, Laitman chooses to avoid stepwise motion in favor of skips and leaps to emphasize the importance of the text, "I say the day I found you was foreknown." An

ascending minor 7th begins the rise followed by a descending perfect 5th, which is countered by an octave. (See example 27)



Example 27: The Hour, mm. 25-27; use of leaps for text emphasis

With the important words, “found you,” being set with a descending perfect 4th, this phrase winds down. The accompaniment begins to gather speed again in measure 29 leading to another octave leap, again G₄ to G₅, as “the years blow like sand around that hour,” another phrase in which Laitman uses leaps and skips rather than stepwise motion. The final vocal phrase utilizes a steady right hand accompaniment over the still moving eighth notes as a representation of “Memnon carved in stone.” (See example 28)



Example 28: The Hour, mm. 36-39; accompaniment used to comment on text

The short three and a half measure postlude transposes the opening vocal melody underscoring the text and definitively stating that it *was* foreknown, it *was* foredoomed.

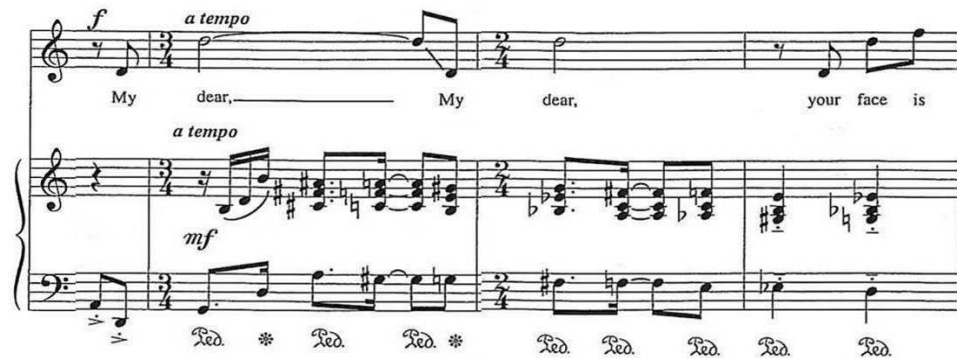
To A Loose Woman

Range: D₄ – A₅

Tessitura: C₅ – F₅

Laitman specifically chose this poem for its “somewhat sarcastic” nature because she felt it was “a good way to dramatically end the cycle.”¹²⁹ The piece is very different from the rest of the set with its faster tempo and almost cabaret-song feel. “The syncopated rhythms and chromatic harmonies in the piano part of ‘To A Loose Woman’ set a sly background for the dramatic vocal line.”¹³⁰

The two measure introduction utilizes only one differing note, rising from a C₅ in measure one to a C₅[#] in measure two, which provides a chromatic line towards the entrance of the vocal line on D. (See example 29)



Example 30: To A Loose Woman, mm. 2-5; octave leaps

The octave interval continues to play an important role throughout the piece beginning with the left hand of the accompaniment in measures 6 and 7, which traverses C_2 to C_4 . Though the octaves are filled in on the off beats, the effect is still heard. The vocal line is full of skips and leaps creating an angular contour, which is an effective reflection of the narrator's mood.

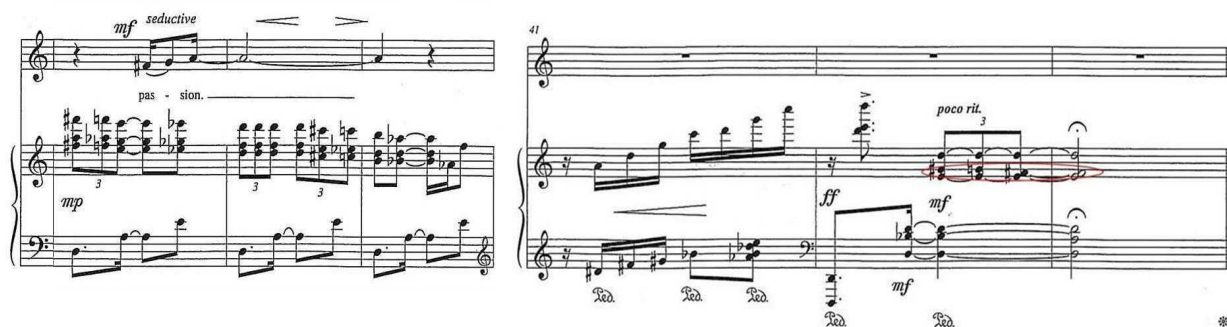
Laitman utilizes the consecutive eighth note patterns in the vocal line and brings back the triplet figure from "Old Tunes" in the accompaniment to further unify this final piece to the rest of the work. The interval or the 4th appears first in measure 1 within the accompaniment and measure 11 in the voice. Laitman continues to use this interval to underscore the themes of Sara Teasdale, which almost exclusively deal with love in some fashion. Rather than utilize the ascending 4th, which seems to suggest a favorable outlook on love and relationships, Laitman uses the descending 4th in this piece as another commentary on the text. She also employs the use of chromaticism to emphasize the mood of the piece.

The two measure interlude in 14 and 15 foreshadows the larger interlude in measures 25 through 30 in both its use of the triplet figure and its descending chromatic line in the soprano. (See example 31)



Example 31: To A Loose Woman, mm. 14-15, 25-30; triplet figure

The interlude, in measures 25 through 30, leads directly to the chromatically descending vocal line, which begins in measure 31. The triplets from the interlude return under the final vocal note in measures 39 and 40 and then moves to the inner voice of the accompaniment at the end of the piece.



Example 32: To A Loose Woman, mm. 38-40, 41-43; triplet figure

Laitman's thoughtful text setting is again mostly syllabic, but she does take some liberties with words whose effect might be better accentuated with an extended line; for example, "ride" in measure 23 or "passion" in measure 38. (See example 33)



Example 33: To A Loose Woman, mm. 23, 38; non-syllabic text setting

She also takes the liberty of repeating the phrase “your lies” in measure 16 and 17 for dramatic stress. Throughout the piece, she continues to let the stress of the words dictate the musical rhythms as is made evident in measure 31 through 34. (See example 34)



Example 34: To A Loose Woman, mm. 31-34; musical rhythms dictated by word stress

Laitman’s thoughtful setting brings “stylistic breadth [to] the syncopated bluesy vamp of ‘To A Loose Woman’.”¹³¹

The Years

This cycle, consisting of five songs, was composed in 2001 in honor of Laitman’s in-law’s, Eleanor and Gershen Rosenblum, fiftieth wedding anniversary. Laitman unifies this cycle, not only musically, but “with a clear thematic structure.”¹³² “The last four poems of the cycle

¹³¹ Jonathan Woolfe, Review of *Mystery*, MusicWeb Oct 2004, <http://www.musicweb-international.com/classrev/2004/Oct04/Laitman.htm>.

¹³² Laitman, e-mail to author, September 10, 2009.

reflect on various aspects of marriage” where “the first song, ‘Jewels,’ represents what might have been if [Laitman’s] in-laws had followed convention instead of their hearts.”¹³³ Laitman continues to utilize some of the same unifying musical elements that she used in *The Metropolitan Tower and Other Songs* including the eighth note figure, the interval of an octave and text-driven rhythmic and metrical structures.

The Jewels

Range: C₄ – A_{♭5}

Tessitura: F₄ – D₅

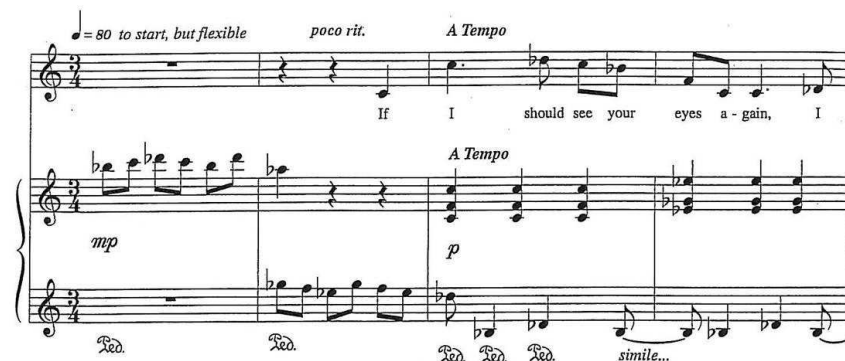
“Jewels” was the first song Laitman composed for this cycle. After composing it, she “realized the poem’s meaning didn’t really fit with the direction of the cycle’s theme,” but because she “liked the song so much,” she “invented a reason to include it.”¹³⁴ That reason was “to imagine what might have happened if [her] in-laws had been more conventional” and not proceeded with their interfaith marriage.¹³⁵

The piece begins with the utilization of the eighth note figuration Laitman has used in these Teasdale pieces as both a commentary on the text and a unifying feature. Here the eighth notes represent the years that have passed and the memories running through the narrator’s mind. The first vocal gesture in measures 2 and 3 is an ascending octave, an early introduction of another of Laitman’s musical unification tools. The first phrase concludes with a descending perfect 4th thereby including a third connecting musical idea within the first four measures of the song. (See example 35)

¹³³ Laitman, liner notes from *Dreaming: Songs of Lori Laitman*, Albany Records, 2003 .

¹³⁴ Laitman, e-mail to author, September 10, 2009.

¹³⁵ Ibid.



Example 35: Jewels, mm. 1-4; unifying musical material

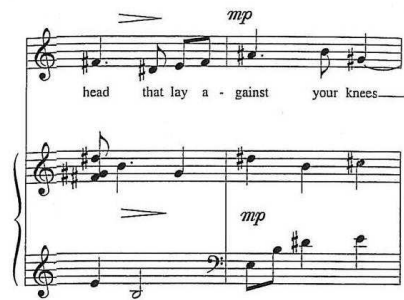
The second vocal phrase begins with an octave leap as well; this time spelled enharmonically, and concludes with, not a perfect but, an augmented 4th. The use of the augmented 4th is an interesting choice by Laitman and seems to comment on the text, “I know how far their look would go,” by saying that the narrator may not feel the memory is as perfect as her lover does. The third vocal phrase contains five uses of the perfect 4th, both descending and ascending, reflecting the speaker’s feelings regarding the memory of their early relationship.

The second stanza is an excellent example of Laitman’s sensitive text setting. In it she lets the rhythm of the words determine the rhythmic structure of the phrases. She insightfully employs not only rhythmic values and pitch but also agogic accents to allow for the correct word and syllabic stresses. In measures 12 and 13, she sets “unloosed” so as to allow the accented syllable to fall on the downbeat in addition to using a higher note. (See example 36)



Example 36: Jewels, mm. 12-13; sensitive text setting

She does this again with “against” in measure 14 and 15. (See example 37)



Example 37: Jewels, mm. 14-15; sensitive text setting

Throughout this poetic verse, Laitman avoids the octave and uses only one descending perfect 4th. Instead she employs the minor 6th and major 7th creating a more angular vocal line as a reflection on the narrator’s pain over the memory of the love that can not be.

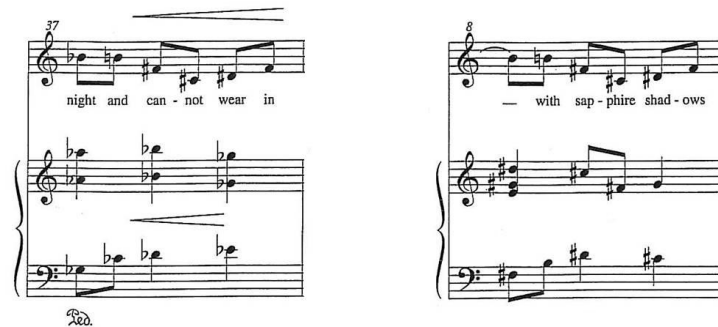
The third verse of this through-composed piece, like the beginning, uses an ascending octave as its initial gesture. The phrase, as in the first, also ends with a descending perfect 4th. Between these two intervals, Laitman sets the text in the upper range of the piece, in fact using the piece’s highest note for the first time, an apt choice for the climax of the speaker’s memories. The second part of the third verse remains within the same tessitura as the first but begins instead with a filled in major 7th and concludes with an ascending perfect 4th. The text setting continues to be syllabic but is less angular in this section.

The fourth verse is defined by the use of a double bar line at its beginning and a shift in tonality. Laitman uses the enharmonic spellings in measures 33 through 35, but the tonality remains the same. In measure 34, she makes use of the octave to set “jewels,” the part of the poem from where Teasdale extracted the title. The “jewels” represent the love that can not be and therefore, it is telling that Laitman chooses the octave in conjunction with the highest note of the piece as well as an extended duration to set it. Not only does she use the octave here, but she approaches the octave by way of a descending perfect 4th. (See example 38)



Example 38: Jewels, mm, 33-35; unifying musical elements

Measure 37 is a direct musical quotation of measure 8, Laitman's way of allowing the memory of the relationship to permeate the narrator's decision to leave the relationship. (See example 39)



Example 39: Jewels, mm. 37, 8; musical quotation

The brief postlude finally lands the piece solidly in D \flat Major for the penultimate measure, but Laitman chooses to end the piece with octave F's unaccompanied in the left hand. This ending provides a final remark on the prosody.

To-Night

Range: D \sharp_4 – A $_5$ (G \sharp_5)

Tessitura: G $_4$ – E $_5$

Completed in July of 2001, Laitman chose "To-Night" because "it again provided good contrast to what had gone before."¹³⁶ She actually composed "Barter," the third piece in the cycle, before "To-Night," but "decided that it would make more dramatic sense if those two

¹³⁶ Lori Laitman, e-mail to author, September 10, 2009.

songs were reversed in position in the cycle.”¹³⁷ As mentioned previously, Laitman intended the final four songs of this cycle to represent different facets of marriage. “To-Night” symbolizes the honeymoon or wedding night. The entire song is only eighteen measures long, the shortest compositionally. In addition to the fact that Teasdale’s verse only contains two stanzas, the shortness seems appropriate to the poetic interpretation of Laitman as the honeymoon or wedding night is certainly only a small part of an entire marriage.

The first vocal gesture is again an octave. In fact, every other vocal phrase within “To-Night” begins with an ascending octave leap. Poetically, Teasdale begins the first and third line of the first stanza, as well as the first line of the second stanza, with “the moon”. Laitman sets them all utilizing the octave. After the leap up, the melody winds down employing mostly stepwise motion and rhythmic values which are tied to the rhythms of the text. The first phrase ends with a descending major 6th continuing Laitman’s tendency to end vocal phrases with a skip or leap within this cycle. In every measure that “the moon” is mentioned, the meter shifts to 4/4 and the accompaniment utilizes four quarter note chords. In measures 2 and 10, only two alternating chords are used, but in measure 6, a third is added. (See example 40)

The image shows three measures of musical notation for the song "To-Night". Each measure consists of a vocal line on a treble clef staff and an accompaniment on a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are written below the vocal line. Measure 1: Vocal line starts with a half note G4, followed by a quarter note A4, then a quarter note B4, and ends with a quarter note G4. The lyrics are "moon is a curv-ing". The accompaniment features a piano (p) dynamic and a simile marking. Measure 2: Vocal line starts with a half note G4, followed by a quarter note A4, then a quarter note B4, and ends with a quarter note G4. The lyrics are "moon was made for". Measure 3: Vocal line starts with a half note G4, followed by a quarter note A4, then a quarter note B4, and ends with a quarter note G4. The lyrics are "moon is a flow-er with-". The accompaniment features a mezzo-piano (mp) dynamic.

Example 40: To-Night, mm. 2, 6, 10; accompaniment comments on text

The quarter notes indicate the faithfulness of the moon, which symbolizes the bride.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

Lush harmonies, which are full of dissonance, are appropriately employed by Laitman in such a palpably romantic piece. She again uses the eighth note figuration in both the vocal line and accompaniment, though it is complicated by the addition of sixteenth notes. The brief piano interlude between the two verses is taken from the vocal phrase directly preceding it, and the entrance of the vocal line in measure 10 is a direct quotation of those same measures, 6 and 7.

(See example 41)

The musical score for Example 41 consists of two systems. The first system (measures 5-7) shows a vocal line with the lyrics "The moon was made for the sky to hold and I for" and a piano accompaniment with lush, dissonant chords. The tempo is marked "rubato". The second system (measures 9-11) shows a vocal line with the lyrics "The moon is a flower without a stem," and a piano accompaniment with lush, dissonant chords. The tempo is marked "mp".

Example 41: To-Night, mm. 5-7, 9-11; vocal line repeats musically

Laitman uses this material yet again in measures 13 and 14 in the voice and 15 and 16 in the accompaniment. (See example 42)

The musical score for Example 42 consists of three systems. The first system (measures 13-14) shows a vocal line with the lyrics "ter ni - ty was made for them to - night for us" and a piano accompaniment with lush, dissonant chords. The tempo is marked "subito mp". The second system (measures 15-16) shows a vocal line with the lyrics "ter ni - ty was made for them to - night for us" and a piano accompaniment with lush, dissonant chords. The tempo is marked "rubato". The third system (measures 17-18) shows a vocal line with the lyrics "ter ni - ty was made for them to - night for us" and a piano accompaniment with lush, dissonant chords. The tempo is marked "A Tempo". Red circles highlight the thematic material in measures 13-14 of the vocal line and measures 15-16 of the piano accompaniment.

Example 42: To-Night, mm. 13-16; use of thematic material

In between all of these measures of similar material, in measure 12, is a 5/4 measure containing an octave leap to the highest note of the piece thus far, G#₅. It is important to note that Laitman's instructions indicate that this can also be the highest note of the piece if the optional ending is chosen. The fact that this is the only 5/4 measure and the highest note stresses the entrance into the most important lines of the poem beginning in measure 13. To end the piece, Laitman chooses to repeat the final line of poetry, "tonight for us" both giving emphasis to the title and the interpretation of the poem. To further stress this point, the beginning of the phrase is unaccompanied and the last note is the highest of the piece, together making this line the most important of all.

Barter

Range: D₄ – G#₅

Tessitura: G₄- D₅

Composed after "Jewels," Laitman later decided to order it third in the cycle for better "dramatic sense."¹³⁸ About the poem, Laitman says:

Interestingly, I had wanted to set "Barter" for quite some time – and the idea for the opening of that song had been floating around in my head for perhaps even as long as a year before I was able to really tackle the poem.¹³⁹

In Laitman's setting, the poem represents compromise, the choice to see the best in each other no matter what the cost, and the beauty of marriage within the cycle. The form is AA'B which, though somewhat unusual, fits the form of the poetry perfectly.

The piece opens with a two measure treble introduction in which the first measure simply repeats. The introduction is based on open 5th, though the first interval in the right hand is a descending perfect 4th. The voice enters in measure 3 on a D₅, an octave below the right hand in

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

the piano, carrying the open 5th over into the beginning of the vocal line and emphasizing the unifying octave interval which has been introduced in the accompaniment already. Tonally, Laitman suggests G Major in the beginning. This is reinforced by the introduction of F# in measure 6. Also in measure 6, Laitman first uses the octave leap in the vocal line. (See example 43)



Example 43: Barter, mm. 6-9; use of octave

She begins to shift tonality in measure 8 to E major, but shifts back in measure 10. Measure 8 also utilizes an ascending perfect 4th in the vocal line on “splendid” emphasizing the generally joyful theme of the poem. Measure 11 employs both a minor 7th and octave ascending leaps creating the image of a jagged “cliff” and “soaring fire” through the angular vocal line. (See example 44)



Example 44: Barter, mm. 11; text painting

The two phrases together, measures 10 through 13, also effectively create the “waves” and “fire that sways and sings.” (See example 45)



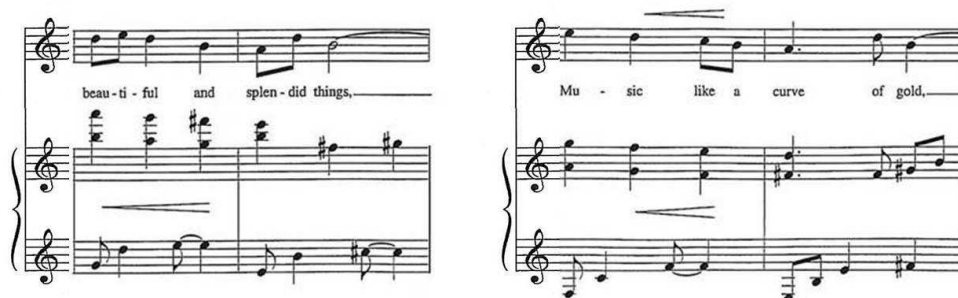
Example 45: Barter, mm. 10-13; text painting

The next two lines of the first stanza illustrate Laitman's ability to set poetry sensitively. She again uses the rhythms of the words to determine the rhythms of the music. (See example 46)



Example 46: Barter, mm. 14-17; sensitive text setting

After a brief interlude reminiscent of the introduction, the second verse begins much like the first. This time Laitman changes the interval on “loveliness” from a 2nd to a perfect 4th illuminating the narrator's increasing emotions through not only its size, but by what it represents. It also serves to link it to the rest of the cycle by way of its resolution by skip rather than step. The phrase beginning in measure 24 is adapted directly from the corresponding phrase in the first stanza beginning in measure. (See example 47)



Example 47: Barter, mm. 7-8, 24-25; melodic derivation

These lyrical, but not particularly long, phrases are excellent illustrations of Laitman's melodic writing. Laitman continues to modify the melody from the first stanza to fit best the poetic text in the second. Instead of the minor 7th and octave combination found in measure 11, in this stanza, Laitman uses two octaves and then a minor 7th, which better suits the poetry and builds the emotional intensity. She also resolves the phrase with a descending perfect 4th. (See example 48)

Example 48: Barter, mm. 27-30; use of octave and perfect 4th

The first big change of the piece happens in measure 33 where Laitman composes a completely new melodic idea to set “holy thoughts that star the night.” The phrase ends on an F#₄, which Laitman reiterates in the piano with octaves.

The final stanza begins with an octave leap, just as Laitman has begun the other pieces in the cycle. She instructs the accompaniment to have “more of a 3/2 feel” in measures 35 through 43.¹⁴⁰ Other than these measures, Laitman maintains a thinner texture than what she employed for “To-Night.” Here, however, she thickens the harmonies and eliminates the accompaniment rhythmic pattern that characterizes the rest piece. These choices serve to highlight the most important part of the poem, “Spend all you have for loveliness/ Buy it and never count the cost.” Laitman actually uses the longest interlude of the piece within the final stanza, separating the last two poetic lines. These last two lines she begins the same, but conclude differently. The final

¹⁴⁰ Lori Latiman, *The Years*, 10.

vocal phrase reemphasizes the G# octave used in measure 36 to begin the stanza and resolves to the F# that she used to introduce the final stanza. (See example 49)

Example 49: Barter, mm. 56-60; final vocal phrases

The entire postlude is in A \flat Major until the penultimate measure where she shifts to F Major, following one final perfect 4th in the soprano and allowing for another in the bass. In the postlude, Laitman quotes the vocal line from the beginning of the song. Measures 63 through the downbeat of 65 correspond to measures 3 through 5, though raised a half step, and measures 67 to the end are taken from measures 6 through 8. The quoting of the opening material allows Laitman to emphasize her interpretation of the poem, reminding the listener once again of the “loveliness” of life.

Faults

Range: D₄ – G₅

Tessitura: F₄ – C₅

“Faults” is the shortest in duration of all the Laitman pieces examined in this study. It “was defiantly chosen for its humor which allowed for a change of musical pace.”¹⁴¹ The piece is an excellent example of Laitman’s ability to use the texture and accompaniment to comment on the mood. It also is an example of her facility with the use of shifting meters to fit best the

¹⁴¹ Lori Laitman, e-mail to author, September 10, 2009.

rhythm of the text. It represents that part of marriage when the couple realize that rather than loving each other in spite of their shortfalls, those “faults had made” their love even deeper.

The one measure staccato introduction utilizes Laitman’s eighth note rhythmic motive which is immediately passed to the opening vocal line in measure 2. The staccato nature of the accompaniment is used to symbolize the chatter of those that “came to tell” the faults of the narrator’s lover. Laitman changes meter in every measure for the first seven bars before finally settling on 3/4 in measure 8. The purpose of this is two-fold. First and foremost, it is to serve the natural rhythm of the text. The shifting meters allow Laitman to keep the stressed words within the poetic line aligned with the strong beats in addition to remaining true to the syllabic stress of each word. Secondly, it helps to establish the proper mood for the piece by effectively illustrating the jagged nature of the people’s accusations. (See example 50)

♩ = 160 (in strict time) *mf*

They came to tell your faults to me;

mf

simile...

f

They named them o - ver one by one;

Example 50, *Faults*, mm. 1-6; use of shifting meters

When the voice enters in measure 2, it is unaccompanied. The accompaniment returns in measure 3 on the final word of the first phrase. Perhaps this creates the impression of the singer being interrupted and is another effective use of the piano to establish the mood of the piece and to comment on the text. (See example 51)

♩ = 160 (in strict time) *mf*

They came to tell your faults to me;

mf

simile...

Example 51: Faults, mm. 2-3; accompaniment comments on text

Laitman repeats this gesture in the second vocal phrase. (See example 52)

They named them o - ver one by one;

f

simile...

Example 52: Faults, mm. 5-6; accompaniment comments on text

Both phrases are constructed similarly: a descending line that ends with a large upward leap resolved down a minor 3rd. Neither is legato nor are they truly staccato. The lack of legato in the first two lines creates a nice contrast with the rest of the vocal part which begins in measure 7.

The vocal line beginning in measure 7 through 13 is contrasted by the continued accented, staccato leaps in the accompaniment. The image fashioned by Laitman is strong. A woman laughs, not because what is being said is humorous, but because she knows something that the others do not. The legato vocal line is joyful and peaceful over the continued chatter

eventually soaring above them defiantly stating, “I knew them all so well before.” Laitman takes the liberty of repeating this phrase in measures 11 through 13 at which time the accompaniment changes and the tempo relaxes, indicating that the narrator has silenced the chatting voices. In measure 13 and 14, the accompaniment takes its material straight from the vocal line. (See example 53)



Example 53: Faults, mm. 10-12; accompaniment derived from vocal line

This serves to slow the piece down and prepare for the poetic shift. Measures 16 and 17 are the slowest of the entire piece emphasizing the sentimental and romantic nature of Teasdale’s poetry. This idea is strengthened by the thicker texture and harmonic language of the accompaniment which is quartal in nature. (See example 54)



Example 54: Fault, mm. 16-18; use of quartal harmonies

Laitman uses the highest note of the piece in conjunction with a longer rhythmic value to stress the word “faults” in measures 17 and 18 under which the staccato returns and the tempo picks up

slightly. Measure 17 is also the only appearance of the octave interval within the vocal line of this piece, though not as Laitman has used it throughout the rest of the cycle. Here she fills in the F# octave with an A. (See example 55)



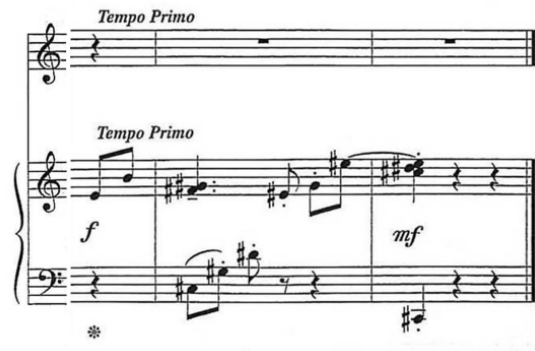
Example 55: Faults, mm. 17-18; use of octave

Laitman uses a musical palindrome to complete the vocal line in measures 19 through 22. She utilizes F#₄ – B₄ – E₄ to set the text “love you more” and then reverses it to repeat those words, ending the vocal line on an F# set against a G Major chord in the accompaniment. (See example 56)

Example 56: Faults, mm. 18-22; musical palindrome

This dissonance stresses the discord between the narrator and the chattering. The brief piano postlude repeats the final notes of the vocal line, but staccato and with added dissonance, and

depicts the idea that the people go on talking despite her refusal to accept their negative opinions of her lover's "faults." (See example 57)



Example 57: Faults, mm. 22-24; postlude comments on text

The Years

Range: C₄ – A₅

Tessitura: C₅ – F₅

The final piece of the cycle was selected because Laitman felt it “was a very appropriate poem to end the cycle,” which is dedicated to Laitman’s in-law’s 50th wedding anniversary, as it explores a relationship that has stood the test of time.¹⁴²

It represents “the years” of marriage. Throughout the piece, Laitman’s text setting is mostly syllabic, though she does utilize more non-syllabic text setting in this piece than any examined thus far. She continues to use shifting meters to maintain the natural rhythms of the words and the poetry while remaining dedicated to the use of the octave and the 4th in both the vocal line and the accompaniment.

After a three beat introduction that includes two chords comprised of perfect 4^{ths}, the first vocal gesture is an ascending octave, the unifying interval of the cycle. The octave is C₄ to C₅, the same notes used to begin the first piece of the cycle, “Jewels.” The accompaniment continues

¹⁴² Ibid.

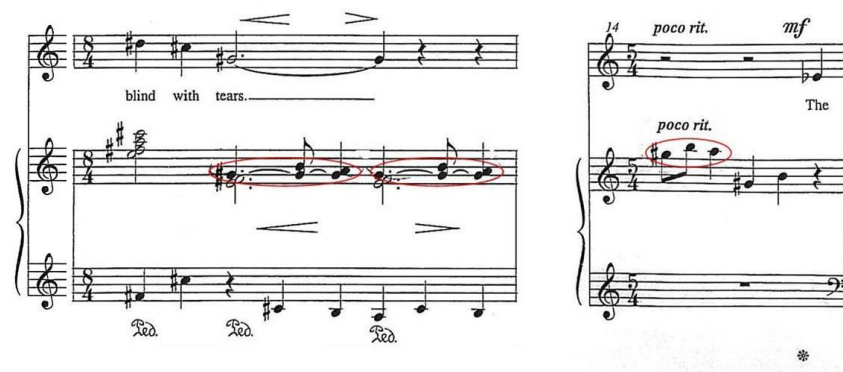
to be based on the 4th throughout the piece and the vocal line continues to outline octaves, whether directly or indirectly. Measures 3 to 4 (D₄ – D₅) and measures 7 to 8 (F#₄ – F#₅) use octaves which Laitman fills in slightly; however, the effect is still clear. (See example 58)

Example 58: The Years, mm. 4, 7-8; use of octaves

The consequent phrase also begins with an octave, which is repeated. In measure 12, Laitman introduces a motive that appears all through the rest of the piece. (See example 59)

Example 59: The Years, mm. 12; use of motive

This motive is passed to the accompaniment in the next two measures. (See example 60)



Example 60: The Years, mm. 13, 14; use of motive

In its first appearance, the motive begins with a minor 3rd, giving it a tinge of sadness and seeming to indicate the love that has yet to be realized by the narrator.

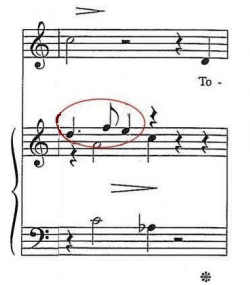
The second stanza also begins with an ascending octave in the vocal line. The accompaniment sounds the motive again in measure 16, this time it begins with a major 3rd signaling an emotional shift. (See example 61)



Example 61: The Years, mm. 16; use of motive

The first four measures of this stanza are another example of how Laitman uses shifting meters effectively to preserve the integrity of the word and poetic stresses. The alternating 4/4 and 5/4 measures allow the eight syllable lines to line up correctly by keeping the unaccented first syllables off of the downbeats. In measure 21, the vocal line has yet another octave while the tempo is slowed and the harmony becomes obviously tertian, rather than quartal. These choices underscore the poetic shift. For further emphasis, in the next measure the left hand of the accompaniment has a melodic perfect 4th followed directly by an ascending octave symbolizing

their perfect union, two becoming one. In measure 23 the motive returns, still using the major 3rd, stated unaccompanied and higher than at any other time. This ushers in the final poetic lines. The accompaniment becomes reminiscent of “Barter” in measure 24. This new pattern is starkly different than the rest of the piece and much thinner in texture, aiding in creating emphasis for the important text. In measure 28, Laitman once again uses the motive with a minor 3rd under the word “tears.” This is the end of Teasdale’s poem, but Laitman chooses to repeat part of the opening line of the poem. Because of this choice, the use of the minor 3rd in the motive allows one last hint at the sadness of the narrator before she finds her love. (See example 62)



Example 62: The Years, mm. 28; use of motive

Laitman extends the repeated text with long rhythmic values, which facilitates an intimate, romantic mood at the end of the song. The melody is almost exclusively octaves. In measure 32, the piece’s motive is employed for the last time. Back in the major mode and again unaccompanied, it adds stress to the happiness of the ending to the narrator’s story. (See example 63)

Example 63: The Years, mm. 32; use of motive

Mystery

Published in 1998, *Mystery* is a song cycle containing five songs for either baritone or mezzo-soprano. Laitman composed it for baritone Kurt Ollmann, “who had just broken up with a long-time partner” and for pianist Fredrick Weldy.¹⁴³ The cycle is united thematically as all of the “poems reflect on love and its enigmas.”¹⁴⁴ Laitman’s musical hallmarks are certainly evident throughout the cycle, but in contrast to the other two sets, she does not employ easily apparent musical elements as unifying material. The text setting remains mostly syllabic, though she does take more liberty at points, and the meter shifts are still text-driven. Within the cycle, Laitman effectively utilizes the accompaniment to set the appropriate mood for each piece, often employing text painting. The pieces are all very different musically, but the cycle remains cohesive due to the theme of the poetry.

Nightfall

Range: B₃ – F₅

Tessitura: D₄ – D₅

“Nightfall” was the first poem selected for the cycle. Thematically, it deals “with the loss of love.”¹⁴⁵ In it she “sets a lyric vocal line against a piano part that portrays the lovers’ past walks together as well as their unhappy present.”¹⁴⁶ The setting is “Finzi-like in its lyrical identification and nostalgia.”¹⁴⁷

The introduction is rather static melodically and harmonically, but not rhythmically. Laitman uses the eighth note figure throughout the piece to represent the “past walks” of the

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Lori Laitman, *Mystery*, Riverdale, NY: Classical Vocal Reprints, 1.

¹⁴⁵ Laitman, e-mail to author, September 10, 2009.

¹⁴⁶ Laitman, *Mystery*, 1.

¹⁴⁷ Woolfe.

lovers.¹⁴⁸ The harmony is based more on the contrast of dissonance and consonance, a commentary on what was and what is in the relationship of the lovers, but D Major is certainly implied in the first 19 measures. The vocal line enters on the same notes that have been used in the introduction. The first vocal phrase utilizes big skips, including a major 7th, which is an element that Laitman will use throughout the piece. The first two phrases use 7^{ths}, the third uses 6^{ths}, and the fourth goes back to the 7th. (See example 64)

The musical score for 'Nightfall' (mm. 1-12) is presented in three systems. The key signature is D major (two sharps) and the time signature is 3/4. The tempo/mood is mezzo-piano (mp). The vocal line enters in measure 1 with the lyrics 'We will'. The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note pattern in the right hand and a walking bass line in the left hand. Pedal markings are present at measures 1, 5, and 9. The lyrics for the first system are 'We will nev - er walk a - gain As we used to walk at night, watch - ing our'. The lyrics for the second system are 'shad - ows length - en un - der the gold street - light When the snow was new and'.

Example 64: Nightfall, mm. 1-12; use of large skips in vocal line

¹⁴⁸ Laitman, *Mystery*.

A brief piano interlude reprises the introduction, but an octave higher. Poetically the second stanza begins just as the first, “we will never walk again,” and Laitman chooses to set it exactly the same melodically. She does, however, begin to create a thicker texture in the accompaniment beginning in measure 16. (See example 65)

The image shows a musical score for a vocal and piano piece. The vocal line is in treble clef, 2/4 time, with a melody starting on G4 and moving stepwise. The piano accompaniment is in bass clef, 2/4 time, with a steady eighth-note pattern. The lyrics "We will nev - er — walk a - gain" are written below the vocal line. The tempo/mood is marked "mp".

Example 65: Nightfall, mm. 15-17; thickening accompaniment

In the second phrase, she adapts the melody from the first verse to fit the poetic line, but it remains recognizable. The accompaniment continues to build creating an atmosphere of increasing emotion and leading to a harmonic shift in measure 20. Under the instructions, “with a breathless quality,” Laitman modulates up a half step to E \flat Major to conclude the second stanza. The melody continues to be filled with 7ths and 6ths and the texture continues to thicken.

Beginning in measure 24, Laitman begins to shift tonalities more frequently. The interlude continues to play on the idea of consonance versus dissonance. The third verse brings the narrator back into the present and Laitman emphasizes this poetic shift with new melodic material. Beginning in measure 36, Laitman employs text painting in the accompaniment. “The clanging square” is heard in the octave displaced dissonant chords of the right hand part and “a street piano cries” in measures 38 through 40. (See example 66)



Example 66: Nightfall, mm. 36-39; text painting

In the final vocal phrase, Laitman uses a descending octave rather than the 6th and 7th she had used through the rest of the piece seeming to indicate a resolution to the narrator’s emotional journey.

In the postlude, Laitman adds a vocal line of “aah,” which creates the image of the narrator dissolving into tears. The accompaniment seems to mimic the cries of the voice and the thin texture allows the cries of the voice to be highlighted. For added emphasis, the “street piano cries” again, an octave higher, ending the piece sorrowfully.

Spray

Range: B \flat ₃ – E \flat ₅

Tessitura: E \flat ₄ – B \flat ₄

Laitman says she selected “Spray” next because “it was so dramatic” and created a stark contrast to “Nightfall.”¹⁴⁹ According to Carol Lines, “This song is a masterpiece of complete emotional turmoil condensed into a tiny *scena* and requires a skilled interpreter with some life experience.”¹⁵⁰ It certainly “begins violently with the piano suggesting the crashing of waves.”¹⁵¹ The use of 6/8 aids in creating the image of the rocking and tumultuous sea. The opening two

¹⁴⁹ Laitman, e-mail to author, September 10, 2009.

¹⁵⁰ Lines, 35.

¹⁵¹ Laitman, *Mystery*.

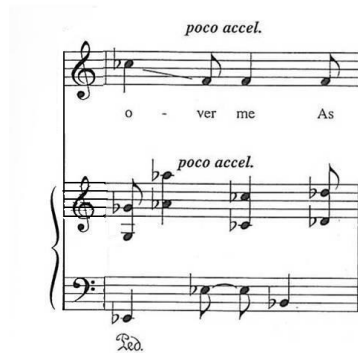
vocal lines are very similar and “move downward rapidly in sixteenth notes extending the vigorous introduction of the piano.”¹⁵² Both begin with an upward octave leap as well. (See example 67)

Example 67 is a musical score in 6/8 time, with a tempo of quarter note = 66. It consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The piano part begins with a 'forceful, like waves crashing' texture, marked 'f'. The vocal line enters in the second system with the lyrics 'knew you thought of me all night, I'. The piano part continues with a 'simile...' texture. The third system shows the vocal line with lyrics 'knew, though you were far a - way;'. The piano part continues with a 'simile...' texture. The score is marked with 'f' and 'mf' dynamics.

Example 67: Spray 1-6; text painting, use of octave

The turbulent accompaniment ends in measure 8 as a new idea begins in the vocal melody. In measure 9 the crashing waves move to the vocal line. (See example 68)

¹⁵² Lines, 34.



Example 68: Spray, mm. 9; text painting

The accompaniment begins to thicken again in measure 10 as the voice builds to another crashing wave, which is echoed in the piano by “a black key glissando text painting of the splashing wave.”¹⁵³ (See example 69)

Example 69: Spray, mm. 11-12; text painting

The piano returns to the music from the introduction at the end of the phrase, which crashes into and out of the interlude.

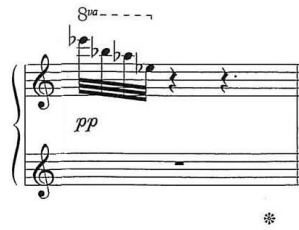
The third section “which Laitman marks ‘sexily’ and ‘slow’,” emphasizes the shift in Teasdale’s poem from the passionate opening.¹⁵⁴ The first vocal phrase is echoed in the “more sparse” accompaniment as the narrator realizes “there are so many ways to love,” a line Laitman takes the liberty of repeating to stress the mood she has created.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 35.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

The final section begins with unaccompanied voice and as the piano enters, the “rocking” of the water returns. “A final minute splash of spray is heard in the piano at the conclusion.”¹⁵⁶ (See example 70)



Example 70: Spray, mm. 46; accompaniment comments on text

The Kiss

Range: B₃ – F#₅

Tessitura: E₄ – C₅

Laitman selected “The Kiss” because it “had humor.”¹⁵⁷ It “is set as a parody, humorously juxtaposing the old parlor song style of the vocal line with a more contemporary piano part containing dissonance and rhythmic displacements.”¹⁵⁸ Laitman originally had concerns about the composition:

At first I was concerned that the vocal line was so “ordinary” – but I thought it matched the poetry, which could also be construed as a bit “ordinary” – the saving grace for me was when I figured out exactly what accompaniment would work best, and the off kilter quality of the accompaniment really transformed the piece into something unique, and into something that emphasized the poem’s inherent humor.¹⁵⁹

In addition to the “dissonance and rhythmic displacements” of the accompaniment, Laitman uses the grace note to stress further the humor.

After a one measure introduction, the first vocal phrase begins with a descending octave.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Laitman, e-mail to author, September 10, 2009.

¹⁵⁸ Laitman, *Mystery*.

¹⁵⁹ Laitman, e-mail to author, September 10, 2009.

Though not always an octave, most of the vocal lines begin with a descending interval with each of the upper notes given further stress through the instruction “relax tempo.” Laitman continues to highlight the poem’s humor by utilizing text painting in measure 5 with a descending perfect 4th on “the south.” (See example 71)

Example 71: The Kiss, mm 5; text painting

The brief piano interlude begins on a c minor chord and works its way to C# minor chord set against a C♯ in the soprano suggesting the unresolved feelings of the speaker. The second vocal section also begins with the C♯, which descends the octave, as the first vocal phrase did. The text setting throughout the piece is strictly syllabic until measure 11. In this measure, Laitman extends the word “all” to accentuate further the poem’s humor with a dramatic flare. Also in measure 11, “dreams” is set using an ascending octave leap up to the piece’s highest note, which is marked “rubato” and “falsetto-like.” This slightly suspended and floating note is another example of Laitman’s use of text painting. (See example 72)

Example 72: The Kiss, mm. 11; text painting

The postlude follows, beginning in measure 12, and humorously rushes to the end of the piece.

The Mystery

Range: C \sharp_4 – F $_5$

Tessitura: G $_4$ – D $_5$

“The long vocal lines in ‘The Mystery’ merge with a simple piano accompaniment to create a feeling of yearning.”¹⁶⁰ Laitman says the song “was very easy for me to write. Sometimes songs flow very quickly, and this was one example.”¹⁶¹ Her instructions state that the pedal markings are intended to “allow sounds to blend/merge.”¹⁶² The slow, extremely legato setting is a stark contrast to “The Kiss.”

The song opens with the longest of Laitman’s introductions, over seven measures. Rhythmic displacements and consonant harmonies are the hallmark of “The Mystery.” The first three notes of the vocal line in measure 8, “your eyes drink,” are echoed an octave higher in measures 12 and 13, “your eyes that.” (See example 73)

Example 73 shows two musical staves. The left staff covers measures 8-9, and the right staff covers measures 12-13. The vocal line is in the upper staff, and the piano accompaniment is in the lower staff. The key signature has one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 4/4. The vocal line in measure 8 has the lyrics "Your eyes drink of". The piano accompaniment in measure 8 has a dynamic marking of *mp*. The vocal line in measure 12 has the lyrics "shine, Your eyes that lean so". The piano accompaniment in measure 12 has a dynamic marking of *f*. The piano accompaniment in measure 13 has a dynamic marking of *mp*. The piano accompaniment includes a pedal marking "pedal ad lib unless specifically marked".

Example 73: The Mystery, mm. 8-9, 12-13; melody echoed

Beginning in measure 15, the piano interlude is reminiscent of the introduction and leads to the second verse, which begins exactly like the first melodically. (See example 74)

¹⁶⁰ Laitman, *Mystery*.

¹⁶¹ Laitman, e-mail to author, September 10, 2009.

¹⁶² Laitman, *Mystery*, 19.

Example 74: The Mystery, mm. 1-3, 16-18; accompaniment sets tone, interlude derived from introduction

The lower range of the first two verses reflects the intimate nature of the poetry. Slowly, the final phrase of the second verse ascends by whole and half steps to the climax and leading to the third verse. (See example 75)

Example 75: The Mystery, mm. 24-27; ascent to climax of piece

Exploring different melodic material and the upper range of the piece, the last two verses begin in the same way. The higher range of the last two verses stresses the inaccessibility of truly knowing another, as the text states. Finally, the last verse ends similarly to the second verse with a line that climbs by whole and half steps to the end.

The Rose

Range: D \flat ₄ – E₅

Tessitura: F₄ – C₅

“The most complex texture of the cycle is found in ‘The Rose,’ in which intricate weavings between voice and piano combine with constant meter changes and mood shifts.”¹⁶³ As opposed to the ease of composing “The Mystery,” Laitman says writing “The Rose” was “long and difficult.”¹⁶⁴ The piece is by far the longest of all the Teasdale settings. It is also the piece in which Laitman takes the most liberty with the text, a fact about which she was “a bit concerned” at first.¹⁶⁵

The piece opens with a two measure bass introduction that imitates the pacing of Pierrot underneath the narrator’s “chamber window.” Shifting meters for each of the first four measures of the vocal part, Laitman illustrates that she is capable of using changing meters to establish a mood in addition to serving the text. In measure 6 and 7, text painting aids in creating Pierrot’s “singing.” (See example 76)

The musical score for Example 76 shows measures 5 through 8 of 'The Rose'. The vocal line is in treble clef, and the piano accompaniment is in bass clef. The lyrics are 'Pier - rot was sing - ing, ——— sing - ing'. The piano part features complex rhythmic patterns and meter changes (8/8, 3/8, 6/8, 4/8). The vocal line has a melodic line with some rests and a long note in measure 6.

Example 76: The Rose, mm 5-8; text painting

¹⁶³ Ibid., 1.

¹⁶⁴ Laitman, e-mail to author, September 10, 2009.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

Laitman also adds multiple measures of Pierrot's song. (See example 77)

13
la la la Tra la la la la la la la la la la Tra la la la

17
la la la la la la la la

play this measure with either hand

sub. mp

Example 77: The Rose, mm. 13-20; Pierrot's song

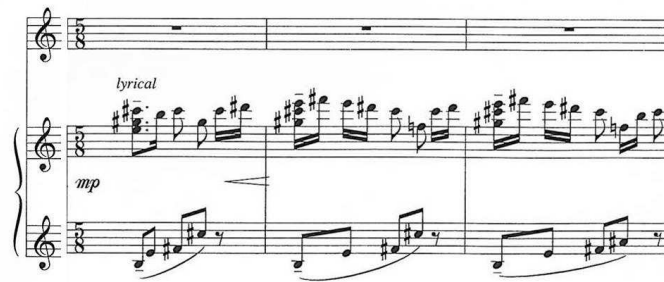
The song passes between the piano and voice almost contrapuntally. (See example 78)

9
la la la la la

13
la la la Tra la la la la la la la la la la Tra la la la

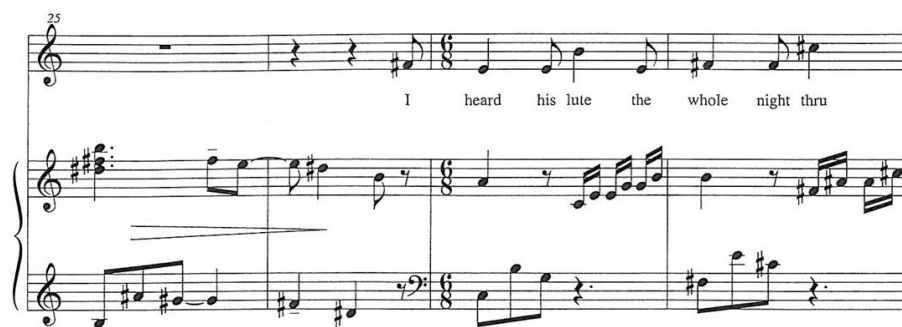
Example 78: The Rose, mm. 9, 13-16; Pierrot's Song

The piano interlude that follows echoes Pierrot's song. (See example 79)



Example 79: The Rose, mm. 22-24; accompaniment echoes Pierrot's Song

The second couplet is set strictly in 6/8 and is based on open 5ths. This is emphasized in the accompaniment, which is imitating the lute. (See example 80)



Example 80: The Rose, mm. 25-28

Beginning in measure 32, Laitman utilizes displaced rhythms and the 5/8 meter to create the stress of the narrator who has “no rose for flinging” in admiration of Pierrot's singing. Laitman exercises additional liberty by repeating this line multiple times in a mellismatic setting. (See example 81)



Example 81: The Rose, mm. 41-44; mellismatic text setting

To complete Teasdale's first verse, Laitman returns to the same melodic material from measure 26 through 30, open 5th in 6/8.

A three measure interlude leads to the second verse which begins with a completely different tone than the first. The first nine measures of the second verse, in addition to the interlude, are dominated by a triplet motive. (See example 82)

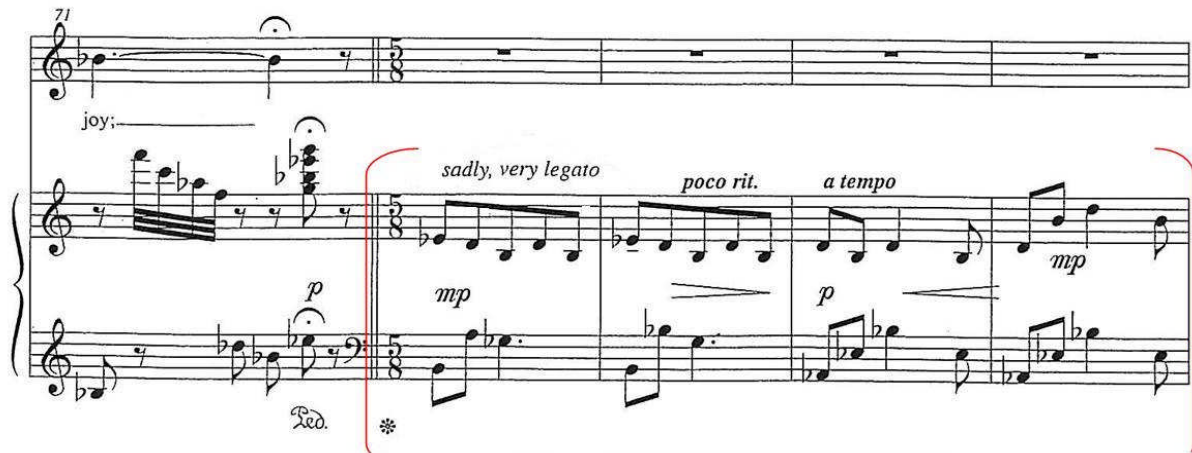


Example 82: The Rose, mm. 51; use of motive

This motive is stated in its primary form six times with four alternate forms. The motive is used to represent the rose the narrator throws to Pierrot. In measure 59 through 61, the motive actually depicts the motion of the thrown flower. Laitman continues to take liberties with the text in this verse, adding “ta ta” and repeating lines. After one last statement of the triplet motive, Laitman introduces a 32nd note motive to represent the scattering of the rose petals. (See example 83)

Example 83, The Rose, mm. 68; motive used for text painting

The final section of the last verse begins with another mood shift in the accompaniment. Marked “sadly,” Laitman returns to the 5/8 of the introduction, now legato, for the piano interlude. (See example 84)



Example 84: The Rose, mm. 72-75; piano interlude

Measure 78 draws on Pierrot’s song from the beginning of the piece, this time in the minor mode to stress the change in mood. (See Example 85)



Example 85: The Rose, mm. 78; Pierrot’s Song

Laitman continues to be free with the text, repeating lines throughout the final section. The accompaniment persists in effectively establishing the tone, again shifting in measure 89, upon the narrator’s remembrance of picking the rose “beside a laughing boy.” (See example 86)

88 *poco rit.* *a tempo*

The rose was plucked when dusk was dim Be -

91 *freely* *a tempo*

side a laugh - ing boy

freely *a tempo* *expressively*

mp

Example 86: The Rose, mm. 88-94; effective use of accompaniment

The nostalgic, dreamy mood continues through the end of the piece, despite the intrusion of Pierrot's song in measures 99 and 100. (See example 87)

99 *freely* *a tempo*

side a laugh - ing boy

freely *a tempo* *expressively*

mp

Example 87: The Rose, mm. 99-100; Pierrot's Song

Chapter 5

Conclusions

Lori Laitman says, in regard to her compositions, “I want my music to speak to all people,” and there is certainly something for everyone within the Teasdale sets.¹⁶⁶ In all of the Teasdale pieces, it is apparent “that Laitman has considered the poetry deeply and that her settings are a visceral response to what she considers vital to the intention of the poet.”¹⁶⁷ Meters and rhythms are “derived from nuance of prosody” and are “continuously changing.”¹⁶⁸ Melodically, Laitman creates lines that are lyrical, often angular, and somehow still smooth and pleasant with “thoughtfully considered” tessituras and ranges.¹⁶⁹ The harmonic language is predominately post-modern and serves “to intensify emotional content,” while the accompaniments partner the voice and vary in degree of difficulty.¹⁷⁰

The Metropolitan Tower and Other Songs was Laitman’s first song cycle and, as such, is much more accessible to a younger singer. There are certainly pieces in this cycle that would be appropriate in the undergraduate studio and provide a suitable challenge. The ranges are not extreme and the accompaniments often double the voice. The tessituras remain in the middle of the soprano range and offer a wonderful teaching tool for working the passaggio, while the shorter melodic phrases offer an opportunity to improve legato singing without taxing the breath support of a young singer. Laitman’s harmonic language is certainly modern in these pieces, but not as dissonant as some of the later Teasdale’s pieces; and the accompaniments, while interesting, are not as difficult either.

¹⁶⁶ Watt.

¹⁶⁷ Lines, 32.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

The Years is actually the latest of the Teasdale's compositions and as such contains music of a more challenging nature. Vocally, the lines are much more angular employing larger leaps and more difficult intervals. While the ranges are similar to those of *The Metropolitan Tower and Other Songs*, the way that the voice is moved within those ranges is very different. The singer is continually asked to move through both the primo and secondo passaggio with phrases that often span over an octave. Thematically, the material requires a more mature performer. While the first cycle dealt with love as well, these pieces ask more of the performer as Laitman has intended them to reflect on a relationship that has stood the test of time. Dissonance is used frequently throughout the cycle, with the accompaniment rarely supplying the vocal pitches, but rather commenting on them harmonically. The accompaniments themselves are not particularly difficult, but are very rhythmical and an integral part of each song.

Finally, *Mystery*, offers something completely different. Composed for baritone, with a mezzo soprano version, Laitman's choice of the lower voice type offers immediate insight into her intentions and interpretations of the poetry. The ranges are not particularly low, but the tessituras are certainly much lower than the aforementioned cycles. Thematically, this cycle is completely different than the others as well and requires a seasoned performer. Dealing with the mysteries of love, the performer is required to express melancholy, seductiveness, humor, bewilderment, love, flirtatiousness, and nostalgia. The vocal lines continue to be wide-ranging, utilizing large leaps as well as more text-painting. Texturally, Laitman uses thicker, richer harmonies here, which is most appropriate for the subject matter. Laitman further complicates the thick textures with rhythmic vocal lines and accompaniments that can be more difficult than the other cycles. Because each piece is in such stark contrast to the next, much is asked of both performers stylistically and emotionally.

All of the pieces include careful performance instructions supplied by Laitman. Some she asks that the performers adhere to strictly, others she offers as a suggestion and insight into her intentions for the performance. These instructions include: dynamics, tempos and tempo changes, pedal markings, as well as mood. Laitman has carefully ordered the pieces in each cycle to provide a thematic as well as musical flow and to create contrast between the pieces; however, she does not require that the cycles be performed in their entirety, and she is very open to the idea of extracting pieces for presenting in recital.¹⁷¹ Dr. Adelaide Walker says that Laitman's songs

utilize contemporary musical language that frees the expressive quality of the poetry and the music; varying bar line lengths, free color associations and accompaniment that is a full partner in a complex, integrated web. Singers are thrilled to have songs that provide both joy and a challenge to prepare.¹⁷²

This study has served as an introduction to Lori Laitman and some of her works, but most importantly has illustrated that Lori Laitman is an important modern American composer of art song whose works should be explored by teachers of voice.

¹⁷¹ Laitman, www.artsongs.com/meet/faq.

¹⁷² Adelaide Whitaker, "Thoughts of a Patron," available at www.artsongs.com/meet/adelaide.

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Appendix A

Works List

Headed by Glendower Jones at 1-800-298-7474 or NYC 718-601-1959, Classical Vocal Reprints (CVR) serves as primary distributor of Lori Laitman's music.

I Never Saw Another Butterfly (1996)

(soprano/saxophone) 6 settings of poems by children who were killed in the Holocaust. Also available: soprano/clarinet version and a soprano/bassoon version. Published by Arsis Press. 15 minutes.

Publisher of the following works is ENCHANTED KNICKERS MUSIC:

The Metropolitan Tower and Other Songs (1992)

(soprano/piano) 6 settings of Sara Teasdale, 12 minutes.

The Metropolitan Tower; A Winter Night; Old Tunes; The Strong House; The Hour; To A Loose Woman

"Dreaming" (1991)

(soprano; soprano and baritone; soprano and mezzo; SATB) (Humorous encore song). Words and music by Lori Laitman, 2 minutes.

The Love Poems of Marichiko (1993, rev. 1994)

(soprano/cello) poems by Kenneth Rexroth, 12 minutes.

I Sit at my desk; If I Thought; Oh the Anguish; You Ask Me; Autumn; Just Us

Days and Nights (1995)

(soprano/piano) poems by Browning, Dickinson, Rossetti, Bourdillon, 12 1/2 minutes.

Along with Me; They Might Not Need Me; The Night Has A Thousand Eyes; Over the Fence; Song; Wild Nights

"Echo" (1995)

(available for baritone, soprano, mezzo soprano) setting of Christina Rossetti, 3 1/2 minutes.

"The Ballad Singer" (1995)

(baritone/piano) setting of Thomas Hardy, 2 minutes.

Thumbelina Songs (1989, rev. 1995)

lyrics by Lori Laitman and Wendy-Marie Goodman.

A Tale to Tell, Alone, Fine Family, I'm Falling in Love, King Song, I am the Mole, Wish Song, My Son, Thumbelina, Wedding Day (not yet published)

Plums (1996)

(soprano/piano) two settings of William Carlos Williams, approximately 2 minutes in length.

To a Poor Old Woman, I Just Wanted to Say

Four Dickinson Songs (1996)

(soprano/piano; also mezzo soprano/piano version) poems by Emily Dickinson, 9 minutes.

Will There Really Be A Morning?, I'm Nobody, She Died, If I...

Between the Bliss and Me (1997)

(soprano/piano) poems by Emily Dickinson, approximately 5 minutes in length

I gained it so, The Book, I could not prove

Mystery (1998)

(baritone/piano or mezzo soprano/piano). poems by Sara Teasdale, 10 minutes.

Nightfall, Spray, The Kiss, The Mystery, The Rose

Daughters (1998)

(mezzo soprano and piano trio) poems by Anne Ranasinghe and Karen Gershon, 18 minutes.

Mascot and Symbol; Stella Remembered; A Letter to My Daughter

Holocaust 1944 (1996, rev. 1998)

(baritone and doublebass) poems by Ficowski, Vogel, Rosewicz, Gershon, Ranasinghe, 28 minutes.

I did not manage to save; How can I see you, love; Both your Mothers; What Luck; Massacre of the Boys; Race; Holocaust 1944

"Homeless" (1998)

(mezzo soprano/piano) poem by Michael Flack, 3 1/2 minutes.

Sunflowers (1999)

(soprano/piano) poems by Mary Oliver, 14 minutes.

The Sunflowers, Dreams, Sunrise

"I am in Need of Music" (1999)

(soprano/baritone/piano or soprano/mezzo soprano/piano) poem by Elizabeth Bishop, 3 1/2 minutes.

Men with Small Heads (2000)

(available for countertenor, mezzo soprano or baritone/piano) Poems by Thomas Lux.
11 minutes.

Men with Small Heads; Refrigerator, 1957; A Small Tin Parrot Pin; Snake Lake
(The song "Men with Small Heads" won "Best American Art Song" in the 2004 American Art Song Competition sponsored by the San Francisco Song Festival.)

"This Space" (2000, rev. 2005)

(bass/piano, also mezzo soprano/piano version) poem by Thomas Lux, 2 minutes.

"Armgarth" (2000)

(soprano/piano) poem by George Eliot, 3 minutes.
(Winner of The Boston Art Song Competition, 2000.)

One or Two Things (2001)

(mezzo soprano/piano) poems by Mary Oliver, 5 minutes.

Don't Bother Me; The God of Dirt; One or Two Things

Round and Round (2001)

(soprano/piano) poems by Anne Spencer Lindbergh, 9 minutes.

Earlier this Afternoon; Little Plump Person; I Contrived A Poem; Bar the Door; Little Anne;
Round and Round

The Years (2001)

(soprano/piano) poems by Sara Teasdale, 9 minutes.

Jewels; To-Night; Barter; Faults; The Years

Living in the Body (2001)

(soprano/saxophone) poems by Joyce Sutphen, 15 minutes.

Burning the Woods of my Childhood; Living in the Body; Not for Burning; Lost at Table; Bring
on the Rain; Crossroads

Within These Spaces (2002)

(soprano/piano) poems by Marjorie Saiser, Janet Coleman and Judith Sornberger,
16 minutes.

I Grow to be My Grandmother; My Mother Has Recovered; Letter to my Daughter; The China
Cup; Pioneer Child's Doll

"Little Elegy" (2002)

(soprano/piano) poem by Elinor Wylie, 1 minute.

Long Pond Revisited (2002)

(baritone/cello). poems by C.G.R. Shepard, 15 1/2 minutes.

I Looked for Reasons; The Pond Seems Smaller; Late in the Day; Days Turn; Long Pond Revisited

Two Dickinson Songs (2002)

(soprano/piano) poems by Emily Dickinson, 4 minutes.

Good Morning Midnight; Wider than the Sky

"Lines Written at the Falls" (2002)

(soprano/piano) poem by Thomas Moore, 3 1/2 minutes.

Captivity (2002, rev. 2004, *Revised again in 2007 into 2 separate cycles. Published in June 2008, as Captivity, with 3 songs: The Polishers of Brass, Books and The Weakness. The other 2 songs will be reworked with piano and published at a later date.*)

(soprano/trumpet) poems by Toi Derricotte.

The Minks; The Struggle; Books; The Polishers of Brass; The Weakness

Fathers (2002, rev.2003)

(baritone/piano trio; also baritone, flute, cello and piano version) poems by Ranasinghe and Vogel. Premiered by Music of Remembrance, Benaroya Hall, April 2003.

Fragment 1; You, Father; Fragment 2; Last Night I Dreamt; fragment 3; I Saw My Father Drowning; Don't Cry (not yet published)

Early Snow (2003)

(soprano/piano) poems by Mary Oliver, 9 minutes.

Last Night the Rain Spoke to me, Blue Iris, Early Snow

The Throwback (2003)

(baritone/piano) poems by Paul Muldoon, 8 1/2 minutes.

Cradle Song for Asher; The Ancestor; Redknots; The Breather; The Throwback

One Bee And Revery (2003)

(soprano/piano) poems by Emily Dickinson, 4 minutes.

The Butterfly upon; Hope is a Strange Invention; To Make A Prairie

Fresh Patterns (2003)

(soprano/piano) texts from Emily Dickinson and Annie Finch, 10 minutes.

Commissioned by Steven Jordheim for Alisa Jordheim.

It's All I Have to Bring Today (Dickinson, soprano and piano); A Letter for Emily Dickinson (Finch, soprano and piano); Fresh Patterns (soprano, soprano and piano/Dickinson and Finch)

Becoming A Redwood (2003)

(high voice and piano/high voice and orchestra) poems by Dana Gioia, 14 minutes.

The Song (after Rilke); Pentecost; Curriculum Vitae; Becoming A Redwood

"Money" (2003)

(for voice and piano/also duet setting soprano/baritone/piano) poem by Dana Gioia, 2 minutes.

"The Apple Orchard" (2004)

(tenor or baritone/piano) poem by Dana Gioia, 2 1/2 minutes.

Being Happy (2004)

(baritone/piano) poem by Dana Gioia, 2 minutes.

Swimmers on the Shore (2004)

(baritone/piano) poem by David Mason, 5 minutes.

Commissioned by The West Chester University Poetry Conference.

If I...

choral version. Arrangement by Bruce Rosenblum.

"On A Photograph" (2004)

(Solo version for all voice types; duet versions for mezzo soprano/baritone and mezzo soprano/bass) poem by John Wood, 5 minutes. Premiered February 14, 2005, Banners Series, McNeese State University, Lake Charles, LA. with soprano Carol Lines and pianist Lori Laitman.

The Seed of Dream (2004)

(baritone, cello and piano) poems by Vilna Ghetto survivor Abraham Sutzkever, with translations by C.K. Williams and Leonard Wolf, 18 minutes. Commissioned by Music of Remembrance, Seattle, WA.

I Lie in This Coffin; A Load of Shoes; To My Child; Beneath the Whiteness of Your Stars; No Sad Songs, Please

Five Lovers (2004)

(soprano/piano) poems by Jama Jandrokovic, 8 minutes. Commissioned by Jama Jandrokovic.

On Meeting Again; Lovely in His Bones; This Morning; Second Date; July, 95 degrees

"Equations of the Light" (2005)

(high voice and piano/also duets for soprano and baritone or soprano and tenor with piano) poem by Dana Gioia, 4 1/2 minutes. Commissioned by The West Chester University Poetry Conference 2005.

"My Garden" (2004)

(soprano/piano) poem by Adelaide Ayer Kelley. (unpublished)

The Perfected Life (2006)

(soprano, tenor/mezzo soprano and baritone versions) poems by Emily Dickinson.

An Amethyst Remembrance (2005); Dear March (2006); The Perfected Life (2006)

River of Horses (2006)

(soprano/piano) poems by Baudelaire, James Wright, James Dickey, Traditional Navajo poem, 10 minutes. Commissioned by Jean del Santo, University of Minnesota. (not yet published)

My Hand Forever, A Blessing, A Birth, Sioux Warrior Song, Two Horses

Orange Afternoon Lover (2006)

(soprano/piano) poems by Margaret Atwood. Jointly commissioned by The Howard Hanson Fund of The Eastman School and The College of Arts and Sciences at Syracuse University, and written expressly for soprano Eileen Stempel and pianist Sylvie Beaudette.

Against Still Life, I Was Reading A Scientific Article, I Am Sitting on the Edge

"Eloise at Yaddo" (2006)

(soprano/piano) poem by David Yezzi.

Full Moon and Light Hearted William: Two William Carlos Williams Songs (1997, rev.2007)

(tenor/piano) poems by William Carlos Williams.

The Blood Jet (2006)

(soprano/piano) poems by Sylvia Plath. Commissioned by Dr. Adelaide Whitaker.

Morning Song; The Rival; Kindness; Balloons

The Silver Swan (2007)

(Two versions; one for mezzo soprano and piano; one for mezzo soprano, piano and flute) poem by Orlando Gibbons. Written for Dr. Carol Kimball.

On The Green Trail (2007) (soprano and piano or tenor and piano) poems by Jeff Gundy.

A Wild Sostenuto (2008) (high or low voice with piano) poem “For C.” by Richard Wilbur.

Operas

Come to Me in Dreams (2004)

50 minute opera created from my songs by The Cleveland Opera’s David Bamberger. Premiered at The Ohio Theatre June 9-12, 2004, Cleveland, Ohio. Cast: Sanford Sylvan, Fenlon Lamb, Megan Tillman and Sara Renea Rucker; instrumentalists Judith Ryder, Maximilian Dimoff and Paul Cohen.

I Did Not Manage to Save; Faults; Yes, That’s the Way Things Are; To-Night; Birdsong; Massacre of the Boys; Wild Nights; The Butterfly; The Years; Holocaust, 1944; Man Proposes, God Disposes; Jewels; The Garden; Both Your Mothers; Echo

The Scarlet Letter (2008) based on Nathaniel Hawthorne’s novel, libretto by poet David Mason, approximately 2 hours. Commissioned by The University of Central Arkansas through Robert Holden and the UCA Opera Program. Premiered November 6, 2008 at the Donald W. Reynolds Theater at the University of Central Arkansas, Conway, AR. Scored for 3 main leads, 3 minor roles, a chorus, assorted secondary roles and chamber orchestra. There is one non-speaking part (Pearl, Hester’s daughter)

Several arias from the opera will be published individually, they are:

“Hester’s Lullaby” (soprano), Dimmesdale’s “Our Nights” (tenor) and “Ye People of New England” (tenor), The Witch’s Dance Aria (mezzo-soprano), and Chillingworth’s aria, “Now truly know me, Hester Prynne” (baritone)

Appendix B

Discography

Mystery: The Songs of Lori Laitman. Albany Records. August 1, 2000.

Dreaming: The Songs of Lori Laitman. Albany Records. May 1, 2003.

Becoming a Redwood. Albany Records. October 2006.

CD recordings which contain songs of Lori Laitman

American Song Recital. Lauren Wagner. Channel Classics. August 19, 1993.
(The Metropolitan Tower, The Strong House)

So Much Beauty. Janeanne Houston. Elmgrove Productions. Feb 9, 2004.
(Wider than the Sky, Good Morning Midnight, If I...)

Emily Dickinson in Song: Dwell in Possibility. Virginia Dupuy. Gasparo Records. June 29, 2004.
(If I..., They Might Not Need Me)

She Says. Sonya Gabrielle Baker. Angelus Productions. 2004.
(Along with Me, They Might Not Need Me, The Night Has A Thousand Eyes, Over the Fence, Wild Nights)

The Shining Place. Janeanne Houston. Elmgrove Productions. January 2006.
(A Winter Night, Old Tunes)

Songs in Transit: An American Expedition. Melanie Mitrano. Capstone Records. 2006.
(Money, The Hour)

Brundibar and Music of Remembrance. Laura DeLucca. Naxos Classics. December 12, 2006. (I Never Saw Another Butterfly)

Appendix C

Other Settings of Sara Teasdale's Poetry

Bachland, Gary. *New York Sonorous* no. 3, "The Kiss," for mezzo soprano and piano. Unpublished. Contact Gary Bachland at www.bachland.org.

Barab, Seymour. *First Person Feminine*. "The Kiss" for SSA chorus and piano. New York, NY: Boosey & Hawkes, 1970.

Duke, John. *The John Duke Collection: Songs for voice and piano*. "Spray." New York, NY: Boosey & Hawkes, c. 1994.

Jacchia, Agide. "The Kiss" for medium voice and piano. Out of print, 1920.

Kennedy, John Broulbin. *The Look, the Kiss, and Joy*. "The Kiss" for SSA chorus. New York, NY: Boosey & Hawkes, 1972. Out of Print.

Silverman, Faye-Ellen. *Love Songs: for soprano and flute/alto flute*. "Faults" and "The Mystery." New York, NY: Seesaw Music Corp., 1997.

Appendix D

Poets Used by Lori Laitman

AMERICAN:

Traditional Navajo poem
Emily Dickinson (1830 - 1886)
William Carlos Williams (1883 - 1963)
Sara Teasdale (1884 - 1933)
Elinor Wylie (1885 - 1928)
Kenneth Rexroth (1905 - 1982)
Adelaide Ayer Kelly (1911 - 1997)
Elizabeth Bishop (1911 - 1979)
Michael Flack (1920 -)
James Dickey (1923 - 1997)
C.G.R. Shepard (1924 -)
James Wright (1927 - 1980)
Sylvia Plath (1932 - 1963)
Mary Oliver (1935 -)
Janet Coleman (1935 -)
Margaret Atwood (1939 -)
Anne Spencer Lindbergh (1940 - 1993)
Toi Derricotte (1941 -)
Thomas Lux (1946 -)
John Wood (1947 -)
Dana Gioia (1950 -)
Jeff Gundy (1952 -)
Judith Sornberger (1952 -)
Wendy-Marie Goodman (1954 -)
Lori Laitman (1955 -)
Annie Finch (1956 -)
Joyce Sutphen (1949 -)
Marjorie Saiser
Janet Coleman (1935 -)
Judith Sornberger
David Mason (1954 -)
David Yezzi (1966 -)
Jama Jandrokovic (1976 -)

BRITISH:

Orlando Gibbons (1583 - 1625)
Robert Browning (1812 - 1889)
George Eliot (Mary Ann Evans, 1819 - 1880)
Christina Rossetti (1830 - 1894)
Thomas Hardy (1840 – 1928)
Francis W. Bourdillon (1852 - ?)
Karen Gershon (1923 - 1993)

SRI LANKAN:

Anne Ranasinghe (1925 -)

CZECH:

Pavel Friedmann (1921 - 1942)
Franta Bass (1930 - 1944)
Hanus Löwy (1931 - 1942)
Miroslav Kosek (1932 - 1942)
Bachner (?? - died 1942?)
anonymous
the above children all died in Auschwitz, killed by the Nazis.

POLISH:

Jerzy Ficowski (1924 - 2006)
Tadeusz Rosewicz (??)

POLISH/NOW ISRAELI:

Abraham Sutzkever (1913 -)

FRENCH:

Charles Baudelaire (1821 - 1867)

RUSSIAN:

David Vogel (died in the Holocaust, lived in early 1900s)

IRISH:

Thomas Moore (1779 - 1852)
Paul Muldoon (1955 -)

Appendix E

Lori Laitman Style Sheet

Lori Laitman (b.1955)

| | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| General | | - composes in an essentially lyrical style |
| Melody | Melodic Contour/Phrase Shape | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fluid, lyrical melodies considered neo-romantic - Early melodies mostly stepwise - Later songs explore more angular melodic phrases - Text often determines melodic contour - “surprising and unpredictable...never abrupt, but smooth, pleasing and natural.”¹⁷³ |
| | Phrase Length | - Determined by nature of text |
| Harmony | Harmonic Texture | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Harmonies are post-modern “carefully chosen by Laitman to intensify emotional context”¹⁷⁴ - texture used dramatically to match mood of text |
| | Tonality | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - tonal center often masked - rich tonal range - usually avoids key signatures for ease of movement between tonal centers - Dissonance is a chief harmonic tool |
| | Text Illustration through Harmony | - uses intervals as unifying devices; sometimes used as seeds for the entire work, chief thematic material, and important structural points |
| Rhythm | Metric Organization | - meter changes tied to text |
| | Rhythmic Patterns | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - active rhythms often tied to the rhythm of the poetry - Also uses rhythms to illustrate text |
| Accomp. | Predominant figures | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - often uses eighth note figures - will use a figure throughout a piece as a unifier |
| | Text Illustration | - accompaniment often describes, comments, or explains the text |
| | Texture | - variety of accompaniments: some dense-textured and difficult; others lean-lined and more simple |
| Poets/Texts | Choice of Texts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - lyrical, romantic poetry a preference - Holocaust poetry - diverse texts (dramatic, humorous) - always set with lyricism - wide range of poets from Rossetti and Dickinson to Lux and Gioa. She has an affinity for setting modern poets. |
| | Treatment of Prosody | - every attempt made to preserve natural rhythm of words |
| | Response to Poetic Content | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - music adapted to text - music meant to heighten meaning of text |
| Form | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - form mostly dictated by text - Uses AB, ABA and through-composed forms mostly |

¹⁷³ Carol Kimball, *Song*, “Lori Laitman,” Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard, 2006, p 32.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

Appendix F

Permissions

Windows Live Hotmail Print Message

Page 1 of 1

Permission email

From: **Lori Laitman** (yale75@gmail.com)
Sent: Fri 10/30/09 11:16 AM
To: Andrea Mueller (andreadmueller@hotmail.com)

Dear Andrea,

As owner of the copyright to my Teasdale songs that you have used in your dissertation, and as owner of the publishing company Enchanted Knickers Music (which publishes these songs), I give you permission to use musical examples from these songs to be reprinted in your dissertation.

Sincerely,

Lori Laitman
Enchanted Knickers Music
www.artsongs.com

<http://by117w.bay117.mail.live.com/mail/PrintShell.aspx?type=message&cpids=9725ee4...> 10/30/2009

Vita

Andrea Mueller, soprano, is an active performer on both the operatic and concert stage. Her roles include Musetta (*La Boheme*), Pamina and Queen of the Night (*The Magic Flute*), Cathleen (*Riders to the Sea*), Suor Genevieve (*Suor Angelica*), Little Red (*Little Red Riding Hood*), Marcellina (*Le nozze di Figaro*), Berta (*Il Barbiere di Siviglia*), Mrs. Gleaton (*Susannah*), and Mrs. Gobineau (*The Medium*) for which Pierre Ruhe of *The Atlanta Journal and Constitution* said she “sang sweetly and grieved believably.” Oratorio credits include Brahms’ *Requiem* and Handel’s *Messiah*. Ms. Mueller is currently a faculty member at the Johnson Ferry Conservatory of the Arts where she teaches voice and piano.

Ms. Mueller is a graduate of Samford University with a Bachelor of Music in vocal performance, a graduate of Louisiana State University with a Master of Music in vocal performance, and is completing her Doctor of Musical Arts Degree in vocal performance with a minor in vocal pedagogy.