A Performance Guide to "Five Musings on the Past" by Elisenda Fábregas for Soprano and Piano

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A PERFORMANCE GUIDE TO *FIVE MUSINGS ON THE PAST*

BY ELISENDA FÁBREGAS

FOR SOPRANO AND PIANO

A Dissertation

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

in

The School of Music

by

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ABSTRACT

This document is a performance guide to Elisenda Fábregas’ *Five Musings on the Past* for soprano and piano. Fábregas is a celebrated Catalan-American composer and concert pianist. Highly influenced by the Spanish tonalities and rhythms of flamenco, she has written compositions for piano, woodwinds, strings, guitar, choral, orchestra, symphonic band, and solo voice. Chapter one discusses the life and compositional style of Fábregas. Chapter two lists the premieres and influential poets behind Fábregas' solo vocal works. Chapter three discusses Fábregas’ musical settings of her original Spanish poetry in *Five Musings on the Past*. Musical examples for each song are presented to demonstrate Fábregas’ use of poetry and musical gesture when recalling a past event. Furthermore, the composer’s suggestions and recommendations for the performance practice of each song are included. A conclusion, a bibliography, and an appendix are included. The appendix contains the full text of *Five Musings on the Past* with a translation, and an original phonetic transcription by the author. Transcripts of interviews, program notes by the composer, a list of her solo vocal works, and letters of permission are also included.
INTRODUCTION

Elisenda Fábregas is a celebrated Catalan-American composer and concert pianist. She was born in 1955 in Terrassa, Barcelona. In 1978, she came to the United States as a Post-Doctoral Fulbright scholar, where she earned her masters degree from The Juilliard School and a doctorate from Columbia University Teachers College.¹ While at The Juilliard School, Fábregas began composing. She has composed for piano, woodwinds, strings, guitar, choral, orchestra, symphonic band, and solo voice.

In 1992, the casual meeting of [Fábregas and] an old friend on a busy street prompted the revival of many memories, some going back to [her] teenage years.² “These intense feelings were translated to poetry in the span of two days in the form of seven poems.”³ In 2002, Fábregas set five of these poems in *Five Musings on the Past*, for soprano and piano, for her friend, Rachel Rosales. The work was premiered on October 6, 2002. This document will examine the composer’s original poems and their settings, which are musings on her memories of past loves.

Chapter one presents the life and compositional style of Elisenda Fábregas. Biographical information will be followed by a discussion of Fábregas’ compositional devices and influences both as a concert pianist and composer.

Chapter two will focus on Fábregas’ solo vocal works. It will be a discussion of Fábregas’ premieres, influential poets, and artistic collaborations relating to her solo vocal works.

² Ibid.
³ Ibid.
Chapter three explores Fábregas’ musical settings of her poetry in *Five Musings on the Past*. “The function of song embodying and encapsulating memory has been a part... of artistic representations in literature and music” for centuries. Fábregas’ poetry embodies in lyrical form, past narratives and experiences, in which she recalls and expresses her longing, anxiety and passion. The text of each poem will appear with an English translation. The individual songs will be analyzed for basic characteristics such as the nature of the vocal line, range, tessitura, metric organization, and rhythm. Musical examples will be presented to demonstrate Fábregas’ use of musical gesture and poetry to describe her life experiences. Furthermore, the composer’s suggestions and recommendations for the performance practice of each song will be included, along with a conclusion; Appendices will include the full text and translation of *Five Musings on the Past* as well as an original phonetic transcription created by the author, transcripts of interviews, program notes by the composer, a list of her vocal works, and letters of permission.

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CHAPTER ONE
ELISENDA FÁBREGAS LIFE AND COMPOSITIONAL STYLE

Biographical Information

Elisenda Fábregas is a celebrated Spanish-American composer, pianist, and educator. She was born on July 30, 1955, in Terrassa, Spain, a city in the east central region of Catalonia. Fábregas grew up during the Franco regime, a time of turmoil during the Spanish Civil War and Nationalism. Franco promoted a strong Spanish identity by establishing a strong Spanish culture where bullfighting and flamenco were frequently televised. As a child, Fábregas would watch television and she became captivated by the sounds and rhythms of flamenco, a major factor in the development of her musical ear. She began her musical studies at an early age despite the antiquated notion that a profession in the arts was frowned upon, especially for a woman.

Her family members possessed many talents, but no one pursued formal musical training. Her mother and her uncle both dabbled in piano:

Her mother loved to play Chopin Waltzes, while her uncle improvised jazz. Fábregas’ grandmother (on her mother’s side) loved to sing and would have been a professional singer if she had been allowed to do so by her family. Fábregas’ grandfather (on her father’s side) was a Catalan folk song aficionado. Fábregas’ mother also had an uncle that had apparently sung at La Scala di Milano, in Italy.5

Fábregas was five years old when her mother began teaching her piano lessons. By the time she was six years old, she was taking piano lessons, theory, and solfège at Las Carmelitas, a local Catholic School.6 She began her formal training at the Conservatorio del Liceo in


6 Ibid.
Barcelona, Spain. When Fábregas was fifteen years old, she became the youngest piano teacher at the Conservatorio de Terrassa, and with her salary, she was able to support her musical studies. In 1975, she left her parents home and moved to Barcelona. For two years she lived under difficult economic circumstances, while continuing her musical studies. She attended the Conservatorio Superior Municipal de Musica de Barcelona (Barcelona Music Conservatory), and began taking piano lessons with Teresa Balcells. Later she studied with Catalan pianist, Miquel Farré, “one of the most outstanding pianists of his generation and a renowned figure in the contemporary concert panorama [in Barcelona].” While pursuing professional studies in music, Fábregas also attended the Autonoma University in Pedrables, Barcelona, where for three years she pursued a degree in chemistry.

1978 was a pivotal year for Fábregas. She was awarded a doctorate from the Conservatorio Superior Municipal de Musica de Barcelona. Moreover, she had the opportunity to play piano for a group of musicians that included Catalan composer, Federico Mompou. Mompou would later write a recommendation letter that Fábregas would present to The Juilliard School in the United States. In September of 1978, the

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8 Ibid., 11.
9 Ibid., 9.
twenty-three year old Fábregas left her home country with the promise of a Fulbright Scholarship if she were accepted at The Juilliard School.\textsuperscript{12}

The first three months in the United States were difficult for Fábregas. She knew very little English; had very little money, until the Fulbright Scholarship came through; and she did not know anyone in the United States.\textsuperscript{13} She lived at the Barbizon Hotel for Women for one month, until she ran out of money.\textsuperscript{14} At the suggestion of the Spanish Consulate, she lived for two months at El Carmelo Residence, established by the Carmelite Sisters Teresas of San Joseph of Spain.\textsuperscript{15} It is an inexpensive home for young women who come to the United States to continue their education or to work in New York City.\textsuperscript{16} Though in difficult circumstances, she managed to present Mompou’s recommendation letter to Dr. Joseff Raieff of The Juilliard School asking him for lessons in preparation for the entrance exam.\textsuperscript{17}

In May 1979, Fábregas was accepted into The Juilliard School as a piano student. Because she did not speak English, she was placed as an undergraduate. After two years of study she became fluent in English, and she received her Bachelor of Music in May 1982. A year later, having continued her studies with Joseff Raieff, and later Beveridge Webster, and Samuel Sanders, Fábregas received her Master of Music from The Juilliard School as well.

\textsuperscript{12} Park, “Piano Music of Elisenda Fábregas,” 11.

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{17} Ibid.
At The Juilliard School, she began playing for the Spanish dance classes of Maestro Hector Zaraspe and Gloria Marina, and with the Modern Choreography dance classes of Janet Soares and Anna Sokolow, performing many of their concerts and rehearsals. She was asked to improvise Spanish dance music for the classes. Fábregas, in some instances, was encouraged by Hector Zaraspe to write down some of her improvisations. Fábregas had already embarked on an accomplished career in piano performance, appearing in such venues as Alice Tully Hall, Merkin Concert Hall, Carnegie Weill Recital Hall, the Joyce Theater in New York City, and the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C, the United Nations Conference in Beijing, the Palace Theater in London, Palau de la Musica Catalan in Barcelona, and the Manuel de Falla International Festival in Granada, Spain. Praising her in a review in The New York Times for her Carnegie Hall debut on May 31, 1983, Tim Page wrote:

Ms. Fábregas has a fluid technique and a poet’s command of musical shading. She opened her program with brightly bouncing performances of two Soler sonatas ... Three selections from Albeniz’s Iberia were exemplary: sultry but never indolent. And Miss Fábregas brought an insistent vitality to four sharp, sinuous compositions by Manuel de Falla.

Fábregas not only performed solo works; she was also a highly admired collaborative pianist. In 1984, she toured England with the Janet Soares Dance Company. During her later

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18 Ibid., 13.


years at The Juilliard School, mid-1980s, she was also a certified accompanist, performing with strings, voice, wind, and brass players.  

She continued her professional studies at The Juilliard School, and started her educational studies at Columbia University Teachers College in 1985. In 1992, she was graduated with a Doctorate of Education, with a specialty in piano pedagogy, music psychology, and music technology. The title of her dissertation is “Designing and Implementing an Electronic Music Program in a Community Music School in New York City.”

While pursuing her educational degree, she worked as a faculty member and Education Director at The Bloomingdale School of Music in New York City from 1985 to 1993. There she taught piano, music theory, composition, music appreciation, ensemble, and computer application.

After years of study and concertizing, Fábregas wanted to create her own style of music, and so began composing in 1985. In 1986, she composed Reflexiones for piano for the Maria Benitez Spanish Dance Company. It premiered on March 18, 1986, at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington D.C., along with Maria Benitez’s


23 Ibid.


solo dance choreography for the work. Pamela Sommers of The Washington Post wrote that the work was “complex and haunting.” Because of the success of the work and the multiple performances of it thereafter, Fábregas continued composing.

In 1993, Fábregas was appointed Assistant Professor of Piano and Piano Pedagogy at the University of Texas at San Antonio where she remained until 2000. In order to work full time as a composer, she chose to continue her association with The University of Texas of San Antonio as an adjunct professor from 2000 to 2002. She also continued her performance schedule, promoting her new works in concerts around the United States and Asia, including China, Taiwan, Korea, and Hong Kong. In June 2002, Fábregas established her own publishing house, Hidden Oaks Music Company, to promote her compositions and recordings.

In 2007, Fábregas decided to pursue a Doctorate of Musical Arts Degree in Composition at Peabody Institute of The John Hopkins University. She studied with Christopher Theofanidis, Kevin Puts, Thomas Benjamin, and Elam R. Sprenkle. While completing her second doctoral degree, Fábregas worked in 2009 as an adjunct faculty

26 Ibid., 16.
29 Ibid.
32 Ibid.
member at Towson University, teaching music theory, and she was offered a job in Seoul, Korea. Upon finishing her degree in 2010, she became a visiting professor at Chugye University for the Arts. In May 2011, she was awarded a Doctorate of Musical Arts in Composition from Peabody.  

She decided to stay in Seoul, Korea, and now she is currently a visiting professor at Kyung-Hee University Humanities College. When asked why she ventured to Korea, she simply stated while laughing, “They offered me a job. That’s all it was.” She enjoys the university, a place where she can compose comfortably:

They treat me really well. It’s a good place to kind of work and work and work. Since I’ve been here, I’ve written symphonies, two concertos, and now another concerto. [I] just teach and then write music.

She currently teaches a cultural history course on eastern and western music. She states that she has learned a great deal teaching Asian traditional music, Indian music, Indonesian music, Korean music, and Chinese music. As a result, she has developed a much broader perspective on different cultures, an understanding which has influenced her in more recent compositions as well. In 2011, *Terra Mater*, a work for Symphony Orchestra was commissioned and premiered by the Wonju Philharmonic Orchestra in Korea. In 2012, she composed *Retorn a la Terra* for narrator, clarinet, bassoon, trumpet, trombone, percussion, violin, and double bass. This piece was commissioned by Virtuoso Ensemble, and premiered at the Dong Tan Art Center in Hwaseong, Korea. Another piece from 2012,  

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33 Ibid., 15.

34 Elisenda Fábregas, Skype interview with author, April 6, 2014, transcript Appendix C

35 Ibid.
entitled *Caminos del Duende* was written for the 4Plus Ensemble and was premiered on July 21, 2012. In 2013, Fábregas composed two works: *Ancient Walls* for solo violin and *Wandering Spirit* for violin and piano, both works commissioned and premiered by Hungarian concert violinist Rodrigo Puskás. Her most recent work is Symphony No. 1 for Symphonic Band, which was commissioned by Banda Municipal de Barcelona and premiered by Maestro Youngmin Park at L’Auditori Sala Pau Casals in Barcelona on February 9, 2014.36

**Compositional Style**

Fábregas did not have formal compositional training until she went to the Peabody Institute. Nevertheless, she was very successful before this educational endeavor, publishing many of her works. She began composing during her time at The Juilliard School. Working and performing with the Spanish dance classes, Fábregas began to reflect upon the Catalan and flamenco rhythms and tonalities she had heard as a child and teenager growing up in Spain. Fábregas learned the Catalanian vocal traditions at home, and her earliest memory of these traditions came when her “grandfather used to sing many traditional Catalan folksongs and it was a great tradition during Christmas and other holidays during [her] childhood.” In spite of Franco’s intolerance for the Catalan language, families still passed down the tradition of language in collections of songs.

Throughout the history of Spain, Catalan folksongs were crafted by a variety of cultures practicing their musical traditions. “The Iberian Peninsula was inhabited by Phoenicians, Carthaginians (1100 B.C.), Celts, Greeks, Romans, Vandals, Suebis, Visigoths,

Arabs, Jews, Moors, and Gypsies." Spanish music, especially flamenco can be traced back to the Arab, the Hebrew, and the Gypsy cultures. Additive rhythms, note repetition, and non-Western tonalities are present in the traditional Andalusia song, cante jondo (deep song). The cante jondo is distinctive in its poetic and musical forms. It is a song form used to vent the plight of the gypsy people, and was often accompanied by the guitar and a dance. Common in Catalan folksongs is the alternation of rhythmic patterns, such as those seen in a Catalan ballad folksong in Figure 1.1. Here the time signature alternates between 9/8 and 3/8.

![Figure 1.1](image)

Figure 1.1. This Catalan ballad, *L'estudiant de Vic* shows an uneven rhythm, revealing the mixture of meters, 9/8 and 3/8.

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38 Ibid.


3/8, which creates a dance-like quality. Dominating these songs are short repeated note figures, and melodies with a narrow range, from a tritone to an octave. These melodies often feature the rising or falling patterns seen in some of Fábregas’ songs, which will be explored in chapter three.41

Catalan folksongs are modal, and use different and contrasting modes to create unresolved endings.42 Simon Furey stated in his thesis, “Harmony in Discord: An Analysis of Catalan Folk Song.”

This [Phrygian] mode does not fit easily with the Western European classical musical tradition, which, based on major and minor keys, is dominated by the concept of resolution. Phrygian... tunes do not resolve, at least to the classically-trained ears or indeed the ears of musicians familiar with folk music of European countries...43

Growing up, Fábregas attended a Catholic School where she learned the modes of Gregorian chant and grew fond of the Phrygian mode. This can be seen in multiple examples of her music further discussed in Chapter three. Figure 1.2 shows the various alterations of the Phrygian mode built on the third scale degree.

![Figure 1.2 Phrygian modes used in Catalan folksongs and Fábregas’ songs.44](image)

In *Five Musings on the Past*, Fabregas uses modes, to create chromatic tonalities that express unresolved endings. And she further heightens these unresolved atmospheres

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43 Ibid., 62.

with even more chromaticism. As a pianist, her encounter with Bela Bartók’s use of the octatonic scale influenced her style. Figure 1.3, depicts octatonic tetrachords.

![Diagram of octatonic tetrachords]

Figure 1.3. The top figure shows the octatonic scale in mode 1, beginning with a whole step. It is built on a minor tetrachord, while the bottom figure exhibits an octatonic scale in mode 2, built on a diminished tetrachord.45

The tritone, a sound inherent in the Catalan folksong is naturally built in the octatonic scale. In chapter three, there are several examples of the octatonic scale found in *Five Musings of the Past*.

The influences of the Gregorian chant style can also be found in Fábregas’ music. Chanting, like heightened speech, with mantra-like repetition, is the device chosen by Fábregas to create various psychological states of being in her music. During her student years at Teachers College, Fábregas read *Emotion and Meaning in Music* by Leonard Meyer. Meyer believed that the organization of music created meaning in music. Meaning in music is a learned processed and ultimately depends on cultural or societal acceptances:

> Much confusion has resulted from the failure to distinguish between emotion felt (or affect) and mood. Few psychologists dealing with music have been as accurate on this point as Weld, who notes that: ‘the emotional experiences which our observers reported are to be characterized rather as moods than as emotions in the ordinary sense of the term…. The emotion is temporary and evanescent; the mood is relatively permanent and stable.’ As a matter of fact, most of the supposed studies of emotion in music are actually concerned with mood and association.46

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Fábregas became interested in creating a mood for each of her compositions, an atmosphere set to music. This idea is similar to the German Affektenlehre (Doctrine of Affections), in which a composer created music in order to arouse particular senses. John Walter Hill, author of Baroque Music, discusses how Mattheson\(^47\) of 1739, made distinctions between dances and affects persuading his audience through musical rhetoric:

Mattheson places his discussion of musical affective expression in the context of musical rhetoric, distinguishing between musical invention, disposition, elocution, and delivery. He places the expression of specific affects within the compositional act of invention, in which the composer decided upon the basic purposes, features, and motives of a work before planning its form or beginning the actual composition.\(^48\)

Fábregas’ music that is influenced by Spanish folksong tonalities displays distinguishing musical characteristics that embody a musical rhetoric of her own. The musical devices she uses to create an affect of memory are trills, tritones, octatonic scales, repetition of text and musical material, additive rhythms, triplets, and ostinato-like figures.

Fábregas’ musical style is considered cosmopolitan and eclectic.\(^49\) Her many places of residency (Europe, American, and Asia) also contribute a distinct quality to her growth as a composer. “She has been able to integrate Western classical music, modal tonalities and distinct rhythmic patterns of Catalanian folk songs and dances, American jazz idioms,

\(^{47}\) Johann Mattheson (1681-1764) was a German composer, singer, writer, diplomat and music theorist during the Baroque period. He is most known for his discipline in musical rhetoric.


Asian music (Japanese instruments, Korean traditional music), and modernist trends she became familiar with while studying and performing contemporary music.”\(^{50}\)

Fábregas’ experience as a pianist has also impacted her compositional style. As a concert pianist she has performed works ranging from the Renaissance to the twentieth century. Ultimately, her favorite composer is J.S. Bach because his own use of musical rhetoric created melodies that were intricately woven into refined harmonies, persuading his audience with musical devices capable of producing emotional responses. But she also performs works by Spanish composers Albeniz, Mompou, De Falla, Granados, Montsalvatge, Padre Antonio Soler, and French composers such as Debussy, and Ravel, who were influenced by the same Spanish musical traditions.\(^{51}\)

Fábregas has composed for piano, woodwinds, strings, guitar, choral, orchestra, symphonic band, and solo voice. She has also written poetry and has set her poetry to music, as we shall see in *Five Musings on the Past* and another work, *Village Scenes*, that will be further discussed in Chapter two.

\(^{50}\) Park, “Piano Music of Elisenda Fábregas,” 17.

\(^{51}\) Ibid., 18.
Fábregas’ vocal works exemplify the fervent passion of the Spanish psyche. Because of Fábregas’ compositional style and intimate connection with her native tongue, she chooses Spanish poetry for all of her songs, with the exception of one work. The Canadian writer, Margaret Atwood, penned the one English poem she has used. She used Spanish and Catalan poets, including Federico García Lorca, Antonio Machado, Josep Janés, and herself.

Fábregas has a special connection with Lorca’s poetry because of his rich use of imagery and symbolism from the Spanish traditions and culture. Lorca (1898-1936) was a Spanish poet and dramatist who was murdered during the Spanish Civil War. His “fascination with Spanish folklore and Gypsy flamenco music colored much of his poetry.”

Fábregas has composed three solo vocal works inspired by Lorca’s poetry. I have decided to group the following solo vocal works out of chronological order.

**Five Songs (1986)**

Fábregas’ first vocal work, *Five Songs* for soprano and piano, was written in 1986, during her time at The Juilliard School. Written for her colleague, Rachel Rosales, the songs were premiered in NYC in 1988 by Rosales, with Fábregas at the piano. The duration of the work is about fifteen minutes in length. Southern Music Company in San Antonio, Texas

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published the work. Fábregas composed this work with Lorca's Spanish poems in mind, as she writes in her program notes:

This song cycle was inspired by five poems of the Spanish poet Federico García Lorca (1898-1936). The poems El silencio [The Silence], La luna negra [The Black Moon], Las seis cuerdas [The Six Strings], and Clamor [Clamor] are drawn from the collection Poema del Cante Jondo (1921), and La mano imposible [The Impossible Hand] is from El Diwan del Tamarit (1931-35). Lorca's poetry is born from the continuous juxtaposition of contrasting and opposing symbols, which attempt to negate each other. His obsession with death, which he referred to as the Spanish lover, also pervades his work.54

In a review of a later performance date, Mike Greenberg of San Antonio Express-News wrote, "Fabregas' idiom here is a sinuous and erotic free tonality, influenced a bit by Ravel and a bit by Schoenberg, but altogether fetching."55

**Five Poems of García Lorca (1992)**

Fábregas has set three other works to Lorca's poetry. In 1992, she composed *Five Poems of García Lorca*, and in 2009 she composed *Gacelas de Amor*. She has also composed an opera on Lorca's drama, *Yerma*, but it has not been published.56 *Five Poems of García Lorca* was "commissioned by the Gotham Ensemble in New York to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the discovery of America by the Spanish."57 It is a work for soprano, cello, clarinet, and violin, inspired by poetry taken from the following three García Lorca


55 Mike Greenberg, “What’s Up,” San Antonio Express-News, October 21, 1996,


This work has been published by Fábregas’ own publishing house, Hidden Oaks Music Company.

**Gacelas de amor (2009)**

*Gacelas de amor* is the third vocal cycle that Fábregas wrote using poetry by García Lorca. This cycle was composed in 2009, sometime after the two previous ones. This is also the last song cycle that Fábregas has written. As of late, she has been focusing on her instrumental works. *Gacelas de amor* is for soprano, flute, and piano. It is based on three poems from the following García Lorca collections: *Diwan del Tamarit* and *Canciones*. The work consists of three movements: *El amor desesperado* (Desperate Love), *Lucía Martínez*, and *El amor maravilloso* (Marvelous Love). The work is nine and half minutes in length and was commissioned by and written for Christiane Meininer, a flute player, and Jörg Waschinski, a male soprano. It was premiered on June 18, 2009 at the *Zentrum for Information und Bildung* in Unna, Germany with Christiane Meininer on flute, Jörg Waschinski singing, and Rainer Gepp on the piano. The American Embassy in Berlin sponsored the premiere, the Center for International Light Art in Unna, Germany, and a

travel grant from the Peabody Institute of John Hopkins University made the premiere possible. German critic, Martina Lode-Gerke, reviewed the premiere:

The highlight was the world premiere of “Gacelas de Amor” after poems by Federico García Lorca by the Spanish composer Elisenda Fábregas, who was present on this evening: The songs are, similar to Richard Strauss, very much oriented to the melody of speech. Occasionally the singer must declaim, which in the case of Jörg Waschinski is especially attractive because of the contrast of the speaking and singing voices. An impressive sound experience.⁵⁹

The work is published under Hofmeister Musik Velag.⁶⁰

**Cinco Soledades (1999/2004)**

In 1999, during Fábregas’ fascination with García Lorca’s poetry, Fábregas composed another song cycle, *Cinco Soledades*, with Spanish poetry by Antonio Machado. It was originally written for bass-baritone and piano in 1999, however in 2004 Fábregas arranged the work also for the lyric baritone. The cycle consists of five songs that reflect solitude and melancholy. The five poems used in the set are from three collections: *Soledades, galerías,* and *otros poemas* (1970: Solitudes, Galleries, and Other Poems). The five poems include:

Soledad #79 (*Desnuda está la tierra…*), Soledad #63 (*Y eres el demonio…*), Soledad #88 (*En sueños…*), Soledad #21 (*Daba el reloj las doce…*), and Soledad #75 (*Yo como Anacreonte*).

Fábregas includes program notes that explain some of Machado’s symbolist and modernist

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⁵⁹ English translation provided by German critic, Martina Lode-Gerke. Both English and German concert programs are available at www.efabregas.com. “Höhepunkt indes war die Uraufführung der „Gacelas de Amor“, die spanische Komponistin Elisenda Fábregas, die an diesem Abend auch anwesend war, nach Gedichten von Federico Garcia Lorca schuf: Die Lieder sind, ähnlich wie bei Richard Strauss, sehr an der Sprachmelodie orientiert, zwischen durch muss der Sänger auch deklamieren, was im Falle von Jörg Waschinski besonders reizvoll ist aufgrund des Kontrastes der Sprech- zur Singstimme.”

⁶⁰ Concert program and reviews are available at www.efabregas.com.
His poetry was born from the subtle link between the ‘exterior world’ and the ‘interior world of feelings.’ Machado’s poetry is tinged with melancholy, sadness, and solitude. These melancholic feelings compounded with the distance by which he seems to contemplate life, points to death. The poet seems to lack meaning in his own life, looking around and not finding a satisfactory answer to his existence.\footnote{Fábregas, “Program Notes” from \textit{Five Musings on the Past} by Elisenda Fábregas published by Hidden Oaks Music Company.}

This cycle’s subject matter can easily remind the listener of Schubert’s \textit{Die Winterreise}. Except that the cycle is only ten minutes in length. Fábregas’ mastery of the state of longing and sadness is obvious in this work. It was premiered on February 11, 2001 at Our Lady of the Lake University with baritone, Jacob Cantu and Fábregas at the piano. Hidden Oaks Music Company published this work.

\textbf{Five Musings on the Past (2002)}

In 2002, Fábregas wrote her next vocal work, \textit{Five Musings on the Past} for soprano and piano. The work was set to her own Spanish poetry that was written ten years prior. It consists of five songs: \textit{Deseo} (Desire), \textit{Definición} (Definition), \textit{El pasado peridido} (The Lost Past), \textit{Calor} (Heat), and \textit{El Sol} (The Sun). This work was also written for dramatic soprano, Rachel Rosales. Fábregas has written a few of her vocal works with a Rosales’ voice in mind. Rosales is a colleague and a friend. Both attended The Juilliard School at the same time, around 1982-1983. At that point, Rosales was singing at New York City Opera. Fábregas stated, “I was impressed with her wide range, musicality, vocal power, and (Mexican) passion.”\footnote{Fábregas, email message to author, March 2, 2014, transcript Appendix B.}
Five Musings on the Past was written “for a concert taking place at Ruth Taylor Concert Hall, Trinity University, sponsored by the Composers Alliance of San Antonio (CASA), on October 6th, 2002.” The composer accompanied Rosales at the premiere. The work is fifteen minutes in length, and it is published by Fábregas' publishing house. Chapter three will explain this work in greater detail.


Fábregas originally wrote Village Scenes, another vocal work set to her own poetry for Rachel Rosales, in 2002. However, in 2004 she arranged it for Catalanian mezzo-soprano, Anna Alàs. She premiered the work on February 27th, 2005 at COMRadio.com, a Spanish radio station, with pianist Xoan Castinyeira. The poetry is in Catalanian. There are three songs: El portal (The Gates), El poble (The Village), and La pluja (The Rain). Fábregas wrote program notes for her published edition denoting her inspiration. She was inspired by childhood memories of the early 1960s:

During the summers of the early 1960s my family and I used to take a vacation at the home of my grandparents in Ullastrell, a very small village near Terrassa (Barcelona). The three poems that inspired these songs were written in early October of 2002, after returning from a trip to Barcelona.

The work is six minutes in length, and is published by Hidden Oaks Music Company.


Moments of Change (2005)

*Moments of Change* is a song cycle that was written in 2005. This is the one cycle or vocal work that is the exception to Fábregas’ custom of setting Spanish poetry. Here she sets the English poetry of Canadian writer Margaret Atwood. The poetry comes from Atwood’s *The Moment from Morning in the Burned House*. When asked why she set Atwood’s poetry, Fábregas responded by saying, “with Margaret Atwood, I loved [her] because she was very strong.” The song cycle is for soprano and piano, however it is also available for mezzo-soprano and piano. The Hanson Institute commissioned it for American Music of the Eastman School of Music at the University of Rochester for soprano Eileen Strempel. It was premiered on April 24, 2005 at the Society for New Music Concert Series at Hosmer Auditorium, Everson Museum of Art, in Syracuse with soprano Eileen Strempel singing. Gregory Berg wrote in the Journal of the National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS) that “several of these songs are among the most intense and unsettling in the collection.” Hidden Oaks Music Company published it.

Tu i els meus somnis (2007)

A work that is lesser known is *Tu i els meus somnis* for mezzo-soprano and piano. Fábregas composed this work in 2007 for mezzo-soprano, Anna Alàs. It has not been premiered. Fábregas set this work to poetry by Catalan poet, Josep Janés. The work is seven minutes in length and it has been published by Fábregas’ publishing house.

66 Elisenda Fábregas, Skype interview by author, April 6, 2014, transcript Appendix C.

CHAPTER THREE
FIVE MUSINGS ON THE PAST

Discussion of Poems and Songs, with Performance Suggestions

As stated earlier, *Five Musings on the Past* is a cycle of five songs for soprano and piano, which are thematically linked through the subject matter of past memories. Well suited for a lyric or dramatic soprano, these songs embody the composer’s original poetry in lyrical form, and are past narratives and experiences, in which she recalls and expresses her longing, anxiety, and passion while reflecting on her memories of past loves.

Through her own musical rhetoric, Fábregas is able to create the overall “mood of memory,” a term I have coined to explain musical gestures in *Five Musings on the Past*. The mood can be described as dream-like and ambiguous,

> Brief passing moments and images remain[ing] completely intact, unaltered... despite the passage of time, but the overall framework appears destined to disappear....

Her use of trills, the tritone, the octatonic scale, repetition in text and musical material, additive rhythms, triplets, and *ostinato*-like figures recreate the character of Fábregas’ memories. Although, the musical devices mentioned above are reoccurring throughout the cycle, each song has a distinct quality and disposition. One can refer to Fábregas’ musical devices as the unifying elements of her compositional style.

*Five Musings on the Past*

Fábregas’ musical treatment of her own poetry is that of heightened speech. She admits to speaking her prose out loud in an effort to find the accent and flow of the Spanish

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language before setting it to music. By using her own musical rhetoric, she has managed to recreate the atmospheres to each past memory. Rhythms, dissonances, and melodies within the accompaniment provide complex or sparse textures, while the voice is used in order to reflect on the anxieties of past psychological states. The vocal line is often repetitive, achieving a mantric quality. Furthermore, Fábregas creates desired intensity by creating a rhythmic competition of two against three between the accompaniment and voice.

1st Song “Deseo”

Dulzura en tus ojos y resolución en tu serena mirada. Sweetness in your eyes and resolution in your serene gaze.
Dureza en tu suave cuerpo y pasión en tus frías entrañas. Hardness in your soft body and cold visceral passion.
Cuerpo que espera una mano caliente. Body that longs for a warm hand.
El deseo inunda mi boca y mis ojos en un imposible sueño Desire floods my mouth and my eyes in an impossible dream
Que noche tras noche nunca se acaba. that night after night it never ends.69

Basic Characteristics

• Vocal line: There are chant-like sections with repetitive notes, and melodic sections with difficult chromatic passages.
• Range: C♯4 - A♭5
• Tessitura: Middle voice

69 English poetic translation is by Elisenda Fábregas.
• Metric organization: Meter alternates between 3/4, 2/4, 4/4, 5/4, and 4/4. (The quarter note is constant throughout).

• Harmonic Structure: Dissonant. The song is built on octatonic tetrachords (diminished 7th chords) and the Phrygian mode. The tritone is present, a sound common to Catalan Folk Songs.

• Expression and Tempo Indications: *Andate tenerament* (moderately slow with tenderness), with resignation, *poco a poco diminuendo* (little by little softer) up to the end, *rallentado poco a poco* (gradually slowing down little by little) up to the end

• Rhythm: Triplets are a dominant figure used throughout the vocal line and accompaniment.

• Accompaniment: Complex orchestration with chromatically dense scale passages.

• Level of Difficulty: This piece is difficult. It would present challenges to a novice performer. The tonalities are nonwestern, making this piece difficult to cognize. It would be better suited for an advanced singer that can make sense of the dramatic passion and subtleties in the chant-like repetition of the Spanish text.

• Length: 42 measures; 2 minutes and 30 seconds

**Song Overview**

*Deseo* (desire) is a passionate poem about the sexual pleasures the body craves with a lover. It is a memory of a past experience with a lover, exposing the obsessive yearning and feeling of resignation when the experience has ended. The physical hardness of the body and the soft glances of two lovers together are juxtaposed. Fábregas uses intervals to emphasize the contrasting nature of such words as *dulzura* (sweetness) and *dureza*
(hardness) and frías (cold) and caliente (hot). In the second measure of the piece, on the second beat, the piano accompaniment has a perfect fourth in the right hand and a tritone in the left hand. The perfect fourth signifies consonance, while the tritone signifies dissonance. She is characterizing the unsettled nature of feeling those extreme sensations. Figure 3.1 displays the consonance of the perfect fourth played simultaneously with the harshness of the tritone.

![Musical score](image)

Figure 3.1. The juxtaposition of dissonance (tritone) and consonance (perfect fourth), m. 2

A rising and falling figure occurs in both the accompaniment and the melodic line, suggesting the ups and downs of a passionate night of lovemaking. The contrasting ideas are prevalent in the textures of the music. Throughout this song, chromaticisms of minor and diminished tetrachords create an unsteady musical environment allusive to the volatility of this impassioned night of lovemaking. Figure 3.2 displays the rising and falling bass line with an octatonic mode-one minor tetrachord in the vocal line.
Figure 3.2. A rising and falling bass line with an octatonic scale in mode-one, displaying the minor tetrachord in mm. 4-5.

The octatonic scale and the Phrygian mode are usually found in a quick scale-like motion to exhibit the longing consciousness. In mm. 9-10, Fábregas uses the octatonic scale in mode-two in the right hand of the accompaniment. The diminished tetrachord gives a conflicting sentiment to the word *serena* (serene). Perhaps since the moment is fleeting, a memory reflected upon, the diminished quality signifies that the serene gaze is only transitory.

Figure 3.3 displays the word *serena* over the accompaniment.

Figure 3.3. Octatonic scale in mode two, displaying the diminished tetrachord in mm. 9-10

- The Phrygian mode can be found in mm. 14 and 15. Fábregas starts with what looks like an octatonic scale in the vocal line in m. 14; however, on the words *en tus frías entrañas* (in your cold viscera) a half step is followed by two consecutive whole steps. Later in m. 15 what looks like a g natural minor scale can also be heard as the Phrygian mode. Although
dissonances in these measures sound purposeful, this occurrence is natural in Fábregas' composition style. Figure 3.4 depicts both Phrygian modes.

![Musical notation showing Phrygian modes in mm. 14-15]

Figure 3.4. The Phrygian mode is present in mm. 14-15.

The repetition of text in *Deseo* occurs as a musical gesture indicative of one remembering an event that has occurred. Memories can be replayed incessantly, while altering details for better or worse. One can heighten a memory by adding elements or one can repress a memory, resigning from the occurrence. Fábregas exemplifies both manifestations of memory through repetition of text with different melodic settings. Figure 3.5 shows mm. 13-19, building in repetition of the word *entrañas* (viscera), which ultimately becomes the melodic height of the song. A word that signifies the most profound depths of the body is set musically at the highest point of the song's range (A♭5). Excess
tension builds during mm. 13-18. With each repetition of the word *entrañas*, the accompaniment grows in texture. Trills are added and eventually the left hand and right hand in the accompaniment double each other in octaves leading to m. 19, the climatic

Figure 3.5. The repetition of the word *entrañas* (viscera) eventually becomes the melodic height of the song in mm. 13-19
point in the song, the most intense part of a building orgasm. Mm. 20-22 allow for the
downward spiral of passion. In m. 22, the chromatic descent signifies the pleasure of
release. Moreover, m. 22 has changed meter. The passion builds continuously in 3/4, while
the final release unfolds in a compound meter of 5/4. Figure 3.6 displays the chromatic
descent leading into a state of stillness.

Figure 3.6. The compound meter of 5/4 and the chromatic descent in m. 22

Fábregas indicates that the state of stillness should begin “with resignation.” Here
the chant-like repetition of the same words three times before continuing the phrase, and a
single-note triplet figure suggest the state of acceptance. It is an acceptance of a body that
aches for more, *cuerpo que espera una mano caliente* (body that longs for a warm hand). An
obsessive quality can be heard here through the notation of exact repetition. See Figure 3.7
for the repetition and triplet figure discussed. The desire is never fulfilled, *el deseo inunda
mi boca y mis ojos* (the desire floods my mouth and my eyes). Fábregas repeats this text
three times as well. Similar to the treatment of the word *entrañas*, tension builds with a
fuller texture in the accompaniment, indicating the flooding of desire.
The yearning for something that once was, is obviously an impossible dream. Fábregas’ poetry admits the desire is a “dream that night after night never ends.” The text, \textit{en un imposible sueño que noche tras noche nunca se acaba} (in an impossible dream that night after night never ends), repeats several times. Each repetition is slightly different and
more dissonant. As the vocal line descends, it is sustained in what sounds like a prolonged suspension through mm. 34-39. See Figure 3.8. Each measure contains a dissonance that resolves within the quarter note followed by a dotted eighth note figure. This depicts the longing for the night. The ending is unsettling. We anticipate a D major resolution to the song in m. 39, however, Fábregas ends on what sounds like a half cadence in m. 40, the V of G. The E♭ in the accompaniment keeps the tritone intact lending a disconcerting quality.
Thus, the feeling of uncertainty accompanies the song to its conclusion. It is an unresolved manifestation of a dream or desire for a past lover.

**Performance Suggestions**

The singer should pay close attention to the chromatic subtleties of this song. Learning the melody away from the accompaniment could prove helpful. The flow of the language is extremely important. The composer has helped a lot in this area with accented stress on certain words. The singer should practice speaking the language in the composed rhythm if the singer is not a native speaker. Since the composer and poet is Spanish, the singer should also sing this song with Castilian Spanish. For example, in the word *dulzura* the ‘z’ is pronounced like such, [θ]. (Refer to Appendix A, I have provided my own IPA transcriptions).

Fábregas is clear about her musical intentions in the score, and the singer should follow all dynamic markings. Each dynamic marking represents a new color of intensity. She requests *sotto voce* on page three, m. 23, this is not to be confused with the vocal part. This instruction is for the pianist. Fábregas intends the singer to sing with a sentiment of resignation during the monotonous repetition of the triplet figure and words, *cuerpo que espera* (body that longs) in mm. 22-28.

Rhythmically, this song can prove more of a challenge for the pianist. It is important that the pianist play with passion and precision. The singer should also be attentive to precise rhythmic values. Because of the impassioned nature of this song, the temptation is to take liberties with the tempo, however one must not become overindulgent, lest one lose the rhythmic precision, which is a hallmark of Spanish music.
**2nd Song “Definición”**

En el espacio estrecho del automovil
Hay un hablar hermético
Entre dos seres
que esperan lo mismo:
Ser definidos.

In the closed space of a car
there is hermetic conversation
between two beings
that are awaiting for the same thing:
To be defined.\(^{70}\)

**Basic Characteristics**

- **Vocal line:** The vocal line is primarily fixed upon a set of pitches within a minor third of each other. As the song develops, becoming more chaotic, the leaps become wider. Leaps of a minor seventh, tritone, fourth, and fifth are included. The vocal line should be treated as a tense-like chant riding over a tumultuous accompaniment.

- **Range:** C\(_4\) - A\(_5\)

- **Tessitura:** Middle voice

- **Metric organization:** Meter changes between 6/8, 12/8, 3/4, 5/8, 9/8, 8/8, and 4/4.

- **Harmonic Structure:** Dissonant and highly chromatic.

- **Expression and Tempo Indications:** *Prestissimo* (very fast, \(\text{\lowercase{M}}. = 100\)), *crescendo poco a poco* (louder little by little), *Poco meno mosso* (a little less motion, \(\text{\lowercase{M}}. = 90\)), *affrettando* (rushing), *A tempo* (back to the same tempo), *Lento* (slow, \(\text{\lowercase{M}}. = 56\))

- **Rhythm:** The eighth note is constant in this song. There is the occasional two against three between the vocal line and piano accompaniment.

- **Accompaniment:** The continuous chromatic eighth note pattern creates the sense of an *ostinato* figure throughout most of the song. The right and left hands often mirror

\(^{70}\)English poetic translation is by Elisenda Fábregas.
each other in contrary motion. Furthermore, trills become more prominent at the end of the piece.

- **Level of Difficulty:** This song is highly difficult. It is not for a beginner pianist or singer. It is best for the seasoned performer, one who can count consistently throughout meter changes. Furthermore, the subject matter is fitting for an older singer. The psychology behind this song is entirely sexual.

- **Length:** 69 measures; 2 minutes

**Song Overview**

*Definición* (definition) is a memory about a conversation that took place in the close confinements of a car, between two inexperienced adolescents:

“Two beings who don’t know who they are and expect the other to define them.”

Fábregas recalls:

This is from when I was a teenager and I was in the car with a young guy who asked me ‘to define him’ - at that point I did not get it. I clearly remember the tense and anxious atmosphere. The car was small and it was dark.

From the beginning there is a specific three-note chromatic motive in the accompaniment, played in both the right hand and in inversion in the left hand, as seen in mm. 1-2 (Figure 3.9). Both hands move in contrary motion in a chaotic *prestissimo*:

The revolving, twisted, and repetitive chromatic three-note motive is supposed to evoke the sense of ‘asphyxia’ or ‘claustrophobia’ both physically (the small car) and

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72 Elisenda Fábregas, e-mail message to author, March 2, 2014, transcript Appendix B.
psychologically (tense emotional situation).\footnote{Fábregas, e-mail message to author, April 13, 20104, transcript Appendix B.}

Figure 3.9. Mm. 1-2 shows the initial tritone in the piece and the contrary motion of the three-note chromatic motive seen throughout the song.

This piece is probably the most difficult piece in the cycle to understand psychologically. \textit{Ser definidos} (To be defined) has a sexual undercurrent. The text, \textit{en el espacio estrecho del automovil hay un hablar hermético} (in the closed space of a car there is an hermetic conversation), suggests a profoundly intimate conversation is taking place, a kind of conversation that stays between two individuals. The idea of defining someone requires an exploration of that person. A sexual experience between two inexperienced teenagers seems to describe this hermetic conversation. The atmosphere is tense during any first experience, especially when the experience requires carnal exploration.

The fast moving eighth-note passages in the accompaniment are heavy with chromaticism, and they are often filled with octatonic scales, reflective of an anxious conversation. However, in mm. 19-23 there is a swift change in the left hand of the accompaniment. In m. 19, there is an abrupt \textit{sforzando} that ends the previous persistently moving eighth notes. Instead the left hand plays staccato chordal eighth notes until m. 23. The right hand continues to carry the moving passages; in mm. 22-23 a fast sixteenth note
passage with an octatonic scale quality is present. The different texture between the right and left hands denotes two different people having an intense conversation. Figure 3.10 exhibits the change in texture in the left hand and the moving passages of the right hand in mm. 19-26.

Figure 3.10. Change in texture in the left hand of the accompaniment, block chords instead of moving eighth notes and the sixteenth note octatonic scale-like passage in the right hand.

All motion stops in m. 24, the conversation comes to a halt, and the physical exploration begins, and there is an understanding between the two inexperienced teenagers. A rhythmical eighth rest initiates this new section. The text, entre dos seres que esperan los mismo (between two beings that are awaiting the same thing), repeats building to a climax on the words lo mismo (the same thing) in mm. 37-41. The broad soaring vocal line with significant leaps is heard over an octatonic scale played in the right hand of the piano accompaniment in mm. 37-38. Figure 3.11 displays the height of the song (A♭) in the vocal
line and one of the composer’s signature scales. This point in the song signifies the craving that the two beings yearn for, which is yet to be defined (ser definidos).

Fábregas’ use of the tritone throughout this song is inevitable because she uses the octatonic scale and Phrygian mode. Here it can found in the accompaniment and the vocal line. The initial chord in in the accompaniment in m. 1 represents an unstable environment. (See Figure 3.9, it displays the tritone in m.1). Figure 3.12 displays mm. 52-53, where the tritone is present in the vocal line on the word, definido (defined), in a descending motion.

Suggesting an unpredictable environment, Fábregas alternates between 6/8 and 3/4 in mm. 16-19. There is also a condensing of rhythmic value on the word hermético.
The diminution of the rhythmic value on this particular word is symbolic for a “sealed” or “air-tight” conservation. Figure 3.13 displays the alternating time signatures on the word hermético.

![Soprano and Piano scores with hermético notated](image)

Figure 3.13. Alternating between 6/8 and 3/4 and the diminution of the rhythmic values in the word hermético in mm. 16-18.

Adding to the unstable environment of this song is the obsessive repetition of text. The first line of poetry, *en el espacio estrecho del automovil* (in the closed space of a car) is repeated three times. The second line of poetry, *hay un hablar hermético* (there is an hermetic conversation) is repeated five times. The third line of poetry, *entre dos seres que esperan lo mismo* (between two beings that are awaiting the same thing) is repeated six times. And finally the fourth line of poetry, *ser definidos* (to be defined) is repeated ten times. The trills that accompany the repeated text, *ser definidos* are effective toward the end of the song, starting on page ten of the score, mm. 47-57. The trill for Fábregas creates an altered psychological state of floating, an altered universe. Thus, the “hermetic conversation” leads to the defining of two bodies, it is an exchange that is out of this world, an orgasm. Figure 3.14 displays the incessant trilling in the accompaniment under repeated text, which ultimately crafts the melodic line.
This relentless repetition represents the building of an orgasm. For the most part, the vocal line remains fixed upon a set of pitches within a minor third of each other. As the song develops, becoming more chaotic, the leaps become wider. Leaps of a minor seventh, tritone, fourth, and fifth are included. At some points the vocal line sounds like a manic
chant riding over a tumultuous accompaniment. Nevertheless, a calming of musical texture occurs at the end of the song. This is the point of acceptance: the two lovers (teenagers) have both explored and defined each other. The lento section is chant-like, smooth and unhindered by the constant change in meter. In mm. 58-69 there are fluctuating meters between 5/8, 6/8, 3/4, back to 5/8, then 9/8, and ending in 8/8. The eighth note is constant. Furthermore, the melodic line seems to descend steadily in pitch. The slow descent suggests a familiarity has been achieved between the two teenagers. Nevertheless, in mm. 67-69, the wafting tritone colors the familiarity with ambiguity. Figure 3.15 shows that the final three chords of the song never resolve because the \( B^\# \) in the left hand of the accompaniment strives with the \( F^\# \) in the right hand of the accompaniment; a tritone is present. Moreover, the \( C^\# \) in the right hand of the accompaniment is used like a jazz blue note, confusing further the tonality and, thereby, essence of the song.

Figure 3.15. Ambiguous tonality, mm. 66-69

Performance Suggestions

This song is the most challenging in the entire cycle, both for the advanced pianist and singer. The \textit{prestissimo} tempo should not be taken lightly, as it does much to create the
frenetic atmosphere of this song. However, practicing this piece out of tempo should help with the ensemble. The song presents a challenge because of its additive rhythms. There are frequent fluctuations in meter and the piece is fast until the lento section, mm. 58-69. The pianist should treat the accompaniment as a virtuoso solo piano piece, paying close attention to the revolving three-note chromatic motive, both hands mirroring each other.

The singer should sing this piece in Castilian Spanish as well. (Refer to IPA transcriptions in Appendix A). Speaking the repetitive text in rhythm should help solidify the rhythmic differences within each repetition of text. Single note repetition in the vocal line is prevalent. The singer should find different colors to express the same recurring text. The vocal line presents tonal challenges if one is inexperienced singing dissonant intervals such as a minor seventh and a tritone. Furthermore, the singer should pay close attention to the dynamic contrasts in this song. She should avoid the temptation to sing everything loudly just because of the anxious and driven atmosphere created by the chaotic accompaniment. There is only one instance where the singer should actually sing a true forte, in m. 38, at the climatic point of the song on an A♭5.

Although challenging for both the singer and pianist, this song is quite gratifying once mastered.
3rd Song “El Pasado Perdido”

El pasado perdido
The lost past
Resiente el presente evitado.
Resents the eluded present.
Eludiéndose entre sí,
Evading each other,
sueño y realidad
dream and reality
Se mezclan libremente
[They] freely mix
en un futuro imposible
in an impossible future
Que recuerda el pasado perdido
that remembers the lost past
Y el presente evitado.
and the eluded present.74

Basic Characteristics

• Vocal line: The vocal begins with a tritone. It is melodically modal and chromatic.
  Text repetition occurs throughout the song.

• Range: C₄ - G₅

• Tessitura: Middle voice

• Metric organization: Meter changes between 6/8, 9/8, and 2/4.

• Harmonic Structure: Dissonant. Diminished tonalities throughout the song.

• Expression and Tempo Indications: Andante (moderately slow, J. = 50), sognando
  (dreaming), crescendo up to the end, enchènez (proceed to the following movement)

• Rhythm: The dotted quarter note is constant until the 2/4 section (J. = j).

• Accompaniment: Fairly sparse: trills throughout the song.

• Level of Difficulty: This song would be difficult for a young singer. The modal
  tonalities are difficult to grasp. Furthermore, the text requires a singer/interpreter
  that has experienced a bit of life to understand the paradoxical words and

74 English poetic translation is by Elisenda Fábregas.
psychology behind the idea of the past resenting the eluded present. It is a state of mind of being neither present nor absent.

- Length: 27 measures; 1 minute and 15 seconds

**Song Overview**

*El Pasado Perdido* (The Lost Past) “is about the frustration of not having taken certain opportunities in the past, and avoiding the ones in the present.” This particular song does not necessarily involve a lover. It is about a person who is not awake or aware in the present moment; one who is always dwelling in the past or evading the present.

Fábregas actually modeled the aesthetic of this particular song after another song, *La Luna Negra* (The Black Moon), which she wrote in 1986 as part of her first vocal work, *Five Songs* for soprano and piano set to García Lorca’s poetry. The song uses trills continuously throughout to create a surreal atmosphere and there is a recurrent alternation between two specific pitches:

The lack of tonal center gives the music a floating impression by surrounding the soprano melody with chromaticism and continuous trills in the piano part. The eerie quality of the music sustains the ambiance...

The same musical gestures can be found in *El Pasado Perdido*. Fábregas decided that the ethereal environment could apply to a person who is not presently aware, one who lives in his own head and not in the real world. Figure 3.16a exhibits the first two measures of *El Pasado Perdido* and Figure 3.16b exhibits mm. 1-3 in *La Luna Negra*. The trills are present

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75 Elisenda Fábregas, e-mail message to author, March 2, 2014, Appendix B.

starting in m.1, to create a dream-like state (sognando). Moreover, the start of a reoccurring motivic device is evident—the chromatic alternation between B♭ and B♮ in the left hand of the accompaniment. This device will return in rhythmic diminution on different notes at the end of the piece, in the right hand of the accompaniment. This device is also used at the end of the second song, Definición (Figure 3.14). The device creates a mood of uncertainty and ambiguity, and along with the wavering tonality of the trill, an altered reality is created:

*El Pasado Perdido* is the most impressionistic of the set with constant trills in the piano part imparting a sense of mystery and ambiguous reality and dream.77

![Figure 3.16a. Trills create a wavering tonality in mm. 1-2, and the significance of B♭ and B♮.](image)

![Figure 3.16b. In mm 1-3, the trill is present from the beginning, and the chromatic alteration between B♭ and B♮ is in the left hand of the accompaniment.](image)

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Word repetition in this song is hypnotic. The following words embody negative connotations, and are recurrent: *resiente* (resent) and *evitado* (evading). Figure 3.17 displays an instance of the word *evitado* repeated three times in a melodic descent in mm. 6-9. The repetition of the word and the descent of the melodic line are suggestive to one slipping away, escaping the future and avoiding the present.

![Music notation](image)

Figure 3.17. The word *evitado* is repeated three times in mm. 6-9.

Fábregas uses the octatonic scale to further enhance the dream world of *El Pasado Perdido*. In mm. 14-17, there are two octatonic scales in mode-one, beginning with a whole step, half step alternation. These sixteenth note octatonic scales occur simultaneously with a meter change. In the phrase *sueño y realidad, se mezclan libremente en un futuro simple* (dream and reality, they freely mix in an impossible future), Fábregas condenses the meter from 6/8 to 2/4. It is as if time slows down when *sueño y realidad* (dream and reality) combine. The words *sueño y realidad* are in 6/8, while the condensing of meter into 2/4 occurs when the two ideas mix, in *se mezclan libremente en un futuro simple* (they freely mix in an impossible future). The intercourse of dream and reality is also signified with an octave leap (D♯4 to D♯5) in the vocal line in m. 13. This is seen in Figure 3.18.
Figure 3.18. Meter change from 6/8 to 2/4, octatonic scales, and octave leap on the word \textit{realidad} (reality) in mm. 12-17

The Phrygian mode is also present in this song. In mm. 18-20, the tonality of $e_b$ minor is present, however the ascending scale, $B_b C D_b E_b F$, sounds Phrygian. See Figure 3.19.
Finally, the tritone is present throughout. The tonality of the piece continues to waver with trills and octatonic and Phrygian scales. Again the words *el presente evitado* (the eluded present) are repeated as the song comes to a close. The rhythm is augmented, the second time through, with a meter change and duplets. See Figure 3.20. As mentioned

Figure 3.19. Phrygian mode in ascending scale in mm. 18-20

...
earlier, a melodic alternating device is played in the right hand of the accompaniment in mm. 25-27 with a blue note (D♭). This idea is perhaps expanded rhythmically from the ending of the second song in mm. 67-69 (Figure 3.14). The tritone (C♮ against F♯) creates an unresolved affect; perhaps signifying the impossibility of dream and reality coexisting in the future. It is a depressing state of realization knowing one is unaware through conscious avoidance.

Performance Suggestions

The singer should find a floating, dream-like quality when singing this song. It is a descriptive of someone trying to move into a greater state of awareness. The hypnotic, a chant-like melody is meditative. There are only two instances where the singer should increase her volume, mm. 13-17 and mm. 22-27. A crescendo is written over the octave leap on the final syllable of the word realidad (reality) in m. 13. Then the singer should maintain her volume at a mezzo forte throughout the 2/4 meter change. The second instance is at the end of the song. On the pick up to m. 23, the singer should begin a crescendo over the augmented line of el presente evitado (the eluded present). The crescendo signifies the irksome, yet perpetual avoidance of the present that ends abruptly with a staccato marking over the final note in m. 27, in both the accompaniment and the vocal line. Although the environment created ends abruptly, Fábregas writes over the rests in m. 27, the word, enchénez (it should be spelled enchaînez).78 This means to proceed to

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78 Elisenda Fábregas, e-mail message to author, April 28, 2014, transcript Appendix B.
the following movement without interruption. It is suggestive that the present continues; life goes on.

The singer should take time to understand the text. It is full of paradoxical ideas. The perplexing thought of mixing the past with reality in an impossible future is enigmatic. As a performer, I have interpreted this song with a nostalgic sentiment, longing for the past in an effort to escape the present. The singer should also sing this song in Castilian Spanish. (Refer to Appendix A for IPA transcriptions).

4th Song “Calor”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spanish</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Calor sofocante y ambiente nervioso.</td>
<td>Oppressive heat and nervous surroundings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudor azul oliendo a quemado</td>
<td>Smoldering blue sweat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>asciende en la habitación</td>
<td>climbs in the room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entre palabras calladas</td>
<td>among silenced words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y miradas escondidas.</td>
<td>And hidden glances.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Con respiros entrecortados</td>
<td>With panted breath</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflejos azules aparecen en el espejo</td>
<td>blue reflections appear in the mirrors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y se derriten en el tórrido calor.</td>
<td>and melt in the suffocating heat.79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Basic Characteristics

- Vocal line: similar to song number two, chant-like with repetition. The B section is more challenging, with leaps of an octave and tritones present.
- Range: D♭₄ - G♭₅
- Tessitura: Medium Voice

79 English poetic translation is by Elisenda Fàbregas.
• Harmonic Structure: This song can be divided into ABA\(^1\). Shifting tonalities, slightly modal.

• Expression and Tempo Indications: *Andante* (moderately slow, \( \dot{J} = 60 \)), *Poco rallentando* (getting a little slower), *Agitato* (agitated), very intense, short, *Cantando* (singing), *Cantando a media voz* (singing at half voice/Stage whisper)

• Rhythm: Shifting back and forth between compound meters. The dotted quarter note is constant until the 2/4 and 4/4 sections (\( \dot{J} = \dot{J} \)).

• Accompaniment: Sparse texture in the A section, with an *ostinato* figure in the left hand. The transitional section is more complex, scales with contrary motion. The B section shifts meter frequently. The A\(^1\) section returns to the simplicity of the ostinato figure in the left hand, while the right hand plays a lyrical melody.

• Level of Difficulty: Fairly difficult. Although this seems to be the most tonal song in the cycle, it is still fairly complex rhythmically and tonally. The singer should be able to interpret text that is repeated often, giving each repetition a new color. Furthermore, the psychology of the song requires a mature interpreter.

• Length: 61 measures; 3 minutes and 25 seconds

**Song Overview**

*Calor* (Heat) is about an experience that occurred later in Fábregas' life. She recalls being in a small room in her apartment in New York City with a friend. This friend had blue eyes, and was wearing a blue t-shirt. There was a mirror in the room and she could see
those reflections of blue in it. “It was very hot, in all senses of the word.”

It is about the oppressive heat and nervousness experienced by two beings having a quiet conversation in a windowless tight room. The conversation is at times distracted by the reflection of blue... in the mirror.

This song conveys the same idea as the second song, Definición. The “conversation” is a sexual experience. In contrast, Fábregas has managed to capture this “conversation” in a more mature exposition. As an experienced adult, she can conceal her true anxiety and excitement in this particular “conversation.” The musical gestures are not as skittish as in Definición, where Fábregas portrays musically the sound of apprehensive inexperienced teenagers having a “hermetic conversation.”

Calor is the most lyrical song of the cycle. Fábregas presents this musical material in true ABA1. Section A unfolds with a sustained ostinato figure in the left hand of the accompaniment. As the song develops it becomes more rhythmic in an effort to expose the nervous environment:

This song is very sustained with a steady and continuous accompaniment of eighth-notes in the piano that don’t subside until the central section where the syncopated rhythm paints the panted breath and the blue reflections that melt in the suffocating-heat.

The sustained eighth-note pattern in the bass is also written in a triple meter of 12/8, giving it some characteristics reminiscent of a passacaglia. The passacaglia is derived from

80 Elisenda Fábregas, e-mail message to author, March 2, 2014, transcript appendix B.


82 Ibid.
the Spanish term *pasar calle* (pass streets), which first appeared in about 1600.\(^8\) It was a term used to describe music that was played on guitars, while walking through the streets of Spain. It became known as the *passacaglia* when the Italians of the Baroque period created variations of this idea on guitar and keyboard. In mm. 1-6 of *Calor*, Fábregas uses this figure to depict the relentless suffocating heat. Figure 3.20 displays mm. 1-2, the *passacaglia* figure that repeats in the left hand of the accompaniment.

![Figure 3.5. Passacaglia figure in the bass](image)

This same figure returns in variation, a half step higher in mm. 44-48, in the A\(^1\) section.

Fábregas use of word painting is more deliberate in this song. In mm. 3-10, the shape of the steady chant is indicative of the suffocating heat, while the singer sings *calor soffocante* (suffocating heat). Moreover, Fábregas suggests slight distress by altering the rhythm within the two repeated phrases of mm. 4-6 and in mm. 8-9. The words *calor* (heat) and *y* (and) are on the off-beat in mm. 8-9. The shift in rhythm depicts the text, *y ambient nervioso* (and nervous ambience). Figure 3.22, displays the chant-like repetition and shift in rhythm.

Establishing the environment of suffocating, Fàbregas begins to speak of the blue images that fill her mind. The image of *sudor azul* (blue sweat) is evocative of her lover’s blue eyes and t-shirt. Her senses are keen, as she muses on *sudor azul oliéndo a quemado*
asciende en la habitación (smoldering blue sweat climbs in the room), the scent of burning flesh filling the apartment. In mm. 13-15, the words *asciende en la habitación* (climbs in the room), are portrayed with an ascending figure in the vocal line, depicting the rising heat in the room. Figure 3.23, displays the word painting within the rising vocal line.

![Figure 3.7. Word painting of asciende (rising/climbing)](image)

Fábregas similarly paints the words *entre palabras calladas y miradas escondidas* (among silenced words and hidden glances), in a descending manner with a dynamic change to *mezzo piano*, depicting suppressed words and secreted looks (Figure 3.24). The musical

![Figure 3.8. Descending vocal line depicts silenced words and hidden glances, mm. 15-18](image)
transitional period before the B section of this song is between mm. 11-18. Fábregas composes a rising and falling lyrical line that leads into section B, with the help of a poco rallentando and a trill, in mm. 17-18, to establish a new idea.

The new idea is represented in an agitated section descriptive of panting and heavy breathing. Fábregas achieves this state of excitement and passion by changing meter frequently between 6/8, 3/4, 2/4, and common time. The text con respiros entrecortados (with panted breath) is repeated three times, each time increasing in rhythmic complexity, and higher in range. The images of blue appear again reflecting in a mirror, reflejos azules aparecen en el espejo y se derriten (blue reflections appear in the mirror and melt). To text paint the word espejo (mirror), Fábregas has written the piano accompaniment in contrary motion. The right and left hands mirror each other (Figure 3.25). The images of blue melting can be perceived interchangeably as sweating blue images in the mirror. The physical act of making love increases body temperature, creating sweat.

Figure 3.9. Contrary motion in the accompaniment depicts the word espejo (mirror)

The B section also builds in a climatic manner indicative of the orgasm between the two lovers. The words y se derriten (and it melts) repeats four times, each time increasing in intensity, volume, and range. To melt is to experience an orgasm. In mm. 29-36, although the phrase y se derriten is written in an ascending manner, the third syllable of the word
derriten (melts) is written with a descending figure each time, first a half step descent, the second a minor third descent, and the third time a descent of a tritone. This can be seen in Figure 3.26. The descent of the final syllable of the word derriten (melt) illustrates the collapse or release of the situation.

Figure 3.10. The final syllable of the word derriten (to melt) is composed in a descending manner all three times

A new transition period begins in mm. 37-43 leading into the A¹ section. Here
Fábregas wants the voice to keep its intensity while accompanying the melody in the right hand of the piano. The words *en el tórrido* (in the torrid) is illustrated with a double triplet figure on the same pitch of a B♮ (Figure 3.27).

![Figure 3.11. The double triplet figure for the words *en el tórrido* (in the torrid), melody begins the right hand of the accompaniment, mm. 37-38](image)

The vocal line is sustained with little movement on the word *calor* (heat), which is repeated three times, leading into the return of a *passacaglia*-like figure on m. 44.

The section A material returns a half step higher beginning on m. 44, thus the section A¹ material is exactly the same from mm. 44-52. At the pickup to m. 53, the text changes and the meter changes as well for the final phrase of text, *entre palabras calladas* (among silenced words). The poetry is then repeated in a spoken manner over an underscore that contains the melody. By speaking the text, Fábregas wishes to evoke a sense of mystery:

As for the spoken text in ‘Calor’ I wanted to put the particular text in the limelight by changing [it] from sung to spoken — and by doing it as indicated “cantando a media voz” I hoped to bring some mystery to the text, especially to “palabras y miradas escondidas.”

The melody is in the right hand of the accompaniment above the *passacaglia* figure that

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84 Fábregas, e-mail message to author, April 13, 2014, transcript appendix B
begins to vary, and taper off as the song comes to a close. Figure 3.28, displays spoken text over the fading underscore.

![Figure 3.28](image_url)

Figure 3.12. Spoken words over the passacaglia tapering underscore

**Performance Suggestions**

The singer should observe all dynamic markings in this song, being careful not to overpower the melody written in the right hand of the piano. The *sempre mezzo piano* for the opening section of *Calor* creates the mystery and lethargic atmosphere of the song. Although the opening of the song is languid, the singer should also be rhythmically accurate in order to bring out the subtleties in rhythm creating the nervous ambience as seen in Figure 3.21.

During the transitional periods of the song the singer should enjoy the lyrical moments, savoring the detailed poetic descriptions of the impassioned suffocating environment. The singer should also sing this text is Castilian Spanish. (Refer to Appendix A for IPA transcriptions).

The B section of the song must be rhythmically clean. This creates the state of agitation describing the panting breath between the two lovers. In mm. 27-36, the singer can broaden the tone and increase intensity while describing what she sees in the mirror, *reflejos azules aparecen en el espejo y se derriten* (blue reflections appear in the mirror and...
Because this section changes meter often, the singer should practice elocution of the text in rhythm before singing it with the accompaniment.

After the excitement of the B section, the singer should recreate the beginning of the song in atmosphere and color, reminiscent of the memory. The A\textsuperscript{1} section can be more mysterious, especially when the singer must speak the text. The text should be spoken in a languid manner, almost sung over the underscore: *cantando a media voz* (singing at half voice) in a stage whisper.

### 5\textsuperscript{th} Song “El Sol”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spanish</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Como un río de oro el sol caliente</td>
<td>Like a gold river the hot sun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ataca la piel desnuda</td>
<td>attacks the naked skin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atravesandolugares prohibidos</td>
<td>going through forbidden places</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sin pedir permiso.</td>
<td>without asking for permission.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mi cuerpo agradece las caricias y</td>
<td>My body appreciates these caresses and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>se contorsiona con placer.</td>
<td>convulses with pleasure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Como un rayo de oro</td>
<td>Like a gold lightning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El sol fulmina el cuerpo</td>
<td>the sun strikes my body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gimiendo a su encuentro</td>
<td>moaning at its meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Como un recien nacido.</td>
<td>Like a new born.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mi cuerpo necesita el sol.</td>
<td>My body needs the sun.\textsuperscript{85}</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Basic Characteristics**

- **Vocal line:** The beginning of the song should be sung *marcato*. The *meno mosso* section is lyrical and expansive.

- **Range:** D\textsubscript{4}- A\textsubscript{♭5}

- **Tessitura:** Medium voice

\textsuperscript{85} English poetic translation is by Elisenda Fábregas.
• Metric organization: The majority of this song stays in 6/8. The last page consists of meter changes between 3/4, 2/4, and 4/4.

• Harmonic Structure: Highly dissonant. Octatonic tetrachords and tritones are present throughout.

• Expression and Tempo Indications: Allegro affrettando (fast and rushing, \( \dot{J} = 80 \)), poco marcato (a little marked), relaxing, poco rallentando (getting a little slower), meno mosso (less motion), flotando (floating), poco affrettando (a little faster), A tempo (return to previous tempo)

• Rhythm: The dotted quarter note is constant until the end of the song where the quarter note is constant during meter shifts between 3/4 and 4/4.

• Accompaniment: Similar to song number four; there is a sixteenth-note ostinato figure in the left hand of the accompaniment. The right hand has a simplified eighth note ostinato figure that alters as the song progresses.

• Level of Difficulty: This song is difficult. A mature performer should sing this song. Again, because of the sexual psychology of this song, it is difficult for a younger performer to understand the musical gestures and suggestive poetry.

• Length: 59 measures; 2 minutes

Song Overview

El Sol (The Sun) is a poem about the personification of the sun as a lover. It “is a sensuous poem that praises [the] sun’s warmth and its power to penetrate the skin.”

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\(^{86}\) Fábregas, Five Musings on the Past for soprano and piano.
Fábregas has always loved the feeling of the hot sun against her skin. Personifying the sun as a lover is a poetic way to describe a lover’s touch. The touch can be forbidden or appreciated. The sun is viewed as a lover that strikes and caresses the body, causing the body to convulse with pleasure. The penetration of the sun (lover) propels the body into orgasm.

Fábregas brings into play a combination of her favorite musical gestures for this song. She uses trills, octatonic scales, the tritone, text painting, repetition, and the passacaglia figure. A sforzando followed by a piano trill in the accompaniment introduces an environment of suspense at the beginning of the song. The tempo marking is allegro affrettando, fast and rushing. A crescendo on a trill into the tumultuous passacaglia figure in the bass illustrates the sun’s rays rising and shining, flowing and fluid, indicative of the forthcoming poetry, como un río de oro (like a river of gold). Figure 3.29 illustrates the energetic beginning.

![Musical notation example](image)

Figure 3.13. Sforzando trill into passacaglia and ostinato figure, mm. 1-3

The left hand contains a sixteenth note passacaglia figure, while the right hand plays a continuous eighth note ostinato figure. The tritone is present throughout: the left hand alternates between a perfect fifth, C♯ and G♯, and the tritone, D and G♯. This continuous

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87 Fábregas, e-mail message to the author, March 2, 2014, transcript appendix B.

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figure is similar to song four, *Calor*. Fábregas characterizes the constancy of the heat with a continuous musical figure such as the *passacaglia*.

As the song begins to develop the *ostinato* evolves into scale-like passages and arpeggiated chords. In m. 13, the use of a fast sixteenth note octatonic tetrachord propels the text, *ataca la piel desnuda* (attacks the naked skin). The first tetrachord is in b-diminished, while the second tetrachord is in f-diminished. The tritone is eminent between the two tonalities. The tonality is harsh, depicting the sun’s (lover’s) aggressive ways.

Figure 3.30, displays the octatonic tetrachords.

![Octatonic tetrachords in the right hand of the accompaniment, m. 13](image)

Fábregas composes the majority of this cycle in a comfortable middle voice range for the soprano. In *El Sol* she explores staying in a higher tessitura for an extended period of time, using the soprano’s upper range to depict the sun’s destructive nature. For instance, Figure 3.31 displays mm. 16-20, where the singer is singing about the sun *atravesando lugares prohibidos* (going through forbidden places). The text is repeated twice in the upper *passaggio* range of the singer, making the text difficult to pronounce.
Nevertheless, the uncomfortable affect that the prolonged height of register has on the singer and to the audience’s ear is suggestive of the forbidden places being touched without permission. It seems as if the singer is powerless and crying out for help.

The *meno mosso* section of this song calms the aggressive tone in the beginning of the piece. Fábregas indicates *flotando* (floating) in the accompaniment. This section illustrates the blissful acceptance of the sun’s (lover’s) aggressiveness. The singer states, *mi cuerpo agredece las carricias* (my body appreciates these caresses), enjoying the sun’s (lover’s) caresses.

*El Sol* (The Sun) is the most regularly metered song in the cycle. The majority of the song stays in 6/8. Nevertheless, Fábregas uses instances of two against three with added duplets in the vocal line. The rhythmic condensing of the vocal line can be seen in m. 9, m. 22, mm. 30-31, mm. 39-40, and mm. 46-47. The duplets are used to provide clarity of text.
Figure 3.32, mm. 29-32 demonstrates how the words *contorsiona con placer* (convulse with pleasure) would not fit into a group of three:

Ah... this maybe more musical than anything else, and it may have to do with the actual words. That it didn't fit doing it in three...there's no hidden meaning here, it's just that... Okay, one thing I want to tell you for me that when I write music it's very much like a language. So many times when I set the poetry I just kind of speak louder...heighten speech. These particular words some how sound better when it's in two than when it's in three. Because I could have put it in three and it would have sounded more like dancing... [the two] kind of breaks it down. It's an important word, “contorsiona.” So... perhaps, it's also hard for me to go back to 2002, and try to remember why I did that.88

The important word, *contorsiona* (to convulse) would not work in a lilting rhythm, it must be "stopped" or broken down to illustrate the body's delight in an orgasm (Figure 3.32).

![Figure 3.32: Example of "contorsiona con placer" in mm. 29-32.](image)

Figure 3.16. The words *contorsiona con placer* (convulses with pleasure) are in duplets in mm. 29-32

This idea is furthered developed in the accompaniment underneath text that is broadened for emphasis. In mm. 35-36, under the text *rayo* (ray), both the left and right hands of the accompaniment stop the dance-like impression of the metered 6/8, especially with the presence of accent marks over the left hand duplets. This allows for an expansive depiction of the sun's rays. The sun is the dominant figure, and it should fill the body with its presence. Figure 3.33 demonstrates the expansive setting of the first syllable of the word

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88 Fábregas, Skype interview with the author, April 6, 2014, transcript Appendix C.
rayo (ray). Moreover, the leap of a major seventh, E♭₄ to D♭₅, to the word rayo is also descriptive in setting the sun’s rays high above the previous musical material.

![Figure 3.17. The leap of a major seventh up to the word rayo, and the first syllable of rayo is expanded within the accompaniment in duplets, mm. 35-36](image)

The rays of the sun make the singer moan in satisfaction when touched by their warmth, *el sol fulmina el cuerpo gimiendo a su encuentro como un recien nacido* (the sun strikes my body moaning at its meeting like a newborn). Fábregas illustrates moaning on the repeated word *gimiendo* (moaning) in mm. 41-43 by having the singer sing the word on different several notes, which suggests moaning or groaning. Figure 3.34 displays mm. 41-42. Fábregas also uses the musical gesture of a trill to remind the listener that the sun is perpetual.

![Figure 3.18. The word gimiendo (moaning) written with several alternating notes, depicting moaning, mm. 41-42](image)
The rendering of final line of text illustrates the dependency of the singer as she states *mi cuerpo necesita el sol* (my body needs the sun). The statement is repeated twice, each time the beginning of the phrase is to be started softly followed by a *crescendo* and a slight rushing (*poco affretando*) of the tempo to the words, *el sol* (the sun). The word, *sol* (sun) is always on a downbeat with a strong chord that includes the tritone. The final *sol* is held out for three measures and a beat. The wafting tritone figure that was present in song two (Figure 3.15) and song three (Figure 3.19) returns here in the right hand of the accompaniment (Figure 3.35).

![Figure 3.19. Wafting tritone figure](image)

A dotted quarter note followed by an eighth note figure repeats four times, as the singer crescendos into a final *sforzando*, symbolizing the need for the sun. The unsettling tritone could be the unresolved feeling of never finding the lover or sun. The need for a lover is constant and never fulfilled.

**Performance Suggestions**

*El Sol* is for a mature singer. The personification of the sun as a lover should be interpreted as a serious passion and need for a lover. The beginning of the song is specific in markings. Fábregas has written *poco marcato*, and included *tenuto* and *staccato*
markings over the words *como un río de oro* (like a river of gold). One sees similar markings in Verdi arias and one should treat them the same—a bit of emphasis on each note while maintaining a *legato* line. The singer should be careful not to interrupt the *legato* line by singing the articulation too detached.

Although the song does not alter meter as often as the rest of the cycle, the singer should make note of the duplet figures throughout the song. Speaking the text in rhythm could be helpful. This song should also be sung in Castilian Spanish. (Refer to Appendix A for IPA transcriptions).

For mm. 13-20, the singer must find a way to create the desired effect without over singing. Because the vocal line lies in the upper *passaggio* of the female voice, the singer should consider slimming the tone in order to maintain intelligibility with overtaxing the voice. The *meno mosso* section should be sung in a calm, lyrical manner, broadening with intensity and volume on mm. 35-42. In mm. 42-45, Fábregas places slurs over the individual phrases to have the singer moan with delight. The final phrase of the song, *mi cuerpo necesita el sol* (my body needs the sun) repeats twice, each time the beginning of the phrase is to be begun softly in order to achieve the desired effects of a *crescendo* and a *poco affretando* to the words, *el sol* (the sun). The singer should not breathe in between the phrase the first time it is sung. The second time through, Fábregas marks the score with a breath mark before *el sol* (the sun). The singer will most likely need to breathe before this phrase because the final *sol* is sustained and crescendos to the release. The word, *sol* is released into a final *sforzando* that is created by the release of the constant [l]. This dramatic cut-off again symbolizes the singer's necessity for the sun (lover).
CONCLUSION

After studying Fábregas’ *Five Musings on the Past*, a cycle of five songs for soprano and piano, I have been able to identify a musical rhetoric that Fábregas uses to bring her poetry alive. As a performer and Latina, I find her settings engaging. Fábregas’ ability to weave distinctive tonalities and rhythmic devices into her music is fresh and unique. There is an innate Spanish quality to her music. The music is difficult, especially for the singer who is not familiar with the chromaticism of the Phrygian mode and the octatonic scale; thus these songs require technical facility and keen musical preparation. Because of the chromatic and rhythmic complexity of this work, it is best suited for a strong musician. These songs are fit for the lyric or dramatic soprano. Furthermore, one should be comfortable with the Spanish language and the mature psychological content of the work.

It is not suited for a young beginner.

I specifically chose this work as a celebration of my heritage and language. Furthermore, I wished to work with a living female Spanish composer in order to bring to light new Spanish art songs. The English title of this work intrigued me, but the poetry is in Spanish. Each poem is an impassioned experience. Fábregas successfully creates the mood of memory through distinct dispositions of her compositional style, and effectively creates atmospheres of ambiguity, anxiety, and longing.

I encourage serious singers to explore Fábregas solo vocal works. A list of published works can be found in Appendix F.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


APPENDIX A
TEXT, TRANSLATION, AND ORIGINAL PHONETIC TRANSCRIPTION OF
FIVE MUSINGS ON THE PAST

The following appendix includes the poetry and translations of Five Musings on the Past by Elisenda Fábregas. I have included my own IPA transcriptions in order to aid singers with the Castilian Spanish that is required to sing this cycle.

I. Deseo
[deˈseθo]
Desire

Dulzura en tus ojos y resolución en tu serena mirada.
[dulˈθura en tus ˈɔksɔ i resolˈθjoθen tu seˈɾena miθraθa]
Sweetness in your eyes and Resolution in your serene gaze.

Dureza en tu suave cuerpo y pasión en tus frías entrañas.
[duˈɾeθa en tu ˈswaβɛ ˈkwɛɾɾɔ i paˈsjɔθen tus ˈfrias enθraθas]
Hardness in your soft body and cold visceral passion.

Cuerpo que espera una mano caliente.
[ˈkwɛɾɾɔ ke esˈpera ˈuna ˈmanɔ kaˈljente]
Body that longs for a warm hand.

El deseo inunda mi boca y mis ojos en un improbable sueño
[el deˈseθi nunda mi ˈboka i mis ˈɔksɔθen un impoˈsiθle ˈswiθno]
Desire floods my mouth and my eyes in an impossible dream
Que noche tras noche nunca se acaba.

[ke ˈnɔθe tras nɔθe ˈnʊkka se aˈkaβa]

*that night after night never ends.*

II. Definición

[defiˈθjon]  
*Definition*

En el espacio estrecho del automovil  
[en el e스′paθ̯ o j e스′treθ̯ o del autəmovi̞l]  
*In the closed space of a car*

Hay un hablar hermético  
[ʰai un aβ′lar eɾ′metikə]  
*there is hermetic conversation*

Entre dos seres que esperan lo mismo:  
[ˈente do̞s ˈsɛɾes ke əs′peran lo ˈmizmə]  
*between two beings that are awaiting for the same thing:*

Ser definidos.  
[seɾ dɛfiˈniðəς]  
*To be defined.*

89 English Poetic Translation is by Elisenda Fábregas.  
90 Ibid.
III. El Pasado Perdido

[el pa´saðo per´ðiðo]

The Lost Past

El pasado perdido

[el pa´saðo per´ðiðo]

The lost past

Resiente el presente evitado.

[re´sjent e el pre´sent e ði´tað]

Resents the eluded present.

Eludiendose entre sí, sueño y realidad

[eluðjent de´sent de´si, sweñð i rea´lðað]

Evading each other, dream and reality

Se mezclan libremente en un futuro simple

[se´meθklan liβer´ment i en un fu´turo´ simple]

freely mix in an impossible future

Que recuerda el pasado perdido

[ke re´kwurða el pa´saðo per´ðiðo]

that remembers the lost past
Y el presente evitado.

[i el preˈsente eβiˈtaðɔ]

*and the eluded present.*  

IV. Calor

[kaˈlɔr]

Heat

Calor sofocante y ambiente nervioso.

[kaˈlɔɾ soʃoˈkante i aṃˈbjente nerˈβiɣoso]

*Oppressive heat and nervous surroundings.*

Sudor azul oliendo a quemado asciende en la habitación

[suˈðɔɾ aˈθul oˈljeðo a keˈmaðɔ aθjende eθ la aθitaˈθjɔn]

*Smoldering blue sweat climbs in the room*

Entre palabras calladas

[ˈɛnteɾ paˈlaθras kaˈʎaðas]

*among silenced words*

Y miradas escondidas. Con respiros entrecortados

[i miˈɾaðas eskɔndiˈðas kɔn resˈpiɾos eθretɾɔɾˈtaðɔs]

*And hidden glances. With panted breath*
Reflejos azules aparecen en el espejo
[reˈflexos aˈθules apaˈɾeθen en el esˈpexo]
blue reflections appear in the mirrors

Y se derriten en el tórrido calor.
[i se deˈɾiten en el ˈtɔriðo kaˈlor]
and melt in the suffocating heat.92

V. El Sol
[ˈel sɔ ol]
The Sun

Como un río de oro el sol caliente ataca la piel desnuda
[ˈkoɾo un ˈri o de ɔɾo el sol kaˈlente aˈtaka la pjel dezˈnuða]
Like a gold river the hot sun attacks the naked skin

Atravesando lugares prohibidos sin pedir permiso.
[atreβeˈsando luˈyaɾes prəˈbiðos sim peˈðir peɾˈmisko]
going through forbidden places without asking for permission.

Mi cuerpo agradece las caricias y se contorsiona con placer.
[mi ˈkwεɾɾɔ əgraˈɾeθə las kaˈɾiθjas i se kɔntɔɾˈsjonə kɔm plaˈθεɾ]
My body appreciates these caresses and convulses with pleasure.

92 English Poetic Translation is by Elisenda Fábregas.
Como un rayo

Like a gold lightning

El sol fulmina el cuerpo Gimiendo a su encuentro

the sun strikes my body moaning at its meeting

Como un recien nacido. Mi cuerpo necesita el sol.

Like a new born. My body needs the sun.93

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93 English Poetic Translation is by Elisenda Fábregas.
APPENDIX B
TRANSCRIPTS OF EMAIL INTERVIEWS WITH ELISENDA FÁBREGAS

August 21, 2013

Dear Elisenda Fábregas,

My name is Megan Barrera. I was born and raised in Miami, FL. I am Cuban Puerto Rican and I am a lyric soprano. I completed my Bachelor of Music degree at the University of Miami in vocal performance. I then went to Louisiana State University to complete my Master of Music degree. I am currently working on my Doctorate of Musical Arts degree at LSU. I am in the process of choosing and researching a dissertation topic. I would like to write my dissertation on a work that is indicative of my heritage and my first language. My final project will be a lecture recital with a written document, an in depth performance guide. I have listened to some of the sound clips of your compositions online and I am most interested in your work, “Five Musings on the Past” for soprano and piano. How can I obtain the sheet music to your composition?

Thank you for your time and I hope to hear from you soon,
Megan Barrera

Dear Megan,

Thank you so much for your interest in Five Musings on the Past and your desire to use it as your dissertation topic!

I will be very happy to send you a complementary copy of the score and a recording.

Please give me your address and I will mail the materials to you.

Thank you again,
Best,
Elisenda

March 2, 2014

Dear Elisenda,

I hope this e-mail finds you well. Now that I have received approval from my dissertation committee, I am ready to start the interview process for your work, "Five Musings on the Past." I wanted to ask where you currently reside, as I would love to actually interview you in person but if this seems an impossible task, I am able to work through e-mails and possibly a Skype interview.
After hearing and studying your work I have a few questions regarding the significance of the poetry and the setting of it. You wrote this poetry in 1992 as a revival of past memories, are there any specifics (stories) that you wouldn’t mind sharing? In your composition the text is set in a repetitious manner. Is this an effect you used to represent a stream of consciousness built on memories? I think its brilliant and effective. Its almost as the ideas are repeated and the details are played over and over again with little difference as one reflects on the past. Furthermore, I wanted to ask you, why is the title in English but the poetry in Spanish? You said you completed eight poems in two days, yet only five are set to music. Would it be possible to include or mention the other poems in my dissertation? Have you written other poems in a similar style?

I notice that your pieces do not include key signatures, just flats and sharps. This is also true of your other work, “Moments of Change.” Do all of your works have the freedom of no key signatures? May I ask who your musical inspiration is?

Finally, how did you meet Rachel Rosales? Was this piece commissioned by her or just written for her? Would I be able to contact her with questions if she was a vital part of your compositional process?

I look forward to hearing from you,
Megan Barrera

Hi Megan,

I found the old poems - they were in an old Word Doc format so I saved them in Preview. Hope you can open them. There are actually seven - two I have not used. Yes, each one has a kind of narrative or memory attached to it. They are all about 'love.' I do not have a lot of time to think about this now but here are a few thoughts.

I. Deseo - is about the 'desire' I had for someone!
II. El Pasado Perdido - is about the frustration of not having taken certain opportunities in the past and avoiding the ones in the present.
III. This is from when I was a teenager and I was in the car with a young guy who asked me 'to define him' - at that point I did not get it. I clearly remember the tense and anxious atmosphere. The car was small and it was dark.
IV. Calor - This incident was much later in life. I was in a small room in my apartment in New York with a friend. It was very hot (in all senses of the word) and he was wearing a blue t-shirt. There was a mirror in the room and I could see his reflection in it.
V. El amor inseguro - similar in meaning to II. El pasado perdido. It is about insecurity in love. No particular story - just general.
VI. El Sol - I have always loved the feeling of the hot sun in my skin. In my poem I personify the sun as if it was a lover.
VII. The clock - is about the anxiety of waiting for the loved one. No particular story.
The repetitious manner that you mention is perhaps due to the past feelings I had about love, especially feelings of anxiety mixed with passion and perhaps obsessiveness! I was not very conscious about it - when I write songs with poetry I really go with the feelings that the poetry gives me. With my poems the feelings are very personal and real and when I read them it's like I am reliving the memories - so I go back to being a teenager in some instances.

The poetry is in English for a very prosaic reason. I wrote the cycle for a particular concert in San Antonio, TX, and wanted to be understood. But yes, looking back at it, probably the title should be in Spanish - although I like the word "Musings" - I have to think about a Spanish equivalent that I like as much!

I recall having written other poems, three about love (in English), others about my childhood which I set to music (Village scenes)

From the beginning I have never used key signatures in my music.

Actually I wasn’t inspired by anybody in particular for the Five Musings on the Past, and that applies to most of my compositions. I met Rachel at The Juilliard School back around 1982-83 I think. At that point she was singing with the New York City Opera. I was impressed with her wide range, musicality, voice power, and (Mexican) passion. [Her background is Mexican] Five Musings was not 'commissioned' (no money involved) although Rachel always liked me writing music for her. She and I premiered this work in San Antonio. She was not a vital part of the composition in the sense that she did not help me but I have always had her and her voice in mind as the ideal voice for the reasons mentioned before. I am sure you could speak to her. We are good friends and when I go to New York City I stay in her apartment.

Thanks for all your thoughts!

Best,
Elisenda

April 6, 2014

Hi Megan,

I had some thoughts regarding my music and its relation to Catalan popular music. The meter of the Catalan music is very old and goes back to Romanic art (Medieval period). Catalunya and Southern France has an incredible wealth of Romanic castles.

I. "Compound meter"

The book "Singularitats de la Canço Popular Catalana" by Bernart Rövenstrunck talks about Traditional Catalan song. But is out of print and in Catalan. However, I own the book and have read it many times. The most interesting parts of the book are the complex compound rhythms of the Catalan songs. I will make some scans and send them to you. I certainly have
been influenced. My grandfather used to sing many traditional Catalan folksongs and it was a great tradition during Christmas and other holidays during my childhood - in spite that Franco did not permit to study the Catalan language in school. It was a kind of subculture. I have many collections of these songs here in Seoul. The fact that I carried them with me means they are an important part of my cultural baggage!

II. Octatonic scale and the tritone

The same book Rövenstrunck talks about the 'octatonicism' (and additive rhythm) and the tritone present in Catalan traditional music. Probably because of the Catalan "language" itself. I do not know why I forgot to tell you about this book since I own it since so many years ago.

As I said, I will scan parts of this book and sent it to you.
Elisenda

Hi Elisenda,

Thank you so much for your time today, and for your follow up email. I forgot to ask you if you had/got any reviews for the work after its premiere. Also, is there a particular reason why you wanted the singer to speak the text at the end of number 4, “Calor?” It's quite effective over the postlude.

Thank you again and thank you for new material to read and explore,
Megan Barrera

April 13, 2014

Hi Elisenda,

Do you think of your work as a song cycle or a collection of songs? As we discussed via Skype, this particular work does not have much development of thematic material. Your other works have more.

Thank you,
Megan Barrera

Hi Megan,

Sorry I got very busy with school and preparing Mid-Term exams, etc, etc...

I believe we probably had a review from the San Antonio Express News but I do not know where it is... I will have to look! If there was a review is probably in one of the 'boxes'. I will look
You are probably right, these songs are only related by the topic “Five Musings on the past” but not really by any distinctive “motive”. However let me think a little more about this.

As for the spoken text in ‘Calor’ I wanted to put the particular text in the limelight by changing from sung to spoken — and by doing it as indicated “cantando a media voz” I hoped to bring some mystery to the text, especially to “palabras y mirada escondidas.”

There is a musical connection between the text and music of ‘Definicion’. I remember having a specific reason for the three-note chromatic motive that starts the piece (in inversion in the left hand). The text is about being in the narrow constraints of a car (or as I say ‘the closed space of a car’) and so the revolving, twisted, and repetitive chromatic three-note motive is supposed to evoke the sense of ‘asphyxia’ or ‘claustrophobia’ both physically (the small car) and psychologically (tense emotional situation.)

As for the book about Catalan music I mentioned I decided to ignore it because it may be a hassle to you because of the language and it is a bit complicated.

It is hard to go back to 2002 and bring back my thoughts when I was composing ‘Five Musings on the Past’, especially when I am so busy but on and off I will keep trying.

Best wishes,
Elisenda

April 25, 2014

Hi Elisenda,

I hope this email finds you well. I wanted to ask you if you have an electronic copy of your song, La luna negra. The library at LSU does not have a copy of the Five Songs for soprano and piano score, I have requested it via interlibrary loan, however if you happen to have an electronic copy it would be very helpful. I just wanted to briefly compare the musical atmosphere that both La luna negra and El pasado perdido evoke. Both are similar, and you stated that the former influenced the latter.

Thank you,
Megan Barrera

April 26, 2014

Hi Elisenda,

I have a quick question about the word "enchènez." It is at the end of the song "El pasado perdido." What language is this from? I assumed it was French but I cannot find it. The closest thing I’ve come to is enchaînez, which means joined. In musical terms, it means to
proceed to the next movement without interruption. Is this what you meant?

Thank you,
Megan Barrera

April 28, 2014

Hi Megan, here is a scan of the published version of the entire Five Songs, which I did in the past for a lecture I was giving in Seoul.

As for "El Pasado Perdido" I guess I meant 'enchaînez' - to play the next song without stop. So it is a typo!

Any more questions do not hesitate :-)
Elisenda

Hi Elisenda,

Thank you for the PDF of Five Songs. I forgot to ask you about a few markings in El Sol. Over the words Como un río de oro, you have tenuto markings and staccato markings, should these be sung like Verdi's tenuto/saccato markings or should they be light and detached?

I personally think they sound Verdian-like, I can't image the line being completely detached but maybe I am misinterpreting it.

Moreover, at the very end, the word sol has a crescendo over it that ends with a sforzando marking, is it safe to say that the "l" consonant can be used to create this sforzando effect on the release of the word?

Thank you so much,
Megan Barrera

April 30, 2014

Hi Megan,

Yes to everything you are saying: Verdi-like and using the "l" for the sforzando!
Elisenda
Hello?

Can you see me?

Yes, hello. Hi! Nice to meet you (Laughter)

Yes, nice to meet you. Thank God for computers, right?

I know, my gosh.

Yes, Well, you look like your pictures (laughing).

Good (laughing)

So I’m sorry, I guess you had to get up really early.

Yes

I thought it was going to be eight o’clock, and then I realized that Baton Rouge is even earlier.

That’s fine though, thank you for agreeing to interview.

Are you an early riser?

Usually, as long as I get to bed early, I can wake up early.

Okay, Well first of all thanks for getting interested in my music. I, um this cycle actually its, you know I like it a lot, but people... its kind of ignored.

Really?

Well, I think the Lorca songs mostly [get attention] because people like his poetry.

Of course

Maybe that’s what it is. I was listening to it after so many years of not listening to it and it’s just so emotional.

Yes, it is very emotional

So tumultuous, you know.
Yes, I think its wonderful and I’ve enjoyed working on it and working with my pianist on it as well. It has been somewhat challenging. But, I do have a few questions…

Sure.

So, thank you for telling me about other dissertations that have been written on you. So that have helped me understand your musical gestures and certain things that you do. So one of the things I wanted to ask you poetically… did you grow up reading any particular poets?

No, actually my parents are not in the arts... wait a minute... I did read, maybe later in my teenage years, Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer. I guess I did read a little bit. Yes.

Okay.

You know, I was a science major. So, (laughing)

I think that’s incredible.

I was doing music and science, so I didn’t have a lot of free time, but anyway… I always think but more now... I enjoy poetry a lot more.

Okay, would you recommend that I read “The Emotion and Meaning in Music” by Leonard Meyer to understand some of the psychology behind your music?

Wait a minute. Well I guess you could apply some things. You read that in the dissertation.

I did.

Well what I like about him is that if I made, for example an interesting harmony a surprise... the predictability and the non-predictability... that I think is the kind of thing that was very important for me to understand. It’s very obvious but sometimes music can be very simple. So perhaps a few concepts... Maybe... that’s a lot of work for you.

Well, that was actually something I was looking into when I wrote my prospectus and submitted it one of things I found somewhat challenging, since you are the poet of the work, it limits in a way how much information I get to share. And perhaps it’s another reason why people don’t do this work. But I find it fascinating. Um... just because there is so much repetition of text. As we had in a previous email... I have explored this, reading other articles about the psychology of music and the idea of recall. People like to repeat ideas a lot, Schumann did this and so did Schubert. Certain thematic material comes back. I know that you enjoy or that you do a lot of triplets... So another question I have... some of the musical material you use such as tritones and triplets and modes, are some of these just Spanish influenced. Is it intentional? Or does it just flow out of you?
It does flow out of me, but I have been very influenced. You know I grew up during Franco’s time. So I listened to flamenco every time I turned on the television and I actually even danced flamenco in school. So obviously I just absorbed a lot. So, uh, its part of my language. And the Spanish music... you have the tritone constantly. I don’t know if you realized that. Alright? Especially my favorite mode is Phrygian. (plays it on piano) So it always has that tritone. And then when I tried to get out of the Spanish music, tried to get of the tonal system... I kind of landed in this whole tone, octatonic... and that’s kind of my dream world. But it comes really from the Spanish music.

Okay, great. I just wanted to confirm that. This idea of or impressionist style, do you find that seems to influence some your music as well? Like with the trills?

Yes, but not so much because I listened to Debussy or Ravel...those were my two least favorite composers when I was being a pianist. Because I felt they were not substantial, they were just always kind of lying. But this impressionism is kind of really honestly mine. Because it’s kind of a floating stage: Every time I go into this, I go into a floating mood. Its like I’m not grounded. It’s a psychological thing more than just kind of now I’m going to sound impressionistic. It’s all very psychological in my music.

I interpreted it as a state of being. As not necessarily being present but still aware of the moment. Okay, great. And then, um... So when I had asked you a little more about the stories relating to each particular song in the cycle you had mentioned that it was meeting in 1992 that sparked all of these emotions was that particular meeting with the same person you experienced these emotions with?

Yeah, that person that I met in the street was the same person that is kind of the protagonist in the first song, first song.... These people are alive so I can’t give... (laughing)

Right, I understand.

You know, this is all kind of personal so...

Yes. So I shouldn’t ask you for photographs?

Of who?

Just in general of anything or anyone that might of influenced you during your thought process for this cycle, any particular song... The apartment that you spoke of or the street that you met this person...

Because I’m in Seoul, and this was in New York City... I didn’t take any pictures. Actually, that was so long ago, I’ve been through a divorce since then, I basically ah... all my stuff is packed in Baltimore. So I’m here with just the least possible stuff. So no photos. I don’t have a photo and the apartment was in Downtown, New York City. I never even took photos. That was 19... 1980...1983. The apartment. That was a long time ago. We didn’t have disposable cameras.
Right. Yes.

No Facebook.

I know. Sometimes I wish we went back to that world.

There's more mystery in everything.

When you do constant meter changes, I noticed that most of them lie in 3, whether it’s 6/8, 9/8, 12/8, or 3/4 occasional 2/4, 8/8, 5/8, again is this coming from the rhythmic cadence of flamenco?

I always had a preference for compound rhythms. Or threes because it dances. Music always has kind of a dance. When I kind of condense it into twos it feels tighter. I use it for that…. To condense the time. It doesn't dance then. It kind of goes. Even in my playing, my playing always dances. That's very much me, I guess or my background.

Now, I have listened to the Rosales recording, you and Rachel Rosales.

That was the premiere, okay?

It's wonderful.

It could be better, (laughing) but what I mean is it was a premiere and she's very gracious when we put that into that CD. And one of the regrets is that I didn't record this properly.

I wanted to ask you, because these were memories that happened when you were younger, do you expect different colors in the voice, a younger sound? I know that Rosales is a dramatic soprano, she has a very big voice, and some of the dynamic contrasts were less observed. For example, in number two, Definición, because the song is marked prestissimo it could have a littler quality vocally. Perhaps humorous? It says mezzo forte, and then on page 8, it says mezzo piano. Do want a youthful sound or something else?

I never thought of it. It's interesting. Ah...

I think of two young people in a car. You know, the excitement behind it.

Yeah, the excitement, yes but I don’t think its light. Psychologically it’s not light. No, because my memories of it… eh… I’ve never been a little girl. I mean how can I say, I was always very intense and very serious. (laughing) So I’ve never been kind of that light, you know, in this type of topic. I've never been light. But certainly, I put mezzo piano.

So I should observe dynamics as written?
Well, I mean I think this one may be the hardest psychologically to understand.

I agree.

Yes, so...

One more question, on page 9 where is says affrettando, I know that means somewhat rushing and yet it says poco meno mosso. So is that a kind of like a give and take?

Hold on, let me look. That’s pretty funny. Poco meno mosso for half a measure. (Laughing)

And then a tempo. (Laughing)

I can drive people crazy. Okay, I think I know why I put that there. Because someone looking at this poco meno mosso may think, oh it’s relaxing now. (laughing) It’s not relaxing. It’s a psychological thing. For me affrettando means getting tenser. Of course the whole piece is tense. I don’t know. It just means to start slower and then go faster. Going towards the a tempo. Just push forward... But you know, this could be... you can do your own interpretation. I think I might influenced the pianist because I was playing the eighth notes very intense. Ah, I think we have performed this other times were it wasn’t so loud. Of course, that was the premiere and it could be done lighter in tone, in other words soft but still keep the tension. Yeah, because there is a forte and its just going to be too loud. And everything will be too loud.

So in number 5, El Sol, I noticed this particular piece had more two against three.

Yes.

Was that a particular color choice? I mean I know you are personifying the sun as a lover, which a great image, actually. Again, it says allegro affrettando, which makes total sense. But on page 26... most of this stays in 6/8 actually. But is there a particular reason?

Ah, this maybe more musical than anything else, and it may have to do with actual words. That it didn’t fit doing it in 3. Because “contorsiona con placer” maybe there’s no hidden meaning here, its just that... Okay, one thing I want to tell you for me that when I write music it’s very much like a language. So many times when I set the poetry I just kind of speak louder. Heighten speech. These particular words some how sound better when it’s in two then when its in three. Because I could have but it in three and it would have sounded more like dancing (plays different rhythm on piano). And it kind of breaks it down. It’s an important word, “contorsiona.” So perhaps, it’s also hard for me to go back to 2002, and try to remember why I did that. It’s possible what you just said that the two against three, just brings out the words better.

Number three, El Pasado Perdido, could you describe this as like a hypnotic mantra of not necessarily being present?
Yeah. This one is very similar... you should look at the five songs by Lorca. The ones that are set to Lorca. This is pretty much similar to the black moon. Number two or three in that set. It also has the trills and it has the same kind of atmosphere. So and I actually remember thinking about that song when I wrote this. So now you can refer to that. I try to set up the mystery same as the black moon, the trills, also this alternation between these two notes (plays them on the piano). That’s also in the black moon, in that song. It’s also more chromatic. Especially the trills, it’s evoking the past and not being in the present. Somehow the trills when pianissimo give me this feeling. Also the problem with the piano is the piano sound decays too quickly. So I always use the trills sometimes to extend the sound. And also in wavering the sound, it’s a more expressive way. I mean could have done three, but that doesn’t make sense. More ambiguous. There is ambiguity here in terms of tonality and this wavering between the two tones, the b-flat and b-natural and then also the trills. It’s all full of... I don’t know what the word is in poetry... I mean, it doesn’t make sense, right? (Reading poetry): El pasado perdido resiente el presente evitado. It’s like opposites.

I love it though. I was in a practice room the other day trying to sing through this and I started crying.

*Oh my God… I think you understand the poetry.*

Yes, it makes a lot of sense.

*Good.*

Would you add anything else that you think about the work?

*One thing I’ve been very interested in, I don’t think I was thinking about it... For example when I read the book, you know Albert Schweitzer? J.S. Bach. I really, at the time I read it, it was kind of looked down upon because in the 20th century with Stravinsky saying that the music expresses nothing and all of that. You know everybody kind of turned off their feelings, late 20th century music with 12 tone and all that stuff. Stravinsky, although I love Stravinsky, what he said sometimes, it’s not what the music says. Um... but now, I think there is come back to more emotional stuff. And I think also people are looking again into the rhetoric. You know rhetoric used to be taught from the 16th century through until the beginning of the 19th century. So if you went to school, you were always taught rhetoric, which was the art of persuasion, of argumentation, of how to convince people and all that. So I think in my music, may... it has that. So maybe you can identify my rhetoric. That can be tied to the Meyer thing you were talking about. So those are two angles to look at it. Because its vocal, obviously and the Doctrine of Affections. You know about that, right?*

Yes, absolutely

*So there are certain things that I do, that perhaps I repeat often. So I have a certain rhetorically language. I just thought about that. Trying to put a little more formal.... language for your doctoral thesis.*
Absolutely. Yes, that a good way of looking at it.

Yeah, actually I’m teaching it right now to these Koreans here. And I’m enjoying it. Actually, this once, I’m teaching the cantatas, and the passions, and all of that and I’m going to show them all the different step motifs because it’s a way for the non musicians to understand it. And I totally believe that these people were using that. I think it was taught in the 20th century that this was (explicit) and its not. Composers are people. Bach was not a mechanical being. Like the way it was been played this century. What else? I think you are good. You intuition is good on all this. I would love to see what you do with it. So, you sing opera.

Yes. I’m an opera singer. I went straight through my schooling. I did my undergrad at the University of Miami. My Masters of Music at LSU and this is my third year doing my DMA at Louisiana State University. I’ve gotten to work with a few opera companies already. I love to perform and do recital work as well.

You also like to do recitals?

Yes.

Good. Well I would like for you do this piece. Because you are the right person, I think.

(Laughing)

Absolutely.

So, you just have to find now the educational or formal way of presenting it. That’s the hard part. I will think about it. And if I come up with anything else, I will let you know.

Thank you very much.

You’re welcome. When are you planning to finish this?

I am planning to write the majority of this within the next month.

Oh wow.

I’m doing my lecture recital May 12th.

Can you do a video?

Yes, I will record it and send you a video of it.

Your pianist is good?
Yes, she is.

*How did you come across this work?*

Livingcomposers.org. I was looking for a Spanish female composer. And I came across your name. And I started to listen and read up.

*So you got the score from where?*

You sent it to me. (Laughing)

*Oh, that’s right. I sent you both, Moments of Change and that work. Boy, you are going very fast.*

I just want to get out there and perform. I just want to finish this as quickly as possible. And enjoy after.

*Fantastic. Thank you very much for taking this up.*

Thank you for the opportunity. It’s beautiful music and I’m very looking forward to performing it.

*You’re a lyric soprano?*

Yes. I’m moving into some heavier rep. as well

*You sound it. With time you may be a dramatic soprano. You’re a similar voice to Rachel, actually. I can tell from your speaking voice, it’s a tremendous sound.*

It’s fun to work with. I’ve grown a lot recently so it’s a little scary sometimes.

*It’s kind of wild right? Because it’s here (motions to her throat) and not out there.*

Yes, sometimes I wish I could play it outside my body. I’d have a little more control over it... but... it’s the beauty of it.

*You’re pretty young too?*

Yes, 27. I don’t know if I’m that young but...

*You’re very young. You know for singers. I know about that.*

So any time you have more questions just let me know. You do have a recording, right?

*Yes.*
You speak Spanish?

Si (yes).

Ah, we’ve been speaking English. Mine is almost better than Spanish, although I go to Spain very often. I’m going this summer for two months again.

Oh, wonderful.

Are you on Facebook?

I am.

I should try to find you. It’s a way to kind of promote. I go very often to Spain but my Spanish I need to practice.

Me too. Especially living here for four and half years, it can be very difficult. I speak more when I’m in Miami.

So you live in Baton Rouge now?

Right, trying to finish. I move back to Miami in August.

Ah, I see now. Because when I look at your phone I see (305).

Si (yes). I still have my Miami phone number.

So both your parents are Cuban and Puerto Rican?

Yes, my mother is Puerto Rican and my father is Cubano.

Yes, Barrera is very Spanish. But Megan is not.

No it is not, but I am the only person in my family that has an American/Irish name. Everyone else is Maria Magdalena, Christina Marie, Alberto… Everyone has a Spanish name… I’m the only one.

Fantastic. I love Miami. I was there a while ago. It’s a great place to go to Nicaraguan restaurants. I’ll always remember because they were fantastic restaurants. And the mojitos… Ah, here in Seoul it’s just work, work, work.

I’m sure.

No time for much of anything else.
What drew you to Seoul?

They offered me a job. That’s all it was. I was in school. I went back to do the PhD in composition at Peabody Conservatory. I was getting a divorce after 22 years. I was in the last year, still doing my course work when I was offered this job. And at that point it sounded like a great idea because that was the beginning of the financial crisis, 2008. Actually, I left in 2010 and I thought well, I will my finish my PhD and spend a couple years, but of course now its four years and I moved to a better university and they treat me really well. It’s a good place to kind of work and work and work. Since I’ve been here, I’ve written symphonies, two concertos, now another concerto, just teach and then write music. And I decided now after I teach, then I go take two months off to Spain and then I come back and just work and leave again. So you know, it may work but I’m trying to find a job in Spain actually.

That’s Great.

I am American. I’m actually both, Spanish and American. But I have an apartment in Spain. The reason I go there often is because it would be nice to move back. Although I am American, I have no home there and after 33 years in America, I don’t feel American. So in Spain it’s great. Of course after 32 years it’s very different. It’s not the same country that I left. But the people, the emotional makeup of people…I can relate to them. And I have a lot of good friends. And so there is a top school there in Barcelona, they are interested in me but maybe they’ll give me something like an invited professor, we’ll see. But I have no rush. It has to be something good. And of course Spain is going through a lot of financial difficulties but ah... but I hope not too much longer here.

I understand.

Yeah, it’s not a place for a Spanish person, I think. There are nice things to do, but the culture is so different. It’s a different world. But I’ve learned a lot about Asia and I’m teaching Indian music, Indonesian music, Korean music, Chinese music... I’ve learned the whole Asian traditional music, and I’m teaching a cultural history course on eastern and western music. So actually it’s been great these four years because I’ve learned a lot. And I kind of relate the European culture with the American culture, and the Asian culture. And I have a much better perspective. Perhaps it was meant to be, to come here. Sometimes you just understand the world better. So that’s the reason why I came here.

Wow. What an adventure. That’s great.

Well my other thesis that you read, um there’s a lot of personal stuff there.

Yes.

And, first I was hesitant but then I thought why not. I want to set the record straight because the first years in the states were very difficult and why not me saying it then...
Someone else?

Yeah, why not? I didn’t really go... I could have been even more personal but... It just gives a hint of the kinds of things. And also because it was a second career. It was not my first, my first was piano. And it was kind of... it explains a little more. But anyway, I’m glad it was helpful. The motivic development is something maybe here not so much but you may want to look into motivic development. I’m a fanatic of motivic development. I would pick a motif and kind of appears and it changes. I also love appoggiaturas. And I think that comes from Bach. My favorite composer is Bach. So I think from playing the playing, all those appoggiaturas and the kind of melancholy and the Spanish. Perhaps the Federico Mompou thing, the relation there is that he is Catalan and that I played for him and I came with a recommendation from him and his lyrical melodies are very close to the way I feel about music and when I write melodies, they are similar because they are Catalan. That’s the connection there. But the difference is that he keeps everything to only two ideas, they are very simple and I like to develop. I love to develop ideas. So I’m an opposite acutally. He was a primitivist. He said he just liked to have the ideas and he hated development and in that sense I’m more Germanic. I like more the development, but no you don’t have to look at him. Uh, what else I don’t know. I haven’t thought about my songs and I haven’t written songs in a while now since 2005. Wait, that can’t be right.

No, 2009

Yes, the Gacelas. You know about that work already?

Yes.

That one has more control. This one is a little more turbulent. I think it’s the poetry. Because it’s more personal, and if you remember the situations, I’m very visual and I kind of remember being there. I see it, I feel it. You know when you write with somebody else’s poetry yeah even though you get into it, and with Lorca I feel that way, and also with Margaret Atwood, I loved... because she was very strong. But I think uh... that... I feel its kind of special if you write the poetry and put the music to it.

I agree. It is very special.

Well great. Thank you very much, Megan. We’ll be in touch.

Thank you, ciao

Ciao
In 1992, the casual meeting of an old friend from the past on a busy city street prompted the revival of many memories, some going back to my teenage years. These intense feelings were translated to poetry in the span of two days in the form of seven poems. Five of these poems are set to music in this collection.

I. Deseo (Desire) is a passionate poem that juxtaposes and contrasts words such as “hardness” and “soft”, “cold” and “warm”, and “resolution” and “serene”, implying the extreme feelings that desire can bring.

II. Definición (Definition) is the remembrance of a conversation held in the tight surrounds of a car by two inexperienced teenagers. Two beings who don’t know who they are and expect the other to define them. Musically it is the most dissonant of the set. Three chromatic note figures in ostinato portray the intense tension and atmosphere inside of the car.

III. El Pasado Perdido (The Lost Past) is the most impressionistic of the set with constant trills in the piano part imparting a sense of mystery and ambiguous reality and dream.

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94 This information can be found on the inside of the published score.
IV. Calor (Heat) is about the oppressive heat and nervousness experienced by two beings having a quiet conversation in a windowless tight room. The heat makes breathing difficult. The conversation is at times distracted by the reflection of blue eyes in the mirror. This song is very sustained with a steady and continuous accompaniment of eighth-notes in the piano that don’t subside until the central section where the syncopated rhythm paints the panted breath and the blue reflections that melt in the suffocating heat.

V. El Sol (The Sun) is a sensuous poem that praises the sun’s warmth and its power to penetrate the skin.
APPENDIX E
DISCOGRAPHY

Album Name: *Seelenvogel - Soulbird*
Release Date: 2012
Meininger-Trio records *Colores Andaluces*
NCA New Classical Adventure - 60247-NCA

Album Name: *Voices of the Rainforest*
Release Date: 2012
Meininger-Trio records *Voices of the Rainforest*
Haensler Records Profil Edition - PR 11039

Album Name: *(In) Habitation*
Release Date: 2010
Eileen Stremple, soprano, and Sylvie Beaudette, piano records *Moments of Change*
Centaur Records - CRC 3002

Album Name: *Feminissimo!*
Release Date: 2008
Kobayashi/Gray Duo records *Sonata #1 for Violin and Piano*
Albany Records - TROY 1081

Album Name: *Homage to Mozart*
Release Date: 2007
Eric Himy, piano records *Homage a Mozart*
Centaur Records - CRC 2849

Album Name: *Gardens of Anna Maria Luisa de Medici*
Release Date: 2005
Meininger-Trio records *Voces de mi tierra for flute, cello & piano*
Haenssler Profil Edition - PH 05019

Album Name: *Songs by Women*
Release Date: 2003
Susan Gonzalez, soprano and Marcia Eckert, piano record *Five Songs for Soprano and Piano*
Leonarda Productions - #LE352
Album Name: *Works by San Antonio Composers Played by San Antonio Performers*
Release Date: 2005
Rachel Rosales, soprano and Elisenda Fabregas, piano record *Five Musings on the Past* for Soprano and Piano
Composers Alliance of San Antonio

Album Name: *Roger Wright Piano Masterpieces*
Release: 2000
Roger Wright, piano records *Mirage for Piano*
Eloquence Label (ABC Classics)

Album Name: *Album for the Young for Piano Solo*
Release Date: 2002
Elisenda Fábregas, composer/pianist records *Album for the Young for Piano Solo*
(An piano exercise CD with Books)
Hidden Oaks Music Company
**APPENDIX F**

**A COMPLETE LIST OF SOLO VOCAL WORKS**

**Gacelas de amor (2009)**
Based on three poems (in Spanish) by Federico Garcia Lorca, from the collections *Diwan del Tamarit* (1931-1934) and *Canciones*.

I. El amor desesperado  
II. Lucia Martinez  
III. El amor maravilloso

For soprano, flute, and piano  
Duration: 9’ 30”
Commissioned by and written for Christiane Meininger, flute; Jörg Waschinski, male soprano; and Rainer Gepp, piano  
Premiere- June 18, 2009 at the Zentrum for Information und Bildung in Unna, Germany.  
Sponsored by the American Embassy in Berlin, the Center for International Light Art in Unna (Germany) and a travel grant from the Peabody Institute of John Hopkins University.  
Published by Hofmeister Musik Velag

**Tu i els meus somnis (2007)**
Poetry by Catalan poet, Josep Janés  
For mezzo-soprano and piano  
Duration: 7’
It has not been premiered. Written for Catalanian mezzo-soprano, Anna Alàs.  
Published by Hidden Oaks Music Company

**Moments of Change (2005)**
Poetry by Canadian writer, Margaret Atwood (in English), from *Selected Poems 1965-1975*

I. The moment from Morning in the Burned House  
II. Habitation  
III. More and more  
IV. It is dangerous to read newspapers  
V. Late night

Song Cycle for soprano and piano, also available for mezzo-soprano and piano  
Duration: 15’
Commissioned by the Hanson Institute for American Music of the Eastman School of Music at the University of Rochester for soprano Eileen Strempel.  
Premiere- April 24, 2005 at the Society for New Music Concert Series at Hosmer Auditorium, Everson Museum of Art, in Syracuse - soprano Eileen Strempel.  
Published by Hidden Oaks Music Company

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95 Concert program and review are available at www.efrabregas.com.
**Five Musings on the Past (2002)**
Poetry by the composer in Spanish

I. Deseo  
II. Definición  
III. El Pasado Perdido  
IV. Calor  
V. El Sol

For soprano and piano  
Duration: 15’  
Written for soprano Rachel Rosales  
Premiere- October 6, 2002 at Ruth Taylor Concert Hall, Trinity University, sponsored by the Composers Alliance of San Antonio (CASA) Concert - soprano Rachel Rosales and the composer at the piano.  
Published by Hidden Oaks Music Company

**Village Scenes (2002/04)**
Poetry by the composer in Catalan

I. El Portal  
II. El Poble  
III. La Pluja

For soprano and piano, also available for mezzo soprano  
Duration: 6’  
Written for mezzo-soprano, Anna Alàs  
Premiere- February 27, 2005 at COMRadio.com (Spanish radio) by Catalanian mezzo-soprano, Anna Alàs, and pianist, Xoan Castinyeira  
Published by Hidden Oaks Music Company

**Cinco Soledades (1999/2004)**
Poetry by Antonio Machado in Spanish

I. Desnuda está la tierra  
II. Y era el demonio  
III. En sueños  
IV. Mi hora  
V. Anacreonte

For bass baritone and piano, Version available for lyric or dramatic baritone  
Duration: 10’  
Premiere- Febraury 11, 2001, Our Lady of the Lake University with baritone, Jacob Cantu and the composer at the piano  
Published by Hidden Oaks Music Company.
**Five Poems of García Lorca (1992)**
Poetry by Federico García Lorca in Spanish

I. Casida del llanto  
II. Un punto lejano  
III. Ay!  
IV. La luna asoma  
V. Fuera

For soprano, cello, clarinet and violin  
Duration: 12'  
Commissioned by the Gotham Ensemble  
Published by Hidden Oaks Music Company.

**Five Songs (1986)**
Poetry by Federico García Lorca (in Spanish): taken from the collections *Poema del Cante Jondo* (1921) and *El Diwan del Tamarit* (1931-35).

I. El silencio  
II. La mano imposible  
III. La luna negra  
IV. Las seis cuerdas  
V. Clamor

For soprano and piano.  
Duration: 15'  
Written for soprano Rachel Rosales  
Published by Southern Music Company
April 5, 2014

Hola Elisenda,

I have many questions to ask about your music and poetry. Is there any chance we can Skype sometime within the next two weeks? I know the time difference is significant so please just let me know when a good time works for your schedule.

Furthermore, I want to ask permission from your publishing house to print musical examples in my document. Do I need to contact someone else to do this?

Thank you and I look forward to hearing from you soon,
Megan Barrera

Megan,

I am the publisher so you have my permission to use the music published by Hidden Oaks Music Co.

Elisenda

May 2, 2014

Hi Elisenda,

I will be using the first three measures of La Luna Negra in my Dissertation. Do I need to contact the Southern Music Company of San Antonio for this example? Or do I have your permission to insert this example?

Thank you,
Megan Barrera

May 15, 2014

Megan, here is your permission!
Hope your recital went well!

Elisenda
Dear Elisenda,

I am in receipt of your inquiry forwarded thru us from Ruth Jean. Many thanks for writing and for your patience on the reply. To answer your questions~

1. Ms. Barrera has our permission to use the excerpt of “La luna negra” in her dissertation with the following citation:

   Used by permission. From the collection Art Songs by American Women Composers, vol. 12

   Copyright © 2000 Southern Music Company. International Copyright Secured. All Rights Reserved.

2. This work is listed on our distributor Hal Leonard’s website:
   http://www.halleonard.com/

   Hope this information is helpful.

   All best wishes,
   Joe Derhake, GM
   Southern Music Company
   Lauren Keiser Music Publishing
   Keiser Classical
VITA

Megan Elizabeth Barrera, a native of Miami, Florida, received her Bachelor of Music degree at the University of Miami, Florida in 2009. She immediately moved to the state of Louisiana to pursue her Master of Music degree, which she was awarded in 2011 from Louisiana State University. While at Louisiana State University she studied under the tutelage of Professor Patricia O'Neill. Ms. Barrera decided to continue her postgraduate education at Louisiana State University, and while under a graduate assistantship, Ms. Barrera was able to exercise both her teaching abilities and performance craft. Ms. Barrera taught private voice and diction classes, and she sang the following roles for LSU Opera: Hanna in Lehár’s *The Merry Widow*, Miss Jessel in Britten’s *The Turn of the Screw*, Marianne in Romberg’s *The New Moon*, Musetta in Puccini’s *La bohème*, Susanna in Mozart’s *Le Nozze di Figaro*, and Vanessa in Barber’s *Vanessa*. Ms. Barrera, a lyric soprano, has also sung a number of leading roles in the United States and in Europe, including Norina in Donizetti’s *Don Pasquale* for Wichita Grand Opera and Gilda in Verdi’s *Rigoletto* for La Musica Lirica. Ms. Barrera has also sung with the Natchez Music Festival singing Lilli in Porter’s *Kiss Me Kate*, Opéra Louisiane singing Pamina in Mozart’s *The Magic Flute*, and Florida Grand Opera. She will receive her Doctorate of Musical Arts degree with a minor in vocal pedagogy in August 2014 and upon graduation Ms. Barrera plans to pursue an active career in music, both performing and teaching.