I, Joy L. Burdette, hereby submit this original work as part of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts in Voice.

It is entitled:
Thomas Pasatieri’s Letter to Warsaw: An Examination of Style for Performance Preparation

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Thomas Pasatieri's *Letter to Warsaw*:
An Examination of Style for Performance Preparation

A document submitted to the

Graduate School
of the University of Cincinnati

in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF MUSICAL ARTS

in the Performance Studies Division
of the College-Conservatory of Music

July, 2013

by

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Abstract

This document is an examination of style for performance preparation of Thomas Pasatieri's *Letter to Warsaw* for voice and piano. This study provides an understanding of the life of Pola Braun, the writer of the poems set in *Letter to Warsaw*, and illuminates the circumstances under which she created these poems during World War II. In addition, attention to the compositional choices of Pasatieri in response to these poems is explored and discussed. The musical settings of the texts presented in *Letter to Warsaw* are presented and compared to those in earlier songs of Pasatieri, including *Sieben Lehmannlieder*, *Three Poems of James Agee*, *Three Poems by Kirstin Van Cleave*, and *Ophelia's Lament*. These research elements serve to equip performers with necessary information to create an accurate portrayal of these texts.

A biography of Thomas Pasatieri is included in this document, as well. Pasatieri's compositional style has evolved from his earlier songs. Over time, his compositional style has become more sparse, saying with fewer notes, what he had previously said with many. Understanding the musical journey of Pasatieri will help the singer better understand the compositional style of *Letter to Warsaw*, and how to better communicate the words of Pola Braun. Additionally, two appendices are included, which list the operas of Pasatieri in chronological order, as well as his complete list of songs, cycles, and other vocal works.

*Letter to Warsaw* is one of many song cycles that have been generated worldwide in reaction to the atrocities of the Holocaust. In order to place *Letter to Warsaw* in a creative context, this document briefly describes other selected songs and cycles written in remembrance of the victims and survivors of the Holocaust.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My profound thanks is offered to all those who have given time and consideration to this project by providing assistance, insight, and support. I applaud Dr. Thomas Pasatieri for creating the composition, which inspired this document, but also for his willingness to answer my endless questions about his music. I count it a special honor to document a small portion of the life of this great American composer.

Sincere appreciation is extended to Mina Miller, artistic director of Music of Remembrance, musicologist Bret Werb of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, and Barbara Milewski of Swarthmore College, for offering their exhaustive research on the life of Pola Braun. Humbly, I thank Pola Braun for writing her poetry, even amidst the atrocities, which she had to endure.

I thank my committee chair, Mary Stucky, for her unique commitment to graduate students, and for her continuous support throughout the D.M.A. process. I also thank committee members David Adams and Dr. Gwen Detwiler for their assistance and treatment of this document.

Special thanks to my parents, Ted and Nancy Wallace, who have always believed in my pursuit of academic endeavors, and who have provided a constant environment of love and encouragement. Thank you for your unfailing love and support.

Tony Burdette, my fearless husband and love of my life, deserves the highest praise for his unending patience, love, and encouragement throughout the D.M.A. process. Thank you for believing in me. I am truly blessed to have you by my side, through it all.
I express my undying love and thanks to my children, eight-year-old Calia and six-year-old Benjamin, for their commitment to the D.M.A. process, as well. I pray that I may be as much of an inspiration to you, as you daily are to me.

Finally, I thank my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, for His continuous guidance. *I will sing unto the Lord, for he has dealt bountifully with me!* Psalm 13:6
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CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND

Introduction

Thomas Pasatieri (b. 1945) was commissioned by Music of Remembrance to write Letter to Warsaw in January 2003. Music of Remembrance is a Seattle-based non-profit organization dedicated to remembering Holocaust musicians and their art through musical performances, educational activities, musical recordings, and commissions of new works.¹ Music of Remembrance commissioned Pasatieri to compose the song cycle, and secured the rights to the six unpublished texts written by Pola Braun (1910-1943), a cabaret artist who was incarcerated in the Warsaw ghetto, and who was later murdered in the Majdanek Concentration Camp in Poland, during World War II. These six poems were written by Braun during her time in the ghetto and the concentration camp. Barbara Milewski, a scholar of 19th and 20th century Polish music and music of the Nazi concentration camps, translated the Polish poems into English. It is the English translation of Braun’s poetry that Pasatieri set in Letter to Warsaw. The world premiere of this song cycle occurred May 10, 2004 in Seattle, Washington, at Music of Remembrance’s Holocaust Remembrance concert. Letter to Warsaw was commissioned for soprano Jane Eaglen and conductor Gerard Schwarz, both of whom performed the premiere.

Pasatieri originally composed Letter to Warsaw in 2004 for soprano and chamber ensemble, comprised of a woodwind quartet, a string quintet, trumpet, harp, and piano. He later arranged the cycle for voice and piano, publishing with Theodore Presser in 2007. It is the voice and piano arrangement to which the comments in this document are directed.

¹ Mina Miller, in accompanying booklet Thomas Pasatieri: Letter to Warsaw performed by Jane Eaglen and Music of Remembrance; Mina Miller, Artistic Director; Gerard Schwarz, piano, Naxos 8.559219, 2004. Compact Disc.
Pola Braun and the Warsaw Ghetto Years

Historians believe Pola Braun, a Jew, was living in her home country of Poland in 1938, when Hitler determined that Eastern Europe had to be conquered in order to create a vast German empire for more physical space, a greater population, and new territory to supply food and raw materials. Hitler was seeking to fulfill one of the basic principles of Nazi foreign policy, Lebensraum, or living space. Nazi Germany troops invaded Poland in September of 1939, and World War II began.

Pola Braun had much to bear, for the persecution of Polish Jews began immediately. Hitler's purpose was to concentrate on one enemy only, and through him, attack all others. That one enemy was the Jew. Jews were stripped of their property, their livelihood, and their basic rights of citizenship. Their schools and their temples were destroyed, and their homes were looted. Jews were often dragged into the streets, beaten, and abused. Jews had to wear special armbands of identification, and thousands were forced into labor battalions or sent to labor camps. Jewish owned factories and businesses were expropriated, and Jews were put on starvation rations. The goal of the Nazis was to destroy a Jew's own human dignity by employing a brutal system of moral degradation. Ultimately, the Final Solution to the Question of the Jew was death. Hans Frank, Governor-General of occupied Poland in December of 1941 said, "As far as the Jews are concerned, I want to tell you quite frankly that they must be done

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5 Miller.


7 Isaiah Trunk, Jewish Responses to Nazi Persecution. (New York: Stein and Day, 1979), 14.
away with in one way or another. ...Gentlemen, I must ask you to rid yourself of all feeling of pity. We must annihilate the Jews.”

Humiliation and terror were achieved, and ghettos were established as collection centers to facilitate the shipment of Jews to the death and slave labor camps. These ghettos were located in the worst possible sections of the cities and towns, often with poor infrastructure for plumbing and heating. The non-Jewish inhabitants were ordered to move out of the chosen areas, and thousands of Jews, both local and those from outlying villages, moved in. Non-Jews were convinced, through the Nazi propaganda efforts, that the ghettos were necessary to protect them from the epidemic illnesses that were carried by Jews.

The Warsaw ghetto was the largest of the Poland ghettos, housing 380,000 Jews and encompassing a scant 3.5 square miles. It housed well over 20 percent of Polish Jewry. In October of 1940, work began on the Warsaw ghetto, located in the working class quarter of the city. 80,000 Christians living in the quarantined area were given two weeks to move out. Immediately, more than 140,000 Jews moved in. Jews were allowed to transport only a few essentials, and most of their property, including houses, apartments, stores, furniture, and

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10 Ibid, 90.

11 Yehuda Bauer, 153.


14 Yehuda Bauer, 172.

15 Sloan, 59.
clothing, were seized by the Germans. By mid-November of the same year, after the Germans combed the streets for Jews who had not yet moved into the ghetto, the Warsaw ghetto was sealed. The ghetto was completely sealed off, with ten-feet high impenetrable stone walls, with fifteen entry points. Guards were positioned on both sides of the Wall, with Polish and German policemen on the outside, and Jewish Policemen on the inside. No one could enter or leave, except on work crews or by special pass. All lines of communication were effectively cut off from the rest of the city, by eliminating mail services and all business transactions. If an escape was attempted, the punishment was death.

Overcrowded living conditions in the ghetto were compounded by lack of food. The daily bread ration in Warsaw was less than 100 grams, about 3.5 ounces. Those incarcerated in the ghetto received only 15 percent of the normal daily requirement of calories needed to survive. Even before deportation from the ghettos to the death camps began, it is estimated that about 2 percent, or 100,000 Jews living in the ghettos, died of starvation. Hunger was a never-ending epidemic, and lice, filth, and disease permeated the area. A typhoid epidemic began in late 1940, and by 1941, the deaths totaled 43,239. In January through May of 1942, an additional 22,760 lives were lost to the disease. Because not all deaths were reported, it is likely that the total number of mortalities was higher than these estimates.

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16 Yehuda Bauer, 155.
18 Sloan, 60.
19 Constanza, 92.
20 Yehuda Bauer, 170.
21 Kochanski, 294.
22 Yehuda Bauer, 171.
Although the daily food ration was small, those with means were often able to have food and other goods smuggled into the ghetto from the outside. Those who did the smuggling were primarily the children, those who were small enough to get out of the ghetto by their well-tried paths, and who were also smart enough to live by their wits.\textsuperscript{23} In the ghetto, there was no chance of survival without contraband food. Undersized, undernourished ghetto children would roam the heavily guarded ghetto, skirt fortified walls and barbed-wire fences, sneak through sewer pipes, and mingle audaciously with spies, policemen, Gestapo agents, and hostile citizens on the outside of the ghetto wall. Many were caught, and paid with their lives.\textsuperscript{24} A woman living outside of the wall gives this account:

One evening I was returning home from my work in the city later than normal. In order to get home I had to cross a large bridge as we were living on the east bank of the Vistula river, which parted us from the city. I was in the middle of the bridge which was quite empty at this late hour according to the imposed curfew. Only a lonely SS patrolman [\textit{Shutzstaffel} or "protective squad" of WWII Nazi Germany era] was walking slowly on the other side of the bridge.

Suddenly a tiny shadow nearing the SS man emerged from the opposite direction. The shadow grew bigger and bigger and I could recognize in this little pathetic figure a small boy walking towards the SS man. I could only guess that this was a Jewish boy. He was around ten years old, very thin and dark haired. [...] No child living in the Polish district would be allowed out on this street at this hour. This boy in his hunt after some bread was probably delayed in returning home. [...] This boy on the bridge, he was a brave one, he dared to go out of the ghetto to bring some food maybe for his sick parents or small brothers or sisters. They waited in vain.

The little boy was now nearer the SS man, who suddenly without uttering a word, without asking the boy any questions, seized him by the collar and threw him into the dark and turbulent water of the Vistula. The boy did not even have time to utter a sound.\textsuperscript{25}


\textsuperscript{25} Paulsson, 68-69.
A similar story that marks the bravery of the child smugglers is recounted, "At the corner of Jerusalem Avenue and Krucza Street, a Jewish child sat, a little skeleton, four or five years old, as in India. People wouldn't give him money, but would put a bun in this hand. An elegant German came by, opened a sewer grating, took the child, and threw him into the sewer. I can't forget this picture."26

Such behavior would be hard to forget. Pola Braun certainly must have observed this treatment of the Jewish children while living in the ghetto, as well. Two of Braun's poems in Letter to Warsaw speak specifically of children in the ghetto. "Jew" depicts an innocent child trying to make sense of life in the ghetto. "Mother" comments on the horrors of the terrible day the children were taken from their mothers. Ms. Braun would certainly have had an abundance of stories to draw upon for the writing of these two poems.

Education was forbidden in the ghetto. Schools were shut down, and the buildings were used for the needs of the Germans. Nazi units entered the large ghettos to liquidate Jewish libraries and rob them, as well as other institutions, of their Jewish cultural treasures. In the Warsaw ghetto, the Main Judaic Library contained 30,000 volumes when the war broke out. Within three months of the occupation of Warsaw, the Germans had confiscated them all.27

In order to carry out the charade that ghettos were established as safeguards for Jews until after the war, and to help avoid problems of panic and rebellion, some cultural activities were permitted in some of the ghettos, in the early stages of their existence. Professional theaters operated in the Warsaw ghetto, in both the Polish and the Yiddish languages. Femina, Melody

26 Paulsson, 69.

Palace, Na Piętrku, Eldorado, and New Azazel were among those most frequented. Jews, who could afford it, would take in all of the cultural offerings. In spite of the Nazi desire to quell all learning and creativity among the Jews, feverish intellectual activity continued to grow during the ghetto period. One of the leaders of the resistance movement in the Warsaw ghetto, Zivia Lubetkin, writes that the creativity of the poets was "evidence that despite everything, the Nazis couldn't break our spirit; there were still creative forces among us. Even the most realistic who prophesied catastrophe thought: 'perhaps we will not be overcome.'"

Perhaps one of the most popular theaters in the Warsaw ghetto was the Polish language establishment Sztuka. Before the war, Pola Braun was known as a singer-songwriter for the Polish Jewish cabaret. Incarcerated in the Warsaw ghetto, Pola Braun continued writing songs and performing. Although little is known of Pola Braun's life, Bret Werb, musicologist for the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, has done exhaustive research on Ms. Braun. His research reveals that Pola was born in Zgierz, near Łódź, perhaps in 1910. In the Warsaw ghetto, Ms. Braun performed often at Café Sztuka, the "Art Cabaret," on Leszno Street. A group of writers from the Living Journal, a satiric daily chronicle of the ghetto, written by authors under the direction of Władysław Szlengel, organized daily performances at the Sztuka. For the few people of any means in the ghetto, the Sztuka was considered an elite club. The café was known for the high quality of its black market caviar and coffee, as well as its satirical and humorous

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29 Yehuda Bauer, 179.

30 Aaron, 95.

31 Werb.

32 Miller.
musical offerings. Władisław Szpilman, the pianist whose life is documented in the movie *The Pianist*, describes *Café Sztuka* in this way:

It was the biggest café in the ghetto, and had artistic aspirations. Musical performances were held in its concert room. The singers there included Maria Eisenstadt, who would have been a famous name to millions now for her wonderful voice if the Germans had not later murdered her. I appeared here myself playing piano duets with Andrzej Goldfeder, and had a great success with my paraphrase of the "Casanova Waltz" by Ludomir Różycki, to words by Władysław Szlengel. The poet Szlengel appeared daily with Leonid Fokszański, the singer Andrzej Wlast, the popular comedian "Wacus the Art-lover" and Pola Braunówna [- Pola Braun -] in the "Live Newspaper" show, a witty chronicle of ghetto life full of sharp, risqué allusions to the Germans.34

In March 1942, the *Gazeta* published an article describing the satirical cabaret *Live News*:

A group of well-known authors with famous names came forward with...a very clever literary and artistic show that was absolutely different from the hackneyed (trashy) revue programs. We are thinking here of *Live News I*, initiated and acted by Pola Braunówna [Pola Braun], a talented young author and composer in one and the same person: Władysław Szlengel, the poet and satirist; Leonid Fokszański...; the singer Józef Lipski; and Andrzej Wlast, the popular author and theater director. This consortium of tested writers...put together in the elegant Sztuka café *Live News*, which covered almost all the columns known to us in newspapers. And so we have here, in a lively, colorful, bitterly satirical, and polished literary text (acted by the authors themselves), Szlengel's leading article, a communiqué by the barrister Wacus, songs by Braunówna, articles by Lipski, a poem by Fokszański that rouses Homeric laughter, a report from the street by Szlengel, a chronicle of current events by Wlast, a sports report by Lipski, a theater report by Szlengel, an advertisement by the barrister Wacus, and finally the happy ending of the "live paper" finale. All these pieces are up to standard, with brilliant (not cheap) jokes and far from everyday humor on the most current themes worth noticing and remembering...The authors this time have proved that they are able to compete successfully with actors under current conditions, although the point is not competition but giving the consumer artistic fare by its authentic true creators...They were warmly received, and can therefore count on a fixed "subscription" by readers (the habitués of this original show). The role of Master of Ceremonies was played with great fervor by editor Władysław Szlengel.35

33 Werb.
34 Ibid.
35 Harris, 587.
The programs of *Live News* were repeated many times, and were enormously popular.

For those held captive behind the walls of the Warsaw ghetto, the show offered a chance to laugh, to be moved, and a chance to reflect, all within the best traditions of Warsaw cabaret.

Mary Berg reflects, "Every day at the art [Sztuka] Café on Leszno Street one can hear songs and satire on the police, the ambulance service, the rickshaws, and even the Gestapo, in a veiled fashion. The typhus epidemic itself is the subject of jokes. It is laughter through tears, but it is laughter. This is our only weapon in the ghetto...These programs are tremendously successful..."\(^36\)

Journalist Mina Tomkiewicz, in a memoir written in the 1960s, gives another eyewitness account of an evening at *Café Sztuka*. Braun is ready to take the stage, just following sentimental songs by a popular torch singer that turned audience thoughts back to life before the German occupation. "Then Pola Braun took the stage and burst this bubble of nostalgia, her appearance eagerly anticipated by the female spectators. Her songs, while laced with sentiment, were also lashed with a strong dose of ghetto reality.\(^37\) Tomkiewicz also notes, "Pola Braun sang her own songs, accompanying herself. Many eyes were moist, and women were moved and sighing. Most of them came from Lodz and Plock, or from Sosnowiec: Pola's songs were written for them, not for the women of Warsaw."\(^38\) Pola Braun was looked upon highly for her special way of communicating the events of a day in the Warsaw ghetto into something resembling theater. Other artists also admired Pola and sang her songs, including Diana

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\(^{36}\) Ibid, 588.

\(^{37}\) Werb.

\(^{38}\) Ibid.
Blumenfield, in a revue performed at the *Femina Theater* entitled *Szafa gra.* Even the public at large would take up songs of Pola Braun, as well as others, and hum them in the streets. One of the most popular songs was Braun's *Have Pity, Jewish Heart.* These street songs became so popular that they were sung everywhere: at work, in courtyards, and later in the factories and camps. Ms. Braun helped create a brief escape from the surrounding atmosphere of death and disease.

In 1942, a mass deportation of 300,000 Jews from the Warsaw ghetto occurred. Jews were deported to the Treblinka extermination camp. Instead of deportation, Pola Braun was assigned to work at an industrial plant, *Ostdeutsche Bautischlerdi-Werkstätte (OBW),* and was thus saved from immediate death. Many in the ghetto tried to find work in factories, believing their work would save them from being scheduled for expulsion. A great movement began, then, to establish factories to provide for the needs of the German army. "In the eyes of the Nazis, anyone who doesn't take a needle or a shovel in hand is in no way productive." The Nazis decreed expulsion for any unproductive ghetto resident. All the Jews were doomed to die, but at different speeds.

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39 Harris, 565.

40 Ibid, 575.

41 Ibid.


43 Kochanski, 304.

44 Miller.

Pola Braun and Majdanek Concentration Camp

Braun was eventually transported to the Majdanek death camp, in early 1943. Some believe she was transported there, along with her husband, songwriter Igo Kranowski [Izaak Krane]. There were six main extermination centers, all of which were in Poland. They included Treblinka, Sobibor, Chelmno, Belzac, Majdanek, and Auschwitz, which also had 40 satellite camps, including Birkenau, Budy, and Monowitz. Majdanek was a combined labor and extermination camp on the outskirts of Lublin, set up in the summer of 1941 to produce military supplies. It accommodated 50,000 inmates, and in the course of its history, 200,000 souls died within the camp walls. Upon arrival, Jews that were deemed unfit for work were selected immediately for extermination. The remainder of the Jews entered the main camp, and were forced to undertake hard labor. The food rations were meager, and the inmates were destined for a slow death through overwork and starvation. The barracks were laid out with large wooden bunk beds in several tiers. Each tier was designed to hold several dozen prisoners. In place of bathrooms, there were barrels behind the barracks into which the prisoners relieved themselves. Prisoners were starved, brutalized, covered with vermin and sores, terrified, and often rendered totally helpless. A Majdanek survivor described the camp's routine:

You get up at 3 a.m. You have to dress quickly, and make the "bed" so that it looks like a matchbox. For the slightest irregularity in bed-making the punishment was 25 lashes, after which it was impossible to lie or sit for a whole month.

There was what was called a washroom, where everyone in the camp was supposed to wash - there were only a few faucets - and we were 4,500 people in that section. Of

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46 Werb.
47 Costanza, 11.
48 Yehuda Bauer, 209.
49 Kochanski, 301-302.
50 Aaron, 207.
course there was neither soap nor towel or even a handkerchief, so that washing was theoretical rather than practical.

At 5 a.m. we used to get half a litre of black, bitter coffee. That was all we got for what was called "breakfast." At 6 a.m. - a headcount. We all had to stand at attention, in fives, according to the barracks. After the headcount - work.

We went in groups - some to build railway tracks or a road, some to the quarries to carry stones or coal, some to take out manure or for potato-digging, latrine-cleaning, barracks - or sewer - repairs. During work the SS men beat up the prisoners mercilessly, inhumanely, and for no reason.

Work was actually unproductive, and its purpose was exhaustion and torture.

At 12 noon there was a break for a meal. Standing in line, we received half a litre of soup each. Usually it was cabbage soup, or some other watery liquid, without fats, tasteless. That was lunch. It was eaten - in all weather - under the open sky, never in the barracks. No spoons were allowed, though wooden spoons lay on each bunk - probably for show for Red Cross committees. One had to drink the soup out of the bowl and lick it like a dog.

From 1 p.m. till 6 p.m. there was work again. Afternoon work was the same: blows, and blows again.

At 6 there was the evening headcount. Again we were forced to stand at attention. Counting, receiving the report, while some prisoners were called up for "punishment parade" - they were those who in the Germans' eyes had transgressed in some way during the day, or had not been punctilious in their performance. They were stripped naked publicly, laid out on specially constructed benches, and whipped with 25 or 50 lashes.

The brutal beating and the heart-rending cries - all this the prisoners had to watch and hear.\(^51\)

Roll calls would be held in every temperature, even when the air temperature would fall to below minus thirty degrees centigrade. These roll calls could last for thirteen or more hours, continuing until an escaped prisoner was found and caught. Hundreds of inmates would die of

\(^{51}\) Yehuda Bauer, 211-213.
exposure.\textsuperscript{52} Once the escaped prisoners were caught, punishment was death. One female survivor recalls:

I remember a hanging, the first such brutality I witnessed. It involved two young women, perhaps girls not much older than I, who, having dared an escape, were hanged with great ceremony. The two, who knew hope's futile promise and who imparted it to us, swung from the gibbet for several days and nights for all women to see in the center of the women's camp in Maidanek. \textsuperscript{53}

A month at Majdanek was the equivalent of a year in normal life. Virtually no one lived through two winters at the brutal camp. \textsuperscript{54}

In the midst of all the horrors happening around her, Pola Braun continued writing songs while incarcerated in Majdanek. She wrote the camp "anthem," \textit{Lager-Marsch}, to which the women prisoners sang as they marched off to their daily hard labor. At day's end, Braun entertained those in her barrack with readings of songs and poems by her mentor, Wladislaw Szlengel, and with recitations from the "Living Newspaper."\textsuperscript{55}

Polish writer Krystyna Tarasiewicz, a former prisoner at Majdanek who knew Braun briefly, describes a secret recital at the barracks:

Pola stopped suddenly in the middle of the measure and apprehensively looked around. Emaciated Jewish women with yellow complexions and rotting abscesses on their legs, gazing intently at the singer with pain-filled eyes, moved impatiently about. Before them stood the terrifying camp Kapo, Żenia, the all-powerful Lady of Field V at Majdanek. The whip, which often landed on the backs of the helpless women transported here to die, now dangled low at her side. Żenia was very clearly moved by the shocking tragedy of the Jewish song. And that is how Camp elder Żenia initiated a real concert. More importantly, she allowed us - several Christian Poles from Warsaw's Pawiak prison - to attend. Block 2 - just beyond the office of Field V - was always closed. The Germans had turned it into a warehouse for furniture confiscated from Poles arrested in Lublin.

\textsuperscript{52} Gilbert, 277-278.

\textsuperscript{53} Aaron, 198.


\textsuperscript{55} Werb.
Żenia herself broke the window that we, who would attend the concert, climbed through. A piano stood amidst all the furniture. Pola Braun nervously ran her fingers over the keys. The song began in a café, ran into the street; then, the blockading of houses; finally, people - hungry, broken, weakened - cowering in basements like rats, with a vision of death in their eyes, awaiting their terrible end. "Fear" (Braun intones)/Some sort of invisible fear/Suffused in human tears..." This was not singing, but rather a cry of misery from the heart of a Jewish woman. Her tears fell on the black and white keys, making the melody even more tearful.56

The song with the foxtrot rhythm was later known as Strach 1943.57

Survivor Danuta Brzosko-Medryk visited Pola Braun's Jewish Block several times to hear her recitations and songs. Brzosko-Medryk writes of the experience:

Against the background of so much that was bad, tragic, and filled with death, Pola was some sort of unreal presence lost in the most macabre realities. Her words moved her listeners. We deeply felt her nostalgia, longing, and sorrow. At the same time, I had the desire to run up to her, shake her, and scream: Don't give in! Believe you will survive! Fight! ...But she knew better.58

The population at Majdanek was not exclusively Jewish. The camp actually contained many non-Jewish Poles, Soviet POW soldiers who had been brought to the camp after the battles on the Eastern Front, and prisoners from eleven countries.59 The population was quite mixed, and no one segment was specifically targeted for extermination, until October 1943. It was determined that the Jews in the Lublin District had developed into a serious threat, and that the threat must be eliminated.60

56 Ibid.
57 Ibid.
58 Ibid.
59 Gilbert, 280
60 Kochanski, 302.
On November 3, 1943, a gate was made in the top perimeter fence of Field V, the Field that housed Pola Braun, and Operation Erntefest (Harvest Festival) began. As many as 4,000 Jews from the huts of Majdanek passed through the gate, as well as another 14,000 Polish Jews from the camps in the Lublin district, Trawniki and Poniatova. The naked Jews were forced through the gate in batches, savaged by dogs and whipped mercilessly. Loud music blared from two loudspeaker trucks, as the Jews were pushed forward to the deep ditches that had previously been dug behind the crematorium, just twenty-five yards from Field V. When the Jews reached the edge of the large pits, they were shot by machine guns. A German from the Reserve Police Battalion 101 recalls the scene, as published in Ordinary Men by Christopher Browning:

I definitely remember that the naked Jews were driven directly into the graves and forced to lie down quite precisely on top of those who had been shot before them. The shooter then fired off a burst at these prone victims.

At the end of the three day massacre, 42,000 Polish Jews were dead. Pola Braun was murdered by the Nazis in Operation Erntefest on November 3, 1943.

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61 Gilbert, 278.
62 Kochanski, 303.
63 Gilbert, 278.
64 Ibid, 278-79.
65 Kochanski, 303.
66 Miller
CHAPTER TWO

Vocal Music Composed to Remember the Victims and Survivors of the Holocaust

Art can be the expression of an individual's thoughts and feelings, as exhibited through a particular medium. Human creativity in the arts often comes as a response to great tragedy, intense suffering, irresolvable conflict, or deeply felt pain. It can act as a catharsis, an advocate, a testimony, a retreat, a witness, and even, a message, all bountifully serving the human spirit. Much art has been generated across the globe in reaction to the atrocities of World War II and the Holocaust. Much of this artistic creativity has occurred in the field of vocal music, written by composers of the second half of the twentieth century and of the twenty-first century, on poetry created by the victims of the Holocaust themselves.

This document examines Letter to Warsaw, a song cycle by Thomas Pasatieri (b. 1945), with texts by Pola Braun (1910-1943), a cabaret singer/songwriter who was incarcerated in the Warsaw Ghetto, and was later murdered in the Majdanek Concentration Camp in Poland, during World War II. Pasatieri originally composed Letter to Warsaw in 2004 for soprano and chamber ensemble, comprised of a woodwind quartet, a string quintet, trumpet, harp, and piano. He later arranged the cycle for voice and piano in 2007, and it is the voice and piano arrangement to which the comments in this document are directed.

In addition to Letter to Warsaw, research for this document revealed several other solo songs written on poetry created by Holocaust victims. Simon A. Sargon (b. 1938) set five of the Italian poems of Primo Levi and composed Shemà (1988) for soprano, flute, clarinet, cello, and piano.

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piano. Like Pola Braun, Primo Levi was also incarcerated in a death camp in Poland. While Braun perished in Majdanek, Levi survived the atrocities of Auschwitz. His poetry, however, was not written while still a prisoner, like Braun's, but within a few months of the liberation of the camp, when Levi returned home to the shattered post-war world. This work is named for the Hebrew word for affirmation of faith in God's unity, Shemâ, and is sung or spoken in every Jewish service. The first four poems are insights into Levi's reactions to the war and the immediate aftermath. The last song, "Congedo," is a poem written in 1974, and is much more reflective in content. It is also the most operatic of the five, and the music sounds faintly Puccinian.69 Like Pasatieri, Sargon's musical style is extremely lyrical, and fully exploits the coloristic and technical range of the soprano, throughout the 15-minute cycle.70

The suffering of children during the Holocaust is particularly compelling, and is often the subject of poets and composers. In two of the poems set in Pasatieri's Letter to Warsaw, Braun writes about children, making children the primary theme of the poems "Jew" and "Mother." Other composers have taken a different approach. Instead of setting poems about children, as those of Pola Braun, they have set poems written by children during their time in the concentration camps. I Never Saw Another Butterfly, a collection of poetry by Jewish children who lived in the Terezín concentration camp, has been set quite often. Several composers have set these poems in song cycles, and many have titled their compositions by the same name.

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Ellwood Derr's (1932-2008) *I Never Saw Another Butterfly* (1966) is a song cycle for voice, alto saxophone, and piano. The cycle consists of five songs with poetry by children who were incarcerated in the Nazi ghetto for Jews in Terezín, Czechoslovakia (1942-1944), and who died in Auschwitz before the end of October 1944. Derr obtained permission to use the poems from the State Jewish Museum of Prague, Czech Republic. Although the poetry was written by different children, the poetry does portray a coherent, dramatic journey. The concentration camp is introduced, life in the ghetto is described in detail, and the recognition and fear of one's fate is stated. Finally, in the fifth song, heartbreaking acceptance comes upon the child, and a young boy is dead, never to be seen again in the garden. Derr created this chamber work for three equal partners, and the saxophone and the piano maintain equality with the soprano, in regards to the expression of the text. The cycle is approximately 12 minutes in duration.

Srul Irving Glick (1934-2002) uses some of the same texts in his song cycle of six songs for mezzo-soprano and piano, *I Never Saw Another Butterfly* (1968). Glick's settings make use of highly declamatory vocal lines, atonality and cross voicing between each part, chant sections, text painting, and total independence of the voice and piano from each other. This dichotomy between the voice and piano could be Glick's interpretation of the dichotomy between the beauty of nature and hopefulness expressed in the poem, with the conditions of life faced by the poet in the concentration camp. The cycle is in English, and is just over 19 minutes in duration.

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74 Levy, 45.
Larry Zimmerman's song cycle *Windsongs* (1992)\(^{75}\) is composed for voice and piano, as well. The cycle consists of five songs, with texts taken from Hana Volavkova's book, *I Never Saw Another Butterfly*, a collection of works of art and poetry by Jewish children who lived in the concentration camp Theresienstadt. The poems collected were first written in Czech, and then translated to English for the book by Jeanne Nemcová, Arnust Lustig, Vera Weisblitz Lustig, and Elizabeth Rees. In an interview with Leesa Levy, Zimmerman states the style of *Windsongs* is "more dissonant than my other works. My intent was to evoke the darkness of the poetry and the time period of the Holocaust, which the Jews were painfully experiencing. The music was designed not to have any specific "Jewish" sound, but to evoke the emotions the poets were experiencing in an expressionistic manner."\(^{76}\) Pasatieri's poignantly subtle, more romantic compositional language contrasts with the more dissonant, evocative musical depictions of suffering, as seen in the Zimmerman and Glick settings. Both styles, however, are highly effective in portraying the victim's suffering.

*Three Songs from the Ghetto* (1993)\(^{77}\) is composed for voice and piano by Gershon Kingsley (b. 1922). Of the three songs in this set, only the first song, "The Last Butterfly," has a newly composed melody. The second song, "Lullaby at Ponar" was part of the oral Jewish tradition in Western Europe at the time of World War II, and Kingsley sets the folk-like melody using idiomatic Jewish melodic and rhythmic motives. "S'brennt," the final song, is derived from a melody first composed in the Warsaw Ghetto by Mordechai Gebirtig, an influential Yiddish poet and songwriter, after the pogrom against the Jews in 1938.\(^{78}\) Unlike the settings by


\(^{76}\) Levy, 61.


Glick and Zimmerman, the English translation for Kingsley's "The Last Butterfly" does not come from Volakova's book, but from S. Katsherginsky. Kingsley sets the text in an uncomplicated way, capturing the hypnotic motion of the butterfly as it moves further and further away from the protagonist.79

Lori Laitman (b.1955) set some of the same texts in her song cycle of six songs, also entitled *I Never Saw Another Butterfly* (1996). She discovered the texts when a friend suggested she set some poems from Hana Volavkova's book, *I Never Saw Another Butterfly*. Adelaide Whitaker, who has commissioned seven works from Laitman, comments on Laitman's song style: "[The songs] utilize contemporary musical language that frees the expressive qualities of the poetry and the music: varying bar line lengths, free color associations, and an accompaniment that is a full partner in a complex, integrated web."80 The cycle is in English and is 15 minutes in duration.

*From the Diary of Anne Frank* (1970)81 is another example of a composer setting the texts of a child. The work is an oratorio for soprano or mezzo-soprano, composed by Oskar Morawetz (1914-2007). The work is dedicated to Anne Frank, who lived in Holland during the German occupation of the Netherlands in World War II. Anne Frank was just 15 years old when she perished in the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp in Germany. This oratorio uses excerpts from her 1943 diary as the text. In the entry, Anne writes about a dream regarding a school friend, Lies Goosens, who was taken to a concentration camp. In her dream, Anne has seen horrible images and expresses tremendous guilt at her own security when so many of her friends

79 Levy, 52.
are suffering terrible fates. Pola Braun also expresses feelings of guilt with the mother characters in her poem, "Mother." All of the mothers have lost their children, and the implied feelings of unending guilt are present as they continue to live, while their children have perished. Morawetz set the moving texts of Anne Frank in a 19-minute composition that premiered in 1970, and has been performed by many prominent musicians in at least five different countries.\textsuperscript{82} It is a tribute to the courage and nobility of the human spirit.\textsuperscript{83}

The texts by children of the Holocaust are also used in the work \textit{We Are Here! A Cantata of Voices From The Shoah} (2009-2010)\textsuperscript{84} composed by Philip Koplow (b. 1943). It is a live musical documentary of 14 movements that incorporates traditional and period music, children's diaries, poetry, and statements by survivors. The work was composed for a third or fourth year string orchestra, a solo violinist, three narrators, one male and two female, one of the latter a singer, and the other, a percussionist. A video statement is also projected during a portion of the 37-minute work. "I'd Like To Go Away, Alone," movement 11, can be performed separately from the larger work, and is for soprano, with text taken from the poetry of Alene Synkova, one of the few child survivors of Terezin. When asked how he would describe the musical style of \textit{We Are Here!}, Koplow replied, "I would like to believe that it is melodic, accessible, and tonal. But, it does contain proportional notation, as well as improvised clusters."\textsuperscript{85} The composer believes in turning social and personal pain into music as an act of empathy or protest - a humane method of dealing with life cycle events, as well as violence and evil.\textsuperscript{86}

\textsuperscript{82} Jami Rhodes, \textit{A Performer's Guide to Oskar Morawetz' From the Diary of Anne Frank}. (D.M.A. document, Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College, 2009), 1.

\textsuperscript{83} Music in Response to the Holocaust.

\textsuperscript{84} Philip Koplow, \textit{We Are Here!} (available from the composer, 2009-2010).

\textsuperscript{85} Philip Koplow, interview with the author, May 21, 2013.

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Songs written as a response to the Holocaust can in no way restore all that was lost during the atrocities of World War II. Yet, it is encouraging to feel that perhaps something good and beautiful can grow from that which was so ugly and cruel. Pasatieri created *Letter to Warsaw* from the words left behind by Pola Braun, as she struggled to survive in the Warsaw ghetto and the Majdanek concentration camp. Like Pasatieri, other composers took the words of victims who suffered through their experiences in the camps, as well. These Holocaust songs are forever connected by the suffering that was endured by all, whether adult or child. One is reminded of the quote by David Bauer, when speaking of the *Symphony of Sorrowful Songs* of Henryk Mikolaj Górecki:

> The landscape of Poland is no less littered with bone and ash for the existence of this symphony. Art does not ameliorate evil. Yet, it is the nature of a world in which redemption is a never-impossible and recurring surprise, that ash and bone occasionally become the soil in which something as beautiful as Górecki's *Symphony No. 3* is born.\(^7\)


\(^7\) David Bauer, in accompanying booklet *Symphony No. 3 "Symphony of Sorrowful Songs"* Henryk Górecki, performed by Christine Brewer, Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, and Donald Runnicles, conductor, Telarc, 2009. Compact Disc.
CHAPTER THREE

Thomas Pasatieri

Child Prodigy

Thomas Pasatieri was born in New York City on October 20, 1945. His childhood was a time of persecution and betrayal, laced with hurt and a fear of abandonment. Thus, it is a subject of which he rarely speaks. Interviewer Martin Dulman, speaking of Pasatieri's childhood says, "[it is] a time he dislikes having to remember - and if to relive, he needs to put himself in a near trance-like state." In early childhood, then, Thomas felt an intense need to dedicate himself to the priesthood, longing for a sense of peace.

The world of music, however, soon offered a new solace. Upon seeing a sign for piano instruction while walking home from school, nine-year-old Thomas contemplated:

I am alone, I'm not a child, not an adult. I'm nine; I'm thirty. The children are mean; they are cruel; they are harsh. I feel no peace. I want to be like a summer tree in evening by a lake. Summers in the country with my cousins are fun. It is nice when we get together for the holidays. My older sister is nearly fourteen; my younger sister's just four. I have no brother. I feel safe in the hands of adults: they will not harm me, but they do not know my heart. My heart is a fragile place. I live there.

Thomas did begin piano lessons with Vera Wels, and, although neither his parents, nor his Sicilian relatives were musical, Thomas developed a love and an immediate passion for music. His piano skills developed quickly, and soon Thomas was giving piano concerts in New York City. When faced with pursuing music or the priesthood, the priest surmised that if Thomas were called to become a priest, that calling would still be present after high school.

89 Ibid.
90 Ibid, 5.
91 Ibid.
92 Ibid, 8.
Pasatieri did pursue music, and at age fourteen, without any formal instruction, began composing his own compositions, which included many songs, as well as some piano pieces.\(^9^3\) At age fifteen, Pasatieri attended a lecture by the renowned Parisian teacher of composition, Nadia Boulanger. After the lecture, he brazenly pushed a collection of his compositions into her arms and boldly asked for criticism and advice. This encounter led to an 18-month long distance teaching relationship, in which Pasatieri mailed manuscripts to Boulanger, and she returned the corrected music with comments.\(^9^4\)

Along with music, Pasatieri also had an affinity for the stage. In high school, he was always involved in productions, either acting or directing. For his graduation ceremonies, Pasatieri single handedly produced and directed a production of Jerome Kern's musical \textit{Leave It to Jane}.\(^9^5\) His acting skills certainly had a profound effect on his future, for Pasatieri believes, "You have to be a good actor to be a good opera composer."\(^9^6\)

After earning a scholarship to study composition at the Julliard School of Music, sixteen-year-old Pasatieri necessarily ceased his studies with Boulanger, and began composition studies with Vittorio Giannini and Vincent Persichetti.\(^9^7\) In an interview with Robert Jacobson, Pasatieri says, "at age sixteen it was time to decide, and it [the decision] was to be a musician. I looked inside myself and saw I was a composer, someone who writes music, not a pianist."\(^9^8\) His musically conservative teachers taught Pasatieri a great deal about neo-romantic compositional

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\(^9^4\) Ibid.


\(^9^6\) Robert Jacobson, "Thomas Pasatieri: Opera is the Plural of Opus." \textit{After Dark} Vol. 6, No. 11 (March 19, 1974), 46.


\(^9^8\) Jacobson, 46.
style. Speaking of his studies with the successful American opera composer Giannini, Pasatieri claims, "There and then the opera seed was planted."  

Although Pasatieri was ready to begin opera composition immediately, the wise Giannini insisted he must first study harmony, counterpoint, musical analysis, solfeggio, and music history. In addition, Pasatieri committed to writing two fugues a day, one before breakfast, and one before supper. To master the techniques of writing for the voice, Pasatieri sat in on voice lessons and listened intently as voice teachers instructed their students. He accepted vocal coaching opportunities, and also accompanied voice lessons. By the summer of 1964, Pasatieri had composed over 100 songs. Giannini was finally convinced, and he gave Thomas Pasatieri the nod to begin composing his first opera.

*The Trysting Place* was created while traveling in Europe over the summer of 1964, and was composed from a libretto written by Pasatieri, based on Booth Tarkington's play of the same name. When Pasatieri returned to Julliard that fall, Giannini's verdict was, "O.K., Tom, now let's do another one, this time, together." Pupil and teacher worked to compose *The Flowers of Ice*, completed in 1965. Pasatieri comments, "I learned from Giannini that the most important element of a successful opera is communication of the drama through an expressive vocal line - we analyzed every phrase in the libretto for multiple possibilities of expression before deciding on the most effective setting."

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101 Ewen, 216.

102 Davis.

103 Pasatieri, 15.

104 Ibid.

105 Ewen, 216.
Professional Career

Pasatieri marks the summer of 1965 as the beginning of his professional career. He had completed his two student operas, graduated from Juilliard with his Bachelor of Arts degree, and felt ready to create major works. While studying composition with Darius Milhaud at the Aspen Music Festival, Pasatieri was inspired, quite literally over night, to write his third opera, *The Women*. Pasatieri recalls:

> It all happened very quickly. One morning I woke up with a terrific idea for a libretto; it must have all come to me in a dream. I wrote the words down, finished the music in three days, the orchestration took another week, and right away it was performed by the other students. The audience reaction was tremendous and that hooked me on opera--the whole experience was exciting.\(^{106}\)

Pasatieri continued to write opera at a frantic pace, and by the age of 30, he had 13 operas to his credit, along with a Master of Arts degree from Juilliard, as well as the first ever awarded doctorate from that esteemed school of music. Pasatieri was making a living solely by writing opera, and he was the first American-born and trained composer to do so.\(^{107}\)

By 1983, he had composed 16 operas, including ten one act works, and six evening length works; he seemed unstoppable! But, suddenly, at age 38, the prolific Pasatieri stopped composing operas. He comments, "I did not stop because I felt any lack of creativity. I needed to make a change in my life. The opera companies were only interested in world premieres, not in bringing older pieces back. I wanted a secure financial existence, health insurance and a pension, all of those things, and the only way for a composer to do that is to work in the film industry."\(^{108}\) Those who knew him best, knew that Hollywood always held a fascination for Pasatieri. He was an incurable movie buff, and comments, "I love films like *The Umbrella of..."
Cherbourg, Sundays and Cybele, The Go-Between, A Touch of Class, and most of Bette Davis' films. Movies are really the most alive of the arts today. I would love to do the music for a beautiful film and be an actor in it, too...and be in on the writing and casting, too." Pasatieri moved to Hollywood, where he orchestrated film and television music composed by other people. He did, however, make the decision to not compose any film music himself. On this matter, Pasatieri says, "Film music creates part of the overall impact of the film - it disappears. This is the opposite of what my music is intended to do - it is meant to be heard." He goes on to say that he has not "sold out." "Orchestration is a pure art. I worked at it, and I learned a lot about integrating music with drama, about relating to an audience and feeling free about working in an amalgam of music styles."

Pasatieri worked in the film industry 20 years, and even formed a film music production company, Topaz Productions. His film orchestrations can be heard in Road to Perdition, American Beauty, The Little Mermaid, The Shawshank Redemption, Fried Green Tomatoes, Legends of the Fall, Scent of a Woman, and Angels in America, just to name a few. Pasatieri was not, however, finished composing opera.

The "Comeback"

2007 was the year of Pasatieri's operatic comeback. He humorously commented, "It's a bit like a '40s movie. The young, successful composer becomes dejected because he feels

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109 Jacobson, 48.
110 Ibid.
111 Ibid.
unappreciated. He slams down the piano lid and storms away saying he'll never write another note. Then, the comeback. "There you have it!" His work with orchestration in Hollywood had created an interest in revising his earlier operas. After the revision and premiere of *The Seagull* in 2002, Pasatieri remarked, "I had the feeling it was time to come back to opera." He continued, "I am secure now, because of my life in Hollywood. I can relax into writing the kind of music I want to. Writing operas is what I love to do, so I am doing it again, no matter what." Pasatieri premiered not one, but two new operas in 2007, *Frau Margot* in May, and *The Hotel Casablanca* in August. Speaking of the great opera composer Giuseppe Verdi, Pasatieri reminds us that he "had a sort of hiatus from opera composing of more than a decade after *Aïda* and before *Otello*. I don't compare myself, but that has been a kind of reassurance. I heard the siren call again, always knew I would." In addition to revisions of earlier operas, Pasatieri has now composed 23 operas, with the last, *The Martyrs*, premiering in 2012. A complete list of his operas are included in the Appendix section of this document.

Even while orchestrating film music, Pasatieri continued to compose. Although he is primarily known as an opera composer, during his 20 year hiatus from opera composition, he composed in other genres, including orchestral works, concertos, and chamber works. His primary focus, however, has always been the voice. Pasatieri comments, "The voice is a

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114 Dyer, 17.

115 Ibid, 14.


117 Ibid.
wonderful instrument, and why not do something with it, why not write for it?” He has composed choral music, voice and chamber music, voice and orchestral music, and 225 songs, written from 1956-2013.119

**Compositional Style**

Singers have performed and recorded Pasatieri's songs for years, including such artists as Janet Baker, Sheri Greenawald, Thomas Hampson, Evelyn Lear, Catherine Malfitano, Frederica von Stade, Thomas Stewart, Shirley Verrett, and Jane Eaglen.120 When asked about his own musical style, Pasatieri replied:

> About fifteen times a day I'm asked, 'Well, what does your music sound like?' I mean, from everyone, from my mother on down the line. I suppose, if one has to use labels, I'd be called a conservative composer, because I do use tonality. Since I am a theater composer, whatever works - the best music I can write for that moment - is what I will write. But first of all, it has to be good music, and always music that is beautiful to sing.121

And singers do like to sing his music. The late baritone John Reardon (1930-1988) claimed, Pasatieri writes from the heart rather than the head - soaring lines that we all love to sing without having to worry about picking out awkward, jagged intervals. Sure, his music is conservative, but the diatonic scale is far from exhausted. There's still that tried and true thing of a rising series of tones, a leap to a climactic high note and a smashing cadence that lifts you out of your seat. It's worked for centuries and Pasatieri does it in his own original way.122

Another singer and fellow student from their days at Juilliard, soprano Evelyn Mandac, echoes what many singers say of Pasatieri's music. "He loves the voice. He never uses it in an

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119 Thomas Pasatieri, e-mail to author, January 28, 2013.


122 Davis.
instrumental manner, the way so many avant-garde composers do today. When he writes a part for me, he has my voice in mind and devises a vocal line that brings out my most positive qualities. It's really uncanny."  

Frank Corsaro, long time friend and collaborator with Pasatieri, comments that singers Frederika von Stade and Richard Sitwell were always "grateful for his [Pasatieri's] propensity toward romantic vocal lines."  

When Pasatieri was commissioned to write an original work for singers Evelyn Lear and Thomas Stewart, he was quite honored, but somewhat confused. "Why me? There are lots of composers who are more famous," he queried. "We came to you because you write vocally, you write for the voice, your music is good to sing, good for the voice," came the satisfying reply.  

Although singers love Pasatieri's works, many of his fellow composers do not. Pasatieri has always had to deal with critics. While still a student at age 19 and attending the Aspen Festival, he experienced harsh criticisms from his composition teacher, Darius Milhaud. Even though Pasatieri's one act opera The Women went on to win the Aspen Festival Prize, it was not easy. Pasatieri recalls, "Darius Milhaud hated what I was doing, absolutely hated it. There were composition classes, so it would be me and other composers. We would play our music for him, and he would criticize it. Mine was by far the one that he hated the most."  

He reminisces:  

This tiny little opera The Women won the Aspen Festival Prize. It's a public concert where the pieces are presented publicly and Milhaud was the judge, and two of his graduate students. The Women closed the program. It was in the Aspen tent in the afternoon and everything had been done and it came to me. It was greeted with this thunderous standing ovation! So, then they had to give the Prize, so they gave me the Prize and Milhaud had to give it to me! I suppose he could have given it to someone else. My feeling was, of course I was nineteen years old, that it was because of the public.
reaction that he gave it to me because he did not like it at all, although Madame Milhaud had helped me stage the opera.\textsuperscript{127}

In the beginning of his career, his musical output came pouring forth at such a fast rate, that publicity was everywhere. Although Pasatieri did not seek out interviews, they abounded, and often resulted in antagonism and jealously from fellow composers. More people had read about Pasatieri than had actually heard his music.\textsuperscript{128} Once, another composer in a newspaper remarked that Pasatieri's music is "trash." Pasatieri replied, "Now that really hurt, because to my knowledge he's never heard a note of my music. And that wouldn't have happened without the publicity. I thought 'Even if it's true that I write trash, he should hear my music before saying so.' "\textsuperscript{129} In a later interview, Pasatieri comments, "Critics hurt for a while - I'm not hardened to them yet. Maybe one out of ten fangs you, and that bothers me. But, I've never had any doubts about myself."\textsuperscript{130}

Pasatieri believes that "you learn from everyone."\textsuperscript{131} He heralds his top five "teachers" as Giannini, Puccini, Strauss, Maria Callas, and Jennie Tourel. "From Puccini and Strauss, of course, I learn every day. From Callas I learned what opera was all about, and from Tourel what a song was all about---how to make every nuance, every syllable in a text important."\textsuperscript{132} When speaking of Giannini, Pasatieri explains, "Giannini was a pupil of Strauss, so he had both the Italian and German things and picked the best of both: Italian for the lyric passages with bel canto writing and Italianate things out of Puccini and Leoncavallo; plus the Germanic power of


\textsuperscript{128} Tuck, B4, Col.1.

\textsuperscript{129} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{130} Jacobson, 48.

\textsuperscript{131} Sperber, 27.

\textsuperscript{132} Ibid.
the orchestra for dramatic passages and a kind of austerity of the vocal line." Pasatieri learned not only how to write a pure legato line, but also how to deliver a "sock-it-to-em" phrase! In addition to Puccini and Strauss, Pasatieri also includes Verdi, Bellini, Ravel, and Rachmaninoff among those composers who have had an influence upon his music. Commentators observe that Pasatieri's songs often seem directly related to the lyric lines of Samuel Barber, one of his mentors. Others suggest that his musical idiom is conservative and eclectic, a "neo-Menotti melange," as Menotti is yet another mentor of Pasatieri.

It might be surprising to some to know that Pasatieri also counts among his influences pop star greats, such as Streisand, Franklin, Flack, O'Sullivan, Midler, Ross, Joplin, The Beatles, Hathaway, and Peggy Lee. "It's fascinating to hear them work in the medium of a slow ballad: Their interpretation of a song by stretching or bending a note is closer to Italian bel canto than anything being written today." Pasatieri goes on to say, "I love all kinds of music. It is to be enjoyed with no differentiation. My own artistic experience is deepened by listening to and relating to all kinds of music...Music is for enjoyment, whether it's an aria or a song."

Through the years, critics and commentators have described Pasatieri's music in many ways. It is tonal, with lyric bel canto lines, lush harmonies, and conservative. Pasatieri himself describes his music as contemporary-romantic, lyric, vocal, singable, and melodic. When all

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133 Jacobson, 46.
134 Ibid.
135 Davis.
137 Tuck.
138 Davis.
139 Jacobson, 48.
140 Ibid.
of his colleagues were writing twelve-tone music, Pasatieri continued writing tonal, lyrical music, drawing upon inspiration from the composers he loved. "I wanted to be accepted, but stuck to what I believed in," Pasatieri commented. What he believes in is sincere, heart-on-the-sleeve music. Pasatieri comments, "People intellectualize and are afraid of emotion in the present day. But music is the most emotional of all the arts. Love and romanticism are always relevant." Pasatieri's ultimate goal is simple: He wants people to leave a performance of his works happier than when they arrived.

Pasatieri believes the musical atmosphere has greatly changed from when he first began writing songs in 1956 until the present day, in 2013. Lyric, romantically tonal music is no longer the exception, but now much more the standard. Critics are no longer shocked by a beautifully flowing melody, and audiences are more open to new works. Where Pasatieri used to be accused of not being serious because his music was tonal, he is now heralded as a composer that has a gift for dramatic scoring and an innate ability to satisfy the ear. Of course, some critics still remain who assert that composers whose music appeals directly to the emotions are much less "intellectual" than composers who are concerned with formal coherence and structural complexity. Anne Midgette, a New York Times critic, gave a very back-handed compliment about the effectiveness of Pasatieri's Neo-Romantic opera, The Seagull when she said, "The Seagull seems to be a solid work at the lower end of the artistic spectrum, like a piece of furniture from Ikea [a low-priced, mass-market furniture retailer]: secretly better than it's

141 Ibid.
142 Ibid.
supposed to be." Pasatieri comments that critics are, "either very glowing or sort of tender at this point because I've been around so long. I think they just respect survival. They figure if there is somebody that is still writing after all of those years, then of course the tide has changed. I'm no longer revolutionary for being conservative - or for being tonal. It's no longer strange to hear this music..."

**Creative Process**

Although Pasatieri's music is decidedly conservative, it is difficult to apply traditional analytical methods to describe his works. One may suggest that his style is conservative only when placed beside twelve-tone music and other expressions of the avant-garde composers of the twentieth century. Pasatieri states, "I want to express myself in whatever way works, tonally or dissonantly...What's avant-garde, what's conservative in the perspective of history?" At best, labels are limiting, and do not represent any one work, completely. In an interview given in 2000, Pasatieri discussed his compositional style and creative process:

I really don't know about the creative process. I have said before that I've written hundreds of songs...and I don't remember writing any of them. It's because - I mean - I do remember sitting there - [the] physical act - because when I'm writing - you are there and you're also not there. That's how I feel. You are thinking, but the technique, the actual compositional technique supports you while you're doing it. But I don't have any formalized process like other composers do who can really talk about things like this. I'm not able to do it. Most of my process is done mentally and I feel that it continues even into my conscious mind. So by the time I write it, the process has been going on.

Pasatieri does not formally analyze his creative process, and he is not able to discuss his music in an analytical way. Dr. Pasatieri was recently asked to describe the evolution of his

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147 Beth Bauer, 130.

148 Ewen, 218.

149 Reid, 74.
compositional style, beginning with his earlier songs, and through to the composition of *Letter to Warsaw*. He replied:

To describe the evolution of my writing style in my songs, I would say that I have tried to become simpler. I try to say with fewer notes what I used to say with many. This is always part of my revisions of songs. There are fewer leaps and the tessitura is lower in general. The piano parts are not as thick and I think the climaxes are more controlled and not "over the top." I now feel they are "the top" not over it.\(^{150}\)

Based on Pasatieri's quote, and on score studies of many of his songs and songs cycles, evidence of his self-described compositional evolution in *Letter to Warsaw* will be discussed. Distinctive compositional traits, such as word painting, repetition of text, use of rhythmic and melodic motives, free use of chromaticism and meter changes, melismatic writing for the voice, doubling of melody in the piano, and soaring melodic vocal lines will be examined. A discussion of how Pasatieri uses or does not use these same compositional traits in *Letter to Warsaw* will be demonstrated by comparing the musical relationships that exist between his earlier songs and cycles, including *Sieben Lehmannlieder* (1988), *Three Poems of James Agee* (1974), *Three Poems by Kirstin van Cleave* (1978), and *Ophelia's Lament* (1975). In lieu of an analysis, such as Shenkerian, the tracing of his most distinctive compositional devices will constitute a framework for the discussion of *Letter to Warsaw*. The understanding of the evolution of these compositional choices will aid performers as they seek to create an accurate portrayal of the music in *Letter to Warsaw*.

\(^{150}\) Thomas Pasatieri, e-mail to author, February 1, 2013.
CHAPTER FOUR

Letter to Warsaw

Composition

Pasatieri originally composed Letter to Warsaw in 2004 for soprano and chamber ensemble, comprised of a woodwind quartet, a string quintet, trumpet, harp, and piano. Gerard Schwarz was to conduct the premiere of the work, and suggested that Pasatieri write the song cycle for dramatic soprano, Jane Eaglen. Pasatieri admired Ms. Eaglen very much, and agreed that this would be ideal. The cycle sets six of Pola Braun’s poems, and is interspersed with six purely instrumental movements to create a capacious cycle of 70 minutes. The length of the work, as well as the nature of the songs being interspersed with instrumental movements, have caused some commentators to refer to Letter to Warsaw as a cantata, rather than a song cycle. Recently, when asked if he considers Letter to Warsaw to be a song cycle or a cantata, Pasatieri gave a startling reply. “I am not sure if I consider Letter to Warsaw [to be] a song cycle or a cantata, probably both.” Pasatieri later arranged the cycle for voice and piano with no interspersed instrumental movements. Theodore Presser published it in 2007. When asked the purpose of a voice and piano arrangement, Pasatieri replied, After finishing the orchestral score, I made a piano reduction for the singer to learn the piece, in the same way one would do for an opera score. When Presser was ready to publish Letter to Warsaw, it made sense to use this version, which would encompass all the vocal movements. Also, a singer would need this to learn her part. It also defined each separate movement and could offer a way to perform single songs in a recital.

152 Thomas May, ”In Recital Seattle.” Opera Now (September/October, 2004), 109.
154 Pasatieri, e-mail to author, May 20, 2013.
155 Ibid.
The voice and piano version, when performed straight through, is about 40 minutes in duration. While some composers would be against having their song cycles performed in sections, Pasatieri is glad to have the work performed in its entirety, or with individual songs. He states, "One of the reasons for publishing the solos songs from *Letter to Warsaw* is so that individual sections (songs) can be performed separately. Since most are rather long, one or two would fit nicely in a recital program."156

**Poetry**

Pola Braun's poetry was gathered and assembled after the war by various poets and literary publishers. Aleksander Kulisiewicz, a Polish political dissident, himself a prisoner in Sachsenhausen, copied variants of some of Braun's Majdanek pieces.157 Kulisiewicz first obtained "Letter to Warsaw" in the 1960s.158 The Yiddish poet, H. Leivick, edited one of the first publications to include Pola Braun's ghetto songs.159 Braun's poetry, including five of the texts set in *Letter to Warsaw*, are published in Halina Birenbaum's book, *We Remember Their Poems*.160 "Letter to Warsaw" is published in the 1985 Majdanek anthology, *Piesni zza drutow*, by Sophie Murawsak-Gryn.161

Pola Braun's poetic style has been called *kleinkunst*, meaning "cabaret style."162 It is a broad term, covering forms from rhyming couplets to free verse, sometimes within a single

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156 Pasatieri, e-mail to author, June 1, 2013.
157 Miller.
158 Barbara Milewski, e-mail to author, June 6, 2013.
159 Werb.
161 Milewski.
Trevor Hold comments that, "many of the most effective twentieth-century lyrics are in free verse-forms."163 We know Braun often sang her pieces, but many may have been meant for reciting, only. Braun was a composer, lyricist, and performer. One of the greatest advantages of writing both words and music is that one can adjust the former to fit the latter as the work progresses. The two arts meld into one as nearly as is possible.164 Barbara Milewski comments on Braun's poetic style, "...it reminds [me] very much of the ballad style of Polish interwar-period popular songs that were regularly performed in Warsaw cafe cabarets...The verses have a conversational, almost spoken style that was common to Polish tangos of the 1930s. The refrain would then often have a soaring, break out melodic quality."165 Singer Wiera Gran performs repertoire which predates World War II, and her recordings give a sense of the mood and style of such Polish popular songs that would have been performed during Ms. Braun's time.166

Braun's music has, unfortunately, been lost. It is likely that the missing musical element could explain the apparently anomalous shapes and schemes of some of her lyrics. Without the original music, it is difficult to understand how the patterns functioned.167

Bret Werb, musicologist for the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, brought the poetry of Pola Braun to the attention of Mina Miller, director of Music of Remembrance, and it is from there, that the song cycle Letter to Warsaw was created. Thomas Pasatieri says of the

162 Miller.


164 Ibid, 284.

165 Milewski, e-mail to author, June 11, 2013.

166 Ibid.

167 Bret Werb, e-mail to author, February 4, 2013.
poetry, "I was inspired by these poems, and their descriptions of a woman's loss of freedom and her home. That's how it all began. I am so fortunate to have had such incredible texts to set."¹⁶⁸

CHAPTER FIVE

Musical Discussion

1. Jew

Tell me, dear mama, what does the word "Jew" mean?
Is it something shameful, some sort of disgrace?
Tell me, do Jews really wear long beards
Tell me, do they sway when they pray?
Tell me, dear mama, is it a disgrace,
That I am such a little Jew?

A Jew, dear child, is suffering,
A Jew, dear child, is bad fate,
A Jew, dear child, is worry,
A Jew must hold back every blow.
A Jew, dear child, is a hopeful heart,
A Jew is belief in the future, in better days to come,
A Jew never loses his courage,
He laughs, though his heart sometimes trembles.

Tell me, dear mama, why everyone sneers at him,
Why everyone laughs and sneers?
Tell me, are Jews good for nothing?
Tell me have they never produced anything?
Tell me, dear mama, is it a disgrace,
That I am such a little Jew?

A Jew is...wait, I know what to tell you,
Jew is a mighty word, believe me,
A Jew is very likely the only person,
Who knows truly bitter tears.

Pola Braun wrote "Jew" while living in the Warsaw Ghetto, where hunger, disease, and death were part of every day life. In this poem, a small child is questioning his mother and asking for the meaning of 'Jew,' seeking to make some sense of this new life in the ghetto. The mother replies to her child, first with answers of despair, but then with words of hope, perhaps in an attempt to reassure and comfort her worried child. The child, however, persists, wanting a better answer than his mother is able to provide. Finally, the mother delivers the solemn
response that resonates within her own heart, "Jew is a mighty word, believe me, a Jew is very likely the only person, who knows truly bitter tears."

Pasatieri begins the five-measure introduction, marked Lento, with simple, child-like repeated musical gestures of quick sixteenth notes followed by notes of longer duration (Figure A). The music is playful, but a palpable sense of dread hangs in the sparse accompaniment. Thomas May, music critic, comments that Pasatieri, "establishes a tone of gently paced, autumnal melancholy and an uncomplicated, conservatively oriented melodic pensiveness, calling Menotti to mind."

Beginning with the first vocal entrance in measure six, a steady rocking rhythm is established by eighth notes in the left hand of the piano, and the tempo marking is Allegretto (Figure B). This rhythmic motive continues throughout.

\[\text{Fig. A}\]

\[\text{May, 109.}\]
Pasatieri often uses rhythmic motives in his songs, but rarely does he carry the same motive continuously through the entire piece, as he does in "Jew."

As in his earlier songs, Pasatieri here, too, makes use of recurring motives. Each time the child pleads with his mother, "Tell me, dear mama," Pasatieri uses the same melodic motive, as shown in Figure B. In *Ophelia's Lament*,\(^ {170} \) composed in 1975, Pasatieri uses the technique of a recurring rhythmic motive each time he sets the text "He is dead and gone" (Figure C). Gale Odom observes that Pasatieri "singles out this phrase for special emphasis in his setting" of Ophelia.\(^ {171} \)

\[\text{Fig. B}\]

\[\text{Fig. C}\]

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The rhythms in "Jew" are quite straight-forward, and, apart from three 2/4 measures, the meter is in common time throughout, lending to the simple, child-like atmosphere. This simple use of meter is in stark contrast to many of Pasatieri's early songs, which include frequent use of shifting meters, both simple and complex. "Sonnet," the third song in the song cycle *Three Poems of James Agee*, first published in 1974, contains five meter changes, 4/4, 3/2, 5/4, 6/4, and back to 4/4, just within the first thirteen measures. Another example is found in the 1980 set *Three Poems by Kirstin Van Cleave* in "A Night of Love." This first song of the set contains six meter changes, 2/4, 2/8, 3/8, 2/4, 2/8, and back to 2/4, in the first nineteen measures.

Although word painting is a distinctive trait of Pasatieri's, he does not use that technique in "Jew." He sets the texts of the child and of the mother in a straightforward manner, simple and clear, very much the way in which a mother must speak to a small child. The performer must observe dynamic markings carefully. The first example, moving from a *mp* marking to a *forte* when the child asks, "Tell me, dear mama, is it a disgrace, that I am such a...," and then back to *piano* for, "little Jew?" The varied dynamics mirror speech patterns, helping to create the sense of conversation between mother and child.

Pasatieri's harmonic language is tonal, with a free use of chromaticism. The melody is not declamatory, but is very conversational, as it is a conversation between mother and child. Unlike earlier songs, Pasatieri does not consistently double the vocal line in the piano. Doubling is a distinctive trait, but is quite absent in "Jew." Referring, once again, to "A Night of Love" from *Three Poems by Kirstin Van Cleave*, Pasatieri doubles the entire vocal line, from start to finish, in the piano accompaniment (Figure D).

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Doubling of the vocal line is prevalent in the entire Van Cleave set, as well as in the cycle *Three Poems of James Agee*.

On the final page of this four-page song, Pasatieri finally breaks the rhythmic motive established in measure six. When the mother, again, begins to answer her child, but says, "Wait," Pasatieri sets that word, and those following, "I know what to tell you," unaccompanied, followed by a 2/4 measure of silence. The tempo marking then changes to *Maestoso*, and the vocal line is supported by a homophonic texture of half note chords. Pasatieri sets the final answer, "Jew is a mighty word, believe me, a Jew is very likely the only person, who knows truly bitter tears," creating a great sense of finality. The ominous mood is continued by returning to *Lento*, and ending the song with four measures that echo the melodic motive of the questioning child (Figure E).
One performance idea to consider in the interpretation of "Jew," is maintaining simplicity in tone and delivery, while singing the words of the child. Although Pasatieri did not conceive the text to be sung in a child-like fashion, he does agree that this simple delivery "sounds appropriate."\(^{174}\) To make this technique successful, the singer should also consider facial expressions and gestures appropriate to a pleading child, to accompany the light, more straight-toned notes of the voice. "Jew" is a poignant text, and the performer must guard against singing anything other than simple textual declamation.

\(^{174}\) Pasatieri, e-mail to author, June 6, 2013.
Nie zna pani żydowskiego,
Nie wie pani co to znaczy,
Gdy ktoś się w tym języku żali.
Pyta pani wciąż dlaczego,
Jakże mam to wytłumaczyć
Albo mnie zrozumiesz, albo nie.
Czy ja mogę pani wstawić serce swe?
Takie rzeczy przecież czuję się.
Gdy tęsknota raz cię weźmie in karby swe,
To zrozumiesz łatwo słowa te.

"A hejm - znaczy do domu.
"Curik" - znaczy z powrotem -
I płaczę ktoś pokryjomiu,
A serce wali jak młotem.
"A hejm, to jest tęsknota
To świst lokomotyw
To znak, że wracasz szczęśliwy,
żele wracasz do domu już.

Nie wie pani, co to znaczy
Być uchodźcą w obcym mieście,
Jak to dobrze Warszawianką być.
Jak pani wytłumaczyć,
że ten z Łodzi, Łomży, Brześcia
To w Warszawie nie potrafić żyć.
Pani tu z Żurawiej przyszła
Lecz to tylko kilka ulic jest.
Tamci tu się krężą jak w obłędnym śnie
Licząc dni na kilometry leż.

"A hejm - znaczy do domu.
"Curik - znaczy z powrotem -
I chcesz wyzalić się komus,
Wypłakać swą tęsknotę.

You do not know Yiddish, Madam,
You don't know what it means, Madam,
When someone laments in their language.
You keep on asking "why?" Madam---
How can I explain this to you?
Either you understand, or you don't.
Can I lend you my heart, Madam?
A person feels such things, after all.
When nostalgia takes hold of you,
You'll easily understand these words.

A heym - means "home."
Tsuri - means "back."
And someone's secretly crying,
And a heart is fiercely pounding.
A heym - is nostalgia,
It's a locomotive's whistle,
It's a sign you're gladly returning,
That you're already returning home.

You don't know what it means, Madam,
To be an exile in a strange town,
How nice it is to be from Warsaw.
How can I explain this to you?
That someone from Lodz, Wohmja, Bejeshch,
Cannot get along here in Warsaw.
You came here from Żurawia,
But that's just a few streets away.
Those others roam here as if in a mad dream
Counting the days by the miles of tears.

Like "Jew," the poetry of "Tsurik a Heym" was also written while Pola Braun was living in the Warsaw Ghetto. Population in the ghetto changed daily as Jews were deported to concentration camps, and other Jews throughout the city were rounded up and moved into the enclosed walls of the ghetto. Often, Jews fled to Warsaw from other cities and countries to escape the Germans and the war, only to find themselves incarcerated in the ghetto. The ghetto,
therefore, was a melting pot of Jewish people from many areas of Europe, all speaking in their native tongues.\textsuperscript{175}

In this poem, we catch a glimpse of ghetto life, where it was a daily struggle just to stay alive. The Jews endured daily arrests, periodic round-ups, beatings, tortures, starvation, and the presence of emaciated children.\textsuperscript{176} Many are crying out to be allowed to return to their homes, 'Tsurik a Hyem.' Speaking of the children, Dr. Emanuel Ringelblum in his Warsaw ghetto diary states, "Their cries and moans throughout the night were among the most unbearable experiences of ghetto life."\textsuperscript{177} A woman questions why these words are constantly uttered. It is answered that these are matters of the heart; either you do understand, or you do not. If only we could return home, we could leave our sorrows behind, and begin to live again.

Pasatieri begins the \textit{Adagio piano} introduction of 18 measures with a mournful theme, hovering around the tonal center of e minor. The voice enters seamlessly, becoming one with the haunting tune already established. At measure 32, Pasatieri adds a \textit{Più Mosso} marking as the protagonist vainly tries to explain "why?", as the key center glides into g minor. As her frustration with the explanation grows, the key center again shifts, finally settling into a sense of a minor. To capture the increasing angst, Pasatieri again marks \textit{Più Mosso}, and employs one of his signature compositional traits by having the soprano soar to a high \textit{fortissimo} A on the phrase, "That you're already returning home." (Figure F)

\textsuperscript{175} Kochanski, 296.
\textsuperscript{176} Kalisch, 81.
\textsuperscript{177} Kalisch, 76.
Soaring melodic vocal lines are found in earlier works, such as "Ich bin allein auf Bergesgipfeln," the first song in *Sieben Lehmannlieder*. (Figure G)

Soaring melodic vocal lines are part of Pasatieri's earlier compositional style that carries through into the writing of *Letter to Warsaw*. 
After a two measure interlude, the protagonist collects herself, seemingly resigned that she will never make the woman understand the meaning of 'Tsurik a Heym,' and the music returns to the opening Adagio, and now mezzo piano dynamic. The cycle of angst and frustration builds again, however, but more quickly this time, rising to a forte dynamic, as the tonal center shifts back to e minor. The protagonist reaches near hysteria, and Pasatieri sets the text, "Those others roam here as if in a mad dream, counting the days by the miles of tears. A heym means 'home.' Tsurik means 'back,' " with soaring high, expressive lines. The singer must take good care to allow enough vertical space on both settings of "tears," which are set on a high A, and then high A flat. If one modifies too much toward [a], the word will not be clearly understood. Because text repetition is also a characteristic found often in Pasatieri's earlier songs and song cycles, it is important to note that Pasatieri only chooses to repeat one line of the text in this poem, and it is "by the miles of tears." (Figure H)
This one text repetition then, must be executed by the singer to portray the deep frustration and near hysteria of the protagonist. Pasatieri comments about his text repetitions, "I do it for musical and dramatic reasons...once the words are down, I feel that I can use them again, or parts of them again; once I have set them."\(^{178}\)

Within the natural ebb and flow of human emotion, the deeply felt outburst is followed by a *decrescendo* down to a *mezzo piano* marking, where the protagonist is almost speaking to herself, "And you want to share your sorrow, cry out your longing to someone." However, after a brief three measure interlude, the singer re-enters, with seemingly renewed strength and resolve, and *crescendo poco a poco al fine* is the marking that carries the singer through to the end of the piece, singing a *fortississimo* high F sharp, full of the hope of a new life. (Figure I) Pasatieri marks the final five measures of the piece *Maestoso*, underlining the resolve, strength, and never-ending hope portrayed in the text.

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\(^{178}\) Beth Bauer, 153.
3. Mother

Mère, Mother, Mutter po polsku znaczy: "Mama".
We wszystkich językach świata litera "M" jest ta sama.
I wszędzie na całym świecie jest serce matki to samo,
Zawsze się zjawi na okrzyk dziecka "Mamo"!

Madame Janette już piąty rok zasypia niespokojnie
I ma przed snem nerwowy szok, bo syn jej padł na wojnie.
Mistress Cripps przechodzi Hyde Park powoli i dostojnie,
Modlitwa spływa z sinych warg, bo syn jej padł na wojnie.
Frau Schmidt na cele pieniężne obdarza innych hojnie
I obcym dzieciom pomóc chce, bo syn jej padł na wojnie.
A pani ... nie! nie powiem kto, zatrzaski szyje, pruje,
Nożyczki coraz szybciej tną i myśli gdzieś w dal... 

Do tego dnia, gdy straszny los podstępnie i zdradziecko
Wymierzył jej okrutny cios, bo zabrał matce dziecko.
Kto przeżył raz okropny dzień, gdy dzieci zabierano,
Temu na zawsze w uszach brzmi ostatni okrzyk:
"Mamo"!

Kto nie był świadkiem strasznych dni, choć wzruszy się ogromnie,
Pomyśli: "żył, koszmarny sen, odejdzie i zapomni.
Lecz nie zapomni dzieci swych Janette, mistress Cripps, 
Frau Schmidt
Zostanie zawsze w sercach ich bolesny, krwawy zgrzyt.

A jedną panią spotkał cios, większy niż Janette, Cripps, Schmidt 
Bo jej chłopczyka zabrał los za słowo w metryce, że ...
Zyd -
Każdą z tych czterech kobiet spotkała tragedia wielka.
Tak samo cierpi Zydówka, jak Niemka, Francuzka, Angielka.

Gdyby te cztery panie nagle się razem spotkały,
Może by już narody więcej się nie zabijały.
I gdyby w Lidze Narodów zasiadły matki dzieci,
Może by się skończyła okrutna rzeź na tym świecie.

Bo Mère, Mother, Mutter po polsku znaczy "Mamy".
We wszystkich językach świata litera "M" jest ta sama.

Mère, Mother, Mutter in Polish means "Mama."
In every language round the world the letter "M" is the same.
And everywhere around the world a mother's heart is the same.
She always appears, comes running, when she hears a child cry, "Mama."

Madame Janette tosses and turns in bed for the fifth year in a row,
Suffers from nervous shock before she drifts off, because her son fell in battle.
Mistress Cripps strolls Hyde Park slowly and in dignified fashion,
Prayers flow from her colourless lips, because her son fell in battle.
Frau Schmidt generously showers strangers with financial gifts,
She'd like to help the children of others, because her son fell in battle.
And Mrs. ...no! I won't say who, sews and unsews fasteners, 
Her scissors cut ever quicker as her thoughts wander back in time...

To that day, when horrid fate insidiously and deceptively
Struck a cruel and staggering blow, because it took a child from its mother.
Whoever survived the terrible day, when the children were taken away,
Will for ever hear, sounding in her, that last frightful cry: "Mama."

He who was not a witness to those horrid days, though greatly moved he might be,
Will think, "What a terrible nightmare!" walk away, and forget.
But Janette, Mistress Cripps, and Frau Schmidt will not forget their children,
A painful, bloody scar will remain forever on their hearts.

And one certain lady, faced a calamity greater than Janette's, 
Cripps' or Schmidt's, 
Her son was taken by fate for one word - "Jew" - written in his birth certificate.
Every one of these four women experienced a great tragedy,
A Jewish woman, you see, suffers just like a German, French or English woman.

If suddenly these four ladies were to find themselves together,
Perhaps the nations of the world would no longer kill each other.
And if the mothers would take their place among the League of Nations,
Perhaps the cruel slaughter taking place in this world would finally see an end.

Because Mère, Mother, Mutter in Polish means "Mama."
In every language round the world the letter "M" is the same.
The third song of *Letter to Warsaw* is "Mother." The poem speaks of four mothers who have lost their children. The French woman lost her child in battle, as did the English woman and the German woman. But the Jewish woman lost her child, simply because 'Jew' was written on his birth certificate. The poem concludes by suggesting these mothers should take their place in the League of Nations, and then the cruel, senseless slaughter in the world would end. Because, "in every language around the world the letter 'M' is the same."

When reading this poem, one is reminded of an eyewitness account from survivor Adolf Berman:

> On that very day, the first victims were the Jewish children, and I shall never forget the harrowing scenes and the blood-curdling incidents when the SS men most cruelly attacked children--children roaming in the streets; took them by force to carts, and I remember, fully, those children were defending themselves. Even today the cries and shrieking of those children are clear in my mind. "Mama, Mama," this is what we heard. "Save us, mothers."  

Pasatieri begins in the major key of D, in a very easy *Andantino*, in 6/8 time. The four-measure introduction contains the same rhythmic motive found in the openings lines of "Jew." This rhythmic motive of four sixteenths is a feature which runs throughout the entire cycle, and was purposefully included in "Mother." The singer must execute these opening lines, after the four-measure introduction, in a very straightforward, conversational manner, with a *mezzo piano* dynamic. One is simply communicating the general facts known to be true of mothers around the world.

After one measure of transition to the tonal key center of a minor, the text of measure 19 becomes more concrete, speaking of a specific mother, Madame Janette. Pasatieri increases the use of sixteenth notes in the piano texture, which could be interpreted by the singer to indicate

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179 Gilbert, 317.

180 Pasatieri, e-mail to author, May 20, 2013.
the tossing and turning that has occurred every night for the last five years since Madame Janette lost her son in battle.

Continuing on with his compositional technique of text painting, Pasatieri moves forward to Mistress Cripps, with a *Meno mosso* tempo marking. As the text comments how Mistress Cripps strolls through the park in a most dignified way, Pasatieri simplifies the accompaniment, allowing strong, solid beats on one and four, truly creating a sense of a slow, proud, gait. The listener is introduced to Frau Schmidt who "generously showers strangers with financial gifts." Again, Pasatieri sets the text in the vocal line that seems to simulate the showering of money that might be thrown from the hands of Frau Schmidt, by using quickly ascending sixteenth note patterns. (Figure J)
For the first time since "Jew," the first song of the cycle, Pasatieri employs his signature compositional trait of shifting meter. Susanne Reid, in her interview with Pasatieri on October 6, 1999, asked about his use of meter changes throughout his cycle *Sieben Lehmannlieder*. Pasatieri replied, "It depends totally on the words...with the words and with the flow of the words."\(^{181}\) Throughout "Mother," Pasatieri sets the text through only four-meter changes, far fewer than in earlier song cycles, such as *Sieben Lehmannlieder*. Except for the first song in *Lehmannlieder*, all songs contain many meter changes, with song number four, "In Flammern starb dein Bild," containing 18 meter changes.\(^{182}\) Even though the shifting meters in "Mother" are far less than in earlier cycles and songs, the performer must be aware of the changes, and incorporate a sensitivity to the text when performing.

In "Mother," Pasatieri does change to 2/4 for a measure and a half of unsettling quintuplet sixteenth notes, before the singer hesitantly attempts to utter the name of the fourth mother. She quickly stops herself as the quintuplet sixteenth notes continue in the piano, and the vocal line moves to sixteenth notes, capturing the image of a mother fastidiously sewing and unsewing the same fasteners, again and again. (Figure K) The singer must be aware that the sixteenth note movement in the piano continues through to the vocal line. Pasatieri’s compositional device of moving sixteenth notes should translate, in the singer's delivery of the text, into an anxious quality, indicating that she is waiting for the child who will never return.


\(^{182}\) Ibid.
After 11 measures of 2/4 time, Pasatieri shifts to a 3/4 time signature, in which he sets the text that is the crux of the song. He uses long, soaring notes on the words "time," "day," and "fate," and continues his masterful text setting with descending triplets on the words "insidiously," "deceptively," "staggering," and "terrible." The piano texture becomes more involved, taking up the thick triplet motive, creating great tension through the climactic cries of "Mama, Mama." (Figure L)

The *fortississimo* interlude of six measures follows the climax, and includes tremolo chords in the left hand, with stately, simple octaves in the right. Four measures of *diminuendo,*
ending with a fermata tremolo chord, bring the music back to 6/8 time, with a dynamic of *mezzo piano*. As the singer enters, the text is set much like the beginning texts, syllabically, simply, and in a matter of fact manner, as she sings, "He who was not a witness to those horrid days, though greatly moved he might be, will think 'What a terrible nightmare!' walk away and forget." Those living during the atrocities of the Holocaust knew the experiences they endured, to the outsider, would be hard to believe. Another witness of the Holocaust echoes the words of Pola Braun when she writes, "You see, you don't understand...you who were not there will never understand."\(^{183}\)

The tension builds again as the tonal center shifts to e flat minor, the piano texture becomes thick with steady eighth notes in both hands, and the text speaks of the scars that will forever remain on the hearts of these four mothers. A sudden shift to the tonal center of a minor and the dynamic level of *mezzo forte* cue the listener to the truth that the loss of the Jewish mother is greater than the other losses. Pasatieri chooses to use rests on either side of 'Jew' to intensify the disbelief that the Jewish mother lost her child simply because of one word written on a birth certificate. (Figure M)

\(^{183}\) Kalisch, 72.
Another poignant line of poetry is, "A Jewish woman, you see, suffers just like a German, French or English woman." Pasatieri sets this line like recitative, over one long, sustained chord in the piano. This sparse setting, again, seeks to magnify the meaning of the words. (Figure N)

The piece continues, returning to the opening Andantino and recapping the exact first nine measures of the initial accompaniment, with the simple text of the vocal line set syllabically. The piece ends dramatically by restating the opening text with fortissimo levels in both the voice and piano, "Mere, Mother, Mutter in Polish means, 'Mama.' In every language round the world the letter 'M' is the same." The final note is a sustained, soaring high F sharp.

"Mother" is an emotionally demanding piece, of almost nine minutes. Although the notes themselves are not exceptionally taxing, the raw emotions of the text can be quite draining. Just
as a performance can be emotionally challenging, Pasatieri also found the writing to be difficult.

He writes:

> Before putting pen to paper, I had to immerse myself in the texts, living with them, reciting them out loud, and feeling the feelings of the author Pola Braun. I also had to feel the persecution of the Nazis and the hopeless struggle of the war and concentration camps and these terrible murders. Naturally, I felt very bad and dark during this phase. Once they were in my body and mind, I searched for the musical expression of these words. During this phase, there was less physical pain, since the music was already in the etheric, and I was bringing it down into our realm. While arranging the piece technically, as a composer, and orchestrating, I was not feeling pain, as I was concentrating on the proper musical aspects of the work. ¹⁸⁴

The singer must work to maintain the dramatic intensity throughout, without giving too much, too soon. Measures 53-83 must be the first emotional and dramatic climax of the piece. Quickly, though, the performer must be prepared for measures 129-136, as well as the final pages, measures 150 to the end. Consistent pacing is a must for "Mother."

¹⁸⁴ Pasatieri, e-mail to author, May 20, 2013.
4. Letter to Warsaw

Ledwo tylko w baraku się zamyśla,
Wpatrzona w okno przez mgłę upartych łez,
Wnet o Warszawie marzę i o Wiśle
I tak mi smutno, i nie wiem, co mi jest.

A właśnie wczoraj przy kubku czarnej kawy,
Czarnej, jak moja utrapiona myśl
Ktoś stanął przy mnie: „Daj list do Warszawy,
Pośpiesz się tylko, wyjeżdżam dziś”.

Ref. Warszawa, cóż ci napisać,
Warszawa w gruzach, Warszawa w krwi,
Rytm twoich ulic czy znów usłyszę?
Matczyno grodzie, smutno mi.

Warszawa moja ukochana,
Czy twoja piosenka --- to kuli świat?
Syreno dumma, wytrwaj w kajdanach,
Na sercu potłoż ten mój list!

Pragnę przypaść do gruzów twoich ulic,
Całować mury, do serca je przytułić...
Mój grodzie sentymentalny,
Miasto młodości i pierwszych drżeń.
Powrócić kiedyś na Plac Teatralny
W pierwszy słoneczny wolny dzień!

Pomyślcie samo, już kilka dni potem
List z Warszawy przywieziono do mnie,
List bez adresu i bez adresata
Pisany łzami pod grozą wrzasków wiatru
W płonących bombach, lontach i granatach,
A w liście było tylko kilka słów.

Ref. Warszawa czeka cię wierna,
uparta, mocna, jak miejski bruk.
Choć nęka walki jest bezmierna,
Choć nęka obcych butów stuk,
Warszawy zroszonej łzami
Nie zniweczy ogień ni wroga trud,
Ni obcy placat murów nie splami,
Bo pod placatem stary bruk.

Będziesz cęgieł ugniatać własnym potem,
Z tych cegieł miasto powstanie nowym lotem,
Więc nie bądź sentymentalny,
Spędź z czola smutek i gniewu cień!
Powrócz snówek na Plac Teatralny
W pierwszy słoneczny wolny dzień.

I barely get lost in thought in the barrack,
Gazing out of the window through a mist of stubborn tears.
Before I’m dreaming about Warsaw and the Vistula
And I’m so sad--I don’t know what’s wrong with me.

Just yesterday while drinking black coffee,
Black as my unbearable thoughts,
Someone came up to me: “Give me a letter to Warsaw,
But hurry, I’m leaving today.”

Warsaw, what shall I write you?
Warsaw in ruins, Warsaw covered in blood,
Will I ever again hear the rhythm of your streets?
My native town, how sad I feel.

Warsaw, my dearest,
Is your song now a bullet’s whistle?
Proud city, endure your chains,
Place my letter next to your heart!

I yearn to fall upon the ruins of your streets,
Kiss your walls and embrace them warmly,
My loving home-town,
City of my youth and first tremblings.
Oh, to return someday to Theatre Square
On the first sunny day of freedom!

Imagine--just several days later,
A letter from Warsaw was delivered to me,
A letter without address or addressee.
Written with tears under threat of enemy guns
Amid blazing fuses, grenades and bombs.
And in the letter were just a few words.

Faithful Warsaw awaits your return,
Stubborn and strong as its own cobblestones.
Though the misery of battle is immense,
Though the march of strangers’ shoes torments,
Neither fire nor the enemy’s labours,
Will destroy Warsaw obscured by tears,
Nor will a foreign placard stain these walls,
For beneath any placard are the same old stones.

You will mould bricks from the sweat of your own labour,
From these bricks the city will rise and take flight.
So don’t give in to nostalgia--
Drive sadness and anger’s shadow from your brow!
You will again return to Theatre Square
On the first sunny day of freedom.
"Letter to Warsaw" is the fourth song in the song cycle *Letter to Warsaw*. Like "Mother," Pola Braun also wrote this text during her incarceration at Majdanek Concentration Camp. As mentioned earlier, Braun considered the poet Władysław Szlengel to be her mentor. Szlengel wrote a poem, also entitled "Letter to Warsaw," when he found himself stranded away from home, soon after the start of the war. Braun's poem is a parody of, or quite possibly a response, to Szlengel's poem.\(^{185}\) Braun writes about her longing for her native town of Warsaw. She is asked to write a letter to Warsaw, to send with one leaving that very day. Braun labors about what to write, "Warsaw in ruins, Warsaw covered in blood?" She laments about the ills that have befallen her "loving hometown," but writes with certainty that faithful Warsaw will remain when she "will again return to Theatre Square."

Pasatieri begins with a *Lento* marking in 4/4. The voice enters after seven beats of introduction at a *piano* dynamic. The vocal line is declamatory, which reminds one, more than any other song in this cycle, that Thomas Pasatieri is primarily known as an opera composer. The writer asked Pasatieri about this observation, and he replied, "As with every composition, whether vocal or instrumental, I am what I am, and can not do it any other way. I am reminded of the saying that the *Requiem* is Verdi's greatest opera."\(^{186}\) The first 19 measures are like the recitative often found in Romantic opera, followed by the arioso at measure 20. The composer continues his use of rhythmic and melodic motives, especially highlighting the descending interval of a third, perhaps portraying weeping and deep sorrow. The singer should take great care to fully sing through the second sixteenth note in each grouping, rather than cut it short, in order to lend a feeling of weeping to the vocal line. (Figure O)

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\(^{185}\) Werb, spoken introduction.

\(^{186}\) Pasatieri, e-mail to author May 20, 2013.
Measure 18 introduces a new motive of descending triplet sixteenth notes in the piano, just before the voice bursts through in a *mezzo forte* dynamic, "Warsaw, what shall I write you?" The protagonist continues the struggle with her thoughts, until finally soaring to a high *forte A* at measure 36, followed again by the descending triplet sixteenth notes in the piano that signal sadness and despair. (Figure P)

The shift to 2/4 and a *Più mosso* marking carries the protagonist through her yearnings to return to her beloved Warsaw. Worth noting in measures 48 and 49 is the return of the motive first heard in "Jew," the first song in the cycle *Letter to Warsaw*. (Figure Q)
In "Jew," the motive is playful and whimsical, evoking the image of a small child at play. In this song, the motive occurs again, just as the protagonist is recalling her "loving hometown, city of my youth," Pasatieri continues to use these motives to unify the cycle and to provide a sense of unity to the listener.

The time signature changes to 3/4 as the woman muses on one day returning to Warsaw. The accompaniment is an almost cheery waltz, as the woman dreams of returning to Theatre Square. Her musings shift as her thoughts darken, and Pasatieri sets her words in the style of an operatic aside, as the accompaniment becomes sparse, and the vocal line, once again, becomes very recitative-like.

Suddenly we are in a 4/4 meter, and one can hear the soldiers marching through Warsaw in the short, crisp accompaniments of the left hand. Pasatieri makes the impact of these words quite strong by doubling the vocal line in the piano. Doubling is a compositional trait used often in Pasatieri's early songs, but is the first instance in which the trait is found in the cycle Letter to Warsaw (Figure R). Reflecting on his trait of doubling the vocal line in the piano, Pasatieri recalls this moment:
In 1999, I attended a recital in which the *Sieben Lehmannlieder* was performed. The soprano was speaking to the audience about each group before she sang them. In her talk about the *Lehmannlieder*, she mentioned that the vocal line was doubled in the piano for almost the entire cycle. I had not been aware of this, even though I had written over a hundred songs by then. This thought stayed with me, and I looked over many of my songs and saw this tendency. I was not happy with that, and everything that I wrote after that avoids doubling the vocal line, whenever possible.\(^{187}\)

As the emotions of the protagonist subdue, so does the music, with a return to the opening *Lento* and *mezzo piano* dynamic. The woman is resolved, even through her sadness, again depicted by the descending thirds in the vocal line, that she will return to Theatre Square, "on the first sunny day of freedom." The five-measure postlude continues the weeping motive first found in the vocal line. (Figure S)

\(^{187}\) Ibid, February 1, 2013.
Although the entire cycle is direct and tonal, *Letter to Warsaw* does bring musical challenges to the singer. Because of the free use of modulation and extended harmonies, it can be difficult to hear the direction of the melody. Another challenge arises in keeping the declamatory sections energized enough to maintain audience engagement. One must work to articulate well during the recitative sections, to communicate clearly the text, as well as the emotion.
5. An Ordinary Day - Moving Day - Kaddish

An Ordinary Day

This is how my day began:
A headache in the morning,
Then those sundry rumours
And an ever-changing mood.
Then strange apprehension
Mixed with serious panic,
Then dull resignation:
Why even bother? Who's it for?
Better, more talented souls have died,
And the world likewise didn't care.
It's really not a big deal,
If one more person isn't spared.
Even so, I don't want to die,
In fact, I really want to live.
It's just so dreadful knowing,
That there is no place to hide.
That you'll neatly stand in rows of five
During roll-call every day,
And you'll simply go this way
To a known and certain end.
Yet something taps at the bottom of your heart,
Something still makes it stir,
Does not want to let you consider
Thoughts of a sudden death.
Something inside still gives you hope,
And your thoughts wander in circles:
Perhaps not all is lost?
Perhaps, after all, they won't have time?

Zaczęło się od tego,
że rano miałem ból głowy,
A potem różne plotki
I nastrój ciągle nowy.
A potem lęk jakiś dziwny
zmieszany z wielką trwogą
I tępą rezygnacją:
Właściwie po co? dla kogo?
Zginęli lepsi, zdolniejsi,
O których świat także nie dbał.
Nie będzie dziury w niebie,
Gdy zginie jeszcze jedna.
A mimo to nie chcę umierać,
Przeciwnie, bardzo chcę żyć.
Straszna jest ta świadomość,
że nie ma gdzie się skryć.
że stanie się równo piątkami
Na zwykłym, codziennym apelu
I pójdziesz tak po prostu
Do wiadomego celu.
Lecz na dnie serca coś puka,
Coś na dnie serca się wierci,
Nie chce dopuścić do mózgu
Myśli o nagłej śmierci.
Coś wewnętrz dodaje ducha,
A myśli jak błędne krajzą:
Może nie wszystko stracone?
Może jednak nie zdażą?

Zaczęło się od tego,
że rano miałem ból głowy,
A potem różne plotki
I nastrój ciągle nowy.
A potem lęk jakiś dziwny
zmieszany z wielką trwogą
I tępą rezygnacją:
Właściwie po co? dla kogo?
Zginęli lepsi, zdolniejsi,
O których świat także nie dbał.
Nie będzie dziury w niebie,
Gdy zginie jeszcze jedna.
A mimo to nie chcę umierać,
Przeciwnie, bardzo chcę żyć.
Straszna jest ta świadomość,
że nie ma gdzie się skryć.
że stanie się równo piątkami
Na zwykłym, codziennym apelu
I pójdziesz tak po prostu
Do wiadomego celu.
Lecz na dnie serca coś puka,
Coś na dnie serca się wierci,
Nie chce dopuścić do mózgu
Myśli o nagłej śmierci.
Coś wewnętrz dodaje ducha,
A myśli jak błędne krajżą:
Może nie wszystko stracone?
Może jednak nie zdażą?
Moving Day

We moved
Without furniture, packages, knick-knacks.
No one brought us bread and salt,
No one brought us flowers.
But who really cares about any of this?
We've moved during this war
From Bielsko to Lwow, then Lodz;
We're used to it by now--
Ever since the war broke out--
Used to this endless migration,
The constant variation.
Even so, though it might be senseless,
May even be childish,
This mind does not want to adapt
To things new, strange and cold.
Small wonder, then, that a person
Walks around gloomy and cross,
All the more so since she's ill at ease,
And there's a drizzling rain outside.
And all the more so now
That we live so close to the highway
To which our fate
Has been inseparably joined.
And blind fate holds us tightly
As if in a spider's web
And one would only like to ask:
When must we move again?
Answer us fate,
And this time be true,
Where will you lead us:
To freedom, or to the gas?

Kaddish

May God's name be exalted and hallowed throughout the world that He created, as is God's wish.
May God's sovereignty soon be accepted, during our life and the life of all Israel.
And let us say: Amen.

May God's great name be praised throughout all time.
Glorified and celebrated, lauded and worshipped, exalted and honoured, exulted and acclaimed
May the Holy One be, praised beyond all song and psalm, beyond all tributes that mortals can utter.
And let us say: Amen.

Let there be abundant peace from heaven, with life's goodness for us and for all Israel.
And let us say: Amen.

My the One who brings peace to His universe bring peace to us and to all Israel. And let us say: Amen.
The final two unpublished poems of Pola Braun, which were given to Pasatieri to set, are included together in the fifth, and final, song of the cycle. Pola Braun writes of the ever-changing emotions on any given "ordinary" day in the Majdanek Concentration Camp. Is today the day I die? Will it matter? She concludes that she does not want to die, even knowing "that there is no place to hide," and asks, "perhaps, after all, they won't have time?"

Jewish families moved often during the war. Nazis positioned Jews into areas of the city to eventually form ghettos, and Jewish families knew not when their next move would come. Families would be forced to move, often taking nothing, or taking only what could be carried in their arms. Even after moving from the ghetto to the camps, prisoners were still forced to move from place to place, never knowing their final destinations and what those destinations held. Holocaust survivor Marek Sznajderman, gives this account:

I was in the labor camp for over eight months. On the thirtieth of April, 1943, along with the entire camp, I was transported to the concentration camp in Majdanek and, subsequently, in the middle of July 1943, to the concentration camp Auschwitz-Birkenau. I remained there until October 1944, that is, for over fifteen months. From there, toward the end of October 1944, I was transported to Sachsenhausen, from there to the camp in Ohdruf, and next, in January 1945, back to Sachsenhausen, and in February, to the camp in Nossen, Saxony.\(^\text{188}\)

Pola Braun writes of the "endless migration" in her "Moving Day" poem, and asks, "when must we move again...where will you lead us?" The question is answered by asking yet another question, "To freedom, or to the gas?"

The final portion of text of this fifth song comes from the traditional liturgy of the Jewish prayer service, Kaddish. Shira Schoenberg, in her article "Mourner's Kaddish," writes, "The Kaddish is a prayer that praises God and expresses a yearning for the establishment of God's kingdom on earth. The emotional reactions inspired by the Kaddish come from the
circumstances in which it is said: it is recited at funerals and by mourners.\textsuperscript{189} Despite the great loss, those of the Jewish faith will still praise God and accept Divine righteousness and judgment.\textsuperscript{190} When asked about the addition of the Kaddish to Pola Braun's poetry, Pasatieri replied, "I added the Kaddish because I felt that I, and the performers, needed to memorialize a tribute to those who were murdered, and pray for their peace."\textsuperscript{191}

The four-measure introduction begins with an \textit{Adagio} marking and a \textit{piano} dynamic. The voice enters in a quiet and deceptively simple manner. But then, in measure seven, an \textit{accel. e cresc.} is marked, and the vocal line moves quickly forward at a \textit{forte} dynamic, while triplets and agitated tremolos in the piano add to the angst. A fermata of silence then leads the listener back to \textit{a tempo}, where the protagonist asks, "Why even bother? Who's it for?" As in the previous song, Pasatieri sets the words as \textit{secco} recitative, as well as \textit{accompagnato} recitative. As the woman tries to reason with herself, the tempo again shifts to \textit{poco accel. Più mosso}. Pasatieri uses the tempo changes to underline the text. The woman is constantly changing her thoughts, every moment of the day, wondering if she will die today, or perhaps tomorrow? As she realizes "that there is no place to hide," the tempo changes from \textit{Adagio} to \textit{Alla marcia}. The woman speaks of standing at roll call outside of the barracks, as the accompaniment marches along with a quarter note, dotted eighth, sixteenth note motive. (Figure T)

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\item \textsuperscript{190} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{191} Pasatieri, e-mail to author, May 20, 2013.
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A Majdanek survivor describes roll call, "We all had to stand at attention, in fives, according to the barracks, of which there were 22 in each section. We stood there until the SS men had satisfied their game-playing instincts by 'humorous' orders to take off and put on caps. Then they received their report, and counted us. After the headcount - work."\(^{192}\)

As she speaks of hope, a *Più mosso* interlude (Figure U) quotes the opening vocal line of the entire cycle (Figure V), a motive which was hinted at in measures 15 and 16 of this fifth song. Pasatieri uses the compositional device of returning to the opening music of the cycle to unify *Letter to Warsaw*, as did Beethoven in *An die Ferne Geliebte*, and Schumann in his cycle, *Frauenliebe und Leben.*

\(^{192}\) Yehuda Bauer, 211.
As this poem comes to a close, it is worth noting that Pasatieri uses the same interval in the voice line that he used in the introduction of "Ordinary Day." As the text comments that,
"thoughts wander in circles," Pasatieri brings this section full circle by finishing with the 9th leaps (Figure W) with which he began the song (Figure X).

An *Andante maestoso* interlude of 11 measures introduces the text of "Moving Day."

The *fortissimo* interlude again quotes the motives of "Jew." The voice enters at a *piano* dynamic, and the piano provides solid support with predominately chordal accompaniment. The recitative style returns on the words "ever since the war broke out," and the desolation returns as well. As the protagonist sings of the difficulty of adapting to new things, the piano ceases at the phrase, "and there's a drizzling rain outside," leaving the voice to stand alone.
The meter changes to 3/4, and Pasatieri sets the highest note of the cycle on the word "blind," a high B flat. (Figure Y)

![Figure Y]

The rise of emotion quiets, then swells again, as the woman asks for an answer to "when must we move again?" In this phrase, *accelerando* is marked as the woman demands an answer. The accompaniment is sparse and the phrase ends with an *a tempo* marking and *piano* dynamic. Following a fermata rest, the singer enters after a four-measure introduction in a 6/8 meter, with the text of the *Kaddish*, at a *Lento triste* tempo. The text is set with large leaps, and beautiful, soaring, legato lines, that seem to indicate hope. The vocal line is accompanied throughout, giving the singer plenty of support. Then the cycle ends with a mournful eight-measure postlude, which fades away to nothing, just as all life, eventually, must.

The sheer length of this song may present a challenge to the singer. The final song's duration is about 14 minutes. The first four songs equal nearly 29 minutes. Adequate vocal endurance training will be necessary to practice in preparation for performance. Because the final song is actually composed of three separate texts, three separate moods are demanded of the singer. Pasatieri does give a 10-measure interlude between "An Ordinary Day" and "Moving
Day," as well as a four-measure interlude between "Moving Day" and "Kaddish." The interludes certainly do provide the opportunity for a change of emotions, and one must take advantage of those transitions to avoid maintaining the same emotion throughout this scena.

In addition to the length of this section, and the varying emotions required, the many instances of unaccompanied recitative may also present a special challenge for the singer. Confidence is the key to presenting lines which occur at dramatically poignant places. The drama, itself, is intensely important. One must plan, in advance, to present the words of Pola Braun so they will not quickly be forgotten. As with every song, the singer must express the depth and power of this text, using all her dramatic and musical resources.

Although the first four songs in Letter to Warsaw have a moderate tessitura, a metamorphosis does occur throughout the final song, climaxing with the highest tessitura of the cycle in "Kaddish." The performer must take note of the higher range, which occurs at the very end of the cycle, and adequately pace herself for a strong conclusion to this cycle.

Additional Performance Notes

When performing the voice and piano version of Letter to Warsaw, the singer and pianist must purposefully avoid increasing the tempo. The singer must avoid a rushing tempo, which might be tempting because of the sparse texture in the piano. The increased tempo, while it might create a sense of ease for the singer, will engender a sense of unease in the audience, and the serious nature of the texts will be lost.

Letter to Warsaw has been performed with a variety of concepts throughout the years. In a performance in Norfolk, Virginia, Letter to Warsaw was actually staged, using a costumed
soloist and an effective set. Dancers were utilized, and actual film from the Holocaust was included. Pasatieri expounds, "This was a shattering experience, and I approve of such an approach." An ever-increasing popular method of performance is to employ multi-media projection. During a recent 2012 performance in Chicago, Pasatieri had an inspiration for a future performance. "I thought that it would be wonderful to start the piece with a projection of a swastika behind the orchestra, which would dissolve during the Kaddish into a bright, gold Star of David, signifying the eventual triumph of the Jews."  

193 Pasatieri, e-mail to author, June 1, 2013.  
194 Pasatieri. e-mail to author, May 20, 2013.
CHAPTER SIX

Conclusion

Ludmilla Leibman stated, "The Holocaust is so singular, so catastrophic, so unimaginable an event that the process of annihilating six million Jews cannot be visualized unless it is somehow personalized." Thomas Pasatieri, by setting the texts of Holocaust victim Pola Braun, does just that, by painting a vivid picture of one woman's struggle to survive the atrocities of the Holocaust. *Letter to Warsaw* opens a door "to the emotional life of all women caught inextricably in the web of the Holocaust tragedy." Pasatieri personalizes Pola Braun's story, and reminds us that each of the victims of the Holocaust was an individual, with a life, a story, and aspirations beyond survival.

This document shows support for the self-described evolution of Pasatieri's compositional style, by demonstrating that his song writing style has, indeed, become more simple. The vocal line is still quite demanding, requiring a wide vocal range, but the overall compositional style utilizes less complex devices. While Pasatieri does continue to demonstrate some of his characteristic, distinctive compositional traits in *Letter to Warsaw*, the techniques of repetition of text, free use of meter changes, melismatic writing for the voice, and doubling of the melody in the piano, are noticeably absent. In addition, the piano accompaniment in *Letter to Warsaw* is not as thick and complex as those found in his earlier compositions.

Though written in the twenty-first century, *Letter to Warsaw* is a song cycle that represents an expansion of the Romantic tradition, which is indicative of Pasatieri's style. He draws from a rich, harmonic vocabulary that operates within a definitely tonal framework. The

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196 Miller.

197 Ibid.
vocal writing is extremely skillful, and the best characteristics of the soprano voice are exploited. Because Pasatieri knows how to effectively set the English language, the vocal lines follow the natural inflections of speech, making them quite easy to sing, understand, and believe. *Letter to Warsaw* represents a significant contribution to the vocal literature of the twenty-first century. This document is intended to aide in the performance of *Letter to Warsaw*, and emphasize its role as a tribute to the human spirit. If Pola Braun were alive today, these words of Thomas Pasatieri may well have resonated within her soul:

An emotional experience and problems give profundity to the expression one has...An artist has higher highs and lower lows than anyone else. That's the basis of song, so man can express something so joyous or so sad that words alone cannot express. It's a higher level of expression. We can be touched by words and by music, but the two together can be so elevated.\(^{198}\)

\(^{198}\) Jacobson, 49.
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Werb, Bret. E-mail to author, February 4, 2013.


**Recordings**


Scores


Koplow, Philip. We Are Here! Available from the composer, 2009-2010.


APPENDIX A

Chronological List of the Operas of Thomas Pasatieri

*The Trysting Place* (1964)
Opera in one act; libretto by the composer, based on a play by Booth Tarkington.
Unpublished

*Flowers of Ice* (1964)
Opera in one act; libretto by Ronald Rogers.
Unpublished

*The Women* (1965)
Opera in one act; libretto by the composer, based on an original story.
Publisher - New York: Theodore Presser, 1967

*La Divina* (1965)
Opera buffa in one act; libretto by the composer.
Publisher - New York: Theodore Presser, 1967

*Padrevia* (1966)
Opera in one act; libretto by the composer based on a story from the *Decameron of Giovanni Boccaccio*.
Publisher - New York: Theodore Presser, 1967

*Calvary* (1967)
Chamber opera in one act; libretto by the composer, based on the play by William Butler Yeats
Premiere: April 7, 1971, St. Thomas Episcopal Church, Seattle.
Publisher - New York: Belwin-Mills, 1971

*The Penitentes* (1967)
Opera in three acts; libretto by Anne H. Bailey.
Premiere: August 3, 1974, Aspen, CO.
Publisher - New York: Belwin-Mills, 1975

*Black Widow* (1969)
Opera in three acts with epilogue; libretto by the composer after M. De Unamuno, *Dos Madres*.
Premiere: March 2, 1972, Seattle.
Publisher - New York: Belwin-Mills, 1972

*The Trial of Mary Lincoln* (1970)
Television opera in one act; libretto by Anne H. Bailey.
Premiere: February 14, 1972, network television.
Publisher - New York: Belwin-Mills, 1971

*The Seagull* (1972, rev. 2002)
Opera in three acts; libretto by Kenward Elmsie, after Anton Chekhov.
Premiere: March 5, 1974, Houston.
Publisher - New York: Belwin Mills, 1974

*Signor Deluso* (1973)
Opera buffa in one act; libretto by the composer after Molière's *Sganarelle*.
Premiere: July 27, 1974, Vienna, VA.
Publisher - New York: Belwin-Mills, 1974

*Ines de Castro* (1975)
Opera in three acts; libretto by Bernard Stambler.
Premiere: April 1, 1976, Baltimore.
Publisher - New York: Belwin-Mills, 1976

*Washington Square* (1975)
Opera in three acts; libretto by Kenward Elmsie, after Henry James.
Premiere: October 1, 1976, Detroit.
Publisher - New York: Belwin-Mills, 1977

*Three Sisters* (1979)
Opera in two acts; libretto by Kenward Elmsie, after Anton Chekhov.
Premiere: March 13, 1986, Columbus, OH
Publisher - New York: Theodore Presser, 1979

*Before Breakfast* (1980)
Monodrama for soprano; libretto by Frank Corsaro, after Eugene O'Neill.
Premiere: October 9, 1980, New York City Opera
Publisher - New York: Belwin-Mills, 1981

Children's opera in one act; libretto by the composer, based on a story by J.L. Grimm and W.C. Grimm.
Premiere: February 15, 1981, Fort Worth, Texas.
Publisher - New York: G. Schirmer, 1982

*Maria Elena* (1982)
Opera in one act; libretto by the composer based on a true story.
Publisher - New York: Theodore Presser, 1982

*Frau Margot* (2005)
Opera in three acts; libretto by Frank Corsaro, based on his original play *Lyric Suite*. 
Premiere: June 2, 2007, Fort Worth, TX  
Publisher - New York: Theodore Presser

_The Hotel Casablanca_ (2007)  
Opera in two acts; original libretto by the composer based on George Feydeau's play, _A Flea in Her Ear_.  
Premiere: August 3, 2007, San Francisco  
Publisher - New York: Theodore Presser

_The Heir Apparent_ (2008)  
Librettist, Frank Corsaro  
Premiere: 2008, Seagle Music Colony Workshop, Fort Worth Opera  
Unpublished

_The Family Room_ (2009)  
Opera in one act; libretto by Daphne Malfitano  
Premiere: July, 2011, Berlind Theatre of the McCarter Theatre Complex, Princeton, NJ  
Publisher - New York: Theodore Presser

_God Bless Us Everyone_ (2010)  
An opera for Christmas; libretto by Bill van Horn and Michael Capasso  
Premiere: December, 2010, DiCapo Opera Theatre, New York City  
Unpublished

_Marianne_ (2012)  
Monodrama; libretto by Daphne Malfitano  
Premiered together with _Percy as The Martyrs_, 2012, DiCapo Opera Theatre, New York  
Soon to be published with Presser under the title _The Martyrs_

_Percy_ (2012)  
Monodrama; libretto by Daphne Malfitano  
Premiered together with _Marianne as The Martyrs_, 2012, DiCapo Opera Theatre, New York  
Soon to be published with Presser under the title _The Martyrs_
APPENDIX B

A Listing of the Songs, Cycles, and Other Vocal Works of Thomas Pasatieri

From 1956 until 1967, Pasatieri composed 103 songs, of which none are published.\textsuperscript{199} They include:

- Oh, Captain (Whitman)
- Five Songs of Edward DePasquale
- Du Matin, seven songs in French (Prévert)
- 16 Elizabethan Songs
- Four Songs for Mezzo and String Quartet
- Four Bible Songs
- Fragments from Sappho, three songs
- Midsummer Nights (Sara Teasdale), nine songs for soprano and instruments
- The Race of Man, (Edna Millay), six songs
- Seven Songs of Cavafy
- Sehnsucht, five German songs
- Four Tennyson Songs
- Seven Songs from When Lilacs Last in the Door-yard Bloom'd (Whitman)
- 25 individual songs to various poets

From 1968 until 2013, Pasatieri composed 122 songs, including six duets not listed below, most of which are published.\textsuperscript{200}

- Far From Love (Dickinson) (1976), six poems for soprano, clarinet, violin, cello, and piano
- Day of Love (Kirstin van Cleave) (1983), five poems, commissioned by Frederica von Stade
- Un sogno, in Italian, unpublished

Selected Songs (1971)

- Three American Songs (Louis Phillips)
  - Boundaries
  - Haiku (commissioned by Evelyn Mandac)
  - Critic's Privilege
- Two Shakespeare Songs
  - Parting
  - That Time of Year (commissioned by Jennie Tourel)
- Three Coloratura Songs

\textsuperscript{199} Pasatieri, e-mail to author, January 28, 2013.

\textsuperscript{200} Ibid.
Miranda-Miranda (Louis Phillips)
Lear And His Daughters (Louis Phillips)
Love's Emblem (John Fletcher), commissioned by Sheri Greenawald

*Heloise and Abelard* (Louis Phillips) (1973), for soprano and baritone, commissioned by Evelyn Lear and Thomas Stewart

*Rites de Passage* (Louis Phillips) (1974), voice, chamber orchestra or string quartet, commissioned by Elaine Bonazzi

*Three Poems of John Agee* (1974), commissioned by Shirley Verrett
  - How Many Little Children Sleep
  - A Lullaby
  - Sonnet

*Songs, Volume 1* (1977)
  - These are the Days (Dickinson)
  - Reflection (Dickinson)
  - Instead of Words (Gerald Walker)
  - Vocal Modesty (Gerald Walker)
  - Winter's Child (Martin Dulman)
  - The Kiss (Martin Dulman)
  - Lullaby for a Lost Child (Josephine Schillig)
  - Agnes (Paul Enos, age 9), commissioned by Marc Howard
  - Dirge for Two Veterans (Whitman)
  - Discovery (Anne Howard Bailey)
  - The Harp That Once Through Tara's Halls (Thomas Moore)
  - Ophelia's Lament (Shakespeare), commissioned by Joan Patenaude

*Songs, Volume 2* (1980)
  - Beautiful the Days (Kit van Cleave)
  - To Music Bent is My Retired Mind (Thomas Campion)
  - There Came a Day (Dickinson)
  - As in a Theatre (Shakespeare)
  - The Verandahs (Kenward Elmslie)
  - Overweight, Overwrought, Over You (Sheila Nadler)
  - *Three Poems by Kirstin van Cleave*, commissioned by Sheila Nadler
    - A Night of Love
    - You Know
    - Give Me Then Your Hand

*Three Married Songs*, for voice and cello, commissioned by Elaine Bonazzi
  - Break of Day (John Donne)
  - The First Fight; Out of Sight, Out of Mind (Barnabe Googe)
  - Dear, If You Change (Anonymous)
Canciones de barrio (based on poetic texts Canciones del Barrio by José Montoya) (1983), six Spanish songs for mezzo, piano, and string quartet

Three Sonnets from the Portuguese (Elizabeth Barrett Browning) (1984)
Go From Me
I See Thine Image Through My Tears Tonight
I Thank All Who Have Loved Me, In Their Hearts

Sieben Lehmannlieder (Lotte Lehmann) (1988), in German
Ich bin allein auf Bergesgipfeln
Wie lieb' ich diese klare Stunde
So hört' ich wieder deiner Stimme
In Flammen starb dein Bild
Wie schön ist dieser tiefe Schlummer
Narzissus
Die Welt scheint ganz aus Glut gesponnen

Windsongs (1989)
Three Poems of Theodore Ramsay
Love
Remembering
On Parting
Vocalise
Three California Songs (Robert H. Deutsch)
Brother
Song
The Middle-Aged Shepherd
Windsong (Richard Nickson, from Staves: A Book of Songs), for soprano, viola, and piano
Antiphon
All Music, All Delight
Farewell

Alleluia (1991), for voice and piano, or voice and harp, or voice and orchestra

Three Poems of Oscar Wilde (1998), commissioned by Thomas Hampson
Helas
The Harlot's House
Requiescat
A Rustling of Angels (2003)
    How Sweet the Answer (Thomas Moore)
    I Saw (Anonymous)
    What Would I Give (Christina Rossetti)
    Gather Ye Rosebuds (Robert Herrick)
    At the Moated Grange (Shakespeare)
    Love's Philosophy (Shelley)
    Green Grow the Rushes (Robert Burns)
    Art (Herman Melville)
    The Revelation (Coventry Patmore)
    Echo (Christina Rossetti)
    The Old Stoic (Emily Brontë)
    Beneath the Cypress Shade (Thomas Love Peacock)

Letter to Warsaw (Pola Braun) (2003), commissioned for Jane Eaglen
    Jew
    Tsurik a Heym
    Mother
    Letter to Warsaw
    An Ordinary Day - Moving Day - Kaddish

Song Album (2006)
    The Last Invocation (Whitman)
    Orpheus (Shakespeare)
    Dream Land (Christina Rossetti)
    Three Poems of James Agee
        How Many Little Children Sleep
        A Lullaby
        Sonnet
    Ophelia's Lament (Shakespeare)
    I Just Love My Voice (Gerald Walker)
    Overweight, Overwrought, Over You (Sheila Nadler)
    Divas Of A Certain Age (Pasatieri), a duet

The Daughter of Capulet (adapted from Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet) (2007), monodrama

Lady Macbeth (adapted from Shakespeare's Macbeth) (2007), monodrama

Bel Canto Songs (William Blake) (2010), six songs in English
    The Garden of Love
    Laughing Song
    To the Evening Star
    To the Muses
    The Lamb
    Hear the Voice
The Bride of the Moor (adapted from Sir Walter Scott's novel The Bride of Lammermoor) (2011), voice, cello, piano

I Hear America Singing (2012), for voice and piano, available in The Opera America Songbook, Scott Wollschleger

Some of Pasatieri's songs, including Alleluia, two of the Lehmannlieder, The Little Stone, Vocal Modesty, Instead of Words, As in a Theatre, The Harp, and Overweight, Overwrought, Over You, have been rewritten by the composer, so two printed versions exist.\textsuperscript{201}

\textsuperscript{201} Ibid.