A performer's guide to Libby Larsen's: Try Me, Good King: Last Words of the Wives of Henry VIII

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A PERFORMER’S GUIDE TO LIBBY LARSEN’S
TRY ME, GOOD KING: LAST WORDS OF THE WIVES OF HENRY VIII

A Written Document
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
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in
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by
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements ........................................................................................................ ii

Abstract ......................................................................................................................... v

Introduction ................................................................................................................... 1

Chapter

1 Libby Larsen, Composer ............................................................................................. 4
   Biographical Information ......................................................................................... 4
   Larsen’s Interest in the Wives of Henry VIII ....................................................... 7
   Compositional Process for *Try Me, Good King* ............................................... 7
   Voice Type .............................................................................................................. 9
   *Try Me, Good King* - A Challenge Piece ......................................................... 10
   Characterization and Vocal Coloring ................................................................. 12

2 Historical Sketch of the Queens ................................................................................. 14
   Katherine of Aragon .............................................................................................. 14
   Anne Boleyn ........................................................................................................... 18
   Jane Seymour ......................................................................................................... 21
   Anne of Cleves ....................................................................................................... 24
   Katherine Howard ................................................................................................. 26
   Katherine Parr ........................................................................................................ 28

3 Libby Larsen’s *Try Me, Good King* ...................................................................... 30
   The Role of the Lute Song .................................................................................... 30
   “Katherine of Aragon” ......................................................................................... 31
   “Anne Boleyn” ...................................................................................................... 40
   “Jane Seymour” .................................................................................................... 48
   “Anne of Cleves” .................................................................................................. 55
   “Katherine Howard” .............................................................................................. 61

Conclusion .................................................................................................................. 71

Bibliography ................................................................................................................. 72

Appendix

A. Texts of the Lute Songs ......................................................................................... 74

B. Texts of Full Letters and Speeches Larsen Used for the Set .................................. 76

C. Discography ........................................................................................................... 81

D. Vocal Music .......................................................................................................... 85
ABSTRACT

American composer Libby Larsen has created works in many musical genres. Larsen’s vocal music recordings have featured well-known performers such as Arleen Augér, for which Larsen won a Grammy as producer. Her vocal music employs texts from various sources including Nursery Rhymes and the Bible, as well as numerous others.

Larsen works solely on commission, and in 2000 Larsen was approached by the Marilyn Horne Foundation to compose a group of songs for Metropolitan Opera competition winner, soprano Meaghan Miller. Larsen had always been interested in the wives of Henry VIII and the commission request finally gave her the opportunity to research and characterize the Queens through this set of powerful songs.

The texts for Larsen’s *Try Me, Good King: Last Words of the Wives of Henry VIII* come from the Queens’ letters and/or gallows speeches. This document provides a complete performance guide that encompasses Larsen’s background, a basic historical sketch of each Queen, and a discussion of topics pertinent to the successful performance of the work.

The first chapter of this document includes a brief biographical sketch, as well as an explanation of Larsen’s lifelong interest in the Queens. In addition, her journey through the compositional process of *Try Me, Good King* is discussed.

Included in the second chapter is a historical sketch of the Queens. Performers must understand the background of each Queen in order to successfully perform the work.

The final chapter of this document covers each individual song with Larsen’s insights and suggestions for a complete performance. Performance and practice suggestions, as well as corrections to the score and additional lute song quotations are addressed with musical examples as needed.
Appendix A includes the texts of the lute songs Larsen used in the construction of this work. Appendix B lists the full letters and speeches that Larsen used to create the texts for the work. Appendix C provides a discography of Larsen’s vocal music. Appendix D is a listing of Larsen’s vocal music. Appendix E is a copy of the permission for copyright letter from Oxford University Press.
INTRODUCTION

American composer Libby Larsen has created works in the genres of opera, instrumental, orchestral, choral, and vocal music. Recordings of Larsen’s vocal music feature performers such as Eileen Strempel, Susanne Mentzer, Terry Rhodes, Ellen Williams, and Arleen Augér, for which Larsen won a Grammy as producer in 1994. Her vocal music employs texts from various sources including Nursery Rhymes and the Bible, as well as the words of Willa Cather, e.e. cummings, Emily Dickinson, Brenda Ueland, and numerous others.

Larsen is a composer who works solely on commission. In 2000 Larsen was approached by the Marilyn Horne Foundation to compose a group of songs for its annual competition winner, soprano Meaghan Miller. Miller would premiere this work in the Eighth Annual New York Recital for the Foundation. After listening to recordings of Miller, Larsen “felt that [she] heard in [Miller’s] voice the versatility and power to be able to carry off the depth”\(^1\) needed to embody the Queens in a dramatization setting. Larsen had always been interested in the lives of the wives of Henry VIII and the commission request finally gave her the opportunity to research and characterize the Queens through this set of powerful songs.

The texts for Larsen’s \textit{Try Me, Good King: Last Words of the Wives of Henry VIII} come from the Queens’ letters and/or gallows speeches. While papers have been written on this composition, the focus has been mainly historical rather than musical. This document will provide a complete performance guide that encompasses Larsen’s background, a basic historical sketch of each Queen, and a discussion of topics pertinent to the successful performance of the work.

\footnote{1 Libby Larsen, interview by author, 7 October 2007, Minneapolis. Digital Recording. Larsen Private Residence, Minneapolis, MN.}
The first chapter of this document covers basic information about Larsen’s life and works. It also includes a brief biographical sketch, as well as an explanation of Larsen’s lifelong interest in the lives of the Queens. In addition, her journey through the compositional process of *Try Me, Good King* is discussed, including Larsen’s choice of the texts to be used in the songs. Her goal was to “find the person”\(^2\) within all of the letters and speeches which were recorded from the Queens. Through this procedure, Larsen proved to be successful in portraying each Queen as a person and not solely a political figure.

Included in the second chapter is a historical sketch of the Queens. It is important for the performer to know the background of each Queen. It is equally important to understand each Queens’ relationship with King Henry and the connection of one Queen to the other. Larsen chose not to compose a song for the final Queen, Katherine Parr, who outlived Henry. In the interest of offering the complete picture of Henry and his Queens, Parr will be discussed in this document as well. While this historical sketch is not the main focus, it is crucial for the performer to understand each Queen’s situation within the context of the song and the cycle as a whole.

The final chapter of this document covers each individual song with Larsen’s insights and suggestions for a complete performance. In addition, as Larsen chose to use quotations from popular lute songs within this set, her reason for choosing the different lute songs for each Queen is discussed. Examples of the lute song quotes not notated by Larsen can also be found in this document. Performance and practice suggestions, such as tempo markings; meter; appropriate places to breathe; expression; vocal range; and difficult spots within the music, as well as corrections to the score are addressed with musical examples as needed.

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\(^2\) Libby Larsen, interview by author, 7 October 2007, Minneapolis. Digital Recording.
The last section of this paper consists of several Appendices. Appendix A includes the texts of the lute songs Larsen used in the construction of this work. Appendix B lists the full letters and speeches that Larsen used to create the texts for the songs themselves. Appendix C provides a discography of Larsen’s vocal music. Appendix D is a listing of Larsen’s vocal music. Appendix E is a copy of the permission for copyright letter from Oxford University Press.

Research sources consulted for the writing of this document range from articles and books concerning Larsen’s life and compositional techniques, Tudor history, as well as theses and dissertations covering Larsen and her compositions. In addition, a personal interview with Larsen serves to provide clarification for any remaining questions regarding style, markings, and techniques. All of these sources are necessary to create a proper performance guide for *Try Me, Good King*. 
CHAPTER 1
LIBBY LARSEN, COMPOSER

Biographical Information

American composer, Libby Larsen was born in Wilmington, Delaware, on Christmas Eve of 1950. At the age of three, Larsen and her family moved to Minneapolis, Minnesota, where she resides today with her husband and daughter.\(^3\) She grew up in a musical family, with her father playing “clarinet in a Dixieland band” and her four sisters taking piano lessons.\(^4\)

As a child Larsen attended a Catholic grade school. During this time she learned to “sing Gregorian chants for daily services.”\(^5\) From early on, Larsen studied piano, and around the age of seven Larsen began to compose her own pieces.\(^6\) She soon realized that she “had a natural interest in rhythm” and that composing came “naturally” to her.\(^7\) Her early encounter with Gregorian chant had a profound effect on her compositional style. Larsen said, “The rhythm has everything to [do] with the flow of the Chant, as it exists in the space in which it is being performed.”\(^8\)

Larsen attended the University of Minnesota for her undergraduate and graduate studies, receiving both Master of Music and Doctor of Philosophy degrees in composition.\(^9\) Professors during her time at the University of Minnesota included Dominick Argento, Paul Fetler, and Eric Stokes.\(^10\) Along with her professors, other sources have served as influences on Larsen such as

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\(^4\) Ibid.


\(^6\) Ibid.

\(^7\) Ibid.

\(^8\) Ibid.


\(^10\) Ibid.
“poets, architects, painters and philosophers,” as well as modern musical scores.11 Some of her favorite composers range from Johann Sebastian Bach and Hector Berlioz to Chuck Berry and James Brown.12

Larsen has composed over 200 works in genres that range from orchestral and instrumental to operatic and vocal, from which over fifty recordings are available.13 Widely respected and performed, she has won many awards and has worked with famous singers, such as Frederica von Stade and Arleen Augér. Larsen stated, “I love working with singers” mostly because there is “no such thing as an absolute because it is not a mechanical instrument.”14

Larsen won a Grammy in 1994 as producer of the recording “The Art of Arleen Augér.”15 This recording of Augér includes a rehearsal performance of Sonnets from the Portuguese. Larsen composed the set for Augér to premiere, but Augér “became ill” and was unable to perform the work.16 Augér wrote to Larsen saying, “Oh, Libby, every time I hear our piece the more I fall in love with it. You have really written something very special which touches my heart.”17

In addition, Larsen was a co-founder of the American Composers Forum, which originated as the Minnesota Composers Forum in 1973.18 Larsen was also the “first woman to serve as a resident composer with a major orchestra.”19 In turn, she has held residencies with

11 Ibid.
12 Ibid.
13 Ibid.
14 Libby Larsen, interview by author, 7 October 2007, Minneapolis. Digital Recording.
17 Ibid.
19 Ibid.
renowned institutes and orchestras, such as the Cincinnati Conservatory and the Minnesota Orchestra.\textsuperscript{20}

Larsen currently composes works by commission. However, she does not accept every proposal that is presented to her. “Only when the right opportunity presents itself” will she consider a commission.\textsuperscript{21} Larsen has many ideas and interests that she hopes will find their way into future compositions, but she is often willing to “wait for the performance opportunity to apply the idea to.”\textsuperscript{22}

In 2000, Larsen was contacted by the Marilyn Horne Foundation wishing to commission a work for soprano Meagan Miller, a winner of the 1999 Metropolitan Opera Competition. Larsen happily agreed to the commission.\textsuperscript{23} She began listening to recordings of Miller, and after listening to Miller’s voice Larsen “felt that [she] heard in [Miller’s] voice the versatility and power…to be able to carry off the depth” needed to portray the wives of Henry VIII.\textsuperscript{24} Larsen knew that Miller was “100% dedicated…at the top of her game and ready to take a risk.”\textsuperscript{25} On the other hand, Miller understood that the Horne Foundation had contacted Larsen and asked her “to write a cycle for a dramatic coloratura with a lot of high notes” as the Foundation “felt that there weren’t many pieces in the art song repertoire” that met this criteria.\textsuperscript{26} Regardless, \textit{Try Me, Good King}, which was the result of the commission and collaboration proved to be successful and according to the pianist for the premiere Brian Zeger, “People are still talking about the premiere.”\textsuperscript{27}

\textsuperscript{20} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{21} Libby Larsen, Interview by author, 7 October 2007, Minneapolis. Digital Recording.
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{23} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{24} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{25} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{26} Meagan Miller, phone interview by author, 12 January 2008.
\textsuperscript{27} Ibid.
Larsen’s Interest in the Wives of Henry VIII

The history of King Henry VIII and his wives has always been an interest of Larsen. She explained, “I love studying the Queens…because they are universal.” Larsen said that she searches for subjects that are “universal because that is the only way [she] can put contemporary music” with them. Her interest in the Queens goes deeper than just the historical aspect; Larsen has “been really interested in the discarding of wives.” She observed that this occurs frequently in our present time, as well as the past. Accordingly, in choosing a topic to set to music Larsen “look[s] at things in our culture, and patterns, and [she] works backwards to try to understand what is the history of the cultural phenomenon we are experiencing today.” She further explained that, as a tradition, the “discarding of wives” seems to occur “especially by very powerful and wealthy men.” This behavior is certainly the legacy of such brutal rulers as Henry VIII, making an exploration of Henry’s cruel treatment of his wives a timely topic.

Compositional Process for Try Me, Good King

Larsen chose the words of the Queens for this set of songs very carefully. The texts for the songs are derived from surviving documents of the Queens, such as letters and gallows speeches. As Larsen was already familiar with the Queens and the political situation during the reign of each Queen, she thought it highly important to portray each character through her own words. She explained, “I thought if the words could be completely raw, then the situation that each Queen knew she was in and put herself in, becomes illuminated in a direct way.”

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28 Libby Larsen, interview by author, 6 October 2007, Minneapolis. Digital Recording. Larsen Private Residence, Minneapolis, MN.
29 Ibid.
30 Ibid.
31 Ibid.
32 Ibid.
33 Ibid.
When using a prose text, such as the Queens’ letters and speeches, for her compositions Larsen states, “I buy the source material, whether it is a novel or letters, and read them and then read around them to try to understand the ecology that produced these words in this order, at this time, in this culture.” Larsen then continues the process by “reading the letters…over and over again to try to filter the emotion out of the political, ritualized writing which is absolutely necessary to protocol but gets in the way of finding the person.” She explains that around the fourth reading of the source material “the essential words…lift off the page…they seem to be essential of the character the way that I feel the character musically.” Then Larsen is able to determine the final text by looking for the “musical and thematic viability” within those words.

After deciding on final texts Larsen begins to set them to music. During the composition process of Try Me, Good King she wrote two revisions. She then made additional revisions after meeting with soprano Meagan Miller and pianist Brian Zeger in New York to help them rehearse the songs for the premiere. She stated that there was “revising going on through [the] rehearsal process,” but the revisions were mostly for the second song of the work, “Anne Boleyn.”

After composing a piece Larsen generally asks herself “How do [I] feel about this?” At the end of the compositional process for Try Me, Good King Larsen said, “I felt relieved because the subject that has been with me for decades is now voiced.” In some ways, she “felt almost like a medium” to the Queens. She was able to tell the stories of the Queens using their own

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34 Libby Larsen, interview by author, 7 October 2007, Minneapolis. Digital Recording.
35 Ibid.
36 Ibid.
37 Ibid.
38 Ibid.
39 Libby Larsen, interview by author, 7 October 2007, Minneapolis. Digital Recording.
40 Ibid.
41 Ibid.
words. Larsen explained, “There is a certain amount of mediation that musicians bear responsibility for, we actually are mediums…it comes through us.”

Larsen stated that composing this work has driven her to choose more “direct words” for the texts of her music. Referring to Try Me, Good King, she observed, “to lay yourself open to this kind of directness for composer, and for the singer…requires a real centered person.”

Miller agreed with this statement and further explained that the performer must be a woman “who has the presence to carry off” the roles of the Queens. Larsen also thought that “working with direct words is a way that we as performers can transcend the recording industry…and [that] the next horizon for training to be a performer is to train yourself to deliver direct human emotion.” Additionally, she stressed that as a composer, she finds it difficult to “notate emotion,” which is the reason she gives such direct suggestions for characterization throughout the work.

**Voice Type**

Larsen wrote Try Me, Good King for a graduate level, or older, soprano. She “never intended” for undergraduate students to perform this work. The work was also composed for a soprano who can sustain strong high notes, including a high C#. Furthermore, Miller believes that the singer for this work should also be able to sing operatic roles such as Violetta from La Traviata, or Musetta from La Bohème.

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42 Ibid.
43 Ibid.
44 Ibid.
46 Libby Larsen, interview by author, 7 October 2007, Minneapolis. Digital Recording.
47 Ibid.
48 Ibid.
Larsen explains that she “worries about younger singers’ research techniques.”50 As a general rule, she warns undergraduates against taking their research solely from the internet.51 To obtain the most accurate information, Larsen prefers that the singer read the primary and secondary source materials that refer to the work. To perform this work the way that Larsen intended, the performer must research the history of each Queen and understand her not only as a monarch, but as a woman.

It was also Larsen’s intent that the work “be an opera…a tour de force.”52 She has seen the work performed with a different singer representing each Queen, in costume. Larsen prefers that the work be performed with one singer and without costumes, as costumes “create a distance on the words.”53 She explains that in costume “the songs work fine, but they don’t work as they are meant to be- abstracted words of the Queens.”54

*Try Me, Good King- A Challenge Piece*

Larsen views *Try Me, Good King* as one of her “challenge pieces.”55 She has written a “series of pieces…that challenge the idiom of the instrument to be excellent in all of its’ technical approaches.”56 Larsen further explains, “All challenges are built in for the singer to grow, so they’re all constructed in ways that are absolutely achievable,” and so that the singer will be “rewarded in [her] communicative powers and in the message, plus [she’s] been a cultural medium.”57

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50 Libby Larsen, interview by author, 7 October 2007, Minneapolis. Digital Recording.
51 Ibid.
52 Libby Larsen, interview by author, 6 October 2007, Minneapolis. Digital Recording.
53 Ibid.
54 Ibid.
55 Libby Larsen, interview by author, 7 October 2007, Minneapolis. Digital Recording.
56 Ibid.
57 Ibid.
Throughout this work Larsen poses challenges for the singer in areas such as breathing and stamina, while the pianist may face challenges in finger placement particularly in “Anne of Cleves.” However, for the voice Larsen believes that the “ranges are not that challenging.”\textsuperscript{58} This could be argued by performers who are unable to sustain a \textit{fortissimo} high C\#\textsubscript{6}.

Larsen says, “For the singer I tried to make it relatively easy to know where your pitches are, but at the same time you don’t actually know you’re on your pitch.”\textsuperscript{59} She explains further that this choice was deliberate on her part. It was for “metaphorical reason because none of the Queens knew where they were in their ability to remain alive.”\textsuperscript{60} By the same token, Larsen intends that “for the singer, the question is not getting your pitch, but knowing where you are.”\textsuperscript{61} It was her intention to strengthen the singer’s ear training ability. If the singer does not have a “confident ear,” then by “learning this cycle you will get a confident ear.”\textsuperscript{62} Moreover, for Larsen the real challenge “is to trust what you know you’ve got but you can’t necessarily hear in the ways that we’re trained to hear them.”\textsuperscript{63}

Another difficulty in this piece lies in the question of metric stress. Larsen wants the “words to flow in a recitative like way, but it’s not recitative.”\textsuperscript{64} In the same vein she exclaims that it is important “except in ‘Anne of Cleves,’ not to take the bar line as an indication of metric stress.”\textsuperscript{65} Larsen further understands that it is her “job to give you the correct stress for the words for the given situation.”\textsuperscript{66} Once again Larsen wants the singer to learn the rhythms in the songs and trust them, regardless of what the piano may be playing underneath.
Characterization and Vocal Coloring

One important aspect for a successful performance of Try Me, Good King, is vocal coloring. Again Miller is in agreement stating “there has to be some color in the voice” to perform this work.67 In continuing Larsen explains that “in this cycle more than previous cycles, [she is] looking to the future, looking for the acceptance in the vocal studio of teaching healthy singing to a much wider range of vocal color.”68 Larsen comprehends that “singers now are training to make the most beautiful sound, in the [healthiest] way, and it’s the halls that are adapting to the singers, not the singers to the halls.”69

Characterizations are indicated throughout the work. These characterizations were suggested to the songs to inspire vocal coloring. Larsen explains, “If I put an expression or an adverb, it opens the door to time and interpretation of the word and what color belongs to that word.”70 Because the singer must portray five different Queens, of vastly different temperament, one may view the work as “wide open for coloring.”71

Miller found that for her the “hardest part of the set [was] to transition between characters, both vocally and emotionally.”72 She felt that it was quite difficult to move from the devout Katherine of Aragon to the blunt Anne Boleyn, and then to the sweet and fragile Jane Seymour.73 Clearly each Queen had a very different personality and faced different circumstances. Because their personalities were so diverse, their emotional responses were also quite dissimilar. Moreover, Miller suggested that the singer write the age of each Queen at the time of her death, with the exception of Anne of Cleves, under the title of each song in the

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68 Libby Larsen, interview by author, 7 October 2007, Minneapolis. Digital Recording.
69 Ibid.
70 Ibid.
71 Ibid.
73 Ibid.
work.\textsuperscript{74} She found that this served as a reminder every time she worked on one of the songs and proved to be substantially beneficial to her performance of the work.\textsuperscript{75} Larsen and Miller both seem to agree that it is vitally important for the performer to understand each Queen and her situation, as well as the Queen’s age when she was experiencing her final days.

\textsuperscript{74} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{75} Ibid.
CHAPTER 2- 
HISTORICAL SKETCH OF THE QUEENS

The history of Henry VIII and his wives is quite complex and full of intrigue. Henry was known as a King who knew what he wanted and did everything in his power to get his way. This aspect of his character rang especially true when it came to his women. Henry took any measure necessary to end marriages and begin new ones. He also was known to have many affairs with other women while he was married. Along with these affairs came the inevitable—children out of wedlock, most of whom he did not acknowledge. The following are brief histories of each Queen and her relationship with the infamous King Henry VIII.

Katherine of Aragon

Katherine of Aragon was brought into the Tudor realm originally to marry Prince Arthur, son of Henry VII. Henry VII was driven by his own desires in securing this marriage. He believed “marrying his son to the daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella would help validate his claim to the throne and enhance England’s battered reputation.”76 In addition, the King knew this marriage would bring him a sizable dowry. It was agreed that the dowry would be paid on both the wedding day and throughout the next year.77 At first, King Ferdinand of Spain was not fond of the match of his daughter to Prince Arthur. However, when King Henry agreed to Ferdinand’s request to execute any “Tudor rivals to secure the dynasty,” Ferdinand became more comfortable with the union and allowed the marriage to take place.78

Arthur and Katherine were married by proxy in 1499, with Katherine in absentia, as she was only fourteen and he was a year younger. Over the next few years they corresponded.

77 Ibid., 13-14.
through love letters and their admiration for one another grew. Finally on November 14, 1501 the couple was married in Saint Paul’s Cathedral. Ironically, Prince Henry VIII at ten years of age, Katherine’s future husband, walked her down the aisle.

However, the marriage was short-lived as Prince Arthur died only five months later on April 2, 1502. It has been recorded that at that time both Prince Arthur and Princess Katherine were ill of the sweating sickness, which was the possible cause of Arthur’s death.\textsuperscript{79} Others have mentioned that Prince Arthur died of tuberculosis.\textsuperscript{80} Regardless, Katherine was now a widow who did not want to return to Spain. As Henry VII had not yet received the entirety of the dowry, he was also reluctant to send Katherine back to Spain right away. This resulted in the King’s proposition to Ferdinand and Isabella that he himself marry Katherine.\textsuperscript{81} The King and Queen of Spain refused this proposal. Therefore, Henry VII was forced to find another plan that they would not refuse. Thus, the offer of his younger son Henry VIII as Katherine’s new husband was suggested.

The question of Prince Arthur’s and Princess Katherine’s wedding night and short marriage then entered the discussion. Katherine swore that Arthur had “shared her bed only seven times” and that their marriage had never been consummated.\textsuperscript{82} This is possibly due to their young age, or the fact that Arthur was quite “small and underdeveloped” for a fifteen year old boy.\textsuperscript{83} Katherine was considered very short in height for this time, and Arthur was even shorter than she. Also, Arthur had always been weak, which was evident at his wedding when he

\textsuperscript{80} Denny, 74.
\textsuperscript{81} Lindsey, 20.
\textsuperscript{82} Denny, 73.
\textsuperscript{83} Fraser, 24.
chose to “dance only once,” because he was extremely fatigued.\textsuperscript{84} This weakness might also have interfered with his ability to consummate his marriage.

All of these facts lean toward the notion that Katherine was telling the truth about her lack of sexual relations with Arthur. However, it was the duty of the clerics to inspect the sheets used on the royal wedding night for proof of consummation. Recorded in letters from the court of Henry VIII was the following fact: “the Dowager Duchess of Norfolk later brought evidence before the Blackfriars court that the marriage was indeed consummated.”\textsuperscript{85} Though this fact may have been false, it caused Henry VIII to be leery of marrying his brother’s wife.

Young Henry also struggled with the views of the Bible on the subject. He found that “Leviticus forbade a man to marry his brother’s wife and warned that such unions would be cursed with childlessness, while Deuteronomy positively encouraged” the union.\textsuperscript{86} The scripture from Leviticus 20:21 would later return to haunt their marriage.

Regardless, Katherine insisted that she remained a virgin. With the question of her virginity lingering, the couple was granted permission to marry in December 1503. The marriage would take place in 1505 after Henry reached the age of fourteen.\textsuperscript{87} However, King Henry VII delayed the union as long as he could. During this time Katherine suffered illnesses, hunger, and poverty as King Henry VII was not concerned with providing her with what a future princess deserved. The couple was finally free to marry after King Henry VII was laid to rest in 1509.

On June 11, 1509, Henry and Katherine were united. Katherine wore white symbolizing her virginity. It is even recorded that “King Henry liked to boast that he had indeed found his

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\textsuperscript{84} Lindsey, 17.
\textsuperscript{85} Denny, 73.
\textsuperscript{87} Ibid., 45.
wife a ‘maid’, although years later he would attempt to pass off these boasts as ‘jests’."\textsuperscript{88} The new King Henry would be questioned about this statement during his future divorce from Katherine.

Their marriage proved to be successful at first. The couple had truly fallen in love and shared many nights together with the hope of creating a male heir. Katherine soon became pregnant and in January 1510 had a stillborn daughter.\textsuperscript{89} One year later in January 1511 Katherine gave birth to a son whom they named Henry. Shortly after his birth, the young Prince Henry died when he was only fifty-two days old.\textsuperscript{90} In 1513 Katherine lost another daughter, and then in 1515 she lost another son in childbirth. In May of the same year Katherine was yet again pregnant, and on February 18, 1516 she gave birth to Mary, who “inherited her piety and love of religion from her mother.”\textsuperscript{91} Because of her strict religious beliefs she would later be known as the infamous ‘Bloody Mary.’

Henry “regarded the pregnancies of his wives- not only [of] Katherine- as a positive justification for seeking consolation elsewhere.”\textsuperscript{92} Henry was known to have many affairs in his lifetime and his wives usually knew about his other women. When Katherine became pregnant in early 1518, Henry had an affair with Bessie Blount. By October 1518, Blount was also carrying a child of the King. In November Katherine once again gave birth to a stillborn daughter, while Blount gave birth to a healthy baby boy in June 1519.\textsuperscript{93}

A couple of years later Henry ended his affair with Blount and began another with a girl named Mary Boleyn. Mary was also said to have become pregnant during the time of her affair

\textsuperscript{88} Fraser, 49.
\textsuperscript{89} Ibid., 61.
\textsuperscript{90} Ibid., 62.
\textsuperscript{92} Ibid., 71.
\textsuperscript{93} Ibid., 83.
with Henry, which may or may not have been his child.\textsuperscript{94} The affair only lasted a short while, but introduced him to Mary’s older sister Anne. This introduction played a major role in Katherine’s undoing.

Henry VIII was beginning to wonder if the passage from Leviticus was true, and if there was a curse on his marriage to Katherine. He needed a male heir, produced from his wife, to secure the Tudor dynasty. As Katherine was growing older and fighting bouts of illness, Henry began to rethink their union and her ability to produce a son. Around 1524, the couple “had ceased having sexual relations” perhaps because “Henry was advised by his doctors that her child-bearing years were over” as Katherine had not been pregnant since 1518.\textsuperscript{95} The urgency of producing a male heir and the thought of a cursed marriage pressed Henry to find a solution. For Henry that solution was Anne Boleyn.

\textbf{Anne Boleyn}

Anne Boleyn served as a lady-in-waiting to Queen Katherine in 1522. At the time Anne was to marry Henry Percy. However, from the moment King Henry saw Anne, he knew that he wanted her for himself. The King made a point to entice Anne away from Percy. At first Anne continuously rejected the King’s advances. However, King Henry would not be discouraged, for he was determined to have Anne as his new wife. Anne actually left court for a while to flee from the King and his advances. King Henry longed for Anne to become his mistress, but she would not agree. For a time Anne chose not to reply to his letters referring to her as his mistress.

During this time Anne had many admirers including her already married cousin Thomas Wyatt.\textsuperscript{96} Wyatt was a poet who wrote many poems referring to Anne. It is said that the

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{94} Denny, 92.
\item \textsuperscript{95} Ibid., 83.
\item \textsuperscript{96} Lindsey, 55.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
“flirtation between the two was taken seriously by Wyatt but not by Anne herself.”  

Once Wyatt realized that the King was interested in Anne, he decided to move on as he knew what the King was capable of doing to someone attempting to thwart his intentions.

For a year Anne did not return Henry’s letters. By then, the King, unaccustomed to such spurning, was desperate to win her affection. The religious Anne believed that affairs and sexual relations outside of marriage were wrong. When Henry finally explained to her that he “would soon be free to contract a legal marriage to a true wife, which God would bless with a son and heir” she gave in to him and his plan. The notion of becoming Queen would only benefit Anne and her family, which is what her father, Thomas Boleyn had wanted all along. Her scheming father had placed his daughter Mary at court with the hope that she might win the King’s affection. However, if the King did not want Mary, perhaps he would fall for his other daughter Anne.

In June of 1527, Henry broke the secret news to Katherine that he was planning to have their marriage annulled. Katherine tried everything in her power to prevent this annulment, including involving her nephew Charles V and his influence over the papacy. Katherine was aware of the King’s relationship with Anne. She stood strong in her Catholic beliefs against divorce, and fought for her marriage. She knew Henry was wrong and tried to plead her case, but to no avail. During this time, Cardinal Campeggio met with Katherine and “under the sacramental oath, she swore that she had been a virgin at the time of her marriage to Henry.”

All of this did not matter, for Henry’s mind was made up and he was determined to divorce Katherine.

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97 Ibid., 55.
98 Denny, 99.
99 Fraser, 134.
100 Ibid., 149.
Before the beginning of 1528 Anne began returning the King’s affections. In the summer of 1528 Anne became ill with the sweating sickness, which worried Henry for it might have affected his plans. Anne was now promising her King the son he desperately needed, and in October of 1528 the couple seemed to be planning their wedding even though Katherine was still the King’s wife. However, Henry and Anne would not be joined in marriage until November 1532, in a secret ceremony as he was still married to Katherine. Other sources state that the secret marriage occurred in January 1533.\textsuperscript{101} Regardless, Anne became pregnant soon after in January 1533.

In February of 1533 Henry was finally granted his divorce from Katherine after “Henry decreed that the Church of England be separated from that of Rome and made himself its Supreme Head and Governor, declaring that the Pope’s authority no longer held sway in England.”\textsuperscript{102} Henry was now free to appoint an Archbishop, Thomas Cranmer, who would grant him the divorce from Katherine which he had so unrelentingly pursued. Many were outraged by this as they truly loved their Queen. By April Katherine was stripped of her title of Queen, made a Princess Dowager, and moved from the palace. She insisted that her servants call her Queen until her death from cancer on January 7, 1536 at the age of 50.\textsuperscript{103}

On June 1, 1533, the coronation of Anne took place.\textsuperscript{104} She was now the crowned Queen of England. In September of 1533 Anne gave birth to Princess Elizabeth, who would later be Elizabeth I, Queen of England. When Henry met Anne he had been drawn to her strong will, but soon Anne became too “overbearing” for his taste.\textsuperscript{105} At one point she even suggested that

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{101} Lindsey, 90.
\bibitem{102} Alison Weir, \textit{The Children of Henry VIII}, 2.
\bibitem{103} Fraser, 207.
\bibitem{104} Ibid., 190.
\bibitem{105} Derek Wilson, \textit{In The Lion’s Court: Power, Ambition, and Sudden Death in the Reign of Henry VIII}. (New York: St. Martin’s Griffin, 2001), 383.
\end{thebibliography}
“Henry have Katherine and Mary put to death legally.” She also had not been able to fulfill her promise to give Henry the son he longed for. Anne had suffered at least three known miscarriages, with the miscarriage of a son falling on the date of Katherine’s burial. It is even said that she “was pregnant when she was executed.”

The King had grown tired of Anne’s assertive nature and he once more feared for his lack of a male heir. Anne’s last miscarriage was the last straw for Henry; he again decided to end the marriage in one way or another. Anne blamed Henry’s flirtation with Jane Seymour, a lady-in-waiting, for her last miscarriage. But after Anne had the miscarriage, Henry felt that he was free to find another wife, even though Anne was still able to have children. As a final blow to Anne, King Henry would claim that the annulment of his marriage from Katherine was the result of his being “bewitched by Anne Boleyn.”

Jane Seymour

Long before the time of Katherine’s death, Henry had already begun other affairs outside of his marriage to Anne. In the beginning of 1536 “the latest young woman to take Henry’s fancy was Jane Seymour.” Jane had been a lady-in-waiting to Katherine before the divorce. At that time Jane had fallen for Will Dormer, but this infatuation did not last long. In 1533 Jane left court and returned in 1534 as one of Anne’s ladies-in-waiting. Henry and Jane began their relationship in September 1535.

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106 Lindsey, 104.
107 Ibid., 115.
108 Denny, 289.
109 Lindsey, 117.
110 Ibid., 118.
111 Fraser, 137.
112 Wilson, 385.
113 Lindsey, 107.
114 Ibid., 108.
At first, Jane tried to avoid the King’s affections as Anne once had. Jane’s brother Edward Seymour guided her in how to act with Henry. Edward also encouraged Jane to steer clear of sexual relations with the King, which he knew would help to keep the King’s interests. Regardless, Henry acted as he had with Anne by showering Jane with gifts, and spending his free time with her. Also, Henry gave Jane a locket that “Anne saw and, in a jealous rage, tore from her neck.”

Anne was jealous because she knew that she was the next wife to be discarded. During this time, Henry’s love for Anne had turned to hate. Thomas Cromwell, who was on the king’s council, figured that the only way to get rid of Anne was by charging her with adultery against the King. Cromwell had also helped the King with the annulment of his first marriage, and he knew that there needed to be a different reason to dissolve the King’s marriage to Anne. One by one, Cromwell found men that Anne held as acquaintances and had the men arrested for adultery. Henry Norris, Mark Smeaton, Francis Weston, William Brereton, and Anne’s brother George Boleyn were accused of adultery, found guilty, and executed. Most of the men had been tortured into saying they had relations with Queen Anne, but her brother continually denied the charges. Richard Page and Thomas Wyatt were initially arrested, but later released.

115 Ibid., 119.
116 Ibid., 120.
117 Ibid., 119.
118 Ibid., 119.
119 Ibid., 120.
120 Ibid., 121.
121 Ibid., 121.
122 Ibid., 128.
123 Ibid., 127.
124 Ibid., 125.
At the final trial for Anne, Henry Percy sat on the jury, and Anne’s uncle, the Duke of Norfolk read her verdict. Both men had been very close to Anne but were forced to participate in her trial. Anne denied the charges against her, but was found guilty and sentenced to death. On May 17th, the men were executed, and Anne and Henry’s marriage was annulled. Two days later on May 19, 1536, Anne was beheaded by sword. While Anne was awaiting her death she was told that it “would not be painful” because she would be beheaded by sword instead the usual ax. To this Anne exclaimed the famous statement, “I heard say the executioner was very good, and I have a little neck.” Anne was approximately 36 years old when she suffered this horrible act.

That same day Henry could be found celebrating his new freedom with Jane. Their wedding soon followed on May 30, 1536. Once again Henry seemed to be pleased with his latest wife. Jane kept her King content by not nagging him as Anne had. However, Jane did talk Henry into allowing Princess Mary to return to court, even though Mary was forced to say that the marriage between her mother Katherine and Henry was invalid.

In February of 1537, Jane became pregnant, and Henry decided to remain close by in the case of complications. Jane enjoyed her pregnancy and feasted upon “fat quails” as often as possible. She gave birth to Henry’s long awaited son, Edward on October 12th. Jane endured three days of labor and then became very ill days after the birth, finally dying of “puerperal

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125 Ibid., 127.
126 Ibid., 128.
127 Ibid., 129.
128 Ibid., 129.
129 Ibid., 129.
130 Ibid.
131 Ibid., 132.
132 Ibid., 134.
133 Ibid., 134.
fever.”134 Henry was distraught for Jane “had been the perfect wife, docile and submissive, giving him his son and then dying before he grew bored with her.”135 Jane was approximately 28 years old at the time of her death on October 24, 1537.

Anne of Cleves

Henry soon began his hunt for a new wife. During his search, Henry hired the artist Hans Holbein to paint portraits of available prospects.136 Holbein traveled to the “German territory of Cleves” to paint two available sisters, and the Duke of Cleve’s daughters, Anne and Amalie.137 Anne seemed to be the better choice of the two sisters for Henry, although she did not enjoy dancing or music as he did.138 Henry was also told by others that Anne was beautiful and that Holbein’s portrait was “very lively” and “lifelike.”139 One acquaintance stated, “Everyman praiseth the beauty of the said Lady, as well for the face, as for the whole body, above all other ladies excellent.”140

Henry trusted what he had been told about Anne and decided that she would become his new wife and Queen. The royal couple’s marriage contract was signed on September 4, 1539, and Anne was brought over to England from Cleves in a long and grueling journey.141 Anne finally arrived in England in early January 1540.

The initial meeting of the couple was quite awkward. Henry was anxious to meet his bride to be and chose to disguise himself as a messenger to surprise her.142 When Henry “burst in on Anne,” she was definitely surprised “at the unexpected intrusion of a fat, bedraggled, and

134 Ibid., 135.
135 Ibid., 135.
136 Ibid., 138.
137 Ibid., 140.
138 Ibid., 140.
139 Ibid., 140.
141 Lindsey, 141.
142 Ibid., 142.
boisterous stranger” that would soon be her husband.\textsuperscript{143} Although Anne did not act appalled when she found out who the messenger actually was, Henry could tell that she wasn’t thrilled with his looks.\textsuperscript{144} Henry was very angry, and felt that he had been misled. He exclaimed, “I am ashamed that men have praised her as they have done, and I love her not.”\textsuperscript{145} Henry even referred to Anne as a “great Flanders mare.”\textsuperscript{146} Regardless, it seems as though Henry had a blow to his ego when Anne did not fall in love with him at first sight, and chose to get back at Anne by demeaning her looks and calling her childish names. Others did not seem to think of Anne as ugly, but chose not to “argue with the enraged king” as they feared for their lives.\textsuperscript{147} Thomas Cromwell would later be accused and executed for treason against King Henry for tricking the King into an unfitting marriage.\textsuperscript{148}

Henry tried everything in his power to stop his scheduled wedding to Anne. However, Henry knew it was best not to add to his list of enemies by upsetting the Duke of Cleves. Consequently, he made the decision to marry Anne of Cleves despite their lack of attraction for each other. The couple was married on January 6, 1540. Due to their mutual dislike of each other, the couple was unable to consummate their marriage.\textsuperscript{149}

Anne knew what sufferings Henry had caused his previous wives because they could not provide him with an heir. Since Anne and Henry were not having sexual relations, she began to fear for her life. When Henry asked Anne for an annulment, she was relieved. Anne agreed happily to end their marriage and Henry rewarded her for not resisting his desires by allowing her to stay in England. After the annulment on July 9, 1540 was granted, Anne was considered

\textsuperscript{143} Ibid., 142.
\textsuperscript{144} Ibid., 142.
\textsuperscript{145} Ibid., 142.
\textsuperscript{146} Ibid., 142.
\textsuperscript{147} Ibid., 143.
\textsuperscript{148} Ibid., 155.
\textsuperscript{149} Ibid., 150.
as Henry’s “sister.” 150 Henry provided Anne with “a generous yearly income and a number of manors and estates,” and let her be part of his children’s lives. 151 Anne chose not to remarry, and lived comfortably and happily in England. She died in the spring of 1557 at the age of 42.

**Katherine Howard**

During the period of the King’s short marriage to Anne of Cleves, Henry had begun an affair with one of her ladies-in-waiting, Katherine Howard. 152 Henry fell in love with Katherine “the first time that ever his Grace saw her.” 153 Katherine was the first cousin of Anne Boleyn, and the Duke of Norfolk, who had read Anne’s death sentence at her trial, was also Katherine’s uncle. Norfolk was again placing one of his nieces in the view of the King to benefit himself and his family. In any case, Henry fell for the bait and wanted Katherine for his fifth wife.

Henry and Katherine were married on July 28, 1540, only weeks after the Kings’ annulment. Katherine loved being the Queen. She enjoyed the bountiful gifts and clothing that went along with the title of Queen. Yet Katherine had a past that would come back to haunt her.

Katherine was not a virgin when she married Henry. George Manox and Francis Dereham were past lovers of Katherine. Katherine hired Dereham as her “private secretary” shortly after marrying Henry. 154 Katherine had also been in love with Thomas Culpeper, who was Henry’s servant. 155 It is said that Katherine was “planning to marry” Culpeper before the King showed interest in her. 156 Despite this fact, Katherine married Henry and chose to continue her affair with Culpeper, who was much younger and more desirable than the obese King. 157
Jane Lady Rochford served as a “go-between for Katherine and her lover,” Culpeper. Lady Rochford would later regret this decision.

When Henry found out that his precious “rose without a thorn” was not a virgin when he married her, he was devastated. Manox and Dereham were arrested, and they admitted that they had both had sexual relations with Katherine. Soon after Katherine was questioned, and she too finally admitted that she was not a virgin before her marriage to the King. Katherine tried to lie about her past and said that Dereham forced her “in a manner of violence” to have sex with him. Later she acknowledged that this statement was also a lie, but there was “no proof” that Katherine had relations with Dereham after her marriage to Henry.

However, there was proof that Culpeper was having an affair with Katherine. Her ladies-in-waiting were able to provide evidence that the Queen was secretly seeing Culpeper. He claimed that he never had “full sex” with Katherine. Katherine also denied that they had known each other completely in a sexual way, but as she had lied about Dereham, no one seemed to believe her. Culpeper actually blamed their affair on Katherine. Regardless, both Culpeper and Dereham were tortured and executed on December 10, 1541, with Dereham being drawn and quartered.

Understandably, Katherine was quite hysterical the days before her beheading. The night before her execution “she requested that a block be brought to her so that she could practice how to place her head on it properly.”

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158 Ibid., 171.
159 Ibid., 164.
160 Fraser, 347.
161 Ibid., 349.
162 Ibid., 348.
163 Ibid.
164 Lindsey, 176.
165 Ibid., 177.
166 Ibid., 178.
her cousin Anne Boleyn. Lady Rochford followed and was beheaded on a “block still wet and slippery with her mistress’s blood.” Katherine was only 21 years of age at the time of her execution on February 13, 1542.

**Katherine Parr**

The King once more was forced to find himself another suitable wife. This time he chose a woman who was a widow, Katherine Parr. Katherine had been married twice, but both of her husbands were much older than she and had passed away, leaving her without children. The death of her second husband seemed to come at the perfect time for King Henry, as he was dealing with the death of his fifth wife and searching for a replacement.

Katherine had grown up with Princess Mary, Henry’s daughter, because her mother was a lady-in-waiting to Katherine of Aragon. The King had watched Katherine become a woman, and was evidently attracted to her. After the death of Katherine’s second husband, Henry began to shower her with “expensive gifts” in an attempt to win her affection. At the time, Katherine had fallen in love with Thomas Seymour, Jane’s brother. However, the King always got his wishes and he now wished to have Katherine as his sixth wife. The couple was married on July 12, 1543.

Katherine enjoyed being a Queen, and was an excellent stepmother to Henry’s children. During her reign she wrote a book of *Prayers and Meditations* and a Protestant work called *Lamentation of a Sinner*. Henry never read the latter, but became agitated with Katherine’s “increasingly Protestant beliefs.”

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167 Fraser, 353.
168 Ibid.
169 Lindsey, 182.
170 Ibid., 183.
171 Ibid., 186.
172 Ibid., 189.
173 Ibid., 197.
Katherine found out his plan and claimed that she had become “ill” because she knew he was upset with her.\footnote{Ibid., 198.}

Fortunately for Katherine the King accepted her apology, and the couple lived happily until Henry’s death on January 28, 1547.\footnote{Ibid., 199.} Katherine did not mourn for long, because she married Thomas Seymour “secretly” in May of 1547.\footnote{Ibid., 200.} She soon became pregnant and gave birth to a daughter, becoming ill after the delivery. On September 5, 1548, at the age of 36, Katherine died of puerperal fever.
CHAPTER 3
LIBBY LARSEN’S TRY ME, GOOD KING

The Role of the Lute Song

Larsen chose to base parts of this work on different lute songs. She began by looking at the texts she had chosen from the Queens’ letters and speeches. Then understanding each Queens’ different situation she chose a lute song whose text would best fit what the Queen was experiencing and feeling at the time. For Katherine of Aragon and Katherine Howard Larsen chose John Dowland’s “In Darkness Let Me Dwell.” She felt that the text of this lute song complemented both of the Queens’ situations and emotions.177 Larsen chose another one of Dowland’s lute songs for Anne Boleyn, “If My Complaints Could Passions Move.” Again the text reflected Anne’s feelings at the time of her trial and death. The lute song that is quoted for Jane Seymour is Michael Praetorius’ “Lo, How a Rose E’re Blooming.” This lute song is often used at Christmas time, as it refers to the birth of Jesus Christ. Jesus is considered “The Rose of Sharon” and the “Prince of Peace,” whereas Seymour’s son, Edward was considered to be the “Tudor Rose” and the long awaited prince.178 Finally, for Anne of Cleves Larsen chose Thomas Campion’s “I Care Not for These Ladies” for the evident reason that Henry was not at all attracted to Anne.179

Another reason that Larsen chose to use lute songs in this work was because most lute songs were written around the time of Elizabeth I, daughter of Anne Boleyn.180 Larsen thought that the lute songs could have been referring to events that were taking place when they were written, which seems a likely possibility. She had wondered if the lute songs contained “the

177 Libby Larsen, interview by author, 6 October 2007, Minneapolis. Digital Recording.
178 Ibid.
179 Ibid.
180 Ibid.
messages” of what had just occurred in the culture.\(^{181}\) Therefore, some of the poetry for the lute songs could have evolved from the events of the Queens’ lives.

Throughout the set Larsen has specified by an asterisk where the lute song quotes appear. The quotes appear in both the piano and voice lines. However, not all of the quotes are notated in the work. As applicable, additional lute song quotes will be listed in the discussion of each individual song of the Queens.

“The Katherine of Aragon”

“My most dear lord, king, and husband, the hour of my death now drawing on,
the tender love I owe you forces me to commend myself unto you
and to put you in remembrance of the health and welfare of your soul.
My most dear lord, king, and husband,
you have cast me into many calamities and yourself into many troubles.
For my part, I pardon you ev’rything
and I wish to devoutly pray God that He will pardon you also.
For the rest I commend unto you our daughter, Mary,
beseeking you to be a good father unto her.
Lastly I make this vow, that my eyes desire you
above all things, above all things.”

Form of Song- Tempo and Meter

The first song of the work is “Katherine of Aragon” as she was the first wife of Henry VIII. Larsen chose to emphasize Katherine’s Catholic background by composing her song in the style of a chant. Since Larsen was taught Gregorian chant in her Catholic education, she was drawn to the independence from meter.\(^{182}\) She feels that Gregorian chant has a “timeless flow,” and was looking to portray this “flow” in “Katherine of Aragon.”\(^{183}\)

Because Larsen is evoking the chant, this song does not contain bar lines or a time signature. Larsen made this choice “on purpose to create this flow…it is to never give the pianist

\(^{181}\) Ibid.
\(^{182}\) Kessler, 2.
\(^{183}\) Ibid.
or the singer the opportunity to place metered stress.” In using a chant-like form, the singer and pianist must work together to maintain a fluidity throughout this song. The phrases must flow equally between the voice and piano, with neither taking precedence over the other.

In order to sustain the flow that Larsen envisioned for this piece, the performers must be careful to observe the tempo marking given. This slower tempo is needed to allow the phrases of the piano and voice to interact with each other. Also, it is best not to rush the tempo out of deference to Katherine’s character, which was both reserved and thoughtful. The tempo markings used in the entire work were specified for a reason, and, if followed, seem to capture the ambiance that Larsen intended for each character.

**Lute Song**

As stated earlier, the lute song that Larsen incorporated into “Katherine of Aragon” was “In Darkness Let Me Dwell” by John Dowland. She chose this lute song because it coincides with Katherine’s emotional state and the circumstances she was dealing with in her life and marriage. (See Appendix A for the full text of “In Darkness Let Me Dwell.”) Larsen explained that the “piano is a deconstruction of ‘In Darkness Let Me Dwell’” within this song, and Larsen was careful to point out where these quotations of the lute song appear in the score of “Katherine of Aragon.”

In the beginning of the piece the lute song is quoted in the right hand of the piano’s first phrase. For this opening Larsen urges the pianist to “give a farther away feeling to [the] right hand...[this] creates a different kind of time and space.” This is achieved by closely adhering to the $p$ marking at the beginning of the song. It might help the pianist to think that this opening

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184 Libby Larsen, interview by author, 6 October 2007, Minneapolis. Digital Recording.
185 Ibid.
186 Ibid.
needs to be somewhat softer than a regular $p$ in order to capture the distance Larsen was seeking to achieve.

Continuing the discussion of the lute song, there is a place in the score incorrectly marked. At the top of page 4, before the singer enters with “the tender love I owe you,” the right hand has a lute pluck immediately following the low A$_1$ of the bass clef. While remaining in the bass clef the pianist should play the low F$_2$ to A$_3$ as a lute pluck.

Example 1- Lute Pluck (indicated by brackets)$^{187}$

After the lute pluck, Larsen wants the pianist to bring out the lute song quote in the right hand even more, and with increased *legato*. $^{188}$ She explains that the lute song quotes in this piece should maintain a “loving quality” to them.$^{189}$ This statement remains true for the entire set.

**Repetition of Notes**

The left hand of the piano plays a constant F$_3$ through the entire song. In the program notes for the work Larsen states “the repeated note recalls the lute and creates psychological

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$^{188}$ Libby Larsen, interview by author, 6 October 2007, Minneapolis. Digital Recording.

$^{189}$ Ibid.
When referring to this repeated note Larsen explains that the left hand of the piano should play continuously “so the lute is there; it’s impartial; it’s just going.” Larsen insists that there be no rubato, stating, “all the rubato belongs to the singer and the right hand of the piano.” Larsen is once again insistent that the left hand remain “steady and impartial so then the singer moves in and around the English lute.”

Others who have studied the work have added their own ideas for the repeated note. All of these ideas may be true and can be applied as to how the performer views Katherine’s character and the situation in which she finds herself. On one hand, Larsen was using the repeated note in this piece to depict the tension existing between Katherine and Henry since their divorce and Henry’s subsequent marriage to Anne Boleyn. Strempel states that the “repetition of this note seems now to evoke both Katherine’s repeated plea of innocence to Henry as well as his annoyance at her protestations.” Henry was clearly annoyed by Katherine not giving in to his wishes for an immediate divorce. As King he was accustomed to everyone catering to his wants and needs and Katherine’s standing firm against what she believed to be wrong infuriated him.

On the other hand, the repeated F3 could represent “the inner strength of Katherine, it is the pulse of her love for Henry and devotion to her faith.” Katherine was a devout Catholic, who was irrevocably devoted to her marriage. Receiving a divorce was entirely against her beliefs, and, in her mind, should have been against Henry’s as well. Katherine expressed her concerns to Henry in a letter dated January 7, 1536 saying she wished to “put [him] in

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190 Libby Larsen, *Try Me, Good King: Last Words of the Wives of Henry VIII, For Solo Soprano and Piano*. Version A.
191 Libby Larsen, interview by author, 6 October 2007, Minneapolis. Digital Recording.
192 Ibid.
193 Ibid.
remembrance of the health and welfare of [his] soul.”¹⁹⁶ Katherine feared that Henry’s worldly choices would affect his relationship with God. Perhaps seeking to clear her conscience, Katherine later states that she “pardons” Henry and that she “wish[es] to devoutly pray God that He will pardon [Henry] also.”¹⁹⁷

Keeping to a more religious theme, the repeated note could also symbolize Katherine’s ritualistic prayers with her rosary. When Larsen was asked if she had this concept in mind when composing Katherine’s song she said “I hadn’t thought of it, but that doesn’t mean I wasn’t thinking of it. It hadn’t come to the surface…I doubt she was ever without a rosary.”¹⁹⁸ As Larsen has a Catholic background and understands the importance of the rosary, this could be another possibility for the repeated notes.

Interestingly and quite poignantly, as the song ends, Katherine declares her love for Henry saying, “Lastly I make this vow, that my eyes desire you above all things.”¹⁹⁹ This statement contradicts Katherine’s own belief that God must be first in her life. Larsen believes “at that moment she is committing blasphemy because she is saying that she desires the King above God.”²⁰⁰ According to what we know about Katherine’s strong religious beliefs, Larsen’s idea seems to ring true.

Bell Tolls

“Katherine of Aragon” contains thirteen bell tolls, the most of any song of the work, with the exception of the unmarked tolls found in “Katherine Howard.” Larsen chose to indicate

¹⁹⁶ Libby Larsen, Try Me, Good King: Last Words of the Wives of Henry VIII, For Solo Soprano and Piano. Version A.
¹⁹⁷ Ibid.
¹⁹⁸ Libby Larsen, interview by author, 6 October 2007, Minneapolis. Digital Recording.
¹⁹⁹ Ibid.
²⁰⁰ Ibid.
where all of the bell tolls occur in this piece. This is not true for the entire work. The unmarked bell tolls will be identified for the other songs throughout this document.

The bell tolls used in Katherine’s song symbolize the arrival of her death and disintegration of her marriage. Larsen clarifies that the bell tolls in this work are “slightly foreboding but they are used as a metaphor that could be death (the obvious metaphor)...but it really is the tolling of the passing of a thousand years into the next thousand year cycle in my mind because so many things happened in this particular 100 years which has set into motion what is happening” in our society today.201

The majority of the bell tolls in this song contain the same notes and rhythmic structures. In some cases the notes may vary, including the C sharp and C natural combination whose importance will be discussed shortly. However, the most important note in every bell toll included in this song is the low A1.

The tolls are also rhythmic variations of the initial bell toll. Larsen explains, the “bell tolls can be a little freer especially when they are marked as 32\textsuperscript{nd}s or 64\textsuperscript{th}s with emphasis on the low A\textsubscript{1}, everything is leading to the low A\textsubscript{1}, because the low A\textsubscript{1} is the tolling.”202

201 Ibid.
202 Ibid.

Example 2—Low A\textsubscript{1} in Bell Toll

The tolls are also rhythmic variations of the initial bell toll. Larsen explains, the “bell tolls can be a little freer especially when they are marked as 32\textsuperscript{nd}s or 64\textsuperscript{th}s with emphasis on the low A\textsubscript{1}, everything is leading to the low A\textsubscript{1}, because the low A\textsubscript{1} is the tolling.”202 This
suggestion again stresses the importance of the low A, which also relates to the possible key signature that Larsen hints at.

Within this setting the bell tolls seem to complete the thought of the vocalist. The pianist and vocalist must be careful to allow the fellow performer to finish each respective phrase before beginning the next thought. Larsen explains that for the pianist a “rule of thumb is to wait for the word to finish where it can” before playing the bell toll.\textsuperscript{203} Regardless, the pianist and vocalist must practice the connection from phrase to bell toll to phrase in order to ensure the proper flow needed for the piece.

**Importance of C and C#**

Larsen stresses the importance of the relationship between the C sharp and C natural in this piece. As the left hand in the piano is playing the repeated F, Larsen uses the C natural and C sharp relationship within the right hand of the piano and in the vocal line. Throughout the song the C sharp seems to represent any statements about Henry, Mary their daughter, and God; while the C natural seems to occur in the phrases in which Katherine refers to herself.\textsuperscript{204} During the last few bars of the piece the C natural and C sharp switch places and then merge in the last phrase. This merging could symbolize Katherine’s inner peace as she is dying.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{example3.png}
\caption{Example 3– Merging of C Natural and C Sharp}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{203} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{204} Ibid.
When the voice moves between the C natural and C sharp within the same phrase Larsen is emphasizing that for Katherine there is a “decision to be made.” This decision could possibly be that as her death is approaching, Katherine is choosing once again to remain strong in her devotion to God and her husband even though she knows that Henry has not been loyal to her.

Given that Larsen wants the vocalist to stress the significance of the C natural and C sharp relationship, she also insists, “it is very important that the tuning of the C naturals and C sharps is clear.” Larsen further explains that it is important for the singer to find in her voice how she “can place the C natural and C sharp in equal temperament.” She also states that she is not fond of electronic tuning and urges the singer “to work to truly match [those] pitches on the piano.”

Along with the tuning issues of the C natural and C sharp emerges the idea that the two notes should have somewhat different colors. Larsen recommends that the “singer find a way to make a color differentiation between the C natural and C sharp [that is] subtle, but there, so that we hear two planes of activity going on.” This will help the listener better understand Katherine’s struggle with the different decisions she was forced to make.

When composing this piece Larsen carefully thought out a creative way to tie the piano C sharp and the C sharp in the vocal line together. She pointed out that “the right hand of the piano will reiterate the C sharp and hit the low A₁ with the pedal on it, which then creates the overtone

205 Ibid.
206 Ibid.
207 Ibid.
208 Ibid.
209 Ibid.
series coming out of the piano into the air…the overtone series gives you [the] C sharp.”²¹⁰ This ingenious touch helps join the piano and vocal lines on yet another level.

**Coloring/Styles-Spanish and British**

Because of Katherine’s Spanish origins, Larsen chose to insert certain Spanish features into the song. After all, in reference to Henry, “Katherine of Aragon could have raised the armies of Spain, but she didn’t because she loved him and couldn’t believe he was doing this.”²¹¹ In any case, the listener can hear how Larsen endowed some of the vocal line with a Spanish flavor. Within the initial phrase of the song Katherine proclaims “My most dear lord, king, and husband.”²¹² Larsen states that “My most dear lord” along with the rhythms and notes that correspond with the words, refer to the British aspect of Katherine’s life, while the “king” with the triplet figure and the notes of the triplet refer to Katherine’s Spanish upbringing.²¹³

![Example 4- Spanish and British Influences](image)

**Example 4- Spanish and British Influences**

Another place in this piece where Larsen evoked a Spanish flavor is on the word “many” in the phrase “you have cast me into many calamities and yourself into many troubles.”²¹⁴

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²¹⁰ Ibid.
²¹¹ Ibid.
²¹² Libby Larsen, *Try Me, Good King: Last Words of the Wives of Henry VIII, For Solo Soprano and Piano*. Version A.
²¹³ Libby Larsen, interview by author, 6 October 2007, Minneapolis. Digital Recording.
²¹⁴ Libby Larsen, *Try Me, Good King: Last Words of the Wives of Henry VIII, For Solo Soprano and Piano*. Version A.
Although the scale is marked “freely” in the music, Larsen insists that the singer imagine that the word “‘many’ can be much freer as a Spanish guitar that is very sensual and free.” This same feeling also should occur in the run on “pardon” in the phrase “that He will pardon you also.” Larsen wanted the singer to keep the Spanish guitar in mind when singing these phrases to aid the voice in achieving the free quality she was looking for.

“Anne Boleyn”

“Try me, good king, let me have a lawful trial and let not my enemies sit as my accusers and judges. Try me, good king, let me receive an open trial for my truth shall fear no open shame. Never a prince had a wife more loyal, more loyal in all duty, never a prince had a wife more loyal, more loyal in all true affection, never a prince had a wife more loyal than you have found in Anne Bulen. You have chosen me from low estate to be your wife and companion. Do you not remember the words of your own true hand? ‘My own darling, I would you were in my arms for I think it long since I kissed you, my mistress and my friend.’ Do you not remember the words of your own true hand? Try me, good king, Try me. If ever I have found favor in your sight, if ever the name of Anne Bulen has been pleasing to your ears, if ever I have found favor in the sight, if ever the name of Anne Bulen has been pleasing to your ears, let me obtain this request and my innocence shall be known. Let me obtain this request and my innocence shall be cleared.

215 Libby Larsen, interview by author, 6 October 2007, Minneapolis. Digital Recording.
216 Libby Larsen, *Try Me, Good King: Last Words of the Wives of Henry VIII, For Solo Soprano and Piano*. Version A.
Try me. Try me. Try me.
Good Christian people, I come hither to die and by the law I am judged to die.
I pray God, I pray God save the King.
I hear the executioner’s good, and my neck is so little.”

Tempo

Larsen indicated an initial tempo marking of 138 for “Anne Boleyn,” after the opening phrase of “Try me, good king.” In measure 25, the tempo changes to 80 and then returns to the original 138 in measure 46. Throughout the piece, Larsen specifically marked certain phrases to be sung “freely.” When this occurs, the singer is encouraged to take time for the phrase as there is little or no accompaniment under her. The singer and pianist must work together to observe these passages marked “freely” without losing the intense drive of this song.

Bell Tolls

There are no bell toll indications within “Anne Boleyn.” Larsen did not want to “draw attention to the bell” in this song, even though Anne suffered a horrible death. However, bell tolls can be found on the last page of the song as Anne is about to be executed.

Example 6- Unmarked Bell Tolls

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217 Ibid.
218 Libby Larsen, interview by author, 6 October 2007, Minneapolis. Digital Recording.
Larsen felt that the listener would hear the tolls and recognize them in relation to the bell tolling introduced in the first song of the work, “Katherine of Aragon.” Thus, she chose not to indicate them.

**Lute Song**

The lute song that Larsen incorporated into “Anne Boleyn” was “If My Complaints” by John Dowland. Once again, the reason behind this choice lies within the text of the lute song as it relates to Anne’s situation before her death. (See Appendix A for the full text of “If My Complaints.”) The melody of the lute song is quoted in both the piano and voice lines throughout the piece, with some rhythmic variations. These quotes are not always noted in the score. In measures 10 and 12 the lute song is quoted in Anne’s line, as well as in measure 66.

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219 Ibid.
Also, the full beginning melody of the lute song is then quoted in the piano line in measures 72-75.

Example 9- Lute Song quoted in the piano in Measures 72-75

The lute song plays an additional role within this song, as opposed to the others in the set. Larsen decided to answer Anne’s questioning Henry about their past loving relationship with his own words. For this passage, Larsen’s indication is “as a lute song, simply.” Henry was known to write lute songs and Larsen wanted to capture his words in a fashion that he might have proclaimed to Anne during their relationship. Instead of the marking “as a lute song, simply” Larsen meant this section “to be sung simply as a lute song…one of Henry’s lute songs” that he might be singing to Anne. During this section, Anne is trying to “reconstruct that moment” when Henry would have professed such words to her. The singer should sing this section as Anne remembering the love that Henry once had for her, and not trying to portray Henry singing a lute song. Afterward, in measure 39 Anne snaps “back into her own reality” of simply wanting a trial to prove her innocence.

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220 Libby Larsen, *Try Me, Good King: Last Words of the Wives of Henry VIII, For Solo Soprano and Piano.* Version A.
221 Libby Larsen, interview by author, 6 October 2007, Minneapolis. Digital Recording.
222 Ibid.
223 Ibid.
224 Ibid.
Example 10- Anne coming back to reality in Measure 39-41

Also, in this measure Anne is “appealing to his sense of right and wrong,” by urging Henry to remember the words he wrote not long ago, “My mistress and my friend.” Larsen believed that this phrase was the “psychological key to their relationship.”

**Coloring**

Immediately after Anne tries to recreate Henry’s lute song, she remembers her present situation. Larsen then uses the title phrase in measures 43 through 45 to symbolize Anne’s growing agitation to Henry’s cruelty. Larsen writes a crescendo over the word “Try,” which she intends to be “very even and quite exaggerated.” In order to achieve this evenness Larsen wants the singer to think of the cresendo “as a slider on a mixing board,” with the voice almost beginning from a “niente” if possible.

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225 Ibid.
226 Ibid.
227 Ibid.
228 Ibid.
Example 11- Crescendo in Measures 43-45

For the entirety of measures 46-58 Larsen suggested that the singer add more “desperation to the voice,” or even a “gasping quality” as Anne was saying anything she could to get out of dying a horrible death.229 Anne’s goal was to try to get Henry to show some compassion and call off her death sentence, and she is pleading with the King to reconsider his decision. Meagan Miller explained that Anne “believed in her power of persuasion so much, that she had no chance to prepare to die because she was spending so much time fighting it.”230

In portraying this desperation the singer must be careful not to push her voice as the emotions grow with each phrase. For part of this section, Larsen was careful to mark each phrase beginning piano then growing increasingly louder. Throughout this entire section the singer should think about moving forward without straining the voice. Miller found this segment to be quite difficult, but she suggested that the singer think of measures 46-58 as “waves of emotions, as opposed to one specific emotion” that Anne is experiencing.231

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229 Libby Larsen, interview by author, 6 October 2007, Minneapolis. Digital Recording.
231 Ibid.
During this section Larsen included the “Let me obtain this request” phrases without accompaniment, and chose not to mark them as “freely” for the singer.

Example 12- Stay rhythmic in Measures 59-60

In this instance Larsen does want the singer to keep the first phrase in rhythm. The singer’s tendency will be to rush this phrase, but Larsen stressed that the first phrase “should be metric” as Anne was possibly trying to prolong the inevitable. The second phrase should begin to move forward, without being rushed.

Example 13- Begin to move forward in Measures 62-63

Towards the end of the fury, Anne repeats “Try me” three times. The final cry ends with a fermata on a high C₆ moving to a F♯₅. Larsen wrote the phrase to reach this climax as it is Anne’s final plea. As a result, Larsen’s goal was for the singer to take more time on the high C₆.

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232 Libby Larsen, interview by author, 6 October 2007, Minneapolis. Digital Recording.
because Anne is finally able to “get out over and above the den of politics” which are represented by the rhythmic complexity in the piano part.233

![Rhythmic complexity in piano in Measures 69-72](example.png)

Example 14 - Rhythmic complexity in piano in Measures 69-72

The last page of this song brings us to Anne’s execution. For this conclusion, Larsen indicates a “recitative” marking in addition to the “freely” marking that has previously occurred throughout the song. In measure 80 Anne begins with the protocol of the times, to acknowledge the King’s welfare, before her execution. Larsen chose to write that Anne begins to say “I pray God save the King” and is unable to complete the phrase as she realizes what is about to take place, and blames the King for her fate.234 Larsen continued by stating that Anne was “speaking to [her]self” and not the crowd, when she said “I pray God save the King.”235

As Anne tries to verbalize those words again, she can only speak them “half-voiced” as she has a “lump in her throat.”236 This “half-voiced” marking can be a tricky suggestion for singers. Larsen clarified that when she gave this marking she meant that the “voice should be breathy” with an approach of “less tone, more talk” for the singer.237 The singer could “even go so far” to take the given marking as “entoned-talking.”238

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233 Ibid.
234 Libby Larsen, Try Me, Good King: Last Words of the Wives of Henry VIII, For Solo Soprano and Piano. Version A.
235 Libby Larsen, interview by author, 6 October 2007, Minneapolis. Digital Recording.
236 Ibid.
237 Ibid.
238 Ibid.
Then the last phrase of the song should continue along the same vein. The singer should also be careful not to hold the last note of “and my neck is so little” longer than the indicated eighth note.\(^{239}\)

“Jane Seymour”

“Right, trusty and Well Beloved, we greet you well, for as much as be the inestimable goodness of Almighty God, we be delivered of a prince, a prince.

I love the rose both red and white, to hear of them is my delight,

Joyed may we be, our prince to see, and roses three.”\(^{240}\)

Form

The tempo marking given for “Jane Seymour” is 82, with the eighth note receiving the beat. Larsen chose this marking because she felt that if she gave the beat to a quarter note, the

\(^{239}\) Libby Larsen, *Try Me, Good King: Last Words of the Wives of Henry VIII, For Solo Soprano and Piano. Version A.*

\(^{240}\) Ibid.
singer would “rush” the song. The main reason that Larsen does not want the singer to “rush” is because Jane was dying. Jane did not have the “energy left” within her to speak in a hurried fashion; all she had left was “love for her son.”

Larsen continues on to stress that she was “never interested” in hearing this song in two, which is the singer’s tendency. However, she clarifies that from measure 17 to the end of the song she “can hear it in two.” If she had the chance to write this song again, she would have written “dotted bar lines” for measures 1 through 16 to help the singer steer away from the feeling of a meter in two.

![Example 17- Meter change in Measures 15-17](image)

**Lute Song**

The lute song that is integrated into “Jane Seymour” is “Lo, How a Rose E’re Blooming” by Michael Praetorius. (See Appendix A for the full text.) As previously stated, this lute song refers to Jesus’ birth, and that he is known as the “Rose of Sharon” and the “Prince of Peace.” Larsen chose this lute song because Jane had finally given birth to Henry’s long awaited prince,

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241 Libby Larsen, interview by author, 6 October 2007, Minneapolis. Digital Recording.
242 Ibid.
243 Ibid.
244 Ibid.
245 Ibid.
246 Ibid.
the “Tudor Rose.” Larsen chose to set the words of the poem entitled “Tudor Rose” to the melody of Praetorius’ lute song, which can be heard in the right hand of the piano. Larsen believes that “Tudor Rose” could be a “political poem,” but initially interpreted the poem as referring to a child’s birth, which could have been “written for Edward.”

Bell Tolls

Bell tolls are used quite differently in “Jane Seymour” than in the other songs. The bell is tolling to represent the birth of a long awaited prince. Accordingly, the bell tolls begin to appear after the phrase “we be delivered of a prince” in measure 10, and continue through the rest of the song as Jane is singing the lullaby to her new son.

Example 18- Bell Tolls continue after Measure 10

As a result, Larsen wants the bells in this song to symbolize the joy of Edward’s birth, rather than the sadness of Jane’s death.

In addition, Larsen suggests that the pianist “make a bigger emphasis on the low A2” of the bell toll in measure 10. Her reason for this suggestion is to recall the bell tolls used in

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247 Ibid.
248 Ibid.
249 Libby Larsen, Try Me, Good King: Last Words of the Wives of Henry VIII, For Solo Soprano and Piano. Version A.
250 Libby Larsen, interview by author, 6 October 2007, Minneapolis. Digital Recording.
251 Ibid.
“Katherine of Aragon.” Larsen made this compositional choice to further interlace the Queens’ songs together, but not to recall the sadness of Katherine’s situation.

Difficult Spots

Larsen explains that she has “never been happy with” measures 7-8 of “Jane Seymour.” The phrase “as be the inestimable goodness of Almighty God” poses a problem for the singer as it is difficult not to rush the phrase to fit it into the measures. Larsen urges the singer to “take more time on the 32nds” of the word “inestimable.” Again, she does not want the singer to “rush” any phrase of the song as Jane was dying. Adhering to the tempo marking given will only help the singer with this predicament. In addition, Larsen states that the marking “push ahead” is actually in the wrong place. Instead of the beginning of measure 8, the marking should be on the B₄ eighth note of “goodness,” as it “makes much more sense there.”

Example 19- Correction to “push ahead” marking in Measures 7-8

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252 Ibid.
253 Ibid.
254 Libby Larsen, Try Me, Good King: Last Words of the Wives of Henry VIII, For Solo Soprano and Piano. Version A.
255 Libby Larsen, interview by author, 6 October 2007, Minneapolis. Digital Recording.
256 Ibid.
257 Ibid.
258 Ibid.
As the singer moves into the following phrase in measures 8-9, she must get a sufficient breath to be able to support the piano marking above the F#₅ on “prince.”

Larsen states that the singer “can shorten the quarter note on ‘we’ and come in a little after the downbeat” of measure 8.²⁵⁹ This will ensure that the singer can “take a good breath” which is needed to sing the phrase correctly.²⁶⁰

Larsen believes that Jane experiences a psychological change in measure 13.²⁶¹ The change occurs during the measure as the piano is playing “darkly.”²⁶² Within the same measure Jane enters by repeating “a prince.” Larsen urges the singer to avoid flatness while singing the B₄ of “prince.”²⁶³ She understands that this pitch is difficult for the singer to hear and explains that the singer “can take time” before pronouncing the initial consonant of “prince,” in order to “hear the B octave in the piano.”²⁶⁴

²⁵⁹ Ibid.
²⁶⁰ Ibid.
²⁶¹ Ibid.
²⁶² Ibid.
²⁶³ Libby Larsen, Try Me, Good King: Last Words of the Wives of Henry VIII, For Solo Soprano and Piano. Version A.
²⁶⁴ Ibid.
Example 21- Wait to hear the B pitch if needed in Measures 13-14

Larsen states, “If the B₄ is right where it needs to be, its [going to] go right into people’s hearts, because it has been so obscured for so long.” She views this emergence from obscurity as a metaphor to the arrival of the long awaited prince.

In measure 24 Larsen incorporated a high Ab₅ on the word “roses.”

Example 22- How to handle the high note in Measures 23-24

She wants the Ab₅ to be sung using the “full voice,” but then explains that the singers can “move to a float on the A flat, then come down softly” if preferred. It does not matter to Larsen which choice the singer makes, as long as she is sure to “take time with the dotted quarter” note on “roses,” and descend softly to the word “three” in measure 25.

265 Ibid.
266 Ibid.
267 Ibid.
268 Ibid.
As the song comes to an end, Larsen chose to write that Jane is humming her son to sleep. This section seems to be very challenging for singers. Larsen has found that “all” singers seem to have an issue with the humming phrase. She has heard singers approach the hum in many different ways such as “a hum...an open mouth ‘hng’...an ‘ahh’ or a ‘schwa’ sound.” Larsen states that “it is a question of how you can negotiate those notes with a very gentle, warm quality and not break between the E₅ and the G₅.”

Larsen prefers the hum if possible “because the sound is so barely there and it draws your ears as a listener, you are drawn in the way you would be drawn in when someone is dying.” She continues to explain that what she had in mind for the hum was that when a loved one is dying, and “you lean into the face...it is almost as if you share the breath somehow towards the end” with them. For this reason she believes that the “open ahh” should be avoided, because it is “too loud and too full of vitality” and does not portray Jane as she was weak and dying.

269 Ibid.
270 Ibid.
271 Ibid.
272 Ibid.
273 Ibid.
274 Ibid.
“Anne of Cleves”

“I have been informed by certain lords
of the doubts and questions which have been found in our marriage.
It may please your majesty to know
that though this case be most hard and sorrowful
I have and do accept the clergy for my judges.
So now the clergy hath given their sentence, hath given their sentence.
I approve. I neither can nor will repute myself for your grace’s wife,
yet it may please your highness to take me for your sister, your sister,
for which I most humbly thank you.
Your majesty’s most humble sister, Anne, daughter of Cleves.”

Tempo

The tempo marking suggested by Larsen for “Anne of Cleves” is perfect. Larsen
believed that the tempo could be only a “tick” slower, but not faster than the 112 marking.
“Faster and bouncier doesn’t carry the Germanness” that Larsen was looking for in this piece.
She urges the performers to think of this song as “more of a Laendler…so it has a little bit of the
heavy boot quality to it.”

Lute Song

As previously stated, the lute song Larsen incorporated into “Anne of Cleves” was
Thomas Campion’s “I Care Not for These Ladies.” The title suggests Henry’s feelings toward
Anne. (See Appendix A for the full text.) She felt that this lute song would add to the “humor”
of the situation, as neither Anne nor Henry wanted to remain in their marriage, and did not find
each other attractive.
Bell Tolls

Larsen chose not to use bell tolls for “Anne of Cleves.” The reason for this choice is because Larsen believed that Anne of Cleves “is the only one who outsmarted the system.” Anne was able to find a way to get out of her marriage to Henry and remain in “good standing” with him. Anne was not banished; she actually stayed and helped raise Henry’s two daughters, Mary and Elizabeth. Anne did not have to suffer a cruel death by order of the King, therefore, there is no need to include bell tolls in her song.

Use of Tri-tones and Scales

Larsen chose to use parallel tri-tones throughout “Anne of Cleves” “as a metaphor for compatibility and incompatibility.” In the NATS Journal, Eileen Strempel expresses that the tri-tones in this song “serve as a comic reminder of their marital mismatch.”

The scales of tri-tones Larsen placed in this piece are very challenging for the accompanist. Larsen knew that it is “very difficult to [play] downward moving tri-tones” and considers this section of “Anne of Cleves” to be a “retraining exercise” for the pianist.

Example 24 – Suggested fingering for pianists in Measures 42-44

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279 Ibid.
280 Ibid.
281 Ibid.
282 Ibid.
283 Libby Larsen, interview by author, 7 October 2007, Minneapolis. Digital Recording.
For this reason, Larsen requested that pianist Eric McEnaney create this suggested fingering for the left hand to help accompanists with this difficult section. He stated that “Each pair of numbers refers to each eighth-note in the bar:

m. 42--[2 5], [1 4], [2 5], [1 4], [2 5], [2 5]
m. 43--[1 4], [2 5], [1 4], [2 5], [1 4], [2 5]
m. 44 and 46 are the same as m. 42
m. 45 is the same as m. 43
m. 47--the passage should end on a [4] in the left hand.”

He continued with his reasoning for this choice saying:

“My basis for choosing this fingering is to help the pianist maintain a legato chromatic scale throughout the passage. This is why [2] and [1] often alternate in the top part of the chord and why [4] and [5] alternate in the bottom part of the chord. There are a couple of spots where [2 5] fingerings happen successively, and this helps to maintain flow, as it is not truly possible to alternate [1 4] and [2 5] throughout the entire passage.”

Problem Words
Larsen understood that the singer must be able to enunciate words that she placed on eighth notes in this fast tempo. She stated that because “Anne of Cleves” is in 6/8 rhythm, there are “problem words” that must be addressed. One of these instances is in measure 19 on the words “case be most.”

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285 Ibid.
286 Libby Larsen, interview by author, 7 October 2007, Minneapolis. Digital Recording.
Larsen explained that this phrase is both “very difficult” to sing, and to understand as an audience.  For this reason, Larsen, in the accompaniment, “left an open space with the idea that you can take a little more time” to properly enunciate those words. The same predicament also occurs on “clergy hath given their” in measure 33, and in measures 47-48 on “myself for your grace’s wife.” In all instances, Larsen wants the singer to take the time needed to pronounce the words intelligibly. She even clarified that the singer “can stretch the meter a little” in those measures.

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287 Ibid.
288 Ibid.
290 Libby Larsen, interview by author, 7 October 2007, Minneapolis. Digital Recording.
Characterization

Larsen gave precise characterization markings in “Anne of Cleves.” However, she lent some suggestions to the markings that appear in the score. In measure 30, the marking given for the phrase “So now the clergy hath given their sentence” is “cheerfully.” Larsen explained that the singer could keep the characterization of the previous phrase “as a matter of fact,” or change to the “cheerfully” marking. She left that decision up to the performer.

The characterization marking listed above measure 40 is “beaming” for the phrase “I approve.” Larsen said that this section “has never worked in any performance” that she has heard. She prefers the marking of “beaming triumphantly” as Anne is saying that “she approves of what the King is doing and that is complete defiance.” Larsen continued, stating that for this section of Anne’s song “there should be a kind of demeanor and quality of I outfoxed you…and I am going to give you all the dignity accord[ed] to you in your royal

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292 Libby Larsen, interview by author, 7 October 2007, Minneapolis. Digital Recording.
293 Libby Larsen, *Try Me, Good King: Last Words of the Wives of Henry VIII, For Solo Soprano and Piano. Version A.*
294 Libby Larsen, interview by author, 7 October 2007, Minneapolis. Digital Recording.
295 Ibid.
position because I want to.” However, Larsen knew that she did not want the marking to be simply “triumphant” as she felt the tone quality would not be a “bright enough” for her taste.

Larsen gave the characterization marking of “winking” in measure 55. She wanted the singer to “wink on the rest” in measure 56 within the word “sister” if possible.

In addition, she believed that the singer should differentiate between the “sister” phrases in measures 56 and 68. Larsen suggested that the first “sister” should be “winking” as marked and the second “sister” could be somewhat “smug.” The singer can use the two glissandos on each “sister” phrase to aid in this effect. Larsen continued to explain that using more of the notes in the glissando in measure 68 could help to make a better distinction between the two phrases.

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296 Ibid.
297 Ibid.
298 Ibid.
299 Ibid.
300 Ibid.
“Katherine Howard”

“God have mercy on my soul. Good people, I beg you pray for me. By the journey upon which I am bound, I have not wronged the King. Brothers, I have not wronged the King, I have not wronged the King. But it is true that long before the King took me, I loved Thomas Culpepper. I wish to God I had done as Culpepper wished me, For at the time the King wanted me, Culpepper urged me to say that I was pledged to him. Brothers, I wish to God I had done as he wished me, For at the time the King wanted me, Culpepper urged me to say that I was pledged to him. If I had done as he wished me, I should not die this death, nor would he. God have mercy on my soul Ah, Good people I beg you pray for me. Ah, I die a queen but I would rather die the wife of Culpepper.”

Tempo

“Katherine Howard” begins with a tempo marking of 60, which should be adhered to. A slower tempo does not allow the performers to portray the intensity needed for this piece. The tempo then accelerates and returns to the tempo primo, while intermittently incorporating recitative. The singer and pianist must work together to perfect these tempo changes in the music in order to achieve the desired affect.

Lute Song

Larsen chose to use the same lute song for “Katherine Howard” that she used for “Katherine of Aragon,” “In Darkness Let Me Dwell” by John Dowland, as the text could be applied to Katherine Howard’s tragic situation. Larsen considered using the lute song “Flow My Tears” by John Dowland, but “decided against it because it doesn’t hold that ‘deer caught in the headlights’ quality that is part of Katherine Howard’s story.”

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301 Libby Larsen, *Try Me, Good King: Last Words of the Wives of Henry VIII, For Solo Soprano and Piano. Version A.*
302 Ibid.
303 Ibid.
304 Ibid.
Bell Tolls

There are only two listed bell tolls in “Katherine Howard.” Additional bell tolls can be found on the downbeat of measures 12, 27, 34, and 35, as well as in the last beats of measures 37, 39, and 40.

Example 30- Unmarked bell tolls in Measures 12 and 27

Example 31- Unmarked bell tolls in Measures 34 and 35

Example 32- Unmarked bell tolls in Measure 40
Larsen explains that bell tolls may also be found throughout measures 41, 43, and 44.305

Furthermore, a mutation of the bells tolling may be heard on the downbeat of measures 37 and 39.306

**Piano Suggestions**

Larsen was careful to list precise dynamics for the pianist throughout “Katherine Howard.” When a _p_, or _piano_ dynamic is given, the pianist should “think of it as _ppp_ and definitely _subito_.”307 Additionally, the _p_ marking is usually found in measures such as measure 23, where the tone should be “dry” and resemble a “clock ticking,” as Katherine’s last minutes are ticking away.308

Example 33- Unmarked bell tolls in Measures 43-44

Example 34- Piano suggestion for Measure 23

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305 Ibid.
306 Ibid.
307 Ibid.
308 Ibid.
The same feeling also occurs in the opening phrase of the piano. Larsen explained that if she had been writing this piece for strings, she would have given the direction “white tone and non-vibrato” for measures such as 23.  

**Spanish Trill**

In the opening phrase of the voice Larsen added a “Spanish trill” for several reasons.  

![Example 35- “Spanish trill” in Measure 4](image)

The first reason for this was “structural-to tie it back to the first piece,” and the Spanish feel of “Katherine of Aragon.” Another reason for this choice was that Katherine Howard’s execution speech was “recorded by an unknown Spaniard.” However, the “least obvious” reason that Larsen added the Spanish feel to Katherine’s opening phrase is because Larsen “imagined dramatically that [Katherine] steps out into the light and it hits her like a ton of bricks” that she is about to be beheaded.  

When singing the opening phrase Larsen urges the singer to “treat the triplet in measure 4 almost as 32nd notes.” In the next phrase, the triplet in measure 6 is then “augmented” and

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309 Ibid.
310 Ibid.
311 Ibid.
312 Ibid.
313 Ibid.
314 Ibid.
“should be much more drawn out.”\textsuperscript{315} This will allow the audience to hear the desperation in Katherine’s voice.

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{example36.png}
\caption{Example 36- Augmented “Spanish trill” in Measure 6}
\end{figure}

\textbf{Characterization}

Larsen listed precise characterization markings throughout “Katherine Howard.” However, Larsen decided not to give an exact characterization for measure 10. She “left it open on purpose.”\textsuperscript{316} She allowed the singer to decide whether to continue with the initial “like a frightened child” marking of measure 4, or to find another characterization that fits Katherine’s situation.\textsuperscript{317}

In measure 12, Katherine desperately cries out “Brothers.”\textsuperscript{318} At this point, it is “almost as if Katherine is looking around” for someone to help her.\textsuperscript{319} The “half-voiced” marking used here should be different than the marking that appears in “Anne Boleyn.”\textsuperscript{320} Larsen states, “This is even more ¾’s whisper, ¼ voice…could call it quarter voiced” instead of “half-voiced.”\textsuperscript{321}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[315] Ibid.
\item[316] Ibid.
\item[317] Ibid.
\item[318] Libby Larsen, \textit{Try Me, Good King: Last Words of the Wives of Henry VIII, For Solo Soprano and Piano.} Version A.
\item[319] Libby Larsen, interview by author, 7 October 2007, Minneapolis. Digital Recording.
\item[320] Ibid.
\item[321] Ibid.
\end{footnotes}
Difficult Spots

The section beginning in measure 19 may pose a problem for some singers. Katherine is "becoming more anguished" and the music should "push ahead," which leaves little room for the singer to get a sufficient breath.322 Larsen explains that the singer should "breathe right before measure 21."323 Moreover, the singer "can pant a little bit in measure 22 as she becomes more anguished."324 Larsen adds that the 32nd notes in measure 22 do not have to be rhythmically accurate as she was "much more going for dramatic gesture than technical-rhythmic perfection."325

Example 37- “Half-voiced” in Measure 12

Example 38- Rhythmic difficulties in Measures 21-22

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322 Libby Larsen, Try Me, Good King: Last Words of the Wives of Henry VIII, For Solo Soprano and Piano. Version A.
323 Libby Larsen, interview by author, 7 October 2007, Minneapolis. Digital Recording.
324 Ibid.
325 Ibid.
Perhaps the most difficult section of “Katherine Howard” is the ending, beginning at measure 37. Larsen explains that Katherine Howard was a “19 year old girl who was scared out of her wits.”\textsuperscript{326} The voice part resembles this and includes three ascending scales that can be viewed as Katherine screaming in terror before her beheading. The first scream is a cry to “God,” while the other cries are on “Ah.”\textsuperscript{327} Also, the screams contain the same notes reaching to a high B natural, with the exception of the final scream extending to a C#6.

\footnotesize
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{326} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{327} Libby Larsen, \textit{Try Me, Good King: Last Words of the Wives of Henry VIII}, For Solo Soprano and Piano. Version A.
\end{itemize}

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Beginning at measure 37, Larsen explains that the performers “are allowed freedom from the beat.”\textsuperscript{328} During the screams the “beats do not have to line up” with the piano.\textsuperscript{329} Larsen states that the singer can also “take time” in measure 38, and even choose to sing the phrase “have mercy on my soul” in a more speech like fashion.\textsuperscript{330}

Regardless, throughout these sections of \textit{agitato} the focus for the soprano should not be on counting, but allowing herself to portray the emotions Katherine would have been experiencing before her death.\textsuperscript{331}

\textsuperscript{328} Libby Larsen, interview by author, 7 October 2007, Minneapolis. Digital Recording.
\textsuperscript{329} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{330} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{331} Ibid.
The apostrophe after the *fermatas* of measure 37 “can be very long.”\textsuperscript{332} The bell toll immediately after the apostrophe should also be played with a *fermata*.\textsuperscript{333} The ending bell toll of measure 39 can also have a *fermata* over it, but there should not be as long of a pause before the bell toll as in measure 37.\textsuperscript{334} These *fermatas* should be added “to create foreboding” after Katherine’s cries of terror.\textsuperscript{335}

**Optional Ending**

In 2003, Larsen wrote an optional ending for “Katherine Howard.” The optional ending was written for soprano, Eileen Strempel, and can be found in her NATS Journal article.\textsuperscript{336} This ending changes the notes and rhythms of Katherine’s screams in measures 37, 39, and 41. Larsen explains, “I prefer the published score, however I know the kind of stamina the piece requires.”\textsuperscript{337}

**Score Corrections**

There are actually two versions of the *Try Me, Good King* score. In one version a treble clef has been incorrectly added to the end of measure 44 of “Katherine Howard.”

\textsuperscript{332} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{333} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{334} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{335} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{336} Strempel, 11-20.
\textsuperscript{337} Libby Larsen, interview by author, 7 October 2007, Minneapolis. Digital Recording.
In measure 44 and 45 the right hand of the piano should remain in the bass clef. Larsen also adds that in measure 45, the right hand should actually be played as a crossover of the left hand, an octave lower than written in either score.  

Example 42- Measures 43-45 (Correct, but right hand of 44 should be an octave lower)

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339 Libby Larsen, interview by author, 7 October 2007, Minneapolis. Digital Recording.
340 Libby Larsen, Try Me, Good King: Last Words of the Wives of Henry VIII, For Solo Soprano and Piano. Version A.
CONCLUSION

By composing *Try Me, Good King*, Libby Larsen was able to portray the wives of Henry VIII in their times of joy and trouble. Through music Larsen captured each Queens’ situation and desperation. She was able to allow the Queens to tell their story through a modern musical setting, while also invoking the Elizabethan era by incorporating the aspect of the lute songs.

*Try Me, Good King* poses difficulties for both the singer and pianist. This document serves as a guide to the work and provides useful suggestions for the performers. When performed *Try Me, Good King* proves to be a truly challenging, yet rewarding experience, and it is hoped that this performance guide will enhance that experience.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


———. Interview by author, 6 October 2007, Minneapolis. Digital Recording. Larsen Private Residence, Minneapolis, MN.

———. Interview by author, 7 October 2007, Minneapolis. Digital Recording. Larsen Private Residence, Minneapolis, MN.


Miller, Meagan. Phone Interview by Author, 12 January 2008.


APPENDIX A

TEXTS OF THE LUTE SONGS

*The texts will be shown with original spellings.

“I Care Not for These Ladies”
Words and Music by Thomas Campian
From Philip Rosseter’s A Booke of Ayres, 1601

Verse 1
“I care not for these Ladies That must be woode and praiade, Give me kind Amarillis the wanton country maide, Nature art disdaineth, Her beautie is her owne,
Chorus
Her when we court & kisse, She cries forsooth let go, But when we come where comfort is She never will say no.
Verse 2
If I love Amarillis, She gives me fruit and flowers, But if we love these Ladies, We must give golden showers, Give them gold that sell love, Give me the Nutbrowne lasse,
Chorus
Who when we court & kisse, She cries forsooth let go, But when we come where comfort is She never will say no.
Verse 3
These Ladies must have pillows, And beds by strangers wrought, Give me a Bower of willows, Of mosse and leaves unbought, And fresh Amarillis With milke and honie fed,
Chorus
Who when we court & kisse, She cries forsooth let go, But when we come where comfort is She never will say no.”

“If My Complaints”
Words by , Music by John Dowland
From The First Book of Songes, 1597

Verse 1
“If my complaints could passions move, Or make love see wherein I suffer wrong: My passions weare enough to prove That my despayrs had governed me too long, O love I live and dye in thee, Thy griefe in my deepe sighes still speakes, Thy wounds do freshly bleed in mee. My hart for thy unkindnes breakes, Yet thou dost hope when I despaire, And when I hope thou makst me hope in vaine. Thou saist thou canst my harmes repaire, Yet for redresse thou letst me still complaine.
Verse 2
Can love be ritch and yet I want, Is love my judge and yet am I condemn’d? Thou plenty hast, yet me dost scant, Thou made a god, and yet thy power contemn’d. That I do live it is thy power,

That I desire it is they worth, If love doth make mens lives too soure, Let me not love, nor live henceforth, Die shall my hopes, but not my faith That you that of my fall may hearers be, May here despaire, which truly saith I was more true to love than love to me.”

“In Darknesse Let Mee Dwell”
Words by , Music by John Dowland
From A Musical Banquet, 1610

“In darkness let mee dwell, the ground shall sorrow be, The roofe Dispaire to barre all cheerful light from mee, The wals of marble blacke that moistened still shall weepe, My musicke hellish jarring sounds to banish friendly sleepe. Thus wedded to my woes, and bedded to my Tombe, O let me living die, till death doe come.”

“Es ist ein Ros entsprungen”
Music by Michael Praetorius
Translated by Theodore Baker

Verse 1
“Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming from tender stem hath sprung! Of Jesse's lineage coming, as those of old have sung. It came, a floweret bright, amid the cold of winter, When half spent was the night.
Verse 2
Isaiah 'twas foretold it, the Rose I have in mind; With Mary we behold it, the virgin mother kind. To show God's love aright, she bore to us a Savior, When half spent was the night.”

342 Ibid., 83-5.
343 Ibid., 121-7.
APPENDIX B

TEXTS OF FULL LETTERS AND SPEECHES LARSEN USED FOR THE SET

*The texts that Larsen incorporated into the work are underlined. Larsen did modify a few words from the text to fit the music.

Letter from “Katherine of Aragon, formerly Queen of England, to Henry VIII, 7 January 1536” 345

“My most dear lord, king and husband,

The hour of my death now drawing on, the tender love I owe you forceth me, my case being such, to commend myself to you, and to put you in remembrance with a few words of the health and safeguard of your soul which you ought to prefer before all worldly matters, and before the care and pampering of your body, for the which you have cast me into many calamities and yourself into many troubles. For my part, I pardon you everything, and I wish to devoutly pray God that He will pardon you also. For the rest, I commend unto you our daughter Mary, beseeching you to be a good father unto her, as I have heretofore desired. I entreat you also, on behalf of my maids, to give them marriage portions, which is not much, they being but three. For all my other servants I solicit the wages due them, and a year more, lest they be unprovided for. Lastly, I make this vow, that mine eyes desire you above all things.” 346

Letter from “Anne Boleyn, Queen of England, to Henry VIII, May 1536” 347

“Your grace’s displeasure and my imprisonment are things so strange to me, that what to write, or what to excuse, I am altogether ignorant. Whereas you send to me (willing me to confess a truth and so obtain your favour), by such a one, whom you know to be mine ancient professed enemy, I no sooner received this message by him, than I rightly conceived your meaning; and if, as you say, confessing a truth indeed may procure my safety, I shall with all willingness and duty, perform your command. But let not your grace ever imagine that your poor wife will be brought to acknowledge a fault, where not so loyal in all duty, and in all true affection, than you have ever found in Anne Bulen- with which name and place I could willingly have contented myself, if God and your grace’s pleasure had so been pleased. Neither did I at any time so far forget myself in my exaltation or received queenship, but that I always looked for such alteration as I now find; for the ground of my preferment being on no surer foundation than your grace’s fancy, the least alteration was fit and sufficient (I knew) to draw that fancy to some other subject.

You have chosen me from low estate to be your queen and companion, far beyond my desert or desire; if, then, you found me worthy of such honour, good your grace, let not any light fancy or bad counsel of my enemies withdraw your princely favour from me; neither let that stain- that unworthy stain- of a disloyal heart towards your good grace ever cast so foul a blot on me, and on the infant princess your daughter.

Try me, good king, but let me have a lawful trial, and let not my sworn enemies sit as my accusers and as my judges; yea, let me receive an open trial, for my truth shall fear no open

346 Ibid., 179-80.
347 Ibid., 193.
shames. Then you shall see either my innocency cleared, your suspicions and conscience satisfied, the ignominy and slander of the world stopped, or my guilt openly declared. So that, whatever God and you may determine of, your grace may be freed from an open censure; and my offence being so lawfully proved, your grace may be at liberty, both before God and man, not only to execute worthy punishment on me as an unfaithful wife but to follow your affection already settled on that party [Jane Seymour] for whose sake I am now as I am, whose name I could some while since have pointed unto- your grace being not ignorant of my suspicion therein. But if you have already determined of me, and that not only my death, but an infamous slander must bring you the joying of your desired happiness, then I desire of God that he will pardon your great sin herein, and likewise my enemies, the instruments thereof; and that he will not call you to a strait account for your unprincely and cruel usage of me at his general judgement-seat, where both you and myself must shortly appear; and in whose just judgement, I doubt not (whatsoever the world may think of me), mine innocency shall be openly known and sufficiently cleared.

My last and only request shall be, that myself only bear the burden of your grace’s displeasure, and that it may not touch the innocent souls of those poor gentlemen, whom, as I understand, are likewise in strait imprisonment for my sake. If ever I have found favour in your sight- if ever the name of Anne Bulen have been pleasing to your ears- then let me obtain this request: and so I will leave to trouble your grace any further, with mine earnest prayer to the Trinity to have your grace in his good keeping, and to direct you in all your actions. From my doleful prison in the Tower, the 6th May.”

Love Letters from King Henry VIII to Anne Boleyn

“My mistress and friend: I and my heart put ourselves in your hands, begging you to have them suitors for your good favour, and that your affection for them should not grow less through absence. For it would be a great pity to increase their sorrow since absence does it sufficiently, and more than ever I could have thought possible reminding us of a point in astronomy, which is, that the longer the days are the farther off is the sun, and yet the more fierce. So it is with our love, for by absence we are parted, yet nevertheless it keeps its fervour, at least on my side, and I hope on yours also: assuring you that on my side the enui of absence is already too much for me: and when I think of the increase of what I must needs suffer it would be well nigh unbearable for me were it not for the firm hope I have and as I cannot be with you in person, I am sending you the nearest possible thing to that, namely, my picture set in a bracelet, with the whole device which you already know. Wishing myself in their place when it shall please you. This by the hand of your loyal servant and friend, H. Rex”

“No more to you at this present mine own darling for lack of time but that I would you were in my arms or I in yours for I think it long since I kissed you. Written after the killing of an hart at a xj. of the clock minding with God's grace tomorrow mightily timely to kill another: by the hand of him which I trust shortly shall be yours. Henry R.”

348 Ibid., 193-4.
350 Ibid.
“Mine own sweetheart, these shall be to advertise you of the great loneliness that I find here since your departing, for I ensure you me thinketh the time longer since your departing now last than I was wont to do a whole fortnight: I think your kindness and my fervents of love causeth it, for otherwise I would not have thought it possible that for so little a while it should have grieved me, but now that I am coming toward you me thinketh my pains been half released.... Wishing myself (specially an evening) in my sweetheart's arms, whose pretty dukkys I trust shortly to kiss. Written with the hand of him that was, is, and shall be yours by his will. H.R.”351

Famous statement of Anne Boleyn to Jailer, Sir William Kingston

“I heard say the executioner was very good, and I have a little neck.”352

Gallows Speech of Anne Boleyn, 19 May 1536

“Good Christian people, I am come hither to die, for according to the law, and by the law I am judged to die, and therefore I will speak nothing against it. I am come hither to accuse no man, nor to speak anything of that, whereof I am accused and condemned to die, but I pray God save the king and send him long to reign over you, for a gentler nor a more merciful prince was there never: and to me he was ever a good, a gentle and sovereign lord. And if any person will meddle of my cause, I require them to judge the best. And thus I take my leave of the world and of you all, and I heartily desire you all to pray for me. O Lord have mercy on me, to God I commend my soul.”353

Letter from “Jane Seymour, Queen of England, to the Council, 12 October 1537”354

“Right trusty and well beloved, we greet you well, and for as much as be the inestimable goodness and grace of Almighty God, we be delivered and brought in childbed of a prince, conceived in most lawful matrimony between my lord the king’s majesty and us, doubting not but that for the love and affection which you bear unto us and to the commonwealth of this realm, the knowledge thereof should be joyous and glad tidings unto you, we have thought good to certify you of the same. To the intent you might not only render unto God condign thanks and prayers for so great a benefit but also continually pray for the long continuance and preservation of the same here in this life to the honour of God, joy and pleasure of my lord the king and us, and the universal weal, quiet and tranquility of this whole realm. Given under our signet at my lord’s manor of Hampton Court the 12th day of October.”355
The “Tudor Rose” Poem, Poet- Anonymous

“I love the rose both red & white.
Is that your pure perfite appetite?
To her talk of them is my delight!
Joyed may we be,
our prince to see,
and roses three”356

Letter from “Anne of Cleves, Queen of England, to Henry VIII, 11 July 1540”357

“Pleaseth your most excellent majesty to understand that, whereas, at sundry times heretofore, I have been informed and perceived by certain lords and others of your grace’s council, of the doubts and questions which have been moved and found in our marriage; and how hath petition thereupon been made to your highness by your nobles and commons, that the same might be examined and determined by the holy clergy of this realm; to testify to your highness by my writing, that which I have before promised by my word and will, that is to say, that the matter should be examined and determined by the said clergy; it may please your majesty to know that, though this case must needs be most hard and sorrowful unto me, for the great love which I bear to your most noble person, yet, having more regard to God and his truth than to any worldly affection, as it beseemed me, at the beginning, to submit me to such examination and determination of the said clergy, whom I have and do accept for judges competent in that behalf. So now being ascertained how the same clergy hath therein given their judgement and sentence, I acknowledge myself hereby to accept and approve the same, wholly and entirely putting myself, for my state and condition, to your highness’ goodness and pleasure; most humbly beseeching your majesty that, though it be determined that the pretended matrimony between us is void and of none effect, whereby I neither can not will repute myself for your grace’s wife, considering this sentence (whereunto I stand) and your majesty’s clean and pure living with me, yet it will please you to take me for one of your humble servants, and so determine of me, as I may sometimes have the fruition of your most noble presence; which as I shall esteem for a great benefit, so, my lords and others of your majesty’s council, now being with me, have put me in comfort thereof; and that your highness will take me for your sister; for the which I most humbly thank you accordingly.

Thus, most gracious prince, I beseech our Lord God to send your majesty long life and good health, to God’s glory, your own honour, and the wealth of this noble realm.

From Richmond, the 11th day of July, the 32nd year of your majesty’s most noble reign.
Your majesty’s most humble sister and servant, Anne the daughter of Cleves.”358

Gallows Speech of Katherine Howard,

"Brothers, by the journey upon which I am bound, I have not wronged the King. But it is true that long before the King took me, I loved Culpeper, and I wish to God I had done as he wished

357 Crawford, 203.
358 Ibid., 203-4.
me for at the time the King wanted to take me he urged me to say that I was pledged to him. If I had done as he advised me I should not die this death, nor would he. I would rather have had him for a husband than be mistress of the world, but sin blinded me and greed of grandeur; and since mine is the fault, mine also is the suffering, and my great sorrow is that Culpeper should have had to die through me…I die a Queen, but I would rather die the wife of Culpeper. God have mercy on my soul. Good people, I beg you pray for me.  

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APPENDIX C

DISCOGRAPHY

This is a discography of Libby Larsen’s vocal music only.
*All information has been taken from her website www.libbylarsen.com

CD Title: “American Art Song Today Alive”
  Songs from Letters
  Performers: Anne Marie Church, soprano; Linda Sweetman-Waters, piano
  Label: Josara Records

CD Title: “American Dreams: The American Music Sampler, Volume II”
  “I Thought Once How Theocritus Had Sung” from Sonnets From the Portuguese
  Performers: Arleen Augér, soprano; Members of the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra and
  Minnesota Orchestra; Joel Revzen, conductor
  Label: Koch International

CD Title: “American Songbook: The American Music Collection, Volume III”
  “I Thought Once How Theocritus Had Sung” from Sonnets From the Portuguese
  Performers: Arleen Augér, soprano; Members of the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra and
  Minnesota Orchestra; Joel Revzen, conductor
  Label: Koch International

CD Title: “The Art of Arleen Augér”
  Sonnets from the Portuguese
  Performers: Arleen Augér, soprano; Joel Revzen, conductor; St. Paul Chamber Orchestra and
  Minnesota Orchestra Members
  Label: Koch International

CD Title: “Barab, Bolcom, Larsen, Previn: Chamber Music”
  Beloved, Thou Hast Brought Me Many Flowers
  Performers: Theresa Treadway Lloyd, Toby Blumenthal, Bert Phillips
  Label: Albany Records

CD Title: “Be Still My Soul, Selections from American Art Song for the Sacred Service”
  Missa Gaia: Agnus Dei/Sanctus: How Lovely Are They Holy Groves
  Performers: Karen Leigh, mezzo-soprano; David Heller, piano
  Distributor: Classical Vocal Reprints

CD Title: “De Toda La Eternidad, Songs of American Women Composers”
  De Toda La Eternidad
  Songs from Letters
  Performers: Bonnie Pomfret, soprano; Laura Gordy, piano
  Label: ACA Digital Recording, Inc.
CD Title: “The Eternal Feminine”
Love After 1950
Performers: Susanne Mentzer, mezzo-soprano; Craig Rutenberg, piano
Label: Koch International Classics

CD Title: “Fabulous Femmes”
Cowboy Songs
Performers: The Athena Trio; Nannette McGuinness, soprano; Jan Roberts-Haydon, flute; Sylvie Beaudette, piano
Label: Centaur Records

CD Title: “Grand Larsen-y: Vocal Music of Libby Larsen”
Beloved, Thou Hast Brought Me Many Flowers
Chanting to Paradise
Hell’s Belles
Margaret Songs: Three Songs of Willa Cather
Songs from Letters
“The Color Duet” from Dreaming Blue
Performers: Terry Rhodes, soprano; Ellen Williams, mezzo-soprano; Benton Hess, piano; Steven Reis, cello
Label: Albany Records

CD Title: “Heartbeats: New Songs from Minnesota for the AIDS Quilt Songbook”
Perineo
Performers: Bradley Greenwald, baritone; Tim Linker, piano
Label: Innova Recordings

CD Title: “A Journey in Song”
Songs from Letters
Performer: Laury Christie, soprano
Commemorative CD: University of South Carolina School of Music

CD Title: “Larsen/Hagen/Moravec/Cipullo: New American Song Cycles”
My Antonia
Performers: Paul Sperry, tenor; Margo Garrett, piano
Label: Albany Records

CD Title: “Libby Larsen”
Songs from Letters
Songs of Light and Love
Performers: Benita Valente, soprano; Joel Revzen, conductor; Scottish Chamber Orchestra
Label: Koch International Classics

CD Title: “Licorice Stick- Clarinet Chamber Music of Libby Larsen”
Songs from Letters
Performers: Kathleen Roland-Silverstein, soprano; Katerina Strom-Harg, piano; Stefan Harg, clarinet
Label: Rhode-Kil Records

CD Title: “Love Lies Bleeding: Songs by Libby Larsen”
Cowboy Songs
Sonnets from the Portuguese
Try Me, Good King: Last Words of the Wives of Henry VIII
Performers: Eileen Strempel, soprano; Sylvie Beaudette, piano
Label: Centaur Records

CD Title: “Rich, Edwards, Larsen, and Others”
Cowboy Songs
Performer: Louise Toppin
Label: Albany Records

CD Title: “Roosevelt”
Eleanor Roosevelt
Performers: Camerata Singers; Floyd Farmer
Label: New World Records

CD Title: “A Sampler in Song: Art Songs by Women Composers”
Cowboy Songs
Performers: Judith Cline, soprano; Michael Sitton, piano
Hollins University

CD Title: “She Says, Sonya Gabrielle Baker”
Mary Cassatt
Performers: Sonya Gabrielle Baker, soprano; Vicki Berneking, piano; Jeannie Little, trombone
Murray State University

CD Title: “Treasures: Little Known Songs by Women Composers”
Cowboy Songs
Performers: Linda Dykstra, soprano; Joan Conway, piano
Label: SPERA Recordings

CD Title: “Vitality Begun”
Late In the Day
Performers: Patricia Stiles, mezzo-soprano; Graham Cox, piano
Label: Cavalli Records

CD Title: “Women’s Voices: Five Centuries of Song”
When I Am an Old Woman
Performer: Neva Pilgrim, soprano
Label: Leonarda
CD Title: “Women of Note”
“How Do I Love Thee?” from *Sonnets from the Portuguese*

**Performers:** Arleen Augér, soprano; Members of the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra and Minnesota Orchestra; Joel Revzen, conductor

**Label:** Koch International
APPENDIX D

VOCAL MUSIC

*All information has been taken from Larsen’s website www.libbylarsen.com

Songs, Sets, and Cycles

ANT AND THE GRASSHOPPER, THE (extracted from “Late in the Day”) – soprano, piano; Jeanne Shepard, text; 1:20 min; 1998

APPLE’S SONG, THE – baritone, piano; Edwin Morgan, text; 3 min; 2001

BEFORE WINTER – baritone solo, organ; Arthur Mampel, text; 2 min; 1982

BELOVED, THOU HAST BROUGHT ME MANY FLOWERS – mezzo-soprano, cello, piano; Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Hilde Doolittle, Rainer Marie Rilke, Percy Bysshe Shelley, texts; 20 min; 1994

CENTER FIELD GIRL – soprano, piano; Michele Antonello Frisch, text; 3 min; 2007

CHANTING TO PARADISE – soprano, piano; Emily Dickinson, text, 7 min; 1997

COWBOY SONGS – soprano, piano; Anon, Belle Star, Robert Creeley, text; 6:45 min; 1979

DE TODA LA ETERNIDAD – soprano, wind ensemble (or piano); Sor Juana Inez de la Cruz, text; 15 min.; 2003/2005

FERN HILL – tenor solo; Dylan Thomas, text

HELL’S BELLES – mezzo soprano, handbell choir; four movements; Talulah Bankhead, Billy Jean King, Gertrude Stein, Nursery Rhyme, text; 14 min.; 2001

I LOVE YOU THROUGH THE DAYTIMES – voice, piano; ancient Egyptian, text; 3 min.; 2003

IF I CAN RISE FROM ASHES – tenor, piano; Michelangelo Buonarroti, text; 3 min; 2002

JAZZ AT THE INTERGALACTIC NIGHTCLUB – tenor, piano; Thomas McGrath, text, 3 min; 2001

LATE IN THE DAY – soprano, piano; Jeanne Shepard, text; 1998

LORD, MAKE ME AN INSTRUMENT (PRAYER OF ST. FRANCIS) – tenor, piano; St. Francis of Assisi, text; 3 min.

85
LOVE AFTER 1950 – mezzo soprano, piano; Rita Dove, Julie Kane, Kathryn Daniels, Liz Lochhead, Muriel Rukeyser, texts; 15 min; 2000

LULULU’S FUNERAL – solo voice, prepared piano; Kusano Shimpei, text; 5 min.; 1976

MARGARET SONGS: THREE SONGS OF WILLA CATHER – soprano, piano; Willa Cather, Libby Larsen, texts; 9 min; 1996

ME (BRENDA UELAND) – soprano, piano; Brenda Ueland, text; 37 min; 1987

MY ANTONIA – high voice, piano; Willa Cather, text; 16:30 min; 2000

PERINEO – baritone, piano; Roberto Echavarren, text; 5 min.; available in “The AIDS Quilt Songbook,” published by Boosey and Hawkes; 1993

A PIG IN THE HOUSE – tenor, piano; Alvin Greenberg, text; 2004

QUIET SONG, A – voice, piano; written in memory of Bruce Carlson of the Schubert Club; Brenda Ueland, text; 2 min.; 2007

RIGHTY, 1966 (songs/sets/cycles) – soprano, flute, piano; Michele Frisch Antonello, text; 2:30 min; 2007

SAINTS WITHOUT TEARS – soprano, flute, bassoon; Phyllis McGinley, text; 12 min.; 1976

SELECTED POEMS OF RAINER MARIA RILKE – soprano, flute, guitar, harp; Rainer Maria Rilke, text

THE MERRY-GO-ROUND; LADY ON THE BALCONY; SPANISH DANCER

SIFTING THROUGH THE RUINS – mezzo-soprano, viola, and piano; Hilary North, anon., Alicia Vasquez, Martha Cooper, and Ted Berrigan, texts; 18 mins.; 2005

SONGS FROM LETTERS: CALAMITY JANE TO HER DAUGHTER JANET 1880-1902 – soprano, piano (or chamber ensemble); Calamity Jane, text; 13 min; 1989

SONNETS FROM THE PORTUGUESE – soprano, chamber ensemble (or piano); Elizabeth Barrett Browning, text; 21 min.; 1991

TAKE – soprano, piano; Margaret Atwood, text; 5 min.; 2006

THIS UNBEARABLE STILLNESS: SONGS FROM THE BALCONY – soprano, string quartet; Dima Hilal, Sekeena Shaben, text; 17 min.; 2003

I. A Different Morning Altogether, No. 1
II. Fourteeth Ode
III. A Different Morning Altogether, No. 2
IV. Tempest
THREE RILKE SONGS – high voice and guitar; Rainer Maria Rilke, text; 1980
   FROM REQUIEM; I AM, YOU ANXIOUS ONE; IF I HAD GROWN UP

TRY ME, GOOD KING: LAST WORDS OF THE WIVES OF HENRY VIII – soprano, piano; Katherine of Aragon, Anne Boleyn, Jane Seymour, Anne of Cleves, Katherine Howard, texts; 15 min.; 2000

A VERSE RECORD OF MY PEONIES – tenor, tape, percussion; Masaoka Shiki, text; 7 min.; 1980

WATCHING A WOMAN PRAY – soprano, piano; Roger Conover, text, 2 min; 1978

WHEN I AM AN OLD WOMAN – soprano, piano; Jenny Joseph, text; 3 min.; 1990

A WORD FROM YOUR JENNY – soprano, piano; Jenny Lind, adapted by LL, text; 14 min.; 2004
   LEIPZIG, APRIL 1846; VIENNA, MAY 6, 1846; AACHEN, JUNE 2, 1846; VIENNA, FEBRUARY 13, 1847; STOCKHOLM, DECEMBER 15, 1847

   Voice with Orchestra

COWBOY SONGS - soprano, orchestra (or piano); Anon, Belle Star, Robert Creeley, text; 6:45 min; 2005

DE TODA LA ETERNIDAD - soprano, wind ensemble (or piano); Sor Juana Inez de la Cruz, text; 15 min.; 2003/2005

ELEANOR ROOSEVELT - soprano (2), mezzo-soprano, speaker, SATB chorus, clarinet, violoncello, piano, percussion played by chorus; Sally M. Gall, text; 1996

MARY CASSATT - mezzo-soprano, trombone, orchestra and slides; historical narrative and letters of Mary Cassatt, text; 30 min; 1994

NOTES SLIPPED UNDER THE DOOR - soprano, solo flute, orchestra; Eugenia Zukerman, text; 15 min.; 2001

RASPBERRY ISLAND DREAMING - mezzo soprano, orchestra; Joyce Stuphen, Patricia Hampi, text; 15 min.; 2002

SONGS FROM LETTERS: CALAMITY JANE TO HER DAUGHTER JANETY 1880-1902 (songs/sets; voice/orch) - soprano, chamber ensemble (or piano); Calamity Jane, text; 13 min; 1989

SONGS OF LIGHT AND LOVE - soprano, chamber ensemble; May Sarton, text; 19 minutes; 1998
SONNETS FROM THE PORTUGUESE - soprano, chamber ensemble (or piano); Elizabeth Barrett Browning, text; 21 min.; 1991
APPENDIX E
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89
Soprano, Angela R. Day currently resides in Wheeling, West Virginia. She has received an undergraduate degree in vocal performance from Mid-America Christian University in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, and a Master of Music degree in vocal performance from Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. During her studies at Louisiana State University she appeared in numerous operas and opera scene programs, as well as participated in the opera outreach program. Angela is currently an adjunct professor at West Liberty State College in West Liberty, West Virginia.