Understanding Libby Larsen’s “Beloved, Thou Hast Brought Me Many Flowers” A Collection of Love Songs

D.M.A Document

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Musical Arts in the Graduate School of the Ohio State University

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Abstract

*Beloved, Thou Hast Brought Me Many Flowers*, a collection of six love songs by the contemporary American composer Libby Larsen, is written for an ensemble of mezzo-soprano, cello, and piano. Larsen was commissioned to compose these songs by Hella Mears Hueg for her husband’s 70th birthday. Based on poems by Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Rainer Maria Rilke, Hilda Doolittle, and Percy Bysshe Shelley, the songs are about mature love, music, nature, and flowers. The information in this document is intended to help all the musicians preparing to perform the composition.

The first chapter provides an overview of Libby Larsen's biography, particularly her musical background and the various influences on her compositional style. The second chapter gives a short biography of the poets Browning, Rilke, Doolittle, and Shelley and relevant information about their poems that Larsen selected for this collection. The third chapter offers an analysis of the form and rhythmic characteristics of the writing and discusses how each poem lends itself to being incorporated into the musical composition. The fourth chapter provides detailed information about the overall structure of the collection and the connections among the six songs. The fifth chapter gives a transcript of a personal interview with Libby Larsen. In addition, a complete
music score with breath markings given by the composer is included in the Appendix.

An understanding of both the poems and the music for the entire ensemble offers a deeper understanding of the message of mature love, music, nature, and flowers that Libby Larsen intended to deliver through the composition.
Dedication

Dedicated to my parents,

my brother,

and my friends
Acknowledgments

This document could not have been completed without the support and love of numerous people. I cannot not thank them enough.

I would like to thank my friend, Dr. Susan Olson, who recommended Larsen’s collection for piano collaboration with voice and instrument, which is exactly what I wanted to write about. I am grateful to her for helping me find a suitable topic for the document. I deeply appreciate my committee members, Prof. Glaser, Dr. Ashby and Dr. Woliver, who supported and encouraged me to complete my degree even during the years that I spent in Louisiana.

I infinitely appreciate the privilege of getting to know the composer, Libby Larsen. It was a pleasure to become closely acquainted with both her work and herself as a great composer. During her interview, she helped and inspired me with her kindness, high spirit, and passion for music. Many thanks to Larsen’s assistant, Grace Edgar, who arranged the whole interview trip smoothly and efficiently through our email correspondences. In the process of completing this document, I am indebted to my editor Dr. Mügé Galin who assisted me with writing and with insightful discussions of the poems.
I also wish to thank my friend, Jui-wan Chang along with other close friends, who kept me in their prayers and offered assistance in many ways. Furthermore, I am very fortunate to have my parents and my brother’s full support and immeasurable love. I am extremely blessed to have such a caring family who is understanding of my decision to become a collaborative pianist. Finally, I thank my God as I believe he arranges all this to happen in His plan and at His time. I thank him for providing me abundant wisdom and grace – as my Chinese name says “Huei” “En” – for completing this project.
Vita

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Chapter 1: Concise Biography of Libby Larsen

Music exists in an infinity of sound. I think of all music as existing in the substance of the air itself. It is the composer’s task to order and make sense of sound, in time and space, to communicate something about being alive thorough music.

Libby Larsen

1.1 Introduction

This document examines the song cycle, Beloved, Thou Hast Brought Me Many Flowers by American composer Libby Larsen, one of the most dynamic living composers in the United States. Larsen is one of America’s most frequently commissioned composers and a speaker in great demand within serious music circles. Today, she maintains an active life as composer and her music continues to appear in concert programs. Her musical achievement has brought her numerous awards and honors.

This chapter provides a brief biography of Larsen’s career as composer. It describes her musical inclination as a child during her early years in Minneapolis, Minnesota and the music training she received at the University of Minnesota at both undergraduate and graduate levels. In addition, the chapter presents the awards and
honors Larsen received for her musical achievements and discusses her composing philosophy.

1.2 The Early Years

Libby Larsen was born Elizabeth Brown Larsen on December 24, 1950, in Wilmington, Delaware; her family moved to Minneapolis, Minnesota when she was three. Larsen was introduced to music at an early age by her mother who played recordings of Broadway musicals and piano. She also grew up watching her sister practice the piano. Her earliest music teachers were nuns from Christ the King School, the Catholic school she attended in Minneapolis, where all students learned to sing Gregorian chant and to sight-read using “movable do [system].” Larsen’s piano teacher, Sister Colette, would assign her students the music of Mozart, Bartok, Stravinsky, and other classical composers, as well as Japanese music and boogie.1

During the early years of her musical life, Larsen was not only reading music, but she was also already writing music. To her, these abilities were as natural as drawing and painting. She didn’t consider them to be unusual, since every child at her school was doing the same. Therefore, as early as in elementary school, Larsen enjoyed writing and improvising music, and she often “organize[d] her friends into choruses.”2 Her exposure to different types of music at a young age led her to develop a profound interest in rhythm: “[she] heard rhythms in words and speech patterns…she was fascinated by the way words in Latin moved through the ancient Gregorian chants, with their total lack of

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1 Rovi Joseph Stevenson, *Libby Larsen: Information from Answers.com.*

meter.”³ In an interview with Richard Kessler, Larsen recalled clearly how she began to pay attention to words and rhythms: “I started writing them down and manipulating them on paper…and it developed really from age seven on.”⁴ That same year, Larsen started taking piano lessons. Soon after, she became attracted to the precise notation of Western music in contrast to the free form of Gregorian Chant.

As Larsen grew up, she continued to write music; her desire to communicate by using sound grew stronger, as it enabled her to express her sense of being alive. At a young age, even before realizing that she was becoming a composer, Larsen could already see that writing music was the most elegant and most deeply communicative way to share and express herself.

1.3 Education

After high school, Larsen attended the University of Minnesota, where she completed both her undergraduate and graduate studies in music theory. Not much information is available regarding the years when she was pursuing her degrees. Larsen did mention a non-musical experience after she received her BA in music theory, which happened to be her first job, as a secretary in an insurance company. As she told Timothy Mangan of The LA Times, “after about four months, I was going insane, not fitting into

---
the corporate world. And I composed two one-act operas on coffee break[s] and went back to school immediately after that.”

In the 1970s, on her journey of becoming a composer, Larsen faced the choices of modern music, such as 12-tone music, aleatoric music (chance music) and Wagnerian writing before she settled on her composing language. While she admired the academic approach of modern music, Larsen wanted to find the best way to communicate her feelings – just as she had when she was a child. To her, language was most intriguing, and she paid close attention to language and the way people talk. She noted how music evolves out of the rhythms and pitches in people’s everyday language. As she said, “I am interested in how music can be derived from the rhythms of spoken American English.”

In other words, she wanted to discover how “rhythmic patterns, pitch range, tempo and phrase contour in American spoken English” inspire music, and she used these intentionally in her compositions. “This belief evolved into the controlling aesthetic of her work.”

In 1973, when she was still in graduate school, Larsen co-founded the Minnesota Composers’ Forum with Stephen Paulus. Today, the organization is known as American Composers’ Forum and is becoming a major clearinghouse for American music. Larsen

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5 “She Works on Full Commission: Libby Larsen, a throwback to the likes of Mozart and Hayden, wants her works heard in concert halls, not classrooms,” LA Times, 10 December, 1995.

6 McGraw-Hill.

7 LA Times.

8 McGraw-Hill.
married a trial lawyer in 1975. She and her husband James Reece have a daughter. In 1978, Larsen completed her doctoral studies in theory and composition, having studied with Professors Dominick Argento, Eric Stokes, and Paul Fetler. As her doctoral dissertation, Larsen composed *Words Upon the Windowpane*, a one-act opera based on a play of the same title by W.B. Yeats. It premiered at the University of Minnesota on June 1, 1997 under Vern Sutton, then director of the University’s Opera Workshop.\(^9\)

1.4 Major Achievements and Honors

Soon after Larsen co-founded the Minnesota Composers’ Forum with Stephen Paulus, she was appointed Composer in Residence of the Minnesota Orchestra from 1983 through 1987. This made her the first female composer in the United States to hold such a position with a major orchestra. She also held residencies with the Charlotte Symphony and the Colorado Symphony. Larsen has received commissions from The Los Angeles Master Chorale, The Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, and The Cleveland String Quartet.

Larsen has been rightfully honored for her many achievements. In the late 1980s, she won a Bush Scholarship. In 1990, *USA Today* selected her opera “Frankenstein, The Modern Prometheous” as one of the eight best classical music events of the year. In 1994, she received a Grammy Award as producer of her CD, “The Art of Arleen Auger.” Other awards that Larsen received include the American Council on the Arts Young Artist Award, the American Express “Women to Watch” Award, a Lifetime Achievement Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and fellowships from the

National Endowment for the Arts.

Larsen has received many honorary doctorate degrees and she has held the Papamarkou Chair in Education and Technology at John W. Kluge Center of the Library of Congress in 2003. Labels such as EMI, Koch International Classics, Nonesuch, and Decca have recorded her commissioned works and E.C. Schirmer and Oxford University Press have published her compositions. Most recently, in May of 2010, Larsen was presented the George Peabody Medal for Outstanding Contributions to Music in America.

1.5 Larsen’s Compositions

Larsen composes in a wide variety of genres to express her musical ideas and she continues to experiment with new genres. Her oeuvre includes solo instrumental music, chamber music, choral music, and orchestral music, as well as scores for band, opera, and vocal music. Among these, she is particularly interested in writing vocal music. Her compositions have been praised for their atmosphere of energy and positive spirit.

When describing her own work Larsen states: “The key to my music is to hear tones that aren't articulated and to be able to listen to low tones.”\(^\text{10}\) She expects her audience to “come with open ears and an open mind and ready for anything.”\(^\text{11}\) She likens the way people should receive her music to the way people go to a new restaurant. She wants her audience to expect something new and emotionally connect to it.

\(^{10}\) Libby Larsen home page.

\(^{11}\) Ibid.
1.5.1 Rhythm/Text in Songwriting

Under the influence of Gregorian chant in her early years, Larsen cultivated a style of songwriting that was free of meter. In both meter and rhythm, she followed the flow in Gregorian chant. This strong foundation as a writing style gave Larsen’s music a feature of “syllabic text setting [which] predominates her song settings.” For her hard work, Larsen has been hailed as “the only English-speaking composer since Benjamin Britten who matches great verse with fine music so intelligently and expressively.”

Listening closely to the rhythms and pitches in people’s everyday language, Larsen noted that “American English is more rhythmic than melodic. It’s truncated and full of body language punctuation.” For example, she observed the following about Jesse Jackson’s speech pattern:

…if you were to analyze the interval of his pitch range, the tempo variations and the rhythms, you would find an extraordinary musicality, uniquely American. I strive to understand how these characteristics represent our American lives and emotions, and to use these elements in my music. This, I think, is what makes it “American.”

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13 Libby Larsen homepage.

14 Richard Kessler.

15 Libby Larsen homepage.
Therefore, in her vocal compositions, Larsen set out to capture the precise language of American English with all its rhythms, pitches, tempos, and phrases. And thus, she successfully “allow[ed] the natural inflection and rhythms of spoken American English to emerge in the melodies and rhythms of the songs.”

1.6 Larsen’s Composing Philosophy

After receiving her doctorate from the University of Minnesota, Larsen took a novel route in her career. She decided to write music for performance rather than accepting a teaching position in a university. As she launched her career as composer, she set out to meet the best performers so that she could write the best possible pieces. She believed that her compositions were not complete until they had been performed. She participated in the preparations that led to the recording sessions of her compositions or their performances. She has been so successful in getting her music recorded and performed that, amazingly, she lives purely on commission, as was reported by reviewer Timothy Mangan in the *LA Times*. As Mangan writes, her “music is driven by a kind of healthy *Realpolitik*”

In her composing career, Larsen has avoided participating in any competition, because she believes that the motivation to write for a “prize” would undermine the original creative force. Although winning a prize may be an affirmation and public recognition, which are all good, she does not see it as real success. In an interview with

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16 Katherine Kelton.

17 LA Times.
Richard Kessler, Larsen talks about what success is for young composers: “it’s important to feel very comfortable that your own voice is growing, and that you’ve mastered the techniques to help it grow, and that you’re finding the performers who believe in your voice and want to grow with you. That’s real success.”

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18 Richard Kessler.
Chapter 2: Poems in *Beloved, Thou Hast Brought Me Many Flowers*

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides information about the poems that Libby Larsen set to music in her song cycle, entitled *Beloved, Thou Hast Brought Me Many Flowers*. The song cycle includes two poems each by Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Rainer Maria Rilke, and one poem each by Hilda Doolittle and Percy Bysshe Shelley. The selection of these six poems and the order in which they were put together was made according to the request of German actress Hella Mears Hueg, who commissioned Libby Larsen to compose a chamber music for her husband’s 70th birthday.

Larsen opens her song cycle with a poem by Browning, “Beloved, thou hast brought me many flowers,” whose title she adopted. She also closes with Browning’s “Go from me.” In addition, Larsen uses two poems by Rilke in their entirety, entitled “Liebeslied” and “Do you know.” She also uses part of a poem by Doolittle, originally entitled “The whole white world,” whose title she changed to “White world,” and she left
out the last stanza of the poem. Finally, Larsen also adapted to music a poem by Shelley, entitled “Music, when soft voices die.”

The song cycle premiered on May 22nd, 1994 at the surprise birthday party for Bill Hueg at the Hueg household in Minnesota. Hella Hueg suggested to Larsen to use the poems by Browning and Rilke that appear in the song cycle, and she requested a mezzo soprano with cello, and piano for the reason that she favored darker timbres. She worked together with Larsen in finding the right poems and the best translations. Once Larsen wrote the song cycle, Hella Hueg also became involved in the rehearsals with Larsen and the performers. From conception to completion, the song cycle took a full year.

Hella Mears Hueg, an actress who was born near Dusseldorf, Germany, grew up in musical surroundings and music was always a part of her life. She and her husband Bill Hueg, an agronomist who taught at the University of Minnesota, are members of the Minnesota Commissioning Club – a patron organization for professional musicians and music lovers. As much as they love music, they equally love nature and gardening. They own a large farm where they grow flowers and trees.

2.2 The Poems

In the opening note that Larsen wrote for this song cycle, she explains that it is about mature love, music, nature, and flowers. The poems used in the song cycle are quoted below. The keywords representing the theme that Larsen chose and any unstated, but objectively implied keywords are set in bold type.

2.2.1 “Beloved, thou hast brought me many flowers” by Elizabeth Barrett Browning

# 44 from “Sonnets from the Portuguese” (1850)
Beloved, thou hast brought me many flowers
Plucked in the garden, all the summer through
(And winter), and it seemed as if they grew
In this close room, nor missed the sun and show’rs
So, in the like name of that love of ours,
Take back these thoughts which here are unfolded too,
And which on warm and cold days I withdrew
From my heart’s ground. Indeed, those beds and bowers
Be overgrown with bitter rue
And wait thy weeding: Yet here’s eglantine,
Here’s ivy! Take them, as I used to do
Thy flowers, and keep them where they shall not pine.
Instruct thine eyes to keep their colors true,
And tell thy soul their roots are left in mine.

2.2.2 “Liebeslied” by Rainer Maria Rilke

From “Leben und Lieder” (Life and Songs) (1894)

How shall I withhold my soul so that
It does not touch on yours? How shall I
uplift it over you to other things?
Ah willingly would I by some
lost thing in the dark give it harbor
in an unfamiliar place
that does not vibrate on when your depths vibrate.
Yet, everything that touches us, you and me,
takes us together as a bow’s stroke does,
that out of two strings draws a single voice.
Upon what instrument are we two spanned?
And what player has us in his hand?
O sweet song.

2.2.3 “Do you know” by Rainer Maria Rilke

From “Advant” (1898)

Translated from “Weisst du, ich will mich schleichen”

Do you know, I would quietly
Slip from the loud circle,
When first I know the pale
Starts above the oaks
are blooming.
Ways will I elect
that seldom any tread
in pale evening meadows –
and no dream but this:
You come too.

2.2.4 “The whole white world” by Hilda Doolittle

From “Hymen” (1921)

The whole white world is ours,
and the world, purple with rose-bays,
bays, bush on bush,
group, thicket, hedge and tree,
dark island in a sea
of grey-green olive or wild white-olive,
cut with the sudden cypress shafts,
in clusters, two or three,
or with one slender, single cypress tree.

Slid from the hill,
as crumbling snow-peaks slide,
citron on citron fill
the valley, and delight
waits till our spirits tire
of forest, grove and bush
and purple flower of the laurel-tree.

2.2.5 “Music, when soft voices die” by Percy Bysshe Shelley

From “The work of Percy Bysshe Shelley” (1880)

Music, when soft voices die,
vibrates in the memory:
Odors, when sweet violets sicken,
live within the sense they quicken.
Rose leaves, when the rose is dead,
are heaped for the beloved’s bed;
and so thy thoughts, when thou art gone,
Love itself shall slumber on.
2.2.6 “Go from me” by Elizabeth Barrett Browning

#6 from “Sonnets from the Portuguese” (1850)

Go from me. Yet I feel that I shall stand
Henceforth in thy shadow. Nevermore
Alone upon the threshold of my door
Of individual life, I shall commend
The uses of my soul, not life my hand
Serenely in the sunshine as before,
Without the sense of that which I forbore-
Thy touch upon the palm. The widest land
Doom takes to part us, leaves thy heart in mine
With pulses that beat double. What I do
And what I dream include thee, as the wine
Must taste of its own grapes. And when I sue
God for myself, He hears that name of thine,
And sees within my eyes the tears of two.

2.3 The Poets

2.3.1 Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1806-1861)

Elizabeth Barrett Browning, one of England's foremost poets, was married to poet Robert Browning. Her poetry reveals her concern for political issues and problems of women in Victorian society. She was also interested in theological debates, and many of her works carry a religious theme. Her poem “Aurora Leigh,” for instance, is a good example of her work containing religious imagery. Her collection, "Sonnets from the Portuguese," is best remembered among all of her works. It was written during her courtship when she met her husband Robert Browning. She disguised the collection as though it was a translation work from Portuguese.

2.3.2 Rainer Maria Rilke (1875-1926)

Rainer Maria Rilke, one of the most significant poets in the German language, was a Hungarian-Austrian poet and art critic. Among his works, which he wrote in
both German and French, “Duino Elegies” is the most well known to his English-language readers. “Letters to a Young Poet” and “The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Bridge” are his two most famous prose works. Rilke used haunting images to describe the difficulty of communion with the ineffable. Writing in the age of disbelief and anxiety, he is considered a transitional figure between the traditional poets and the modernists. Among the symbols he used in his poetry were rose petals, reminiscent of closed eyelids, which appear in his epitaph as a symbol of sleep.

2.3.3 Hilda Doolittle (1886-1961)

American poet Hilda Doolittle was born in Pennsylvania and moved to London in 1911. Considered a major 20th-century poet, she is also known as a novelist, memoirist, and is best known for her association with the avant-garde imagist poets. She published three separate collections of poetry under the titles of "The Collected Poems of H.D.,” “Selected Poems of H.D.,” and “Collected Poems 1912-1944” between 1925 and 1983. Many of her books were autobiographical. She won additional acclaim for her translations. She liked Ancient Greek literature, and often borrowed from Greek mythology and classical poets. Her personal life included two marriages and she was also bisexual. During the 1970s and 1980s, following her death, she became an icon for both the gay rights and feminist movements. As a result, her poems, plays, and essays were rediscovered.

2.3.4 Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822)

Percy Bysshe Shelley is one of the most important English Romantic poets. His works, such as “Ozymandias,” “Ode to the west wind,” “To a skylark,” and “The masque
of anarchy,” are some of the most popular poems in the English language. He is often associated with his contemporaries John Keats, Lord Byron, and his second wife, the novelist Mary Shelley. As one of the early romanticist poets and an idealist, he lived an unconventional life. However, he died young – at the age of 30 – and did not live to see the extent of his success and influence beyond his death. Some of his works were published during his lifetime, but they were often suppressed, and he could not earn his living from his writings. Nevertheless, he became an idol for the next few generations of poets. At University College in Oxford, England, the Shelley Memorial was established in his honor, as one of Oxford University’s most illustrious alumni.
Chapter 3: Musical Analysis of Beloved, Thou Hast Brought Me Many Flowers

This chapter analyzes Libby Larsen’s song cycle, Beloved, Thou Hast Brought Me Many Flowers, which premiered on May 22, 1994 by mezzo-soprano Glenda Maurice, cellist Laura Sewell, and pianist Ruth Palmer. The score was published by Oxford University Press in 1999. This chapter provides an analysis of the songs in the order in which they appear in the collection.

3.1 “Beloved, thou hast brought me many flowers” by Browning

Beloved, thou hast brought me many flowers
Plucked in the garden, all the summer through
(And winter), and it seemed as if they grew
In this close room, nor missed the sun and show’rs
So, in the like name of that love of ours,
Take back these thoughts which here are unfolded too,
And which on warm and cold days I withdrew
From my heart’s ground. Indeed, those beds and bowers
Be overgrown with bitter rue
And wait thy weeding: Yet here’s eglantine,
Here’s ivy! Take them, as I used to do
Thy flowers, and keep them where they shall not pine.
Instruct thine eyes to keep their colors true,
And tell thy soul their roots are left in mine.

Larsen’s song “Beloved, thou hast brought me many flowers” is a setting of Elizabeth Barrett Browning’s poem by the same title. The speaker in the poem likens the
love that nourishes her to the freshness of the flowers that she has received from her beloved. She expresses her wish to preserve the undying love that they share.

Written for mezzo-soprano, cello, and piano, “Beloved” is atonal, but has an implied tonality in A major. Here, Larsen uses the score indication *brightly*. The three sections implied in this song are roughly distinguished by the manner of changes in meter: (1) in measures 1-43, the meter changes frequently; (2) in measures 44-85, there is a more steady flow, as the meter mostly remains in quarter-notes; and (3) in measures 86-108, Larsen writes a more condensed version of section one with a postlude.

### 3.1.1 Section One

The opening of “Beloved” is a five-measure phrase with asymmetrical writing that gives uneven priority to the piano and cello, which creates an off-balance prelude. In this asymmetrical writing, Larsen captures the rapturous mood of both the flower sender and receiver, expressing their joy with exclamations and racing heartbeats. The piano leads the opening by introducing the motive of the entire song. Bearing the expression marking *brightly*, the song exudes a lively mood and positive energy, consisting of 8th notes throughout the introduction.

As can be seen below, these are two large phrasings: theme in measures 1-3, and melody in opposing direction in measures 4-5 are suggested in the ensemble of piano and cello.
When the voice enters, Larsen’s rhythm matches the natural speech pattern, and vital words are aligned with strong beats for emphasis. Similarly, the melody parallels the natural rise and fall of the text, resulting in frequent changes in meter and a rather unconventional phrasing. Larsen crafts melodic structures that follow the natural speech-like quality of Gregorian chant learned from her childhood.

The dyad “A-G♯,” with which the voice enters in measure 6 comes from the top voice of the piano in the opening. The vocal line follows in written out quarter notes with the expression freely. This suggests that the voice should sing the phrase in a more expressive gesture, and an un-hurried tempo. A theatrical effect is created when the ensemble of piano and cello stops at the beginning of measure 6, as if the voice were proclaiming, “Beloved, thou hast brought me many flowers.” An augmented 4\textsuperscript{th} (A-D♯) appears in the voice’s phrase, with the “D♯” lydian 4\textsuperscript{th} Larsen is particularly fond of.

On the last word of the statement, “flow’rs,” the piano and cello join in \textit{a tempo} by playing the motive for only one measure. The \textit{pizzicato} that Larsen notes in the cello’s score to play by plucking the string, hints at the next word, “Plucked,” which will be sung by the voice. In measure 9, the vocal line continues the lyrics by singing “plucked in the
garden, . . .” in a repeated interval pattern three times. This pattern, “D♯-A-C-F♯,” forms a
diminished seventh chord, by considering the D♯ enharmonically as E♭.

![Fig. 3.2: measure 9](image)

In these melodic diminished 7th phrases, there is a familiar sonority, the dyad “A-G♯,”
that comes from the opening and is now hidden in the chant-like melody line.

![Fig. 3.3: measure 9](image) ![Fig. 3.4: opening](image)

Although the melodic pattern is simply repeated, the frequent changes in meter indicate
that Larsen intended to align the stressed syllables with the downbeats.

*Plucked in the gar-den, all the sum-mer through and it seemed as if they grew*
In the ensemble arrangement here, the piano joins the ensemble in measure 12, sharing the same melodic diminished 7th from the voice, but in 8th notes.

The F♮ sonority in the left hand of the piano here, coming from the interlude in measure 3, will be seen later in measures 16 and 88. The F♮ is the bVI chord of A major, a borrowed chord from the parallel A minor. This bVI chord in Larsen’s writing, commonly found in the romantic period, often functions as harmonic color.

Hence, the intensity of the dissonant sonorities builds up to the phrase, “nor missed the sun and showers,” arriving at a climax, where the piano and voice both reach
the $F^\natural$ for a dramatic color change. The piano re-states the dyad in measures 18 and 20, leading the voice to the next solo phrase.

In measure 23, “So, in the like name of that love of ours,” it is as if the speaker were declaring the love that the poet feels for her beloved, given Larsen’s arrangement for the voice to sing solo. Immediately after the voice completes singing her phrase in measure 27, the ensemble of piano and cello play in unison with the voice. The ensemble plays the rhythmic pattern from the opening, but the original atmosphere with its *brightly* marking, is changed.

There is a remarkable difference in the phrase structures when the ensemble enters in measure 27. The phrasing is in a four-measure concept, which enhances the listener’s sense of ensemble unity. The lyrics in measure 27, “Take back these thoughts which here unfolded too,” re-appear later in measures 31 and 40, each time with different kinds of musical expression. When the same lyrics are sung without a break in measures 27 and 31, mostly the same musical ideas appear in these two sets of measures. In the vocal line, contrary to her usual phrasing style, the rhythmic patterns in measures 27-30 and 31-34 remain the same; only the melodic phrase in measures 31 and 32 are modified from measures 27 and 28, respectively – that is, the phrase is transposed a major/minor third lower in measure 31, and the phrase becomes an augmented/major second higher in measure 32 (see musical example).
Another noticeable difference between the two sets of measures is in the dynamic markings. Larsen keeps the ensemble soft in \textit{p} in measure 27; then in measure 31, the ensemble continues with the same dynamics, except for the cello playing \textit{pp}; this is followed by the written out \textit{crescendo} to reach \textit{mf}, and \textit{decrescendo} in measure 34 before the new lyrics.

In measures 31-33, a new musical idea, \textit{tremolo} in B\textsubscript{b}, is played by the cello with the dynamic marking \textit{pp} in a low register. Consequently, the cello can barely be heard at first. The low \textit{tremolo} “B\textsubscript{b}” gives a disconcerting feeling when the whole ensemble plays \textit{crescendo}, matching the lyrics, “Take back these \textbf{thoughts which here unfolded} too, And \textbf{which on warm and cold days}.” The \textit{crescendo} also imbues the song with a more dramatic mood, as it accompanies the repetition of the lyrics.

In supporting the coloring of the text, a vertical reading of the score shows that the sonority in measures 27-34 is dissonant, due to the motivic sonority – the minor
seconds. This sonority appears often, and mostly falls on the strong beats against the melody from the voice. A horizontal reading of the score shows that it is dissonant also because the melody from the singer is reappears vertically in the G chord, “G, B♯/ B♭, D.”

The note C♯, an augmented 4th also known as the lydian fourth (G-C♯), leads to an unsettled tonality when added to the G chord.

The note B♮ that repeatedly alternates with B♭ (or enharmonically in A♯) not only determines whether the chord has a major or minor quality, but also produces a brighter/darker sonority that makes the tonality perpetually ambiguous. While the lyrics say “take back these thoughts,” Larsen keeps the music intricate by using a combination of the musical elements that were discussed earlier; and when the lyrics say “which here
unfolded too,” Larsen takes the liberty of releasing all of the mixed thoughts and feelings in her music.

In measures 35-38, matching the lyrics, “and which on **warm** and **cold** days I withdrew From my heart’s ground,” Larsen continues her previous tonal ambiguity, using minimalistic features. In contrast to the previous sonority in the voice, Larsen alternates the major and minor third (B / B♭) in melodic phrasing, starting in measure 35; the voice ends on a major third in measure 38, but in a rising melodic interval. Larsen has the vocal line in melodic minor thirds alternating with major thirds, slightly changing the rhythmic pattern in each repetition.

In the instrumental writing, the piano plays two different ideas in each hand, repeating a three-beat pattern in the right hand against a two-beat pattern in the left.
In the cello, the *trill* is suggested to be played *sul pont.*, meaning “on the bridge,” instructing the cellist to bow very near to the bridge. This produces a glassy sound with a bright thin tone, which gives a peculiar and irregular sound, with lots of high harmonics that convey a disconcerting feeling. Here, Larsen keeps the vocal line flat. Perhaps, she chose monotonous singing, in order not to detract her audience’s attention from Browning’s words.

Larsen’s repetition of musical fragments is a feature of minimalism, as she uses the least number of components to achieve the greatest effect. This style calls the audience’s attention to the lyrics that say, “And which on warm and cold days I withdrew From my heart’s ground.” The last two words, “heart’s ground,” are sung to *ritardando*, slowing down the tempo, as though Larsen wanted to emphasize the lyrics.

Before the third repetition of the lyrics, a measure of 5/8 functions as a bridge, connecting to the third repetition which leads the voice’s re-entrance. The music remains in a four-measure phrase structure in measure 40, written in quarter-note base. Starting in measure 41, the cello repeats this idea an octave lower, written like the vocal line in a quasi-F major tonality (B♭, C, A, G and F).
Two chords are shown in the writing for the piano in measure 40: the diminished 5th in the right hand and the major 3rd in the left hand, the intervals for the right and left hands alternating in each subsequent measure. Hence, a more tonal sonority is created, along with a slower pace and fewer musical elements that are dissonant. This follows the lyrics sung by the singer, “Take back these thoughts which here unfolded too, And which on warm and cold days I withdrew From my heart’s ground,” as if referring to the speaker’s thoughts about the contented “warm” days. Likewise, the previous unsettled section in measures 27-38 seems to refer to the speaker’s thoughts about the uneasy “cold” days. The vocal line in measures 40-43 is set differently. The whole texture written in less rhythmically active and exclamatory then it was in measures 27-34.

Larsen wrote an intriguing first section with a variety of musical components to achieve the plot that is suggested by the poem. In order to successfully convey these varieties, the performers should be aware of the individuality of each feature, particularly in differentiating the staccato and legato to accomplish the imagery that Larsen has constructed.
3.1.2 Section Two

In the beginning of section two, an interlude connecting sections one and two presents three different ideas every two measures between 44 through 49. First (44/45), the piano plays \( ff \) in C major for an abrupt color change, together with the cello reinforcing the tonality by playing a long trill on “C.” Second, the similar writing in measures 40/41 and 46/47, as well as the meanings go along with the near repetition of text. This gives the impression that the composer is trying to reveal the lover’s insistence when she sings, “take them/back these thoughts.” And third (48/49), the motivic rhythmic passages express the brightly atmosphere before the contrasting mood that follows.

The main musical feature in the second section occurs in measure 50. The steady flow is given by the piano and the cello, playing as ostinato in measures 50-70, while the meter remains in 4/4 or 3/4. The repetition in the piano consists of “F-E-D” played in a syncopated pattern by the right hand, to be played against quarter notes in the top voice of the left hand. The notes from the top voice, “A^b-C-B-C,” against the bottom note “A^b,” create constant micro color changes.
The color changes in the above example show the influence of the voice from measure 35, while the ostinato plays in consistent and steady moving 8th notes created by the syncopation. The piano and cello give an instant meditative feeling by playing ostinato, in addition to the vocal line written in chant-like phrasing, as if one were talking to oneself.

The vocal line in measures 52-66 is mainly built on a diminished 7th chord on F, “A\(^b\)/G\(^#\)-D-B-F,” a gesture similar to that in measures 9-14. The two additional notes to the diminished 7th, “C\(^\flat\)” and “G\(^\natural\),” appear in measures 52 and 56, 55 and 58, respectively.

One may look at the score and associate these extra notes illustrate the lyrics, “overgrown.” Below are the few additional and repeated words that the composer chose in her rearrangement of the lyrics:

- Indeed, those beds and bow’rs
- Be overgrown with bitter +weeds +and rue
- And wait thy weeding
- +and +wait +thy +weeding
- +and +wait, +and +wait:

Together with these lyrics, the musical score communicates that the natural world continues to grow, quietly and unnoticeably. The narrow range that ostinato Larsen writes for piano and cello seems to illustrate the [flower]bed that nourishes the plants, and the long length of the sedate music seems to match the added lyrics, “wait.” Likewise, the melody written in a melodic diminished 7th for the voice matches the lyrics, “bitter rue.” The ascending melodic line played by the cello in measure 66, together with the two crescendos in piano in measures 69 and 71, can be interpreted as love blossoming.
Consequently, the two sets of measures, 9-14 and 50 -70, both use the diminished chord in expressing the suggestive subject, “flower.” The former describes picking the flowers, and the latter describes nourishing them, following the order in Browning’s original poem.

After the long sedate mood, the musical tonality and elements change in measure 71. As if nature were awakening from hibernation, a sudden flash of brightness and positive sonority is infused in the music through the two previous crescendos that bring in new energy and new musical writing.

The musical elements in 71/76 recall those in 44/45. These sets of measures share similar writing and mood, while the differences in length simulate the dream in the lover’s mind which is not fulfilled the first time, but blossoms in measure 71. The musical writing also verifies the lyrics in the second flash of brightness in measure 71: “Yet here’s eglantine, Here’s ivy.”
As can be seen below, Larsen modifies and re-arranges the lyrics in her writing between measures 73 and 85, starting with “take them.”

Yet here’s eglantine, (measure 73)
Here’s ivy! Take them, take them, as I used to do
(Thy flowers, and) keep them, keep them where they shall not pine (measure 85)

It is unusual to see Larsen uses the exact same musical content for the added repetitions of “Take them, take them.” Examples can be seen in measures 77-78, 46-47, and 82-83.

![Fig. 3.15: measures 77-78](image1)
![Fig. 3.16: measures 46-47](image2)
![Fig. 3.17: measures 82-83](image3)

Larsen omits the lyrics, “thy flowers,” which may be hidden in this section under the lyrics, “keep them,” and under the musically blossoming crescendos and ascending passages.

The descending trill that the cello plays in measure 77 is assimilated into the trill previously heard in measures 35-37. Both also coincide with the lyrics in 35-37, “which on warm and cold days . . . ,” to respond to the lyrics in 77, “as I used to do.” Then, through measures 82-85, the cello, voice, and again the cello immediately play three
consecutive ascending melodies as their transition into the third section. When the “A-G♯” dyad returns, recalling the joy of receiving the flowers, that was felt at the opening of the song.

3.1.3 Section Three

Measure 86 opens the condensed third section with the returning theme, and shows fragments of each musical idea before the grand closure. First, a clear thematic progression of A major to F (♭VI) in measures 86-88 offers the rapturous mood of giving and receiving flowers; it is then followed by a fragment in quarter notes that could illustrate the flower suggested in measure 89. A simplified motivic pattern as a bridge in measures 90-91 gives a brightly spirit. It then connects to the quasi-diminished 7th ascending melody in measures 92-93, with the implied subject, “flower.” The entire condensed writing here corresponds to the lyrics, “Instruct thine eyes to keep their [the flowers’] colors true.”
In measure 96, the tonality appears to be settled in A major, where the cello repeatedly plays the 5th note “E” in different registers, awaiting the cadence V-I in A major in measures 100-101. The melody is written in duplets for the voice, creating a *hemiola* to the ensemble while singing: “And tell thy soul their roots are left in mine.” The duplets here naturally broaden the tempo in the vocal line, while claiming the most important message, “. . . in mine.”

In the piano score starting in measure 96, the chordal writing for the theme suggests tone painting; the notes attached to the stands in the score visually portray a full bouquet of flowers, which explains the fuller texture in the opening.

![Fig. 3.19: measures 96-99](image)

In the same measure, the dynamic marking *p* remains soft until 110 and 111 for *f*, as the full joy of the anticipated bloom.

Beyond measure 101, in which the lyrics are completed, it is as though Larsen intends her audience to absorb the joyful feeling conveyed. She therefore extends the
song with a seven-measure postlude in measures 102-108, ending in an even grander gesture, as she repeats the thematic pattern in pure A major tonality three times. The same two chords are repeated by the piano in measures 104, 105, and 106 give detailed information about the opening theme. These chords contain the notes listed below:

\[ B \quad D \quad F^\# \quad A \quad C^\# \quad E \quad G^\# \]

These notes can be seen as a V\(^{13}\) chord, that is, a V\(^{13}/V\) chord of A major, and give a full explanation for how the dyad “A-G\(^\#\)” originated. This also explains that some notes were omitted in the opening theme of the piano. The postlude concludes with the cello separating the bowing to reach the maximum volume. Then the piano follows and imitates the cello by playing in the same way for the grand closure in a grand gesture.

Finally, a note to the pianist. In the entire song collection but especially in “Beloved,” Larsen writes long phrases for the voice without any breath markings. It is the pianist’s responsibility to be aware of the singer’s breathing during the performance. The pianist must anticipate that the singer may take an unexpected breath, and must be accordingly flexible in stretching the music to yield time for the singer. It is also the
pianist’s responsibility to cue the cellist to make a micro adjustment in turn, in order to keep the ensemble playing as a team. In Appendix A, the complete collection of music is enclosed with optional breath markings for the voice. Those markings are given by Larsen to suggest to the singer that there is such a need.
3.2. “Liebeslied” by Rilke

How shall I withhold my soul so that
It does not touch on yours? How shall I
uplift it over you to other things?
Ah willingly would I by some
lost thing in the dark give it harbor
in an unfamiliar place
that does not vibrate on when your depths vibrate.
Yet, everything that touches us, you and me,
takes us together as a bow’s stroke does,
that out of two strings draws a single voice.
Upon what instrument are we two spanned?
And what player has us in his hand?
O sweet song.

Larsen composed “Liebeslied” (love song) for the poem by Rainer Maria Rilke
for a duo of cello and mezzo-soprano, having the piano absent in the entire song.
Translated from the German poem by the same title, this poem describes the loveliness of
two souls uniting. The poet utilizes the metaphor of the lovers as “two strings [that draw]
a single voice,” creating a sweet song.

In the composition, the voice singing like a chant engages in an intimate dialogue
with the cello, which is written in a wide range. Larsen has stated that she is fond of
Gregorian chant. In the dynamic writing, Larsen arranged a thin texture, with the cello
solo phrase fluctuating between a stronger and a softer volume, depending on when the
voice joins the ensemble. Such responses between the cello and the voice are very similar
to antiphonal writing used in Christian rituals by a choir or congregation, which often
appears in Gregorian chant. Here, Larsen uses dual modes: the modern lydian with a
pentatonic quality and the hypolydian with the A minor scale sonority; she then closes the
song in D major.
“Liebeslied” opens with a three-measure cello solo, which reveals one of the important musical ideas in the song. It is the low D octave, followed by the 5th (A), then the lydian 4th (G#), and resolving on the 3rd (F#).

Fig. 3.21: opening

The complete scales are presented below, with the notes Larsen uses shown in bold and larger font:

- lydian in E: E F# G# A# B C# D# E
- hypolydian in A: A B C D E F G A

The opening cello solo plays “D-A” from hypolydian and “G#-F#” from lydian, and in measure 4, the voice follows this manner by emphasizing the “G#-F#” in her opening phrase.
The cello re-phrases the beginning statement in measure 6 in hypolydian, at the point that the voice holds the long “E” for the word “soul.” The re-phrased statement in cello can be seen as embellished with written out melisma, skillfully not interfering with the voice, while playing with passion and matching the expression rhapsodically. This particular attention to cello and voice is the style Larsen uses throughout the song. She has one soloist performing at a time while the other one holds long notes or rests, with the unison in the middle section being the only exception.

The idea of “D-A” with “E,” supporting the harmonic “G# - F#” (or in reverse order) is the main color scheme constructed for “Liebeslied.” The opening eight measures present this idea, and have the cello re-articulate the supporting chord to strengthen the sonority. Two examples are shown below.
As mentioned above, “Liebeslied” follows the *antiphonal* style of writing, in which the phrasing for the voice is similar to a chant, as if the singer were reciting the poem freely with no bar-line. Consequently, Larsen crafts her music very carefully, alternating the meter between 3/4 and 4/4, and arranging it to be sung under the long note to the words “soul” and “yours.” She does this subtly to smooth out the one-beat difference in the meter change.

As shown below, the two intervals in measure 10, together with the *pizzicato* D in measure 11, can be seen as a cadence of IV-V-I from the lower notes of the “G-A-D”

Fig. 3.23: measures 1-9

Fig. 3.24: measures 5-9
fifths. Meanwhile, the top “D-E” echoes the opening sonority, both of the first notes from the cello and voice.

Another interpretation of the cadence is to consider a half cadence (IV-I, notes: G-D) from the grace note “G,” combining the full cadence in the middle voice (IV-V-I) to close the musical idea in measure 11. The phrase ends passionately as Larsen indicates *rhapsodically* along with the *subito f*, suggesting for the cello to have a grand closure before moving on to the next phrase.

The *pizzicato* D in measure 11 plays an interesting role as the ending of the phrase for the cadence, as well as the beginning of the next phrase. Although the interpretation could vary from person to person, as can be seen below, the overlapping cello phrases in measures 6-11 and 11-15 fall on the *pizzicato* D.
As previously seen, the rhythmic writing here aids to reconstruct the pulse of the 3/4 meter. The two dotted quarter notes that create a quasi-6/8 in measure 10, followed by a quarter note and a triplet in a half-note duration, give the impression that Larsen keeps the same idea for the entire phrase, and it carries over to the end of the phrase in measure 15.

The melody for the voice in measure 12 also shares the same style of reconstructing the pulse. The reconstructing idea carries through the phrase, where the rhythm is also aligned with the text to stretch the words “lift [my soul] over yours” on top of the syncopation. Larsen’s writing of reconstructing the meter creates new pulses, which can be interpreted as changes in the temperament of the female speaker in “Liebeslied.”
Fig. 3.28: measures 12-15

The oddness of this phrase in measures 11-14 is concluded with a tritone and a sharp stop from the voice. Both of the phrases the voice sings in measures 4-9 and 12-15 end with a question mark, where Larsen raises the end of each phrase to match the intonation in natural speech (see example above).

In measures 11 through 15, the hypolydian mode is not applied in the melody. A quasi-D major sonority is built in voice against the $F^\flat$ from the cello. Here, the key is neither settled nor developed; the quasi-D major remains until a new sonority in C major, found in measure 16 with a lydian 4th ($F^\#$).

The re-phrased writing in measure 6 is applied in cello in measures 16 and 17; the repetition of another written out melisma creates a faster pace, which leads the cello to play rhapsodically and progress to land on the high “E” with trill. This creates a passionate mood that matches the first emotional expression in voice, “Ah,” which is followed by the speaker expressing her wish for a “harbor in an unfamiliar [silent] place.”
In measure 18, after both the cello and the voice reach the note “E,” the cello begins the *trill* on the dissonant minor second (shown below, measure 18). The voice then repeating “D-C♯-A” three times and the melody is mostly written in quarter-note base, instead of in 6/8, which creates tension between the 6/8 (cello) against the disguised 2/4 (voice). When the voice sings: “Ah, willingly would I by some lost thing in the...,” the sonority on “D-C♯-A” is relatively brighter than the lowered minor 2\(^{nd}\) under the word, “dark.” Larsen also indicates *decrescendo* for voice, as well as *p* for cello to play even softer in order to achieve the “dark” quality.
Tone painting is discovered by the notes for cello in measures 22 through 33. Both visually in the score and audibly in their sound, simulate the waves of the sea from which the lover seeks refuge, harbor. The cello repeats the pattern as ostinato, which functions as accompaniment that provides a background for the voice, while the voice sings syllabically to express her feelings through the lyrics.

![Fig. 3.32: measures: 22-25](image)

Before entering the next section, the cello continues to play in ostinato until measure 29, where Larsen has displaced the pattern as if there were a written ritardando, until the cello lands on A in measures 33/34.

In measure 34, the voice sings a melody similar to the first phrase in measure 4, but within an E minor sonority leading into the immediate duo section with no break. In this duet, the melody for the cello is written mostly in a major 3rd below the voice, and the only exceptions are the minor 3rd, minor 6th, and augmented 5th with the lyrics “us,” “draws,” and “a,” respectively.
Such a writing style can be related to the counterpoint, as the notes are written strictly against one another, while closely following the rule of keeping a harmonic sonority. In measures 37 through 44, the lyrics “take us together” explain why Larsen wrote a parallel duet. In addition, the lyrics “as a bow’s stroke does, that out of two strings draws a single voice,” explain why Larsen wrote an ensemble arrangement for voice and cello. Finally, the lyrics “single voice” also explain why both the vocal line and the cello end the phrase on the same note, E. This duet-contrapuntal section flows most steadily with the quarter-base meter, only alternating between 3/4 and 4/4, to show the steadiness in the relationship represented by “a single voice” drawn from “two strings.”

A *cadenza*-like solo is written for the cello in measures 45 through 47. Here, the meter is broadened from 4/5 to 4/7, which are both seen for the first time.
In addition to playing *rhapsodically*, it is also the first time the cello is written a complete phrase. In the solo writing for the cello, due to the short duration from the 32\textsuperscript{nd}, Larsen treats the *melisma*-like notes not only as patterns, but also as if they were real ornamentations. The wide range writing that ends with the challenging 6\textsuperscript{th} intervals allows the cellist to play the *cadenza*-like solo, which expresses the lover’s lack of inhibition and passion. The voice enters in measure 48, following the *melisma* quality from the cello, but in 8\textsuperscript{th} notes.

![Fig. 3.36: measures: 47-49](voice.png) ![Fig. 3.37: measure 45](cello.png)

The perfect 5\textsuperscript{th} in cello in measure 48, responding to the voice, singing: “…two strings draw a single voice,” begins with the interval “A-E,” then moves to “D-A” and “E-B,” then lands on the single note “F” in measure 53. The progression from the low 5\textsuperscript{th} “D-E-F” foretells the cello playing another *cadenza*-like solo here, showing the melodic phrase, “D-E-F,” which is crafted throughout the whole ascending passage till measure 58. The entire passage crosses from low to high register; each of the “D-E-F” is varied while bringing up the dynamics to *ff*, which is the loudest in the entire song.
One may note that Larsen creates the song’s climax at the very end and that she does so in cello. Thus, the cello’s energy reaches the highest level, but this does not last long. Larsen softens the volume by marking *decrescendo* for the *cello*, in anticipation of the voice’s last line. While the voice sings “O sweet song” in measures 59/60, the accompanying cello plays the sustaining “E” in harmonic, in a similar writing style to that in measure 18.
The voice sings her last phrase starting with a melisma pattern in measure 59, then ends on “E” against the “D” played by the cello in measure 60. The “D” and “E” sonority recalls the first note in the opening, as intentionally arranged to be heard at the end of the ensemble as it was in the very beginning.

Ultimately in measures 60-62, the cello closes the song in D major, echoing back to the first three measures of the song. This closing phrase contains the same notes as those played by the cello in measure 6.
For the last three measures, Larsen gives the specific marking of *expressive* and *crescendo* in measure 60, then *decrescendo* together with *ritardando* through the end. Immediately before the double-stop lines, Larsen also indicates *niente*, meaning nothing, suggesting to the cellist to carry out the *decrescendo* to “no sound” in two measures. The purpose of letting the sonority die out together with the major chord quality within “D-A-E” and “G-F#” is to respond to the opening sonority of the song. The only exception is reducing the G# from the lydian 4th to G♮, as if to sweeten the sound for the end of the song, as the lyrics say, “O sweet song.”
3.3  **Do You Know by Rilke**

Do you know, I would quietly  
Slip from the loud circle,  
When first I know the pale  
Starts above the oaks  
are blooming.  

Ways will I elect  
that seldom any tread  
in pale evening meadows –  
and no dream but this:  
You come too.

“So you know,” translated from the German poem “Weisst du, ich will mich schleichen” by Rainer Maria Rilke, describes a night scene and a love relationship.

Larsen wrote this atonal song for an ensemble of mezzo-soprano, cello, and piano. The meter principally remains in 4/4, occasionally alternating between 3/4, 2/4, or 5/4, quarter note equaling 88-92 mm. In this song, each of the instruments and the voice takes turns leading the ensemble. In addition, each has its moment of playing and singing unaccompanied by the other two. The writing in the piano covers a wide range, and the piano trails the voice when the voice leads the ensemble.

In the title and the opening phrase, “Do you know,” in both the original text in German and the English translation that Larsen selected, there is a comma at the end of the phrase, rather than a question mark. Here, the speaker is not asking a question. “Weisst du” in German simply translates to mean the casual “You know” in English. However, in measure 30 right before the last phrase, Larsen takes the liberty of re-stating these lyrics and using a question mark in parentheses: “Do you know,(?)” in addition to the original comma. She thus turns Rilke’s statement into a rhetorical question.
The cello opens the song by playing solo and *pizzicato* for seven measures. A noticeable feature is found in this opening, as the relationship between the notes is either broken and hesitant or in consecutive seconds. Moreover, the rests in the phrase add a mysterious mood, which gives a sense of the unknown. Since these seven measures do not follow a concrete phrasing structure, they can be broken down into two similar phrases.

![Phrase I and Phrase II](image)

Fig. 3.45: opening

A series of dynamic markings is also indicated in the score, which may lead to two different interpretations for this particular writing.

First, the soft quality matches the serene night imagery of a starry sky. The notes played by the cellist in *pizzicato*, as if randomly plucked, call to mind the twinkling stars described in the lyrics, used to set the mood in the introduction: “the pale stars . . . are blooming.” Second, the consecutive dynamic changes and the wide interval leaps imitate the intonation of someone trying to speak softly and hesitantly, while enunciating every syllable. Or, putting together both interpretations, it could be that Larsen places the speaker against the background of a starry night.
The voice enters right after the cello’s opening, singing “Do you know, I would quietly slip from the loud,” which coincides with the motive, “C-A-B♭.” Another motive, in measure 12, is hidden in the middle of the phrase with a slightly different rhythm.

A comparison of the opening cello and the voice’s first phrase shows that despite their similarity in writing, the phrases have very different outcomes.
In this song, Larsen writes similar, but not identical phrases, which can be recognized by the motive “C-A-B\textsuperscript{b}.” Hence, a variation of the motive may be found as crafted in the writing vertically or horizontally, disguised by different accidental markings and then placed in a different order. This motive and its variations are reminiscent of the image of the starry night that remains the same, while it is different every time one looks up at the night sky. Or they may be related to someone talking, who expresses the same idea but in slightly different words and order every time.

In the ensemble writing, when the voice sings “Do you know, I would quietly slip from the loud circle,” Larsen indicates the dynamic markings that match the lyrics. Examples include the ensemble starting in $p$ in measure 8, responding to the word “quietly” in measure 9. Then, the piano plays $mf$ in measure 10, followed by the crescendo to $f$ as pre-setting the word “loud,” which the voice also sings crescendo, aligned with the word.

![Fig. 3.50: measures 8-10](image-url)
In the next phrase in measures 12-14, “when first I know the pale stars are blooming,” Larsen omits the original words, “above the oaks,” presenting it in the tone painting in the score for cello in measures 11-14.

![tone painting: trees (from cello) and stars (from voice)](image)

Fig. 3.51: measures 11-14

This is supported by the stems in quarter notes and half notes, suggesting the image of “oak trees” in their appearance, thus linking to the missing lyrics. To further support the tone painting idea, the note heads in the melody of the voice resemble stars above the trees.

In measure 15, a three-measure phrase in piano functions as a bridge. This bridge starts with the motive written in a high register, while the whole phrase is written in a wide range as crossing four octaves. Another partial motive in reversed order, “Bᵇ-A,” is found one measure apart in the middle voice, in measures 15 and 17.
In measure 18, the whole ensemble is written in unison with full texture, while the phrase is also written in descending motion. The voice singing “Ways will I elect that seldom any tread” through measures 18 and 19, also follows the descending, yet melodic third phrase. The top diatonic phrase can be seen as “D-C-B♭-A♭-F♯,” as shown below.
In the above example, there is a close relationship between the trio in measures 18/19 and the piano solo in measure 20. The descending diatonic scale sung by the voice in measures 18 and 19 is first heard in the left hand of the piano in measure 17, where the descending 3rd melodic phrase is written in major and minor 2nds on the top voice of the left hand. It is then transposed in the voice in measure 18.

In addition, the note A from the motive “C-A♭-B♭” is now transformed into “C-A♭♭-B♭♭” in measure 18. Another illustration of the same musical example, but showing the new look of the motive “C-A♭♭-B♭♭,” can be found in both measures.

measure 18 (piano)                                      measure 20 (piano)

| top voice | D - C - B♭ - A♭ | inner voices | D - C - B♭ - A♭ |

Fig. 3.55: measures 16-17
When the voice sings the next phrase in measures 21 through 23, Larsen repeats the lyrics and adds an extra “the” in addition to the original, as shown below:

\[ +\text{that} +\text{seldom} +\text{any} +\text{tread in} +\text{the pale evening meadows}, \]

The melody of the vocal line begins with the same two notes, “F-F♯,” from measure 19, in the same rhythm as the second half of the first beat.

One may read the similarities between rhythm and interval in measures 19 and 21 as reflecting the repeated lyrics, while Larsen literally proposes the different “ways” in the music, as in the lyrics. She also places A♭ co-exist with A♮ in the motive, as if offering more “ways” in responding to the lyrics, while having one measure of piano solo in between, stating the unspoken word, “or.”

A repeated phrase, the melodic writing of “D-B♭-C-A♭-B♭,” starts on the third beat of measure 24, which had first appeared with A♭ in the vocal line in measure 18. This piano phrase is placed in an interesting arrangement, starting with a high “G,” and crossing over to measures 25 to start the piano solo interlude.
At the same time, placing the repeated phrase in the middle of the measure emphasizes the motive “C-A-B♭,” which stands out, as the note C is aligned with the downbeat in measure 25. An illustration of the phrasing is given below.

The piano solo starts in measure 24, playing for four and half measures, each measure written differently with a center of the motive, “C-A-B♭.”
Fig. 3.61: measures 24-28

Apparantly, Larsen uses the core motive idea “C-A-Bb” and it’s variation which penetrates the interlude, stretching the motive in various arrangements of the rhythm, as if the speaker were puzzled by the same question, looking for the best way to articulate it before she finally utters it in measure 30: “Do you know,(?)”. This motive is also hidden in the two chords played by the piano before and after the singer’s question.
In measures 31-33, the cello plays the notes below in an ascending phrase which contains the diatonic-quality scale in measure 32.

The partial motive “A-B♭” is also disguised as “A-A♮” in the cello’s phrase. Then with *meno mosso* in measure 34, the voice sings “. . . and no dream but this” in descending melodic 3rd’s. It ends in solid G major, spurring the lover to state her real concern decisively: “[will] you come too.”
The note $A^b$ now can be fully clarified as $b\text{II}$ in the tonality of G major, also known as the Neapolitan chord. This relates to the speaker’s questions that have been puzzling her and explains the motive “C-A-B$^b$” which also appears as “C-A$^b$-B$^b$.” In addition, further varieties of motives are presented in the piano solo interlude. After the voice finishes singing, the cello solo plays a melodic phrase in pizzicato, which is transposed from the very beginning of the song.

This reversed order between voice and cello from the opening appears to be arranged in meno mosso, as if Larsen intends for the cello to answer the voice’s question within the disguised G$^\#$ in a variation of the motive, “C-A$^b$/G$^\#$-B.”
The new combination of an augmented 2\textsuperscript{nd} (A\textsubscript{b}-B) crafted in the motive brings a fierce and shocking response from the piano, playing both A\textsubscript{b} and A in an \textit{arpeggio} built in 4\textsuperscript{th}s in \textit{mf}. Instead of re-stating “C-A-B\textsubscript{b},” the motive ends in the order of “A-A\textsubscript{b}-B-C,” closing the entire song in a visual contour, in a phrase assimilating the question mark.

![Fig. 3.67: ending]

In “Do you know,” the piano plays mostly the role of supporting the ensemble. The solo bridge sections in measures 15-17 and 20 should not be played independently as a piano solo. They should be considered as leading the voice into the ensemble by emphasizing the descending phrase (15-17) and inner voices (20). Larsen varies the rhythms and meters in measures 24-28 in the interlude, requiring the pianist to play each measure expressively, while giving each a different character.
3.4 **White World by Doolittle**

The whole white world is ours,
and the world, purple with rose-bays,
bays, bush on bush,
group, thicket, hedge and tree,
dark island in a sea
of grey-green olive or wild white-olive,
cut with the sudden cypress shafts,
in clusters, two or three,
or with one slender, single cypress tree.

Slid from the hill,
as crumbling snow-peaks slide,
citron on citron fill
the valley, and delight
waits till our spirits tire
of forest, grove and bush
and purple flower of the laurel-tree.

Originally a poem by Hilda Doolittle entitled “The whole white world,” Larsen composed “White world” by adapting only two thirds of the poem for voice. Doolittle’s poem purely depicts the scenery of snow. Larsen, in turn, closely follows this organic description in the poem, as there is a simplicity in her musical score compared to the other songs in this collection.

The very first line of the poem, “The whole white world is ours,” portrays a snow scene, while the poem focuses on describing the purity and beauty of the natural world. The same line appears in both the beginning and the end, where Larsen repeats it two complete times, and repeats the words, “is ours,” for a third time. The repetition of the phrase shows the composer’s intention to emphasize that the whole white world belongs
to the lovers. The poem implies that the snow preserves the beauty of this white world under its cover, seemingly for the lovers to enjoy.

“White world” is written for mezzo-soprano and piano, while the cello is absent. The voice sings solo to the accompaniment of the piano, while Larsen uses only the white keys of the piano in the entire piece. In this song, the meter mainly remains in 4/4, occasionally alternating with 3/4 or 5/4 for one measure, and then going back to 4/4; quarter note equaling 66 mm.

The piece opens with the piano presenting two ideas, which will be heard throughout the entire song. One is the descending melody played by the left hand, “F-E-D-C-B-A-G,” which captures the motion of the snow “slid[ing] from the hill.” The other idea is carried by the right hand playing cluster-like 16\textsuperscript{th} notes made of two broken triads, F and G major, written in a new juxtaposition.

![Fig. 3.68: opening](image)

The descending melody of the piano is first presented in single notes; then Larsen doubles the melody as octaves for the piano, while the voice enters. The continuing 16\textsuperscript{th} notes in the piano function as \textit{ostinato}, as though the writing were imitating the
shimmering snow. The vocal line that Larsen writes for voice is chant-like, which is heard in the beginning of the song, while the notes are derived from the two chords of the left hand. The melody is mostly in a narrow range, E4-E5; the only exception in measure 29, G5, will be discussed later in this section. One important feature in the vocal part is that Larsen consistently crafts the verse “white” or “white world” in the interval of “C-D.” Examples are as follows:

Fig. 3.69: measures 3-4

Fig. 3.70: measure 13                  Fig. 3.71: measure 35

Fig. 3.72: measures 37-38
In the opening ten measures, both the voice and piano avoid the note, “E.” The only exception is “E” being played by the piano as a passing note in the descending melody. In measures 9 and 10, for the first time both voice and piano share the same musical idea, a parallel melodic perfect 4\textsuperscript{th} in voice, as well as in the left hand of the piano. The melodic perfect 4\textsuperscript{th} also echoes the words “thicket,” “hedge,” and “tree,” illustrating tone painting, as its shape resembles valleys filled with thickets, hedges, and trees.

![Fig. 3.73: measures 9-10](image)

Starting in measure 11, the absent “E” from the first ten measures now appears on the downbeat in the left hand of the piano in a descending phrase. The voice echoes the piano one beat behind, while continuing to sing in a syllabic manner, ending the phrase in measure 13. Here, the meter is stretched from 4/4 to 5/4 for one measure, while the 16\textsuperscript{th} ostinado is now played by the left hand of the piano on the 5\textsuperscript{th} beat, leading the entrance of the first ascending phrase in measure 14.
Up to this moment, the left hand of the piano was playing the descending phrase in \textit{mf}, while the right hand was playing in \textit{p}, resembling the shimmering snow. In order to keep the cluster-like 16\textsuperscript{th} clean, very little usage of pedaling is suggested, while using more of finger pedaling in the left hand to accomplish the long descending phrase. In measure 13, switching the hands when playing the 16\textsuperscript{th} notes should be done subtly, without causing any tone change or extra accent.

In response to the lyrics, “in clusters, two or three,” the ascending cluster phrase consists of major 2\textsuperscript{nd}, major/minor 3\textsuperscript{rd}, and perfect/augmented 4\textsuperscript{th} (see musical example below). This ascending phrase opposes the idea of the descending melody at the beginning of the song. With the dynamic marking \textit{poco a poco crescendo}, the rising motion builds up through measures 14-17, before the unforeseen dramatic fall in measures 18 and 19.

![Fig. 3.74: measures 14-15](image)

Unlike the calm music earlier, a new transition begins in measure 17, while entering measure 18. The left hand of the piano plays the 16\textsuperscript{th} clusters from the preceding \textit{p}.
playing $f$ for one beat, then softening to $p$. At the same time, the right hand plays the ascending phrase, which turns into a descending phrase as it doubles the voice’s melody, while it remains in $f$. This sudden change from the left hand implies that more dramatic music will follow. In the upcoming measures 18/19, a timber change from bright to dark is also found, where the phrase ends abruptly and falls to a register 3 octaves lower. This dark timber leads immediately into a new cluster sonority with 32nd notes, creating a disturbing mood and a feeling of moving forward more than the previous 16th notes did.

The transition from a higher register to a lower one with new 32nd clusters in piano situates a measure ahead of the voice, as if preparing the scene that is suggested by the lyrics: “Slid from the hill, as crumbling snow peaks slide.” Larsen also uses tone painting here, as she writes ascending and descending passages that visually resemble the shape of the hill. These passages capture the sliding motion, as the voice re-starts the melody on note C from the beginning of the song; but this time, there is an atmosphere of more turmoil from the left hand of the piano. The moving 32nd is mostly made of arpeggio that starts with “E” or “D,” and is followed by “G-A-C” or “C-A-G” (see musical example).

Fig. 3.75: measures 22

In this new section starting with measure 21, the phrase of the right hand of the piano assimilates the vocal line by overlapping the main melody notes, though not necessarily in the same rhythm throughout the disturbing section. The dramatic 32nds finally end and return to a calmer pattern of 16th notes after the voice singing the word “de-light” and resolve with the word “waits.” This change in piano takes place in the middle of the vocal line, with no break. Similar to the previous calm when entering into the disturbing section, the pianist should keep the change from playing 32nds to 16ths as smooth as possible, without interfering with the phrase from the right hand.

In measure 29, as the voice sings the word “forest,” Larsen stretches the phrase to “G,” the highest note of the song, by writing in a wide range with a leaping interval. This stretch emphasizes the word “forest” to convey all nature as the lovers’ “delight waits till [their] spirits tire.” After the voice sings “forest,” the melody of the lyrics “grove and bush” in triplets recalls the earlier lyrics, “two and three,” in measures 16 and 17, while they share the main notes, “C” and “B.”
The same descending phrase occurs in measures 18 and 33/34, as the previous one leading into the disturbing section, while the latter, playing solo, and leads into the postlude without any further disturbance.

In measures 35 and 36, is another identical writing in piano to measures 1 and 2, except that Larsen alternates the hands of the piano to play the same accompaniment, and keeps the phrase in single notes rather than octaves.
In measures 37-39, the piano imitates the voice one measure later in augmentation played in octaves.

Here, Larsen puts two ideas together, the word “ours” aligned with the parallel melodic 4th's in measure 39, to express how all of the elements in nature belong to the lovers in the
song. These octaves call to mind a valley of tone painting filled with the unsung idea of “group,” “thicket,” “hedge,” and “tree” played by the piano. The same idea is repeated again in measures 44 through 46.

At the conclusion of “White world,” in measure 47, Larsen writes ascending 16th's starting with the partial pattern of the 16th ostinado (see musical example), giving the impression of the fun of watching the snowflakes blow around, as the poet and musician share their joy with the audience the way lovers do. Larsen finishes the passage on “E,” seemingly to recall the stretching phrase from the voice singing the word “forest,” to restate the enjoyment the lovers have in nature. Hence, in playing this particular ending passage, the pianist should use only shallow pedaling. This helps with the frequent changes in pedaling, in order to keep the passage clean and leave out the pedal in the last measure, playing all 32nd notes as grace notes to make the high “E” stand out.
Fig. 3.85: ending
3.5 “Music, when soft voices die” by Shelley

Music, when soft voices die,
  vibrates in the memory:
Odors, when sweet violets sicken,
  live within the sense they quicken.
Rose leaves, when the rose is dead,
  are heaped for the beloved’s bed;
  and so thy thoughts, when thou art gone,
Love itself shall slumber on.

Larsen composed this song for the poem by Percy Bysshe Shelley, “Music, when soft voices die,” for mezzo-soprano, cello, and piano. In this poem, Shelley talks about immortal love and how it does not wane with time. The essence of “music,” “sweet violets,” or a “rose” lasts in one’s memory, like love does, from the moment it is received. As stated in the last verse of the poem, “Love itself shall slumber on.” It is like music that “vibrates in the memory,” as the poem says. The voice opens the song leading as the soloist and introduces the wandering melody with a written out appoggiatura quality. This melodic phrase recurs when the piano and cello accompany the voice. The volume of the ensemble as a whole is mostly soft, as if the instruments and voice were murmuring.

The tempo marking Larsen noted for this song is quarter note equaling 60 mm, along with the expression marking languidly. This tempo makes it the slowest song among the six songs; it is also the shortest, containing only 23 measures in the entire collection. The meter in this song is 4/4 throughout, except for one measure in 3/4. The key is written in an implied tonality in Eb major.

In the first phrase of the song, the very first two notes that the voice sings are the minor 2\textsuperscript{nd} interval on “A-B\textsuperscript{b}.” This particular minor second, the motive, appears often in
the score, mostly in these specific notes, “A-B♭.” In addition, this minor 2\textsuperscript{nd} can be found in the beginning of the phrase, as well as being hidden in the middle of the harmony.

“Music, when soft voices die” can be described in three sections that are vaguely distinguished by changes in expression markings. An overall glance at the score shows four main elements that seem to be connected with the poem:

(1) the motive – minor second interval;

![Fig. 3.85: measure 1](image)

(2) the 16\textsuperscript{th}-note pattern containing a major second and a major sixth has an ornamentation quality of written out mordent;

![Fig. 3.86: measure 5](image)

(3) the syncopated chords in second inversion; and
(4) the triplet thirds starting with a rest, are comprised of the motivic interval in its phrase, and vary in single notes, or in melodic thirds, without the triplet.

3.5.1 Section One: *languidly*

The first section, covering measures 1-7, begins with the expression marking, *languidly*. Here, the voice opens the song by singing the motive twice, the first time at a slower pace and the second time, quicker (see musical example: measures 1-3). A similar phrasing structure can be found in measures 6 and 7 (see musical example). Both times, each of the opening phrases in measures 1 and 6 finishes with a sub-phrase in measures 4 and 8, respectively.
In the ensemble writing, the piano enters at the end of the voice’s phrase, aligned with the word, “die.” It begins with the motive on the right hand while the left hand plays the minor seconds in both ascending and descending hidden motivic intervals.

The cello in measure 5, starting the phrase by imitating the previous beat from the piano’s melody in the right hand (see music example), plays the second idea as mentioned above.
Fig. 3.94: measures 4-5

The cello then continues the phrase with the motive, and assimilates the phrase with the vocal line until a sudden stop in measure 8. The cello first trails the piano in measure 5, and then trails the singer in measures 6 and 7. The phrase of the vocal line in measure 8 is the sub-phrase of measures 6 and 7. The exact interval pattern here can be seen as the second idea which echoes the cello in measure 5, which brings closure to the first five measures:

Fig. 3.95: measure 5

This idea is also seen in measure 8 in voice, which brings closure to the phrase in measures 6-8. Later in measure 17, the voice is followed by the piano, which brings closure to the entire song.
The third musical idea in measure 6, written in syncopated chords, appears for the very first time in the piano. Observing the writing for the chords in the entire song, each new entrance of the syncopated chords brings in a new subject, with the word “odors” in measure 6 and “rose” in measure 9.

![Fig. 3.97: measure 6](image)
![Fig. 3.98: measure 9](image)

Then in measure 17, the chord enters two measures ahead of the word “love” as an interlude to bring in the subject of love. Hence, these chords serve to introduce the new subject from the lyrics.

Since Larsen indicates *languidly*, the pianist can play super *legato* to enhance the polished tone quality, while using the pedal carefully to smooth the chord progression.

### 3.5.2 Section Two: *poco animato*

In measure 9, the voice sings “Rose leaves” to open the second section. Singing the phrase starts with the motive on F# for the new sonority, with the expression marking,
*poco animato*. The ensemble in section two is written in a fuller texture, filled with all four musical ideas to create the intensity in responding to the lyrics. When the voice starts singing the lyrics “when the rose is dead” twice in measures 10 and 11 (see the music example below), the piano follows this specific phrasing in the second half of measure 10 and the cello plays the same but in flats, in measure 11.

![Fig. 3.99: measures 10-11](image)

The rhythm in this specific motive written in triplets, originates in measure 10 in the vocal line. It has a tie on the first note, then the piano and cello follow the new motivic rhythmic pattern in measures 10 and 11, which is the fourth musical idea mentioned above, but here in single notes. To obtain the fourth idea successfully consigned through the ensemble, both the piano and cello should genuinely follow how the motive on F# is phrased by the voice. Other musical ideas should be approached in the
same manner as well, to preserve the undying memory and keep it fresh, as suggested in
the lyrics.

In measure 12, the original fourth idea is shown in the piano, while in measure 13, the
phrasing for voice elongates the fourth musical idea, but in melodic writing. Linking this idea and the lyrics, a full interpretation of it may associate the writing with the
subject “Rose.” The eighth rest in the triplet expresses the motion of falling “rose
leaves;” the interval of thirds describes the pile of rose leaves “heaped for the beloved’s
bed;” the melodic third interval in the left hand of the piano follows the motion of falling
rose petals, as well as sung in the descending vocal line. This melodic interval also shares the descending third melody in measures 13 and 14.

Fig. 3.100: measures 13-14
3.5.3 Section Three: *Freely, meno mosso*

In the last section, the musical components start two and half measures ahead of the new musical expression, as the syncopated chords appear in measure 14, anticipating the new section to begin. Here, the new expression marking says *Freely, meno mosso.* The lyrics that the voice sings repeat the last verse of the poem, assuring the audience that love itself shall no doubt slumber on. The phrase that the voice sings is based on the second idea of 16th notes which bring closure to the entire song. In measure 17, the piano echoes back the idea of closure to the vocal line; then in measure 19 in *a tempo,* the cello and piano bring back the remaining three musical elements: the motive, syncopated chords in second inversion, and the triplets with rests, as if ensuring undying love.

After viewing the entire song, the motive, that is the minor second interval, can be interpreted more completely. The minor second, which can be seen as the core unit, is the smallest element used to build an interval. As stated in the poem, the undying “essence” of music, odors, rose, and love will be remembered infinitely. Larsen appears to express this essence through the minor second motive.

Another word association can be found between the musical writing *trill* and the word “vibrates.”

written out *trill*

![written out trill](image)

Fig. 3.101: measure 4
Examples are, the word “vibrates” written out in trill in measure 4; the word “sicken” coinciding with the trill in the cello in measure 7; the lyric “dead” in measure 10 aligned with a long trill, which is written for the right hand of the piano.

Fig. 3.102: measure 7
Fig. 3.103: measure 10

An overall structure is hidden in the song with the third musical idea: an A-men cadence structured on the second inversion chord. It is first built on $A^b$ in measure 6, then resolves in $E^b$ in measure 9. After that, the chord remains in $E^b$ until the very end. This chord progression of $A^b - E^b$ (IV – I) is the church cadence, also known as the A-men cadence, suggesting peace and harmony, regardless of the chaos and decay in life. This peace and harmony are implied in the trills heard in measures 4, 7, and 10, as stated above, confirming the lyrics “vibrates in the memory” and keeping the essence of life alive in the minds and hearts of lovers.
3.6 “Go from me” by Browning

Go from me. Yet I feel that I shall stand
Henceforth in thy shadow. Nevermore
Alone upon the threshold of my door
Of individual life, I shall commend
The uses of my soul, not life my hand
Serenely in the sunshine as before,
Without the sense of that which I forbore-
Thy touch upon the palm. The widest land
Doom takes to part us, leaves thy heart in mine
With pulses that beat double. What I do
And what I dream include thee, as the wine
Must taste of its own grapes. And when I sue
God for myself, He hears that name of thine,
And sees within my eyes the tears of two.

Larsen wrote the song “Go from me,” based on the poem by Elizabeth Barrett Browning, for the ensemble of mezzo-soprano, cello, and piano. In the poem, the lover addresses her beloved, beseeching him to leave her, while her real wish is that they never separate. The song is written in 4/4, quarter note equaling to 80; there is no key signature and a weak tonal center, closing the song in C major. The cello opens the composition by introducing a dyad-motive with an appoggiaturas quality, while it is accompanied by the piano, which plays white-key clusters throughout the six-measure prelude.

The song has a steady flow, as the meter mainly remains in 4/4, alternating with 3/4, and has only one measure in 2/4, using quarter-note base throughout the entire song. Based on its tonality, the song appears to be comprised of three sections. Sections one and three both have a weak tonal quality in C, while section two is simply dissonant and has no development in musical components. A notable feature that stands out in this song
collection is the consecutive tempi change, which lasts for 16 measures before returning to *a tempo* at the end of the first section.

### 3.6.1 Section One

In the opening six measures, as indicated by the phrasing, there is continuous interaction between the cello and the piano. This opening can be seen as consisting of two phrases. One phrase is played by the cello and piano in a comparatively lower register, marked with the dynamic marking *mf*, and then *decrescendo*; the other phrase is played in a higher register, marked with the dynamic marking *p*, and then *crescendo to f* within more moving 8\textsuperscript{th} notes to fill in the sustaining moments.

![Fig. 3.104: opening](image)

Although the cello and the piano respond to each other while they share the same style of ascending phrasing, they have completely different musical components. The writing for the cello is reminiscent of *appoggiaturas* with a sustaining note, later incorporating a syncopated rhythm. The melody of the cello uses restricted notes, “D-E” or “D-E-B.” In
responding to the cello, the piano, playing parallel clusters in an ascending phrase, has a more pentatonic sonority coming from the multiple hidden 4th s.

In measure 7 following the prelude, the cello continues the same dynamics from the previous measure, playing $f$. Surprisingly, the cello all of a sudden lands on a long trill on “G,” with a completely new and intrusive musical idea. The voice enters in measure 8 singing: “Go from me. Yet I feel that I shall stand henceforward in thy shadow,” with the phrase featuring melodic perfect 4th s which borrow this from the piano in the prelude.

The $A^b$ chord in second inversion in measure 13 is the $b$VI chord, which suggests that Larsen is intentionally changing the color. This $A^b$ major chord naturally darkens the
sonority, matching the lyrics as the voice sings the word “shadow.” In measures 13 and 14, two melodic intervals are disguised in the A\textsuperscript{b} sonority, echoing each other in different voicing. One is a descending phrase, “C-A\textsuperscript{b},” in both voice and piano; the other is an ascending phrase, “C-D,” in piano and cello.

![Fig. 3.107: measures 13-14](image)

Hence, the echoing relationship in the repeated melodic intervals reinforces the image of inseparable lovers that the lyrics, “in thy shadow,” call to mind. This also explains the musical interaction in the prelude: similar to Browning’s description of how the beloved’s shadow follows her, the ensemble of cello and piano are intimately bound to each other in the prelude.

The descending “C-A\textsuperscript{b}” and ascending “C-D” phrases are both resolved immediately in measure 14, where a fermata momentarily sustains the A\textsuperscript{b} chord. Through a written out glissando passage, Larsen restates the entire prelude in measures 15 and 16,
but transposed in one perfect 4th higher in the cello as “G-A,” rather than the original “D-E.”

This septet of written out glissando in measure 14 may describe the motion of “withdrawing” from the shadow in the previous statement, “Go from me.” In measure 8, in contrast to commanding her beloved to leave her, singing, “Go from me,” the lover is actually manipulating him to stay. The theme of intimacy from the prelude returns in measures 15 and 16, again with continuous interaction between the cello and the piano. The ascending phrase played by the piano and cello corresponds to the lover feeling she has her beloved’s attention and that they are inseparable. Carrying over this idea in measure 17, the cello precedes the voice’s phrase by playing one beat earlier, inverting the original “D-E” into “E-D.”
Following the loving feeling expressed in the poem, the entire ensemble from measure 18 through 34 assimilates the same notes, giving a feeling of unity until the voice sings the dyad-motive with an *appoggiatura* quality in measure 20.

The unified writing of the ensemble in full texture follows the lyrics, showing a strong bond between the lover and her beloved, as the voice sings: “Nevermore Alone upon the threshold of my door Of individual life.” The piano here plays mostly the supporting chords for the ensemble, while expanding its range to fortify the strong feeling between the lovers. The pianist needs to pay extra attention when crossing the voice’s
range especially in measures 18 and 19, and later in measures 24 and 25. Although the dynamics is marked/f starting in measure 17, it is necessary to lighten up the volume particularly in playing the full texture. An easy way to confirm that the pianist is not overpowering the voice is to make sure the lyrics are audible even when sung in low range.

In this whole section, the intensity in the ensemble as they simultaneously sing and play the same motive is suggestive of the attention that the lovers pay to one another. For example, the melody of the cello playing “E-D” in measure 17 is echoed by the voice one beat behind; similarly, the cello and the voice have a close relationship in measures 20/21 (cello) and measure 22 (voice), and the voice in measure 24 is echoed by the cello in measure 26. In all three sections, combining the lyrics with this melodic phrase “E-D” shows Larsen’s plan to have the lyrics stand out by repeating the melodic phrase, “E-D”:

Nevermore…in dividual life, I shall………(my) soul

cello/voice…cello………voice, voice……………cello

Larsen indicates tempi changes across 15 measures (23-38), covering the lyrics shown below.

I shall command The uses of my soul,

nor lift my hand Serenely in the sunshine as before,

Without the sense of that which I forbore-

Thy touch upon the palm.

The words presented in bold above indicate each pickup to a new descending phrase in the score, which follows the falling manner of the phrase “E-D” from the previous
musical idea. The lyrics describe the lover reminiscing the days that she spent with her beloved, and Larsen applies the tempo change to fulfill the speaker’s expression. In measures 23 through 31, corresponding to the words that are italicized above, Larsen notes an *accelerando* without a break, as if the lover could not stand to be apart from her beloved.

Larsen also notes *ritardando* in the third stanza and *freely* in the last stanza, slowing down and taking time in the tempi, similar to the lover’s recalling their time together. An additional *accelerando* is played by the cello and piano for two measures (33 and 34) located between the last two stanzas. This may relate to the lover’s short panicky feeling as the music moves to the A♭ sonority, which was linked with the lyric “shadow” from measure 13, and now makes her realize the reality of being away from her other half. In measure 35, the intimacy between the lovers is once again reflected in Larsen’s musical score for the piano.

Larsen uses various musical expressions to show the inseparable relationship between the lovers and to catch their mood. These include having the cello, piano, and voice echo and closely respond to each other, along with tempi changes. Larsen also uses tone painting to describe the lovers’ closeness through the keyboard and rhythm. For example, in measure 26, the writing for the piano is interlaced, as was seen before, but this is the first time that it is held for six beats. The chord, “A-D-F,” from the left hand is played against the chord, “A-C-E,” written for the right hand. These chords may be interpreted as being combined in a minor II⁰ chord (D-F-A-C-E). Yet, a more poetic interpretation could be that Larsen visualizes the left and right hands of the piano being
interlocked, which there is no reference until the text “hand” in measure 29, as are the fingers of lovers when they hold hands.

![Fig. 3.112: measures 26-27](image)

Right hand  
notes on the keyboard  
Left hand  

This tone painting explains the opening chord in measure 1, which is shown below. The exact same chord also appears in measures 4, 15, and 20.

![Fig. 3.113: measures 4, 5, 20](image)
In measures 33 and 34, a syncopated rhythm is interwoven in the ascending melody.

Another instance of intimacy is Larsen’s use of two broken triads written in a 16th sextet, which describes more vividly how notes from the second melodic triad fill in the blanks in the first chord.

Fig. 3.114: measures: 33-34

Fig. 3.115: measure 35
first triad                            f              a              d
notes on the keyboard                F     G     A     B     C     D
second triad                                g             b      c

The lyrics here verify the idea of lovers holding hands, as the voice sings, “Thy touch upon the palm,” in measures 35 through 38.

3.6.2 Section Two

Larsen marks \textit{a tempo} in measure 38, which starts with a sequence of “E” from the piano’s low register and then from the cello. Next, the cello plays the written out \textit{glissando}, leading to the voice’s first solo phrase in section two. The tonality in the second section is unclear and odd, as the sonority is built on the dissonant components that clash in the entire ensemble. As shown below, Larsen departs from the poem, taking the liberty of repeating the lyrics “doom takes to part us.” She also changes the word “heart” to “hand,” reinforcing the idea of holding hands, as also suggested by the interlaced writing for the piano. The complete lyrics in section two are shown below.

\begin{center}
The widest land Doom takes to part us, 
\ldots** doom takes to part us, 
Leaves thy \textbf{hand} (heart) in mine 
With pulses that beat double.
\end{center}

In measures 44 through 55, the cello plays a repeated pattern as \textit{ostinato}, alternating the single note “E\textsuperscript{b}” with the perfect 4\textsuperscript{th} of “E\textsuperscript{b}-B\textsuperscript{b}.”
One may interpret the repeated pattern as illustrating the fact that the lover lives on her own, represented by the single note, “E♭.” In addition, as symbolized by the perfect 4th, the lover continues to keep her beloved in her thoughts. As a result, the cello expresses her belief in living as a couple. In the same section, two rhythmic features are found in piano: sustaining notes and a weak beat rhythmic pattern. The sustaining notes in the downbeat are first seen in measures 44-45. They then become the top voice, repeating “A-G,” in the left hand of the piano in measures 50-55.
The weak beat feature of the piano in measures 46 and 47 is varied in measures 50 through 55 as a new arrangement, which had originated in the opening. In the ensemble, the piano is rhythmically aligned with the cello and voice in measures 50-55, resembling the heartbeats of the two lovers.

Here, the vocal line is built by a restricted group of notes. After the voice finishes her first statement in measure 44, the phrase is built by using the notes, “C-D-A-G#.” The same phrase is repeated again and ends in “G♭” which is sung in measure 48, while it
shares the repeated lyrics. Later, the vocal line is simplified, repeating the notes “G-B♭” and “G-B♮” in a non-fixed rhythmic pattern. Larsen may have intended for the unifying rhythmic patterns to stand out in the ensemble by keeping the musical components simple, as she does in the vocal line.

The piano in section two is written in a relatively low register compared to that in section one. In order to have a clear “heartbeat-like” rhythmic feature and to keep the cello (played in p) audible, the pianist needs to be cautiously aware of following the notes’ duration as they are written in the score. No pedaling is suggested in this section, as Larsen did not indicate any. Furthermore, a clean cut-off of each chord is required, and the volume of the entire ensemble needs to allow the lyrics to be heard clearly.

This dissonant sonority in section two ends one measure after the voice finishes her phrasing. A familiar passage that had appeared earlier in measures 5 and 16 is now used as a bridge to connect back to the C sonority before entering the third section.

3.6.3 Section Three

In measures 57-64, the voice sings solo the following lyrics: “What I do And what I dream include thee, as the wine Must taste of its own grapes.” The first phrase which begins in measure 57 shares a similar quality with the opening vocal line in measure 8, while the second phrase which begins in measure 62 keeps only the features of a dotted rhythm and triplets from the opening phrase.
Marked *freely*, along with the almost *a cappella* quality accompanied for only one chord by the piano, this phrase draws attention to Browning’s lyrics. The only chord written for the piano in measure 62 can be seen as communicating two important messages here. First, the top voice of the piano’s left hand plays the dyad-motive, “D-E,” to reinforce the sound that is lacking in the second phrase of the voice.

Second, the piano’s right hand plays a cluster-like chord made of two perfect 4th’s. The cluster of notes can be read as grapes hanging on the vine, represented by the *arpeggio* marking, which appears only in measure 62, while the voice sings, “as the wine Must taste of its own grapes.” This tone painting, which completes the phrase sung by the voice in measures 57-64, begins and ends with the two broken triads played by the piano.
in measures 57 and 65. As mentioned previously, the two broken triads convey the image of holding hands in section one. They serve as a sweet memory for the lover who is longing to be with her beloved. The same broken triads also correspond to the lyrics that the voice sings: “What I do And what I dream include thee, as the wine Must taste of its own grapes.”

A new sonority, “B♭,” lasts for three measures, 66-68, as Larsen notes animato in the score. This is a similar approach to the A♭ that Larsen used earlier to have a color change. A romantic explanation may be that in German, the note B♭ is called the “German B,” and the note B♮ is represented by the letter “H,” which coincides with the initials of Hella Mears Hueg, the German woman who commissioned Larsen to compose this song collection. This could explain the opening phrase, “D-E,” as the country code of Deutschland, while the note “B” (represented by “H” in German) appears in the middle of the phrase in measures 4 through 6, standing for Hella Hueg. This idea has confirmed in the interview with Larsen, that the observation may be entirely plausible which may have occurred to her on a subconscious level.

![Fig. 3.124: measures: 4-6](image.png)
Starting in measure 66, a clear scheme of the voice’s long phrase can be read as a progression of the ascending phrase, “A- Bb-C-D-E,” and “D-E” is re-stated two more times in measures 71-72 and 74-76.

ascending phrase: “A- Bb-C-D-E”

As a result, along with the main scheme from the phrase structure, Larsen matches the ascending phrase, “A- Bb-C-D-E,” to highlight the lyrics, as shown below.

“And-When . . .God . . . (my)self . . . He/hears . . .thine, . . .with . . . my . . .the . . . two”

A      Bb                C              D                 D        -       E,           D     -    E         D    -    E

In response to the passionate lyrics, the ensemble is written with a fuller texture, as the piano plays the musical ideas in section one, together with the cello. A short postlude is built on the cadence of V-I starting in measure 76 and flowing through measure 80. This postlude begins with the dyad-motive “G-A” in cello, that is akin to “D-E.” This may
represent the lover (who is also German), while the dyad-motive “G-A” is her beloved’s response, which Larsen literally inserted in the piano writing. Overall, Hella Hueg’s initials are interwoven throughout the song, to express her profound love for her husband.

The same musical idea also describes the phrases in cello in measures 66 through 74, carrying the specific dyad-motives, “D-E” and “G-A” or their inversions, “E-D” and “A-G,” in the long phrase. Continuing without a break, this long phrase embraces these two ideas, similar to the lovers who will not be separated.
The same idea is also carried over in the vocal line in measures 74-76, where Larsen again notes the expression marking, *freely*.

Here, the voice’s closing melody is made of inverted “G-A” that is interwoven with “D-E” as the new compound dyad-motives, “D-‘A-G’-E,” as if we can see Hella embracing her husband in the music. In addition, the two motives, “G-A” played by the cello, and “D-E,” which is hidden in the chords in the piano, echo each other in the postlude. Relating this idea to the prelude, the “G-A,” in contrast, hidden in the chord played by the
piano and echoing the “D-E” played by the cello, clearly reflects the intimacy between the lover and her beloved.

While Larsen indicates *animato* for section three to be played passionately, the pianist does not need to put extra emphasis in the performance to reinforce the specific dyad-motives, “D-E” and “G-A.” This is true for cello and voice, as well. Doing so avoids the occurrence of any broken phrases, and consequently loses the unity of the ensemble. Instead, as Larsen wrote for the closure, performers should keep a larger phrase concept in mind and have the two dyad-motives blend in the ensemble, together with the ascending motion.
Chapter 4: Compilation of Stylistic Elements

Chapter 4 compiles information on the musical writing in Larsen’s complete song collection, “Beloved, Thou Hast Brought Me Many Flowers.” This discussion of her writing provides a list of each musical feature in alphabetical order. It illustrates how Larsen arranged and executed these features in her own language, as she reflects on topics of love, music, flowers, and nature. Larsen’s phrasing, color, rhythm, and form are direct consequences of, and inspired by various aspects of nature. Her music calls to mind vivid images, conveying the essence of feelings that nature evokes in lovers, making her writing stand out among the music of her contemporaries.

The musical features Larsen most frequently uses in this song collection are given below.

4.1 Ensemble Arrangement

This song collection is arranged for voice, cello, and piano, played in various combinations of duo or trio to express Larsen’s musical ideas. “Liebeslied” is a duo for cello and voice; “White world” is written for the piano accompanying the voice; the remaining four songs are written for the ensemble of voice, cello, and piano. This variety
of arrangement is also heard in the opening of each of the six songs. The chart below indicates the solo instrument or voice and the length of measures written for the opening.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Song</th>
<th>Open with –</th>
<th>Measure(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beloved,</td>
<td>piano / cello</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liebeslied</td>
<td>cello solo</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you know</td>
<td>cello solo</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White word</td>
<td>piano solo</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music,</td>
<td>voice solo</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go from me</td>
<td>cello + piano</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 4.1: opening arrangement

A particular feature in Larsen’s ensemble arrangement is the voice’s entrance. Larsen cautiously softens the dynamics of either, or both the cello and the piano, by indicating a *decrescendo* before each phrase that the voice sings. This avoids the instruments overpowering the voice’s volume. Another particular arrangement that Larsen uses for the voice is to simply leave it as an unaccompanied soloist. Larsen pays attention to the lyrics by frequently changing in meter, together with using tailored speech-like phrases, which creates the theatrical effect of a quasi-*recitative*, as if the vocal line were half sung and half spoken.
Unaccompanied voice: Song 1, m 23-26

![Unaccompanied voice notation](image)

Fig. 4.2: unaccompanied voice

Frequent changing in meter: Song 2, m 4-9)

![Meter changes notation](image)

Fig. 4.3: meter changes in voice

Larsen’s writing for the ensemble of piano and cello also reflects the meaning of the lyrics through tone painting or through the motives. For example, in the third song, “Do you know,” the lyrics that Larsen omitted in her musical writing are literally displayed in the music score through tone painting. In the sixth song, “Go from me,” Larsen also represents the lover and her beloved by having the cello and piano echo the motives in both the introduction and the postlude.
4.2 Form

The musical writing in this collection has a non-traditional form. Although Larsen seems to have adapted the A-B-A’ form in the first and last song, the oversized first section and extremely condensed third section are a defining feature in her structural writing. Her songs “Liebeslied,” “White world,” and “Music,” share the same idea of forming the song by piling several long and complete phrases together. Larsen does not develop these phrases, but uses them to construct each song, which contributes to her non-traditional form of writing. There are also repeated fragments of writing under each phrase.

In the third song, “Do you know,” a style close to the strophic form of writing is found, as the motive regularly re-appears in different phrases. Each phrase includes the same motive, as well as having its unique characteristics. Hence, the phrases are assembled as if they were a variation. Moreover, Larsen’s writing in “Do you know” is similar to “Gymnopedie,” a collection of three piano solo pieces written by Erik Satie. In “Gymnopedie” it is as if one were looking at the same statue from different angles. In their core, the three songs in the collection have very similar musical phrasing, harmony, and meter, while each of them is still an independent piano piece. In “Do you know,” one gets the feeling that the speaker is reformulating his/her question with every repetition of the motive. The phrases have the same core-motive, which each time is paraphrased slightly differently. The figure below illustrates the overall structure of each song.
Fig. 4.4: form

In the song collection, two songs have the golden ratio, “Do you know” and “Music, when soft voices die.” Both of them share the ideal proportion (1:1.6) that many artists and architects have favored since the Renaissance. The remaining four songs are arranged with the climax coming closer to the end of the song, as Larsen follows the flow of each poem.

Fig. 4.5: golden ratio
4.3 Harmony, Tonality

4.3.1 Tonality

The songs in this collection do not have a key signature. Larsen writes accidentals to give an implied tonality and ends each song in a major key, except for the third song, “Do you know.” Here, the voice ends in a G major sonority ahead of the ensemble, while the ensemble concludes in quasi-C major with a flat 3rd (E♭) and an extra flat 6th (A♭), or in C minor with an extra sharp 6th A♯. A list of each ending tonality is shown below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Song</th>
<th>Ending Tonality</th>
<th>Song</th>
<th>Ending Tonality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Beloved,</td>
<td>A major</td>
<td>4. White world</td>
<td>C major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Liebeslied</td>
<td>D major</td>
<td>5. Music.</td>
<td>E♭ major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Do you know</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>6. Go from me</td>
<td>C major</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 4.6: tonality

The tonality in these songs is implied rather than stated. Furthermore, Larsen uses modes in her writing. “Liebeslied” is written with co-existing modes of lydian and hypolydian in the opening, and Larsen resolves the song in the tonality of D major. Larsen’s use of modal writing, as well as raising the 4th note, commonly seen in the lydian mode, may be due to the influence of Gregorian chant. A clear example of this can be found in measure 27 in the first song.
4.3.2 Ambiguous Tonality

Ambiguous tonality in Larsen’s collection refers to the continuing uncertain sonority created by frequent alternation of intervals. This can be found in the first song, “Beloved, thou hast brought me many flowers” in measures 35-38. Here, minor 3rd intervals alternate with major 3rd’s in the vocal line, and this pattern is repeated for four measures, giving an instant color change between dark and bright sonorities. In measures 51-54 of the last song, “Go from me,” the writing is almost identical in voice, as Larsen uses the same intervals to reflect the lyrics.

“Beloved,” m 35-37

“Go from me” m 51-53
4.3.3 Harmony: Borrowed Chords

Borrowed chords appear in this song collection, as Larsen uses them for color change. They are: $b^\text{II}$, $b^\text{VI}$, and $b^\text{VII}$. The location of each borrowed chord is shown in the chart below, followed by musical examples.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chord</th>
<th>Song</th>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Also known as-</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$b^\text{II}$</td>
<td>3. Do you know</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Neapolitan chord</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$b^\text{VI}$</td>
<td>1. Beloved,</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$b^\text{VII}$</td>
<td>6. Go from me</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 4.10: borrowed chords

Fig. 4.11: $b^\text{II}$

Fig. 4.12: $b^\text{VI}$
4.4 The Lyrics

In composing this song collection, Larsen takes the liberty of tailoring the lyrics to fit her music. This involves repeating the lyrics to stress the meaning or omitting some of the lyrics in the original poem. A good example of both is seen in Larsen’s song, “White world.” In contrast to Doolittle’s original poem, “The whole white world,” Larsen repeats the first line of the poem, “the whole white world is ours,” two and a half times at the end. She also omits the last third of the poem, given below.

Yet not one wearies,
joined is each to each
in happiness complete
with bush and flower:
ours is the wind-breath
at the hot noon-hour,
ours is the bee's soft belly
and the blush of the rose-petal,
lifted, of the flower.
The omitted section of the poem represents the happiness between the two lovers, as expressed by the borrowed idea from the sixth song. The interlaced broken chords used in “Go from me” serves as the ostinato for “White world,” showing the happiness of the lovers, which later becomes a sweet memory in “Go from me.”

Larsen may have related the last ascending passage in “White world” to the omitted poem “wind-breath,” as the lovers enjoy watching the snowflakes being blown by the wind-breath.

Besides the lyrics that are written out, there are also unspoken lyrics that carry the meaning through the music. For example, the A♭ tonality in measure 13 in “Go from me” appears with the word “shadow,” suggesting inseparable lovers.

4.5 Phrase Writing / Rhythm

In this song collection, the lyrics play a dominant role and are closely related to phrasing and rhythm. Larsen does not only take note of the rhythm and intonation of a natural speech pattern, but she also successfully conveys them rhythmically and melodically. Akin to Gregorian chant, Larsen’s notations enable the performer to keep
the original tone and natural rhythm while singing. This adjustment in the lyrics becomes
a feature of the song collection, as the phrases share the same motive, but vary each time.

Frequent changes in meter are also written to accommodate the lyrics. The only
two exceptions in this collection, written in the classical phrase structure, appear in the
first and sixth songs. Musical examples from these songs are shown below.

Song 1, m27-30 (classical phrase writing)

![Fig. 4.16: phrase writing-1](image)

Fig. 4.16: phrase writing-1

Song 6, m1-4 (classical phrase writing)

![Fig. 4.17: phrase writing-2](image)

Fig. 4.17: phrase writing-2

A rhythmic feature in Larsen’s writing is the quasi-unison rhythms found in the
sixth song, which overlap. Although these rhythms are not written identically in the
score, they reflect the two pulses from the lyrics, producing the almost equally matching
heartbeats.
**Hemiola** is another rhythmic feature in this collection. Examples can be found in the following songs: “Beloved” in measures 96-99; “Liebeslied” in measures 23-27; and “Go from me” in measures 45, 48. The slightly off-balance feeling that **Hemiola** creates in the music naturally obligates the audience to emotionally engage with the performers, as if Larsen intended to have them connect with the music while they are listening.

### 4.6 Motive and Theme

The writing in this collection is motivic rather than thematic, since Larsen’s theme is written structured by the motive, and may vary occasionally. As shown in the list below, the note “A” is commonly found in each motive, as Larsen consistently uses motivic writing to close the songs.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Song</th>
<th>Motive (beginning)</th>
<th>Ending</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beloved,</td>
<td>A, G♯-(A-B)</td>
<td>same</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liebeslied,</td>
<td>D-A-E, G♯-F♯</td>
<td>D-A-G-F♯</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you know,</td>
<td>C-A-B♭</td>
<td>A (A♭)-B-C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White word,</td>
<td>C-A (C-D-C-A-B)</td>
<td>C-A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music,</td>
<td>A-B♭</td>
<td>F♯-G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go from me,</td>
<td>D-E (G-A)</td>
<td>G-A (D-E)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 4.19: motive

### 4.7 Similarity in Writing

Very similar musical writing appears in different songs using almost identical notes and rhythms. Two examples of these are ambiguous tonality and interlaced broken chords, which were discussed above in sections 4.3.2 and 4.4, respectively. A third example is found in “Liebeslied” and “Go from me,” as shown below. Both songs share the single note E♭, which alternates with the 4th. The only difference is that the augmented 4th is used in describing the wave in “Liebeslied,” while the perfect 4th is used in describing the double pulse in “Go from me.”

![Fig. 4.20: similarity writing-1](image)
4.8 Ornamentation and Technique

Larsen uses different ornamentations in this collection, such as the long trill, ostinato and drone writing, and written out glissandos. In “Go from me,” there are indications for the cellist to play a written out glissando, which gives the impression of the lovers being withdrawn implied by the poem “go from me.” When the same glissando appears again, it not only shows the passage, but also suggests the implied meaning of being withdrawn. In addition, the long trill writing in four of the songs may imply a shared meaning, which is discussed below. Larsen also uses tone painting in each song, which is another manner of presenting the lyrics. She uses minimalism in “Beloved” and “Go from me” as well, in order to call attention to the lyrics.

4.8.1 The Long Trill

As listed in the chart below, most of the long trills work to reassert the new tonality. The long trill in “Music, when soft voices die” is aligned with the lyric, “dead,” as if it vibrates in memory to show the essence of undying love. This meaning may explain the descending long trill in cello in measures 77-81 in “Beloved, thou hast brought me many flowers,” while the note is built to accommodate the harmony. The long trill in the cello in measures 92-95 in “Beloved” may also share the same implied meaning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure (s)</th>
<th>1. Beloved,</th>
<th>2. Liebeslied</th>
<th>5. Music,</th>
<th>6. Go from me</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Functioning as</td>
<td>New tonality</td>
<td>New tonality</td>
<td>Essence of Love</td>
<td>New tonality</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 4.22: long trill

Long trill in m 77-81 (Beloved,)

Fig. 4.23: long trill writing-1

Long trill in m 92-95 (Beloved,)

Fig. 4.24: long trill writing-2

4.8.2 **Drone and Ostinato**

*Drone* and *ostinato* are commonly seen in Larsen’s whole song collection, except in the third song, “Do you know.” With repeated musical components, they both create a sedate feeling. Written in the same note(s) and held for a long duration, *drone* is another element of Gregorian chant that Larsen adapted. The chart below shows which of the
songs uses *drone* or *ostinato* in the writing. In the case of “Liebeslied,” there are many more instances of *drone* than the example listed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Song measure</th>
<th>No 1, 50-70</th>
<th>No 1, 71-76</th>
<th>No 2, 7-9</th>
<th>No 3, 22-27</th>
<th>No 4, 10th notes</th>
<th>No 5, 9-11</th>
<th>No 6, 44-55</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Drone</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ostinato</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 4.25: *drone* and *ostinato*

### 4.8.3 Tone Painting

Besides the interlaced symbol in “White world” mentioned above, which is borrowed from “Do you know,” the following chart provides a list of tone paintings found in each song.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Measure/Instrument</td>
<td>96-99 piano</td>
<td>22-33 cello</td>
<td>11-14 cello, piano</td>
<td>21-26 piano</td>
<td>13-14 mezzo-sop 26-27, 35 piano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tone Painting</td>
<td>Flower bouquet</td>
<td>Wave</td>
<td>Oaks, stars</td>
<td>Valley</td>
<td>Falling rose petals</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 4.26: tone painting
A list of various musical symbols Larsen uses to present the topics of mature love, music, nature, and flower are listed below to give an overview of how Larsen arranged this song collection.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>motive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Trees /Valley parallel writing</td>
<td></td>
<td>motive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flowers</td>
<td>Motive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 4.27: topic writing

4.9 Performance Recommendation

In the interview with the composer, a performance issue came up due to the limitation with the cello. In the opening of “Liebeslied,” the cello loses the low D as the foundation for supporting the entire sonority. The cellist is forced to abandon the low note when changing strings in order to reach the higher notes. As a result, the lydian 4th cannot stand out strongly without the D foundation. To resolve this issue, an alternative suggestion would be to include a second cellist playing the low foundation, even though the collection is written for a trio ensemble. The opening with the second cellist can be seen below, with the rests to clear out the sonority before articulating the new phrase.
The same approach can be applied to the very last three measures of the song. With the advantage from the second cellist, the *crescendo* in measure 60 and *decrescendo* in measures 61 and 62 can be easily accomplished. Furthermore, the second cellist can reinforce the D major together with the reduced *lydian* 4th to echo the lyrics: “O sweet song.” Therefore, the performers can ignore *niente* for the original purpose of cutting off the sonority immediately. A complete look at the score can be seen below.
Second cellist plays "D" ---------------------------------------------

Fig. 4.29: performance recommendation-2
Chapter 5: Personal interview with Libby Larsen

This interview took place on February 14, 2011 in the composer Libby Larsen’s home in Minneapolis, Minnesota. My purpose in including the transcript of the interview in Chapter 5 rather than in an appendix at the end of the document is to complement my own understanding of Larsen’s work as I have explained in Chapter 3. It is my hope that together, these two chapters will give a full sense of this collection. In the transcript of the interview, HH are the initials of my name, Huei-en Hsu, and LL are the composer Libby Larsen’s initials.

HH: It’s so nice to see you again, and this is regarding the composition (Beloved) you wrote. We are having the interview on Valentine’s day, and I also think that is the theme.

LL: You know, I was thinking of that, too, isn’t that great?

HH: Before we go on to (discuss) the composition, can you give us the new updates of the Hueg couple, did I say it right?

5.1 Stories behind the collection

LL: Yes, the Huegs [hjugs], yes I can …they both are very well, and they spend the winter in Naples, in Florida, where they are now! And they will be back (in Minneapolis) when the weather gets warmer. Probably next month!
HH: I thought this is such a lovely gift for her husband.

LL: It is, isn’t it? And they are in love ever since then (they are married).

HH: And it’s such a so thoughtful gift.

LL: It is so thoughtful, and..Hella..you know, she is a dear friend, she was an actress in Germany, and a very empathetic, very caring person.

HH: I’ve read some of the information, and I think you met her from a Minneapolis group.

LL: Yes, there is a group in Twin City area called the Commissioning Club, and it is for couples who are really interested in music, particularly new music. So they meet regularly and every year they commission a composer for a piece of music, and often, they will commission and (they) travel to where the premiere is.

HH: Are you still involved in this group now?

LL: Yes, I still am.

HH: That’s amazing! Because it’s been quite a while.

LL: Yes, it’s been quite a while. Hella is a member of Commissioning club, and commissioned the “Beloved” cycle on her own. Because it was for a surprise, she didn’t want the idea to leak out. So she commissioned on her own. As a matter of fact, I got through her to know “Beloved.” Someone suggested to her that we would work well together, so she contacted me about this, and of course I knew who she was, through the commissioning club. Now, we are talking about the collaboration (for this commission).

HH: So, she (Hella) pulled out these six poems to you. Is there any particular reason how it’s been ordered in this collection?

LL: That actually was my choice! And Hella requested “Beloved” to be the first one, as well as the title, and she actually loves all these poems. I think I suggested “White world.” We worked back and forth on the poetry to find the grouping that is what she wanted to express.

HH: For the interpretation of the poems, did you simply have discussions between you two, or is it just from her point of view to see the poems. Or, you also have your own interpretation (point of the view) that you discuss with her?

LL: We discussed back and forth. To be honest with you, our discussion were really
about her relationship, her life and her love for Bill. Hella has been an actress, and she is a really fine actress, and she admitted we collaborated very well together. We had the right kind of conversation, so she wasn’t saying: be sure to make this one, and this one is sad, I really don’t want the dissonant! Often times, people will set rules on the surface for the collaboration, with these rules that do not sit very well. Those things just don’t mean anything when it begins to shape a piece.

HH: One more question about the title. To me, after reading the poems and through the subjects, I wonder if it was part of the reason she (Hella) wanted to re-new the wedding vow or something like that, I don’t know, maybe I am just imagining…

LL: That’s an interesting question! She didn’t bring that up.

HH: Because from the poem: “from good days and bad days” vs “warm days and cold days.” Somehow that just reminded me if she was trying to re-new the wedding vow.

LL: Not the wedding vow, but definitely the love. Definitely, yes, definitely the love. This actress’s love for her husband is very unique. They weren’t newly wedded, they were in their seventies at the time. They just love each other and it is just beautiful! She just wanted it very special, very sincere, and very genuine, showing her expression of love for Bill.

**5.2 The writing of the collection**

HH: What about the process? How has it been processed for writing this collection especially for the sound arrangement? My understanding is that it’s her (Hella’s) request to include the mezzo-soprano because she doesn’t want something bright. She also wants a cello which she loves, and she thought there should be a piano, and that’s how the trio came up. Therefore, this kind of ensemble is really unusual. So, to you (as a composer), have you thought about relating to (certain) similar colors, timbre or nuance, or do you simply write for this ensemble?

LL: I wrote for the ensemble. When I compose pieces of music, I put together instruments even if it has never been done before. What I do is I put instrument sound in my head, and begin to work with them as their own instruments, with their own timbres, their own nuances, and their own interactions, and all these things. So, the cello writing is really meant for cello.

HH: I remembered you wrote songs for soprano. How is it different in writing for mezzo-soprano and for soprano? Especially for this case.
LL: That…is a really good question. Interestingly enough, the mezzo-soprano upon whose voice I composed specifically for, has a very dark, deep, round and resonant quality. She tends to sing everything a little slower. My writing for soprano is often athletic, demanding in color, range, and moves (quicker).

HH: I remember that in your “Cowboy” song, it was very demanding for soprano.

LL: Yes, it is! I wanted to find a way that was equally challenging to the mezzo, but a mezzo is quite different as a matter of fact. They don’t do agile, floating notes, those kinds of things.

HH: Actually, that reminds me of the writing for “Beloved” with less wide ranges and less leaping intervals.

LL: Yes, and the most agile song in terms of a more scherzo-like is “Beloved.” It is! To be honest with you, “Beloved” started out as a song for the soprano. So, I had it and when this commission was affected (to me), I thought I’d re-write “Beloved” for mezzo. So, I did re-write it! But still, it’s more soprano-like, and more agile.

HH: Do you consider you are writing more in a motivic way or thematic?

LL: Motivic or thematic?

HH: Ok, to me, the collection is for the ensemble. When you start a song, there is a theme (from the ensemble), but the writing is more motive-like writings with a rhythmic pattern, and it becomes as a feature. Therefore, I really think your writing is more towards to motivic.

LL: So here…would you say thematic?

HH: For example, in “Beloved,” the whole ensemble (piano and cello) starts the song with the theme, but the motive is here: (just the top voice: A-G♯-A-B-A).

Fig. 5.1: theme of no.1
LL: Yes! And of course, you grow out the melody from the motive.

HH: In “Beloved,” I found a great influence from Gregorian chant. Especially in the voice! I know there is a “freedom” from the Gregorian chant (in the voice writing), therefore, you’d broaden the meter, you’d tear down and change the meter to incorporate the downbeat to emphasize the vital words. I was arguing/discussing with my advisor about what is the real features about Gregorian chant, and how does that influence in your writing?

LL: Right! Here is a good example.

If I were going to write this in chant, and I would. I would take out the meter, take out all the bar-lines, and then this is the first downbeat you would see. So, in Gregorian chant, you stress certain words without making it metric. In this case, I wanted to emphasize “So”—meaning and / yet, and “like” name, not in the like name, of that love, of ours. If it were for the Gregorian chant, even without the metric, you would get emphasis on “So” because of the head voice, and lead up the 4th “the-like” (F♯-B), even without the 4/4, you would get the upward three notes, and you would get emphasis on “like name” which we want.

HH: Actually, I have noticed you pay attention to not only the natural vowel to make the brighter/darker (color), you also catch the natural rhythm from the lyrics, and that’s how you start from the “natural.” I also think this is really thoughtful for any singer, especially here (in this collection) for mezzo-soprano, so they really can feel freer to express in their singing.

LL: THAT is what I hope. Yes, I do. I try to set these, especially what we are talking about: measures 23-26 of “Beloved.” I tried to work very hard to set the beats, and the words naturally. Almost as if they were spoken. Except that, most people would probably say, “So in the like name,” instead of emphasizing on “like name of that love.” “Ours,” is the highest note, so really, I was working in between these purposes,
and yet, it doesn’t feel that (metric), because it (the melody) winds in a chant-like way.

HH: This is another thing. I am not sure you planned to do in your writing. Sometime I feel you want the mezzo to stand out (from the ensemble), so you let her sing solo, unaccompanied. And after she finishes the statement, I call that “statement,” and the ensemble comes in and joins her. Somehow, that gives me a theatrical effect.

LL: Theatrical?

HH: Yes, theatrical! I almost can imagine the mezzo sings and acts at the same time.

LL: It could be! Very well, and well, you bring up an interesting point. I am a great advocate of art song, and song cycle. However, I have been looking for long time to see what happens if I can give the songs that theatrical experience.

HH: I think I saw that (in the collection). This one reminds me a lot of Chinese opera and Japanese Noh!

LL: Yes! Both of which I know very well. My PhD thesis was an opera, on a Yeats’ play, which form was Noh!

HH: Somehow, I just have that idea as if you were having the connection with theater idea, but you didn’t purposely write it this way.

LL: Yes, I do have that connection and no, I didn’t write it purposely. It just reflects back that way (what I had).

HH: Were you trying to finalize the musical to make it more artistic? Maybe?

LL: I think … maybe!

HH: I especially think in this trio ensemble, a chamber-like setting, rather than only singer and piano and cello accompaniment!

LL: Yes, that’s correct.

HH: One thing about the ornamentation writing. It seems that you like ornamentation a lot, especially you like to write the notes out.

LL: Yes, I do. I like to write them out.

HH: Is there any particular reason for that?
LL: You mean, rather than indicate it with a marking?

HH: Is it for a better control (for the ensemble performance)?

LL: That’s a really good question! It is for better control.

HH: And I thought you like *ostinato*?

LL: I do! Maybe that’s one reason that I write out ornamentation, too. But somehow, they need to work it in a clock-like way. Therefore, I write out the 32\textsuperscript{nd}s or 64\textsuperscript{th}s so they can line-up!

HH: I also found out places that you have cross-song ideas. The same idea used in different places.

LL: Give me examples!

HH: Sure! The accompaniment in “White World,” I also found it in “Go From Me.”

LL: That is on purpose. Make this song grouping as a song group.

5.3 Song 6: Go From Me

HH: Call me crazy on this one, and this is my interpretation. I thought this is hand holding. (the interlaced chords in “Go From Me”)

![Fig. 5.3: hand holding](image)

LL: No, I didn’t think about it that way. But it didn’t mean I didn’t think in words. I was thinking of the music.
HH: Can I show you? You also changed the lyric.

LL: I did? Oh, no…

HH: Yes, you did. I thought that’s the way to confirm the idea of hand holding. First is “Thy touch upon the palm…,” and then here, you changed “heart” to “hand.”

LL: Oh it should be “heart,” and I changed it. Look at that!

HH: That’s the hint for me to confirm it.

LL: If I did it, it was unconscious. But I doubt that kind of things happen all my life. I was thinking of the music.

HH: Here is another example. (showing more hand holding examples)

LL: Oh! They held! They held each other. Oh my god!

HH: Are you happy to know that?

LL: I’m very happy to know that!

HH: In that case, was there any special musical meaning for those (I call hand holding)? In “Go From Me.” I thought I was way too imaginative.

LL: No, I don’t think so. I often work with chords that are close. Close and diatonic. The interlocking chords…not so much. I work on the piece with my hands.

HH: Let’s just say it’s your idea for hand holding. And let’s talk about tone painting as well. Since we are at “Go From Me,” there is one more thing I need to verify with you. Here, I called it “grapes” hanging on the vine. In this writing: the arpeggio marking appears only once in this song.

Fig. 5.4: “grapes” writing
LL: And it’s right there?

HH: I thought you did it purposely.

LL: I did not do it purposely. But that doesn’t mean that what it isn’t. Because it’s very possible and I am working with words.

HH: I hope you are happy with this finding.

LL: Yes, I am very happy. My process is linking with my instincts and techniques.

HH: And your instincts were right. One last thing about “Go From Me,” and I really need your confirmation. The “D-E,” “D-E-B” and “G-A,” I thought that’s the lover and her beloved.

LL: Yep!

HH: That’s it?

LL: Yep! That’s it.

HH: There are more! Well, let me tell you this! The very first thing caught my attention is the B♭ (measure:66). I couldn’t find any good explanation for it, and the only thing I thought about is flat VII. But I thought that shouldn’t be the only reason. So, I thought the B♭ substitutes for the German B, and you were referring to Bill. And the natural B in German is “H”, that’s Hueg, and I thought that’s how you meant it. And here, in the opening, the “D-E” then turns into “D-E-B,” I thought you were signing her name “D-E” (Deutschland), along with “G-A” hidden in the piano.

LL: I wish I was that clever! (laughing hard)

HH: (continue) And vice versa at the end. So, that’s why this is a love song written with all their names!

LL: What do you think that is? I suppose it is a love song engraved with their names.

HH: You’ve got to share this with them!

LL: I got to! Explain it to me again. Oh my goodness!

HH: (repeating the story)

LL: Wow! Isn’t the brain amazing?
HH: I think your brain is amazing! I spent time trying to figure out what it is (B\textsubscript{b})? And then there was a moment, the “a-ha” moment, and I got excited, “really? I have to ask her.”

LL: Yeah, yeah…when I compose, it’s there, then link instincts to technique.

HH: You just didn’t know you were doing it.

LL: I’m sure like Mozart, he didn’t know.

HH: The logic is logic, the truth is truth. But it’s all there.

LL: The logic that I didn’t even realize it. I do know when logic is happening, you know, when I’m working on a piece and the piece is…working. I know it does feel like logic.

HH: A quick question about the accompaniment here (in the opening of “Go From Me)! I heard fourths, and I described it as pentatonic. Or were you simply writing in white keys?

LL: Just white keys.

5.4 Song 5: Music, When Soft Voices Die

HH: I see. Let’s go backwards. Here is the “Music”! In my mind, the motive is the “A-B\textsubscript{b},” and I thought this really is the core interval and you start from there. This is also the essence to everything, and you want to reserve the love and keep it fresh, undying.

LL: Right, that is right.

HH: One writing feature is the use of syncopated chords. Somehow I heard it as if they are bells. I wonder if there is any specific meaning to it.

LL: Let me think about this…

HH: The rest in the triplet pattern is describing the rose petals off the bloom (for example: piano score in measure 12)?

LL: Absolutely! (the rose description) You know, I wouldn’t say they are bells (the syncopated chords).
HH: I just wasn’t sure if you were trying to mean something here. In my understanding, there is a hidden structure underneath the syncopated chords. You first have it on $A^b$ and then $E^b$.

LL: Yes, I do. Which are the related key areas.

HH: I thought that’s the church cadence.

LL: Oh! You are right!

HH: Because of the church cadence, then they all have peace! (both laughing) People usually feel sad when people they know pass away. But here, I think you try to give a different way to look at it.

LL: It is peaceful. I wanted a peaceful quality.

HH: In a positive way!

LL: This is actually true. My feeling about passing and death, it’s very peaceful. I also try to create peacefulness and subtlety.

HH: I think you did it differently as people often mourn for this kind of thing.

LL: For me, it is not. There is the heaviness of the heart, but it’s peaceful. It’s a peaceful heaviness!

HH: You also use the trio to keep the memory alive, am I correct?

LL: Yes, exactly!

5.5 Song 4: White World

HH: Ok! White World.

LL: Another piece of white keys!

HH: When I read the title, I thought you were trying to say “snow or winter.” Is it true?

LL: Ah…NO!

HH: I just got the impression you used all the white keys, and the accompaniment from The piano is describing the shimmering of snow.
LL: No, I wasn’t! I was Not thinking of snow. I was thinking of apple orchards.

HH: So you were really thinking about those trees.

LL: And the olive orchards. Have you been to the apple orchards in spring when ALL the trees are blooming?

HH: Not in spring but in autumn.

LL: If you visit it in spring, there are lots of apple orchards around here. When the trees are all blooming, it’s white. Especially, under the moon light. It’s so delicate!

HH: I guess that’s how I got the “shimmering.”

LL: But a much more “calm” shimmering. White!

HH: In that case, what is the descending melody trying to capture? I first thought that’s the place you were trying to say slide from the snow…

LL: Oh no, no, no... I can tell you what it is. It’s nothing real! It is a point of view. I am imagining myself above this field, above this orchard. I am looking down, and I don’t know why! I really knew when I was writing this, I was imagining not being under the tree looking up. Not walking through the trees, but suspended from above, seeing the whole white world below me. So, this is almost like descending, actually descending into it, and smelling the fragrance from the orchards.

HH: What about the big fall? I originally thought that’s the “snow” fall since there is the snow peak.

LL: It’s not snow fall for sure. The snow peak here is the metaphor. And there are the valleys!

HH: I hope you did know you did the valley.

LL: What did I do?

HH: Did you see that? (showing the tone painting)

   tone painting: Vally
LL: Oh I did, didn’t I? (laughing)

HH: That’s all about the trees in the valleys. I believe in your writing, the music also reflects to the lyrics: “two or three.”

LL: THAT I knew I was doing!

HH: Is that your habit, to write out the turns, ornamentations here again?

LL: Yes, also play it in half steps. (song 5th: Music..“A-Bb”) 

HH: Do you agree with me on this one, the voice is the leading, and the piano is simply accompanying?

LL: Yes! The piano is creating the mood, the orchards and the trees. The voice on this one can really come across the trees.

HH: When you composed “White World,” were you simply just following the poem and describing all the nature?

LL: Yes! It is almost like chanting the poem.

HH: Because the couple (Huegs) really love nature. I thought that’s the reason.

LL: Yes, that’s the reason for this poem. They premiered the piece at their home on Bill’s birthday. They both love flowers and nature.

HH: They also plant flowers at their home, right?
LL: Yes, and Bill (Dr. Hueg) was on the faculty of the department of Agriculture department at the University of Minnesota. They (the Huegs) are bonded to nature, and that really is a part of them.

HH: Any particular reason for skipping the last 1/3 of the poem? Is it because of the length? But I truly think you hide it well in the postlude. Especially here (the passage at the end of the song), I thought you were referring to the lovers.

LL: How interesting! Wait a minute! Maybe I did something. I kept adding on the phrasing in this one. Just showing the couple is so in love, the breathlessness… (singing the phrases)

HH: The strong chemistry. Is the last passage trying to describe the “ours is the wind-breath” from the omitted poem?

LL: I think so, you are right.

HH: When I first thought the couple were having fun in playing the snow and the snow flake was flying everywhere.

LL: That also works for orchards. It is two breaths becoming one, becoming one whole energy that flows on and through.

HH: Then the song ends in a grand gesture.

LL: It is a grand gesture.

HH: I think this is unbelievable as I could feel it the breath when I hear the music. It is hard for capturing it in the music, isn’t it? How did you make it happen?

LL: I knew I wanted to end it like that. I also didn’t want it to end with the same accompaniment, you know. Because it lasts for such a long time, you are out of breath, and cannot even breathe. The postlude is building up the tension by adding phrases. It’s not a bad tension, it’s ecstatic tension. So, I am giving them - both performers and audience a moment to breathe. Right here (the last ascending passage) -Whoosh! I changed it to 5/4 to catch the breathe.

5.6 Song 3: Do You Know

HH: Got you! Let’s move on to “Do You Know.” I have different stories for the opening. One is the night sky and the stars are twinkling.
LL: Sky is part of it!

HH: Another possibility is that people talk softly but still enunciate the words clearly. At the end, I suggested that two stories can also combine together as well. I got this feeling from the melody you wrote either is in steps or wide leaps.

LL: I wasn’t thinking about talking. I was thinking quietly, slipping away from before (song 2: “Liebeslied”). Slipping away from the lines without many rests, chords, and the crafted *rhapsodically* moments. Simply slipping away from all that.

HH: I assume that’s a specific arrangement you had in between these two songs.

LL: That’s what I was thinking, and the arrangement for the starts.

HH: I did it here! Is that it?

Melody of mezzo soprano: stars

![Fig. 5.6: “stars” and “oaks” writing](image)

Melody of cello: oaks

HH: Am I correct you skipped “above the oak” and hide it in the cello (score)?

LL: Yes, yes! That’s exactly what I was thinking.

HH: Here, when the musical components are getting condensed (starting measure 18, score: p.16), I thought you were trying to give “ways” as the lyrics say here, as giving different options. I also assume you have the piano solo (measure 20) saying: “Or.”

LL: Yes, that’s right! Exactly right. And the motive: “Do you know” (C-A-B⁵).
HH: Later you gave A♭ (as C-A♭-B♭) as other options.

LL: Yes, very different options, and it’s really chromatic here. It is really about setting this motive, and then playing with it.

HH: Then you pulled out even more options in piano solo (starting measure 24).

LL: Yes!

HH: Any reason you write a quintuplet? (measure 26)

LL: That was very instinctive!

HH: I love the way how you stretch it, although I cannot really relate it with any reason.

LL: It is not a picturesque meaning, but re-oriented from the motive. About my writing, I am assuming when someone is listening to the form they are caught up in the metaphor and narrative. The words and the music combined, so, I am thinking by the time we come here, if I crafted this well, and those who are listening to us are right there, they are ready to play with the music in the way that you recognized the motive, and when it changes. This is re-orienting!

HH: Is there any particular reason you wrote the descending motion (measure: 18)? I felt the heaviness from the whole ensemble pulling down from it. Is that why you had the piano playing the abrupt change to the high register (in measure 24)?

LL: Probably. I was having fun with chromatic writing, to be honest with you.

HH: The chromatic writing you are talking about is the top from measure 18, am I correct?

LL: Yes, then I went back up here, back to where it was. It seems I have created a path, as I was imagining also walking, I don’t know why. But that’s how I got the path, and that somehow the motive got another path, and I was following the path.

HH: Am I correct that even the cello here (measures 31-32) is also suggesting another path?

LL: Yes.

HH: By the way, I need to ask you about the punctuation.

LL: Oh, I couldn’t have messed that up.
HH: Here, you added a question mark (measure 30).

LL: Yes, I did….did I?

HH: From the original translation, it was a comma.

LL: (Why did I do that?)

HH: I also just don’t get the piano part and the end. Were you trying to say something?

LL: I was trying to ask the question, which probably from the translation was not a question. I am trying to ask a question, and the question is not “Do you know,” it’s “will you come?”

HH: That’s right. What about this reaction (the piano ending), what did it say?

LL: This is not the answer. This is still the question mark. As if the question has not been answered. That is what I am doing, it is an indirect question.

HH: I thought this is the right question (will you come) as she’s been waiting for.

LL: That’s the only thing she asks even though Rilke didn’t ask the question, this is human interpretation. Rilke is mystical.

HH: What about the cello here when you reversed the order arrangement compared to the beginning?

LL: It could be! But it wasn’t anything I was thinking about. What I truly was thinking is she actually buried her soul, she has only one dream, “you come, too.” But she doesn’t know if it’s going to happen. Still, every day in your marriage or in your committed relationship, there is always a moment, where you hope that what you doing, even little things, the other party would agree with us. Maybe this is totally my personal interpretation. Because I am a seeker, and that is really me!

5.7 Song 2: Liebeslied

HH: Liebeslied!

LL: This is my favorite!

HH: You started this one first. Is that true?
LL: I did!

HH: I thought this is a song for the dialogue between the two lovers. And please correct me if I am wrong. You start the song in a mode and resolve it “in sweet song” in D major. If I say, the cello metaphorically the guy, and I think this is the first and the only time I heard this guy finally say something, and say a lot.

LL: Yes, and I did use the cello as Bill.

HH: Is this the way he talks? Expressively?

LL: Let me think about that. He is a tall man and very lyrical. I thought…this is Bill! Not his talking, just Bill… and he is very tall!

HH: I see. Is that the reason for the wide range?

LL: He is very solid, very grounded but also seeking at the same time. Definitely, this is Bill.

HH: Wow, that’s really him (in the music)!

LL: It really is! Not his speaking but his personality and being!

HH: What about the opening writing? I am sad that the low D couldn’t be sustained longer.

LL: Wouldn’t that be nice if it could be held for the whole time? It establishes the fundamental all the way through.

HH: I was thinking if one day I get to play this song, I might secretly play the octave (for the cello).
LL: You could! I also would like to hear the growing volume from cello, and hanging the long note.

HH: Maybe we should secretly hire another cellist playing behind the curtain.

LL: Which will be very cool!

HH: Nobody would know, but we get to keep the “D” in the hall creating the booming sound.

LL: That’s an interesting idea and we can hear the cello “drone.”

HH: Yes!

LL: Actually that really is an interesting idea. Because this is the fundamental, the F♯ and G♯ can stand out, to think about the lydian 4th. The lydian 4th is so important here if we could hear the fundamental “D.”

HH: What about the phrase here, the pizzicato D! I thought this is really interesting. I see the pizzicato D as the finishing one phrase and beginning the next.

Fig. 5.8: finishing and beginning pizzicato note

LL: Yes, that’s right!

HH: Really? So, that’s why you put pizzicato!

LL: Well, it’s not the ending pizz, you know.

HH: And here, (measures 12-15) you let the mezzo-soprano sing really freely and you
broaden the meter.

LL: This is the ending (pizzicato) which also drives toward to the next phrase.

HH: You really like to re-construct phrasing, and that creates a new pulse to the music, to the ensemble. Is it true you also like hemiola?

LL: Very much, very much! Because, to me, it is one of the powerful metaphors we have for the ensemble.

HH: Is it also similar to the heartbeat (in your writing)? It seems that you have strong feelings about something and how the heart is beating.

LL: Yes, it is true. And, you know, I wanted to create a sense of coming together from audience and ensemble, small ensemble not large ensemble. The more you use hemiola, the more the people from outside of the ensemble (audience/listeners) just becomes part of wanting to be together. Because it is effective and direct to the listeners, people naturally and instinctually want to keep time together. So, if we suggested out of the time and away from the pulse, people would try to get that together!

HH: Because that’s human’s nature!

LL: Isn’t that wonderful? And it’s neurological!

HH: Amazing! Here, I thought you were creating a huge motion to reach the “Ah” (measure: 16-18, score: p.12).

LL: Yes, I was!

HH: And here, is another tone painting (measure 22: wave)

LL: Yes, it is.

HH: I assume you know you wrote both B♭-E♭ symbolizing the two heartbeats in “Go from me!” The writing is very similar to here.

LL: Yes, and I did that on purpose. This place I know I did on purpose.

HH: I thought this is amazing bringing two heartbeats together. Particularly, the rhythm used to unite the cello with piano, as well as the mezzo with the piano.

LL: Yes, that’s on purpose! Because we already established the togetherness in “How shall I.” And here we are, talking about “parting.”
HH: Is it true that you keep the musical components really simple? It’s very similar to minimalism where you just want the lyrics to stand out for the audience to hear very clearly.

LL: Yes, really clearly! That’s right.

HH: I think the unison here (duet: measure 37, p.13) is because you are trying to say “you and me” (measures 35-36). I had an argument with my advisor the other day (about the duet writing). I said this writing is very similar to counterpoint, it’s point to point. Am I correct?

LL: Yes, yes!

HH: It’s mainly written in harmonic in 3rd’s and 6th’s with only a few exceptions, but mostly, you are showing how close the lovers they are.

LL: That’s right, so I can bring them together to a single note in a single voice (measures 43-44). And that’s also why I picked the voice and cello for this song without the piano. Piano would not allow this to happen. For one thing, the piano is equally tuned. It’s mechanically tuned. If I played with all the 3rd’s and 6th’s, it would just not work on the piano. This way, everybody (voice and cell) is infinitely adjusting all the time. You know, adjusting relatively! So, we can end up on unison.

HH: The piano just has no chance for doing so.

LL: No, and because, the singer would be always adjusting and tuning to the piano. As the singer and the cello would listen to each other and it’s just so beautiful.

HH: Because of the attention they are paying to each other (voice and cello), like the way the lovers pay attention to each other.

LL: Exactly! Exactly! That really is the harmonic I worked really hard for, so for that very reason, we would psychologically, infinitely be adjusting to each other, then come to one voice as united.

HH: This brought into another question. How do you see this trio? If Hella is the mezzo and Bill is the cello, what is the piano? Supporting the love?

LL: No! (laughing) I don’t know if the piano is a person. I think piano is not a person, not the accompaniment, could be the compositive for the two, is the collaboration of the two. Except for this one song, we just need two (without the piano). That is a really interesting question.

HH: I know it’s a weird question, but I just wonder if you happen to have the answer.
LL: No..no..but I can tell you, honestly, when I was working on this, I wish I could have written for cello and mezzo.

HH: That will be really cool.

LL: I wish that I could. At the time, I could have conceived the whole thing written for just cello and mezzo. I am not sure if that combination would carry this many songs.

HH: Because it is so specific! Back to the music, would you say the cello here is really expressing love (measure 45)?

LL: As rhapsodically as one can!

HH: I assume this is all about him (the cello solo). It says who he is and how tall he is. Here (starting measure 51), when you emphasize the “D-E-F,” any particular reason?

LL: Instincts!

HH: Could I tell you a secret?

LL: Yep!

HH: The “D-E” is from “Go from me.”

LL: It’s…Hella! Yes, it was instinct!

HH: Ok, now you know it!

LL: (goodness)

HH: I love the way how you end the song in D major here and that’s just so sweet.

LL: And the lyrian 4th is gone!

HH: By the way, the niente means “nothing,” so you wanted the whole sonority to die out together.

LL: I did, I wanted the whole sonority…niente.

HH: In the real performance, people usually hold on for a few more beats, but I assume you are avoiding that.

LL: Yes, I am avoiding that. I wonder if I could notate that better. I mean, what would
happen if I notated the “D” tied over here (to the very end) even it’s impossible?

HH: Well, you can secretly hire somebody to play for that “D,” then you don’t need the niente.

LL: Then playing open strings together. I could do that, couldn’t I?

HH: Yes!

LL: It is the sonority! It’s not the F# or the A.

5.8 Song 6: Go From Me- part 2

HH: Speaking of the ending, is there any special reason to end the whole collection first ff, then subito to pp (in Go From Me)?

LL: I love the pp and I hate this pitch! It’s so low and it’s just awful, isn’t it?

HH: I wonder how the performer could really soften the volume after you have reached the ff?

LL: You know what I really want? To be honest with you, they (the Huegs) made me do this!

HH: They made you? Ok, then never mind.

LL: They made me do this! In performance, they just wanted it this way. I like the ff to hang in the air and die out.

HH: Ok, that’s not your signature. I’m sorry to say this but I just don’t think this makes sense.

LL: It doesn’t make any sense especially if you see all the endings in other songs. This is really not my signature.

5.9 Song 1: Beloved, Thou Hast Brought Me Many Flowers

HH: Thank you! That really clears my confusion. Ok, the first one, (Beloved), the one with 5/8 meter. I thought the opening is written asymmetrically, and it’s interesting. The
*brightly*, I thought that’s the way you musically to express a guy sending flowers to his lover, with a rapturous happy mood. The melodic octaves from the cello, are they trying to depict the heartbeat?

LL: It could be! It’s not that literal though. I could tell you the happiness definitely is part of this, and this is..

![Fig. 5.9: “Bill” writing-2](image)

HH: How tall Bill is!!

LL: And this is coming from Liebeslied!

![Fig. 5.10: “Bill” writing-3](image)

LL: The asymmetrical is (5/8 is a way of establishing independence) for the two of them but the independent status (of the two) definitely belongs together.

HH: In that case, the mezzo is definitely Hella and who is Bill? The cello? Or the piano?

LL: Both at that moment (the opening). This is almost the introduction for the whole cycle.
HH: So in the opening, you are simply showing the “brightly” mood.

LL: Yes, it really sets the tone as to how great this particular woman (Hella) is.

HH: I love the way how you wrote the diminished 7th here, and you also wrote the *pizzicato* right before the “Plucked.”

LL: Yes.

HH: In measure 27, you have the classical phrasing as the phrasing could be anticipated. I think you wanted to lead the phrase to later (measure 35) for “warm and cold days” where you keep the piano playing *ostinato*.

LL: Yes, yes.

HH: What about the cello here playing *sul. pont.*?

LL: (Why did I do that?) Oh, I know why, and it could be dorky. I wanted to create a feeling of withdrawing tone. If you listen more carefully to these words, and part of the problem, particularly the words, is that you have lots of “W”s. It’s a little hard to enunciate. I wanted to create a way for ears to really dig in.

HH: I thought you were creating a disconcerting feeling.

LL: Yes, and this is *legato* so it won’t interfere with the doubles (*trill* from cello). I don’t want to cover the words or unit these three as one. Does that make sense? I can get these words to stand out.

5.10 The writing of the collection-part 2

HH: Speaking of “One,” is there any specific writing or writing style to make the whole collection in “One”?

LL: I wish I could say there was because I would say there is not. You know, they belong together and they also can be done separately.

HH: Yes, they can be done separately. I totally agree with you. I actually made a list of all the motives showing how you open each song and how you end it. Note “A,” you have “A” going through.

LL: Everything?
HH: Yes! I wasn’t sure and I thought that might be a coincidence.

LL: It was not intentional, not in my mind. However, it should make sense.

HH: We tune on “A” anyway. (laughing)

LL: (laughing) “I wanted an A for this song cycle.”

HH: It’s an A plus!

LL: That is interesting!

HH: Somehow I felt you put “A” as the tonal center and it is centered.

LL: Yep, right, it is centered! You know, I am thinking that the truth of my background is “chant,” and chant centers with A! It becomes the tonus. I’m wondering if there is a tonus A in here? That’s what I’m wondering.

HH: Maybe that’s why, theological!

LL: It could be that was done unconsciously. But then it becomes the center. That’s an interesting question. And maybe what I did is I placed “A” in my mind and I wasn’t aware of that.

HH: And you also used the implied tonality. You hide it at the beginning, and then..

LL: Yes, and then there it is (at the end)!

5.11 Song 1: Beloved, Thou Hast Brought Me Many Flowers-2

HH: Let’s get back to the first song. When the duplets appear, I’m wondering if you are trying to express the brightness (sonority) of sunshine when you line up with “duplets” (eglantine and ivy)? The long sedate atmosphere as if describing the flowerbed. And later, I thought that nature is awakening from hibernation.

LL: Yes, absolutely! The waiting and the weeding! The eglantine and ivy are just sturdy and they made it through the winter. They are the sturdy vine.

HH: Finally, I got it now. That’s the only thing they have in common.
LL: You know, the poem says here I am, in my mind. Hella has her life filled with tragedy. She leaves her home country, she lost her first husband, so here I (Hella) am this person, and here I am, I am waiting for you!

HH: When you pre-text the “Take them take them”, you are referring to Hella, right?

LL: Yes, as “Take me take me, take me as (who) I am!”

HH: I see. And at the end, you give a condensed A section, giving each musical elements to conclude the song. You have the ensemble stay on V, broaden the time for the mezzo-soprano to sing the most important message: “in mine.” And here comes a question: the postlude you wrote, I thought there is so much love and you prolong it…

LL: And it ends on (note) “A.”

HH: With “your love” (laughing) I found the proportion of this song in the first section to be heavy, and I assume you meant it.

LL: Yes!

5.12 The writing of the collection- part 3

HH: Did you know two of your songs in this collection match the golden ratio? Did you know you used the borrowed chord? Flat II, flat VI and flat VII!

LL: I don’t….know.

HH: I can explain the last one flat VII is Bill.

LL: Yes, but I don’t know about the other two. Could be me! (laughing)

HH: Each song ends with a tonality.

LL: I am so surprised by that!

HH: We couldn’t tell (the tonality) at the beginning of each song.

LL: You cannot and everything ends with tonality. I wonder if that was not planned but it could be. In each song, I wanted everything to grow together. The relationship grows. You have no idea at the beginning but it grows.
HH: (opening the file) So, “Do You Know” and “Music” match the golden ratio.

LL: Unconciuos! Do you think I was influenced by the poetry?

HH: I haven’t thought about that!

LL: I also do the repeating (lyrics) and adding measures. I wonder why? It’s really interesting. Maybe, it’s the structure of the poem!

HH: I think it’s in your brain. Somehow that just clicked in your writing.

LL: Do you think people plan that?

HH: I don’t think so. It really is the ratio.

LL: I don’t think composer would say I am going to make a “Golden Me!” I’m not sure how I do it but it feels right.

HH: I totally agree! I think you just have it in your writing!

LL: I am really glad to know (the golden ratio). I get to know that instinctively of feels right. And who I am! Thank you for the interesting questions.

HH: Thank you for this wonderful collection!
References


Retrieved from http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/american_music/summary/v027/27.1.kelton.html


Discography


Music score

Appendix A

One can find the suggestive breath markings in Appendix A, which are given by the composer. The information I have added applies to the original score published by Oxford University Press, Inc., in 1999.
BELOVED, THOU HAST BROUGHT ME MANY FLOWERS

For Mezzo-soprano, Violoncello, and Piano

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

Libby Larsen

Music notation follows the score.
Plucked in the garden, all the summer through and it seemed as if they
grew in the close room, nor missed the sun and show'ren
Slowly, freely
So is the
like name of that love of ours, Take back these thoughts which
here unfolded too, Take back these thoughts which here unfolded too, And which on warm and cold days I with drew From my
Yet here's eg-len-tine, Here's i - ve! Take them, take them,

as I used to do, keep them, keep them
...where they shall not pine.

Instruct those eyes to

keep their colors true. And till their souls are left...
LIEBESLIED
For Mezzo-soprano and Violoncello

Rainer Maria Rilke
From: M.D. Hetten Norton

Libby Larsen

Mezzo-soprano

Violoncello

How shall I with-

hold my soul-

so that it
does not touch

on yours?

How shall I

so that it

over yours, to

other things?
Ah willingly would I by some

lost thing in the dark give it harb-

does not vi-brate on when your... depths vi-brate.

Yet, ev'-ry-thing... that touch-es us, you and me.
takes us together as a bow's stroke does, that out of two strings draws a single voice.

Up on what instrument are we two spanned?

And what player has us in his hand?
Do You Know
For Mezzo-soprano, Violoncello, and Piano

Raine Maria Rikke
Libby Larsen

Mezzo-soprano

Violoncello

Piano

Do you know— I would quietly slip from the land...
...when first I know the pale stars are blooming.

Ways will I select that seldom any tread,

that seldom any tread in the poetic mead-own...
WHITE WORLD

For Mezzo-soprano and Piano

H. D.

Mezzo-soprano

Piano

The whole white world is

and the world, purple with

169
rose - boys,
boys, 

bush on bush,
group, thick - et, hedge and tree.

dark is bush in a sea of grey green el - i ve or
white alive, cut with the sudden cypress shafts,
one single cypress tree.

Slide from the hill, as
rumbling snow, preka, slids.
dit, ren on cit, ren.
fill the valley.
Music, When Soft Voices Die

For Mezzo-soprano, Violoncello, and Piano

Percy Bysshe Shelley

Libby Larsen

Mezzo-soprano

Violoncello

Piano

Music, when soft voices die,

Vibrates in the memory

O, deck.
when sweet violet sick en, live with in the sun they quick en. Rose leave en.

when the rose is dead, when the rose is dead, are

heaped for the beloved's bed: and so thy thoughts, when thou art gone,
Freely, molto mosso

Love it-self shall slumber on.

a tempo
GO FROM ME
For Mezzo-soprano, Violoncello, and Piano

Elizabeth Barrett Browning
Libby Iansen

Mezzo-soprano

Violoncello

Piano

Go from me. Yet I feel that I shall stand forward in thy...
est land Down takes to part us, ...doom takes to

part us, leaves thy hand... in mine With puls-es... that beat

double... What I do... And

Freely

Freely again.
what I draw to chide thee, as the wine must taste et its own...

grapes. And when I see God for my...

light animato

self, He hears that name of thine, and sees within...