A Performance Guide to Selected Song Cycles of John Harbison: North and South (Six Poems of Elizabeth Bishop), Simple Daylight, and Flashes and Illuminations

Cheryl Denyse Cellon
A PERFORMANCE GUIDE

TO SELECTED SONG CYCLES OF JOHN HARBISON:

NORTH AND SOUTH (SIX POEMS OF ELIZABETH BISHOP),
SIMPLE DAYLIGHT, AND FLASHES AND ILLUMINATIONS

By

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this treatise is to provide a performance perspective and guide to selected works of John Harbison for voice and piano. John Harbison (b. 1938) is a Pulitzer-prize winning American composer, whose music is becoming a part of this century’s mainstream vocal repertoire. The three works selected for research and analysis are North and South (Six Poems of Elizabeth Bishop), Simple Daylight, and Flashes and Illuminations. This treatise provides performance suggestions for each piece, along with background information and a brief biographical description for each poet. The poets for these three works are Elizabeth Bishop, Eugenio Montale, William Carlos Williams, Czesław Miłosz and Michael Fried. Each section of text includes a brief explanation to aid performers in musical interpretation and guidelines by the composer, which comprise the remaining focus of this treatise.

Harbison writes specific instructions to accompany his works, and his indications create guidelines that can be used by performers to assist them in interpretation. In this treatise, these details on performance are outlined for pianist and singer and are derived from various first-hand accounts, interviews, and master classes. Other information is obtained from a variety of print and journal articles.
INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this treatise is to provide a performance perspective and guide to selected works of John Harbison for voice and piano. John Harbison is a Pulitzer-prize winning American composer, whose music is becoming a part of this century’s mainstream vocal repertoire. The three works selected for research and analysis are *North and South (Six Poems of Elizabeth Bishop)*, *Simple Daylight*, and *Flashes and Illuminations*. *North and South (Six Poems of Elizabeth Bishop)*, for voice and piano, was written between 1995 and 1999 and premiered in 2001. *Simple Daylight*, a song cycle for soprano and piano, was commissioned by Lincoln Center and premiered in 1990. *Flashes and Illuminations*, for baritone and piano, was commissioned in 1994 and premiered in 1996.

This treatise provides performance suggestions for each piece, along with background information and a brief biographical description for each poet. The poets for these three works are Elizabeth Bishop, William Carlos Williams, Eugenio Montale, Czesław Miłosz, and Michael Fried. Each section of text includes a brief explanation to aid performers in musical interpretation. In addition, guidelines provided by the composer will be included and remain the primary focus of this treatise.

Harbison writes specific instructions to accompany his works, and his indications create guidelines that can be used by performers to assist them in musical expression. These details on performance are outlined for pianist and singer. Other helpful suggestions and notes on musical interpretation will come directly from the composer. Just as there are performance practices regarding articulation, dynamics, voicing, etc. in the study and performance of works by Bach or Beethoven, there are also rules that apply to interpreting Harbison’s music. Since little has been written about these song cycles, research will come primarily from the composer, with other information derived from journal articles. Harbison’s intentions for performance will be clarified through various recorded first-hand accounts, as well as print sources and master classes.
CHAPTER ONE
BIOGRAPHY AND VOCAL WRITING STYLE

John Harris Harbison was born on December 20, 1938, in Orange, New Jersey. His family was the primary influence in his diverse musical childhood. His father, a history professor at Princeton, gave him simplified piano arrangements of Bach chorale preludes and exposed him to chord progressions from popular songs. As a child, he was improvising before he learned to read music. At age nine, Harbison became fascinated with opera and began to listen to the Metropolitan Opera radio broadcasts.\(^1\) He took lessons on viola and piano. His first piano teacher was also a composer and was often more interested in hearing Harbison’s compositions than teaching him to play the piano.\(^2\)

While in middle school, Harbison was using his abilities at the piano and viola to participate in jazz and chamber ensembles, and at the age of thirteen, he was playing jazz with professional musicians. During his high school years, he took lessons in violin, tuba, viola, piano, composition, theory, and voice, and continued to be obsessed with jazz. As a member of his high school choir, he had the opportunity to conduct and hear some of his own compositions performed. At age fifteen Harbison won the Broadcast Music, Inc. (BMI), award for his composition *Capriccio for Trumpet and Piano*.\(^3\)

Harbison went to Harvard University as an undergraduate and studied composition with Claudio Spies, Robert Moevs and Walter Piston. During this time, Harbison’s focus was primarily in conducting and performing jazz. He was selected as the conductor for Harvard’s prestigious Bach Society Orchestra. He was also given a conducting fellowship to study at Tanglewood. As a professional jazz player, Harbison had the opportunity to play piano with the Royal Garden Six and also jazz trombone with Joe Raposo’s Crimson Quintet.\(^4\)

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At age twenty-one, in the summer of 1960, Harbison was awarded the John Knowles Paine Traveling Fellowship from Harvard to study composition with Boris Blacher in Berlin. This proved to be a very important turning point in Harbison’s life as a composer. It was in Berlin that he was exposed to the music of Penderecki, Messiaen, Boulez, and Blacher, among others. This experience gave Harbison the desire to focus his career on composition. Harbison continued his graduate studies at Princeton University, where his teachers included Milton Babbitt, Earl Kim, and Roger Sessions. Although his focus had turned to composition, he expanded his conducting experience as the assistant conductor of the Princeton University Orchestra. While at Princeton, Harbison received many awards, and the conducting opportunities provided venues for the performances of his works and exposed him to vocal repertoire.

Harbison joined the faculty at The Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge in 1969. He has also been a faculty member at Boston University and Cal Arts University. Harbison has held other positions, such as composer-in-residence with several orchestras and festivals: the Pittsburgh Symphony, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Tanglewood, Marlboro, and Santa Fe Chamber Music Festivals, and the American Academy in Rome. He has also been a conductor and guest conductor for various orchestras and chamber groups including the Handel and Haydn Society and the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Still active in Boston, Harbison is the former director of the Cantata Singers and has been a guest conductor for Emmanuel Music, where he has conducted Bach cantatas, seventeenth-century motets, and new music.\(^5\)

Harbison has received various awards for his accomplishments, including the Pulitzer Prize for his cantata *The Flight into Egypt* in 1987. His other awards include the Heinz Award for the Arts and Humanities, the Distinguished American Music Center’s Letter of Distinction, the Kennedy Center Friedham First Prize, and a MacArthur Fellowship in 1989.\(^6\)

Many sources describe the vocal writing style of John Harbison, and the following section will summarize the various statements about his style characteristics. Harbison writes vocal pieces with elements of lyricism and rhythmic intensity, and


\(^{6}\) Ibid.
although these seem contrasting, the juxtaposition of the styles is found throughout his works. His melodies are often angular and bring life to the text, combining many style origins that are derived from his musical education and professional experiences.

Harbison has had a wide variety of vocal experience which shaped his compositional techniques and understanding of vocal pieces. “My vocal music is shaped by my work as a performer of Bach cantatas. The Bach aria, with its combination of philosophical, dramatic, and sensuous texts, is more my ideal than that of the Schumann or Strauss Lied.”7 He believes that it is essential for the composer to have an understanding of the voice in order to compose vocal music effectively. “The time he spent as a singer, conductor, auditioner, and composer, coaching his pieces (one on one with vocalists) has given him the reservoir of knowledge necessary to gain a substantial understanding of the nature of the voice.”8 This understanding has influenced several of his style traits, such as his interest in polyphony and imitation, an appealing variety in timbral and textural combinations, angular melodies for both instruments and voices, complex (but not perplexing) rhythmic layers, and effective, often dramatic, word painting.

Harbison’s study of jazz and popular music has led to another aspect of his style. “The influence of jazz and popular music can be subtly or bluntly found in many of his works with piano, e.g. the many uneven or irregular rhythms and meters along with blues and jazz scales and tunes.”9 Harbison writes that he has tried to hold on to forces which carried him into music: the fascination of harmonic progressions, the directness of melody, and the magic of sonorities.10 The lyricism of his vocal writing combines with unique harmonic languages, borrowed from other genres. “His work is eclectic, ever open to fresh sources of development in the music of any style or period, and always rigorously self-disciplined.”11

“Harbison’s works are distinguished by their outstanding craftsmanship, rhythmic intensity, and lyricism. . . . He has also demonstrated a rare sensitivity in

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9 Ibid.
10 Ewen, 307.
setting vocal texts.”¹² Harbison, a writer and avid reader of poetry, has won awards for some of his own poetry. His abilities for creating poetry are helpful in setting vocal texts.

Exceptional in Harbison’s prolific output are his many song cycles, and the most significant of these is the work with which he consolidated his mature style, _Motetti di Montale_, an engagement with Eugenio Montale’s love poems that recalls the Müller cycles of Schubert. He establishes tonal centers by various means, employing jazz-derived chords without imparting the flavour of jazz and unifies the cycle with linear planning.¹³


¹³ Ibid.
CHAPTER TWO
POETS

Many poets discussed in this chapter have a common characteristic in their affinity for the metaphysical. Most metaphysical poems are lyrical poems addressing the profound experiences of humankind. Another characteristic of twentieth-century metaphysical poets is their association with the ideals of the modernist movement, which included poets such as Ezra Pound and T.S. Eliot. This movement attracted those poets who sought to break away from the Victorian traditions of writing, finding better ways to use a more contemporary language to express the modern world.

Elizabeth Bishop

Elizabeth Bishop was born in Worcester, Massachusetts, in 1919. Shortly after her birth, her father died, and soon after that, her mother was placed in a mental institution; thus, Bishop became an orphan. Although she grew up as an orphan, she was not without financial means. After attending Vassar College, she spent time traveling and visiting many countries around the world, including France, Spain, North Africa, Ireland, and Italy. She lived much of her life in New York, Florida, and Brazil. Her teaching credits included appointments at the University of Washington in Seattle and Harvard University. Bishop died in 1979.

Several people influenced Elizabeth Bishop’s poetry, including the seventeenth-century English metaphysical poet George Herbert. “Through Herbert, Bishop learned a sleekness of line and a relationship to language marked by humility.”14 She explored the world and learned to write in a straight-forward manner that was not too personal or decorative. She was “attracted to the simplicity of metaphysical poetry.”15 Another influence on Bishop was the French symbolist poet Stéphane Mallarmé, as seen in her use of the surreal, with many of her poems containing natural subjects with almost

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15 Ibid.
supernatural powers.\textsuperscript{16} Other influences include the poets Marianne Moore and Robert Lowell, who were not only mentors, but also close friends of Bishop. “Bishop’s poetry avoids explicit accounts of her personal life, and focuses instead with great subtlety on her impressions of the physical world. Her images are precise and true to life, and they reflect her own sharp wit and moral sense.”\textsuperscript{17}

Bishop received many awards for her poetry, including the Fellowship of the Academy of American Poets, National Book Award, Pulitzer Prize, and the Neustadt International Prize for Literature. She was awarded the Houghton Mifflin Poetry Fellowship for her first volume of poetry, \textit{North and South}, in 1945.\textsuperscript{18} Like so much of her poetry, \textit{North and South} is filled with scenes of her travels and the world that surrounded her. According to Anne Stevenson, the poems in \textit{North and South} reveal Bishop’s sense of place in the world:

They present a view of the world as it appears to her—not a social phenomenon, but a set of visible surfaces which, in their shifting relationships, sometimes reveal momentarily, obliquely, a kind of truth or a transcendental beauty and harmony which arises out of and somehow balances the chaos of experience.\textsuperscript{19}

\textit{North and South} shows a conversational style utilizing the natural rhythm of speech. Because of this and other elements in her style, Harbison finds many musical possibilities in Bishop’s writings. Her meticulous and exacting use of words is appealing to Harbison and fits his compositional style. He has set Bishop’s poetry in two of the cycles discussed in this treatise: \textit{North and South} and \textit{Flashes and Illuminations}.

\textbf{William Carlos Williams}

William Carlos Williams was born in 1883 in Rutherford, New Jersey. He attended the University of Pennsylvania, where he studied medicine, and later became a practicing physician in his hometown. In addition to being a full time physician throughout his adult life, he also wrote poetry. Williams “emerged as one of the most

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{17} Ibid.
influential modern American poets.” The subject matter in his poetry is focused on everyday circumstances and lives of ordinary people. To some, he is known as a “modernist poet,” breaking away from tradition to help create a clear voice for America.

Williams is known for his ability to use the conversational speech present in American life without the use of slang. He believed that it was his job as a poet to use his own language effectively. According to Williams, “that is the poet’s business: not to talk in vague categories but to write particularly, as a physician works . . . to discover the universal.” Williams published plays, poems, novels and essays. His work received increasing attention in the 1950s and 1960s. He died in 1963 and was awarded the Pulitzer Prize posthumously. Harbison has set the poetry of Williams in two of his song cycles: Flashes and Illuminations and Words from Patterson, a monumental work based on the multi-volume poem “Patterson.”

Eugenio Montale

The next poet, Eugenio Montale, can be compared to Williams in that Montale was also a modernist poet of sorts, seeking to set the Italian language in nontraditional ways to describe everyday life. Montale published his first poems in the 1920s and was “destined to set the standards for contemporary Italian verse.” He was praised for his prose-like verse and won the Nobel Prize in 1975 for his life and literary exploration and success. He is known as “one of the great metaphysical poets of the twentieth century, whose radically negative attitude toward reality was simultaneously an expressive urge and a political statement.” He has been compared with such modernist poets as T.S. Eliot, with regard to his use of similar landscapes and moods, directness of expression, and the desire to give a modern voice to the world at that time. Montale died in 1981. Many people consider his poetry obscure and difficult to comprehend. Harbison also commented on this aspect of Montale’s poetry: “Many of his poems are not connected

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20 Willhardt, 344.
21 Kunitz, 1090.
22 Willhardt, 222.
23 Ibid.
by tissue, per se; it is up to the reader to make the connection. Montale liked the sense that people didn’t know how things were connected.”

A musician himself, Montale was opposed to the musical setting of any poems, especially his own; however, Harbison sent him his complete score of *Mottetti di Montale*, and he approved the work without hesitation. Flashes and Illuminations contains one poem by Montale.

**Czesław Miłosz**

Czesław Miłosz wrote poetry and prose that was “compelled by history and beauty alike.” Born in Lithuania in 1911, Miłosz fought in the Polish Resistance in World War II and published anti-Nazi poetry in underground journals. He sought political asylum in France because of his differences with the ideals of the Polish government. Although his work was banned in Poland at the time, he continued to publish his poetry, which included protests against the Polish Communist Party. Before the political climate worsened, Miłosz moved to the United States to teach at the University of California at Berkeley. He became a United States citizen in 1970 and received the Nobel Prize in 1980. After the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989, Miłosz was no longer exiled from Poland; he died in Krakow in 2004. Miłosz’s style is metaphysical and his material is primarily autobiographical. His Eastern European roots had a tremendous influence on his poetry as he continued to strive for hope. Harbison used one poem by Miłosz in Flashes and Illuminations.

**Michael Fried**

Michael Fried was born in New York in 1939. Formerly an assistant professor at Harvard, he is currently the J.R. Herbert Boone Professor of Humanities at The Johns Hopkins University. Although he is primarily known as an art critic and historian, Fried has published three books of poetry: *Powers, To the Center of the Earth*, and *The Next Bend in the Road*.

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25 Seabrook, 8.
26 Willhardt, 219.
Fried’s poetry has been published in England and in the United States. His poetry is found in both *Flashes and Illuminations* and *Simple Daylight*. Prior to writing these cycles, Harbison set Fried’s poetry in *Three Harp Songs* and *Flower Fed Buffaloes*. Harbison also set Fried’s powerful poem “Depths.” Most of the Fried poems discussed in this treatise can be found in his first published collection in the United States, *To the Center of the Earth*.

The key note of all of the poems is lyrical intensity, which at times reaches visionary levels. Many of the poems are brief, but none is small or slight: they combine sensory precision of great vividness with a deep-grounded musicality that gives to their rhythmic and syntactic structures an unexpected and wholly original power of expansion.27

Harbison first met Fried when they were competitors in the Glasscock Poetry Competition in the 1960s. They became better acquaintances when they attended Princeton University together. Since that time, they have formed a lasting friendship.28 Harbison is attracted to the “tiny haiku-like verses”29 and believes that Fried’s poetic sensibility is quite independent of the present era. Harbison speaks of his admiration for Fried’s poetry in the following:

The consistent feature of Fried’s poetry is that the line is telling and memorable; functioning as some of the older poetry by using a strong elemental force in the poem. The value of that for the writer of the song is obvious because it is not particularly advantageous in working with song material to work with units that do not define themselves in that way, because the musical expression of the words is already going to be stretched.30

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27 Michael Fried, *To the Center of the Earth* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1994), Notes from the dust jacket.
28 John Harbison, master class on *Simple Daylight*, Pepperdine University, Malibu, CA., 18 June 2005.
29 Ibid.
CHAPTER THREE
BACKGROUND AND GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

The information in this chapter is based on the author’s contact and experience with Harbison at Songfest, as well as additional interviews with the composer. The first interview took place on the telephone on December 19, 2005. The second interview was a personal one with Harbison in New York City on February 24, 2006, just prior to the second performance of his Milosz Songs.

The idea for this treatise was developed in the summer of 2005 at the Songfest Music Festival at Pepperdine University in Malibu, California. The festival’s professional program, “The Complete Recitalist,” featured John Harbison as the distinguished composer-in-residence for several days. Each of the song cycles discussed was performed at the festival, with specific instructions given in private coaching sessions with Harbison, as well as master class forums. The festival also included a rare opportunity to participate in the creative compositional process of the esteemed composer in his newest cycle, Milosz Songs. Selected pianists and singers were given copies of the original manuscripts of Milosz Songs in order to assist Harbison in the process of orchestration for the New York Philharmonic premiere, which took place in New York on February 23, 2006.

Harbison has explicit ideas about how his music is to be performed. He uses meticulous markings throughout his scores in order to guide the performers to a more successful performance. Methodical score study should precede the addition of personal interpretation, and for music written by Harbison these study techniques are especially important. It is only after this extensive preparation that Harbison would give some sense of individual and collaborative interpretation to the performers. He values performances of his music as written, with little sense of free interpretation.

Harbison’s written and unwritten guidelines will be discussed further in the remainder of this chapter. These include the expectations of the composer with regard to specific technical elements necessary for an effective performance, including pedaling,
dynamic markings, tempo markings, voicing of chords, and the role of pianist and singer.

**Pedaling**

The general topic of pedaling is a concern for Harbison, and as a result he is exact in his instructions for individual pedals. Harbison believes that pianists have a tendency to overuse the damper pedal and that the pedal is best used as a form of expression, not merely as a sustaining device. In his music, he does not expect the pianist to play without pedal if there are no pedal markings, but rather, “the indication of the pedaling comes at a time where one might not necessarily look at the page and automatically assume that pedaling is needed.”

Harbison asks pianists to consider the harmonic structure of a piece and respond appropriately with the pedal.

Another issue concerns problems arising from the use of the *una corda* pedal in song accompaniment. For Harbison, the *una corda* pedal should seldom be used to aid in soft playing; pianists are expected to practice and learn control of softer dynamics without its use. As a coloristic device, the *una corda* pedal can be added discretionarily without the composer’s indications, but not to replace proper balance with the singer. When used sparingly in specific moments, this tool becomes influential in creating color.

**Dynamic Markings**

Unlike many composers, Harbison thinks of *pianissimo* and *fortissimo* as absolute dynamic ranges. He rarely uses *ppp* or *fff*. He is emphatic in trying to re-value dynamics in his music, attempting to shape the basic range and encourage performers to be responsive and take dynamics more literally. With regard to the song cycle *Mirabai Songs*, Jane Manning, a contemporary vocal educator, states that it is “essential to obey the composer’s dynamic markings—as the longer more sustained lines will then stand out in relief.”

The same is true for Harbison’s other vocal music.

Another factor concerning dynamics involves the piano lid. For chamber music, including these and other song cycles, Harbison prefers that the piano lid remain fully

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open. The pianist must learn to cultivate soft dynamics, and the open piano will help to further that purpose.

**Tempo Markings**

Harbison is specific about tempo indications and expects them to remain steady. Harbison occasionally uses the indication *rubato* in his music. Since this is a somewhat unusual marking for him, performers can appreciate the artistic freedom it allows them.

Harbison aims for control of the melodic line with meticulous expressive markings to convey the line. Few English and German expression markings exist in Harbison’s works with the large majority of his markings in Italian. Harbison favors the Italian language as his mode of expressive communication as he frequently employs traditional and non-traditional or uncommon Italian expression markings.\(^{33}\)

**Voicing of chords**

Typically, chord voicing on the piano requires consideration of the harmonic and melodic hierarchy; however, Harbison intends for most of the blocked chords in these cycles to have equal voicing. That is to say that no one voice should dominate over another, thereby creating some type of melodic line. This view of Harbison’s stems from his use of counterpoint, combined with the ideals of the baroque and jazz styles from his background and training. Consequently, when a pianist plays blocked chords in Harbison’s work, it is to be understood that the composer expects each of the voices to be played equally and without hierarchy.

**Role of pianist and singer**

In considering any of Harbison’s vocal compositions, there are assumptions that can be made about the abilities and skill level of the pianist and the singer. His music requires a singer and a pianist who possess an advanced technique and collaborative skill. For the singer, there are frequent episodes of independence throughout which the singer must maintain pitch accuracy. The pianist must understand the harmonic structure of each piece and accurately represent the articulations and numerous indications made by the composer. With the exception of the independent voice

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\(^{33}\) Bonous-Smit, 323.
episodes, the pianist neither takes a subordinate role nor dominates the texture, which includes the singer.\textsuperscript{34}

In addition to the musical nuances, text delivery is crucial. As Mike Seabrook says, “Harbison’s settings are sensitive to the finest nuance of mood in the texts.”\textsuperscript{35} Harbison encourages singers to study each poem carefully to understand the character. “The singer needs to inhabit the text and internalize what the music is saying.”\textsuperscript{36} In an interview, Harbison discussed his choice of text as “something that is haunting; it becomes so much a part of your life that you will not be comfortable until you deal with it.”\textsuperscript{37}

\textsuperscript{34} Harbison interview, 19 December 2005.
\textsuperscript{35} Seabrook, 8.
\textsuperscript{36} Harbison interview, 19 December 2005.
\textsuperscript{37} Vangelisti, 46.
CHAPTER FOUR

NORTH AND SOUTH (SIX POEMS OF ELIZABETH BISHOP)

The first performance of *North and South (Six Poems of Elizabeth Bishop)* took place in DeForest, Wisconsin at the Token Creek Festival on September 3, 2000. This performance featured mezzo-soprano Janice Felty and pianist Craig Smith. The Chicago Chamber Musicians commissioned and premiered an orchestrated version on May 13, 2001, with mezzo-soprano Lorraine Hunt Lieberson. The orchestration includes scoring for English horn, clarinet in B-flat, bassoon, violin, viola, violoncello, and contrabass.

According to Lloyd Schwartz from the Boston Phoenix:

*North and South* also uses six poems, these dealing with love and music: two of Bishop’s "Songs for a Colored Singer" (which she had hoped someone would set for Billie Holiday – too bad Holiday didn’t live to hear Harbison’s bluesy insinuations); two short mood pieces, "Late Air" and the early "Song" ("Summer is over upon the sea"); and two love poems Bishop didn’t publish in her lifetime, the heartbreaking "Breakfast Song" ("Today I love you so/how can I bear to go/(as soon I must, I know)/to bed with ugly death") and the untitled "Dear, my compass/Still points north"). Here the vocal line is primary (though the chamber version is also full of instrumental wizardry), the harmonies are more comprehensible, and the emotions are more direct. Two particularly expressive singers introduced *North and South*, mezzo-soprano Janice Felty (the piano version) and Lorraine Hunt Lieberson (the chamber version).  

*North and South*, by Elizabeth Bishop, is a book of poetry that is largely based on the author’s travels in Florida. The poems can be divided into two classes: fantasies and straight descriptive verse. The song cycle *North and South* is divided into two “Books” with three songs in each.

Each of the two “Books” begins with one of the “Songs for a Colored Singer”: (HARBISON called them “Ballads for Billie” because Bishop had hoped Billie Holiday might record them). This cycle is in the range for both sopranos and mezzo-sopranos. Each opening song is followed by a brief and mysterious interlude, then by a darker, more soulful love song. *North and South* is one of

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Harbison’s works that is immediately appealing, with suggestions of blues, a haunting waltz, and unsentimental but pervasive melody.\textsuperscript{39}

Harbison composed this cycle from 1995-1999. The entire cycle of six songs has a duration of twenty minutes. In general, Harbison’s preference is for the original version for piano and voice; however, he is partial to the third song of the orchestrated version due to the polyphony and clear voice leading.\textsuperscript{40} It is acceptable to perform individual songs from the cycle. According to Harbison, the most effective pieces taken out of the cycle are “Breakfast Song,” “Song,” and “Ballad for Billie II,”\textsuperscript{41} since each of these songs could be performed on its own. \textit{North and South} begins with three songs of Book I. The first song is entitled “Ballad for Billie I,” and comes from the first section of Bishop’s poem, “Songs for a Colored Singer.”

\textbf{Book I}

\textbf{Ballad for Billie I}

\textbf{Songs for a Colored Singer}

I

A washing hangs upon the line, 
but it’s not mine. 
None of the things that I can see 
belong to me. 
The neighbors got a radio with an aerial; 
we got a portable. 
They got a lot of closet space; 
we got a suitcase.

I say, “Le Roy, just how much are we owing? 
Something I can’t comprehend, 
the more we got the more we spend . . .” 
He only answers, “Let’s get going.” 
Le Roy, you’re earning too much money now.

I sit and look at our backyard 
and find it very hard 
that all we got for all his dollars and cents 
’s a pile of bottles by the fence.

\textsuperscript{39} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{40} John Harbison, \textit{North and South}, master class, Pepperdine University, Malibu, CA., 14 June 2005.
\textsuperscript{41} Ibid.
He’s faithful and he’s kind
but he sure has an inquiring mind.
He’s seen a lot; he’s bound to see the rest,
and if I protest

Le Roy answers with a frown,
“Darling, when I earns I spends.
The world is wide; it still extends . . .
I’m going to get a job in the next town.”
Le Roy, you’re earning too much money now.

Bishop’s “Songs for a Colored Singer” is a poem in which she examines the
difficult existence of a colored domestic servant. This poem portrays a melancholy
domestic who is having trouble with her man—a classic scenario for the blues. The
singer expresses the difficulty of working as a domestic, as she witnesses firsthand the
inequalities of the classes: “None of these things that I can see / belong to me.” She
continues to describe in detail the differences she sees between colored people and
whites: “They got a lot of closet space; / we got a suit case.” The circumstances of the
colored singer establish the melancholy tone of the poem.

Harbison considers this to be one of the most difficult songs in the cycle,
particularly for the pianist. A jazz-influenced atmosphere is created by the harmonic
language and rhythmic activity. The pianist may have a tendency to manipulate the
accompaniment to create the jazzy style, but by observing the meticulous rhythmic
indications of the composer with precision, the style will happen naturally. Careful
attention to all of the dynamic changes will insure that the meaning of the text will be
clearly conveyed as Harbison intended.

The indication “Free and Easy” refers more to an attitude of an uninhibited
lifestyle than to the rhythm. The tempo for this piece remains steady, without rhythmic
flexibility. Harbison has indicated a dry piano texture with little, if any, pedal, and
absolutely no rubato. Harbison asserts that the piano line can be thought of in terms of a
chamber ensemble: each voice in the piano line represents a different instrument that is
equal in importance. Therefore, the chords in this piece are not voiced and each note
will have an equal sound within the structure of the chord.

42 Ibid.
The vocal line has a declamatory and speech-like character. Each line of the text is set as a musical phrase. Harbison carefully constructs the music to match the natural rhythmic inflection of the text. For example, in measures eleven and fourteen, Harbison has set the text to imitate natural speech by writing triplet figures (Example 1).

Example 1: *North and South.* “Ballad for Billie I,” mm. 12-14

The first stanza of the poem spans the first seventeen measures of the song, in which the pianist sets up the general mood of the piece. The vocal line is doubled much of the time, and there are brief, winding interludes for the piano between each of the poetic lines. At measure eighteen, Harbison changes the piano texture to blocked chords. The vocal line lingers through a series of minor thirds, creating a bluesy effect and re-iterating the frustration of the woman as she struggles with the fact that her man spends more money than they can afford (Example 2).
Bishop unifies the two halves of the poem by using the same line at the end of the second and fourth stanzas, “Le Roy, you’re earning too much money now.” Harbison responds by using the same music for this phrase in measures thirty-three to thirty-five and measures sixty-eight to seventy for the climactic expression of the text (Example 3).

Example 3: North and South. “Ballad for Billie I,” mm. 68-71
Late Air

From a magician’s midnight sleeve
the radio-singers
distribute all their love-songs
over the dew-wet lawns.
And like a fortune-teller’s
their marrow-piercing guesses are whatever you believe.

But on the Navy Yard aerial I find
better witnesses
for love on summer nights.
Five remote red lights
keep their nests there; Phoenixes
burning quietly, where the dew cannot climb.

Harbison describes the second song of Book I, “Late Air,” as a “typically elusive love-and-loneliness Bishop incantation.” Keeping absolutely strict time and a steady pulse without any use of rubato is important for the performance of this song. When the song is performed precisely, Harbison believes that the rubato will be perceived by the listener, since he wrote the piece in a way that sounds improvisational. The technical flourishes in the piano part can be challenging; therefore, Harbison encourages the pianist to be flexible with fingerings during the preparation process.

The pianist and singer have assigned roles in this song: the piano represents the sea and the voice represents the narrator, with each contemplating the concept of love. The pianist and singer exchange musical activity throughout. In measures twenty-seven to thirty, the marcato indication in the piano part provides enough resonance to enhance the image of the five remote red lights that can be seen across the sea (Example 4).

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44 John Harbison, *North and South*, master class, Pepperdine University, Malibu, CA., 14 June 2005.
Example 4: *North and South.* “Late Air,” mm. 26-30

The poet has provided hope through the image of the Phoenixes at the end of this poem. Harbison’s writing combines with the text to create visualization for the audience, enhancing their ability to imagine the scene. In measures thirty-two to thirty-three, the colorful image of the burning Phoenixes is created through the use of triplet figures with wide intervals to signify the quiet flames (Example 5).

Example 5: *North and South.* “Late Air,” mm. 31-33
Breakfast Song

My love, my saving grace,
Your eyes are awfully blue.
I kiss your funny face,
Your coffee-flavored mouth.
Last night I slept with you.
Today I love you so
How can I bear to go
(as soon I must, I know)
to bed with ugly death
in that cold, filthy place,
to sleep there without you,
without the easy breath
and nightlong, limblong warmth
I’ve grown accustomed to?
—Nobody wants to die;
tell me it is a lie!
But no, I know it’s true.
It’s just the common case;
There’s nothing one can do.
My love, my saving grace,
Your eyes are awfully blue
Early and instant blue.

The third song of the cycle, “Breakfast Song,” is an intimate and personal expressive poem. In an interview about this poem, Lloyd Schwartz, who had the opportunity to interview and become friends with the poet, explained that there was a time when Bishop was hospitalized for an extended period. He had the opportunity to visit with her for several days; during that time he saw the latest poem on which she was working, “Breakfast Song.” It is a poem about love and Bishop’s own mortality, which she faced with some reluctance. The poem was not published during her lifetime. Schwartz admittedly copied the poem while Bishop was out of her room. He was so taken with the poem and worried that she might destroy her work or think it was too personal to publish. He kept his copy of the poem until after her death and hoped that someone would find it among her papers, but this was not the case. This poem was finally published in the New Yorker during the week of December 19, 2002.45

The musical setting for “Breakfast Song” is a passacaglia; the same pattern of notes is repeated in every seven measures of the piece (Example 6).

As the pianist works for expression in harmony and texture, finger legato should be used throughout, because Harbison prefers little to no pedal at all. Pedal should only be used if finger legato is not possible. Beginning in measure forty-three, the bass line of the piano has a stark and cold quality, representing the image of “ugly death.” The short, staccato notes are played with a sharp, sinister character and a steady pulse throughout the song (Example 7).
Example 7: *North and South.* “Breakfast Song,” mm. 44-49

With his extensive background in counterpoint, Harbison uses ground bass to unify this song. The ground bass melody is written in various registers but is never absent from the piece. In measure sixty-four, the ground bass melody is found in the top voice, and at measure seventy-one it is in the middle voice.

**BOOK TWO**

**Ballad for Billie II**

**Songs for a Colored Singer**

**II**

The time has come to call a halt;
   And so it ends.
   He’s gone off with his other friends.
   He needn’t try to make amends,
   ’cause this occasion’s all his fault.
Through rain and dark I see his face across the street at Flossie’s place.
He’s drinking in the warm pink glow to th’accompaniment of the piccolo.

The time has come to call a halt.
I met him walking with Varella
and hit him twice with my umbrella.
Perhaps that occasion was my fault,
but the time has come to call a halt.

Go drink your wine and go get tight.
   Let the piccolo play.
   I’m sick of all your fussing anyway.
   Now I’m pursuing my own way.
I’m leaving on the bus tonight.
   Far down the highway wet and black
   I’ll ride and ride and not come back.
   I’m going to go and take the bus
   and find someone monogamous.

The time has come to call a halt.
I’ve borrowed fifteen dollars fare
and it will take me anywhere.
For this occasion’s all his fault.
The time has come to call a halt.

“Book Two, dedicated to Janice Felty, begins with another, even more emphatic, declamation from the poem, ‘Songs for a Colored Singer.”46  In this poem, Bishop continues her portrayal of the colored woman and her increasing exasperation with her situation, both financially and in the relationship. This dynamic song is the climax of the cycle, marked by the text and the feelings of the colored woman who has had enough. In this text, from the second part of “Songs of a Colored Singer,” it is evident that this woman is taking back control. The singer’s first entrance sets the mood and establishes for the audience that this woman is no one’s doormat.47

The following paragraphs contain suggestions from the composer. Some of the most difficult measures of the piece are found in the piccolo/jukebox sections in measures thirty-one to thirty-five and measures fifty-three to fifty-eight. Here Harbison uses jazzy triplet figures to depict the sound of the jukebox (Example 8). Beginning with measure sixty, Harbison writes rests on the third beat of the piano part and the observation of these rests is vital for the effect of silence. Harbison reminds the pianist to execute the slurs carefully in measures seventy to seventy-one.

47 John Harbison, North and South, master class, Pepperdine University, Malibu, CA., 14 June 2005.
Example 8: *North and South.* “Ballad for Billie II,” mm. 33-35

Just as in the first song of this cycle, rhythmic precision is crucial throughout, creating a jazz sound. The natural feeling of jazz as written will be destroyed if either performer attempts to perform in a jazz style. Therefore, it is essential to use a metronome as a tool during preparation, which will help both performers develop an internal feeling of a steady pulse.

**Song**

Summer is over upon the sea,
The pleasure yacht, the social being,
That danced on the endless polished floor,
Stepped and side-stepped like Fred Astaire,
Is gone, is gone, docked somewhere ashore.

The friends have left, the sea is bare
That was strewn with floating, fresh green weeds.
Only the rusty-sided freighters
Go past the moon’s marketless craters
And the stars are the only ships of pleasure.
The text for “Song” comes from Bishop’s first book of poetry, *North and South*, and depicts the sea. The continuous patterns and repeated sequences in Harbison’s music create a feeling of the rocking waves, with a brief expansion in measures seventeen to eighteen. For the tempo, Harbison indicates half-note equals forty-two to forty-eight, believing that it is sometimes better to take a slower tempo. The singer is then free to take as many breaths as needed. During a master class, Harbison offered technical advice for pianists and singers: “It is permissible to break the left hand figures at the downbeat for those pianists with a smaller span, but make sure not to apologize for it.”48 Thinking of the grace notes as sixteenth notes will help insure they are not rushed (Example 9).

This piece provides some technical challenges, much like the second song, “Late Air,” from the first book. Craig Smith, the pianist who premiered the work, looked at the song, originally a tone higher, and convinced Harbison to transpose the piece down before it was published. In this tranquil setting, Harbison creates the atmosphere of a bygone summer. Harbison writes a slowly expanding structure with a descending chromatic bass line and an ascending treble line from measures one to eighteen [see Example 9]. This pattern begins again in the same fashion at measure nineteen. In the second stanza of the poem, the pattern recurs in the piano part, but the vocal part is moved into a lower register to utilize the colors and richness of the voice, enhancing the text.

48 Ibid.

Example 9: North and South. “Song,” mm. 1-8

Dear, My Compass…

Dear, my compass
Still points north
To wooden houses
And blue eyes,

Fairy-tales where
Flaxen-headed
Younger sons
Bring home the goose,

Love in hay-lofts,
Protestants, and
Heavy drinkers…
Springs are backward,

But crab-apples
Ripen to rubies,
Cranberries
To drops of blood,
And swans can paddle
Icy water,
So hot the blood
In those webbed feet.

—Cold as it is, we’d
go to bed, dear,
early, but never
to keep warm.

The last song of this cycle has lyrics from another private poem, “Dear, My Compass . . .,” which was discovered by Lloyd Schwartz at an inn in Ouro Preto, Brazil, an eighteenth century mountain town where Bishop purchased a house in 1965. Schwartz describes her poem in the following:

Here is the unmistakable voice of Elizabeth Bishop, here the fairy-tale vividness and coloring-book clarity of images . . . ; the geographical references—and restlessness—of the world traveler, the delicate yet sharply etched jokes . . . the apparent conversational casualness disguising the formality of the versification; the understated yet urgent sexuality; even the identification with animals.49

The tenuto indications in the piano part are essential to the character of this piece. The slight lengthening of these notes is performed with “a stroke and slight lingering”50 (Example 10).

Example 10: North and South. “Dear, My Compass . . .,” mm. 1-2

This piece is both difficult and delicate. Each word should be clearly articulated. The delicate touch of the piano, according to Harbison, is essential to achieving a fragile sound (Example 11). Although the metronome marking may seem slow, it is crucial to the character. A true *pianissimo*, without the use of the *una corda* pedal, will aid performers in achieving the intended sound of the composer.

Example 11: *North and South*. “Dear, My Compass…,” mm. 37-46
CHAPTER FIVE

SIMPLE DAYLIGHT

Simple Daylight was commissioned by Lincoln Center and conceived with two prominent musicians in mind: Dawn Upshaw, to whom the work was dedicated, and James Levine. Dawn Upshaw premiered the work on May 22, 1990, at the Herbst Theatre in San Francisco with Alan Feinberg, pianist. Although the cycle was commissioned by Lincoln Center, it was also conceived with James Levine in mind, as he had requested to collaborate with Upshaw; however, Levine never performed this work. According to Harbison, it became clear that Levine would not have the time to devote to such a difficult work. As a result, most of the performances have been by the pianist Gilbert Kalish.

Simple Daylight only uses poetry of Harbison’s longtime friend and associate, Michael Fried. Harbison had access to the poems before they were published.

The six poems reflect on grief, rage, hatred and finally resignation and acceptance of the loss of the loved one. The piano part is stark, dissonant and perfectly entwined with the vocal score to mirror every passing twist of emotion in the immensely concentrated language of the poems. The six poems by Michael Fried appear to deal with varying states of grieving, self-directed rage, wistful remembrance, and acceptance in the wake of lost love.

Harbison arranged the sequence of the text in a way that would imitate the order of a Bach cantata or a drama with a narrative. He wanted to begin with the most substantial poem, entitled “Japan,” followed by “Simple Daylight” and the third poem, “Somewhere a Seed,” which functions as the dramatic and aggressive piece. This was followed by two other poems and finally, “Odor,” an appropriate closing for Harbison because of its metaphysical and slightly unusual content. After Harbison finished setting the six poems he had chosen, Fried decided the fourth poem was too personal and


52 Ibid.
candid, insisting it be removed. As a result, Harbison had to replace this poem with “Your Name” and had to write another song, even though both the pianist and singer had already prepared the original song. Such a radical change to the cycle was unsettling for Harbison and somewhat constraining to his compositional process.

Fried also became a little uncomfortable with the sequence of the poems and the order of the words. Harbison put a notation in the score, indicating that the order of the poems was not the order that the poet intended. Fried published these poems individually, over a period of time. “Your Name,” published in the book *Powers*, was the only poem that was published at the time this song cycle was written. The other poems were published later in Fried’s next two books of poetry: *For the Center of the Earth* and *The Next Bend in the Road*.

*Simple Daylight* was composed in 1988, and has been described as “a closely integrated piece for voice and piano, rather than a song cycle for singer and accompanist.” The songs have a motet-like partnership between pianist and singer. “Both performers share, in many cases less in the first one than in the others, much of the same material. This can be evidenced the most in ‘Simple Daylight,’ the second song of the cycle, in which every line of the texture of the piano and voice parts are based on the text and the information is evenly distributed in the foreground and background.”

St. George discusses elements of the cycle:

In *Simple Daylight*, the keyboard's role is an entirely different one. Here, voice and piano work in the closest partnership imaginable—the vocal part is just one strand in a tightly knit polyphonic argument. The musical language of these songs is rugged, sharply dissonant, uncompromising.

The cycle has a duration of approximately sixteen minutes and has obstacles that prevent it from being performed as frequently as other cycles by Harbison. The challenges inherent in performing this cycle include rigorous technical demands, the need for cohesive ensemble, and the raw connotations of texts. Certain technical demands make it difficult for some singers to find pianists to play these songs. The vocal line is also challenging, and as a result, it is problematic to find two people who

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53 Seabrook, 9.
54 Harbison interview, 24 February 2006.
are willing to put in the time and effort needed to master and perform this cycle. The independence of the individual lines makes ensemble more challenging because of the motet-like interactions and the musical connectivity that exists between the players. In addition to the obstacles of the performers’ musical abilities, *Simple Daylight* also contains texts that are “fairly raw and tough,” particularly that of the third song, “Somewhere a Seed.” In fact, on more than one occasion, *Simple Daylight* has been canceled because of the text.

**Japan**

Tired and empty,
I occupy a winterized log cabin
In a clearing in a snowy wood
In a country that might be Japan.

Each morning I catechize myself
In the hope that there has been a change
Either from or into the new man
It appears I’ve partly become.

Lunch arrives in a wicker basket
That later will be taken away.
But when I rush to the window
The encircling snow lies undefiled.

Towards midnight I shall step outside
And expose my face to the stars
And weep, not merely from the cold.
May their beauty appease me.

My best moments are those
When, in default of inspiration,
My hand rests lightly on the wrist
Of the one who writes.

Harbison wanted the first piece, “Japan,” to be an expansive, semi-strophic song, resembling the dimension and breadth of the opening chorus in a Bach cantata. According to Harbison, “Japan” has a different musical organization than the other

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pieces: the voice and piano parts are “somewhat disengaged harmonically from each other, and that has to do with the atmosphere of the poem.” In an essay about this cycle, St. George wrote:

Certain details and moods stand out in sharp relief, such as the wintry landscape painted in the piano introduction to “Japan,” a landscape of isolation where winter birds rustle coldly in the trees, but where those same birds, in the last moments of the song, become the memory of the protagonist's lost lover/muse. Also, passages of protracted harmonic stasis in the song underline the isolation, so that when harmonic movement does occur, it suggests the possibility of change and growth.  

Throughout the first piece of this powerful cycle, the soprano needs a keen sense of intonation and grounding of pitch, which is difficult because of the independent harmonic world Harbison has created. The coordination of the pianist and the singer is intertwined to represent the tissue of the connecting text. In the opening, marked Mesto, andante, the motive in the piano is clearly established and represents an exotic instrument. The pianist creates an atmosphere of a harsh winter landscape that is stark and angular, eliminating any expression by maintaining accents and playing the grace notes in a short, pointed manner (Example 12).

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57 Harbison interview, 24 February 2006.
Example 12: *Simple Daylight.* “Japan,” mm. 1-2

For the first bars, which are in the guise of an exotic instrument, pianists can create the mood to sound “very formal, brusque, atmospheric, and stark.” At measure three, a new texture emerges contrasting a line with a woodwind-like quality against the chords that begin each verse at the ritornello or refrain (Example 13).

Example 13: *Simple Daylight.* “Japan,” mm. 3-4

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59 Harbison interview, 24 February 2006.
Throughout the movement, pedaling indications are marked by the composer with several basic concepts in mind. It is interesting to note that the composer remarks that the “use of the pedal is by no means confined to the passages indicated.” All of the notes in the blocked chords are evenly voiced, and to maintain the exotic flute-like lines, it is best to play them dryly. In the last section of the piece, beginning in measure fifty nine, Harbison expects for the singer and pianist to sound as though they are declaiming independently of one another (Example 14).

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**Example 14:** *Simple Daylight.* “Japan,” mm. 58-63

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It’s true—if there were life after death
In an underworld it would be simple daylight
I would miss most, would grieve for
Inconsolably, would braid into every poem,
Every lament, such as this one,
For what was lost.

Motives play an important role in Harbison’s style and are prevalent in “Simple Daylight,” with a style that imitates chorale motet writing. Since the primary melodic material is based on points of imitation, an effective performance of this piece relies on the precise partnership of the pianist and singer. The piece begins with unison parts for the pianist and singer, which is unusual for Harbison’s writing. For blend, the pianist can work toward finding a richness of sound that is complementary to the voice. The motive in the vocal part at measure six begins in unison with the piano, but is then continued by the pianist in various forms and pitches until measure nine (Example 15).

Pedaling strategies for the pianist include those that do not change the harmonic scheme. To achieve this, the pianist can use a legato touch without the use of the pedal, unless it is indicated by the composer. Observing all articulations and phrase markings...
creates greater distinction in the lines featuring independence between the vocal and piano parts. “The balance of the piano to the voice should be relatively equal with a more cantata obbligato balance of Bach than a typical lieder song balance of Schumann or Schubert.”

There is a polyphonic texture beginning in measure sixteen that can prove to be challenging for the pianist. In this context, unusual accents in the vocal line imitate sobbing or wailing. Harbison suggests, with regard to phrase length, that the singer breathe after the d-sharps. Other breaths are at the performer’s discretion.

In measure twenty, Harbison foreshadows motivic material found in the third piece, “Somewhere a Seed” (Example 16).

Example 16: Simple Daylight. “Simple Daylight,” mm. 19-21

The dynamic markings are critical for effective interpretation of the text. In the preceding section, Harbison encourages the vocalist to use a guttural sound while the pianist strives for maximum sound output. In contrast to the dynamic level of measures twelve through twenty-two, a sweet voice utilized by the singer will startle the listener in

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61 Harbison interview, 24 February 2006.
measure twenty-five at “what was lost.” Meanwhile, the pianist maintains the effect of the staccato indications while utilizing the pedal. Harbison believes that a short articulation through the sustained pedal is essential for the effect. The short stroke of the pianist will be heard with a different sound than notes played with a sostenuto attack (Example 17).

Example 17: *Simple Daylight.* “Simple Daylight,” mm. 25-26

“Somewhere a Seed” (Michael Fried)

Somewhere a seed falls to the ground  
That will become a tree  
That will someday be felled  
From which thin shafts will be extracted  
To be made into arrows  
To be fitted with warheads  
One of which, some day when you least expect it,  
While a winter sun is shining  
On a river of ice  
And you feel furthest from self-pity,  
Will pierce your shit-filled heart.
This piece is the most technically challenging of the cycle. “Somewhere a Seed” is based on the principles of the chorale prelude: elements of the melody are expressed in the piano part in diminution. In addition, the primary melodic motive is introduced in the piano part and then afterwards in the voice. Each subsequent phrase is presented in this way, with the pianist introducing the idea and passing it to the vocalist. Numerous Bach organ and choral pieces function with chorale material being presented in a quicker rhythmic value, like the form and melodic structure found in “Somewhere a Seed.”

St. George discusses the setting of this piece:

In *Somewhere a Seed* the text speaks, in violent, hate-filled images, of the carefully planned, step-by-step production of the weapon which will pierce the heart of the former beloved. Both poem and music make it clear that self-recrimination and projection onto the other are the main concerns here. The music amazingly mirrors this idea by the use of canons, prefiguring each phrase of the vocal part and appearing to stalk it like a predator. The voice becomes engulfed in the canons and at the high point of the song is literally impaled on the climactic high A, which then quivers, like the shaft of an arrow, throughout the remainder of the song.62 [Example 18].

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Many readers conclude that Fried’s poem concerns someone who has been mistreated by a loved one and seeks some type of retribution. Harbison rejects the focus of the poem as a statement by a dejected lover and believes it is the protagonist that is the center of interest. He believes that it is more plausible for the protagonist to be the center of drama, learning to take responsibility for his actions. “The turning point of that theology is always the acknowledgement of the necessity to recognize that and make a change.”

Another element of the text that is an obstacle for the performance of this piece occurs with the use of profanity. The line of text, “your shit-filled heart,” has caused cancellations from the Florida Art Center and Philadelphia Academy.

The character indication of Bollente directs the pianist to create a boiling sensation over which the singer can present the text. This is created through dry playing, very little pedal, and emphasizing each line in the texture. Harbison would like for the alto voice in measures nine to eleven to be more pronounced in the overall texture, which can be challenging for the pianist (Example 19).


Example 19: Simple Daylight. “Somewhere a Seed,” mm. 9-11

Harbison interview, 24 February 2006.
In a master class setting, Harbison is consistent in mentioning measures forty-four to the end of the piece. The \textit{pressando} (pressing) in measure forty-four indicates a change in character rather than an actual speed. An \textit{accelerando} is possible but the pianist should take care that the \textit{poco più mosso} in measure fifty-three is not established too quickly, thereby losing intensity. Similarly, the tumultuoso section has the tendency to begin too quickly, causing the passage to lose control which has the effect of destroying the dramatic ending. Proceeding independently with accurate time will allow the passage to have the intended effect of a falling arrow piercing a heart [See Example 18].

\textbf{Your Name}

That passionate monosyllable, your name,  
Like some wounded animal’s all but inarticulate  
Cry, when the familiar hurt returns, on dragging legs,  
After an interlude of sleep or natural anesthesia,  
Spoken over and over by my own lips, wakes me.

As stated earlier, this piece was added after the original setting of the cycle was complete. “Your Name” was a replacement song for a poem Fried withdrew. The opening tempo indication is \textit{posato}, meaning settled, and the entrance for the vocalist has immediate and critical dynamic markings (Example 20).
Harbison makes changes to the texture at measure eleven. Beginning in the lower register of the soprano voice, the vocal writing ascends in dynamics and pitch. Harbison increases the piano activity with a descending eighth-note pattern giving clarity to the text “spoken over and over” (Example 21).

Example 21: Simple Daylight. “Your Name,” mm. 13-16

At the end of the piece, the pianist should keep the figures fortissimo with no decrescendo. Harbison expects the pianist to release the pedal on beat three of the final measure, allowing the left hand chord to continue to sound (Example 22).
The Wild Irises

Dying of thirst,
I long to share the fate of the wild irises
Each raindrop must seem to whom the size of a boulder
Flung down to devastate them with what they need.

“The Wild Irises” is another song in which Harbison writes specific pedal markings, especially in places that are less intuitive. In this piece, some of the sustaining in the left hand can be achieved with the assistance of the pedal.

In measure thirteen, Harbison enhances the inflection of the text with a melismatic texture. The vocalist must use finesse in the grace notes while maintaining control over the dynamics and pitch accuracy (Example 23).

In measure seventeen, Harbison recognizes the delicacy required for the pianist to represent everything in the score, and he desires the left hand to play legato. “Pianists with smaller hands may use pedal to help this connection without changing the tonal color. One can make a pedal connection and get rid of the pedal in time to get the sound of the upper notes without it bleeding over”\textsuperscript{64} (Example 24).

\begin{example}
\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{example.png}
\caption{Example 24: \textit{Simple Daylight}. “The Wild Irises,” mm. 17-19}
\end{figure}
\end{example}

The pedaling indications should be strictly observed at measure twenty-seven. Keeping the pedal down, the pianist must carefully simulate the tumultuous rain falling down by utilizing the \textit{pianissimo} dynamic and the sharp staccato markings within the pedal. By energizing the consonants, the vocalist keeps the dynamic intensity of the \textit{fortissimo}, thereby better conveying the text (Example 25).

\textsuperscript{64} Ibid.

“Odor”

Your perfume, or odor—
All measure gone I remember it, my body
Remembers it, my body when dead will remember it
In its bones, and when after incineration
The bones themselves are pulverized and dispersed upon
the air
As tiny motes of ash, they too will remember
(Dancing in the sunlight, jostled by larger molecules)
Your odor without a name.

St. George describes “Odor” in the following:

“Odor” has a life after death image. There are some words that are different in the published version in “Odor,” the last poem in the *Simple Daylight* cycle. In the final song, "Odor," the gradual disintegration, ultimately into atoms, of the body of the lover is graphically realized, but at the same time, from the very first measure, the main point of the poem, which is permanence, not transience, is held in focus by an accompaniment pattern as delicate and fragrant as the perfume it evokes.65

Sense of smell is a tremendous component of what people remember and know about each other. The concept—what is, will persist in the afterworld—is perfect for

65 David St. George, “John Harbison: Composer Essay,”
this Bach cantata form. Harbison believes that this is a grand statement to be used as a concluding piece to this cycle. A large scale crescendo occurs in this piece without any accelerando or change in tempo. The pianist has two voices and the upper voice provides the melodic line while the bottom line, marked non legato, provides motion through a repeated eighth-note pattern (Example 26).


Example 26: Simple Daylight. “Odor,” mm. 1-3

In order to maintain a smooth texture at measure thirty-three, it is advisable for the pianist to switch hands for the continuation of the original motive. Harbison also suggests a pronounced color change. This will enhance the important material that bridges the two main sections of the piece. In measure thirty-seven, a dry articulation will be most effective without any pedal (Example 27). Refraining from any pedal in measure forty will preserve the harmonic integrity.
Dynamic indications in measure fifty-eight should be observed, while ensuring adequate balance between pianist and singer. Both performers should carefully plan the diminuendo in measure fifty-nine. An equal dynamic balance throughout sections with thicker textures and challenging piano registration will help the pianist to avoid overshadowing the vocalist (Example 28).
With the words “dancing in sunlight,” Harbison creates an interruption of the texture. For the intended effect, the pianist should refrain from any pedal use. In addition, the best assistance and the most important part of this passage is the dynamic marking of pianissimo. There is a tendency of the vocalist to focus too much on the character and the articulation which would hinder the effect of the poet and composer. Even though this dynamic indication is difficult to execute, Harbison expects both performers to observe the pianissimo to create the desired effect (Example 29).

Example 29: Simple Daylight. “Odor,” mm. 66-68

Regarding the pedaling at the end of “Odor,” Harbison asks that the pianist observe the pedal markings exactly. In this section the pianist may be tempted to clear the build up of sonority; however, Harbison’s sense of writing produces a somewhat more eccentric effect.
CHAPTER SIX

FLASHES AND ILLUMINATIONS

According to the composer,

*Flashes and Illuminations* (1994) was commissioned by Reader’s Digest/Meet the Composer for baritone Sanford Sylvan and pianist David Breitman. Honoring their long musical partnership, I composed the piece that falls equally to pianist and singer, from poets who invite sustained reflection.

The title comes, in part, from the “Flashes and Dedications” section of Eugenio Montale’s book *La Bufera* (The Storm), in which the poem ‘Sulla Greve’ appears (the Greve is a small river near Florence). For Montale, the ‘flash’ is a momentary perception of the natural world or a human interaction that brings sudden insight.

Each poem suggested to me a Montalean flash: sudden, muted lightning on the horizon.⁶⁶

The premier performance of *Flashes and Illuminations* was given by baritone Sanford Sylvan and pianist David Breitman at Emmanuel Church, Boston, March 2, 1996. Harbison met the duo at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. As a member of the faculty, Harbison was aware of Sylvan and Breitman’s performance collaborations, which influenced him during the writing process for the cycle. It is also important to note that Breitman is a specialist in fortepiano and baroque performance practice.

Some of the songs of this cycle have both original and transposed versions. The transpositions were provided so that Sylvan would be able to perform these pieces as his vocal range began to shift later in his career. Harbison wanted to keep them in the bass/baritone region. In performances today, it is more common to hear the lower, transposed version. This was the second time that Harbison had written a transposition for Sylvan, having had previously transposed the fourth book of his song cycle, *Motetti di Montale*, for him. Overall, he wants singers to feel comfortable; however, changing

the key center can alter the composition. Normally resistant to transposition, Harbison makes exceptions for artists whom he knows.

*Flashes and Illuminations* is difficult to characterize briefly because it presents a disparity of voices. It would be more appropriate to define this cycle as a collection of distinct sources rather than an actual song cycle in the traditional sense. Harbison “wanted everything to be a conclusion of some phase and the initiation of another. Each one [piece] is its own world. This is not exactly a cycle in the true sense of its connectivity.”

*Flashes and Illuminations*, written in 1994, contains poems by five poets and is similar to song sets of the traditional lieder composers. The set includes another Montale poem (in Harbison’s own translation), two poems by Elizabeth Bishop, and one each by William Carlos Williams, Michael Fried, and Czesław Miłosz. This cycle is less formally organized than *North and South* or *Simple Daylight*. Harbison has commented that for reasons of compositional technique and registration, writing for the baritone voice presents greater difficulty than the soprano voice. Overall, the cycle represents the fundamental issues from the male point of view, but the songs are not interconnected.

Many elements contributed to the compositional evolution of this cycle. For two of the poets, this cycle marks the last time that Harbison would set their poetry to music. In addition, there are some poets included that Harbison had never set before. To Harbison, “he was leaving certain things behind and finding new experiences with poets and poetry that he had not experienced at all.”

Harbison wanted to depart from Montale’s poetry by using one last poem to begin the cycle. The extensive Montale settings found in the cycle *Motetti di Montale* took Harbison two years to write. “On the Greve” would serve as an end to his settings of Montale poetry.

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68 Ibid.
On the Greve (Eugenio Montale)

Now I feast no longer in your look as I did then,
When, at my whistle,
you leaned out, barely visible. A rock, a blocked furrow,
the swallow’s black flight, a covering for the world…
And now for me,
bread is that velvet bud which opens unclosing
with a slide from a mandolin.
Water is that rustling current,
your deep breathing wine.

“On the Greve,” or “Sulla Greve,” was written by Montale in 1950 and can be found in the original Italian version as well as in another translation by Jonathan Galassi in Collected Poems, 1920-1954, Parte IV “Flashes e Dediche.” At Songfest, Harbison stated the following with regard to “On the Greve”:

Montale wrote a lot of poetry during the 1930s about religion and women. There are sacramental images of the central Christian sacraments within this text. . . . Christian theology was a philosophy much more prevalent in Italy than in other parts at that time.

According to Jonathan Galassi, who translated Montale’s poetry:

“On the Greve” is about a trattoria situated above the Greve River just south of Florence, suggesting this as the possible locale of the lovers’ dinner/dance, symbolized here as a “carnal communion . . . a physical miracle of Cana,” in which the watery whispering of the woman’s velvet dress transubstantiates synesthetically with her breathing—always the most intimate of action in Montale, richly symbolic of vitality—to become wine (i.e., sacred blood). This is a poem of physical consummation, of consumption, but the lovers’ union is portrayed . . . in metaphors that have religious connotations.

Harbison composed an earlier version of “On the Greve,” but later revised the vocal line for the final printing of the cycle. This piece was first conceived as a piano suite. The biggest problem with the earlier version, according to Harbison, is the fact that he wrote the piano part first and then attempted to design a vocal part. “This piece depends completely on the self-sufficiency of the piano part to convey itself, and the

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69 John Harbison, Flashes and Illuminations, master class, Pepperdine University, Malibu, CA., 18 June 2005.

vocal part barely nests there.”

After the original piece for voice and piano was finished, Harbison wrote a new vocal line because the original version was too disjunct. The piano part is strong enough to stand alone in the original version, and as a result, the balance and partnership with the vocalist are challenging.

Harbison thoroughly marks details in his compositions to express subtleties in image, articulation, and dynamics. Harbison indicates *rubato* from the beginning and performers should enjoy the expressive possibilities allowed by this marking. Throughout the first movement, the Greve River is heard in images of water created in the piano part. Harbison creates a consistent direction of movement and sequence to sound like the river (Example 30). The pianist must be very specific in the dynamic shadings of each of the phrases, specifically in the dramatic *crescendo* at measure eighteen with a *subito pianissimo* at measure nineteen (Example 31).

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**Example 30:** *Flashes and Illuminations.* “On the Greve,” mm. 1-2

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Example 31: *Flashes and Illuminations.* “On the Greve,” mm 18-19

The singer must concentrate on the successful execution of each of the articulation markings indicated by the composer. Beginning with measure twenty-two, the singer articulates the text carefully while the pianist enhances the text through descending sixteenth notes in the left hand along with descending sextuplets in the right hand of the piano part, giving the impression of a “slide” (Example 32).
“Chemin de Fer” (Elizabeth Bishop)

Alone on the railroad track
    I walked with pounding heart.
The ties were too close together
    or maybe too far apart.

The scen’ry was impov’rished:
    scrub pine and oak; beyond
its mingled gray-green foliage
    I saw the little pond

where the dirty hermit lives,
    lie like an old tear
holding onto its injuries
    lucidly year after year.

The hermit shot off his shot-gun
    and the tree by his cabin shook.
Over the pond went a ripple.
    The pet hen went chook-chook.

“Love should be put into action!”
    screamed the old hermit.
Across the pond an echo
    tried and tried to confirm it.

*Flashes and Illuminations* contains the first Elizabeth Bishop settings by Harbison. Up until that time, Harbison had shown no interest in her poetry for his compositions; however, his good friend Michael Fried shared a particular Bishop poem with Harbison and suggested that he set it to music. “Chemin de Fer” was the first poem to inspire a lasting relationship of collaboration of text and music for Harbison and Bishop.

The performance guidelines for this song come mainly through the composer’s specific comments on details of the text, articulations, and dynamics. Harbison speaks of his interpretation of Bishop’s poetry as it applies to the performance of this piece: “The singer and the pianist should create in their minds an atmosphere of a walk that is arduous, but determined and impeded. The image of the railroad track represents a self-
generated anxiety. Both performers must communicate in rehearsals and make decisions regarding the reasons that the protagonist is stressed with a pounding heart.”

The tempo of poco più mosso at measure fifty-five should be maintained until molto rit. al fine at measure ninety-three. In measure sixty-one, Harbison has provided an ossia in the score to allow for the omission of the left-hand upper notes in the event that the repeat mechanism of the piano is not operating properly. It has been his experience that this malfunction of the instrument prevents the proper execution of the articulations intended.

The performers should make a special note of the particular articulation markings at measure seventy-one. These indications should be performed in a very pointed manner and generally not as short as the staccato mark. This is what is usually defined as a heavy staccato, which is almost always interpreted by the composer as a matter of duration (Example 33).

Example 33:  *Flashes and Illuminations.* “Chemin de Fer,” mm. 68-72

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“Love put into action” at measure seventy-five is still under the poco più mosso marking. The hermit of the poem has one thing to say: “Love should be put into action!” This idea provided the whole motive for the last part of the song. The pianist should execute an “almost uncomfortable”\textsuperscript{74} \textit{sfz} at the text “old hermit” while the singer, at Harbison’s suggestion, should employ a different voice quality for a change in character (Example 34).

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{example34.png}
\caption{Example 34: Flashes and Illuminations. “Chemin de Fer,” mm. 73-77}
\end{figure}

Harbison has set this poem as a “descent into sadness” and the pianist should “meditate towards the end.”\textsuperscript{75} The pianist can hold the tempo back to reinforce the wallowing of the protagonist.

\textsuperscript{74} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{75} Ibid.
The Winds of Dawn (Michael Fried)

Nevermind who, or what:
let the dawn answer those questions
as it may, let the winds of dawn level their fierce gusts
without favor or compunction
                                          until all is swept away.
Within sight of the ships, clothed in solar fire
As I caroled home the bronze spearheads, I was at last the poet
I have always wanted to be.

“The Winds of Dawn” is a setting of a poem Fried withdrew. Fried told Harbison he wasn’t going to use it, but that Harbison could set it anyway if he wanted to. After hearing Harbison’s setting, Fried became interested in the poem again and revised the words. The poem above is the revised version. Harbison has encountered many questions from those who have found the revised poem in the book The Next Bend in the Road; however, Harbison has chosen not to re-adapt his song to the newer published version of the poem.

Harbison claims to have a “‘Bach-perverted ear’ and hears him all the time, especially in this piece.”76 It is easy to see similar elements of composition between “The Winds of Dawn” and a Bach two-part invention or prelude (Example 35). Potential issues of balance can arise because of the low vocal line and the tumultuousness of the piano writing. “Often the balance issues come from the pianist using too much pedal.”77 The pianist should vehemently execute the fortепiano markings without overpowering the singer. When proper balance is achieved, the singer can focus on effective text delivery. Harbison has written accents in the vocal line to encourage the singer to use the consonants. Often, the singer misinterprets these accents and the diction suffers due to the efforts of the singer to use a louder dynamic. In addition, the vocalist must provide clarity of text through the articulations of the staccato notes.

76 John Harbison, Flashes and Illuminations, master class, Pepperine University, Malibu, CA., 18 June 2005.
77 Harbison interview, 19 December 2005.

Example 35: *Flashes and Illuminations.* “The Winds of Dawn,” mm. 1-3

**“Cirque d’Hiver” (Elizabeth Bishop)**

Across the floor flits the mechanical toy,
fit for a king of several centuries back.
A little circus horse with real white hair.
His eyes are glossy black.
He bears a little dancer on his back.

She stands upon her toes and turns and turns.
A slanting spray of artificial roses
is stitched across her skirt and tinsel bodice.
Above her head she poses
another spray of artificial roses.

His mane and tail are straight from Chirico.
He has a formal, melancholy soul.
He feels her pink toes dangle t’ward his back
along the little pole
that pierces both her body and her soul

and goes through his, and reappears below,
under his belly, as a big tin key.
He canters three steps, then he makes a bow,
canters again, bows on one knee,
canters, then clicks and stops, and looks at me.
The dancer, by this time, has turned her back.
He is the more intelligent by far.
Facing each other rather desperately—
his eye is like a star—
we stare and say, “Well, we have come this far.”

The marvelous “Cirque d’Hiver” was, Harbison told us, the poem that first got him hooked on Bishop. Poignantly sung by Sylvan, it’s one of Harbison’s most beautiful songs, reflecting both the elegance of the little mechanical horse “with real white hair” that “bears a little dancer on his back” and the elegance of Bishop’s interwoven rhymes. The toy is Bishop’s image of the busywork of creation, and Harbison’s music captures both its innocence and Bishop’s desperation. 78

This setting is evocative of a toy horse with a key in his belly and a dancer on top. The pole that pierces them creates images of distress; however, the last line, “Well, we have come this far,” signifies that even through this, the dancer and the horse are able to carry on. The genders of the dancer and the horse capture the complexity of a male/female dynamic. The male personifies a sad melancholic, falling into depression as he winds down. As the horse and the woman are locked together, she falls with him. 79

Beginning with the Poco meno mosso section at measure thirty-five, each “step” of the canter should be started anew and dramatized (Example 36). Each new measure should begin on its own with separate ideas for each. The effect created should feel like a winding down of things with almost no energy in this passage.

79 John Harbison, Flashes and Illuminations, master class, Pepperdine University, Malibu, 18 June 2005.
Example 36: *Flashes and Illuminations.* “Cirque d’Hiver,” mm. 34-36

At the end of the piece, the singer projects a sense of desperation to the audience. The pianist needs to convey this throughout the descent, which drops all the way down through the piano registration.

**To Be Recited to Flossie on Her Birthday (William Carlos Williams)**

Let him who may among the continuing lines seek out that tortured constancy affirms where I persist let me say cross cross purposes that the flow’r bloomed struggling to assert itself simply under the conflicting lights you will believe me a rose to the end of time.

The musical setting of *To Be Recited to Flossie on Her Birthday* is intimate, yet matter of fact. Harbison is surprised that Williams actually published such a personal poem—one that was written for his wife Florence. “There is a sense of singing to one specific person which can be compared to the quality and singing in the works of Schumann.”

Harbison describes this song as a passacaglia: “The upper element is a fixed pattern, an adulterated type of passacaglia, while the lower element changes” (Example

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80 Ibid.
81 Ibid.
37) The passacaglia theme is eight measures long and appears first in both the right hand of the piano part and the vocal line. The theme occurs five times, but with some variation. In measures fourteen to sixteen, Harbison writes a *ritard* that is meant to be exaggerated. This particular *ritard* is often trivialized in performances. Harbison has written optional notes for the baritone in measures twenty-two and twenty-four to offer alternatives to the lower pitches in this phrase.

Harbison is entrusting the performers to maintain a broad, sustained tempo throughout the piece. The challenge for the pianist is to provide enough sound for the singer without being intrusive. Often, the pianist plays too quietly, thus creating an unsupported feeling for the singer. This piece places a great demand on the voice, particularly in carrying the line and choosing breaths carefully and executing them in a

Example 37: *Flashes and Illuminations*. “To Be Recited to Flossie on Her Birthday” mm. 1-6.
precise manner. Harbison asks that the singer deliver the text in “a muffled manner as if behind a scrim.”

December 1 (Czesław Miłosz)

The vineyard country, russet, reddish, carmine-brown in this season.  
A blue outline of hills above a fertile valley.  
It’s warm as long as the sun does not set, in the shade cold returns.  
A strong sauna and then swimming in a pool surrounded by trees.  
Dark redwoods, transparent pale-leaved birches.  
In their delicate network, a sliver of the moon.  
I describe this for I have learned to doubt philosophy  
And the visible world is all that remains.

This is Harbison’s first setting of a poem by Miłosz. Harbison chose this poem because he liked the attitude of the text. Rather than coming to the United States and complaining about his former life in Poland, Miłosz was appreciative of his new life and opportunities in the United States. December 1 is also the birth date of Harbison’s wife, Rose Mary. The following are from Harbison’s program notes for his latest song cycle, Milosz Songs:

I write these songs not as a literary commentator or “appreciator” of poetry. I write them because they suggest specific musical opportunities to me. In reading Miłosz, I am repeatedly drawn to his fierce, cunning, sweeping, mid-length poems. . . As a composer I am drawn to fragmentary short lyrics, grateful for their elusive melody, their barely reconciled dissonant elements, and their embrace of the every day.

According to Harbison, this last song of Flashes and Illuminations is one of the best pieces that he has written. Both the pianist and the singer are equally responsible for generating the piece. Harbison composed it with diverse instrumentation in mind to represent the contrapuntal voices of the piano part, which should be individualized to represent the various timbres. He later orchestrated this piece for his friend, conductor David Hoose, and the Tallahassee Symphony Orchestra. This orchestrated version of “December 1” was written for mezzo-soprano rather than baritone. There are several

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82 Ibid.  
performance issues in the piano/vocal version. It would be extremely helpful for the pianist and the singer to listen to the orchestral version so that the conceptualization of colors and the harmonic texture can be fully understood. The pianist can choose different methods to create the distinctive sounds required to play each of the lines written in the polyphonic texture (Example 38).


Example 38: Flashes and Illuminations. “December 1,” mm. 1-3

Harbison asks that the singer execute the melismatic passages, like the one in measure thirty-six, in a mechanical and non-expressive way. One of the most frequent issues that Harbison addresses in many master classes is the importance of the lentissimo indication at measure thirty-eight. At the lentissimo, the baritone must sing slowly enough and stretch the phrase through measure forty-one (Example 39).
Example 39: *Flashes and Illuminations*. “December 1,” mm. 34-40

There are a couple of options for the pianist in measures forty-five to forty-seven. The pianist can either use the *sostenuto* pedal to clarify the harmonic changes, or simply use the damper pedal and allow the harmonic colors to blend. Harbison spoke of his preference for the damper pedal in a master class: “If the sostenuto is applied, the clear effect leaves nothing but the A, whereas pedaling leaves more color.”

One last note: there is a mistake by the publisher at the downbeat of measure twenty. The note in the right hand piano part should be an A rather than a G.

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CONCLUSION

Opportunities to work with living composers are invaluable as a way to gain more complete understanding of their pieces. Leading American composers such as Harbison have written song cycles that challenge and reward modern performers. In music by Harbison, there is information in the score; this treatise was written to provide a guide for performers with information derived mainly from master classes and conversations with the composer. Harbison urges performers to focus on every detail in the musical score. Along with tempo and dynamic indications, articulations and pedaling, he provides suggestions for performance, including subtleties of harmonic texture and poetic expression. A true partnership between voice and piano is essential. This treatise is an attempt to elucidate Harbison’s approach to performing his songs and to encourage artists to learn these demanding works.
**TABLE 1: HARBISON WORKS FOR VOICE**

*Does not include works from the opera, *The Great Gatsby*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Soloists/Instrumentation</th>
<th>Year of Publication</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Miłosz Songs</td>
<td>soprano, instrumental ensemble</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Little Children, Let Us Not Love in Word</td>
<td>soprano, alto, tenor, bass, piano</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>4 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ain’t Goin to Study War No More</td>
<td>baritone, instrumental ensemble</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>3 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aria:  Song for the Rainy Season</td>
<td>mezzo soprano, instrumental ensemble</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requiem</td>
<td>soprano, mezzo soprano, tenor, baritone, SATB chorus, instrumental ensemble</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>55 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North and South</td>
<td>soprano, instrumental ensemble or piano</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>15 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Il Saliscendi Bianco (The White Swallow)</td>
<td>mezzo soprano, instrumental ensemble</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>18 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Primavera di Sottoripa</td>
<td>soprano, instrumental ensemble</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>15 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four Psalms</td>
<td>soprano, mezzo soprano, tenor, baritone, SATB chorus, instrumental ensemble</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>40 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chorale Cantata</td>
<td>soprano, instrumental ensemble</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
</tr>
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</table>
TABLE 1: continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Voice/Instruments</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flashes and Illuminations</td>
<td>baritone, piano</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>16 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 1</td>
<td>mezzo soprano, instrumental ensemble</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>4 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juste Judex, from “Requiem of Reconciliation”</td>
<td>mezzo soprano, bass, SATB chorus, instrumental ensemble</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>6 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recordare, from “Requiem of Reconciliation”</td>
<td>mezzo soprano, bass, SATB chorus, instrumental ensemble</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>8 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Two Worlds</td>
<td>soprano, 2 cellos, 2 pianos</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>29 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Rewaking</td>
<td>soprano, instrumental ensemble</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>19 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Flute of Interior Time</td>
<td>baritone [or mezzo soprano], piano</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>2 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Words by Patterson</td>
<td>baritone, instrumental ensemble</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>27 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Im Spiegel</td>
<td>voice, piano/violin</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>3 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simple Daylight</td>
<td>soprano, piano</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>16 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rot und Weiss</td>
<td>voice, instrumental ensemble</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>3 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Natural World</td>
<td>soprano [or mezzo soprano], instrumental ensemble</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>15 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Flight into Egypt, Sacred Ricercar</td>
<td>soprano, baritone, chorus, instrumental ensemble</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>14 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mirabai Songs</td>
<td>soprano [or mezzo soprano], instrumental ensemble or piano</td>
<td>1982</td>
<td>17 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Composer</td>
<td>Vocal/Instrumentation</td>
<td>Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Due Libri</td>
<td>mezzo soprano, instrumental ensemble</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>23 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motetti di Montale</td>
<td>soprano, strings or piano</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>55 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samuel Chapter</td>
<td>soprano [or tenor], instrumental ensemble</td>
<td>1978</td>
<td>12 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Flower Fed Buffaloes</td>
<td>baritone, SSATBB chorus, instrumental ensemble</td>
<td>1976</td>
<td>19 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three Harp Songs</td>
<td>tenor, harp</td>
<td>1975</td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moments of Vision</td>
<td>soprano, tenor, instrumental ensemble</td>
<td>1975</td>
<td>24 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book of Hours and Seasons</td>
<td>mezzo soprano, flute, cello, piano</td>
<td>1975</td>
<td>20 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elegiac Songs</td>
<td>mezzo soprano, instrumental ensemble</td>
<td>1974</td>
<td>20 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX A

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Dear Cheryl Collen,

Farrar, Straus and Giroux, L.L.C. hereby grants Cheryl Louise Collen permission to include six poems ("Songs for a Colored Prophet," "Lute Aria," "Song," "Chemin de Fer," "Cran d'Hiver," and "Your Name") from THE COMPLETE POEMS 1927-1979 by Elizabeth Bishop, two poems ("Begin Again," "One of Those Osseous Brunettes") from EDGAR ALLAN POE & THE VILE VICE by Zachary Hooper, and a poem ("Japan") from "Shape of Light," "Somewhere a Seed," "Your Name," "The Vail of Fire," and "Adore") from I, THE CENTER OF THE EARTH by Michael Fried, in your treatise entitled "Performance Poetics: Songs, Song Cycly, John Cage, Fluxus, Finite and Continuous, Simple Daylight, and North and South." Permission is granted for unrestricted citation in the treatise. Mention of the treatise name and publisher is necessary to include the excerpts in published versions of the treatise. Please send a copy to the below.


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Should you have any queries or comments, please feel free to communicate the address below.

With appreciation,

[Signature]

19 Union Square West, New York, New York 10003 Telephone 212-732-6600 Fax 212-533-9385 email: fsgpubs@fsgbooks.com

To: Dear Cheryl Collen

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23 October 2004
Cheryl Louise Collen
Florida State University

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Should you have any queries or comments, please feel free to communicate the address below.

With appreciation,

[Signature]
November 7, 2006

Cheryl Cellon
2388 Wintergreen Road
Tallahassee, FL 32308

RE: FLASHER AND ILLUMINATIONS
NORTH AND SOUTH (SIX POEMS OF ELIZABETH BISHOP)
SIMPLE DAYLIGHT

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Print Licensing Manager
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- Greve 1-2, 18-19, 22-23
- Chemin 68-72, 73-77
- Winds 1-3
- Cirque 34-36
- To Be Recited 1-6
- December 1-3, 34-40

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- Ballad 12-14, 20-23, 68-71
- Late Air 26-30, 31-33
- Breakfast Song 1-7, 44-49
- Ballad II 33-35
- Song 1-8
- Dear, My Compass 1-2, 37-46

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- Japan 1-2, 3-4, 58-63
- Simple Daylight 7-8, 19-21, 25-26
- Somewhere 53-55, 9-11
- Your Name 1-4, 13-16, 19-20
- Wild Irises 13-16, 17-19, 26-28
- Odor 1-3, 33-37, 58-61, 66-68
APPENDIX B

IRB APPROVAL
Dear Cheryl Cellon,

Your application has been received by our office. Upon review, it has been determined that your protocol is an oral history, which in general, does not fit the definition of "research" pursuant to the federal regulations governing the protection of research subjects. Please be mindful that there may be other requirements such as releases, copyright issues, etc. that may impact your oral history endeavor, but are beyond the purview of this office.

Sincerely,

Tom Jacobson, Chair
FSU Human Subjects Committee

Cc: Timothy Hoekman
HSC No. 2006.0952
LETTER OF CONSENT FOR RESEARCH AND INTERVIEW

Dear Mr. Hortman,

I would like to write a treatise from a performance perspective about three of your song cycles: North and South, Flashes and Illuminations, and A Simple Daylight. I am asking for your permission to write about my findings as well as any assistance that you may give in the way of documentation, interview and other means of research.

I give my consent to participate in this research.

John Hortman

Oct 16 '06
BIBLIOGRAPHY


_______. Flashes and Illuminations. Sanford Sylvan, baritone, David Breitman, piano, Token Creek Recordings, 1996.

_______. Interview by author, 19 December 2005, Tallahassee, FL. Tape recording.

_______. Interview by author, 24 February 2006, New York City. Tape recording.

_______. Milosz Songs. Lincoln Center, New York, 23 February 2006. Program notes.
North and South, Janice Felty, soprano, Craig Smith, piano, Token Creek Recordings, 2004.


“Six Tanglewood Talks (1, 2, 3).” Perspectives of New Music (Spring-Summer, 1985)


BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Working actively as a vocal coach and accompanist, CHERYL CELLON has a wide variety of experience from opera and chamber music to vocal music literature. She has concertized as soloist and collaborative artist in France, Austria and the U.S. Among her credits are solo performances with the Greenville, Charlotte, and Pensacola Symphonies. Her teachers have included Carolyn Bridger, Jerry Alan Bush, Lita Guerra, Leonard Mastrogiacomo, Paul Nitsch and Valerie M. Trujillo. She has coached with Douglas Fisher and Timothy Hoekman, participated in master classes with Dalton Baldwin, Martin Katz, and John Wustman and has had the opportunity to work with notable composers such as John Harbison, Jake Heggie and Krzysztof Penderecki. She has served on the faculty at the American Institute of Musical Studies in Graz, Austria, and has been a participant in the Songfest Music Festival at Pepperdine University and the Académie Internationale d’Été de Nice in Nice, France.

Ms. Cellon’s degrees include a bachelor’s degree in piano performance from the University of South Alabama, the master’s degree in choral conducting from the University of Florida as well as a master’s degree in piano accompanying from the Florida State University. She received her doctoral degree in Piano Performance: Chamber Music/Accompanying from the Florida State University in December 2006.