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El Alba del Alhelí is a work that reveals cultural and intellectual influences in the music of composer Juan Orrego-Salas. Despite being one of the most significant Latin American composers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, his music is not frequently performed today. The presentation of this song cycle illustrates a facet of 20th-century Latin American music that does not necessarily conform to the nationalistic or folkloristic ideal that is typically expected. Its analysis reveals Orrego-Salas' way of integrating European and American trends of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and is at the same time a resource to enliven the interest in Latin American music and composers.

Lack of familiarity with the Spanish language is another aspect that leads to not venturing into the Latin American repertoire. In this work, the free translation that accompanies the original edition is replaced by a translation that allows the singer a closer approximation to the content of the poems.

A PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS OF THE SONG CYCLE EL ALBA DEL ALHELÍ BY  
COMPOSER JUAN ORREGO-SALAS

by

Maria M Menendez

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## CHAPTER I: EL ALBA DEL ALHELI: TEN SONGS TO POEMS BY RAFAEL ALBERTI

### Introduction

Even in today's classical Latin American music, especially the art song genre, there is a modest representation in concert and study programs. Lack of familiarity with Hispanic composers and their music is a factor that keeps the performer from exploring valuable repertoire. Presenting the song cycle *El Alba del Alhelí* by composer Juan Orrego-Salas is a way of bringing more exposure to a work and a composer whose imprint dissipated with the passage of time. It also allows us to explore a facet of mid-20th-century Latin American art music. A characteristic aspect of Orrego-Salas' compositions is the absence of recognizable Chilean folkloric or national elements. His inspiration emerges as a combination of Creole life experience and academic musical training intertwined with his intuition and imagination.

When it comes to Latin American music in the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the term Nationalism, prevalent since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, comes to the fore. The juxtaposition of diverse human groups was a decisive consequence of the colonial phase, which led to a significant transformation of life and cultural practices in the region and continued with the subsequent waves of European migrations of later centuries. These social movements generated the emergence of a Creole population, rooted in their ancestral traditions, a situation that fundamentally characterizes the composition of the population in Latin America. European educational training was adopted and with it came the adherence to cultural patterns, aesthetical ideals, and the imitation of styles and techniques in the arts. When listening to the music of this Chilean composer, we perceive a source of his inspiration in his ancestral Spanish roots rather than in his native environment, which mixed with his intellectual formation, produces the results that emanate from his works.

After WW2, there was an increase in cultural and musical collaboration between Europe, the United States, and Latin America. Composers from the most developed countries in the region like Brazil, Argentina, Mexico, Chile, and the Caribbean islands used to travel to Europe and the U.S. to receive training in avant-garde composition techniques. These interactions contributed to shaping the aesthetic orientation of the emerging generation of Latin American composers throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, moving from Nationalism to a different search in their expressive needs and broadening their international aspirations. It is within this scenario that Orrego-Salas' musical creation unfolded.

### **Composer's background**

As Orrego-Salas indicates in his book *Encuentros, Visiones y Repasos* (2005), the Creole population predominated over the native inhabitants in Chilean society at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The composer stated that for a long time, he knew very little about the Aboriginal culture of his country (2005, p.80). As in many other Latin American countries, this population was decimated after the European conquest and remained relegated to the background, very far from the social focus. The composer expresses that in Chilean academic education, very little space was dedicated to Chile and the Americas. He himself admits that the Indigenous tradition in Chilean music “was minimal and has coexisted in parallel with the Creole tradition of Iberian roots” (Orrego-Salas, 1974 p.271).

The academic education of Juan Orrego-Salas alternated between English and German schools and the European conservatory style. After completing his degree, he was actively involved in Chilean musical life as a composer, educator, and scholar. He wrote numerous essays, and articles for important music journals in Chile. Parallel with music, he became an



architect and always considered that both disciplines had common features. The composer expressed it clearly in his book:

When I started my architectural studies, I was able to recognize that the harmony and unity of a visual form depended on the presence of a basic cohesive instrument, which is comparable to the function of the generating motive that sustains the continuity in the development of music (Orrego-Salas, 2005, p.55).

An example of this statement is evidenced in *El Alba del Alhelí*, where the introductory motive sets parameters for the rest of the composition.

Orrego-Salas' recognition in the U.S. began in 1944 with a period of studies at Tanglewood with A. Copland. In the early 1950s, a second Guggenheim Fellowship was awarded to him for additional studies, benefiting from the teaching of Randal Thompson and Paul Henry Lang. This was also a fruitful period for the composer in which several of his orchestral works were premiered. After 1961 his activities expanded with an offer from the Rockefeller Foundation to head the Latin American Music Center [LAMC]. At the request of the composer, the center was incorporated into the music program of an educational institution, and Indiana University was chosen to conduct the project. The creation of the LAMC in 1961 represented one of the efforts to bring Latin American music beyond the confines of its local environment, exposing it to the attention of the American audience and academia. From this moment on, he settled permanently in the United States where he continued his activities as a composer and teacher until his death.

“Expressing with music the content of the words” (Orrego-Salas 2005) was of utmost importance for the composer. Orrego-Salas drew much of his inspiration from Spanish poetry. Some examples of this are *Cantata de Navidad* for soprano and orchestra, *El Retablo del Rey*

*Pobre* (The Altarpiece of the Poor King) opera-oratorio, *Alabanzas a la Virgen* (Praises to the Virgin) for high voice and piano in popular singing tradition, *Cinco Canciones a seis* (Five songs for six interpreters) for mezzo with two violins, cello, clarinet, and piano, and *Canciones Castellanas* for soprano and an ensemble of eight instruments. The composer considered this work, written between the years 1946-48, as his best achievement up to that moment. It represented the beginning of a new stage in his development as a composer. Its premiere in Paris, conducted by the composer himself, and later in London, received acclaim and recognition from the audience. In 1950, inspired by Rafael Alberti's poetry, he composes *El Alba del Ahelí*. This is the collection that follows *Canciones Castellanas*, and it was created at the request of the Argentine soprano Clara Oyuela, who performed the premier of the cycle.

### **The poet**

Rafael Alberti (Cadiz, Andalucia, 1902-1999), considered one of the greatest figures of the silver age of Spanish literature, was a prominent playwright, painter, and poet, who belonged to the generation of Spanish writers of 1927. This was an influential group of artists dedicated to avant-garde art that emerged between 1923 and 1927 in Spain. It was not restricted to literature, extending to other branches of the arts such as sculpture, painting, cinema, and music. Among the figures belonging to this group were well-known personalities such as Federico García Lorca, Emilio Prados, Salvador Dalí, and the Catalan composers Eduardo Toldrá, and Federico Mompou.

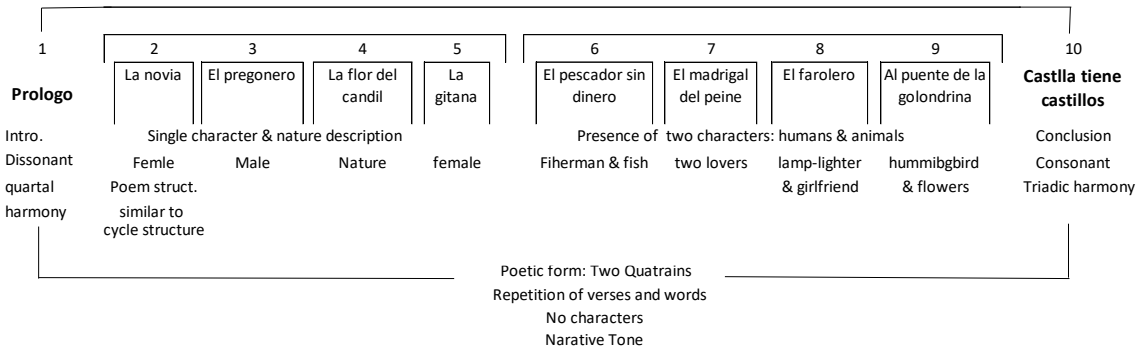
*El Alba del Ahelí* (1927) is the title of the third book of poems by Rafael Alberti, which translates into "The Dawn of the Wallflower," different from the title of the musical edition (The Fragrant Dawn). The literary tendency that characterizes Alberti's first stage of writing was called neo-populism. This was a manifestation of anti-elitist character in Andalusian poetry,

focused on the imitation of popular style. Simplicity in verse metric and language, repetition, and refrains are structural elements of the neo-populist composition (Lopez-Castro, 1998). The collection contains 22 poems that reflect the idiosyncrasy of southern Spain through “human figures on the marginal side of society” (López-Castro, 1998). These poems display the aforementioned characteristics of Alberti’s style such as brevity, simplicity of form and language, and repetition of words and verses. Orrego-Salas selected eight poems from this collection and stated that “each one of them gave him the opportunity to face different characters and translate that image into music” (2005, p. 281). Two of the poems, the lullaby *El Madrigal del peine perdido* (Song of the Lost Comb) and the one that closes the cycle, *Castilla tiene castillos* (Castile has its Castles), belong to a previous book by Alberti titled *La Amante* (The Lover).

### **Analytical Overview Songs 1-5**

The general conception of the piece as a whole, represents a logical selection and organization of the poems. The first poem serves as an introduction. It is followed by eight scenes of village life and a final poem with a conclusive meaning. Its theme is not related to the previous ones and provides a unique ending to the cycle, closing with an emotional tone of pride toward the poet’s native land. Rural life and nature are interconnected throughout the piece in the presentation of the characters and their interaction with nature. Figure 1 shows a general scheme of the relationship between the structure, the poems, the music, and the characters. Through the eyes of the poet, as indicated by the lines of the opening poem, contrasting life stories coexist sheltered by the beauty of nature. Orrego-Salas (2005) said that a musical composition should constitute a complete thought, to which nothing can be subtracted or added without altering its integrity...the harmony between all its parts (p.78).

**Figure 1. General overview of the cycle**



The songs are connected by “thematic modules,” a term Orrego-Salas uses in referring to the musical coherence of the composition as a unity (2005, p.281). Between the first and last poems, there are common characteristics. The poetic voice is expressed in a narrative tone in both, and there is no presence of characters or drama. These qualities leave them on the periphery of the situations and conflicts the internal poems describe. Both songs differ in their musical language, displaying contrasting styles. In the Prologue, the “neoclassical” writing of the composer is evident by the dissonant language and the clarity in the piano texture. In the final song, he employs a consonant homophonic style, using a melody over a triadic harmony.

The simplicity of the language is a characteristic that both Orrego-Salas and Alberti maintain in their respective genres. A distinctive element in Alberti’s poetry is the ability to artistically recreate an unsophisticated language. Orrego-Salas, on his side, stated that “both musical and architectural creation depended on the use of very few elements” (2005, p.71). He employs in his melodies the rhythm and inflections of the spoken voice. The piano part dialogues with the voice and accompanies with patterns that are not complex but are highly effective in their function of building the drama for each character’s scene.

## 1. *Prólogo*

As the word prologue indicates, this is the introduction of the work. It can be described as the presentation of the cycle from both a literary and musical perspective. In this short poem, the poetic voice announces diverse experiences to share, which translates into the scenes and characters that follow. The music, on the other hand, reveals with the initial motive a short musical idea that contains key elements for the cycle: the rhythmic figure and the perfect 4<sup>th</sup> interval, both important for the continuity of the work. (Example 1). The main motive is an example of the thematic module, the *continuum* that sustains the piece, which the composer continually mentions throughout his book. Many of the ideas of the songs that follow are derived from this motive, whether by means of melody, rhythm, or harmony.

### Example 1. Initial motive



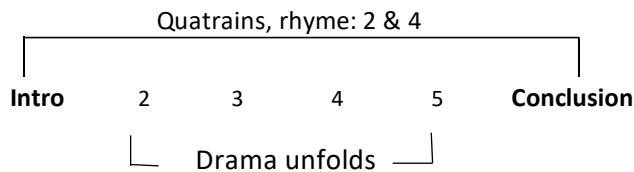
During the course of the Prologue, the initial motive is used as accompaniment in the manner of an ostinato with harmonic variations. The treatment of the vocal line is simple, unfolding within the range of an octave and announcing the declamatory character that permeates the whole cycle. The music follows the structure of the poem, demarcating the two stanzas in different styles. The first suggests a declamation with minimal intervention of the piano. In the second verse, the accompaniment provides a foundation for the vocal line through a repetitive pattern created from the initial motive. The use of ostinato as a means of

accompaniment is established from the very first song and it is generally used as a resource for the accompaniment of the following songs.

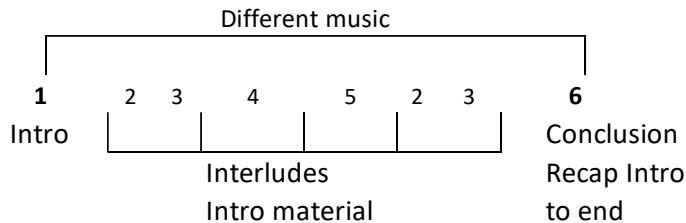
## 2. *La Novia*

This poem describes the mini-drama of a village bride. It resembles on a smaller scale the general structure of the cycle (Figure 2). The outer stanzas are similar in the number of verses while the text only differs in one word. The story of the main character is reserved for the inner verses. The composer slightly modifies this structure for musical purposes by grouping the second and third tercets. Before the last stanza, this grouping [2-3] is presented again (Figure 4). By varying the accompaniment between the first and the last repetition of the grouping, the dramatic character of the song intensifies.

**Figure 2. La novia: Poem structure**



**Figure 3. La novia: Musical Structure**



As for the music, the element that connects the structure is presented in the piano introduction. This material is used as an interlude between verses and as the closing statement for the entire song. From the upward opening gesture, it is established its clear function of building the drama by conveying the bride's haste for her imminent wedding in each of its appearances.

The poem does not present a clear denouement and this material is used to reflect the lack of resolution at the end of the story.

As stated in the Prólogo the use of ostinato as a form of accompaniment is a strategic tool in Orrego-Salas' writing. Depending on the character of the verses, the composer employs different ostinato patterns. Another characteristic announced in the Prólogo is the interval of the fourth, which is used melodically and harmonically throughout the entire piece. It is subtly contained in both hands during the introduction (Example 2) and used as well in the ostinato pattern of the middle section (Example 3).

### Example 2. La novia, Introduction

### Example 3. Ostinato pattern and metric superposition

In example 3, the composer works with a combination of duple and triple pulsation simultaneously. The effect of the quarter triplets in the vocal line predominates giving the impression of a triple meter contained in a 2/4 time signature. The groups of sixteenth notes and the eighth-note triplets in the piano part maintain a constant percussive base that comes close to

the continuous pulsation of castanets. During this passage, the real meter of the piece is blurred. The singer leads in creating the illusion of a 3/4 meter.

The basic characteristic of the vocal line is its syllabic structure. The idea is to mimic the agitation of the main character through an almost unintelligible speech. Orrego-Salas uses 3 ingredients to achieve this idea: fast tempo, 16th figures, and syllabic text setting. In this song, the composer employs a distinctive Spanish element characteristic of the Andalusian flamenco: melismatic singing (Example 4). This vocal resource of Flamenco singing is imitated by the composer to emphasize dramatic expression. Flamenco consists of several elements: singing, dancing, guitar playing, and *Jaleo*, a term to designate the hand clapping and shout of encouragement that accompany this tradition. One of Orrego-Salas' friends, Vicente Salas Viú, a Chilean writer and teacher who was educated in Spain considered that the composer "had not escaped Andalusian vulgarity in this work."<sup>1</sup> The writer referred to the moments in which Orrego-Salas employs melodic turns that recall the Flamenco singing style. Later in the cycle, in song #5 *La gitana*, appears another example known as *quejío*, the singing on the exclamation "Ay!" as a characteristic expression of pain and a very distinctive element of Flamenco singing.

Continuing with the Spanish vein of the composer, we must mention the modal influence. Throughout this composition, the modes of E and A (which are very common in Spanish traditional music) are heard frequently. The prevailing sonority in *La Novia* belongs to the Phrygian mode and its chromatic variant (Figure 2), which is typical in many of the Spanish community areas like Andalucía, Extremadura, Galicia, Catalunya, and Castilla. The following is a variant of the E mode that was commonly used in Spain, and it is frequently heard in this song.

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<sup>1</sup> Juan Orrego-Salas in *Encuentros, Visiones y Repasos: capítulos en el camino de mi música y mi vida*, p.273.



According to several authors, the chromatic version of the Phrygian mode is related to the Arabic influence during the medieval invasion (Garcia, 2013).

**Figure 4: Phrygian mode chromatic variant**



**Example 4. Flamenco melisma**

A musical score for a flamenco melisma. The top staff is a vocal line in treble clef with lyrics "mi lín-do col-lar ?". The bottom staff is a piano accompaniment in bass clef. Both staves feature sixteenth-note runs with a "6" above them, indicating a sixteenth-note figure. The piano part includes a dynamic marking of *mf* and a fermata over a chord.

Text painting is a resource that does not escape Orrego's creativity. A clear example in *La novia* is the imitation of the sounds of a church bell and its echo. In the last stanza, the bell call returns transformed into a dramatic bell stroke, given the bride's growing anxiety. For this purpose, the composer used the lower piano register in a sort of call/response interaction with the piano (Example 5).

### Example 5. Dramatic bell stroke

The musical score for Example 5, 'Dramatic bell stroke', is presented in two systems. The first system features a vocal line in treble clef with lyrics '¡To - ca!' and 'To - ca la cam - -'. The piano accompaniment consists of a right hand with a rhythmic pattern of sixteenth notes and a left hand with a bass line. A 'bell stroke' (a sharp, accented note) is marked in the left hand. The second system continues the vocal line with lyrics 'pa - - na de la ca - te - -'. The piano accompaniment maintains the rhythmic pattern, with the bell stroke becoming more prominent. The score includes dynamic markings like 'mp' and 'p', and a 'bell stroke' symbol.

### 3. El Pregón

Street crying as a basis for songs is typical of Hispanic popular tradition. The word *pregón*, by definition, is the shout with which the street vendor loudly announces what he sells, wishing to be heard by everyone. In this case, the composer artistically manages this idea in a contrasting way, beginning the song very softly. A soft dynamic is maintained for the first two pages, creating an introspective character, which is completely opposite of what a crier intends. A possible explanation for this treatment could be as a dramatic resource to access the inner world of the town crier, his sadness and humble reality.

Several variations of the Prologue's motive, the "thematic module," are present in almost every measure of this song. Sometimes it is transferred from the piano to the voice, but its consistency creates the sense of a rhythmic pedal that sustains the entire song. Examples 6 a, b, and c show some of these variants.

### Example 6. Thematic module variation

The image displays three variations of a musical theme, labeled a), b), and c).  
a) A single staff in 2/4 time with a treble clef. The melody is marked *mf* and features a long, sweeping line with many accidentals. The word "los" is written below the first few notes.  
b) A two-staff system with a treble and bass clef. The treble staff has the lyrics "los cir-ros" and a fermata over the final note. The bass staff contains a complex, dissonant accompaniment.  
c) A two-staff system with a treble and bass clef. The treble staff features a rhythmic pattern of chords with a fermata over the final chord. The bass staff has a similar rhythmic pattern with a fermata over the final chord. A *f* dynamic marking is present.

Orrego-Salas' compositional language is predominantly dissonant. On several occasions, he uses harmony to emphasize certain words. For example, the occurrence of consonant chords when the text alludes to elements of nature like roses, dawns, and the reflection of twilights. This effect provides a contrast within the dissonant framework of the piece. To highlight the word roses, the composer uses a C major chord, to highlight the word dawns he uses a B-flat major chord, and to highlight the golden twilight he uses a D major seventh chord.

The seller's cry as such is reserved for the last stanza (Example 7). It is vocally expressed through the very physical octave leaps in the melody, the expansion of the piano registers, and the use of *forte* dynamics.

### Example 7. The seller's cry

The musical score for Example 7 consists of three systems. The top system is a vocal line in a single treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a 3/4 time signature. The lyrics are "la nie - ve! ¡ Ven - - do la". The middle system is the piano accompaniment, featuring a right hand with a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes and a left hand with a similar pattern, creating a strumming effect. The bottom system shows the piano accompaniment in a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) with a key signature of one flat and a 3/4 time signature.

Once again, the sonority of Flamenco style is captured in Orrego's writing. A figure that reminds us of the use of a Spanish guitar appears in the climactic phrase of the seller's cry. The piano figure imitates the up-and-down strumming of the guitar which is translated into the piano writing through alternate hands. This writing produces the harmonic and rhythmic effect of guitar strumming while capturing the passionate character of the Flamenco typical accompaniment (Example 8).

### Example 8. Guitar strumming imitation

The musical score for Example 8 consists of two systems. The top system is a vocal line in a single treble clef with a key signature of one flat and a 3/4 time signature. The lyrics are "del pre - - - go". The middle system is the piano accompaniment, featuring a right hand with a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes and a left hand with a similar pattern, creating a strumming effect. The bottom system shows the piano accompaniment in a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) with a key signature of one flat and a 3/4 time signature.

## 4. *La Flor del Candil*

Poetry moves from human conflict to describing the beauty of nature. Candil is a plant that grows spontaneously in Andalucia and climbs on the rocks. Its flowers, in the shape of a lamp, have a difficult color to define, somewhere between purple and red. The poem resembles a short prose description that does not need the rhythm or regularity of the verses. It simply

expresses the beauty of the field when the lamp flower blooms. In tune with that simplicity, the texture that Orrego-Salas presents is a peaceful melody accompanied mostly by one chord per bar.

The rhythm of the word governs the meter, leading to continuous changes in time signature to maintain the logical cadence of the spoken voice. In a poetic-narrative style like this, this flexibility is more important than the need to lock the composition in the same meter until the end. The accompaniment pattern is mostly simplified to one chord per bar, allowing the singer the freedom to express the text. These elements contribute to the leisurely character of the song. Voice and piano parts are in constant imitation. Most of the material in the vocal part is resumed in the piano interludes contributing to the dialogue between the two forces.

In terms of harmony, the composer himself admits in his memoirs that modality is frequent in his music (2005, p. 59). An example of this statement in this song is the fluctuation between major, minor, and Phrygian modes. This constant shifting along with the flexible metrical pulsation, bring this piece close to the sound of a Spanish Medieval song.

The Andalusian cadence is one of the characteristics turns of flamenco music and it is reserved for the final phrase when the progression iv-III-II-I (F# m - E - D - C#) is outlined in the piano part (Example 9).

### Example 9. Flamenco harmonic progression

The musical score for Example 9 is presented in a grand staff format, consisting of a treble clef and a bass clef. The time signature is 4/4. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The melody is written in the treble clef, and the accompaniment is in the bass clef. The progression is iv-III-II-I (F# m - E - D - C#). The score includes dynamic markings: 'p dim. e rall.' and 'pp'. A dashed line at the bottom indicates a page number '89'.

## 5. *La Gitana*

This is a very dynamic character song with contrasting sections which combine declamatory and lyrical styles. Orrego-Salas consistently associates verses containing a question with a declamatory style and alternates with vocalizations. As in *La novia*, the use of Flamenco singing returns. Orrego's realization of the characteristic *quejío* appears with the exclamation "Ay!" in a lyrical version.

The opening section takes up the imitation of the guitar strumming. (Example # 10). Its rhythmic and harmonic effect is translated into a piano figure that is not idiomatic for the guitar, but easily playable on the piano. The passage resembles the thumb sliding along the three grace notes and the up-and-down gesture of the guitar strumming. It is written in the proper register for the guitar, although the real sound would be an octave below the piano writing.

### Example 10. Guitar strumming imitation

Allegro ritmico (♩ = 80)



## Text and Translations of Songs 1-5

### 1. Prólogo

Todo lo que por tí vi  
- La estrella sobre el aprisco  
el carro estival del heno  
y el alba del alhelí -  
si me miras, para tí.

Lo que gustaste por mí  
- la azúcar del malvavisco,  
la manta del mar sereno  
y el humo azul del benjuí -  
si me miras, para tí.

### 1. Prologue

All through your eyes I've seen:  
- the evening star above the corral  
the laden cart of summer hay,  
and the dawn of the wallflower -  
if you look at me, that you will see.

All that you have learned through me:  
- the sugar of the mallows,  
the blanket of the calm sea -  
and the blue smoke of benzoin -  
if you look at me, that you will see.

### 2. La novia

Toca la campana  
de la catedral.  
¡y yo sin zapatos,  
yéndome a casar!

Dónde está mi velo,  
mi vestido blanco,  
mi flor de azahar?

Dónde mi sortija,  
mi alfiler dorado,  
mi lindo collar?

¡Dáte prisa madre!  
Toca la campana  
de la catedral.

¿Dónde está mi amante?  
¿Mi amante querido  
en dónde estará?

Toca la campana  
de la catedral.  
¡y yo sin mi amante  
yéndome a casar!

### 2. The Bride

Ring the bell  
from the cathedral,  
and I, shoeless,  
hastening to be wed!

Where are my veil,  
my white wedding gown,  
my orange blossom wreath?

Where is my ring,  
my golden pin,  
my lovely necklace?

Hasten, mother!  
The bell is sounding  
from the cathedral tower.

Where is my lover?  
my dear lover,  
where can he be found?

Ring the bell  
from the cathedral,  
and I, without my love,  
hastening to be wed!

### 3. El pregón

¡Vendo nubes de colores:  
las redondas, coloradas,  
para endulzar los calores!

¡Vendo los cirros morados  
y rosas, las alboradas,  
los crepúsculos dorados!

¡El amarillo lucero,  
cogido a la verde rama  
del celeste duraznero!

¡Vendo la nieve, la llama  
y el canto del pregonero!

### 3. The Seller's Cry

I sell colored clouds:  
the round ones, the red ones,  
to sweeten the summer heat!

I'm selling purple cirrus flowers,  
and roses, the dawns,  
the golden twilights!

The yellow star,  
clinging to the green branch  
of the celestial peach tree!

I sell the snow, the flame too,  
and the song of the town crier!

### 4. La flor del candil

Ya pronto, para el abril,  
verás la flor del candil.

Veremos los candilejos  
alumbrar los prados y,  
sobre el olivo, la luna  
exprimir una aceituna  
para encender su candil.

Veremos los candilejos  
alumbrar los prados.

Di:

¿los candelos son bermejós  
o son color del añil?

Ya pronto para el abril,  
verás la flor del candil.

### 4. The Lamp Flower

Very soon in April,  
you will see the lamp flower,

We will see its candles  
illuminate the meadows and,  
on the olive tree, the moon  
will squeeze an olive  
to light its lamp.

We will see its candles  
illuminate the meadows.

Tell me:

are the lamp-flowers scarlet  
or of the color blue?

Very soon in April  
you will see the lamp flower



## 5. La gitana

### I

Quisiera vivir, morir,  
por las vereditas, siempre.  
Déjame, morir, vivir,  
deja que mi sueño ruede,  
contigo, al sol, a la luna,  
dentro de tu carro verde.

### VI

¿Por qué vereda se fué?  
¡Ay, aire, que no lo sé!  
¿Por la de Benamejí?  
¿Por la de Lucena o Priego?  
¿Por la de Loja se fué?  
¡Ay, aire, que no lo sé!  
Ahora recuerdo: me dijo  
que caminaba a Sevilla.  
¿A Sevilla? ¡No lo sé!  
¿Por qué vereda se fué?  
¡Ay, aire, que no lo sé!

## 5. The Gypsy Girl

### I

I only wish to live, to die,  
on the roads, forever.  
Let me die, let me live,  
let my dream role  
with you, under the sun, or the moon,  
in your green wagon.

### VI

Through which road has he fled?  
Oh, winds, I do not know!  
Towards Benamejí?  
Through Lucena or Priego?  
Toward Loja did he go?  
Oh, winds, I do not know!  
Now I do recall: he said  
he was walking toward Sevilla.  
Was it Sevilla he said? I do not know!  
Through which road has he fled?  
Oh, winds, I do not know!

## Analytical Overview of Songs 6 -10

Orrego-Salas provided a logical sequence in the organization of the songs that gives unity to the group, considering both literary and musical aspects. However, the songs are not linked by a dramatic line that would prevent their separation for independent performance. From the musical perspective, songs 7-10 have a more evident tendency to tonality. Different from the first group, they are especially connected by the key of D-major and by small melodic allusions between them. The interval of the fourth, a remnant of the initial motive of the work in this final group, becomes melodically important and the quartal harmonies are gradually replaced by triadic harmonies. From songs # 6 - 9 the composer selected poems in which two characters are interacting and this provides diversity to the stories.

## 6. *El Pescador sin dinero*

The monologue of the penniless fisherman is presented in a recitative style and encompasses the first section of this song. The declamatory melodic contour previously heard in other songs transforms into a *recitativo secco* given the few interactions of the piano. In previous songs, the syllabic treatment was used as a dramatic resource when characters were expressing distress but, on this occasion, it becomes the style to articulate the drama. Once again, the thematic module Orrego-Salas use in the construction of the entire piece is recognized in the opening statement. We observe a distant echo of the Prolog's main motive in the initial piano gesture (Example 11).

### Example 11. Variation of the initial motive

The image shows a musical score for a recitative section. It consists of three staves: a vocal line and two piano accompaniment staves. The tempo is marked 'Recitativo (♩ = 52)'. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The vocal line begins with the lyrics 'Me di-go y'. The piano accompaniment features a prominent, flowing eighth-note figure in the right hand and a more rhythmic bass line in the left hand. The overall style is declamatory and dramatic.

Alberti's story begins as a fisherman, sitting by the riverbank, narrates his misfortune while a fish approaches the surface. The accompaniment figure resembles the continual flow of water and the subtle movement of the fish interacting with the fisherman. This represents the clearest example of text painting. Elements such as the Phrygian scale and Andalusian cadence are also present in this song. The transposition of the Phrygian scale to F predominates in the piece. On the words "cry with my crying" the composer outlines the Andalusian chord progression veiled by quartal harmonies. An example of the connection between songs is shown

in examples 12a and b. The chord of the last bar connects with the introductory statement of the following song.

### Example 12.

a) Ending measure, song # 6



b) Song #7 first measure.



### 7. *Madrigal del peine perdido*

Alberti's poem is presented in two sections while the music maintains the same structure. Each section presents three stanzas, although the accompaniment remains the same, the vocal line is based on melodic variations. The lover softly sings to his sleeping beloved in a calm and steady rhythm, creating the perfect lullaby atmosphere. As expressed in example 11b, the opening material contains a similar statement of the initial motive of the cycle in an inverted motion. Towards the end of the first section, the piano briefly connects with the following song by announcing a fragment of the melodic line. The use of the D-major key begins from this moment on, this progress towards tonality allows a fluid succession between songs.

### 8. *El Farolero y su novia*

Orrego-Salas' music is aligned with the structure of the poem in three stanzas. The first two repeat the same music while the third stanza is built on melodic variations. The key of D-major gains more presence as the song progresses, using scales to the third as a means of accompaniment. This resource stabilizes the sense of tonality and contrasts with the modal

tendency characteristic of the first five songs of the cycle. A preview of the following song's melody is announced in the piano's final statement, giving way to the song.

From a literary point of view, Alberti creates a symbolic relation between the moon and the lamplighter's lantern as a representation of the moon. This resource may be used by the singer as a dramatic component. A challenge in this song is for the singer to portray the difference between the two characters.

### **9. *¡Al Puente de la golondrina!***

This song is a dialogue between the hummingbird and the flowers that the little bird finds on his way to the bridge. The piano part is very descriptive and uses a cheerful theme with jumps and octaves depicting the restlessness of the hummingbird. As stated in the introduction, the repetition of verses is a characteristic of Alberti's poetry. When setting the poem to music, the composer imitates these repetitions.

The middle section returns to the idea of the ostinato which was present in the accompaniment of previous songs. Orrego uses a dissonant pattern which momentarily erases the sense of tonality. The contrast established with this resource is justified with the poem's narrative. Each verse refers to a time of day: morning, afternoon, and night. The music transforms into each one of them conveying different moods. The general outline of this song suggests an ABA' scheme.

### **10. "*Castilla tiene castillos*"**

This poem belongs to Alberti's previous collection entitled "*La Amante*" (The Lover) of 1925. It shows the contrast of elements characteristic of Alberti's poetry: the sea and the land. Cadiz, his native land, has both elements, which makes the region more precious. This simple tune is built on an 11-bar theme, related melodically to the previous song. They are also

connected by the tonal tendency to D-major. The jumping of intervals in fourths in the melodic line is tied to the previous song. This is the only element that remains from the motive which originated the Prólogo.

The composition of the song consists of a simple tune that is repeated with some variations and is entirely based on the piano introduction. Among the aspects that are significant in the construction of this final song is the imitative counterpoint between the right hand of the piano and the singer's melody. This two-voice counterpoint treatment is used for the first time in the work. The other aspect is linked to the motive that started the cycle, the interval of the fourth. Quartal harmony has been characteristic and now the interval becomes more relevant in its melodic function. The composer slightly alters Alberti's structure repeating the first line of the poem to conclude the work. In the piano parts, the last phrase recalls the melody of song # 9. In some way, the composer establishes a link not only with the previous song but with the beginning of the cycle by adding strong dissonances and thus betraying the sense of tonality at the end of the cycle.

Orrego-Salas uses a total economy of means manifested through a stable rhythmic pattern, which is predominantly composed of quarters and eighth notes. White notes only appear at the end of phrases to elongate the sound. Since is written in 2/4 with ternary pulsation, the natural accents of the text do not always correspond with those of the measure. It is the first time in the cycle where the text is treated this way indicating that it is done with full intention. Due to the metrical ambiguity, the ends of some phrases overlap with the beginning of the next.

*Castilla tiene castillos* as the closing of the cycle, superimposes dissonances to the key of D-major in its last chords. This is a clear attempt to dissipate the tonal intention that was

developing in the last group. In this way a connection with the dissonant language of the previous songs emerges.

### Text and Translations of Songs 6-10

#### 6: El pescador sin dinero

##### I

Me digo y me retedigo  
¡Qué tonto!  
ya te lo has tirado todo.  
Y ya no tienes amigo,  
Por tonto. Que aquel amigo  
tan solo iba contigo  
porque eres tonto.  
¡Qué tonto!  
y ya nadie te hace caso,  
ni tu novia, ni tu hermano,  
ni la hermana de tu amigo,  
porque eres tonto.  
¡Qué tonto!  
me digo y me redigo...

##### II

Pez verde y dulce río  
sal, escucha el llanto mío:  
rueda por el agua, rueda,  
que no me queda moneda,  
sedal tampoco me queda...  
Llora con el llanto mío.

No me queda nada, nada  
ni mi cesta torneada,  
ni mi camisa bordada  
con un ancla, por mi amada... Llora  
con el llanto mío.  
Sí, llorad, sí, todos, sí

#### 6. Penniless Fisherman

##### I

I tell myself once more and say:  
What a fool!  
Now you've gone and spoiled it all  
and you no longer have a friend,  
You fool. That friend  
only went with you  
because you are a fool.  
What a fool!  
and no one will listen to you,  
Not your girlfriend, not your brother,  
Not the sister of your friend,  
because you are a fool.  
What a fool!  
I tell myself once more...

##### II

Green fish and sweet river,  
rise and hear my weeping:  
roll through the water,  
that I don't have any money left,  
I don't have fishing line either...  
Cry with my crying.

I have nothing left, nothing, nothing  
not my woven wicker basket,  
not the garment that was brodered  
with an anchor by my lover...  
Cry with my crying  
Yes, weep, yes, all, weep!

**7. Madrigal del peine perdido (Nana)**

I

Ea, mi amante, ea,  
Ea, la ea. -  
¡El peinecillo tuyo,  
que verde era!

Perdiste el peinecillo,  
ea, la ea  
mi amante,  
Que era de vidrio.

El peinecillo tuyo,  
ea, la ea,  
que era de vidrio verde,  
mi amante, ea.

III

Duerme,  
Que en el mar huerto perdido,  
va y viene, amante, tu peine,  
por los cabellos, mi vida  
de una sirenita verde.

De una sirenita  
que se los peina a la orilla  
mientras la orilla va y viene. -

**7. Song of the Lost Comb (Lullaby)**

I

Sleep, my loved one,  
Sleep  
Your little hair-comb,  
that was so green!

You lost that little hair-comb,  
Sleep,  
Dear loved one,  
it was made of glass.

Your precious hair-comb,  
Sleep,  
It was made of green glass.  
My lover, sleep.

III

Sleep,  
It is lost in the deep sea,  
it comes and goes, my dear, your comb,  
through the hair  
of a little green mermaid.

Of a little mermaid who combs  
her hair on the shore  
while the shore comes and goes.

## 8. El farolero y su novia

- Bien puedes amarme aquí,  
que la luna yo encendí,  
Tú, por tí, sí, tú, por tí.  
- Sí, por mí.

- Bien puedes besarme aquí,  
faro, farol, farolera,  
la más álgida que ví.  
- Bueno, sí.

- Bien puedes matarme aquí,  
Gélida novia lunera  
del faro farolerí.  
- Ten. ¿Te dí?

## 9. ¡Al Puente de la Golondrina!

¡Vente rondaflor, al puente  
de la golondrina, amor!  
- ¡Buenos días, hiladora  
del agua -rosa-naciente!  
- ¡Buenos días, rondaflor!

¡Vente rondaflor, al puente  
de la golondrina, amor!  
- ¡Buenos tardes, bordadora  
del agua -clavel-poniente!  
- ¡Buenos tardes, rondaflor!

¡Vente rondaflor, al puente  
de la golondrina, amor!  
- ¡Buenos noches, veladora  
del agua -dalia-durmiente!  
- ¡Buenos noches, rondaflor!

¡Vente rondaflor, al puente  
de la golondrina, amor!

## 8. The Lamplighter and His Girlfriend

- Now you can love me here,  
since I lit the moon,  
Just for you, yes, for you.  
- "Yes, for me."

- Now you can kiss me here,  
Lamp, little lamp, lamp-girl,  
the most algid I saw.  
- Well, yes.

- Now you can kill me here,  
icy bride, like the moon,  
lamp, little lamp.  
- Take it. Did I give it you?

## 9. To the Swallow Bridge!

Come to the bridge, hummingbird,  
to the bridge where the swallow-bird soars!  
- Good morning to you  
Water-spinning rose -rising-rose!  
- Good morning, hummingbird!

Come to the bridge, hummingbird,  
to the bridge where the swallow soars!  
- Good evening to you water flower-  
carnation-west!  
- Good evening, hummingbird!

Come to the bridge, hummingbird,  
to the bridge where the swallow soars!  
- Good night to you guardian of water-  
dahlia-sleeping flower!  
- Good night, hummingbird!

Come to the bridge, hummingbird,  
to the bridge where the swallow soars!



## 10. “Castilla tiene castillos”

Castilla tiene castillos,  
pero no tiene una mar.  
Pero sí una estepa grande,  
mi amor, donde guerrear.

Mi pueblo tiene castillos,  
pero también tiene una mar,  
una mar de añil y grande,  
mi amor, donde guerrear.

## 10. Castile has its Castles

Castilla may have its castles,  
but it does not have any sea,  
It has a great wide prairie,  
my love, where wars can be.

My land, has castles too,  
but it also has its sea,  
a very large indigo sea,  
my love, where wars can be.

### Final Words

*El Alba del Alhelí* is a work that shows a facet of Latin American musical expression.

Orrego-Salas approaches music with the same simplicity that emanates from the poetry. Both the composer and poet build a work of art from very simple elements using an economy of means that helps create the pertinent scenario for each character. From the poetic point of view, simple language, alliterations, and repetitions are characteristics derived from the nature of the characters chosen by the poet. In the musical setting, Orrego-Salas matches these characteristics with resources such as clear textures, ostinato patterns, and a predominant melodic contour close to the speech patterns.

As a Latin American composer, Orrego-Salas was nurtured by European and American teaching traditions and absorbed the neoclassical style that emanates from his music. According to his own words, he was convinced of the possibility of a true interconnection between the traditions compatible with the artist and the musical conception of his time as a source of continuous inspiration (1974, pp. 27-28). He considered the importance of accepting the validity of traditions and being involved in the changes and forces operating around the world. These are the resources that allow the composer to acquire originality in his works.

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## APPENDIX A: PROGRAM NOTES RECITAL #1

### JOHANNES BRAHMS

Born May 7, 1833, Hamburg, Germany

Died April 3, 1897, Vienna, Austria

### Sonata for Piano and Violin in G Major Op. 78

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Between 1875 and 1890 Brahms was already recognized as one of the greatest composers of his time. His success as artistic director of 'Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde' from 1872-1875 as well as his extraordinary skills as a conductor and pianist guaranteed him frank admiration among Vienna's musical circles. His music had also earned enthusiastic acclaim in many European cities like Amsterdam, Utrecht, Breslau, London, Munich, Leipzig, and his native Hamburg, among others. The first violin sonata in G major saw the light as a work of artistic maturity in this period of great productivity, evidenced with larger works like his Piano Concerto No. 2 (1878-81), the Symphony No. 2 (1877), and the Violin Concerto Op.77 (1878). Being Brahms, a composer who tackled almost all musical genres except opera, chamber music was a vital mode of expression from his earliest years. It is presumed that there were several violin sonatas prior to this one that were discarded by Brahms himself due to his intense self-criticism. The first violin sonata was the only chamber work between the years 1878-1879, and together with the violin concerto, they benefited from the close influence of his long-life friend and violinist, Joseph Joachim.

One significant and well-known aspect of this sonata is its closeness to the cycle "Regenlieder" op. 59, especially the song no. 3 and 4, *Regenlied* and *Nachklang*. The popular name given to this work, "Regenlied Sonate," evidences this relationship. The unfolding of the entire sonata gravitates around the dotted rhythm that characterizes these paired songs, which suggests the sound of raindrops. References to this motif constantly appear across the three movements revealing the cyclic nature of this work. In the second movement, the raindrop rhythm is still present through the middle section with the heavy feeling carried by the funeral march. The beginning measures of the third movement quote both the voice and piano parts of *Regenlied*. Musical elements of the two previous movements are also present in the finale. The allusion of raindrops becomes more prominent by the non-typical pianistic figure. We will not be listening to the wavy arpeggio's characteristic of Brahms' pianistic expression, but rather a repetitive pattern resembling the rain pitter-pattering.

The lakeside town of Pörtschach offered Brahms the calm setting for this composition which also reflects his sadness over the deterioration of his godson, Felix Schumann. Undoubtedly, Clara Schumann and her youngest son played a significant role in the composition of this sonata. Felix, who was also a violinist and poet, was by then terminally ill. In the well-known dedication of the second movement to Clara, Brahms expresses his consternation for both mother and son, and makes a special allusion to Felix with the languid entrance of the violin after the expressive introduction of the piano. The inference by musicologists that the funeral section of the second movement was conceived after Felix's passing seemed logical and natural.

The serenity and simplicity of the opening theme of this sonata establishes the relaxed character that permeates the entire work. Instead of the classic four-part structure, this sonata is conceived in three movements, with a cyclic relationship that unifies the structure. The first and third movements are not particularly fast as the listener may expect. We could say that the intention of the composer was to describe the soothing nostalgic effect of rain, preventing the interpreter from a fast tempo, which would not portray the expressive sense of this personal and intimate music.

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**COMPOSED**

During the summers of 1878-79 at Pörtschach am Wörthersee, Austria

**FIRST PERFORMANCES**

August 1879, Private performance by Brahms and Joseph Joachim

**FIRST EDITION**

Publisher: Berlin, Simrock, 1880. Pub. pl. no. 8148

November 8, 1879; Bonn, Germany, Public performance by Robert Heckmann, violin and Marie Heckmann-Hertig, piano

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**STACY GARROP**

Born 1969

**Fragmented Spirit for Alto Saxophone and Piano**

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When listening to *Fragmented Spirit*, it is easy to perceive the connection between the title and the melodic structure. Although there is a poem that accompanies the work, it was created by the author after the piece was conceived, and though not originally linked to the work itself, it adapts to the piece very well. The poem has three irregular stanzas. By looking at the text, it is possible to visualize the fragmented expression of the ideas. There are lines of the verse formed by a single word, sometimes two or three, which are necessary to connect several lines to obtain a meaning. This poetic resource mirrors the union of short melodic statements until delivering a complete musical idea. In terms of a general structure, and similar to the poem, the piece is organized in three main sections while internal subdivisions are also observed, especially in the middle section. The first and last sections reflect a declamatory style given by the repetition of the same pitch and the predominant use of semitones. The two gravitate around the tonal center B-flat minor, rather than the concept of tonality being an important focus of this piece; it is in fact, the way the music carries different emotions and connects with the listeners. An example of a musical resource that portrays the fragmented nature is the angular and syncopated melodic line that, in conjunction with irregular rhythmic figures, create a state of emotional instability. It gives us the idea of improvisation. A fundamental tool for the composer is the manipulation of *tempi* through the piece.

When a reflexive state is in place, the tempo remains stable for the entire section like in A and A'. Both sections are connected by thematic material, lighter texture, mood, and very legato articulation.

Section B contains, like the second stanza of the poem, the most extreme expressions and rapid changes of emotions, manifested through different articulations, expanded range, strong dynamic contrasts, and intense chromaticism in both piano and saxophone. Some violent sonorities caused by clusters take place in this section, and a relation to the lines of the second verse may be perceived. The composer takes time transitioning from one emotion to the other. Frequent tempo changes are related to the intensity of these emotions and the use of extreme registers in both instruments. The prominent syncopations and angular melodies emphasize the state of despair that makes us observe again the poem's allusions.

As a contrast, episodes of silence are also important in this work as part of the fragmented state. The need for silence is in this music as it is in our lives, allowing the natural process to release the dense moments. A nine second pause before recapitulation dissolves the tensions before proceeding to the introspective atmosphere of the main theme. We could say that the most significant element of this piece is the connection with varying human states through sound effects suggested by the title.

This piece is Garrop's first composition for saxophone and was written for saxophonist and professor Steven Stusek, faculty member at UNCG since 1999. American composer Stacy Garrop established herself as a free-lance composer in 2016 after 16 years as a full-time professor at Roosevelt University. She has served as composer-in-residence for several institutions, such as Chicago's Music in the Loft Chamber Music Series, the Albany Symphony in 2009 and 2010, Skaneateles Festival 2011, and the Volti Choral Institute for High School Singers. Her collaborations reflect her interest as an educator to collaborate with educational programs in the community and creatively interact with young people through music.

Garrop's works include a wide range of styles such as orchestra, choir, opera, oratorios, and chamber works for various ensembles, string quartet, wind ensembles, piano trios, and art songs. She has received commissions from diverse institutions including Albany Symphony, Minnesota Orchestra, San Francisco Choral Society, Norton Building Concert Series, Music in the Loft, Cabrillo Festival, Chicago Opera Theater Vanguard Program, Dallas Symphony Orchestra Chamber Series, and renowned chamber ensembles. Her works deliver a story to the audience, whether dramatic, lyrical or realistic.

f  
ragmented  
i feel  
so  
fragmented  
i  
am  
small bits  
over cement  
glittering specks, dark lines  
i don't know  
how  
to reassemble myself

fragmented  
i sound  
listen  
open my jaw  
i gurgle, cough, gasp  
a silent, violent scream  
my throat cannot  
recall  
its primary function

a spirit in pieces  
you see it  
strewn everywhere as if on parade  
you have power  
you can stomp on it  
smash it  
or you can collect the bits  
and teach my hands  
how  
to reshape my tattered spirit  
into vibrance.

- Stacy Garrop -

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COMPOSED Summer 1998

FIRST EDITION 1999 Dorn Publications, Inc

RECENT PUBLISHER Theodore Presser Co.

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**JAKE HEGGIE**

Born March 31, 1961

**TERRENCE MCNALLY**

Born November 3, 1938

Died March 24, 2020

**At The Statue Of Venus**

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“...Heggie’s way with music, the way in which his choices unlock and intensify the poetry and drama of the words, is consistently illuminating, full of surprises.”

*Gramophone Magazine*<sup>2</sup>

The above quote is a statement which beautifully describes this work. *At the Statue of Venus* is a scene for soprano and piano that captures the emotions and internal dialogue of a middle-aged woman, Rose, waiting for a blind date. Most importantly, it is a piece that recreates a scene of human emotions with which many can identify. Heggie, in the notes written for the premiere of this work, highlights the important role of the operatic genre as a vehicle of expression in a new context with different social needs. The works of great composers like Britten and Beethoven served as inspiration for Heggie<sup>3</sup>, who is playing with the complicity of the two performing forces, voice and piano, to convey the message of this scene. McNally’s libretto leads us through the intricacies of a woman’s mental state, concerned about her age, appearance, self-criticism, and judgments until she finally travels inward to realize the answer to all her doubts lies inside her heart.

A significant characteristic of this one-woman opera is that the action takes place in the mind of the protagonist. The music is speaking her mind, capturing Rose’s anxiety and frustration beginning with the piano introduction. Her nervousness is accentuated by the ascending gesture that leads to her entrance with a cluster, resembling a scream of frustration. This participatory role of the piano in the drama is one of the features that makes this work so effective. The piano works as part of the protagonist’s subconscious, participating in the evolution of her thoughts. Musically, the seed of this piece is planted in the rhythmic and melodic material of this opening, which will be recreated through the body of the work.

The libretto is structured in four sections, delineated by the nature of Rose’s internal dialogue. The first is extensive and descriptive in order to introduce the audience to the situation which brought Rose to her current location: standing in front of the statue of Venus. During the second section, the music contrast intensifies as Rose’s anxiety progresses. Heggie uses the piano to its fullest effect by introducing motivic figures, and tempo and metric changes which are closely aligned with Rose’s thoughts. McNally takes us into Rose’s psychological world through the narrative in her restless mind. He makes the story realistic instead of idealistic by navigating through Rose’s internal turns and fears.

The story turns towards a deeper reflection on the search for love as Rose recalls the meaning of love in her childhood. The chatter in Rose’s mind falls behind, reaching a brief moment of

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<sup>2</sup> [jakeheggie.com/biography/](http://jakeheggie.com/biography/).

<sup>3</sup> Jake Heggie, *At the Statue of Venus*, vocal score prologue (Music, Bent Pen Music, Inc., 2005).

enlightenment. In a climactic moment, Rose's aria delights the senses with a lyric and expressive melody culminating the third section of this opera. These reflections transform her thinking and attitude from this moment on, moving toward a new set of expectations. From the moment in which she stops contaminating her mind with useless thoughts, her inner wisdom emerges revealing why she is still waiting in front of the statue of Venus.

Heggie has been widely recognized for his operas and song cycles and has composed around 300 art songs. He has created eight full-length operas and several one-act operas. Among the internationally renowned singers with whom Heggie has collaborated are sopranos Kiri Te Kanawa, Renée Fleming, Talise Trevigne; mezzo-sopranos Frederica von Stade, Joyce DiDonato, Susan Graham, and Broadway star Audra McDonald.<sup>4</sup>

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**COMPOSED** 2005

**PUBLISHED**

2005 Bent Pen Music, Inc.

**FIRST PERFORMANCE**

Sep. 10, 2005, by Kristin Klayton, lyric soprano and Jake Heggie at Ellie Caulking Opera House inauguration

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<sup>4</sup> [jakeheggie.com](http://jakeheggie.com).



## AT THE STATUE OF VENUS

Libretto by Terrence McNally

A WOMAN enters. Her name is ROSE. She wears well-cut black slacks, low heels and a crisp white blouse with a reasonable cleavage. A modest necklace and earrings complete her look which is best described as open, honest, direct. She stands a moment, looking around and getting her bearings, then looks at her watch and begins to wait.

### ROSE

The slacks were a mistake. Too late now. Brazen it out. Look him in the eye, make him see what you want him to see. It's not about how you're dressed, it's about who you are, and who I am right now is a woman who wishes she wasn't wearing slacks. Weren't wearing slacks. Wasn't wearing slacks. Weren't. Wasn't. Whatever!

God, I hate that expression. What if he uses it all the time? I'll kill myself.

Meeting a blind date at the statue of Venus, wearing black slacks. Way to go, Rose.

What were my options? The yellow dress? Too cheerful. Black is so severe. The blue Chanel was perfect. But it looks expensive. It was expensive. Why am I suddenly so embarrassed I can afford my own clothes?

I'm too old for this. I haven't felt this way since high school. I'm being judged for all the wrong reasons. What on earth possessed me to wear slacks?

It was a sexy voice: "I'll meet you at the statue of Venus. Let's say five-ish, shall we?"

I liked the "shall we?" The "five-ish" not so much. Don't gay men say "five-ish"? My friends would never do that to me. "You two should meet. You're really perfect for each other. He's a Pisces. You're a Scorpio. You both love the ballet." Another warning sign? No. Lots of straight men like the ballet. Name one, Rose. Name one. If he's gay it won't matter I wore the slacks.

Look at all those women. Out with friends.  
Looking at art.  
Look at all those women. Happy.  
Able to be who they are, not meeting a stranger at the statue of Venus.

Was a real woman this artist's inspiration? Or was she imagined?  
Look at the way he expressed her beauty.  
How must it feel to be idealized and treasured?  
A woman beyond measure.  
I love the way he saw into her heart. Look at all these women!

There's a woman as seen by Titian.  
There, another woman as painted by Matisse.  
Manet, Monet, Degas,  
Warhol, DeKooning, Chagall.  
All so beautiful. All inspired.  
Who wouldn't want to be loved like that? A source of inspiration.  
And knowing someone once saw in you a masterpiece.  
A masterpiece. What will he see in me?

Look at all those women. Any other day there I'd be,  
One of all those women passing by, hardly glancing at Venus.  
But not today, I'm trying to see myself the way he'll see me:  
A woman. Just a woman in slacks hoping for love.



It's him. It's him! No, it's not. I wish I were dead. No, invisible, so I could be looking at him the way he'll be looking at me.

(Looking at "the man")

There's a bald spot. You know, a few hours at the gym wouldn't exactly kill you, either.  
You say you voted for who? I just can't imagine why our friends thought I might like you.

It's him. Coming straight toward me.  
Oh God, please let it be him. This is the moment.  
He's beyond my wildest dreams. This is the one.  
There he is, even more handsome than I pictured he'd be.

A face to match the voice on the phone: sexy  
and gentle.

He's here, though not on time. Not on the  
minute.  
But now there's no waiting, no more fear,  
He's finally here. And now I can breathe again.  
This is the.

This is a man greeting another woman in slacks.  
Not me.  
Life is not fair. But wait, here's another one.

Oh God don't let it be him, this is a nightmare.  
This is exactly what I was afraid of. Run for your  
life!  
Here he comes. Nowhere to hide and I'm stuck  
by this stupid Greek statue.  
Maybe it's not. Too late, it's him!

The what? The men's room? I wouldn't know. I  
don't work here.  
The slacks just make me look like it. Life is not  
fair.

What if he's been here and gone? Seen me and  
changed his mind?  
I've been judged and found lacking without a  
defense.  
Well maybe you're not to my liking either,  
whoever-you-are-thinking-your-God-almighty,  
judging and leaving and making me wonder if  
it's me or the slacks as I stand here and wait for  
a date I don't want at the statue of Venus. At the  
statue of Venus! I have a judgment for you: not  
so terrific yourself. I'm leaving.

If I leave now, I'll never know. And where am I  
going?

At night we dream of love, of loving and being  
loved,  
Like when we were children, if we were lucky, as  
I was.  
I knew my parents loved me, and I loved them.  
I felt safe and protected.  
I knew that morning would always come,  
And I knew I was loved.  
Oh God, I was a lucky, lucky child.

Sunday night dinners over at Grandma's, we'd  
all be together.

Playing piano, singing along, not in tune or too  
much in measure.  
Wrestling with cousins. The stories we'd share.  
The night Randall kissed me.

Then pretending to sleep in the car riding home  
with my father and mother.  
Wanting to hear the secrets they'd share,  
But mostly just wanting to be carried upstairs in  
my father's arms,  
Then he'd kiss me and say:

"Good night, my little pumpkin.  
Sleep soundly, my little love.  
Angel from heaven.  
Star from above." And I'd sleep.  
That love is what I'm seeking;  
To feel again I am safe and protected.  
To wake each morning filled with hope.  
And to know I am loved.  
Oh God, I was a lucky, lucky child.



Will I know him? Of course I will. He'll be a  
man I can laugh with and be myself with.  
He'll be handsome which only means when I  
look at him my heart will smile, and I'll feel  
happy to the tips of my fingers. That's all  
"handsome" is: happiness.

How will he know me? That's easy.  
He'll listen for my laughter and be happy to  
know he's the reason I laugh.  
He will know the vastness and fullness of my  
heart.  
Together we'll know beauty and drink of it  
deeply, over and over.  
We will keep each other hopeful and brave.  
Together. We will brave this world together, the  
rest of our days.

I'll meet you at the statue of Venus.

ACCOMPANIST/CONDUCTOR

Rose?

ROSE

Yes?

THE END

## APPENDIX B: PROGRAM NOTES RECITAL #2

### Identity and Transformation in the Life and Music of Rochberg, Shostakovich and Alén

The selected works are imbued with the circumstances each composer faced within a certain time period. The pressure imposed by the policies of Socialist Realism in Soviet art, between 1932 and mid-1980s, impacted Shostakovich's creative life and intertwined with the artist's personal circumstances. From 1970 Rochberg surprised the followers of modernist and avant-garde techniques with a radical change in musical language, manifesting his unwavering fidelity to himself. Alén, now established in Spain away from the crushing Cuban reality, interlaces his experiences and creativity, informing us about the variety of rhythms seen across Latin music.

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#### **GEORGE ROCHBERG**

Born July 5, 1918, Paterson, New Jersey

Died May 29, 2005, Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania

#### **Ricordanza - Soliloquy for Cello and Piano**

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The year 1964 marked a turning point in Rochberg's compositional career. For many years his success in the dodecaphonic field was resounding, becoming one of the leading American composers of the time. Immediately after the death of his son, Rochberg profoundly changed his vision regarding his career and became convinced that the 12-tone composition system was not adequate enough for his aesthetic ideals. He believed that music after all is a way of communication, and the highly intellectual conception of serial technique produced an abstract musical language that did not allow him to communicate his experiences in all their depth. It also sacrificed the power of music to endure in the ear and memory of the audience.<sup>5</sup> Rochberg then decided to free himself from the restrictions imposed by the 12-tone system and make use of the compositional resources from the tonal palette.

In his interview with Peter Cairns in 2005, Rochberg stated that one of the things he wanted to prove with his return to tonal music was that “beauty was not dead.” He pointed out that his first tonal piece was the one written in 1972 for cello and piano in “pure” A major, which suggests that he was referring to *Ricordanza*. Even in his closed circle of admirers and relatives, the piece was received with bewilderment and considered strikingly similar to Brahms’s romanticism. *Ricordanza* (Remembrance) is indeed a beautiful piece that carries the nostalgia of the event that gave rise to Rochberg’s inspiration. It was dedicated to the memory of his deceased nephew. Along with his original ideas, the composer incorporated the old practice of musical quotations, a practice that he explored in many other compositions from this aesthetic change. In *Ricordanza* there are quotes

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<sup>5</sup> Cairns, Peter. (2004, July 29). Interview with George Rochberg, Newton Square, Pennsylvania. [vimeo.com/53370870/](https://vimeo.com/53370870/).

from the introductory Adagio of Beethoven's Cello Sonata No.4 in C-major. The theme and the dialogues between both instruments are clearly recognizable in the second section of the piece. Rochberg uses the key of F-major which allows a seamless transition to the main theme in the toneful key of D-flat. The piece presents a simple ABA structure with an exquisite cello cadenza. The composer found a way to integrate the musical past with his own emotions by crafting a deeply touching discourse that goes beyond copying Beethoven's work.

Rochberg received a hostile reception among the followers of serialism. He was considered 'a traitor'<sup>6</sup> who abandoned the path of Modern music within the classical tradition. Rochberg stood firm and was not shaken by the wave of criticism. He challenged the status quo and dared to be honest with himself without having to satisfy the prevailing desire for modernity.

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**Composed:** 1972

**Approximate duration:** 13 minutes

**Premiered:** New York, April 25, 1974, by Norman Fischer, cello and G. Rochberg, piano

**Writings:** *The Hexachord and its relation to the Twelve-Tone Row* (Theoretical Treatise), 1955.

*The Aesthetics of Survival* (collection of essays), 1984

**Editor and director of publications:** Theodore Presser Company, 1954-1960

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## **DIMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH**

Born May 7, 1906, Saint Petersburg, Russia

Died August 9, 1975, Moscow, Russia

### **Sonata for Cello and Piano in D Minor Op. 40**

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Shostakovich was 27 years old when he undertook the composition of this sonata. By then, he was enjoying international acclaim as a Soviet composer. The immediate success and popularity of his opera *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* in Moscow and Leningrad revealed his potential in the operatic genre, but the work was disqualified by Stalin and his aspirations in this field collapsed with this blow. As a Russian artist from the Soviet era, Shostakovich experienced the pressure of cultural

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

politics known as socialist realism, even before the condemnation of his opera. The composition of the cello sonata started before the government's disapproval in the Summer of 1934. At the same time, in his personal life there was a period of turmoil as a result of an extramarital affair that caused his marriage to collapse. After a short-term divorce, Shostakovich resumed their marriage upon learning of his wife's pregnancy. The emotional burden of this period of his life can be glimpsed through the lyrical and gloomy character of the themes in this sonata, particularly the third movement. This is the densest and darkest moment of the entire composition with a great deal of sorrow and depression concentrated in its music.

The work is conceived in a large format of four movements. Shostakovich handles the sonata form with a free and ambiguous tonal criterion. The first and second themes in the first movement have a lyrical and introspective character and are somehow romantic. The lyricism of this movement combines with the repetitive rhythmic pattern that is introduced in the developmental section by the piano. It offers a contrasting support to the cello line. In the recapitulation, the themes appear in reversed order, bringing the movement to an end with the slow reiteration of the established rhythmic figure.

The folk-like themes and energetic quality of the Allegro breaks with the serious sense that the first movement leaves us. Ostinai, sharp articulations, and a volatile temperament are characteristic of the second movement. It represents a great contrast with the deep lament that stems from the melody of the 3rd movement. The *Largo* is dominated by the languid tone of the cello. It is the sorrowful and darkest moment of the sonata, mostly using the lower register of both instruments and great treatment of instrumental color.

Shostakovich's ability to create contrasts, some humor and irony is manifested throughout the fourth movement. Very energetic in character, the Finale in rondo form is presented in a clear texture with the acidulous nature of Shostakovich themes.

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**Composed:** 1934

**Premiered:** Christmas Day, 1934 by Shostakovich and Victor Kubaski, principal cellist of Bolshoi Theater.

**Approximate duration:** 25 minutes

**Other works from this period:**

24 Preludes for Piano (1933)

Piano Concerto no.1 in C minor (1933)

Love and Hate (1934) film music

Suite for Jazz Orchestra no. 1 (1934)

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## ANDRÉS ALÉN

Born October 7, 1950, La Habana, Cuba

## Sonata for Soprano Saxophone/Clarinet and Piano

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Cuban historical reality in all its aspects is formed from the combination of foreign cultural elements which, through several centuries of integration, became the Cuban culture we know today. The musical tradition has its roots in Spanish culture and in African rhythmic patterns and dances. During the course of the centuries, foreign influences enriched the musical realm of the island, especially French and American. Andrés Alén assimilated in his compositions the Cuban popular musical heritage, elements from Jazz and Latin American music.

The *Sonata for Clarinet or Soprano Saxophone and Piano* is organized in three movements, *Allegro*, *Andante* and *Allegro molto*. Although there is not a firm adherence to the sonata form in this work, some characteristics of the genre are intact, for example, contrasting themes, developmental sections, and recapitulation. However, the tonal plan that ordinarily defines the sections of the sonata form is not observed by Alén. The piece has a strong modal influence, and its sections are not clearly defined.

The first movement balances in the alternation between modality and tonality. There are clear areas for the main and secondary themes delineated by a change in mode, character, and the irregular pulsation of the  $\frac{7}{8}$  meter used for the second theme. The second movement introduces a short statement, recalling the recitative style, which contains the rhythmic germ of the movement that follows. The *Allegro molto* is clearly influenced by Cuban and South American rhythms such as the Venezuelan *Joropo* and Peruvian Vals (waltz). The overall form of this movement shares characteristics of the rondo-sonata. The principle of variation is used throughout the movement, especially in the elaboration of the accompaniment figures. The idea of foot tapping expressed in the rhythmic syncopation, is characteristic of the Venezuelan Hispanic heritage that resembles the Cuban *Zapateo* and the Argentine *Malambo* as well. In the middle section, the composer interrupts the rhythmic pulsation introducing a lyrical waltz, a typical expression of the music of Perú.

Due to the influence of popular music, the rhythmic characteristics of this work such as syncopation, polyrhythm, sharp articulations, and asymmetrical pulsations make it rich and complex. They expose the variety of resources that Alén manages in his individual expression. The elements of jazz, classical music, and Latin rhythms in Alén's writing intertwine with his ability to create beautiful melodies.

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**Composed:** 1988

**Approximate duration:** 16 minutes

**Other works:** Theme and Variations for Saxophones, Six Preludes for Piano, Sonata for Flute and Piano, Danzón Legrand (piano)

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## APPENDIX C: PROGRAM NOTES, RECITAL #3

Two visions in the treatment of words and music, separated in time but congruent with the myriad of elements from which the inspiration of each composer is nourished.

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### CLAUDE DEBUSSY

Born August 22, 1862, Saint-Germain-en-Laye, France

Died March 25, 1918, Paris, France

### *Cinq Poèmes de Charles Baudelaire (L 64)*

*Le Balcon · Harmonie du soir · Le Jet d'eau · Recueillement · La Mort des amants*

---

*“La musique est une mathématique mystérieuse dont les éléments participent de l’Infini.”<sup>7</sup>*

*Claude Debussy*

This description of music as a mysterious mathematics in Debussy’s quote matches the correspondence between imagination, sensations, accents, sounds, and colors in Baudelaire’s writing. The poems were extracted from *Le Fleurs du mal*, Baudelaire’s controversial collection which represents the majority of his poetry. During the time these *mélodies* were composed, Wagner’s influence dominated Western Europe and inevitably permeated Debussy’s inspiration. Published two years after his first remarkable collection, *Ariettes Oubliées*, this group represents a less characteristic musical writing, as a momentary fruit of Debussy’s contact with Wagner’s ideas.

The highly articulated eroticism and suggestive images of Baudelaire’s poems are translated into music in complete amalgamation with the text. *Le Balcon*, inspired by one of the poet’s significant mistresses, recounts memories of past experiences and the happiness the lovers no longer have. The balcony, suspended in the air, extends from the intimacy of the apartment to the outdoor space: “l’espace profonde.” The psychological conflict expressed by Baudelaire wavers between uncertainty and hope and is reflected in a dense accompaniment, almost orchestral in magnitude, which is reinforced by the recurrence of verses. Debussy follows the poem using the same melody for the first and last lines of the stanzas.

*Harmonie du soir* uses an adaptation of the pantoum verse form, where the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> lines of each stanza become the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> of the following, a characteristic that contributes to its cyclic sense, analogous to the recurrent melodic motives. Baudelaire’s poetic imagery expresses connections

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<sup>7</sup> Quoted in Arthur B. Wenk, *Claude Debussy and the Poets*, p.68. (Music is a mysterious mathematics whose elements participates in infinity).

between colors, sounds, and perfumes. From the musical perspective, the extensive use of chromaticism can suggest the manifestation of multiple images.

The rippling water of the fountain is accurately represented in the accompaniment of *Le Jet d'eau*, which was later orchestrated by Debussy. Characterized by the sense of movement, it simulates the endless motion of water from the initial double tone pedal, undulating arpeggios, and rolled chords. While the melody of the refrain is repeated, the accompaniment changes giving the impression of constant movement. The correspondence between two opposite elements becomes significant in this piece. The ascending water column of the fountain and the 3-note descending motive may be associated with the feeling of tranquility and repose that characterizes this *mélodie*.

The last two poems share the sonnet form: two quatrains followed by two tercets interlaced by the rhyme. In *Recueillement*, the poet addresses his sorrow and the sense of resignation. It has the longest introduction, allowing the pianist to establish the mood of contemplation ahead of the singer. Consistent with this idea, this *mélodie* is written in a very slow tempo, a feature that distinguishes it from the previous ones. Two intervals become very important in the framework of this piece: the minor second and the minor third. Typical is the association of these intervals with the feelings of pain, sadness, and regret, and they use both melodically and harmonically agrees with the expressive sense of this piece. Words such as *Douleur* (pain), *Regret* (regret), and *Nuit* (night), are capitalized in the poem emphasizing the poet's intention. The final *mélodie*, *La Mort des amants* was the first in order of composition and it uses, as the previous piece, an intervallic relationship. The minor third interval in the configuration of the main motive permeates the entire piece. Here, Baudelaire highlights the correspondence between sensual pleasure and spiritual extasy.

A demanding group of songs, for both the singer and pianist, it suggests orchestral textures in the accompaniment and requires the use of the entire vocal register. The singer will find excellent opportunities to display vocal qualities with long phrasing and the effects of real *pianissimo* on top notes. A thick texture in the accompaniment challenges the pianist's ability to carefully balance them and suggest orchestral timbres.

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**COMPOSED**

Between 1887- 89

**EDITIONS**

Paris: L. Paxent, 1890

1902 only 150 copies

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## Text and Translations

### Le balcon

Mère des souvenirs, maîtresse des maîtresses,  
Ô toi, tous mes plaisirs! ô toi, tous mes devoirs!  
Tu te rappelleras la beauté des caresses,  
La douceur du foyer et le charme des soirs,  
Mère des souvenirs, maîtresse des maîtresses.

Les soirs illuminés par l'ardeur du charbon,  
Et les soirs au balcon, voilés de vapeur rose.  
Que ton sein m'était doux! que ton cœur m'était bon!  
Nous avons dit souvent d'impérissables choses  
Les soirs illuminés par l'ardeur du charbon.

Que les soleils sont beaux par les chaudes soirées!  
Que l'espace est profond! que le cœur est puissant!  
En me penchant vers toi, reine des adorées,  
Je croyais respirer le parfum de ton sang.  
Que les soleils sont beaux par les chaudes soirées!

La nuit s'épaississait ainsi qu'une cloison,  
Et mes yeux dans le noir devinaient tes prunelles,  
Et je buvais ton souffle. Ô douceur! ô poison!  
Et tes pieds s'endormaient dans mes mains fraternelles,  
La nuit s'épaississait ainsi qu'une cloison.

Je sais l'art d'évoquer les minutes heureuses,  
Et revis mon passé blotti dans tes genoux.  
Car à quoi bon chercher tes beautés langoureuses  
Ailleurs qu'en ton cher corps et qu'en ton cœur si doux?  
Je sais l'art d'évoquer les minutes heureuses!

Ces serments, ces parfums, ces baisers infinis,  
Renaîtront-ils d'un gouffre interdit à nos sondes  
Comme montent au ciel les soleils rajeunis  
Après s'être lavés au fond des mers profondes  
- O serments! ô parfums! ô baisers infinis!

### The balcony

Mother of memories, mistress of mistresses,  
O you, all my pleasures, O you, all my duties!  
You will recall the beauty of caresses,  
The hearth's sweetness and the evenings' charm,  
Mother of memories, mistress of mistresses!

Evenings lit with the glow of coals,  
And evenings on the balcony, veiled in pink vapours.  
How soft your breast was, how warm your heart!  
We have often said imperishable things,  
On evenings lit with the glow of coals.

How beautiful the suns on warm evenings!  
How space is deep, how strong the heart!  
Leaning toward you, queen of my loves,  
I seemed to breathe the scent of your blood.  
How beautiful the suns on warm evenings!

Night thickened like a wall,  
And my eyes in the dark divined your own,  
And I drank in your breath, O sweetness, O poison!  
And your feet were cradled in my fraternal hands.  
Night thickened like a wall.

I am skilled in the art of recalling rapture,  
And relive my past, my head in your lap.  
For where else should I seek your languid beauty  
But in your dear body and most loving heart?  
I am skilled in the art of recalling rapture!

These vows, these scents, these infinite kisses,  
Will they rise from a pit we are forbidden to fathom,  
As the reborn suns ascend the sky,  
Having washed themselves in the depths of the sea?  
O vows! O scents! O infinite kisses

## Harmonie du soir

Voici venir les temps où vibrant sur sa tige  
Chaque fleur s'évapore ainsi qu'un encensoir ;  
Les sons et les parfums tournent dans l'air du soir;  
Valse mélancolique et langoureux vertige!

Chaque fleur s'évapore ainsi qu'un encensoir ;  
Le violon frémit comme un cœur qu'on afflige ;  
Valse mélancolique et langoureux vertige!  
Le ciel est triste et beau comme un grand reposoir.

Le violon frémit comme un cœur qu'on afflige  
Un cœur tendre, qui hait le néant vaste et noir!  
Le ciel est triste et beau comme un grand reposoir;  
Le soleil s'est noyé dans son sang qui se fige.

Un cœur tendre, qui hait le néant vaste et noir,  
Du passé lumineux recueille tout vestige!  
Le soleil s'est noyé dans son sang qui se fige ...  
Ton souvenir en moi luit comme un ostensor

## Evening harmony

Now comes the time when quivering on its stem,  
Each flower sheds perfume like a censer;  
Sounds and scents turn in the evening air;  
Melancholy waltz and reeling languor!

Each flower sheds perfume like a censer;  
The violin throbs like a wounded heart,  
Melancholy waltz and reeling languor!  
The sky is sad and beautiful like a great altar.

The violin throbs like a wounded heart,  
A fond heart that loathes the vast black void!  
The sky is sad and beautiful like a great altar.  
The sun has drowned in its congealing blood.

A fond heart that loathes the vast black void  
And garners in all the luminous past!  
The sun has drowned in its congealing blood...  
Your memory within me shines like a monst

## Le Jet d'eau

Tes beaux yeux sont las, pauvre amante!  
Reste longtemps, sans les rouvrir,  
Dans cette pose nonchalante  
Où t'a surpris le plaisir.  
Dans la cour le jet d'eau qui jase  
Et ne se tait ni nuit ni jour,  
Entretient doucement l'extase  
Où ce soir m'a plongé l'amour.

La gerbe d'eau qui berce  
Ses mille fleurs,  
Que la lune traverse  
De ses pâleurs,  
Tombe comme une averse  
De larges pleurs.

Ainsi ton âme qu'incendie  
L'éclair brûlant des voluptés  
S'élançait, rapide et hardie,  
Vers les vastes cieux enchantés.  
Puis, elle s'épanche, mourante,  
En un flot de triste langueur,  
Qui par une invisible pente  
Descend jusqu'au fond de mon cœur.

La gerbe d'eau qui berce ...  
Ses mille fleurs,  
Que la lune traverse  
De ses pâleurs,  
Tombe comme une averse  
De larges pleurs

O toi, que la nuit rend si belle,  
Qu'il m'est doux, penché vers tes seins,  
D'écouter la plainte éternelle  
Qui sanglote dans les bassins!  
Lune, eau sonore, nuit bénie,  
Arbres qui frissonnez autour, —  
Votre pure mélancolie  
Est le miroir de mon amour.

La gerbe d'eau qui berce...

## The fountain

Your beautiful eyes are fatigued, poor lover!  
Rest awhile, without opening them anew,  
In this careless pose,  
Where pleasure surprised you.  
The babbling fountain in the courtyard,  
Never silent night or day,  
Sweetly prolongs the ecstasy  
Where love this evening plunged me.

The sheaf of water  
Swaying its thousand flowers,  
Through which the moon gleams  
With its pallid light,  
Falls like a shower  
Of great tears.

And so your soul, lit  
By the searing flash of ecstasy,  
Leaps swift and bold  
To vast enchanted skies.  
And then, dying, spills over  
In a wave of sad listlessness,  
Down some invisible incline  
Into the depths of my heart.

The sheaf of water  
Swaying its thousand flowers,  
Through which the moon gleams  
With its pallid light,  
Falls like a shower  
Of great tears.

O you, whom night renders so beautiful,  
How sweet, as I lean toward your breasts,  
To listen to the eternal lament  
Sobbing in the fountain's basin!  
O moon, lapping water, blessed night,  
Trees that quiver all around,  
Your sheer melancholy  
Is the mirror of my love.

The sheaf of water...

## Recueillement

Sois sage, ô ma Douleur, et tiens-toi plus tranquille;  
Tu réclamais le Soir: il descend; le voici:  
Une atmosphère obscure enveloppe la ville,  
Aux uns portant la paix, aux autres le souci.

Pendant que des mortels la multitude vile,  
Sous le fouet du Plaisir, ce bourreau sans merci,  
Va cueillir des remords dans la fête servile,  
Ma Douleur, donne-moi la main; viens par ici,

Loin d'eux. Vois se pencher les défuntes Années,  
Sur les balcons du ciel, en robes surannées;  
Surgir du fonds des eaux le Regret souriant;

Le Soleil moribond s'endormir sous une arche,  
Et, comme un long linceul traînant à l'Orient,  
Entends, ma chère, entends la douce Nuit qui marche.

## La Mort des amants

Nous aurons des lits pleins d'odeurs légères,  
Des divans profonds comme des tombeaux,  
Et d'étranges fleurs sur des étagères,  
Écloses pour nous sous des cieus plus beaux.

Usant à l'envi leurs chaleurs dernières,  
Nos deux coeurs seront deux vastes flambeaux,  
Qui réfléchiront leurs doubles lumières  
Dans nos deux esprits, ces miroirs jumeaux.

Un soir fait de rose et de bleu mystique,  
Nous échangerons un éclair unique,  
Comme un long sanglot tout chargé d'adieux;

Et plus tard un Ange, entr'ouvrant les portes,  
Viendra ranimer, fidèle et joyeux,  
Les miroirs ternis et les flammes mortes.

## Meditation

Be good, O my Sorrow, and keep more calm.  
You longed for Evening; it is falling; now:  
A dusky atmosphere enfolds the town,  
Bringing peace to some, to others care.

While the vile multitude of mortals,  
Lashed by Pleasure, that pitiless tormentor,  
Goes gathering remorse in abject revels,  
Give me your hand, my Sorrow; come this way,

Far from them. See the departed Years leaning,  
In outmoded dress, from the heavens' balustrades;  
See smiling Regret well up from the waters' depths;

The dying Sun fall asleep beneath an arch,  
And like a long shroud trailing in the East,  
Listen, my love, listen to the tread of gentle Night.

## The death of lovers

We shall have beds drenched in light scents,  
Divans as deep as tombs,  
And displays of exotic flowers  
That bloomed for us beneath fairer skies.

Outdoing even their most recent passions  
Our two hearts will be two mighty torches,  
Reflecting their twin lights  
In our two twin-mirrored souls.

On an evening of pink and mystic blue,  
We shall exchange a single radiant glance,  
Like a long sob laden with farewells;

And later an Angel, pushing the portals ajar,  
Will come, faithful and joyous, to revive  
The tarnished mirrors and lifeless flames.

## JUAN ORREGO-SALAS

Born January 18, 1919, Santiago, Chile

Died November 24, 2019, Bloomington, Indiana

### ***El Alba del Alhelí: Diez Canciones sobre Poemas de Rafael Alberti, Op. 29***

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“I prefer to define...the union of words and music...as a phenomenon of reciprocal nourishment, in which the music, without losing its own order, reflects the expression of the text, and the text in turn, nourishes it with its singular content.”<sup>8</sup>

J. Orrego-Salas

The union of words and music was, for the composer, “one of the most seductive means of personal expression.”<sup>9</sup> He understood that the word established the character of the music, but it was the music that determined the way of communicating it. His natural inclination led him to look into the Spanish literary past as a source of inspiration. As he himself narrates in his book *Encuentros, Visiones y Repasos*, the Spanish traditions settled in his mind at an early age without him realizing it.<sup>10</sup> In his case, the Iberian roots weigh more than the folkloric Chilean expression, of which his music carries very little.

Educated in Chilean Creole society, Orrego-Salas received European musical training, further deepened in the US under the tutelage of Aaron Copland, Randal Thompson, and Paul Henry Lang. The Spanish heritage is present in many of his vocal and instrumental works with some examples being his Festive Overture, Op.21; Symphony No.1, Op.26; *Canciones Castellanas*, Op.20; *El Retablo del Rey Pobre*, Op.27; choral pieces such as *Madrigales*, Op. 62; and the cantata *La Ciudad Celeste*, Op. 105.

Orrego-Salas entered the musical life of the United States in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century and worked extensively to disseminate Latin American art music. The year 1961 marked the beginning of his permanent life in the US and his primary commitment was to direct the Latin American Music Center at Indiana University in Bloomington. As a composer, educator, scholar, and architect, he taught extensively and published numerous articles for major music publications in his native Chile and the U.S.

*El Alba del Alhelí*, on Rafael Alberti’s collection with the same title, is a sample of the Andalusian vein in his music.<sup>11</sup> The populist poetry of Alberti “imposed” on the composer’s melodic and

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<sup>8</sup> Translated from *Encuentros, Visiones y Repasos*, J. Orrego-Salas, p.276

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p.277

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p.277

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p.273

stylistic traits from the music of southern Spain. These poems placed him in front of various characters of humble background, and his instinct led him to adjust his imagination to the stories, dramas, and patterns of each one of them. The strumming of the Spanish guitar, the melismatic raptures of Flamenco singing, the Andalusian cadence, and the use of modality are popular aspects of the Spanish vein present in this collection. Although the composer avoids making direct allusions in his music, the Chilean writer Vicente Salas Viú, who was also a friend of Orrego-Salas, pointed out that “Andalusian vulgarity was interwoven with the composer’s melodic refinement.”<sup>12</sup>

In creating the structure for this cycle, the composer chose two poems with similar literary characteristics to begin and end it. The first one, with the introductory character, announces the musical motive that lays the foundation for the rest of the composition. In a narrative tone, the final poem alludes to the poet’s love for his Andalusian land. The internal poems reveal the stories and mini dramas of marginal characters, the fisherman, the lamplighter, the street crier, a gypsy girl, and include scenes that describe the beauties of the poet’s land.

Alberti, one of the most significant poets from the generation of Spanish writers of 1927, stood out for his neo-popularist tendency. His poems are characterized by brevity, repetition of words, verses, and the use of simple vocabulary. His ability to artistically recreate an unsophisticated language was part of his singularity as a writer. *EL Alba del Alhelí*, different from the title of the musical edition (The Fragrant Dawn) is translated as “The Dawn of the Wallflower.” Orrego-Salas used eight poems from this collection and two from Alberti’s previous book titled *La Amante* (The Lover), the final poem *Castilla tiene castillos* and the cradle song *El madrigal del peine perdido*.

The songs are contrasting in the dynamic of the stories they tell. The village bride is a desperate character, which is conveyed from the introductory piano gesture and the agitation with which the accompaniment contributes to the drama throughout the piece. The Flamenco melisma is present in her melody as well as in *La gitana*, the gypsy’s song, where it takes the form of a *quejío* (lament) over the syllable “Ay.” The vocalizations capture the Andalusian melodic twist to communicate the passion and despair of the characters. The songs also exhibit the modal sonority related to the Arabic influence in Spanish traditional music. Also traditional is the use of the Spanish guitar. The harmonic and rhythmic imitation of the strumming appears translated into the piano writing in song #5, resembling the thumb sliding along the arpeggiated notes of the introduction.

Other moments to note from this work are the unusual introspective street cry in song #3, totally opposed to the idea of the typical town crier’s call; the end of *La flor del candil* (The Lamp Flower), tinged by the Andalusian cadence; and the *recitativo-seco* of the penniless fisherman telling the river his sorrows. Orrego-Salas’ neoclassical writing keeps clear textures in the piano part, creating ostinato patterns with economy of means but remaining very effective in the development of the scenes.

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p.273.

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**FIRST RECORDING**

Clara Oyuela, soprano and Elvira Savi, piano

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