University of Cincinnati

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I, Michael P Lanci, hereby submit this original work as part of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts in Composition.

It is entitled:  
Songs for Joe Hill

Student's name:  
Michael P Lanci

This work and its defense approved by:

Committee chair: Michael Fiday, Ph.D.

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Songs for Joe Hill

A dissertation 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 Division of Composition, Musicology, and Theory
of the College-Conservatory of Music

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By

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Master of Music, State University of New York at Fredonia, 2012
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Committee Chair: Dr. Michael Fiday
Abstract

*Songs for Joe Hill* is a collection of five protest songs based on the texts of late 19th century authors and poets who addressed issues of labor, social, and political rights within their work. This composition is dedicated to the Swedish immigrant, singer-song writer, and labor rights activist Joe Hill (1879-1915), who was a member of the *Industrial Workers Union of the World*, which is still one of the largest union organizations in the world and can be accredited for helping fight for many of the labor rights we enjoy today. Although Joe Hill was an important influence in helping further the cause of the growing American labor movements of the early 20th century, it was not until the highly controversial trial that led to Joe Hill’s execution for the murder of John G. Morris and his son outside their Salt Lake City grocery store in 1914, that his beliefs were brought to the public’s attention. Speculation surrounding the evidence presented by the prosecution, and rumors of collusion between eyewitnesses and local mining companies that were strongly anti-union, led to the involvement of President Woodrow Wilson, the Swedish ambassador, and author Helen Keller in an unsuccessful bid for clemency. This helped further generate international media attention, turning Joe Hill into one of the more significant martyrs of the labor rights movement.

*Songs for Joe Hill* is both a work in memory of Joe Hill’s activism and beliefs as well as a response to the growing rate of income inequality which can be directly tied to the dismantling of our labor, social, and political rights over the past thirty to forty years. The texts used in this song cycle are all over a century old and were chosen in an effort to help remind us of how history has a way of repeating itself. The rights Joe Hill and his contemporaries were fighting for are still at risk and must be vehemently defended to help ensure a decent quality of life and promote a fair and just environment for democracy to thrive. The text of each song addresses certain aspects tied to inequality, such as poor working conditions, unfair legislation and taxation, dishonest politicians and policy, the right to organize, and the mental and physical suffering that result from these injustices. I hope that these songs will help remind us that threats to labor, social, and political rights affect us all and can serve as a common or bipartisan grounds around which we as a people can unite and protect by exercising our right to vote.
Copyright

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Table of Contents

I. A Machine I Become ........................................................................................................1
   Text by Morris Rosenfeld, The Sweatshop (1898)

II. Don’t Tax the Millionaire .............................................................................................23
   Text by anonymous author, (1894)

III. Will You Listen? ........................................................................................................43
   Text by Gamaliel, Dedicated to Old Party Voters (1896)

IV. Stolen Crown ................................................................................................................59
   Text by F. Scrimshaw, Vote Him Out (1893)

V. Sounds the Fluttering of Wings .....................................................................................74
   Text by Adelaide Proctor, Cradle Song for the Poor (ca.1887)
Michael Lanci

*Songs for Joe Hill*

For Soprano, Flute, Clarinet, Violin, Cello, Percussion, Piano

Duration: ca. 23'
**Instrumentation:** Soprano, Flute, Clarinet, Violin, Cello, Percussion, Piano

**Movements:**

I. *A Machine I Become*
II. *Don’t Tax the Millionaire*
III. *Will You Listen?*
IV. *Stolen Crown*
V. *Sounds the Fluttering of Wings*

**Program note:**

*Songs for Joe Hill* is a collection of five protest songs based on the texts of late 19th century authors and poets who addressed issues of labor, social, and political rights within their work. This composition is dedicated to the Swedish immigrant, singer-song writer, and labor rights activist Joe Hill (1879-1915), who was a member of the *Industrial Workers Union of the World*, which is still one of the largest union organizations in the world and can be accredited for helping fight for many of the labor rights we enjoy today. Although Joe Hill was an important influence in helping further the cause of the growing American labor movements of the early 20th century, it was not until the highly controversial trial that led to Joe Hill’s execution for the murder of John G. Morris and his son outside their Salt Lake City grocery store in 1914, that his beliefs were brought to the public’s attention. Speculation surrounding the evidence presented by the prosecution, and rumors of collusion between eyewitnesses and local mining companies that were strongly anti-union, led to the involvement of President Woodrow Wilson, the Swedish ambassador, and author Helen Keller in an unsuccessful bid for clemency. This helped further generate international media attention, turning Joe Hill into one of the more significant martyrs of the labor rights movement.

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I. *A Machine I Become*
Author: Morris Rosenfeld, *The Sweatshop* (1898)

The Machines in the shop, so wildly they roar
That oft I forget in their roar that I am-
In the terrible tumult I’m buried,
The me is all gone, a machine I become.
I work, work, work on unceasing;

No room for feeling, for thought or reason,
All bitter and bloody the work kills the noblest,
The best, the most beautiful, the richest, the deepest.
The highest in life is crushed to the earth
On fly the seconds, the minutes, the hours,
The nights like the days flee swiftly as sails;
I drive the machine as though I would catch them,
Unavailing I chase them, unceasing I speed.

The clock in the workshop is never at rest;
Ever pointing and ticking and waking together.
Its language, I understand different;
Its unrest pushes me onward;
“Work more, more, much more.”
Reason was in it, they said to me then;
What it is, I forget; ask me not!
I know not, I know not, I am a machine!

II. *Don’t Tax the Millionaire*
Anonymous Author, (1894)

Tax the land, tax the water,
Tax the sunbeams, tax the air
Tax the earth, tax perdition,
But don’t tax the millionaire!

Tax the crops, tax the trees,
Tax common people everywhere,
Tax the schoolhouse, tax the churches,
But don’t tax the millionaire!

Tax the moonbeams, tax the stars,
Tax the planets where they are
Tax the widow, tax the orphan,
But don’t tax the millionaire!

Tax the living, tax the dead,
Tax the clothing, tax the hair,
Tax the coffin, tax the gravestone,
But don’t tax the millionaire!

Tax the preacher, tax the teacher,
Tax the saints though few and rare,
Tax ambition, tax hope of heaven,
But don’t tax the millionaire!
III. *Will You Listen?*
Author: Gamaliel, *Dedicated to Old Party Voters* (1896)

Ragged voter,
Come see your redeemer,
A bright dollar,
It can buy you, it can sell you,
It has power to enslave you.
It will give you starvation,
While you worship its power

Foolish voter,
Bow down to your idol,
You believed them, And voted their ticket,
They deceived you, and enslaved you,
You are in their power.
While they are planning and scheming,
To take all your earnings,
While you worship that gold dollar

Will you listen?
And be true to your family,
That is crying, that is hungry,
And starving for bread,
Will you listen?

IV. *Stolen Crown*
Author: F. Scrimshaw, *Vote Him Out* (1893)

There’s a devil in the land,
Dealing death on every hand,
In his train come famine slow,
Ruin, blight and bloody woe,
We the nation must overthrow;
And vote to break this demons chain

Fierce and pitiless is he;
Naught for conscience careth he,
Naught for justice, truth or honesty;
Either he must rule or we

Labor Samsons! Tis your hour;
To rise and use your dreaded power,
Fear not this philistine’s frown,
Spoil him of his stolen crown,
We must vote him out,
We must tear his lordly temple down,

We the nation must break this demons chains,
Vote our long-lost rights to gain,
We must vote our manhood back again,
We the nation must overthrow,
And vote to break this demons chain
Hush I cannot bear to see thee
    Stretch thy tiny hands in vain;
Dear, I have no bread to give thee;
    Nothing, child, to ease thy pain!

When God sent thee first to bless me,
    Proud and thankful, ‘twas I;
Now, my darling, I thy mother,
    Almost long to see thee die,
Sleep, my darling, thou art weary;
    God is good, but life is dreary!

I have watched thy beauty fading,
    And thy strength fail day by day;
Soon, I know will want a fever
    Take thy little life away!

Famine makes thy father reckless,
    Hope has left both him and me;
We could suffer all my baby,
    Had we but a crust for thee!

I am wasted, dear, with hunger,
    And my brain is all opprest;
I have scarcely strength to press thee,
    Wan and feeble, to my breast

Patience, baby, God will help us,
    Death will come to thee and me,
He will take us to His heaven,
    There no want or pain can be.
Listen nearer while she sings,
    Sounds the fluttering of wings.

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Performance Notes:

Strings:

Microtonal Glissando: freely slide between the suggested notes within the box. This technique should always be performed *sul pont.* to create a gradual “sweeping” through partials of the harmonic series. The performer should seamlessly change bow where needed and gradually glissando for duration indicated by black line.

Harmonic trill: freely trill between given notes. This technique should always be performed *sul pont.* to create a fluctuating “sweep” through partials of the harmonic series. The performer should seamlessly change bow where needed and freely fluctuate the speed of trill for duration indicated by black line.

Jete, tight bow: throw bow and keep bouncing close to string so that gesture is more rhythmically precise than freer jete stroke and should result in a louder dynamic.

Percussion:

Vibraphone (with bow),
Crotales
2 Brake Drum (within interval of 2nd or 3rd )
Tambourine

Hi-Hat (brushes or sizzle sticks)
Medium Tom
Kick drum (resonant)

Percussion legend:

Piano:

Bass Mute: at the end of the string closest to the keyboard and roughly one inch from the tuning peg, lightly mute the string indicated by the square note head with fingertip. Remove finger mute quickly after note is struck.

M3 Harmonic: place finger on node roughly a half to one inch behind dampers to produce a harmonic two octaves and a third above the fundamental pitch indicated with a regular black note head. The diamond shaped note head represents touched node and note in parentheses indicates sounding harmonic pitch.
I. A Machine I Become

Text by Morris Rosenfeld "The Sweatshop"

Score in C

Michael Lanci

The Machines in the shop, so wildly they roar
That oft I forget in their roar that I am-
expressionless, machinelike (use little pedal)
Accidentals are stave or hand specific
and should not be transferred between staves

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In the terrible tumult I am buried
The me is all gone, a machine I become.

gradual increase in bow pressure in sync with dynamic swell to get distorted sound rich with overtones

ord. pres.
I work on unceasing; toil unending
Why? . . . . . . for whom?
I know not, . . . . . . . I ask not.
No room for feeling,
for thought or reason,

All bitter and bloody the work kills the noblest,

The best, the most
beautiful, the richest, the deepest. The highest in life is crushed . . . . . . . . . . to earth.
On fly the seconds, the minutes, the hours

(becoming more agitated)

D fall off
The nights like the days flee swiftly as sails;
I drive the machine as though I would catch them,
Unavailing I chase them, ...unceasing ...I speed.
The clock in the workshop is never at rest; . . . . . . Ever pointing and ticking and waking together.

(exasperated, helpless)

Its language,
I understand different; Its unrest pushes me ownward; Work more, more, much more!

Reason was in in it,
they said to me then; . . . What it is I forget; . . . ask me not! . . . I know not, . . . I know not, . . . for I am . . .

(f (desperate, hopeless)
freely alternate between "dissonant" cluster chords that are predominantly constructed of black and white keys.
ragged, pagan, like an amateur band
(tight synchronization optional)

fff

fff

fff

fff

fff

fff

fff

fff

fff
Piu mosso ca. $J = 110$

Gradually open hi-hat

Stop half way, decay to nothing

Slowly release damper pedal, stop half way
II. Don't Tax the Millionaire

ca. \( \cdot = 110 \)

Fl.

Cl.

Vln.

Vc.

Dr.

S.

Pno.

	

Hi -hat (2 brushes or rute/hot rods sticks )

Ta - ta - ta ta - ta - ta tax the land,
the land, tax the water...tax the sun beams,
don't tax the millionaire.
stars, tax the Planets where they are,
Ta-ta-ta ta-ta-ta tax the wi-
Fl.  

Cl.  

Vln.  

Vc.  

Dr.  

S.  

clothing  
tax the hair  
tax the coffin  
tax the gravestone  
tax the widow  
tax the orphan  
tax the living  
tax the dead,  
tax the

Pno.  

mf  
p  

p sub.  

gliss.  

-
Tempo primo ca. $\frac{3}{4} = 110$

Pno.

gradually release damper ped.

S.

tax the dead

freely molto rubato.

Vln.

Cl.

Vc.

Dr.

freely (quasi swung $\frac{3}{4}$)

But don't tax the
Fl.\hspace{1cm} Cl.\hspace{1cm} Vln.\hspace{1cm} Vc.\hspace{1cm} Dr.\hspace{1cm} S.\hspace{1cm} Pno.

non vib.\hspace{1cm} non vib.\hspace{1cm} non vib.\hspace{1cm} non vib.

ord.\hspace{1cm} ord.\hspace{1cm} ord.\hspace{1cm} ord.

sf\hspace{1cm} sf\hspace{1cm} sf\hspace{1cm} sf

mf\hspace{1cm} mf\hspace{1cm} mf\hspace{1cm} mf

millon\hspace{1cm} millon\hspace{1cm} millon\hspace{1cm} millon
beams, tax the air, tax the crops tax the trees tax the earth tax the planets tax the
moonbeams
tax the planets
tax the moonbeams
tax the
Molto meno mosso ca. \( \dot{q} = 55 \)

\[ \begin{align*}
\text{Fl.} & \quad \text{fp} \\
\text{Cl.} & \quad \text{fp} \\
\text{Vln.} & \quad f \rightarrow p \\
\text{Vc.} & \quad \text{fp} \\
\text{Dr.} & \quad \text{fp} \\
\text{S.} & \quad \text{stars} \quad \text{tax the saints} \quad \text{though} \quad \text{there are few} \quad \text{tax am} \\
\text{Pno.} &
\end{align*} \]
Fl. \[ M \]

Cl.

Vln.

Vc.

Dr.

S.

Pno.

To Vib. and Crot.

heaven

But don't tax the millionaire

attacca
III. Will You Listen?

Adagio semplice  \( \text{ca. } \frac{3}{4} \) = 55  poco vib. dolce.

Fl.

Cl.

Vln.

Vc.

Perc.

S.

Pno.
Ragged voter, Come see your redeemer, A bright gold dollar, that can
It has the power to enslave you and give you.
starvation while you worship its power.

Foolish
vo-ter;

Bow down to your i-dol,

You be-lieved them and vot-ed their
ticket, but they deceived you and enslaved you. You are in their
While they are planning and scheming to take all your earnings while you worship that gold
Will you?
Will you?
listen? Will you? Be true to your family. That is crying and hungry, and
starving for bread

Will you be true?
Will you be true? Will you be true?
Will you be true

ff
Will you listen? Will you listen?
There's a devil in the land,
Dealing death on every
We the nation must overthrow and vote to break this demon's
Fierce and pitiless is
he, Naught for conscience care-th he, Naught for justice truth or honesty, Ether
"pressure trill" alternate between stopped pitch and harmonic node. non preciso sul pont.

he must rule or we
Fl.

B. Cl.

Vln.

Vc.

Perc.

S.

Pno.

La - bor Sam - son_ Tis your hour, _ to Rise _ and use your dread ed pow er _
Fear not this philis-tines frown.
Spoil him of his stolen crown.
We must
vote him out! and We must tear his lord-ly tem-ple down

We the na-tion must
break this demon's chains,

We the people must vote your long-lost
rights to gain,
We the nation must
break this demon's chains, and We must vote our man-hood back again. We the people...
must o- ver throw and vote to break this de- mon's chains
Text by Adelaide Proctor
"Cradle Song for the Poor"

V. Sounds the Fluttering of Wings

Perc. adagio ca. $\frac{1}{4} = 68$

Vib. (med. soft cond.)

Perc. (hold down pedal until indicated to release)

Pno. $mf$

Pno. $p$

Pno. $pp$

Pno. $p$

Pno. $mf$

Vib. (med. soft cord.)

(Repeat for the next 12 meas.)

To Cl.

Poco piu mosso ca. $\frac{1}{4} = 80$

B. Cl.

Con sord. sul pont. (Repeat for the next 12 meas.)
Fl.

Cl.

pp

Vln.

mf → p

Vc.

Somber folk ballad. Use little vibrato.

Release pedal

(hold down pedal until indicated to release)

S.

Hush I can not

Pno.

mf
bear to see thee

Stretch thy tiny hands in vain: 
Dear I have no bread to give thee  
No-thing child to ease thy pain
When God sent thee first to bless me,)
Proud and thank-ful t'was I.
Now my darling I thy mother I almost long
to see you die
Sleep now my darling thou art wea-
I have watched thy beauty fading
And, thy strength
fail day by day

Soon I know we'll want and
fever. To take thy little life away.
over blow to sound harmonics
an octave above diamond

Fl.
p

Cl.

Vln.

Vc.

Perc.

Vib.

S.

Pno.

Fa

Sul pont. freely fluctuate
the speed of trill for duration
indicated by black bar.

Crot.
(with vib. mallet)

To Crot.
(with vib. mallet)

hold down pedal until
indicated to release

Fa mine_ makes thy fa-ther reck- less_

Hold down damper pedal until indicated
to release
Hope has left both him and me
We could suffer all my baby
Had we but a
Fl.
Cl.
Vln.
Vc.
Perc.
S.
Pno.

mf
mf
mf

espr.

crust for thee

("8")

Pno.
poco acceler.

K Poco piu mosso ca. $\frac{d}{\text{dim.}} = 88$

Fl. non vib. → molto vib.

Cl. poco vib. → molto vib.

Vln. poco vib. sul pont. → molto vib. sul pont.

Vc. poco vib. non vib. → molto vib.

Perc. Release pedal

S. I am wasted, dear, with hunger

Pno. Release damper pedal
And my brain is all oppressed
I have scarcely strength to press thee, Wan and feeble
to my breast

Pa-tience baby, God will help
Death will come to thee and me. He will take us to heaven.
There no want or pain can be
Poco meno mosso ca. $q = 78$

Listen nearer while she sings

Hold down damper pedal until the end.
the flut-tering of wings,
Freely, unmetered feel
moto rubato

(B, F#, l.h.)

(B, F#, l.h.)