

Italian Art Song

Giacometti Carissimi (1605-1674) wrote for four professional singers who entertained in rich Roman homes.¹ composed “**Vittoria, Vittoria**,” also known as “**Vittoria, mio core**” in 1646. This Baroque Italian aria, which is from one of Carissimi’s 150+ solo cantatas, is about freedom from the clutches of an ungodly, deceitful woman. This can also be sung by a woman about a lying man. The singer is released from the clutches of horrible love. Domenico Benigini (1596-1653) wrote the lyrics. The first stanza is a refrain and will be sung at the beginning and end of the song, as well as after “È spento l’adore!”

Italian Lyrics

Vittoria, mio core!
Non largimar piu
È sciolta d’Amore
La vil servitù

Già l’empia a’ tuoi danni
Fra stuolo di sguardi,
Con vezzi bugiardi
Dispose gl’inganni;

Le frode, gli affani
Non hanno più loco,
Del crude suo foco
È spento l’adore!

Da luci ridenti
Non esce più strale,
Che piaga mortale
Nel petto m’aventi

Nel duol, ne’tormenti
Lo più non mi sfaccio
È rotto ogni laccio,
Sparito il timore!

English Translation

Victory, my heart!
Weep no longer
[You] are free of love [and]
Its abject slavery.

Formerly the inhuman one
Through many glances, [and]
With false charms
Arranged [past] deceits;

Frauds, pains, [they]
Have no more place,
The fire of her cruelty
Has been spent in love!

From smiling lights [eyes]
No more arrows will dart
Like a mortal wound that
Hurls into my chest

In sadness, in torments
I will not undo myself
Every snare is broken,
Fear has departed!

¹ The LiederNet Archive

Don Giovanni, an opera with two acts composed by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791) to an Italian libretto by Lorenzo Da Ponte (1749-1838), premiered in 1787. This incredibly famous opera is about Don Giovanni's pursuit of women ending with his descent into hell. In Act I, Don Giovanni has intentions to seduce Zerlina, who is engaged to the commoner, Masetto, at their wedding. Masetto realizes this, becomes enraged, and confronts Don Giovanni about his plan to stay alone with Zerlina. All the while, Giovanni's henchman Leporello is trying to distract Masetto. In the aria, "**Ho capito, Signor sì**," Masetto is passive aggressive by saying that he himself is deaf, dumb, and crazy to think that such a gentleman, such as Don Giovanni, would impede. He then angrily runs off telling Zerlina he wants her to stay behind.

Mozart is a name that needs no introduction as he is one of the greatest composers in Western music history. He was a prodigy and could read and write music by five years old, composing by six. He wrote symphonies, operas, chamber music, and choral music. He is an integral contributor of the Classical period of music which lasted from mid-18th century to the early 19th century.

Italian Lyrics

Ho capito, Signor sì
 Chino il capo e me ne vo
 Giacché piace a voi così
 Altre repliche non fo
 Cavalier voi siete già
 Dubitar non posso affé
 Me lo dice la bontà
 Che volete aver per me
 [a Zerlina]
 Bricconaccia, maladrina!
 Fosti ognor la mia ruina!
 [a Leporello]
 Vengo, vengo!
 [a Zerlina]
 Resta, resta.
 È una cosa molto onesta!
 Faccia il nostro cavaliere
 Cavaliera ancora te.

English Translation

I understood, yes sir!
 I bow my head and I leave
 Because you want me to
 I won't reply anymore
 You're a gentleman
 I can't doubt it, in faith
 Your generosity for me
 Makes it clear
 [to Zerlina]
 You scoundrel, you rascal!
 You're always my ruin!
 [to Leporello]
 I'm coming, I'm coming!
 [to Zerlina]
 You stay, stay.
 It's a very honorable thing!
 Let our gentleman here
 Make a gentlewoman out of you

French Art Song

Jean-Baptiste Lully (1632-1687) composed “**Bois épais**” in 1684. This Baroque French aria premiered in Lully’s opera *Amadis*. Amadis is the main character and at this time, he laments being exiled and heartbroken. His only comfort are the trees of the forest, and yet the trees do not make it dark enough to match his emotion. Amadis begs for the trees to blot out the sun. The lyrics come from Philippe Quinault (1635-1688). When Lully and Quinault started working together, they ushered in the era of the *tragédie lyrique*, which dominated the French opera stage even after both of their deaths.

French Lyrics

Bois épais, redouble ton ombre;
Tu ne saurais être assez sombre,
Tu ne peux pas trop cacher
Mon malheureux amour.

Je sens un désespoir
Dont l’horreur est extrême,
Je ne dois pas plus voir ce que j’aime,
Je ne veux plus souffrir le jour

English Translation

Deep woods, increase your shade;
You could not be dark enough.
You could not conceal too well
My unhappy love

I feel a despair
Whose horror is extreme,
I am to see no longer what I love,
I want no longer to bear the light of day.

“**Le Secret**” is a poem by Armand Silvestre (1837-1901) put to music by Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924). Inspired by the German *lied*, this *mélodie*, a French art song of the 19th and 20th centuries, is about love. The singer is struggling with love as he wants to relieve the burdensome weight on his shoulders by revealing his love yet is fearful and wants to keep these feelings secret.

Fauré was the most advanced composer of his generation in France and has the title of one of the Masters of French song and is a master of the art of unfolding a melody. He connects the end of romanticism with the second quarter of the 20th Century and covers a period in which the evolution of musical language was rapid.

French Lyrics

Je veux que le matin l’ignore
Le nom que j’ai dit à la nuit,
Et qu’au vent de l’aube, sans bruit,
Comme une larme il s’évapore.

Je veux que le jour le proclame
L’amour qu’au matin j’ai caché
Et, sur mon cœur ouvert penché,
Comme un grain d’encens il l’enflamme.

Je veux que le couchant l’oublie

English Translation

Would that the morning was unaware
Of the name I told to the night,
And that in the dawn breeze, silently,
It would vanish like a tear

Would that the day might proclaim it,
The love I hid from the morning,
And poised above my open heart,
Like a grain of incense kindle it.

Would that the sunset might forget,

Le secret que j'ai dit au jour
Et l'emporte, avec mon amour,
Aux plis de sa robe pâlie!

The secret I told to the day
And would carry it and my love away
In the folds of its faded robe!

“**Clair de Lune**” is a famous title that multiple composers have used, but Fauré’s composition is one that picks out baroque elements of the scene rather than dwell on the impressionistic moonlight. “The singer enacts the delicate ballet of courtship weaving in and out of the moonlight.”² There’s no victory nor genuine ecstatic happiness in the song. Even while singing of victorious love and fortunate living, the singer does not believe in their happiness.

Paul Verlaine (1844-1896) wrote this poem, and he was a major influence on the Symbolist Movement. The Symbolist poets wanted to change poetry by moving away from clear explanations and formal speeches. They focused on expressing emotions, intuitions, and sensory impressions that are hard to put into words, trying to convey the mysterious and deeper truths of existence.³ To do this, they used personal, imaginative metaphors and images that did not have exact meanings but reflected the poet’s inner state. The poetry hinted at the hidden, complex unity of life that can’t easily be described.⁴

French Lyrics

Votre âme est un paysage choisi
Que vont charmant masques et bergamasques
Jouant de luth et dansant et quasi
Tristes sous leurs déguisements fantasques.

Tout en chantant sur le mode mineur
L’amour vainqueur et la vie opportune,
Ils n’ont pas l’air de croire à leur bonheur
Et leur chanson se mêle au clair de lune

Au calme clair de lune triste et beau,
Qui fait rêver les oiseaux dans les arbres
Et sangloter d’extase les jets d’eau,
Les grands jets d’eau sveltes parmi les
marbres

English Translation

Your soul is a chosen landscape
Bewitched by maskers and bergamaskers,
Playing the lute and dancing and almost
Sad beneath their fanciful disguises.

Singing as they go into a minor key
Of conquering love and life’s favours,
They do not seem to believe in their fortune
And their song mingles with the light of the
moon.

The calm light of the moon, sad and fair,
That sets the birds dreaming in the trees
And the fountains sobbing in their rapture,
Tall and svelte amid marble statues.

² Johnson, Graham & Stokes, Richard: “A French Song Companion,” Oxford University Press, New York, 2000, P. 165

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

German Lied

Franz Schubert was born on January 31st, 1797, in a Viennese suburb. He was the son of a schoolmaster and a domestic servant, but music filled his youth. He learned how to play piano, violin, and organ, as well as singing and basic principles of harmony from his family or choirmaster. At eleven, he entered the *Stadtkonvikt*, which is essentially a conservatory-school where only a lucky few boys were trained to sing in the choir of the Imperial Chapel. At thirteen, he wrote a “Fantasy in G for Piano Duet,” at fifteen his first-string quartet, at sixteen his first symphony, and at seventeen he wrote from Goethe’s *Faust* “*Gretchen am Spinnrade*” a miraculous masterpiece. The following year he wrote his most famous song “*Erlkönig*.” During Schubert’s life, Viennese aristocrats found his music too difficult and non-commercial, so he lived on the border of poverty. Fame found him after his life ended in 1828. There was one famous singer, Michael Vogl, who fell in love with Schubert’s music and was determined to promote the music whenever he was in those Viennese circles. Vogl understood Schubert’s unique ability to employ the essential mood of a poem to the music that brings the words to a new and vivid life. Today Schubert is recognized as the most important creator of the German *Lied* or “art song.” With Schubert’s deep connection to emotions, nature, and the human experience, his *Lieder* ushered in a new era of music, the Romantic era.

“**Der Tod und das Mädchen**” was composed by Franz Schubert in 1817. This Romantic-era German lied tells the story of Death and a maiden. Death comes to find a grimly sick young girl. She’s frightened when she sees him approaching and even calls him “a wild bone man.” Death assures her that he is not to be feared and he, as a friend, will protect her as she sleeps. Matthias Claudius (1740-1815) wrote the lyrics to this song from the inspiration of death’s inevitability.⁵ Also known by the pen name “Asmus,” his poems, like this one, have a naïve, childlike, and devoutly Christian quality.⁶

German Lyrics

[Das Mädchen]
Vorüber, ach, vorüber!
Geh, wilder Knochenmann!
Ich bin noch jung, geh, Lieber!
Und rühre mich nicht an.

[Der Tod]
Gib deine Hand, du schön und zart Gebilde!

Bin Freund und komme nicht zu strafen.
Sei gutes Muts! Ich bin nicht wild,
Sollst sanft in meinen Armen schlafen!

English Translation

[The Maiden]
Pass by, ah, pass by!
Away, wild bone man!
I am still young; leave me!
And do not touch me.

[Death]
Give me your hand, you lovely, tender creature.

I am your friend, and come not to chastise.
Be of good courage. I am not cruel;
You shall sleep softly in my arms.

⁵ Schubert Song Text

⁶ Britannica

“**Der Leiermann**” is about an elderly man playing the hurdy-gurdy, a string instrument that produces sound by hand-turned crank rosined wheel rubbing against the strings. The man stands barefoot on ice, swaying back in forth playing this instrument the best he can with numb fingers. Nobody listens to his playing, much less looks at him, but he lets everything go on as it will while continuing to play his instrument. The narrator ponders if he should go with the man, who could be a ghost. The narrator hopes that the player will play his hurdy-gurdy to the narrator’s songs. The German lyric poet is Wilhelm Müller (1794-1827) and his lyrics helped arouse sympathy for the Greeks in their struggle for independence from Turks. Müller also worked on multiple works from Schubert including “Die schöne Müllerin” and “Die Winterreise”.⁷

German Lyrics

English Translation

Drüben hinter’m Dorfe
Steht ein Leiermann,
Und mit starren Fingern
Dreht er was et kann.

There, beyond the village
Stands a hurry-gurdy player
With numb fingers
He plays as best he can.

Barfuss auf dem Eise
Schwankt er hin und her;
Und sein kleiner Teller
Bleibt ihm immer leer.

Barefoot on the ice
He totters to and fro,
And his little plate
Remains forever empty.

Keiner mag ihn hören,
Keiner sieht ihn an;
Und die Hunde knurren
Um den alten Mann,

No one wants to listen,
No one looks at him,
And the dogs growl
Around the old man

Und er lässt es gehen
Alles, wie es will,
Dreht, und seine Leier
Steht ihm nimmer still.

And he lets everything go on
As it will;
He plays, and his hurdy-gurdy
Never stops.

Wunderlicher Alter,
Soll ich mit dir geh’n?
Willst zu meinen Liedern
Deine Leier dreh’n?

Strange old man,
Shall I go with you?
Will you turn your hurry-gurdy
To my songs?

“**Der Doppelgänger**” starts this haunting story in the stillness of night. A man walks through town to find a home that holds a treasure of memories. As he draws closer to this painful home,

⁷ “Winterreise.” *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., n.d.

he notices a strange and mysterious figure. He looks closer at this figure who is wringing his hands in overwhelming pain. The narrator is horrified to discover this figure is the narrator's exact form. The narrator then feels mocked and questions why the wraith feels the agony and pain that tormented the man on that very spot in his old days.

Heinrich Heine (1797-1856) is the poet of this story, and he was born in Düsseldorf, Germany to assimilated Jewish parents. His international literary reputation and influence was established in 1827 by *Buch der Lieder* (The Book of Songs), frequently set to music, through the more somber poems of his final years are also highly regarded.⁸

German Lyrics

English Translation

Still ist die Nacht, es ruhen die Gassen,
In diesem Hause wohnte mein Schatz;
Sie hat schon längst die Stadt verlassen,
Doch steht noch das Haus auf demselben
Platz.

The night is still, the streets are at rest;
In this house lived my sweetheart.
She has long since left town,
But the house still stands on the selfsame
spot.

Da steht auch ein Mensch und starrt in die
Höhe,
Und ringt die Hände, vor Schmerzens Gewalt;
Mir graust es, wenn ich sein Antlitz sehe-
Der Mond zeigt mir meine eigne Gestalt.

A man stands there too, staring up,
And wringing his hands in anguish;
I shudder when I see his face-
The moon shows me my own form!

Du Doppelgänger! Du bleicher Geselle!
Was äffst du nach mein Liebesleid,
Das Mich gequält auf dieser Stelle,
So manche Nacht, in alter Zeit?

You wraith, pallid companion
Why do you ape the pain of my love
Which tormented me on this very spot,
So many a night, in days long past?

American Art Song

“**Compensation**” is a short, expressive 21st century art song. The lyrics come from *The Complete Poems of Paul Laurence Dunbar*. Dunbar (1872-1906) was the first African American writer to put the diverse African American experience before a broader audience.⁹ He was a poet, author, writer, and revolutionary.¹⁰ Most famous for his use of dialect, Dunbar became the voice for the African American experience in America at this time.¹¹ The lyrics in “**Compensation**” reflect the adoration and faith in God that brought the performer the gift of music. This specific song composed by Charles Lloyd Jr. in 1977 is published in the anthology of *Art Songs by Black American Composers*, compiled by the late Willis Patterson. Charles Lloyd Jr. lived from 1948 to

⁸ “Doppelgänger.” *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Encyclopædia Britannica, inc.,

⁹ “Dayton Aviation Heritage” National Park Service.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

2024 and was a Professor of Piano, Composition, Voice, and Choral Conducting at the Southern University and Agricultural & Mechanic College in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.¹² In his life, Charles Lloyd Jr. composed eleven instrumental works, two oratorios, three operas, two volumes of spirituals (the first having fifteen songs and the second having fourteen) five art songs for voice and piano, eight larger works for voice and piano, fourteen choral works, fifty-one choral arrangements, eleven hymns, five sacred songs, three benedictions, and thirteen miscellaneous works.¹³

The next two songs come from the *AIDS Quilt Songbook*. William Parker (1943-1993) noticed that while actors and orchestras sported red ribbons for HIV/AIDS awareness, “for singers, we are being pretty unvocal about AIDS.”¹⁴ Created for singers, specifically baritones, this songbook serves to voice the awareness and experience of those living with HIV or AIDS. This songbook is a song cycle created by eighteen composers and almost as many poets.¹⁵ “Both gay and straight, ill and healthy artists offer something personal and revelatory.”¹⁶ Some of the songs deal metaphorically with AIDS, but most confront the agonizing details of the disease and its attendant havoc.¹⁷ There is a lot of variety within the cycle including tonal, atonal, jazzy, plaintive, and bitter with some including hope and even humor. The songbook is still performed today all over the world. The reason I have learned so much about HIV/AIDS as well as the Songbook, and have the honor of performing these songs are because of my two professors Dr. Hurley and Dr. Reber. They regularly tour around the nation and even perform the annual AIDS Quilt Songbook benefit concert in Arizona during Thanksgiving week.

A common misconception is that HIV affected only gay men, but this assumption is false. In 1991, Nancy Padian, PhD, MPH found that HIV is much more likely to be passed sexually from males to females and vice versa as well as becoming the lead cause of death for all Americans from ages 25 to 44 in 1994. The term “gay disease” has sometimes been used. This term is not only derogatory, it is inaccurate: it discredits the women and children that are affected by this disease. This homophobic mentality delayed the government’s involvement which could have saved hundreds of thousands of lives. The height of cases in the United States was in 1989 while the highest deaths was mid-1991. To this day, there is no cure for HIV, however the first substantial decline in 1996 of 47% from AIDS-related deaths was largely due to the use of HAART, Highly Active Antiretroviral Therapy.¹⁸ According to hiv.gov, the southern region of the United States of America makes up 49% of new HIV infections.¹⁹ Also in 2022, Women accounted for 18% of new HIV diagnoses in the US and six territories and freely associated

¹² Charles Lloyd, Jr. website

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ AIDS Quilt Songbook

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ “40 Years of AIDS: A Timeline of the Epidemic.” 40 Years of AIDS: A Timeline of the Epidemic | UC San Francisco.

¹⁹ Ibid.

states.²⁰ Black females younger than thirteen years of age accounted for 50% of new HIV, white women of the same age group accounted for 24%, and Hispanic females in the same age bracket accounted for 20%.²¹ Heterosexual contact made up of 22% of the 37,981 HIV diagnoses in 2022.²²

Fred Hersch, born 1955, composed a song titled “**blues for an imaginary valentine,**” for the *AIDS Quilt Songbook* in 1992. This 20th century art song straddles classical and jazz styles. It explores the utter pain and depth of despair of an HIV positive person facing impending doom. At this time there was no treatment for HIV so diagnosis equaled death. What is worse is that prognosis occurs after finding a long-searched-for love. Hersch feels guilty that he is abandoning his love during such a grim period with the AIDS pandemic. Despite grieving himself, he also grieves for his partner, who must face death alone. Before Fred Hersch released this song, he started out his accomplishments at the age of 12 with having completed his first symphony.

Another song from the *AIDS Quilt Songbook* is “**Vaslav’s Song**” composed by William Bolcom in 1993. The text, from “Dasvedanya Mama” by Ethyl Eichelberger, reflects disdain for their mother. The music has a bitterly sarcastic edge, as the singer tries to keep his cool while repressing rage. Once it emerges, the piano abandons the blues for an untamed choral passage. This song is one of my favorites because of the jazzy feel it creates. A fun fact is that this song was made for William Parker, who wanted to create a literature of composers’ responses to AIDS that could be used to raise funds to find a cure.

British Art Song

Fredrick Keel (1871-1954) was an English composer of art songs, an academic, a baritone, and an active member of the English folk song movement. He was a professor of singing at the Royal Academy of Music where he combined scholarly and artistic interest in English songs and their history. He pioneered the revival of interest of English art song by his free settings of Elizabethan and Jacobean lyrics. When he was in a civilian internment camp in Germany during World War I, Keel boosted morale of his fellow detainees by giving many recitals. He was one of the few singer-songwriters of English art song of his day.²³

“**Port of Many Ships**” is the first song in this cycle and it describes a joyous port where the singer longs to be. This port is described as pleasant and sunny with lively music, dancing, and fellowship. This is believed to be a setting in the afterlife, which is evident once the third lyrical passage is sung. “All the sunken hookers ‘n’ the crews as took ‘n’ died, they lays there merry, sunny, swinging to the tide, ‘n’ I wish, I wish as I was there,” clearly displays the yearning

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ “Frederick Keel.” Discography of American Historical Recordings. n.d.

to reconnect with sailors that have passed on. Typically, sailors faced many hardships such as cramped conditions, dangerous weather, poor food and pay, as well as diseases such as scurvy, a killer condition caused by the lack of Vitamin C that will cause inflamed joints and teeth to rot. Other symptoms include excessively nostalgic and homesickness.²⁴ Perhaps the narrator himself is experiencing scurvy himself.

“**Trade Winds**” follows as a smooth lullaby that describes an island in the Spanish seas. The music caresses the listener like a gentle wave as the lyrics paint the paradise filled with orange trees, ale, dancing, fireflies, and a constant pleasant breeze. The narrator speaks of this place as a memory it seems as if he has rested there multiple times. At the end of the song, the narrator describes a quiet voice calling to him through the ghostly palm trees. Could this be a ghost of a beloved fellow sailor, or a more sinister call from a siren, luring the sailor to his death?

“**Mother Carey**” is the final piece in the cycle and is a cautionary tale of the titular character. She is described as the Mother of Sea Witches responsible for the horrible weather, sunken ships, and drowned sailors that the sea tortures crews with out at sea. Mother Carey can control the wind and seas, has barnacles growing on her, and speaks through the wind. She not only uses the bones of the crew to brush her hair, but also eats sailors with her mate, who is another famous, nautical villain, Davy Jones. The narrator seems to warn the listeners that she may be nice to look at, but if one wants to reach old age, stay clear of both of them.

Musical Theater

In 1957, Broadway premiered *The Music Man* which all was composed and written by Meredith Wilson (1902-1984). One of the most popular songs, “**(Ya Got) Trouble**,” is sung by a smooth-talking traveling salesman named Harold Hill. He tries to convince the citizens of River City, Iowa, to buy into his idea for a boys’ marching band, but in reality, he plans to abscond with their money. Hill accomplishes this by playing on the crowds’ fear of the youth being corrupted by the presence of a pool table in the billiard hall. *The Music Man* is a 20th Century American musical.

“**The Wizard and I**” is from the hit musical *Wicked* and is composed by Steven Schwartz (b. 1948). The story of *Wicked* may be familiar to audiences with the recent movie adaptations starring Cynthia Erivo and Ariana Grande. For those who are unfamiliar with the story, the original Broadway production tells how Elphaba Thropp and Glinda Upland met and became the iconic “Wicked Witch of the West” and “Glinda the Good Witch” from *The Wizard of Oz*. This spinoff story reveals the untold truth about a smart, passionate, and misunderstood emerald-green skin young woman, Elphaba. She sings the song “**The Wizard and I**” shortly after a magic professor urges Elphaba to enroll at Shiz University after witnessing Elphaba’s magical gifts. This is the first time Elphaba is met with respect, and she is shocked that someone sees her as not only an equal, but as someone who can work for the marvelous Wizard. In this song, Elphaba dreams that the Wizard would solve all her problems. In particular, she hopes the

²⁴ “Life a Sea in the Age of Sail” Royal Museums Greenwich

Wizard could change her green skin. She shows in this moment that she just wants to be accepted even if it means stripping her of the one thing that makes her stand out.

The narrative of this song aligns with me deeply as I have worn Elphaba's shoes. Growing up queer, I often had to suppress my joy, personality, and mindset to feel safe or loved. Abundantly, I cried myself to sleep wondering "why am I wrong," "why am I hated because I am different," and "will I ever be able to be myself safely?" I would pray that this weird curse would be taken from me, but this is the very thing that makes me so uniquely different. Having a community that fosters support, kindness, love, and authenticity, allowed me to grow into my own delighted version of "wicked," and I can absolutely guarantee I will never revert back. To all of those who have supported, uplifted, defended, cared for, grew with, laughed with, cried with, taught, and advocated for me even bringing light and life back into my life, this song is for you. Whether you were my professor, friend, colleague, brother, partner, barista, therapist, coworker, roommate, advisor, or chosen family, I hope I can show you how you've changed me for good.