

Mary Letellier

soprano

Recital in partial fulfillment of the
Doctor of Musical Arts, 2025
Student of Bradley Williams

with Timothy Steele, piano

Monday, October 16, 2023
8:00 p.m.
Williams Hall

“Le Petit Prince: A Musical Journey”

PROGRAM

-Narrator-

Marion Bauer

(1882–1955)

Albert Hay Malotte

(1895–1964)

Lori Laitman

(b. 1955–)

Gold of the Day and Night

My Friend

Echo

Timothy Steele, piano

-Fox-

Lori Laitman

(b. 1955–)

Sunflowers

The Sunflowers

Dreams

Sunrise

Timothy Steele, piano

-Rose-

Ernest Chausson

(1855–1899)

Quatre poèmes de Bouchor, Op. 8

Nocturne

Amour d’antan

Printemps triste

Nos souvenirs

Timothy Steele, piano

INTERMISSION

-Farewell-

Cedric Adderley

(b. 1965–)

Aaron Copland

(1900–1990)

Dominick Argento

(1927–2019)

Three Dreams

Dreams

Twelve Poems of Emily Dickinson

The World Feels Dusty

Six Elizabethan Songs

Sleep

From the Diary of Virginia Woolf

Last Entry

Timothy Steele, piano

-Stars-

Sergei Rachmaninoff

(1873–1943)

14 Romances, Op. 34

Vocalise

Timothy Steele, piano

Mary Letellier is the recipient of the Presidential Distinction Scholarship.

Text and Translations

Gold of the Day and Night

Nothing can keep my song from me
That I may sing of you,
Nothing can change the fantasy
Of your smiling eyes of blue.
You are the dream of everything
Woven into a soul,
Part of the plan of mystery
Fashioned out of the whole.
You are the sun and moon to me,
You are my thought's delight,
You are the beauty of all that is,
Gold of the day and night.

-Katharine Adams

My Friend

Within my heart there is a feeling
Forever tender and strong,
For you, my friend, who stand beside me
And urge my footsteps along.
Should fortune fail and shadows fall,
Your friendly hand would guide me. Tho' time may part the paths we wander,
This feeling will remain;
And when at last we go
Unto our journey's end,
We'll meet again, my friend.

-Albert Hay Malotte

Echo

Come to me in the silence of the night;
Come in the speaking silence of a dream;
Come with soft rounded cheeks and eyes as bright
As sunlight on a stream;
Come back in tears;
O memory, hope, love of finished years.

Oh dream how sweet, too sweet, too bitter sweet
Whose wakening should have been in Paradise,
Where souls brimfull of love abide and meet;
Where thirsting longing eyes
Watch the slow door
That opening, letting in, lets out no more.

Yet come to me in dreams, that I may live
My very life again tho' cold in death:
Comeback to me in dreams, that I may give
Pulse for pulse, breath for breath:

Speak low, lean low,
As long ago my love, how long ago.
-Christina Rossetti

The Sunflowers

Sunflowers

Come with me
into the field of sunflowers.
Their faces are burnished disks,
their dry spines
creak like ship masts,
their green leaves,
so heavy and many,
fill all day with the sticky
sugars of the sun.
Come with me
to visit the sunflowers,
they are shy
but want to be friends;
they have wonderful stories
of when they were young -
the important weather,
the wandering crows.
Don't be afraid
to ask them questions!
Their bright faces,
which follow the sun,
will listen, and all
those rows of seeds -
each one a new life!
hope for a deeper acquaintance;
each of them, though it stands
in a crowd of many,
like a separate universe,
is lonely, the long work
of turning their lives
into a celebration
is not easy. Come
and let us talk with those modest faces,
the simple garments of leaves,
the coarse roots in the earth
so uprightly burning.
-Mary Oliver

Dreams

All night
the dark buds of dreams
open
richly.

In the center
of every petal
is a letter,
and you imagine

if you could only remember
and string them all together
they would spell the answer.
It is a long night,

and not an easy one—
you have so many branches,
and there are diversions—
birds that come and go,

the black fox that lies down
to sleep beneath you,
the moon staring
with her bone-white eye.

Finally you have spent
all the energy you can
and you drag from the ground
the muddy skirt of your roots
and leap awake
with two or three syllables
like water in your mouth
and a sense

of loss—a memory
not yet of a word,
certainly not yet the answer—
only how it feels

when deep in the tree
all the locks click open,
and the fire surges through the wood,
and the blossoms blossom.

-Mary Oliver

Sunrise

You can
die for it—
an idea,
or the world. People
have done so,
brilliantly,
letting
their small bodies be bound
to the stake,
creating

an unforgettable
fury of light. But
this morning,
climbing the familiar hills
in the familiar
fabric of dawn, I thought
of China,
and India
and Europe, and I thought
how the sun
blazes
for everyone just
so joyfully
as it rises
under the lashes
of my own eyes, and I thought
I am so many!
What is my name?
What is the name
of the deep breath I would take
over and over
for all of us? Call it
whatever you want, it is
happiness, it is another one
of the ways to enter
fire.

-Mary Oliver

Quatre poèmes de Bouchor, Op. 8

Nocturne

*La nuit était pensive et ténébreuse; à peine,
Quelques épingles d'or scintillaient dans l'ébène
De ses grands cheveux déroulés,
Qui, sur nous, sur la mer lointaine et sur la terre,
Ensevelie en un sommeil plein de mystère,
Secouaient des parfums ailés.*

*Et notre jeune amour, naissant de nos pensées,
S'éveillait sur le lit de cent roses glacées
Qui n'avaient respiré qu'un jour;
Et moi, je lui disais, pâle et tremblant de fièvre,
Que nous mourrions tous deux le sourire à la lèvre,
En même temps que notre amour.*

-Maurice Bouchor

Amour d'antan

Night

The night was calm and full of shadows. A scant
few golden stars lit up the ebony sky
Perfumed wings of masses of unbound hair
rolled over my dear love, sweet, bedazzled face,
like an evening flower in full bloom.

And our young love, born of our thoughts,
awakened on the bed of a hundred frozen roses
that had only breathed for one day.
And I told her, pale and shaking with fever,
that they would see us die smiling
at the same time as our love.

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Love of former days

*Mon amour d'antan, vous souvenez-vous?
Nos cœurs ont fleuri tout comme deux roses
Au vent printanier des baisers si doux.
Vous souvenez-vous de ces vieilles choses?*

*Au rayon pâli des avrils passes
Sentez-vous s'ouvrir la fleur de vos rêves,
Bouquet d'odorants et de frais pensers?
Beaux avrils passés là-bas, sur les grèves!
-Maurice Bouchor*

Printemps triste

*Nos sentiers aimés s'en vont reflurir
Et mon cœur brisé ne peut pas renaître.
Aussi chaque soir me voit accourir
Et longuement pleurer sous ta fenêtre.*

*Ta fenêtre vide où ne brille plus
Ta tête charmante et ton doux sourire;
Et comme je pense à nos jours perdus,
Je me lamente, et je ne sais que dire.*

*Et toujours les fleurs, et toujours le ciel,
Et l'âme des bois dans leur ombre épaisse
Murmurant en chœur un chant éternel
Qui se répond dans l'air chargé d'ivresse!*

*Et la mer qui roule au soleil levant,
Emportant bien loin toutes mes pensées...
Qu'elles aillent donc sur l'aile du vent
Jusques à toi, ces colombes blessées!
-Maurice Bouchor*

Nos souvenirs

*Nos souvenirs, toutes ces choses
Qu'à tous les vents nous effeuillons
Comme des pétales de roses
Ou des ailes de papillons,*

Ont d'une joie évanouie

*Do you, my former love, remember?
Our hearts blossomed like two roses
in the springtime wind of kisses so sweet.
Do you remember those bygone things?*

*In the pale rays of Aprils past,
do you feel the flower of your dreams opening
as a bouquet of fragrant fresh thoughts?
Beautiful Aprils spent there on the beaches!
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Springtime of Sorrow

*The paths we loved will flower again
and my broken heart cannot be reborn.
Each evening finds me weeping
endless tears under your empty window,*

*where your charming head
and sweet smile no longer shine.
When I think of our lost days,
I mourn and am speechless.*

*And always the flowers, always the sky,
and the soul of the woods in its thick shadow
murmur in eternal chorus.
The answers are in the heavily intoxicated air!*

*And the sea rolls on in the rising sun,
sweeping all my thoughts away with it.
May my thoughts, these wounded doves,
ride far away on the wings of the wind until they
reach you!
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Our Memories

*Our memories, all these things
that we pluck, no matter when,
like rose petals
or the wings of butterflies,*

have retained all the secret perfume

*Gardé tout le parfum secret,
Et c'est une chose inouïe
Comme le passé reparait.*

*A de certains moments il semble
Que le rêve dure toujours
Et que l'on soit encore ensemble
Comme au temps des défunts amours;
Pendant qu'à demi l'on sommeille,
Bercé par la vague chanson
D'une voix qui charme l'oreille,
Sur les lèvres voltige un nom.*

*Et cette heure où l'on se rappelle
Son cœur follement dépensé,
Est comme un frissonnement d'aile
Qui s'en vient du joyeux passé.*
-Maurice Bouchor

of faded joys.
And it's amazing
how the past reappears.

Sometimes it feels
like the dream is still going on
and that we are still together,
as we were back in the days of our dead love,
half asleep, lulled
by the vague song of a voice
that charms the ear,
a name fluttering on the lips.

And this hour when we remember
how our heart was foolishly spent
is like the trembling of a wing
from the happy past.
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Dreams

Hold fast to dreams
For if dreams die
Life is a broken-winged bird
That cannot fly.
Hold fast to dreams
For when dreams go
Life is a barren field
Frozen with snow.
-Langston Hughes

The World Feels Dusty

The World—feels Dusty
When We stop to Die—
We want the Dew—then—
Honors—taste dry—

Flags—vex a Dying face—
But the least Fan
Stirred by a friend's Hand—
Cools—like the Rain—

Mine be the Ministry
When thy Thirst comes—
Dews of Thessaly, to fetch-
And Hybla Balms-

-Emily Dickinson

Sleep

Care-charmer Sleep, son of the sable Night
Brother to Death, in silent darkness born
Relieve my anguish and restore thy light
With dark forgetting of my cares, return;
And let the day be time enough to mourn
The shipwreck of my ill-adventur'd youth:
Let waking eyes suffice to wail their scorn
Without the torment of the night's untruth
Cease, dreams, th' images of day-desires
To model forth the passions of the morrow;
Never let rising sun approve you liars
To add more grief to aggravate my sorrow
Still let me sleep, embracing clouds in vain;
And never wake to feel the day's disdain.

-Samuel Daniel

Last Entry

No: I intend no introspection. I mark Henry James' sentence:
Observe perpetually. Observe the oncome of age. Observe greed.
Observe my own despondency. By that means it becomes
serviceable. Or so I hope. I insist upon spending this
time to the best advantage. I will go down with my colours
flying . . . Occupation is essential. And now with some pleasure
I find that it's seven; and must cook dinner. Haddock and
sausage meat. I think it is true that one gains a certain
hold on sausage and haddock by writing them down.

-Virginia Woolf

Program Notes

“Le Petit Prince: A Musical Journey” is a recital that captures the themes of Antoine de Saint-Exupéry’s timeless novel. Each set of the recital represents one major theme and is accompanied by an illustration from the novel and a quote from Katherine Woods’ English translation.



Figure 1: Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, *The Little Prince*, trans. Katherine Woods (London: Farshore, 2017), 4.

Narrator

“And that is how I made the acquaintance of the little prince.”¹

Our nameless narrator meets the little prince in the desert after his plane crashes. They form a deep friendship over the course of the next several days. The little prince reminds the narrator of the importance of imagination; the narrator must let go of the silly things that adults find important and rediscover the wisdom of childhood.

This set begins with two simple songs: “Gold of the Day and Night” and “My Friend” by Marion Bauer and Albert Hay Malotte, respectively. Both contain clear tonal centers and straightforward rhythms; this singable music is paired with touching poetry, representing the childlike insight that the prince brings.

¹ Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, *The Little Prince*, trans. Katherine Woods (London: Farshore, 2017); 8.



Example 1: Lori Laitman. *Echo*. (New York: Enchanted Knickers Music, BMI, 1995).

Lori Laitman's "Echo" is also tonal and has simple rhythms, save for a few metrical variations between 3/4 and 2/4. The melody is more complex; with a wider total range and larger melodic jumps within the vocal line when compared to the first two songs. According to Laitman, "To draw the listener into the singer's reverie, I employ a repetitive pattern of octaves in the right hand of the piano over a pedal point in the left hand." (See **Example 1**)² The longing poetry matched with this more mature sound represents the narrator after saying farewell to the prince, changed forever and longing for his return.



Figure 2: Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, *The Little Prince*, trans. Katherine Woods (London: Farshore, 2017); 67.

Fox

*"And now here is my secret, a very simple secret: It is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye."*³

The little prince meets the fox on his journeys on Earth before he encounters the narrator. The fox asks for the prince to tame him; by taming him, the prince and the fox will be special to one

² Lori Laitman, *Echo* (New York: Enchanted Knickers Music, BMI, 1995), 3.

³ Saint-Exupéry, *The Little Prince*; 72.

another. Though the prince may look like the hunters that the fox fears, their friendship will mark the prince as different. In this same way, the prince's rose, though she looks like any other rose, is individual, and special.

Mary Oliver's poetry perfectly encapsulates the lessons that the fox teaches the little prince. In "Sunflowers," the narrator exhorts the listener to "tame" each sunflower he encounters. Laitman says that the song "opens with a swaying piano accompaniment meant to portray the sunflowers standing in a field."⁴

In "Dreams," the narrator discusses the hidden desires that dreams reveal to the dreamer, as the fox helps the little prince realize his wish to return to his rose. The meter of this song shifts constantly, creating a hypnotic and dreamlike effect. (See **Example 2**). The cycle closes with "Sunrise." The melody "expands into sweeping lyric lines" that mirror the intensity of the poetry.⁵ The beautiful idea that has set the prince's imagination on fire, the sunrise described in the poetry, is the fox's wisdom: "what is essential is invisible to the eye."⁶

12

17 *mf* *f* *poco rit.* ♩ = 66

string — them all to - geth - er — they would spell the

poco rubato *poco rit.* ♩ = 66

mf

* * * * *

Example 2: Lori Laitman, "Dreams." *Sunflowers*. (New York: Enchanted Knickers Music, BMI, 2000).

⁴ Lori Laitman, *Sunflowers* (New York: Enchanted Knickers Music, BMI, 2000), 4.

⁵ *Ibid*; 4.

⁶ Saint-Exupéry, *The Little Prince*; 72.

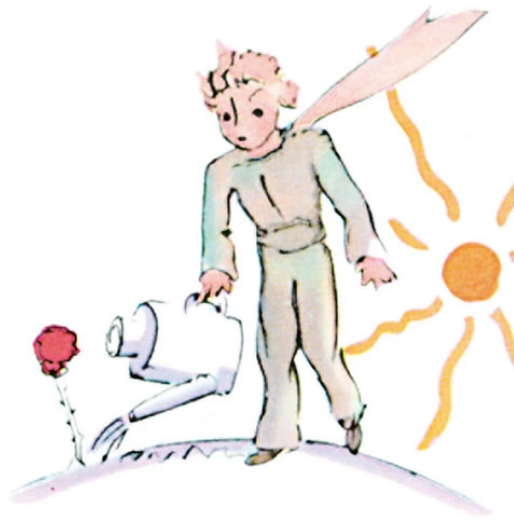


Figure 3: Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, *The Little Prince*, trans. Katherine Woods (London: Farshore, 2017); 26.

Rose

*"The stars are beautiful, because of a flower that cannot be seen."*⁷

The prince loves his rose; she blossomed one day on his small planet and was unlike any flower he had ever seen. She was difficult and vain; she often demanded he water her, shade her, or keep her from cold breezes. Deep down, however, he knew she loved him dearly. He left his planet to discover all he could about the universe. Upon arriving on Earth, he encountered a garden full of flowers, identical to his rose. He was utterly dismayed with this discovery; he had believed his beloved flower was unique. By taming the fox, however, he learned that his rose is truly one-of-a-kind. When he looks up at the night sky, it is made more beautiful by the knowledge she is there.

To represent the distance between the rose and the little prince, her songs are in French while the rest of the recital is in English. Bouchor's poetry in Chausson's *Quatre poèmes de Bouchor* describe a young and passionate love that has died. The narrator uses rich floral imagery to express his longing to recapture the love of those days long since passed. So too, does the little prince. He resolves to return to his rose, by any means necessary.

The two-measure piano introduction of "*Nocturne*" establishes a piano texture and rhythm that pervades the piece; the pattern crosses over the bar line and creates two-against-three rhythmic effect with the vocal line. (See **Example 3**). The dynamics of this piece are particularly

⁷ Saint-Exupéry, *The Little Prince*; 78.

restrained, maintaining *piano* throughout until reaching *mezzo-piano* in the last eight bars. Both the rhythmic and dynamic effects contribute to the longing of the piece.

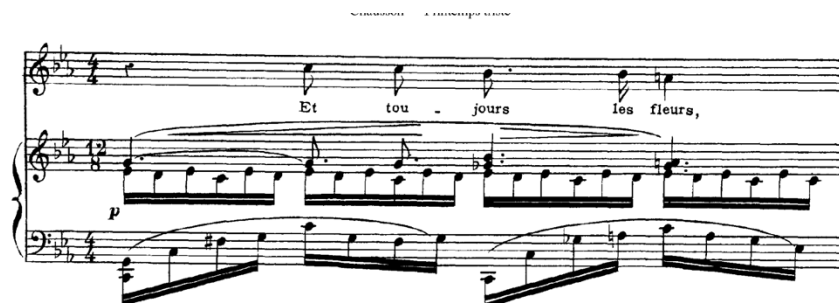


Example 3: Ernest Chausson. “Nocturne.” *Quatre poèmes de Bouchor*. (Paris: E. Baudoux, 1897. Plates E. B. & Cie. 298-301.)

The sparseness of piano texture with the syllabic and speech-like rhythms of the first two lines of text gives it a recitative-like quality in “*Amour d’antan*.” The poem consists of five questions, each asking the listener if she remembers aspects of her life together with the narrator. Each vocal line rises in pitch, to depict these interrogatives. The final line makes it clear that this romance is in the distant past, and resolves strongly on the tonic of b minor.

“*Printemps triste*” maintains the syllabic nature of the text settings of the previous two pieces in the cycle, but the texture of the piano is far denser and Chausson employs polyrhythms and contrary counterpoint motion. The first thirteen measures are in 4/4, followed by twelve measures in 9/8, and then a final return on 4/4. There is a shift in texture as well in the 9/8 meter; the piano is sparser, with triplet repeated chords. The thinner piano texture seems to represent the absence of the lover that the poetry describes in this section.

The reappearance of the 4/4 time signature is quite complicated, however; the vocal line and left hand of the piano are in 4/4, while the right hand are in 12/8. (See **Example 4**). In addition to this polyrhythmic complexity, the piano’s texture thickens again, adding to the intensity which builds to a climax on the text, “*Emportant bien loin toute mes pensées*.”



Example 4: Ernest Chausson. “*Printemps triste*.” *Quatre poèmes de Bouchor*. (Paris: E. Baudoux, 1897. Plates E. B. & Cie. 298-301.)

The cycle ends with “*Nos souvenirs.*” The song begins with the piano over two-octaves apart, in a rocking, repeated eighth note pattern which is maintained for sixteen measures. In the middle of the song, Chausson again employs a two-against-three rhythm; here the poetry describes a dream-like belief that the lovers are still together. This push-pull relationship between the triplet piano and duplet vocal line depicts the dissonance between the speaker’s sad reality and hopeful delusion. The song ends with a thirteen-measure piano epilogue containing melodic material not heard previously in the song.

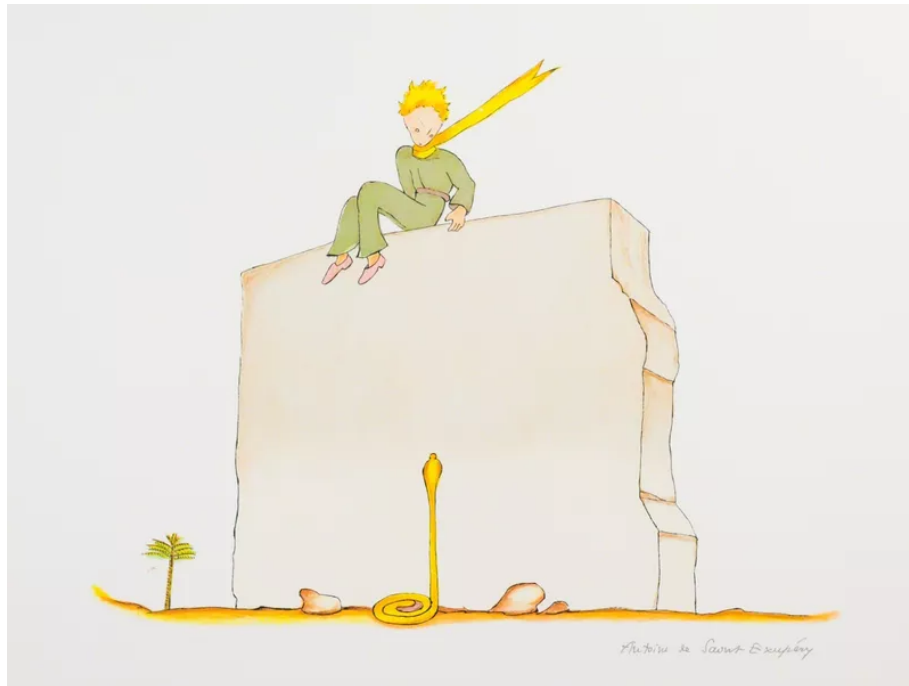


Figure 4: Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, *The Little Prince*, trans. Katherine Woods (London: Farshore, 2017); 86.

Farewell

*“He remained motionless for an instant. He did not cry out. He fell as gently as a tree falls. There was not even any sound, because of the sand.”*⁸

The little prince decides to return to his planet on the anniversary of his arrival on Earth. He has made a deal with the snake near the well. “You have good poison? You are sure that it will not make me suffer too long?”⁹ He tells the narrator that he cannot carry his heavy little body such a great distance: “I shall look as if I were dead, and that will not be true...[My body] will be like an old, abandoned shell. There is nothing sad about old shells...”¹⁰

Cedric Adderley’s “Dreams” uses the text of Langston Hughes’ poem of the same name. The theme of this poem is to never give up on your dreams; life loses all meaning without them. Has

⁸ Saint-Exupéry, *The Little Prince*; 92.

⁹ *Ibid*; 85.

¹⁰ *Ibid*; 91.

the prince given up on his dreams and is therefore ending his life, or does he believe that he truly will return to his rose?

The piano opens with a two-measure introduction; the right-hand plays eighth-note chords and the left-hand a half note melody. This hypnotic texture continues for ten measures, until the texture thickens into sixteenth notes in the right hand and eighth notes in the left hand. The music slows on a *ritardando* into a new tempo on measure 15; the texture again changes to slow, block chords on the text “Life becomes a barren field.” The piano plays a short two-measure coda with similar music as the two-measure introduction. (See **Example 5**).

The image shows a musical score for the song "Dreams" by Cedric Adderley. It features two staves: a Soprano staff and a Piano staff. The Soprano staff begins at measure 17 with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat (B-flat), and a 4/4 time signature. It contains a triplet of eighth notes with the lyrics "frozen with snow." below it. The Piano staff begins with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs), a key signature of one flat, and a 4/4 time signature. It features a two-measure introduction with a half note in the left hand and eighth-note chords in the right hand. A double bar line separates the introduction from the main body of the song. The main body begins at measure 15 with the tempo marking "Tempo I" and the dynamic marking "pp". The piano part consists of block chords in the right hand and a half note melody in the left hand. The score ends with a two-measure coda.

Example 5: Cedric Adderley. “Dreams.” *Three Dreams*. (Cedricadderley.com, 1996).

Aaron Copland’s “The World Feels Dusty” come from his song cycle, *Twelve Poems of Emily Dickinson*. This poem of Dickinson’s can be read that, upon reaching death, the world feels dusty to us all and we long for water to slake our thirst. In the novel, the little prince begs the narrator to carry him to a well for water; the same well that provides the water that quenches both the prince’s and narrator’s thirst is where the prince barter with the snake for its poison. The little prince, too, felt that the world was dusty before he died.

Copland set a 1929 printed version of Dickinson’s poetry; it lacks any of her stylistic dashes and substitutes two words at the end; “thysel” for “Thessaly” and “holy” for “Hybla.” Thessaly is a region in Greece, and Hybla is a Sicilian goddess of earth and fertility. Note the difference in poetry Copland set to the original listed above in the program:

“The world feels dusty
When we stop to die;
We want the dew then,
Honors taste dry.

Flags vex a dying face,
But the least fan
Stirred by a friend’s hand
Cools like the rain.

Mine be the ministry
When thy thirst comes,
Dews of thyself to fetch

And holy balms.”¹¹

Because of the difference between Dickinson’s original version and the 1929 version, Copland’s rhythms do not reflect the dashes, instead representing the punctuation of the 1929 version. Copland creates a rocking lullaby with a two-note short-long figure in the piano. This rhythm gesture pervades the piece, creating a sense of stillness and peace.

The final two pieces in the set are by Argento. The first is “Sleep,” from his *Six Elizabethan Songs*. The poetry comes from Samuel Daniel’s 45th sonnet in his 50-sonnet cycle entitled *Delia*. The music is slow and languid, marked *lentamente*, serving as a lullaby that wills the listener to sleep. The middle section, beginning on measure 9, changes to a faster tempo. The piano breaks into sixteenth-note triplets, underscoring the text as it describes the turbulence of youth and wakefulness. The music returns on measure 17 to the lullaby music again. (See **Example 6**). Interpreted through the lens of *Le Petit Prince*, the middle section music represents the prince’s tumultuous time on earth, while the languid music represents his time on his planet and his solemn return to the stars.



Example 6: Dominick Argento. “Sleep.” *Six Elizabethan Songs*. (New York: Boosey & Hawkes, 1970.)

The final song in this section is “Last Entry;” it is the eighth and final song of *From the Diary of Virginia Woolf*. The text is taken from Woolf’s final diary entry in the 1954 publication, written just twenty days before her suicide. From her writing, it is clear that Woolf is aware that she is struggling with mental illness. Her “occupation is essential” could be read that she accepts that she will die soon but wishes to occupy her time with her writing and preparing dinner. This practical assessment can be seen in the fictitious little prince, who worries more about the narrator’s reaction to his “abandoned shell” than his own departure.

The song is divided into three sections. In the first section, the right hand of the piano establishes a steady rhythm with consonant major triads. The vocal line consists of syncopated repetitions of “No’; the voice part’s inability to line up rhythmically with the constant piano represents Woolf’s struggle with her mental health.

¹¹ Further *Poems of Emily Dickinson*, ed. Martha Dickinson Bianchi and Alfred L. Hampson (Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1929). The version with the dashes comes from *The Poems of Emily Dickinson*, 3 vols., ed. Thomas H. Johnson (Cambridge: The Belnap Press, 1955).

Risoluto ed appassionato (♩. = 60-63)

No, no, no, no, no, no, no, I in-tend no in-tro-

Example 7: Dominick Argento. "Last Entry." *From the Diary of Virginia Woolf*. (New York: Boosey & Hawkes, 1975).

In measure 25, Argento recalls the themes from a previous song in the cycle, "Anxiety," to accompany the text "occupation is essential." Several other songs from the cycle are brought back in the song from measures 28 to 58, including themes from "Rome," "Parents," and "Fancy." The death knell from "War" returns after a grand pause in measure 39, signifying Woolf's impending death. In measure 42, music from the beginning of the cycle returns as Woolf discusses dinner preparations. The singer reiterates the phrase "by writing them down", each time dropping a word until only "writing" remains. This is repeated again and again, until it becomes trance-like. The song ends with a repetition of the final sixteen-measures of the first piece in the cycle, save for the final note. That note represents the finality of Woolf's death, which occurs outside of her diary entry, and outside of this song cycle.

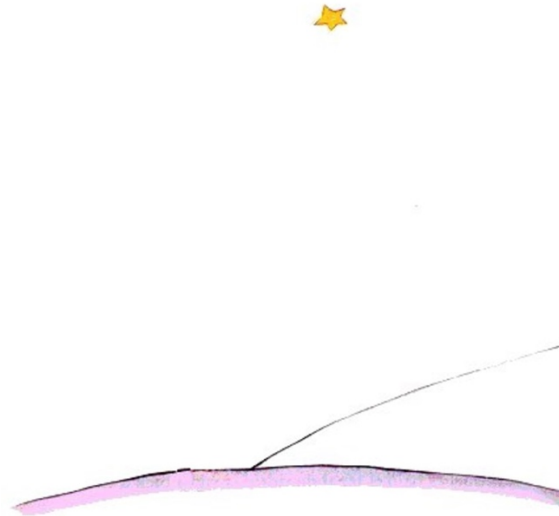


Figure 5: Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, *The Little Prince*, trans. Katherine Woods (London: Farshore, 2017); 93.

Stars

“And at night I love to listen to the stars. It is like five hundred million little bells...And then the little bells are changed to tears... Look up at the sky. Ask yourselves: Is it a yes or no?”¹²

When looking at the night sky, the narrator wonders if the little prince has latched the muzzle for the sheep he drew for his young friend. If the little prince has remembered, the rose is safe, and the stars are bells of laughter. If he hasn't, then the sheep got out of his muzzle, ate the rose, and the stars are full of tears. He asks us all; what sound do the stars make?

Rachmaninov's *Vocalise* is a song without words. The main motive is sixteenth notes culminating in a longer note, whether tied to a half note or eighth. They mark small points of melodic arrival in the piece. The melody itself is an endless cycle, with melodic arrival points visiting distantly related tonalities, coloring the piece suggesting by moods without text.

The use of the repeated descending scales, minor mode, and chromatic scales all contribute to the longing and contemplative mood of the piece. The chromatic movement creates a sense of urgency, a need to resolve. The piece ends with an aching five-measure vocal line that ascends to the highest note in the entire work and terminates in a wistful trill, epitomizing the intense, melancholic yearning of the song. (See **Example 8**)

¹² Saint-Exupéry, *The Little Prince*; 93.



Example 8: Sergei Rachmaninov. "Vocalise." *14 Romances, Op. 34. Complete Songs for Voice and Piano* (pp.177-239) Moscow: Editions Russes de Musique, Gutheil, 1922.

Imagine that each note is a star and answer the question; are the stars laughing or crying?

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