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The Role of the Piano in Samuel Barber's "Despite and Still".

Bruce Leslie Gibbons

Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College

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The role of the piano in Samuel Barber's *Despite and Still*

Gibbons, Bruce Leslie, D.M.A.

The Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical Col., 1987

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THE ROLE OF THE PIANO IN SAMUEL BARBER'S
DESPITE AND STILL

A Monograph

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

in

The School of Music

by

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ABSTRACT

The piano has performed various functions in song literature from the simple giving of a pitch to the evocation of the sonorities of an orchestra. It has provided harmonic support, rhythmic interest, and contrapuntal material for interaction with the voice. The piano has also been used to create mood and illustrate the text.

Certain nineteenth-century composers, such as Franz Schubert (1797-1828), Robert Schumann (1810-56), Johannes Brahms (1833-97), and Hugo Wolf (1860-1903), helped establish the piano as an equal partner with the voice. A number of twentieth-century American composers have continued this tradition of partnership. Among them, Samuel Barber (1910-81) is outstanding because, like most of his nineteenth-century predecessors, he has contributed significantly to the literature of both the voice and the piano, and his songs and song cycles stand as a continuation of the tradition of equality between voice and piano.


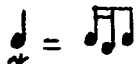
This study is an examination and discussion of the role of the piano in Barber's cycle Despite and Still; also included is a brief discussion of Barber's vocal style. The examination pinpoints those precise musical elements used by the piano to suggest the meaning of the

text and to assist the voice in the presentation of that meaning. By way of summary, the entire cycle is viewed as a whole, and unifying features are discussed and illustrated.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The piano has performed various functions in song literature from the simple giving of a pitch to the evocation of the sonorities of an orchestra. It has provided harmonic support, rhythmic interest, and contrapuntal material for interaction with the voice. The piano has also been used to create mood and illustrate the text. All of these functions have become so integral a part of song literature in the twentieth century that the equality of voice and piano is not only expected but demanded. However, this integration of vocal line and accompaniment has been slow in evolving. Actually, the process leading to the piano's present position in twentieth-century song literature has its roots as far back as the sixteenth century with the first efforts to imitate natural sounds on the keyboard.

Early solo keyboard music contains examples of composers' attempts at imitating the sounds of nature, as well as other sounds, through the elements of pitch and rhythm. In Capriccio sopra il Cucho by Girolamo Frescobaldi (1583-1643) the cuckoo motive, , is heard forty-three times in a variety of augmentation and diminution. Jean Philippe Rameau (1683-1764) used the pincé ()

to illustrate bird calls in his Rappel des Oiseaux (Example 1), and repeated eighths with a rapid thirty-second-note figure to illustrate hens in La Poule (Example 2). In The Bells, William Byrd (1543-1623) uses a basso

Ex. 1. Rameau's Rappel des Oiseaux, mm. 49-51:
pincé used to illustrate bird calls.

(No tempo given)



Ex. 2. Rameau's La Poule, mm. 1-4:
figure illustrating hens.

(No tempo given)



ostinato pattern over which is built variations, utilizing short canonic imitation in the manner of an echo. The suggestion of hunting horns can be heard in The King's Hunt by John Bull (1562-1628), and the horn-call motive also plays an important part in Capriccio in B-flat on the Departure to Distant Climes of his Dearly Beloved Brother by Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750).

In addition, efforts were made to associate certain musical patterns with a particular event, such as those found in the Fantasies of John Mundy (1555-1630), where he attempts to illustrate different kinds of weather ("Faire Wether," "Calme Wether," "Lightning," "Thunder"), or Johann Kuhnau's (1660-1772) depiction of the flinging of the stone and subsequent fall of Goliath in "The Battle Between David and Goliath" from the Biblical Sonatas. This type of association is greatly dependent upon the title or caption supplied by the composer.

Despite these early examples, such as those illustrated above, the piano in song literature received little attention until the last quarter of the eighteenth century. Prior to that time, most songs with keyboard accompaniment used simple chords or chord patterns for support, and many contained a figured bass only. Between the years 1750 and 1780 the thoroughbass disappeared almost unnoticably, and the scoring was changed to two staves with the voice and the keyboard sharing the upper staff. A change to three staves around 1780 led to more freedom in the piano part, producing greater equality between the voice and piano.¹

¹Hans Moser, The German Solo Song and the Ballad, in Anthology of Music, D. G. Fellerer, ed., Vol. 14 (Darmstadt: Arno Volk Verlag, 1958), p. 8.

The increasing desire to use the works of better poets also contributed to this equality.²

Influenced by the device of text painting from the Renaissance, the composers of the "Second Berlin School"³ (ca. 1775-1800) were the first to make use of pianistic description in solo songs. In the songs of Christian Friedrich Daniel Schubart (1739-91), Johann Abraham Peter Schulz (1747-1800), Johann Friderich Reichardt (1752-1814), Carl Friederich Zelter (1758-1832), and Johann Rudolf Zumsteeg (1760-1802) the piano became increasingly important. Of these composers, Zumsteeg was the most influential on Franz Schubert (1797-1828) in terms of representational pianistic devices, in his dramatic use of the ballad form, and with the presentation of themes in contrasting modes for textual purposes.⁴

The growing importance of the role of the piano in song literature can be observed by tracing the development of the nineteenth-century German lied. Schubert used piano

²Eric Sams, John H. Baron, Raymond A. Barr, Paul Griffiths, "Lied," The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, 20 vols., ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 1980), 8:387.

³Composers working at the court of Frederick the Great (ca. 1750), such as Carl Phillip Emanuel Bach (1714-88) and Karl Heinrich Graun (1704-59), are generally referred to as the "Berlin School." The composers of the following generation, credited with the development of lieder, are called the "Second Berlin School."

⁴Donald Ivey, Song: Anatomy, Imagery, and Styles, (New York: The Free Press, 1970), pp. 178-9.

figurations to suggest brooks (Wohin), fish (Die Forelle), and a galloping horse (Erlkönig). He also used it to change mood, as in Der Tod und das Mädchen. In Frauenliebe und Leben Robert Schumann (1810-56) gave added importance to the piano by having it conclude the cycle with a reflective postlude using earlier material. Johannes Brahms (1833-97) used the piano effectively to portray the mood of the poem, as in Von ewiger Liebe and Die Mainacht. Hugo Wolf (1860-1903) assigned to the piano copious details and extended solo interludes throughout his Italienisches Liederbuch. In The Songs of Hugo Wolf, Eric Sams discusses these details using twelve "aspects of song," one of which, by itself, contains a catalogue of forty motivic equivalents for verbal concepts and ideas.⁵

In nineteenth-century German lieder the function of the piano appears to fall within three broad areas: 1) the sharing of harmonic support and melodic imitation with the voice, 2) the setting of mood and the illustration of the text by descriptive devices, and 3) the unification of the song through musical material and figuration. A group of poetically related songs, such as the song cycle, adds the dimension of unity between songs. In summarizing the role of the piano, it can be said that the piano served as a partner, a commentator, and a unifier.

⁵Eric Sams, The Songs of Hugo Wolf (London: Eulenberg Books, 1983), pp. 18-35.

A number of changes occurring in the early part of the twentieth century had a profound effect upon the literature for voice with piano. The reaction to the lushness of late nineteenth-century ultra-chromaticism resulted in thinner textures, unusual combinations of instruments, polytonality, and eventually avoidance of tonality through the use of the twelve-tone system. The angularity of line produced by the twelve-tone system led to the treatment of the voice in a more instrumental manner, and the experimental nature of expressionism, symbolism, and mysticism produced poetry difficult to understand, interpret, or set to music using traditional nineteenth-century descriptive devices. It comes as no surprise, then, that greater emphasis was placed on setting songs more for their variety of tone color and unusual effect than for the meaning of the text.⁶ Ivey notes that "the majority of the songs that have consistently appeared in recital have been those that retained at least a minimal portion of the tunefulness and lyric declamation of the last century while at the same time incorporating enough of the contemporary 'isms' to provide them with a certain currency of sound."⁷

A number of twentieth-century American vocal works seem to fit Ivey's description, notably songs by Aaron Copland (b. 1900), Theodore Chanler (1902-61), Samuel

⁶Ivey, Song: Anatomy, Imagery, and Styles, p. 235.

⁷Ibid., p. 236.

Barber (1910-81), Ned Rorem (b. 1923), and Dominick Argento (b. 1927). All of them have used the piano in much the same way as did the nineteenth-century composers of lieder; their harmonic language may be different, but the function of the piano remains virtually unchanged. Of this group of composers, Samuel Barber stands out because, like Schubert, Schumann, and Brahms, he has contributed significantly to the literature of both piano and voice. His song cycle Hermit Songs is considered a masterpiece of the genre, and his Piano Sonata and Piano Concerto are major works in the modern repertoire. In terms of quantity of compositions, Barber comes nowhere near that of his nineteenth-century counterparts; however, the quality of his work is worthy of the comparison.

This study will demonstrate through examination and discussion the role of the piano in Barber's song cycle, Despite and Still. This particular cycle was chosen for several reasons: the function of the piano is similar to that in the German lied as summarized previously; it is short enough to allow a detailed examination of each song within the limited scope of a monograph; the composer writes well for both voice and piano; the cycle is not frequently performed, recorded, or written about; and the music is readily available for study. The discussion will pinpoint those musical and pianistic devices employed by Barber which illustrate the role of the piano in the cycle. The investigation will concern itself with three main

areas: 1) the piano as partner, 2) the piano as commentator, and 3) the piano as unifier. Each song of the cycle will be studied by category in the order listed below, and, by way of summary, the entire cycle as a whole will be viewed similarly. The following is an outline of these categories and the specific points to be considered:

- I. The piano as partner
 - A. harmonic support
 - B. doubling of voice
 - C. melodic imitation
- II. The piano as commentator
 - A. text illustration
 - 1. imitation of sounds (e.g., birds, bells)
 - 2. traditional images
 - 3. tempo
 - 4. rhythmic figures
 - 5. tonality and harmony
 - 6. texture, direction, register
 - 7. dynamics, accents, declamation
 - B. creation of mood—a synthesis of elements
- III. The piano as unifier
 - A. melodic material
 - B. rhythmic material
 - C. harmonic and tonal relationships
 - D. pianistic figurations
 - E. creation and maintenance of mood

A brief discussion of these specific points should help clarify their meaning as it applies to this study:

The Piano as Partner

The piano supports the voice by providing harmonic structure and defining tonal centers. In addition, the pitches of the vocal line may appear in different positions within the harmonic structure of the piano part (see Example 3). Direct doubling may occur at the unison or in

Ex. 3. Barber's "In the Wilderness," m. 6:
vocal line appearing in different positions.

(Flowing, in 2)



different octaves. Neither harmonic support nor direct doubling helps establish equality and independence of voice and piano. However, melodic imitation offers more interest in terms of a true partnership. The common contrapuntal techniques of augmentation, diminution, and canonic imitation provide opportunity for equal partnership. Often the melodic line itself may be divided between piano and voice.

The Piano as Commentator

Imitation of sounds refers to those naturally occurring sounds, such as bird calls and bells, which can be imitated melodically. Traditional images, on the other hand, are those patterns which, through common usage, have become associated with certain non-musical events (for example, the motive of a falling interval of a second, suggesting sighing or weeping). Slow, fast, and accelerating tempos can reflect calm, joy, and excitement, as well as mark sudden changes of mood. Rhythmic figures, such as those representing horses galloping, are closely related to traditional images. Dissonant harmony may be used to illustrate a particular word (such as "pain"), and a change of tonality may reflect sudden changes in the text. A full-textured chord with many doubled notes may accompany a textual reference to completeness while open intervals of fifths can denote an emptiness. The direction of a melodic line may refer to rising expectations or fallen hopes. High or low pitch placement, referred to as register, may represent height or depth. Dynamic contrasts and the accenting of specific words are used to emphasize a particular emotion or thought. The term "declamation" in this instance refers to brief melodic figures which assist in making alliterative or onomatopaeic effects in the text.

The Piano as Unifier

Any of the items in the foregoing discussions may be considered unifying devices within a single song or between songs. This technique will be clearly delineated when the cycle as a whole is examined.

The examination of the cycle using these categories and specific points of consideration will focus on the precise musical elements that are used to suggest the meaning of the text. The matter of any interpretive conjecture is best left to the imagination of those performing the cycle. Before beginning the examination, a discussion of the most characteristic features of Barber's vocal style is presented in Chapter II.

CHAPTER II

BARBER'S VOCAL STYLE

"Romantic music, predominantly emotional, embodying sophisticated workmanship and complete care. Barber's aesthetic position may be reactionary, but his melodic line sings and the harmony supports it."⁸ This statement sums up the general impression one finds in most writings about Samuel Barber's music. He was not an innovator; his basic style remained consistent and identifiable throughout his career. Because of Barber's fondness for romantic fullness and lyricism combined with classical procedures, one writer places him in a position within his era somewhat similar to that of Brahms in his.⁹ Those changes which did evolve—the exploitations of idiomatic capacities of individual instruments, contrapuntal complexity and dissonance, angularity of line, chromaticism, and the use of twelve-tone technique—are most evident in the instrumental works. Although some of these traits may

⁸Virgil Thomson, Twentieth-Century Composers: American Music Since 1910, (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970), p. 121.

⁹Richard Jackson, "Samuel Barber," The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, 20 vols., ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 1980), 2:133.

be found occasionally in the compositions for voice, the most noticeable change in vocal works is the complexity of interplay between the voice and the piano.

Barber's vocal style is noted for its long, lyrical melodic lines, and its unique mixture of tertian, modal, and quartal harmonies. In the early period of his career (works prior to 1939), he used basically tertian chord structures including chromatic harmonies such as the Neapolitan sixth and augmented sixth chords. The piano served essentially as accompaniment, supplying the harmonic and tonal structure, although there was some attempt at text illustration (see Example 4). As his style developed,

Ex. 4. Barber's "Bessie Bobtail" (1934), mm. 1-6:
motivic figure illustrating slow "wamble."

Andante, un poco mosso *pp*

Voice: As down the road she wam - bled slow, She

Piano: *pp*, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

senza pedale

the interaction between the tertian and quartal harmonies and the increasing emphasis on contrapuntal lines led to more complex sonorities.¹⁰ The employment of "split

¹⁰Russell Friedewald, "A Formal and Stylistic Analysis of the Published Music of Samuel Barber," (Ph.D. Thesis, Iowa State University, 1957), p. 337.

intervals" (simultaneous use of both major and minor thirds or perfect and imperfect fifths) contributed to the complexity.¹¹ Friedewald points to Opus 10¹² (1939) as a step forward in the vocal style because the piano is now independent, although still an integral part of the whole.¹³

And, indeed, in the first song of the set, "Rain has fallen," the piano has an extended interlude; this is nothing new in vocal literature, but it is for Barber's style. Opus 18¹⁴ (1944) is labeled a "landmark" by Friedewald because of the complexity of interplay between voice and piano.¹⁵ Imitation and canonic writing, as in "Sure on this shining night" (Opus 13, no. 3, 1941), became an important part of his technique.

Barber's melodies frequently outline chords, especially seventh and ninth chords. The use of specific intervals, particularly the interval of a second, is important not only harmonically but also for its use as a unifying element. The interval of the fourth in the texture, deriving from quartal harmony, is "one of the few

¹¹Ibid., p. 337.

¹²The songs in Opus 10 are "Rain has fallen," "Sleep Now," and "I hear an army."

¹³Friedewald, p. 36.

¹⁴The songs in Opus 18 are "The queen's face on the summery coin," and "Monks and Raisins."

¹⁵Friedewald, p. 61.

finger-prints that Barber's music shares with . . . Harris Copland, and Piston, [and other American composers]."¹⁶

Rhythmically, there seems to be an emphasis in his songs on constantly flowing eighth-notes as an underlying pulse. According to Virgil Thomson, this is not unique to Barber. He says: "Indeed I think you will find, if you listen carefully to American music as performed by American artists, that a very large part of what has been composed in the last forty years assumes the existence, whether or not this is overtly present at all times in the sound, of a steady continuity of eighth-notes, on top of which other metrical patterns, regular and irregular, lead an independent life."¹⁷ The changing meters, which occur frequently in Barber's songs, are related to the demands and rhythm of the text.

Barber shows strong ties with the past in his use of form in his songs. He uses variation, bar form (AAB), binary and ternary structures, and rondos.¹⁸ In most song literature, the actual form of the composition is more or less dictated by the structure of the text. Because of his consistent use of traditional forms, it seems highly likely

¹⁶Wilfrid Mellers, Music in a New Found Land: Themes and Developments in the History of American Music, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1965), p. 195.

¹⁷Thomson, p. 19.

¹⁸Friedewald, p. 339.

that his choice of texts was greatly influenced by the form of the poem.

When questioned about his methods of composition, Barber said "[When] I'm writing music for words, then I immerse myself in those words, and I let the music flow out of them."¹⁹ In this process of flowing, the piano plays an important role in illustrating those words. In a manner similar to composers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Barber uses text painting to illustrate bird calls (Example 5) and bells (Example 6, page 17).

Ex. 5. Barber's "The Crucifixion" (Hermit Songs),
mm. 1-6:
motivic figure illustrating cry of the first
bird.



Another example of text painting by Barber is pointed out by Friedewald in the song "Nuvoletta" (1939). The text reads: "the tears of night began to fall, first by ones and twos, then by threes and fours, at last by fives and sixes of sevens." Illustrating these words, the left

¹⁹Jackson, p. 135.

Ex. 6. Barber's "Church Bell at Night" (Hermit Songs), mm. 1-2:
chords illustrating the sound of bells.

(Molto adagio)

hand of the piano part plays one quarter note, two eighth-notes, a triplet, four sixteenth-notes, a quintuplet, sextuplet, and septuplet, outlining a unison, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh, respectively (see Example 7).²⁰

Ex. 7. Barber's "Nuvoletta," mm. 109-12:
illustration using note groups and intervals.

(Adagio)

²⁰Friedewald, p. 73.

Because of the importance of the text in Barber's compositional technique, the complete text and a brief discussion of it will be presented before each song is examined in the following chapter.²¹

²¹The text given is taken from the musical setting and includes Barber's alterations and repetitions.

CHAPTER III
THE ROLE OF THE PIANO:
AN EXAMINATION AND DISCUSSION OF THE SONGS

"A Last Song"²²

A last song, and a very last, and yet another
O, when can I give over?
Must I drive the pen until blood bursts from my nails
And my breath fails and I shake with fever,
Or sit well wrapped in a many colored cloak
Where the moon shines new through Castle Crystal?
Shall I never hear her whisper softly:
"But this is truth written by you only,
And for me only: Therefor, love, have done?"

Three poems by the English poet Robert Graves (b. 1895) were selected for use in this cycle. The first song, titled "A Last Song," was adapted by Barber from the original "A Last Poem," which was published in 1964 in a collection entitled Man Does, Woman Is. The collection is actually a three-book sequence "dramatizing the vicissitudes of poetic love."²³

²²Samuel Barber, Collected Songs, (New York: G. Schirmer, 1971), pp. 103-05.

²³Martin Seymour-Smith, Robert Graves: His Life and Work, (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1982), p. 552.

The Piano as Partner²⁴

Harmonic support:

The piano provides chordal support for the voice by inclusion of melodic notes within the chord structures. The sustained quality produced by the relatively slow harmonic rhythm gives the voice the rhythmic freedom of embellishment. The effect is of the vocal line emerging from the harmonic progression rather than an independent melody harmonized by the piano. This can be seen in measures 10-13 in Example 8.

Ex. 8. "A Last Song," mm. 10-13:
emerging vocal line.

(Moderato)

mf *animando e cresc.*

Must I drive the pen until

10 *mf* *animando e cresc.*

²⁴ All musical examples cited in the following examination are identified by the song's measure numbers. Likewise, in the subsequent examinations the measure numbers refer to the specific songs under discussion.

Ex. 8. "A Last Song" (continued).

musical score for Ex. 8, "A Last Song" (continued). The score is in 2/4 time and features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line has lyrics: "blood bursts_ from my nails_ And my breath fails and I". The piano accompaniment has markings "poco a poco", "12", and "13". The tempo is marked "poco a poco" and the dynamics are "f" and "p".

Doubling of voice:

Direct doubling of the voice part occurs several times, but never for more than three or four notes at a time, as in Example 9, measures 3-4. Melodic notes are

Ex. 9. "A Last Song," mm. 3-4:
direct doubling.

(Moderato)

musical score for Ex. 9, "A Last Song," mm. 3-4: direct doubling. The score is in 2/4 time and features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line has lyrics: "A last song, and a". The piano accompaniment has markings "poco rall.", "p", "a tempo", "3", "4", and "8". The tempo is marked "Moderato".

also doubled by inner notes of the chordal outline as in Example 10, measures 15-16.

Ex. 10. "A Last Song," mm. 15-16:
inner doubling of melody.

(Moderato)

Melodic imitation:

Imitation of motives and fragments of motives is the most frequently used contrapuntal device. In measures 24-25, Example 11, the piano briefly imitates the voice a third lower, changing the last interval to remain in the tonality. The piano and voice share in presenting the

Ex. 11. "A Last Song," mm. 24-25:
imitation at the third.

(Moderato)

melodic line by transfer, as in Example 12, measures 22-24, where the piano begins the phrase in the first two measures and the voice continues the melody at the words "But this

Ex. 12. "A Last Song," mm. 22-24:
transfer of melody.

(Moderato)

Tempo I
mp

ando

Shall I nev-er hear her whis-per soft - ly:.. But this is truth

22 23 24

is truth." In Example 13, measures 29-30, the melodic notes are heard first in the piano, imitated by the voice one beat later in the manner of a suspension chain.

Ex. 13. "A Last Song," mm. 29-30:
suspension chain.

(Moderato)

a tempo

There for love have

29 30

The Piano as Commentator

Text Illustration

Imitation of sounds:

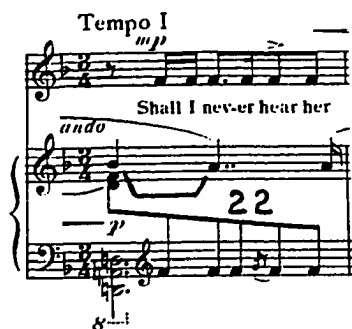
There are no instances of the imitation of natural sounds in this song.

Traditional images:

The "sigh" motive (a falling interval of a second) occurs in Example 14, measure 22, and, in one form or another, in every measure but two in the entire song. The image of the inescapable passage of time is represented by the insistent repeated eighth-notes throughout.

Ex. 14. "A Last Song," mm. 22:
"sigh" motive.

(Moderato)



Tempo:

The animando marking is used to indicate greater intensity at the words "Must I drive the pen until blood bursts from my nails / And my breath fails and I shake with fever" in Example 15, measures 11-12.

Ex. 15. "A Last Song," mm. 11-12:
animando for greater intensity.

(Moderato)

animando e cresc. poco a poco

driveth the pen un-til blood bursts from my nails And my

animando e cresc. poco a poco 12

In Example 16, measure 28, the poco rallentando marking, coinciding with a rolled chord in the piano, emphasizes the second statement of "only."

Ex. 16. "A Last Song," m. 28:
rallentando emphasizing "only."


(Moderato)

poco rall.

on - ly:

28

Rhythmic figures:

The most pervasive rhythmic entity is the insistent repeated eighth-notes mentioned above. However, the pattern $\frac{3}{4}$ , which occurs first in measure 1,

Example 17, is the basic rhythmic pattern for the melody of this song and is frequently used with the "sigh" motive.

Ex. 17. "A Last Song," m. 1:
basic rhythmic pattern of melody.



A repeated four-note pattern is used in measures 20-21, Example 18, to produce a hemiola effect during the transition back to Tempo I. The smoothness of this transition is assisted by the change to $\frac{5}{4}$ meter.

Ex. 18. "A Last Song," mm. 20-21:
four-note pattern used as hemiola.

(Moderato)

Tonality and harmony:

The D-minor tonality is established in measure 4, Example 19. The avoidance of this tonality in the introductory measures 1-3 (Example 19) could be interpreted as an illustration of the feeling of uncertainty suggested by the text. The piano underscores the questioning nature of

Ex. 19. "A Last Song," mm. 1-4:
D-minor tonality established (m. 4);
avoidance of tonality (mm. 1-3).

Musical score for "A Last Song," measures 1-4. The score is in 3/4 time, marked Moderato. It features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The piano part has a "con pedale" instruction. The tempo changes from Moderato to *poco rall.* in measure 2, then back to *a tempo* in measure 4. The key signature changes from C major to D minor in measure 4. The piano part has a "p" (piano) dynamic in measure 4. The vocal line has lyrics "A last song, and a".

the text by concluding the song with an augmented chord on C^1 (spelled C-E-A-flat) as seen in Example 20, measure 32.

Ex. 20. "A Last Song," m. 32;
augmented chord on C^1 (C-E-A-flat).

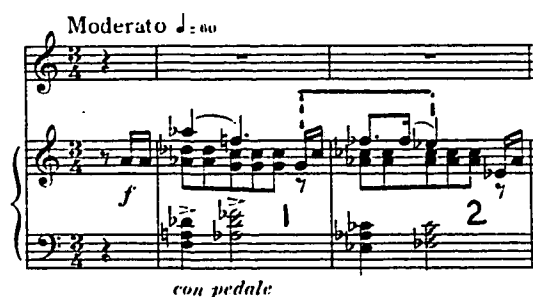
(Moderato)

Musical score for "A Last Song," measure 32. The score is in 3/4 time, marked Moderato. It features a piano accompaniment. The piano part has a "p" (piano) dynamic in measure 32, followed by a "pp" (pianissimo) dynamic. The key signature is D minor. The measure ends with an augmented chord on C^1 (C-E-A-flat).

Texture, direction, register:

Frequent use of open fourths and fifths creates the impression of emptiness. The melodic figure of ascending fourths and a falling second, Example 21, measures 1-2, is

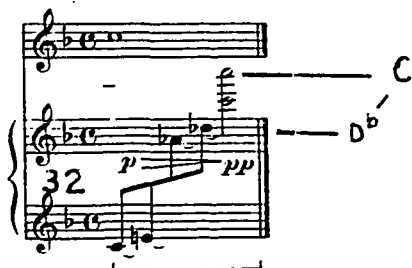
Ex. 21. "A Last Song," mm. 1-2:
melodic figure.



treated in octave displacement in measure 32, Example 22, where the final note rises to C^3 rather than falling to the expected C^2 . The delayed arrival of the D-minor

Ex. 22. "A Last Song," m. 32:
figure treated in octave displacement.

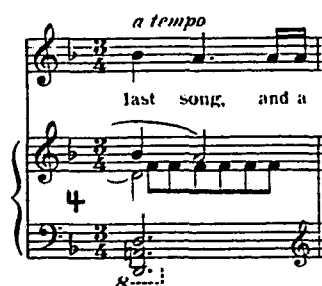
(Moderato)



tonality is emphasized by the placement of the left hand chord an octave lower, as in measure 4, Example 23.

Ex. 23. "A Last Song," m. 4:
chord an octave lower for emphasis.

(Moderato)



Dynamics, accents, declamation:

The volume rises and falls in correspondence to emotions and excitement of the text, particularly in measures 10-17, Example 24. Accented chords and decrescendi accompany the word "breath fails" and "shake with fever" in measures 13-14 of Example 24 as an example of "word painting." In a similar way, the only sforzando in this song is

Ex. 24. "A Last Song," mm. 10-17:
rise and fall in volume (mm. 10-17)
word painting with accents and
decrescendi (arrows, mm. 13-14).

(Moderato)



Ex. 24. "A Last Song" (continued).

poco a poco *f*

blood bursts from my nails And my breath fails and I

poco a poco 12 13

shake with fe - ver. Or sit well.

14 15 7

calmando

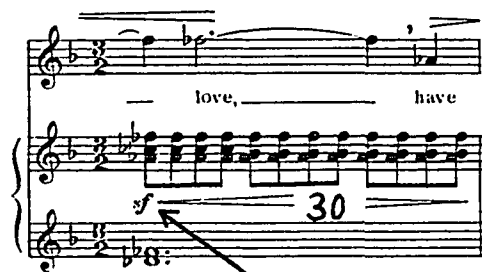
wrapped in a man - y col - ored cloak Where the moon shines

16 17 *calmando*

found in measure 30, Example 25, with the word "love," emphasizing the importance of the word. In Example 26,

Ex. 25. "A Last Song," m. 30:
sforzando emphasis on "love."

(Moderato)



measure 23, the word "whisper" is accompanied by a rolled cluster in the piano, assisting the voice in the declamation of the "wh" sound at the beginning of the word.

Ex. 26. "A Last Song," m. 23:
 rolled cluster with "whisper."

(Moderato)



Mood

The mood of this song is one of painful despair and fear that the force which drives the writer on will never allow a moment's rest. The piano helps create this mood

through the austerity and coldness produced by the quartal harmony of open fourths and fifths. The unceasing pulse of eighth-notes and the falling interval of a second also contribute to the projection of the mood.

The Piano as Unifier

Melodic material:

The frequent falling interval of a second, occurring in every measure except measures 10 and 21, and the arch shapes of the melody (measures 1, 2, 4, 15, 16, 32) serve as unifying devices in this song.

Rhythmic material:

Unifying rhythmic elements are the insistent pulse of eighth-notes and the rhythmic pattern $\frac{3}{4}$ ♩ | ♩ ♩. and its variations $\frac{3}{4}$ ♩ | ♩ ♩. , $\frac{3}{4}$ ♩ | ♩ ♩ ♩ , and $\frac{3}{4}$ ♩ | ♩ ♩ ♩ .

Harmonic and tonal relationships:

The song is unified by the intermittent return to the D-minor chord and tonality, and the texture of the chords built on fourths.

Pianistic figurations:

There are no unusual pianistic figurations that work toward overall unity.

Creation and maintenance of mood:

The insistent eighth-notes and the interval of a second are the most important aspects for the creation and maintenance of mood. The dissonance created by the seconds pervades the song, and starkness is suggested by the open fourths and fifths.

"My Lizard"²⁵

(Wish for a Young Love)

My lizard, my lively writher,
May your limbs never wither,
May the eyes in your face
Survive the green ice
Of envy's mean gaze:
May you live out your life
Without hate, without grief,
And your hair ever blaze
In the sun, in the sun,
When I am undone,
When I am no one.

Theodore Roethke (1908-63), the only American writer represented in the cycle, was educated at the University of Michigan and Harvard University. His career included teaching positions at Bennington College, Vermont, the University of Washington, Seattle, and Lafayette College, Pennsylvania. A Fulbright lecturer in Italy and a recipient of a Ford Foundation Grant, he also received numerous other awards, among which were two Guggenheim Fellowships and a Pulitzer Prize for "The Waking" in 1953.

The original poem "Wish for a Young Wife" is the "dying poet's prayer for the best of possible lives for his wife,"²⁶ his prayer being "that she live without hate or grief after his death."²⁷ Roethke "derived much of his

²⁵Barber, Collected Songs, pp. 106-08.

²⁶Karl Malkoff, Theodore Roethke: An Introduction to the Poetry, (New York & London: Columbia University Press, 1966), p. 195.

²⁷Ibid., p. 11.

poetic power and originality from his attempts to interpret adult life in terms of permanent symbolism established in childhood."²⁸

The Piano as Partner

Harmonic support:

The piano part consists predominantly of two broken chords which appear in alternation throughout the song (Example 27, measures 5-6). The chord in measure 5 functions as a $I^{\flat}_{\frac{6}{4}}$ chord in the key of A-flat major. The D-natural in the chord, implying the Lydian mode with its raised fourth, serves to add instability. The chord in

Ex. 27. "My Lizard," mm. 5-6:
basic chords in song.

(Fast and light)

measure 6 is a secondary dominant which sounds and resolves like a German sixth chord. At no point in the song does the A-flat major chord appear in root position; the

²⁸Ibid., p. 1.

absence of the root and the vacillation from E-flat to F support the image of no beginning and no end.

Doubling of voice:


Some direct doubling of the vocal line occurs, as in measures 15-17, Example 28, but the majority of the time the piano supplies only the underlying harmonic structure.

Ex. 28. "My Lizard," mm. 15-17:
direct doubling.

(Fast and light)

The musical score for Example 28 shows measures 15-17. The vocal line (treble clef) has the lyrics "May you live out your life With - out". The piano accompaniment (grand staff) features a descending three-note figure in the right hand and a more complex rhythmic pattern in the left hand. Measures 15, 16, and 17 are indicated at the bottom of the piano part.

Melodic imitation:

A descending three-note figure , which first occurs in the voice beginning in measure 6, becomes the material for all imitation between voice and piano in the song. It appears in augmentation (measures 12-13, Example 29), and similarly in measures 22-24. The imitation

Ex. 29. "My Lizard," mm. 12-13:
augmentation of descending figure.

(Fast and light)



one beat apart in measures 18-19, Example 30, is an example of partnership as the piano assists the voice in the emphasis of the word "grief." The words "hate" and "blaze" are also treated in this manner.

Ex. 30. "My Lizard," mm. 18-19:
imitation one beat apart.

(Fast and light)

The Piano as Commentator

Text Illustration

Imitation of sounds:

There are no instances of the imitation of natural sounds in this song.

Traditional images:

The disjunct movement of the melodic line and the accompanimental arpeggios, coupled with the contrary motion between melody and bass at chord changes, depict the motion suggested in the opening lines "My lizard, my lively writher." The constant sixteenth-note movement in the piano and the "Fast and light" tempo indication assist in this illustration. The ascending scale in measures 9-10, Example 31, provides an amusing image of the lizard scurrying away, then stopping suddenly to look around.

Ex. 31. "My Lizard," mm. 9-10:
"scurrying" scale pattern.

(Fast and light)



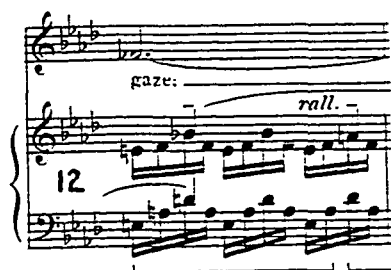
Tempo:

The tempo marking "Fast and light" is itself a description of the movement of the lizard. The only marked changes, the rallentando on the word "gaze" (Example 32[a], measure 12) and the poco allargando on the word "sun" (Example 32[b], measure 22) place emphasis upon these words

Ex. 32. "My Lizard," mm. 12 and 22:

[a] rallentando on "gaze."

(Fast and light)



[b] allargando on "sun."

(Fast and light)



and assist in expressing the musical and poetic shape of the verse. The slowing harmonic rhythm and the augmentation of the three-note descending pattern in combination with the poco allargando in measures 22-24 draw attention to the climax of the song at the word "sun."

Rhythmic figures:

The grouping of four sixteenth-notes, creating a kind of nervous motion, is the most pervasive rhythmic figure in the song. The rhythmically altered and augmented figure of the descending three-note motive (measures 12-13 and 22-24) is used in conjunction with the rallentando and allargando as discussed earlier under Tempo.

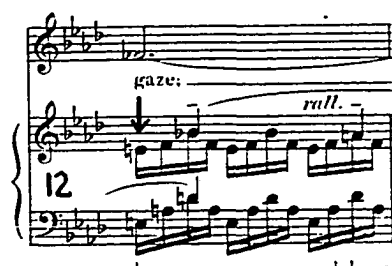
Tonality and harmony:

The tonality and harmony remain basically static within the context of the alternating chords. The movement

of the bass line varies only once for two measures at "envy's mean gaze" where it goes to an E-natural, perhaps to emphasize the destructive powers of envy (Example 33, measure 12). The avoidance of the A-flat major chord in root position helps give the impression that the lizard is already moving before the song starts and is still going after the song ends.

Ex. 33. "My Lizard," m. 12:
E-natural on "gaze."

(Fast and light)



Texture, direction, register:

The "empty" sound associated with the use of open fourths is not as audible in the predominantly two-part texture because of the fast tempo and the juxtaposition of quartal chords, which produces consonant intervals of sixths between the two hands. The writhing of the lizard is illustrated by the direction of the line, turning back on itself within the confines of the outlined interval, usually a seventh. This action produces a feeling of expansion and contraction, stable to unstable. In the final

measure of the song, the upward direction of the line is part of the descriptive effect of the disappearing lizard as it rapidly moves away (measure 32, Example 34). The senza ritardando in the same measure indicates no change in speed; there is no rest for this lizard!

Ex. 34. "My Lizard," m. 32:
upward moving line.
senza ritardando.

(Fast and light)



Dynamics, accents, declamation:

The dynamic level is mostly soft with occasional crescendi on rising lines and phrases. The most dramatic crescendo is during the phrase "And your hair ever blaze, In the sun" (Example 35, measures 18-22), reaching poco forte on the last word. The decrescendo in the last

Ex. 35. "My Lizard," mm. 18-22:
crescendo to climax.

(Fast and light)

cresc. poco a poco
hate, with - out grief, And your hair ev - er

18 *cresc. poco a poco* 19 20

poco f
ossia *poco allarg.*
sun, in the
blaze, In the sun, in the sun, in the

21 22 *poco f. sostenuto*

measure helps to illustrate the disappearance of the lizard (Example 36, measure 32). The tenuto marks are used as accents to set off the augmented imitation and assist in the rallentando and allargando in measures 12-13 and 22-24.

Ex. 36. "My Lizard," m. 32:
decrecendo with disappearing.

(Fast and light)

senza rit.
32
disappearing

The descending three-note motive is used in imitation to assist the voice in the declamation of the words "hate," "grief," "hair," and "blaze."

Mood

The mood of the song is totally one of scurrying and unsettled movement. This is achieved through the sixteenth-note patterns in the piano, the scale passages, and the direction of the line as the lizard disappears.

The Piano as Unifier

Melodic material:

The interval of a second and the upward leap of a ninth are the most important unifying melodic devices. The constant, ostinato-like movement of the bass line from E-flat to F is the most pervasive use of the interval, while the seventh is outlined in the right and left hand four-note groupings. The three-note descending motive is also important, especially when used in imitation.

Rhythmic material:

The ever-present sixteenth-notes, the slow but steady harmonic rhythm, and the variety of imitation of the three-note motive serve to unify the song by their constant reiteration, producing one impression—motion—throughout the song.

Harmonic and tonal relationships:

Although A-flat major is never heard in root position, the perception of that tonality is still felt. The anticipation of ultimately arriving solidly on that chord is dashed in measure 32 as the lizard simply disappears.

Pianistic figurations:

There are no unusual pianistic figurations that work toward overall unity.

Creation and maintenance of mood:

The mood is maintained by the constant movement of the sixteenth-notes and the alternation of the two unresolved chords.

"In the Wilderness"²⁹

He, of his gentleness,
 Thirsting and hungering
 Walked in the wilderness;
 Soft words of grace he spoke
 Unto lost desert folk
 That listened wondering.
 He heard the bittern call
 From ruined palace wall,
 Answered him brotherly;
 He held communion
 With the she-pelican
 Of lonely piety.
 Basilisk, cockatrice,
 Flocked to his homilies,
 With mail of dread device.
 With monstrous barbed stings;
 With eager dragon eyes,
 Great bats of leathern wings
 And old, blind broken things
 Mean in their miseries.
 Then ever with him went,
 Of all his wandering
 Comrade, with ragged coat,
 Gaunt ribs, poor innocent
 Bleeding foot, burning throat,
 The guileless young scapegoat:
 For forty nights and days
 Followed in Jesus' ways,
 Sure guard behind him kept,
 Tears like a lover wept.

"In the Wilderness" was written in 1915 and republished in 1947 in Graves's Collected Poems. Although his views on religion changed between the two publications, Graves still felt that his original intent in writing this poem had not changed. He "began to see Jesus as the antithesis of the genuine, the poetic hero: as patriarchal, fanatic rather than devoted—and terribly vulnerable to betrayal and deceit."³⁰

²⁹Barber, Collected Songs, pp. 109-13.

³⁰Seymour-Smith, Robert Graves: His Life and Work, p. 390.

The Piano as Partner

Harmonic support:

The piano provides fairly full chordal support, emphasizing wide-ranging intervals of the fifth and continuously descending melodic shape. Most melodic pitches are occasionally omitted. The order in which the melodic pitches occur within the measure does not always coincide with those of the voice part, nor is the register in which they appear always the same. The center section of the song (measures 16-26) dwells mostly on the open fifths and the clash of the interval of a second between voice and piano.

Doubling of voice:

Although there are a few times when the piano is doubling the voice exactly, this is not readily heard because of the register changes of individual notes in the right hand of the piano. In measure 7, Example 37[a], the notes of the vocal melody (B-flat-D-C-G-B-flat-F) appear in partial octave displacement in the piano. What is most easily heard is the falling natural minor scale in the upper line of the piano. Actually, this measure consists of four different melodic and rhythmic entities (Example 37[b], measure 7): (1) the melody in the voice, (2) the falling scale in the right hand, (3) the two-note "sigh"

motive in the inner part, and (4) the wide-ranging broken-chord bass line.

- Ex. 37. "In the Wilderness," m. 7:
 [a] octave displacement (arrows).
 [b] four melodic and rhythmic entities.
 (1) melody in voice
 (2) falling scale
 (3) "sigh" motive
 (4) broken-chord bass

(Flowing, in 2)

Un - to lost des - ert folk.

(1) — (2) — (3) — (4) — [b]

Melodic imitation:

There are few examples of melodic imitation between the voice and the piano in this song. In measure 5, Example 38[a], the piano imitates the voice in terms of rhythm and melodic shape but with slightly different pitches, and in measure 11, Example 38[b], the piano imitates the first two pitches of the voice part at the word "answered." Canonic imitation occurs in the piano part in measure 1, Example 38[c], one beat later and at the octave; it appears one eighth-note later in measure 7, Example 38[d]; and briefly at the fifth in measure 26, Example 38[e].

Ex. 38. "In the Wilderness," examples of imitation:

[a] imitation of melodic shape, m. 5.

(Flowing, in 2)

[b] imitation at "answered," m. 11.

(Flowing, in 2)

[c] canonic imitation at the octave, m. 1.

Flowing, in 2 (♩ = 40)

sempre legato, con ped.

[d] imitation one eighth-note later, m. 7.

(Flowing, in 2)

[e] imitation at the fifth, m. 26.

(Flowing, in 2)

The Piano as Commentator

Text Illustration

Imitation of sounds:

The figuration in the right hand on the second beat of measure 9, Example 39, seems to be an attempt at imitating the "bittern," a nocturnal heron with a characteristic cry. Because of the use of the grace-note figure by many

Ex. 39. "In the Wilderness," m. 9:
imitation of "bittern."

(Flowing, in 2)



composers, including Barber, to illustrate birds, it is more likely that this would fit under the category of traditional images. Fortunately, the depiction of the qualities of the "basilisk" and "cockatrice," (measure 16), legendary reptiles that could kill with a breath or a glance, cannot be musically portrayed.

Traditional images:

The constant movement of eighth-notes and the slower pulse of two beats per measure are both used to illustrate

Jesus' walking in the wilderness. This pulse is somewhat broken in the middle of the song by the division of phrases within the $\frac{6}{8}$ meter. This occurs in measures 16-26 during a description of all manner of creatures attracted to him and his homilies. The nature of "communion" and "piety" seems to be illustrated by the sudden change in the style of the piano in measure 12, Example 40, emphasizing two fairly open-sounding chords per measure rather than the moving eighth-note pattern of the left hand. The two-note

Ex. 40. "In the Wilderness," m. 12:
change in piano style.

(Flowing, in 2)



falling figure, or "sigh," is used extensively throughout to depict sadness, as at the word "wept" in measures 39-40, Example 41.

Tempo:

The marking "Flowing, in 2" and the metronome indication of $\bullet = 40$ set the steady, walking pulse for this song. The pace quickens with animando and piu mosso during the section about monstrous creatures, suggesting some

Ex. 41. "In the Wilderness," mm. 39-40:
 "sigh" motive at "wept."

(Flowing, in 2)



degree of fright, with the marking with terror in measure 20. The return to the last section at a slightly slower tempo than the first indicates the wearing and tiring effect of this journey of forty days and forty nights, as do the two allargando markings and the molto allargando marking in the last fourteen measures.

Rhythmic figures:

Barber's use of hemiola contributes to the ponderous feeling in the song. This can be seen in measure 5, Example 42, where the "sigh" motive appears in the middle register as quarter notes treated in the manner of a hemiola. This also occurs in measures 6, 8, and 29-31.

Ex. 42. "In the Wilderness," m. 5:
 "sigh" motive as hemiola.

(Flowing, in 2)

An interesting rhythmic effect is produced in measures 21-26. At measure 21, Example 43[b], the voice is in $\frac{6}{8}$ meter, but the piano is divided into groups of five beats within the $\frac{6}{8}$ meter. Because of the difficulty of actually making

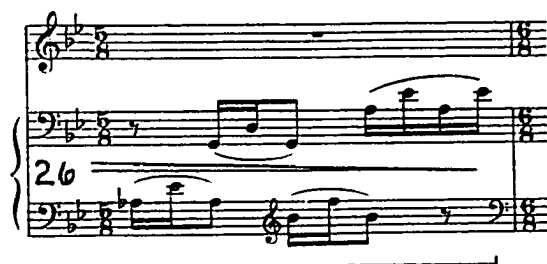
Ex. 43. "In the Wilderness," mm. 21-22:
 [a] sudden pianissimo, mysterious, two-octave drop.
 [b] five beat pattern in $\frac{6}{8}$ meter.

(Flowing, in 2)

a break where it is indicated by the comma or "breath mark," it seems most likely that Barber placed these marks in order to draw attention to this division as well as to make it easier to read and play rhythmically. The effect produced is somewhat chaotic and disorganized. The melodic and rhythmic figure in the piano seems to represent flapping wings of "bats" and "broken things." The sudden pianissimo and the marking of mysterious join with the two-octave drop in register to produce a startling effect (measure 21, Example 43[b]), as if a great flock of bats emerged from the depths, increased in volume as they approached, and decreased in volume as they passed by. As with the lizard in the previous song, their disappearance is accompanied by upward-moving figuration, seen in measure 26, Example 44.

Ex. 44. "In the Wilderness," m. 26:
upward-moving figuration.

(Flowing, in 2)



Tonality and harmony:

Tonal centers and areas are used very clearly to denote differences in sections. The first and last sections, which depict the more calm aspects of the text, alternate between the areas of G and D, while the middle section (describing monsters and exhibiting some excitement) wanders from B to F-sharp to A to E-flat and A-flat within the space of eleven measures. Dissonance is used quite effectively, especially in measure 20, Example 45.

Ex. 45. "In the Wilderness," m. 20:
effective use of dissonance.

(Flowing, in 2)

ff (with terror!)

With ea - ger drag - on eyes,

20

Texture, direction, register:

The texture is dominated by the interval of the fifth and the open spacing of widely-ranging broken-chord figures in the left hand of the piano part. This spacing contributes to the general feeling of austerity and loneliness. The descending scale patterns throughout give the song a strong feeling of sadness and despair, with the "sigh" motive providing numerous points of emotion. This mood is

broken only in the middle section where the movement of the piano part is either upward (mm. 18-19) or static (mm. 21-25). The range of writing is fairly wide in each section except for two instances: the exclusive use of the middle register for "communion" and "piety" (mm. 12-15), and the use of the extreme lower range for "bats" and "broken things" (mm. 21-25).

Dynamics, accents, declamation:

Dynamics are used to illustrate individual words (*p* marking with the word "soft," m. 6), to build suspense and excitement (crescendo from *p* to *ff* in three measures, mm. 18-20, Example 46[a]), and to set off sections by sudden changes (*pp*, mysterious marking, m. 21). In a

- Ex. 46. "In the Wilderness," mm. 18-20:
 [a] crescendo from *p* to *ff*.
 [b] sforzando markings to build tension.

(Flowing, in 2)

The musical score is for the piece "In the Wilderness" (mm. 18-20). It is written in 2/4 time and consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line begins with the lyrics "With mail of dread de-vice," and the piano part features a crescendo from piano (*p*) to fortissimo (*ff*) over measures 18-20. Measure 18 is marked "più mosso" and "p sub.", and measure 19 is marked "sf". The piano part also includes the lyrics "With mon-strous bar-bed stings;" in measure 19.

Ex. 46. "In the Wilderness" (continued).

ff (with terror)

With ea - ger drag - on eyes,

20 *ff*

similar manner, accents are used to mark a particular word or phrase ("bittern" call, mm. 9-10), to help build tension (*sf* in mm. 19-20, Example 46[b]), and to set off unusual phrasing or rhythmic division (patterns of five beats in $\frac{6}{8}$ meter, mm. 21-22). The trills in measure 31, Example 47, which are set with the words "bleeding" and "burning," assist the voice in the declamation of the "bl" and "b" sounds at the beginning of those words.

Ex. 47. "In the Wilderness," m. 31:
trills at "bleeding" and "burning."

(Flowing, in 2)

poco f allarg.

Bleed-ing_ foot, burn-ing_ throat..

31 *poco f allarg.*

Mood






The mood of this song is one of weary sadness and resolve in accepting the inevitable. This is shattered in the middle section by surprises, but soon returns to the same patient submission of the opening section. Dynamics are used effectively in delineating the emotional and formal aspects of the song. The smoothness of the legato writing in the piano, the downward shape of the melodic line, and the repeated two-note "sigh" figures contribute to the overall mood.

The Piano as Unifier

Melodic material:

The song is unified by the descending scale pattern which pervades the first and third sections, the two-note "sigh" figure used in many rhythmic configurations, and the accompanimental pattern of the left hand, emphasizing the broken chords of open fourths and fifths.

Rhythmic material:

The most obvious rhythmic pattern in the piano is the flowing eighth-note pattern in the left hand. The rhythm associated with the "sigh" figure () and its extension in the piano part () also unifies the song, appearing in modified form as  , (7)  , and 7  .

Creation and maintenance of mood:

The mood is maintained through the use of steady eighth-note patterns, the emphasis on fifths and seconds, the dissonance of the second section, the two-note "sigh" figure, the downward moving melodic phrases, and the careful use of dynamics.

"Solitary Hotel"³¹

Solitary hotel in mountain pass. Autumn, Twilight. Fire lit. In dark corner young man seated. Young woman enters. Restless. Solitary. She sits. She goes to window. She stands. She sits. Twilight. She thinks. On solitary hotel paper she writes. She thinks. She writes. She sighs. Wheels and hoofs. She hurries out. He comes from his dark corner. He seizes solitary paper. He holds it towards fire. Twilight. He reads. Solitary. What? In sloping, upright and backhands. Queen's Hotel, Queen's Hotel, Queen's ho- . . .

James Joyce (1882-1941) was born in Dublin but spent much of his life in Switzerland. "Solitary Hotel" is a brief section of prose taken from his novel Ulysses. Serial publication of the novel in 1921 led to a lawsuit and subsequent conviction of the publishers for obscenity. Although this delayed publication of the work in the United States and caused other problems with pirated editions, the notoriety made Joyce famous. Basically a chronology of a particular day's events (June 16, 1904), the novel is full of mythological, historical, literary, and formal allusions and analogies.³² "Solitary Hotel" appears near the end of the day in a section titled "Ithaca," and is a scene constructed by the character Stephen during a conversation with Bloom.

³¹Barber, Collected Songs, pp. 114-18.

³²Coilín Owens, "James Joyce," Critical Survey of Long Fiction, English Language Series, 8 vols., ed. Frank N. Magill (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Salem Press, 1983), 4:1496-1507.

The Piano as Partner

Harmonic support:

The pitches of the voice part generally appear in the piano part or are suggested by the chordal structure. In this song, the voice is primarily interjection and commentary in the manner of a recitative, while the piano carries the melody and the ostinato "tango" accompaniment.

Doubling of voice:

There is no direct or indirect doubling of the vocal line.

Melodic imitation:

The contrapuntal devices used in exchange with the voice are very subtle. They consist of the voice imitating the piano in measures 18-19, Example 48, where it answers at the interval of the fourth; by imitation at the octave,

Ex. 48. "Solitary Hotel," mm. 18-19:
imitation at the fourth.

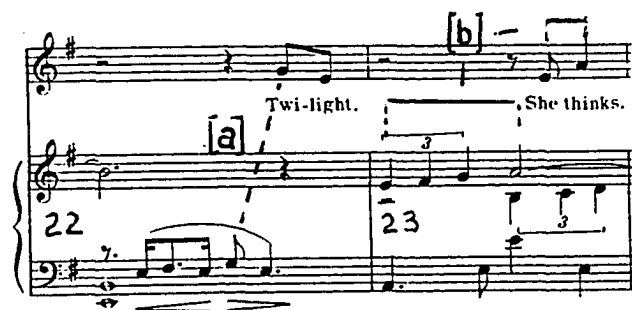
(Like a rather fast tango in 2)

The musical score for Example 48 shows two staves. The top staff is the vocal line, and the bottom staff is the piano accompaniment. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 2/4. The tempo/style is indicated as '(Like a rather fast tango in 2)'. The vocal line has lyrics 'She goes to win-dow. She st' and a melodic phrase. The piano accompaniment has a bass line and a treble line. Measure 18 is marked 'mf' and measure 19 is marked 'p'. The piano part features a triplet in measure 19.

measure 22, Example 49[a]; and by outlining the piano melody in measure 23, Example 49[b]. An example of the

Ex. 49. "Solitary Hotel," mm. 22-23:
 [a] imitation at the octave.
 [b] outlining of melody.

(Like a rather fast tango in 2)



transfer of melody between voice and piano occurs in the final two measures of the song where the voice supplies the penultimate note and the piano finishes the melody with the pianissimo and staccato eighth-note chord, Example 50, measures 50-52.

Ex. 50. "Solitary Hotel," mm. 50-52:
 melodic transfer between voice and piano.

(Like a rather fast tango in 2)



The Piano as Commentator

Text Illustration

Imitation of sounds:

Though not an imitation of the actual sound of horses' hooves, the figure suddenly appearing in measure 32, Example 51 (marked agitato and sf), could be seen as representing a certain roughness associated with that sound. There are no other examples of the imitation of natural sounds in the song.

Ex. 51. "Solitary Hotel," m. 32:
roughness at "Wheels and hoofs."

(Like a rather fast tango in 2)

Traditional images:

Traditional images for movement or action are used occasionally in this song. The descending pattern of eight sixteenth-notes, which occurs first at the entrance of the woman in measure 12, Example 52, and then subsequently at the words "restless" (m. 14) and "sits" (m. 17), seems to depict an image of nervous motion. The thirty-second-note

Ex. 52. "Solitary Hotel," m. 12:
descending pattern depicting nervous motion.

(Like a rather fast tango in 2)



figuration in measure 32, Example 53[a], is used to indicate speed and to depict a quick departure. An ascending glissando on the white keys, found in the same measure (Example 53[b]), suggests the young man's rising from his seat.

Ex. 53. "Solitary Hotel," m. 32:
[a] thirty-second-note figuration.
[b] glissando for rising.

(Like a rather fast tango in 2)

Tempo:

The freedom of the tempo in recitative style and the fermati and numerous rests are effective in describing the scene, setting apart sections, and emphasizing the sporadic movements and thoughts of the man and the woman. The somewhat brisk tempo indicated by the direction "Like a rather fast tango in 2 $\text{♩} = 60$ " suggests a more nervous or restless image than the typical languid and seductive tango.

Rhythmic figures:

The combination of the constant tango rhythm in the left hand and the legato quality of the triplet melody in the right hand sets the mood and is the most prominent feature of this song. The descending pattern of eight sixteenth-notes (Example 52) suggests nervous motion.

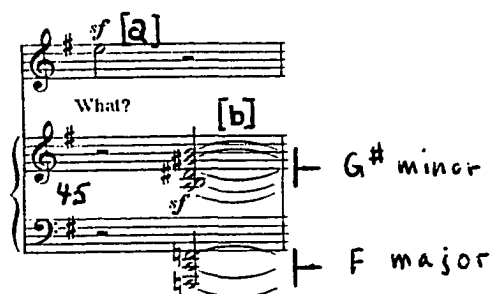
Tonality and harmony:

Barber uses tonality and harmony to set off separate events, thoughts, or movement. Using the basic harmonic progression I-IV-I-V-I he establishes the E-minor tonality; sudden departures from that tonality, therefore, draw attention to the words and usually indicate a change of some kind in the text. The first of these comes at the moment the young woman begins writing. Starting in measure 25 with an altered I_4^{\flat} chord, the progression moves from G-sharp to C-sharp to F, and finally, after downward chromatic movement in the bass over a sustained F chord, arrives at C in measure 32. At this point she hurries out

and the original tango ostinato in the key of E-minor returns. The second departure occurs at measure 45 where the voice finishes the expected cadence of the piano melody to E, but the piano is silent on the first beat, entering on the second beat with a juxtaposition of an F major chord with a G-sharp-minor chord, producing an effect much like a deceptive cadence (Example 54[b]). This coincides with the word "What?" and a sforzando as in Example 54[a].

Ex. 54. "Solitary Hotel," m. 45:
 [a] sforzando on "What?"
 [b] juxtaposed chords.

(Like a rather fast tango in 2)



Texture, direction, register:

Again the texture is dominated by intervals of open fourths and fifths. Downward phrase motion, beginning in measure 1 with the piano introduction, is the predominant sense of direction. The thirty-second-note scales and arpeggios as the woman hurries out and the long glissando on the white keys as the man rises are obvious images depicted by direction. The interesting effect produced by the

placement of the hands four octaves apart may possibly suggest the excitement of anticipation in discovering what the woman has written.

Dynamics, accents, declamation:

The subdued dynamics of most of the song makes the contrasting sections stand out more clearly, such as the forte as she hurries out (Example 55[a], measure 32), the pianissimo as he moves towards the paper (Example 55[b], measure 33), and the crescendo as he holds the paper to the fire (Example 55[c], measures 38-39). Accents are used to

Ex. 55. "Solitary Hotel," use of dynamics:

[a] forte at "hurries out," m. 32.

(Like a rather fast tango in 2)

(free) agitato

Wheels and hoofs. She hurries out.

32

[b] pianissimo as man moves towards paper, m. 33.

(Like a rather fast tango in 2)

a tempo

He comes from his d

33

Ex. 55. "Solitary Hotel" (continued).

[c] crescendo at "fire," mm. 38-39.

(Like a rather fast tango in 2)



portray sudden activity ("Wheels and hoofs," m. 32) and surprise ("What?," m. 45). The piano assists in the declamation of the text at the word "What?" through the use of the sforzando.

Mood

The mood in this song is one of contrast between the relaxed and pensive young man (represented in the piano by the recurrent tango rhythm, the legato melodic line, and the subdued dynamics) and the nervous and restless young woman (represented in the voice by the telegraphic style of the text and in the piano by sudden flurries of motion). The feeling of sadness is portrayed by the downward motion of melodic phrases and the static quality of the ostinato tango rhythm. Sudden changes of mood are facilitated by accents, dynamics, and harmonic surprises.

The Piano as Unifier

Melodic material:

The winding of the melodic line in the right hand of the piano becomes a unifying element in the song, as does the melodic interval of a third, both rising and falling. This can be seen in Example 56[a] and 56[b], measures 5-6.

Ex. 56. "Solitary Hotel," mm. 5-6:
 [a] winding of melodic line.
 [b] melodic interval of a third.

(Like a rather fast tango in 2)

Rhythmic material:

The ostinato rhythmic pattern in the bass (♩. ♪ ♩ ♩) and the equally insistent triple-against-duple rhythm serve as unifying factors.

Harmonic and tonal relationships:

The use of traditional harmonic movement, particularly the I-IV-I₄-V-I progression, and the constant returning to the tonal area of E unify the song.

Pianistic figurations:

There are no unusual pianistic figurations that assist in unifying the song.

Creation and maintenance of mood:

The mood is created and maintained by the tango ostinato, the basically minor tonality, the open fourths and fifths, the downward shape of melodic phrases, and the sudden changes of dynamics and tonality.

"Despite and Still"³³

Have you not read
 The words in my head,
 And I made part
 Of your own heart?
 We have been such as draw
 The losing straw
 You of your gentleness,
 I of my rashness,
 Both of despair
 Yet still might share
 This happy will:
 To love despite and still,
 To love despite and still.
 Never let us deny
 The thing's necessity
 But, o, refuse to choose
 When chance may seem to give
 Loves in alternative.
 To love despite and still.

The title poem "Despite and Still" first appeared in Robert Graves's collection Work in Hand in 1942. It has been said of this poem that "the love theme is able to emerge uninhibitedly and robustly. The old theme of guilty lust vanishes, to be replaced by one of serene and shared confidence."³⁴

The Piano as Partner

Harmonic support:

Although many of the melodic pitches appear in the quartal harmony as outlined by the piano, the sustaining of the chord throughout one or more measures provides a basis upon which the voice is free to create dissonance.

³³Barber, Collected Songs, pp. 119-22.

³⁴Seymour-Smith, Robert Graves: His Life and Work, p. 355.

Doubling of voice:

Direct doubling at the octave can be found in Example 57[a], measures 14-15, and in Example 57[b], measures 26-27. No other exact doubling occurs in this song.

Ex. 57. "Despite and Still," direct doubling at the octave:

[a] mm. 14-15.

(Fast and darkly impassioned)

ff broadly
Yet still might share This hap - py will:
ff broadly
14 15
marcatiss.

[b] mm. 26-27.

(Fast and darkly impassioned)

ff very broadly
When chance may seem — to give Loves in al-
ff very broadly
26 27
marcatiss.

Melodic imitation:

In Example 58, measure 3, the piano presents the first portion of the melody in diminution, using a five-note group of thirty-second-notes; this group is then used as a recurring figure in the song, appearing twenty-six times in a variety of augmentation and diminution (as eighth-notes in measure 28, sixteenth-notes in measure 14, and sixty-fourth-notes in measure 13). Canonic writing at

Ex. 58. "Despite and Still," m. 3:
ascending five-note group.

(Fast and darkly impassioned)



the second, one beat apart, can be seen between the voice and the right hand of the piano, whereas the left hand doubles the voice at the octave, as in Example 59[a], measures 14-15. In Example 59[b], measures 26-27, the same type of treatment is used, this time with the piano leading. Canonic writing at the seventh, one beat apart,

Ex. 59. "Despite and Still," canonic writing:

[a] canonic writing at the second, voice leading.

(Fast and darkly impassioned)

ff *broadly*
Yet still might share This hap - py will:
ff *broadly*
14 15
marcatiss.

The musical score for Example 59[a] shows a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line begins with the lyrics "Yet still might share This hap - py will:". The piano accompaniment features a series of chords and moving lines, with measures 14 and 15 indicated. The tempo/mood is marked "ff broadly" and "marcatiss." (marked with a bracket).

[b] canonic writing at the second, piano leading.

(Fast and darkly impassioned)

ff *very broadly* *allarg.*
When chance may seem — to give Loves in al-
ff *very broadly*
26 27
marcatiss.

The musical score for Example 59[b] shows a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line begins with the lyrics "When chance may seem — to give Loves in al-". The piano accompaniment features a series of chords and moving lines, with measures 26 and 27 indicated. The tempo/mood is marked "ff very broadly", "allarg." (with a 3-measure rest), and "marcatiss." (marked with a bracket).

is evident in the piano introduction (Example 60[a], measure 1-2), and at the unison in Example 60[b], measures 16-18.

Ex. 60. "Despite and Still," canonic writing:

[a] canonic writing at the seventh, mm. 1-2.



[b] canonic writing at the unison, mm. 16-18.

(Fast and darkly impassioned)

mf a tempo, with motion *f molto allarg.*

To love de - spite and still, To love de - spite and

mf espr. *f*

16 17 18

The Piano as Commentator

Text Illustration

Imitation of sounds:

There are no imitations of sounds in this song.

Traditional images:

The use of subito piano in Example 61, measure 10, may be considered a type of text painting with the words

"you of your gentleness." When the subito piano occurs again in measure 22 following a crescendo, it is also used to convey the image of the speaker attempting to restrain his passion following an outbreak of emotion. The "sigh"

Ex. 61. "Despite and Still," m. 10:
text painting with subito piano.

(Fast and darkly impassioned)



motive, embellished with triplets, is seen in Example 62[a], measures 1-2, and appears later in measures 19-21 and measures 31-32. The "sigh" motive, without triplets, is accented in Example 62[b], measure 27, and marked by tenuti in Example 62[c], measure 15.

Ex. 62. "Despite and Still," "sigh" motives:

[a] "sigh" motive with triplets.



Ex. 62. "Despite and Still" (continued).

[b] accented "sigh" motive.

(Fast and darkly impassioned)

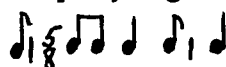
[c] "sigh" motive with tenuti

(Fast and darkly impassioned)

Tempo:

Faster tempos are usually found in the more impassioned sections of the text, while the marking "broader" is associated with statements of hope. The tempo is also slower and broader at each statement of the title "Despite and Still."

Rhythmic figures:

The triplet is used in conjunction with the "sigh" motive to give a stronger emphasis to this recurring figure, and in measures 20-21 it is used in close repetition during a crescendo, illustrating the accompanying marking appassionato. The rhythmic pattern  seems to be almost a "leitmotif" in this song, appearing in measures 16-19 and measures 29-31 with the words "to love despite and still."

Tonality and harmony:

The effect of austerity and despair produced by open fourths and fifths, so prominent in all the songs in this cycle, is less audible in "Despite and Still" because of the cluster sound created by the pedal. The bass line is made more prominent because of this cluster effect, and the use of only the pitches E and A in the bass draws attention to the most pervasive interval in the song.

Texture, direction, register:

The texture emphasizes open fourths and fifths. It is thickened at many climactic moments by the use of the damper pedal through entire measures and twice through a span of two measures. The rising inner line of half-notes (Example 63, measures 9-12) adds tension and excitement.

Ex. 63. "Despite and Still," mm. 9-12:
rising inner line.

(Fast and darkly impassioned)

The musical score for Example 63, measures 9-12 of "Despite and Still", is presented in 9/8 time. It consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line has the lyrics "straw You of your gen-tle-ness." The piano accompaniment features a rising inner line of half-notes in the right hand, marked with "l.h." and "F" and "F#". The bass line is marked with "p sub." and "10".

Ex. 63. "Despite and Still" (continued).

The numerous appearances of the ascending five-note group makes the only downward use of the figure in the final measure of the song a most determined and powerful statement of the theme "Despite and Still" (Example 64, measures 31-33).

Ex. 64. "Despite and Still," mm. 31-33:
final descending five-note group.

(Fast and darkly impassioned)

Dynamics, accents, declamation:

Softer volume is used for the word "gentleness," the subito piano is used to create momentary calm, and crescendi concurrent with rising lines build tension and passion. The accent marks and the direction "hammered," seen in Example 65, measure 1, give added importance to the triplet "sigh" figure.

Ex. 65. "Despite and Still," m. 1:
"hammered" direction.



Mood

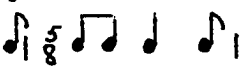
The mood is suggested by the tempo marking "darkly impassioned." Although the text of this song expresses strength and a sense of hopefulness, the repetition of the "sigh" motive and the minor tonality inject a tinge of the despair of previous songs. Passion is maintained by rising figures and periodic crescendi at moments of tension.

The Piano as Unifier

Melodic material:

The frequent appearance of the ascending five-note figure in various note values and the repeated use of the embellished "sigh" are unifying devices in the song.

Rhythmic material:

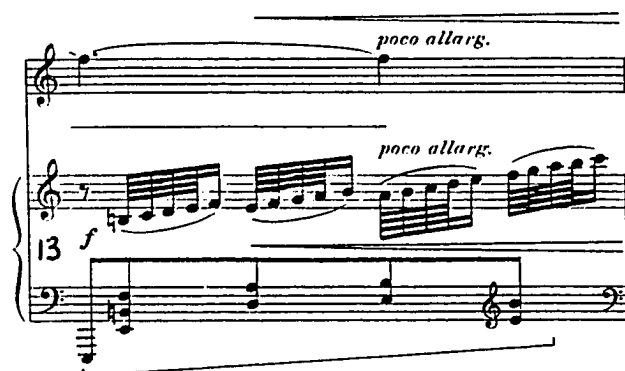
Rhythmic patterns which help unify are the ascending five-note groups, the triplet of the embellished "sigh" motive, and the pattern  , which occurs at the words "to love despite and still."

Harmonic and tonal relationships:

Open intervals of fourths and fifths are used throughout, although not as prominently as in the preceding songs because of the filling in of the intervals and the effect of the damper pedal. Repetition of the chord E-A-D in the left hand of measures 3-10, 14-17, 22, and 28 helps to unify the song. The interval of a fifth is also a unifying element, as seen in measures 13, Example 66, and similarly in measure 25, where it appears in open form in the left hand and as a cluster in the right hand.

Ex. 66. "Despite and Still," m. 13:
unifying element of fifths.

(Fast and darkly impassioned)



Pianistic figurations:

The idiomatic "blurring" effect produced by the damper pedal becomes a feature of the harmonic tone color by repetition.

Creation and maintenance of mood:

The mood is created and maintained by the use of the minor tonality, heavy accents, loud dynamic levels, quartal harmony, and the emphasis on the interval of a fifth. Dramatic statements are further emphasized by crescendo, de-
crescendo, and subito piano indications.

CHAPTER IV
THE CYCLE AS A WHOLE:
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

In examining Despite and Still it is necessary to understand the characteristics inherent in the term "song cycle." The song cycle is a composition for voice and piano (sometimes also voice with other instruments) in which each partner is more or less equal in importance. The work is usually either titled "cycle" or marked in some way by the composer to indicate that the various songs belong together as one work. Their texts can be a narrative tale or journey (Die Schöne Müllerin by Schubert) or they can portray a single theme or mood (Songs About Spring by Argento). A cycle may also be unified by the repetition of the text (as in Rorem's Poems of Love and the Rain, where each song is set twice and the texts are arranged in mirror image) or by interchange of musical motives or material (as in Schumann's Frauenliebe und Leben by the use of thematic material from the first song in the last song in the cycle).

The particular cycle under examination here is not labeled by its composer specifically as a song cycle; however, the title page is headed by a dedication "to my

friend Leontyne Price" under which, in bold print, appears Despite and Still for Voice and Piano. Each song is titled and numbered, and the fifth song bears the same name as the title of the whole set. The order in which Barber has placed the texts is another indication that the songs were conceived as a set. By stating the title of the cycle at the beginning before the first song (paradoxically titled "A Last Song") he gives the performer and listener the basic idea at the very outset. He then proceeds to illustrate his theme through a variety of ways, finally arriving at the same title with which he began, but now as the title of the final song. In this way he reiterates the principal theme and provides a sense of formal unity to the cycle.

The world premiere of this work took place April 27, 1969 in Philharmonic Hall of New York's Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts with Leontyne Price, soprano, and David Garvey, piano. In a review of that performance, George Moushon commented that "the five poems . . . seem to have no linking logic or thematic connection . . . the thoughts remain disparate, compartmented and unrelated to each other. An enigma."³⁵ Barber's sensitivity in setting words and his interest in formal structure seem to belie this statement. In the following paragraphs the thematic linking of these texts will be discussed. A summary

³⁵George Moushon, "Debuts and Reappearances," High Fidelity/Musical America 19 (July 1969): MA 22.

illustrating those musical elements which help to unify the cycle will follow.

By comparing the texts of each song, one must conclude that the theme of the cycle is intended to be concerned with the endurance of love as well as devotion through adversity. Each text illustrates a different kind or aspect of love: "A Last Song" speaks of love as a force which drives the writer on and on almost to the point of despair; "My Lizard" expresses hope for forgiveness and continued love after one is gone; devotion and love in spite of great tribulation and a wearying journey is described in "In the Wilderness"; "Solitary Hotel" suggests the curious inability of a man and a woman (possible lovers?) to communicate in what could be a romantic setting; and the faithfulness of love is summed up in "Despite and Still."

The only real puzzle is "Solitary Hotel"—its presence invites some effort at explanation. It is unique in that it is the only text in prose; also, it does not mention love specifically. Viewed in the context of Ulysses, the work from which it was taken, its inclusion in the cycle can only be a matter of speculation. Certainly, intimate literary knowledge of Joyce's novel is necessary for a complete understanding of this text as it relates to the other texts in the cycle. The song conveys the young woman's restlessness, and the recurrent tango rhythm seems

to suggest romantic intrigue. The mystery is enhanced by the curiosity of the young man when he seizes the paper on which she was writing. In the novel, Bloom is well aware of his wife's clandestine affair with another man. Despite this knowledge, and notwithstanding his other encounters and fantasies during the day, he still feels a devotion to his wife and returns to her, accepting the situation as inevitable. Taken in the context of the novel, therefore, the similarity to Bloom's state of mind and the general theme of the cycle seem to provide a possible explanation for the inclusion of "Solitary Hotel."

From another viewpoint, the inclusion of this text, set to such obviously sensuous music, could be seen as a welcome relief from the serious nature of the three Graves poems. It is not difficult to imagine that the tango rhythm—presented as it is in contrast to the rather disjunct rhythm of the vocal line—could be considered a caricature or a musical cliché.

In examining the cycle as a whole, one may see it more clearly by observing the sum of its parts. Therefore, the various roles played by the piano (and discussed previously in regard to each song) may be summarized as follows:

The Piano as Partner

In terms of harmonic support, equality of voice and piano, and melodic imitation, Barber is consistent

throughout. The piano provides the basic harmonic structure with the voice sharing melodic pitches contained within the chords. The voice usually stays within the chord as outlined by the piano, but occasionally will create dissonance with the underlying harmony by embellishing the melody. Exact doubling between voice and piano is limited throughout to three or four pitches in a row, with one exception in "Despite and Still" where the melody is doubled an octave lower for two measures (measures 14-15 and measures 26-27). The partnership between voice and piano is particularly evident in the use of melodic imitation. Melodic fragments are treated to devices such as diminution, augmentation, and short canonic passages. In "A Last Song" (measures 21-24) and "Solitary Hotel" (measures 44-45), there is also a transfer of the melodic line from the piano to the voice.


The partnership exhibited between voice and piano is a strong characteristic of Barber's style of writing in this cycle. Each song is related to the other through this conformity of style and compositional technique.

The Piano as Commentator

With the possible exception of what might be considered a depiction of the cry of the "bittern" ("In the Wilderness," measure 9, Example 39, page 49) and a certain roughness at "Wheels and hoofs" ("Solitary Hotel," measure 32, Example 51, page 62) there are no instances of

imitation of natural sounds in the cycle. The nature of the texts provides few opportunities for this type of depiction in the piano part, and it appears that Barber chose not to set those few passages in such a manner.

Two traditional images appear in all of the accompaniments to these songs. The first and most extensive is the "sigh" motive, emphasizing the downward moving interval of a second, which is heard in many different rhythmic patterns. The second image is the persistent use of an unbroken pulse, usually created by eighth-notes (sixteenths in "My Lizard"). This image is one of motion, the speed and mood of which is determined by the context of the words. In "A Last Song" it represents the passing of time; the motion of the lizard is suggested in "My Lizard"; in "In the Wilderness" it is a sense of labored walking; and in the alternation between the $\frac{4}{8}$ and $\frac{5}{8}$ meter in "Despite and Still," it draws attention to the unsettled feeling expressed in the text.

Faster tempos within each song are used when the text involves scenes in which excitement or passion are being expressed. In each instance, a return to the original tempo always accompanies the expected return to calm and order in the text. In all the songs certain words or thoughts are emphasized by a slowing or "lingering" effect. All have their own individual rhythmic patterns, although one pattern () seems to be common to all of them. Each is limited mostly to one or two key areas, and all but

the last song have episodes which move briefly to distantly related key areas. The emphasis on minor tonality helps to sustain the mood of despair.

The texture of open fourths and fifths, created by the use of quartal chords, is common to all the songs. The various but related moods are enhanced by the direction of the melodic lines in the piano. Falling lines in "In the Wilderness" and "Solitary Hotel" help to set the prevailing mood of despair. Rising lines are used in "A Last Song" (see measure 32, Example 22, page 28) and "Solitary Hotel" (see measure 32, Examples 53[a] and 53[b], page 63) to depict disappearing, leaving, and arising.

Dynamics and accents are used to emphasize specific words or thoughts, to create a mood, or to mark sudden changes in thought. Declamation is used in three songs: in "A Last Song" a rolled cluster assists the voice with the "wh" sound of the word "whisper" (measure 32); trills help emphasize the "b's" in the voice part at the words "bleeding foot, burning throat" (measure 31 of "In the Wilderness"); and in "Solitary Hotel" the accented dissonant chord following the word "What?" (measure 45) strengthens the element of surprise.

The general mood in the three poems by Graves is one of impassioned despair tinged with a desire for hope. This is produced through the use of relatively slow tempos, descending scales, the insistent pulse of eighth-notes, the "sigh" motive, and the "openness" of the harmonic texture.

"My Lizard" is lighter in mood because of the faster tempo and emphasis on major rather than minor tonality. Certain comic effects related to the depiction of the lizard also help in creating a lighter mood. Comic effects and caricatures in "Solitary Hotel" are also evident, but the song evokes a darker mood by its minor tonality and the descending melodic fragments.

The Piano as Unifier

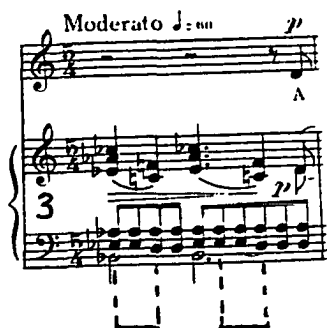
The piano helps to create unity between the songs in a number of ways. The first is by the use of the falling interval of a second—the "sigh" motive—which appears with various modifications in each song. Example 67 demonstrates the use of this motive in different ways.

Ex. 67. - comparison of "sigh" motives:

[a] "A Last Song," m. 3.

[b] "My Lizard," m. 12.

(Fast and light)



Ex. 67. - "sigh" motives (continued).

[c] "In the Wilderness," m. 27

[d] "Solitary Hotel,"
m. 12.

(Flowing, in 2)

(Like a rather fast tango
in two)

[e] "Despite and Still," m. 1.

There is also similarity in the contour of most accompanimental motives in each song, as seen in Example 68. This pervasive shape takes the form of an upward movement ending in a leap and falling back within itself. (Note also that the basic rhythmic pattern ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ is used with this melodic feature; thus two unifying elements are combined.)

Ex. 68. - similar melodic contour:

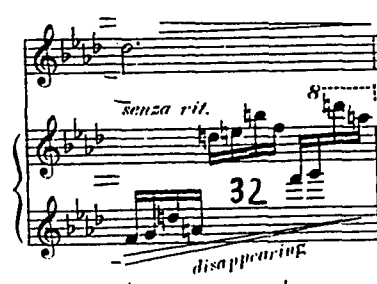
[a] "A Last Song," m. 32.

(Moderato)

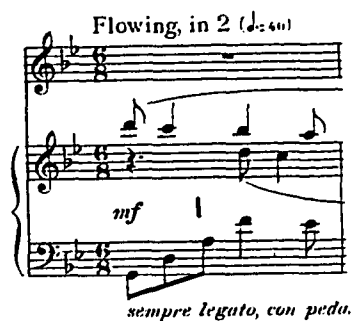


[b] "My Lizard," m. 32.

(Fast and light)



[c] "In the Wilderness," m. 1.



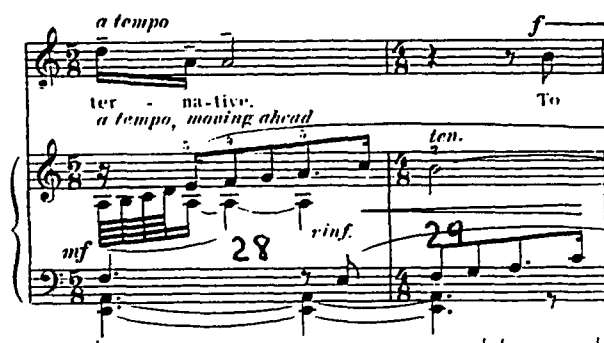
[d] "Solitary Hotel,"
mm. 51-52.

(Like a rather fast tango
in 2)











[e] "Despite and Still," mm. 28-29.

(Fast and darkly impassioned)



As mentioned earlier, the unbroken pulse (most often eighth-notes) is common to all of the songs in the cycle. Barber also makes use of the rhythmic pattern of two-against-three in all the songs, either within one measure, as in "Solitary Hotel" with the melodic triplets against the tango rhythm, or in the form of a hemiola over the period of two or more measures, as seen in "In the Wilderness." The unit of three is also common to all the songs, regardless of the meter signature. "A Last Song" and "My Lizard" are written in triple meter and thus have three beats per measure as the unit; "In the Wilderness" is in the compound $\frac{6}{8}$ meter and has two units of three per measure; the melodic line in "Solitary Hotel" is in triplets throughout, making two units of three per measure in time; and the $\frac{3}{2}$ meter of "Despite and Still" is divided into three and two, and the "sigh" motive appears several times embellished with triplets. A rhythmic continuity within the cycle can be observed by comparing the following metronome markings given by the composer:

"A Last Song"	 = 60 ( = 120)
"My Lizard"	 = 120
"In the Wilderness"	 = 40 ( = 120)
"Solitary Hotel"	 = 60 ( = 120)
"Despite and Still"	 = 120

The use of minor tonality is a common feature of the harmonic and tonal relationship between songs. Only "My

"Lizard" hints at a major tonality (A-flat major), but this is subtly avoided by the inclusion of D-natural which gives the song a decidedly Lydian effect. Barber makes frequent use of the natural form of the minor, as in the opening of "In the Wilderness," "Solitary Hotel," and "Despite and Still." Each song is also unified by the use of quartal chord structure. With the exception of "Despite and Still," each has an episode which contains chords unrelated to the basic tonality. However, the original tonality is always reestablished in the final section.

Rolled chords ("Solitary Hotel," measure 39, and "Despite and Still," measures 28-29), and the use of the damper pedal to produce blurred or sweeping effects (as in measure 32 of "Solitary Hotel," Example 69[a], or measure 13 of "Despite and Still," Example 69[b]), appear to be the only figurations used which are pianistically idiomatic.

Ex. 69. - idiomatic pianistic figurations:

[a] "Solitary Hotel," m. 32 - pedal on white key glissando.

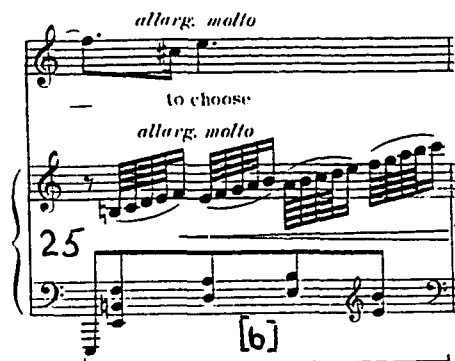
(Like a rather fast tango in 2)

The musical score for Example 69[a] is for measure 32 of "Solitary Hotel". It is written for piano and features a glissando effect on the white key. The melody is marked *f* and *agitato*. The lyrics "Wheels and hoofs. She hur-ries out." are written above the piano part. The measure number "32" is in the bottom left corner. A bracket labeled "[a]" is on the right side of the score.

Ex. 69. - idiomatic figurations (continued).

[b] "Despite and Still," m. 25 - pedal through entire measure.

(Fast and darkly impassioned)



The creation and maintenance of mood is a synthesis of several elements already mentioned. Most notable are the steady, underlying pulse, the falling two-note "sigh" motive, the emphasis on minor tonality, and the composer's metronome markings based on ratios of sixty beats per minute.

Summary and Conclusions

From the examination of Samuel Barber's song cycle Despite and Still it is apparent that the composer intended the function of the piano to be one which would follow in the pathway established in nineteenth-century cycles by Schubert, Schumann, Brahms, and Wolf. In addition to playing its equally important role, it assists the voice by providing a harmonic basis in which melodic notes in the

voice part are included. It usually supplies a sustained chordal structure over which the voice is free to embellish the melody or sing in recitative style. As in earlier cycles, there are instances of exact doubling, both in unison and at the octave, though here they are brief. The best evidence of the equality of voice and piano appears in the area of melodic imitation, as can be seen by the following:

- 1) The piano introductions include a fragment of the melodic line which is stated before the voice enters.
- 2) Figures derived from these fragments are then used as accompanimental patterns in the piano.
- 3) Melodic fragments are imitated between voice and piano, usually in unison or at the octave, but are also seen at the third and the fourth.
- 4) Extended motives are treated canonically, occurring from one-half beat to two beats apart.
- 5) Instances of melodic transfer occur in which the piano and voice share in the presentation of a motive; that is, the piano begins the melody and the voice continues it.

The piano assumes considerable responsibility as a commentator on the text. Although the texts provide no natural sounds for the piano to imitate, the mood of despair is illustrated with the traditional "sigh" motive, and motions or movements of various kinds are suggested by

certain rhythmic patterns. Changes of thought or specific words are emphasized by changes in tempo, and excitement or passion are enhanced by quickening tempos. A number of rhythmic patterns, often used in conjunction with the "sigh" motive, are shared with the voice. The frequently mentioned unbroken pulse and the treatment of patterns in a hemiola effect are functions almost exclusively given to the piano.

The piano denotes changes in thought or mood by the following:

- 1) the use of chords unrelated to the basic tonality;
- 2) the harmonic structures based on fourths and fifths;
- 3) rising or falling lines in the piano part which depict the mood as well as specific ideas;
- 4) unusual effects produced by the use of extreme registers;
- 5) and the use of dynamics and accents to illustrate specific words and to assist the voice in declamation of the text.

Through a combination of these elements and those listed in the preceding paragraphs, it is obvious that the piano plays an important role in projecting the mood of the text and the song as a whole.

Concerning the matter of unification, the piano:

- 1) assists throughout the cycle with the pervasive reiteration of the "sigh" motive;
 - 2) shares melodic contours with the voice;
 - 3) unifies by the use of the insistent underlying pulse, the pattern of two-against-three, and the emphasis on triple meter;
 - 4) supplies quartal harmony and the sense of minor tonality;
 - 5) and produces the pianistically idiomatic blurring effect created by the use of the damper pedal.
- (Since this occurs in only two of the songs, this device does not serve as a unifying element in the cycle as a whole).

With the exception of the categories involving the natural sounds and specific pianistic figuration, the role of the piano in Despite and Still is clearly similar to the role it assumed in nineteenth-century vocal literature.

Recommendations

A review of the literature on Barber listed in Don A. Hennessee's immensely helpful book Samuel Barber: A Bio-Bibliography³⁶ reveals numerous articles, interviews, reviews, and studies of Barber's music and the performance of his music. However, most of these items deal primarily with the instrumental compositions, and relatively few are concerned with the vocal music. The Ph.D. thesis of Russell Friedewald, cited earlier, thoroughly discusses the compositional form and style of the music prior to 1957, including the vocal music. John Emery Albertson discusses the elements of meter and rhythm, harmony, melody, form, and textual setting in his thesis "A Study of the Stylistic Elements of Samuel Barber's 'Hermit Songs' and Franz Schubert's 'Die Winterreise',"³⁷ and Ruth C. Friedberg discusses Barber's songs set to the poetry of James Agee (1909-55) and Frederic Prokosch (b. 1908) in American Art Song and American Poetry, Volume III: The Century Advances,³⁸ particularly from the view of the poetry.

³⁶Don A. Hennessee, Samuel Barber: A Bio-Bibliography, Bio-Bibliographies in Music, number 3, Donald L. Hixon, Series Adviser, (Westport, Conn./London: Greenwood Press, 1985).

³⁷John Emery Albertson, "A Study of the Stylistic Elements of Samuel Barber's 'Hermit Songs' and Franz Schubert's 'Die Winterreise'" (DMA thesis, University of Missouri, Kansas City, 1969).

³⁸Ruth C. Friedberg, American Art Song and American Poetry, Vol. III: The Century Advances (Metuchen, N.J./London: The Scarecrow Press, 1987).

Considering the works cited above, it appears that there is still room for additional study of the vocal works of Barber. For example, in order to provide a more complete picture of Barber's compositional output, a careful study of the poetry of the authors represented in Despite and Still might shed more light on the significance and meaning of the texts in the cycle. Of additional importance would be a comparison of Despite and Still (1969) with Barber's Hermit Songs (1954). Such a study might reveal similarities or differences that would help chart the composer's style. (At the time of this writing, the forthcoming publication of The Songs of Samuel Barber: A Study in Literary Taste and Text-Setting by Jean Louise Kreiling has been scheduled for release in the fall of 1987.³⁹ This study may perhaps speak to the very subject of poetry and text-setting as recommended above.)

Also of interest, particularly to pianists, would be a comparison of the piano writing in Barber's vocal compositions with his works for solo piano. Such projects, though seemingly tedious to some performers, must surely be of considerable value in the understanding of a composer's style, and consequently, should be useful in the preparation for any performance. Certainly, it is hoped that this

³⁹Jean Louise Kreiling, The Songs of Samuel Barber: A Study in Literary Taste and Text-Setting (Ann Arbor, Mich.: UMI Research Press, forthcoming).

examination and discussion of Despite and Still may be of value in the understanding of its composer's style as well as in the preparation and performance of his cycle.

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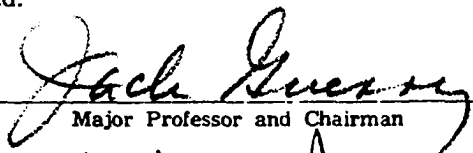
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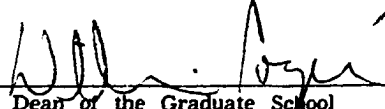
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Major Field: Music

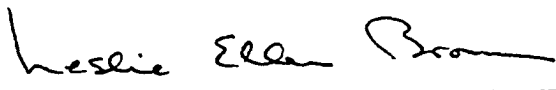
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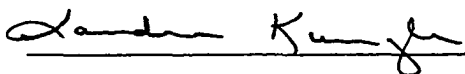
Approved:


Major Professor and Chairman


Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:









Date of Examination:

July 10, 1987
