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American composer Libby Larsen (b. 1950) has written extensively for the solo voice, earning much of her reputation as a vocal composer from her intuitive skill in setting English texts to music. For her song cycle *De toda la eternidad* (2002) for high voice and piano, Larsen chose to set texts from the seventeenth-century Mexican nun and poet Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz (1648-1695). Studied and respected throughout the literary world and a familiar cultural icon in Mexico, Sor Juana's vast poetic output and mastery of Baroque rhetoric and style have earned her recognition as one of the greatest Spanish writers of all time. As few composers have set Sor Juana's words to music, she is largely unknown to American classical music audiences.

De toda la eternidad represents a departure from many of Larsen's more well-known song cycles. Her only work to date for solo voice that is written completely in Spanish, *De toda la eternidad* stands apart from Larsen's other vocal compositions not only because of the language, but also because of the significant difference in perspective of the texts. Many of her vocal works set texts with a specific voice, frame of reference, and perspective. In *De toda la eternidad*, Larsen takes the opportunity to explore an interior approach to these songs, conceptualizing a psychological cycle that is imbued with mysticism. Rather than constructing a narrative of fixed perspective, Larsen seeks to capture the space and timelessness that she found in Sor Juana's poetry and create a

sense of eternity by writing music that is freed from the boundaries of time, culture, gender, and physicality.

This paper provides a background of the conceptualization of the work, brief biographical information on Larsen, and a discussion of trademarks of her style in composing for the voice. It also provides an introduction to Sor Juana, showing a glimpse into Sor Juana's fascinating history and a brief discussion of her literary output and style. The paper concludes with a discussion of the songs by providing an interpretive analysis of the poetry and the music.

LIBBY LARSEN'S *DE TODA LA ETERNIDAD*:
CREATING INFINITY THROUGH THE
WORDS OF SOR JUANA INÉS
DE LA CRUZ

by

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APPROVAL PAGE

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF FIGURES	vi
CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. CONCEPTION OF THE WORK.....	5
III. LIBBY LARSEN, COMPOSER	11
Biography.....	11
Compositional Style.....	13
Solo Vocal Music.....	15
IV. SOR JUANA INÉS DE LA CRUZ, POET	20
Biography.....	20
The Poetry.....	27
V. THE SONGS: AN INTERPRETIVE GUIDE.....	31
Un Instante me escuchen	35
¡Afuera, afuera, afuera!.....	40
Tersa frente, oro el cabello.....	46
Esta tarde.....	51
Diuturna enfermedad de la Esperanza	56
VI. CONCLUSION.....	63
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	65
APPENDIX A. CHRONOLOGY OF THE LIFE OF SOR JUANA.....	71
APPENDIX B. OTHER MUSICAL SETTINGS OF SOR JUANA.....	73
APPENDIX C. CORRECTIONS TO THE POETRY IN THE SCORE.....	77
APPENDIX D. IRB CONSENT FORMS	78

APPENDIX E. COMPOSER'S RELEASE FOR USE OF SCORE EXAMPLES81

LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 1. “Un Instante me escuchen,” mm. 1-2.....	38
Figure 2. “Un Instante me escuchen,” mm. 22-24.....	39
Figure 3. “¡Afuera, afuera, afuera!” mm. 1-3	42
Figure 4. “¡Afuera, afuera, afuera!” mm. 42-44	44
Figure 5. “Tersa frente, oro el cabello,” mm. 1-3	47
Figure 6. “Tersa frente, oro el cabello,” mm. 4-7	48
Figure 7. “Tersa frente, oro el cabello,” mm. 28-32	49
Figure 8. “Esta tarde,” mm. 1-2	53
Figure 9. “Esta tarde,” mm. 22-23	54
Figure 10. “Esta tarde,” mm. 35-36.....	56
Figure 11. “Diuturna enfermedad de la Esperanza,” mm. 1-4.....	58
Figure 12. “Diuturna enfermedad de la Esperanza,” mm. 18-19.....	60
Figure 13. “Diuturna enfermedad de la Esperanza,” mm. 36-39.....	61

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

American composer Libby Larsen has written an extensive catalog of works for the solo voice, and much of her reputation as a vocal composer centers on her intuitive skill in setting English texts to music. This paper explores a composition of Larsen's for solo voice that ventures outside the realm of the American English language but stays within the cultural relevance of the Americas.

The song cycle *De toda la eternidad* for high voice and piano, Larsen's only work to date for solo voice that is written completely in Spanish,¹ takes its texts from the seventeenth-century Mexican nun and poet Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz. Studied and respected in the literary world and a familiar cultural icon in Mexico, Sor Juana became known in her day as "the Tenth Muse" or the "Phoenix of Mexico" because of her prodigious intelligence and vast poetic output. Her impressive mastery of Baroque rhetoric and style has earned her recognition as one of the greatest Spanish writers of all time.

Sor Juana's history is fascinating. Much of her poetry was published during her own lifetime, which was not a small feat for a woman of her day, and her poems were read, not just in Mexico, but also in Spain and throughout the Spanish-speaking world.

¹Larsen's song entitled "Perineo" on a text by Roberto Echavarren (b. 1944), written for the *The AIDS Quilt Songbook* in 1992, contains text in both English and Spanish.

However, for the two hundred years following her death, Sor Juana and her work were largely buried in obscurity until resurfacing in the early twentieth century. A biography entitled *Juana de Asbaje*, written in 1910 by Mexican poet Amado Nervo and dedicated to “all the women of my country and my race,” brought Sor Juana back into Mexico’s national consciousness, and interest in her life and work was revived.² In 1955, Alfonso Méndez Plancarte compiled a critical edition of her complete literary oeuvre, entitled *Obras Completas de Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz*, in four volumes. This source has since been used as the standard authoritative edition of her work. Thanks to growing contemporary attention and scholarship by writers, including the late Nobel Prize-winning Mexican poet Octavio Paz (1914-1998), Sor Juana’s work is enjoying a resurgence, and an increasing number of critical editions and English translations of her work have been published in recent years. While her writing is praised for its lyricism, brilliance of language, and variety of styles, it is curious that Sor Juana’s poetry has seen relatively few musical settings. There are only a handful of composers – Spanish, Latin American, and American – who have set her poems to music. Largely her poetry remains unknown to American classical music audiences.³

Larsen may be the perfect complement to Sor Juana, the musical voice to make Sor Juana’s Baroque texts live and breathe for contemporary audiences. Both are strong women striking bold, independent work in fields traditionally dominated by men. After

²Octavio Paz, *Sor Juana, or, The Traps of Faith*, trans. Margaret Sayers Peden (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), v.

³For further discussion on musical settings of Sor Juana’s poetry, see Appendix B.

reading about the life of Sor Juana, Larsen felt an immediate parallel with the seventeenth-century nun. Larsen explains that both she and Sor Juana were able to do “deeply intellectual work within the monastic system.” For Sor Juana, this was the cloisters of the convent; for Larsen, the institution of graduate school and the traditionally male-dominated field of classical composition.⁴ Sor Juana, a feminist far ahead of her time, found both financial and literary success for herself in an era and culture that was one of the most sexist and restrictive societies in the world. She chose to enter the convent, not out of any deep religious conviction, but because it offered her the opportunity for a life without distraction that would enable her to have the freedom to pursue her writing and study.

Sor Juana wrote much of her poetry on commission, either for religious celebrations and festivals for the Church, or for celebratory or honorary events in the court. The income she received from her writing and the patronage that she enjoyed from the viceregal court earned for herself an impressive financial independence and intellectual respect.

The misogynistic powers of the Catholic Church in colonial Mexico eventually imposed a premature closure on Sor Juana’s literary career. Sor Juana did not win the battle against the misogynistic leadership of the Mexican Catholic Church: her brazen challenge of the masculine authority of the Church and gender roles as dictated by her society dealt her a sentence of silence and penance for the remainder of her life. Larsen

⁴Libby Larsen, interview by author, 5 October 2010, Minneapolis and Greensboro via Skype, iPod recording, Greensboro.

herself has considerable personal experience with Catholicism. She was raised in the Catholic faith and went to Catholic grade school, but she later left the church, finding it “particularly repressive to creative personalities.”⁵

In this song cycle, Larsen has taken the words of Sor Juana and freed them from preconceptions about time, culture, and gender. Sor Juana’s poetry, written in a language that is highly stylized and may seem affected to modern audiences, can be difficult to understand. Larsen’s music, however, allows the emotional content of the poetry to speak clearly. Although Sor Juana’s poetry is from a time and place that may be far removed from twenty-first-century American audiences, Larsen’s music enables the emotions in the poetry to be clearly realized in an immediate and authentic way.

⁵Ann McCutchan, *The Muse that Sings: Composers Speak About the Creative Process* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 144.

CHAPTER II

CONCEPTION OF THE WORK

Larsen's *De toda la eternidad* (2002) is a cycle of five songs originally written for soprano and piano on poetry by Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz (1648-1695). The work was commissioned by soprano Bonnie Pomfret (who was at that time a member of the vocal faculty in the Department of Music at Emory University) and was premiered on February 6, 2003, by Pomfret and pianist Laura Gordy at the Schwartz Center for Performing Arts at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia. The cycle has also been recorded by Pomfret and Gordy on a compact disc entitled *De Toda la Eternidad – Songs of American Women Composers*.⁶

Pomfret was introduced to the poetry of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz while immersed in language and culture studies at the University of Salamanca in Spain. She was struck by the literary quality and musical potential of Sor Juana's writing, but when she returned to the United States and began searching for settings of Sor Juana's poetry, she was unable to find any American composer who had set Sor Juana's texts to music.⁷

⁶This recording contains works not only by Larsen but also Louise Talma, Augusta Read Thomas, Gabriela Lena Frank, and Margaret Bonds.

⁷Linda Rae Brown, notes for *De toda la eternidad: Songs of American Women Composers*, Bonnie Pomfret, soprano, and Laura Gordy, piano, CD (digital disc), ACA Digital Recording, Inc., CM 20090, 2005.

Around that same time, circa 2000 to 2001, Larsen, who has long had an interest and fascination with Mexican history and culture, was also introduced to Sor Juana's poetry by Ellen Harris, a musicology professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Larsen says, "At that point I had heard of her but had not looked into her poetry, and so I looked into her poetry and was *stunned* by it."⁸ She felt an immediate connection to Sor Juana and her poetry, saying dramatically, "she just hit my soul."⁹ The more of Sor Juana's poetry she read, the deeper Larsen's admiration and appreciation grew. In the notes to the score, she describes Sor Juana's poetry as "achingly beautiful, deeply mystical, and puzzlingly enigmatic."¹⁰

Shortly thereafter, Larsen received the commission from Pomfret to write a song cycle based on Sor Juana's poetry, and things "just gelled, as they often do in my life. Oftentimes, things come together, and you know that's the piece you should be working on."¹¹ Pomfret suggested poems to Larsen, and together they selected a group of five poems that were unified by the subjects of love and devotion.

Larsen enthusiastically accepted the challenge of setting these poems of Sor Juana to music, writing her first songs of completely Spanish texts. While not a fluent Spanish speaker, Larsen is comfortable writing music for the Spanish language. She studied

⁸Larsen, interview, 5 October 2010.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Libby Larsen, "Program Notes," *De toda la eternidad* (Minneapolis: Libby Larsen Publishing, 2002).

¹¹Larsen, interview, 5 October 2010.

Spanish every day in elementary school from the second through the sixth grade. They learned the language through a television show, and Larsen says that “one of things that was really interesting about learning Spanish this way [was that] we all learned to speak it without necessarily understanding it. It was more like ear-training, learning by rote.”¹² Because of this background, she had the rhythmic flow of the Spanish language in her ear from an early age. Larsen’s interest in composition developed from her fascination with words: after hearing the rhythm in words, she would try to find a musical notation for them.¹³ In fact, Larsen’s first conscious effort at composing was a song she wrote based on the Spanish word “pollito” (little chicken): “I thought there was such a beautiful rhythm and sound to the word that I wrote a little song about pollitos. So I feel very much like I can find the music in Spanish the way that I can find the music in English.”¹⁴

Sor Juana’s complete literary output has yet to be translated into English, and at the time of the cycle’s composition, English translations of Sor Juana’s poetry were limited to several sources. To aid in their search of the poetry, Pomfret and Larsen consulted two main translations: Alan S. Trueblood’s *A Sor Juana Anthology* (Harvard University Press, 1988) and Margaret Sayers Peden’s *Poems, Protest, and a Dream: Selected Writings of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz* (Penguin Books, 1997). These two volumes offer translations of Sor Juana’s most well-known writings, excerpts from

¹²Ibid.

¹³Philip Kennicott, “Text Message,” in *Opera News* 73:2 (August 2008), in *International Index to Music Periodicals, ProQuest*, http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?url_ver=Z39.88-2004&res_dat=xri:iimp:&rft_dat=xri:iimp:article:citation:iimp00632047 (accessed 1 July 2010): 34.

¹⁴Larsen, interview, 5 October 2010.

larger, extended poems, and samplings of a variety of her poetic genres. Larsen was not completely satisfied with the poetic translations of these sources; while she did use them as a starting point for her work, the cycle took shape largely from her own translations.¹⁵ In the score, the English translations provided are the poetic renderings of Trueblood and Sayers Peden.

Larsen conceived of the cycle for soprano and piano, specifically the grand piano because of the sonority and resonance that the instrument offers. The acoustic principles of attack and decay inherent in the piano were central to Larsen's sound concept of the work.¹⁶ However, at the work's premiere in 2003, Emory University Wind Ensemble conductor Scott Stewart approached Larsen and suggested that she arrange the cycle for a small ensemble of winds. She felt a reluctance to re-conceptualize the songs for wind instruments but decided to approach the project as a challenge. Larsen met with Stewart in the summer of 2003 to discuss the instrumentation of the work, which would include woodwinds (featuring a prominent saxophone section), brass, piano, harp, and percussion. The colors of the instrumentation (especially the percussion parts) work beautifully with the songs. Larsen says of this version, "I feel the addition of woodwinds to these songs further communicates the stunningly profound nature and inexplicable beauty of the poetry as well."¹⁷ However, the ensemble does present some challenges to

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid.

the overall sound concept of the work. The long, sustained phrases in the songs require a tremendous amount of breath control for wind instrumentalists, and the fact that winds cannot reproduce the principles of attack and decay in the same way that a piano does changes the acoustic balance of the settings. It is Larsen's own admission that the cycle exists in its best form when performed with piano.¹⁸

Larsen's professional website indicates that *De toda la eternidad* is for soprano and piano.¹⁹ However, when questioned, Larsen admits that the cycle should not be limited only to female voices. She strongly believes that these poems transcend restrictions of gender. While the author of the poetry is a woman (and several of the poems are dedicated specifically to another woman), the poetic voice cannot be limited to that of a female because the emotions are universal and do not need to be qualified by gender labels. Larsen struggled to answer the following questions: "Is gender meant? If it's meant, so what? And if it's gender that she means, then why is there so much mysticism in the poetry?"²⁰ In the end, Larsen always returns to the actual words of the poetry in their pure form, without trying to impose any preconceptions about them. She explains, "I want the words of the poet to speak for themselves. . . . I read these texts, in their own pure form, as texts about love, and not necessarily human love. Just deep

¹⁷Larsen, "France and Spain!" Program Notes, performed by Emory Wind Ensemble, Scott A. Stewart, conductor, Atlanta, Georgia, 26 February 2010, www.arts.emory.edu/documents/event/2_26_10_EWE_Final.pdf (accessed 28 September 2010).

¹⁸Larsen, interview, 5 October 2010.

¹⁹Libby Larsen, Composer website, "Works – Vocal," www.libbylarsen.com/ (accessed 5 July 2010).

²⁰Larsen, interview, 5 October, 2010.

reverential love and yearning.”²¹ With this approach, the emotions presented in the poetry are not categorically feminine. Rather, the words represent universal ideas, which transcend the idea of gender. The range and textures of the songs make it not only appropriate for a woman to sing, but also a high male voice (either a tenor or a high baritone).

Larsen feels strongly that the poetry also transcends culture, and she worked carefully to avoid creating a cultural reference point of time or place in her musical settings. She struggled against the tendency to write music that falls into the stereotypical melodies and rhythms of Spanish language and music. She says, “I found that as I worked with Spanish, so many of the stereotypic rhythms simply emerged, and I was trying to find Sor Juana’s rhythm . . . without falling into preconceived stereotypes about how Spanish sounds when it is set to music.”²² Larsen’s resistance to falling into clichéd Spanish musical gestures or preconceptions about gender, sexuality, or culture, gives these songs a universal quality. The music is not suggestive of a specific time, culture, or voice; rather, Larsen creates music that always focuses directly on the actual words themselves and their emotional content.

Larsen revised the work in 2007, making mostly small changes to the declamation of the text. The score is published by Libby Larsen Publications and is available for purchase on her website (www.libbylarsen.com) in print and PDF forms.

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid.

CHAPTER III

LIBBY LARSEN, COMPOSER

Biography

Born on December 24, 1950, in Wilmington, Delaware, Libby Larsen was raised in Minnesota, where she enjoyed what she describes as a “typical Midwestern upbringing.”²³ From the early age of seven, she felt a natural urge to compose music and began doing so in grade school. She followed her instincts and her ear and received no formal theoretical training until college, where she studied at the University of Minnesota under Paul Fetler, Eric Stokes and Dominic Argento, and received three degrees in composition: her Bachelor of Arts in 1971, Master of Arts in 1975, and Doctor of Philosophy in 1978.

Larsen is one of the few composers in the United States who makes her living solely by composing. Rather than pursuing a full-time academic career, she prefers to remain unattached to a full-time academic position and selects a small number of private students and college residencies each year. Larsen has served as a visiting professor and lecturer at numerous institutions across the country. She composes primarily on

²³Richard Kessler, “In the First Person: Libby Larsen Interview (2/99),” in *New Music Box: the Web Magazine of the American Music Center*, Issue II, Vol. O, No. 5, 2 June 2002, <http://newmusicbox.org/archive/firstperson/larsen/index.html> (accessed 2 July 2010).

commission, writing for organizations which have included the St. Louis Symphony, Cleveland Lyric Opera, the Ohio Ballet, the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, the Cleveland Quartet, sopranos Arlene Augér and Benita Valente, and the vocal group The King's Singers.

A prolific composer, Larsen has written over four hundred musical works spanning almost all genres, from intimate vocal works and chamber music to large-scale orchestral works and operas. The first woman to serve as a resident composer with a major American orchestra, Larsen has served as a composer-in-residence for the Minnesota Orchestra, the Charlotte Symphony Orchestra, and the Colorado Symphony Orchestra.

Larsen is self-described as a “vigorous advocate for the music and musicians of our time.”²⁴ She, along with composer and friend Stephen Paulus, co-founded the Minnesota Composers Forum in 1973 (renamed the American Composers Forum in 1996) with the purpose of establishing a community of artistic and professional support outside of academia for classical composers. The ACF supports and develops markets for the music of emerging composers and now has approximately 1700 members in its community.

There are over fifty professional recordings of her compositions on labels including Angel/EMI, Nonesuch, Decca, and Koch International. Larsen won a Grammy award in 1994 as a producer of *The Art of Arlene Augér*, a recording that included

²⁴Libby Larsen, Composer Website, “About.”

Larsen's song cycle *Sonnets from the Portuguese*. She has received numerous awards: a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship, the Eugene McDermott Award in the Arts from MIT, and a Lifetime Achievement Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. An outspoken advocate for issues such as music education, Larsen has served on the music panel of the NEA, the managing board of the American Symphony Orchestra League, served as the vice president of the American Music Center, and held the Harissios Papamarkou Chair in Education and Technology at the John W. Kluge Center at the Library of Congress from 2003 to 2004. In May 2010, Larsen was awarded the George Peabody Medal for Outstanding Contributions to Music in America from Johns Hopkins University.

Compositional Style

Larsen's compositional style has been called "adventurous without being self-consciously avant-garde."²⁵ Her music is regarded as generally accessible to audiences, lacking in pretension, and characterized by its "energy, optimism, rhythmic diversity, colorful orchestration, liberated tonality without harsh dissonance, and pervading lyricism."²⁶ Her eclectic sound inspirations range from Berlioz, Debussy, and Stravinsky, to James Brown, Hank Williams, and rap.²⁷ Larsen has never wanted to definitively classify herself within one particular musical style. Rather than striving to

²⁵Mary Ann Feldman, "Larsen, Libby," in *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/42676> (accessed 5 July 2010).

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷James R. Briscoe, ed., "Libby Larsen: How It Thrills Us," in *Contemporary Anthology of Music by Women* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 109.

achieve a recognizable consistency of musical language in her works, it is more important to Larsen that her music communicates something tangible to the audience:

My own musical background is one of direct communication to the spirit through music. . . . I gave a lot of thought to music's communicative power. I wanted – and still want – to work to create music that communicates to intelligent, spiritual people, through both the emotions and the intellect.²⁸

Her harmonic language does not ascribe to traditional functional tonality. Larsen describes her concept of tonality as “pools of comfort” around a functional tonality that is horizontally, not vertically realized. She explains that in her compositional process, “the line comes first and the harmonies result.” While she does create recognizable tonal areas, they are vaguely modal, and oftentimes reinforced through pedal tones in the bass.²⁹ She also assigns particular significance to intervals: “I choose the interval – I like Lydian fourths and major thirds – and develop the meaning of that interval musically through a piece.”³⁰

Larsen's first musical experiences were singing in choirs of her Catholic grade school: the students sang Gregorian chant for daily services. The metric freedom inherent in chant was a seminal factor in Larsen's musical development, and she credits this experience with helping to instill within her a strong sense of internal rhythm. She

²⁸Raymond Tuttle, “Composer Libby Larsen: Letting the Music Speak for Her,” *Fanfare: The Magazine for Serious Record Collectors* 24:6 (July-August 2001): 22, in *International Index of Music Periodicals Full Text, ProQuest*, http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?url_ver=Z39.88-2004&res_dat=xri:iimp:&rft_dat=xri:iimp:article:citation:iimp00210560 (accessed 1 July 2010).

²⁹Larsen, Composer website, “FAQ.”

³⁰Ibid.

explains that chant is “shaped by the moment, and it’s shaped by the spirit. . . . The rhythm has everything to do with the flow of the chant, as it exists in the space in which it is being performed. So I had a very solid grounding in timeless flow.”³¹ In Larsen’s own words, this exposure helped to instill in her a “very intuitive, sensitive kind of musicianship.”³² From then on, her fascination with rhythm became a central issue in her work. When asked in interviews to describe her own music, Larsen responds by saying that “it can be recognized by its rhythm more than anything else.”³³

Solo Vocal Music

While Larsen writes music in all genres, her skill and love for writing for the voice is evident. She has composed numerous solo and choral works, both sacred and secular. Equally comfortable writing on the small and the large scale, she has earned the distinction of being considered one of the most successful female American operatic composers of the 1990s.³⁴ All of her experience singing in choirs as well as conducting and accompanying choirs in college gives her a unique perspective on writing music for the human voice. In an interview, Larsen stated: “I am a singer, you know, and I also am

³¹Briscoe, “Libby Larsen: How It Thrills Us,” 108.

³²McCutchan, *The Muse That Sings*, 144.

³³Kessler, “In the First Person.”

³⁴Christine Ammer, *Unsung: A History of Women in American Music*, Century Edition (Portland: Amadeus Press, 2001), 211.

a great talker. I love the notion of vocalizing.”³⁵ This connection to the voice manifests itself in her vocal compositions: her concept of line and lyricism is always present.

Larsen demonstrates an intuitive skill for writing melodies that are both idiomatic to the voice and work optimally with the language in projecting the text with clarity.³⁶ Larsen says that much of this knowledge came from work she did as a graduate student at the University of Minnesota. She was a lab instructor for a course on the physical acoustics of music, an experience which taught her to view the voice conceptually as a stringed instrument:

Since it has no frets and no keys to depress, it must locate intervals kinesthetically and intelligently. There is a good reason for fourths, fifths, and diatonic scales in vocal music. I try to use them in my style. I work to compose vocal lines that fall naturally in the acoustics of the voice.³⁷

Larsen’s interest in words and their rhythm continues to be paramount to her approach in writing for the voice. In her vocal music, whether large-scale opera or intimate song, her composition is driven by the text. Larsen says that she strives to recreate “the clarity of the word, the specificity of the text, and the nuance of the poetry” in the way she sets the text.³⁸ In composing for the voice, there are two issues that

³⁵Douglas Boyer, “Musical Gesture and Style in the Choral Music of Libby Larsen,” in *Choral Journal* 34:3 (October 1993): 17.

³⁶Laura Greenwald, “The Vocal Works of Libby Larsen: An Environment for Words” (D.M.A. diss., Manhattan School of Music, 1998), 22.

³⁷Libby Larsen, “Double Joy,” in *American Organist* 18:3 (March 1984): 50.

³⁸Kennicott, “Text Message,” in *Opera News* 73:2 (August 2008): 34.

concern her: “First, the vocal line must proceed idiomatically; second, the word setting must flow naturally.”³⁹ She explains:

[I] generally let the rhythm of the words, the varying length of phrases, and the word emphasis dictate specific rhythm, phrase structure, and melodic material. When my music is performed, the words and phrases should flow quite naturally, almost conversationally.⁴⁰

Larsen emphasizes that “great poetry already has its meticulously crafted music – strong and intact.” It is her responsibility to find the inherent music and realize it. Larsen continues,

I love poetry. Clearly, good writing always starts with the words. I learn them by heart, and I think about them very hard, until the music *that is in the words* becomes the music that ends up in the melody. That way, the words are set in a way in which they can be understood, and the setting captures the spirit and the meaning of the words.⁴¹

Larsen has created the term “rhythmating” for her process of finding the natural music in the text.⁴² This process works for both poetry and prose and is not stereotypic to language, meaning that she uses the same process in her work with Spanish or French texts that she does in her work with English texts. Larsen’s process of rhythmating

³⁹Larsen, “Double Joy,” 50.

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹F. S. Ponick, “Conference Highlights: Libby Larsen, an American Composer (interview) in *Teaching Music* 7 (December 1999), in *Academic Search Premier*, EBSCOhost, <http://libproxy.uncg.edu:4467/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=2637748&site=ehost-live> (accessed 21 July 2010): 24.

⁴²Larsen, interview, 5 October 2010.

requires, as she describes it, “connecting your ear with your brain. I try to find notation, notes, and rhythmic values that come from the word itself. The language gives you what you need.” If she has been successful in notating the rhythm and inflection of the text, then the performer can “throw the counting away, and the song will sing if it’s written correctly. . . . There are many kinds of contemporary compositional techniques where counting is the essence . . . but in my music, I am striving for the exact opposite.”⁴³

Larsen avoids manipulation of the texts or imposing her own ideas on the poetry. She guides them but allows the text to shape the form, color, rhythm and melody. While being faithful to the original form of the poem, Larsen does, however, use repetition of text to help shape her musical form. She frequently repeats the first line of a poem at the end of a song, “especially in a slow and more contemplative piece as a way of rounding out the meaning . . . like a frame.”⁴⁴

Larsen is a voracious reader of poetry and prose and is especially attracted to texts by or about extraordinary women, including Willa Cather, Emily Dickenson, Virginia Woolf, Mary Cassatt, and Eleanor Roosevelt. Her predilection for female texts leads her to write much of her vocal music for the female voice. Larsen is especially attracted to the honesty that is specifically found in women’s writing, as she explains:

There is a distancing I often find in male texts. Almost all of the emotions are held at arm’s length to be extracted and examined objectively through technique

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴Jennifer W. Kelly, “Libby Larsen Composes ‘Love Songs: Five Songs on Texts by Women Poets.’ An Artist’s Identity Informs Her Work” (D.M.A. diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 2005), 104-105. in *Dissertations and Theses Full Text, ProQuest*, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/305033210?accountid=14604> (accessed 8 July 2010).

and a particular kind of language. In my texts written by women, the language is subjective and very personal. The author risks exposing herself directly to the reader.⁴⁵

She is also drawn to poetry that goes deeper than expressing simple, romantic love. She now tries to avoid writing “typical love songs” (what she describes as stereotypical “yearning, pining, unrequited love”) in favor of texts that inspire emotions related to more mature, complex love. To always reach for the stereotype is to ignore “the greater part of a human experience of love – the richness, the complexity, the uncertainty, the faith in the uncertainty, the anger, the joy, all the things that make up a complex relationship.”⁴⁶ Choosing texts of greater depth and substance offers Larsen more musical potential. These characteristics all find an embodiment in Sor Juana’s life and her writing. She was a brilliant woman who wrote complex, multi-layered, and fascinating poetry, which is a perfect complement to Larsen’s sensibilities.

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶Kelly, “Libby Larsen Composes ‘Love Songs,’” 23.

CHAPTER IV

SOR JUANA INÉS DE LA CRUZ, POET

Biography

Octavio Paz, whose comprehensive account of Sor Juana's life and cultural milieu sparked much of the renewed interest in her life and work, has called her one of the five greatest poets, not just of Mexico, but of the Spanish language.⁴⁷ A nun in seventeenth-century colonial Mexico, or "New Spain," Sor Juana was one of the most brilliant minds of her day. Her legacy is an impressive body of work: she wrote prolifically in all genres – poetry and prose, sacred and secular – and was renowned for her vast scope of knowledge and brilliant use of language and logic.

Sor Juana's world was a richly-cultured New Spain that was beginning to establish its own literary legacy. Spain's recent Golden Age of poetry from the sixteenth to the seventeenth centuries produced poets such as Lope de Vega (1562-1635) and Luis de Góngora (1561-1627). Many Spanish poets came to the New World and brought with them their rich poetic tradition. Thus the seventeenth century became a thriving literary age in Mexico, its popular poetry enriched with the refinement of the European style.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Octavio Paz, *Sor Juana, or, The Traps of Faith*, 2.

⁴⁸ Lee H. Dowling, "The Colonial Period," in *Mexican Literature: A History*, David William Foster, ed., 1st ed, The Texas Pan American Series (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994), 43.

Not surprisingly, many Mexican poets who wrote imitatively in the Baroque Spanish style have now been forgotten, but because of Sor Juana's ability to infuse the literary forms of the day with freshness and originality, she escaped being merely derivative of the Spanish poets and became regarded as the finest Latin American poet of the Spanish Golden Age of poetry.⁴⁹ Paz, who has also compiled an exhaustive anthology of Mexican poetry, says that "it is not easy to find in the history of Pan-American literature a body of work offering such a variety of themes and subjects, united almost always to perfection of form."⁵⁰

Sor Juana is a fascinating and enigmatic figure. Although a considerable amount of biographical information is available, many of the details of her life are the source of considerable scholarly speculation. Much of the information that we know about Sor Juana comes from two sources. Her first biography was written and published, along with the third volume of her works entitled *Fama y obras póstumas* (Fame and Posthumous Works), just five years after her death by Father Diego Calleja, a Jesuit priest and contemporary of Sor Juana. While Father Calleja never personally met Sor Juana, he corresponded with her through the exchange of letters and spoke to many people who did know her. The other source of information is Sor Juana herself. She left behind two autobiographical writings. In her last public work, a letter entitled *La Respuesta* (The Response), Sor Juana wrote a detailed autobiography, providing insight

⁴⁹Margaret Sayers Peden, "Translator's Note," in *Poems, Protest, and a Dream: Selected Writings/ Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz* (New York: Penguin Books, 1997), xi.

⁵⁰Paz, *Sor Juana, or, The Traps of Faith*, 2.

into all aspects of her life. A private letter that Sor Juana wrote around 1681 to a priest and her confessor also contains detailed autobiographical information.

Sor Juana's birth year was long accepted as 1651, based on a date that Sor Juana had herself given upon entering the convent. However, recent scholarship has uncovered a baptism record from three years prior, and most scholars now accept Sor Juana's birthdate to be December 2, 1648. It is believed that Sor Juana may have provided a false year to cover up the illegitimate circumstances of her birth.⁵¹

Born Juana de Asbaje y Ramirez in San Miguel Nepantla (a village at the foot of the Popocatepetl volcano, several kilometers southeast of, or about two days travel from, Mexico City), she was an illegitimate child of a *criolla* mother (of Spanish descent but born in Mexico) and a father from the Basque Country who was largely absent from her childhood. Juana was raised by her mother on her grandfather's hacienda, and from an early age outspokenly expressed her desire to receive an education. Following her older sister to school, she convinced the teacher to teach both of them how to read. From that point on, she was largely self-taught, gaining much of the rest of her education from her grandfather's extensive library. She displayed a natural inclination to poetry, even emphasizing that it came even more naturally to her than speaking in prose, and she composed her first play (now lost) before the age of ten. Constantly hungry for more

⁵¹Ilan Stavans, "Introduction," in *Poems, Protest, and a Dream: Selected Writings/ Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz* by Margaret Sayers Peden (New York: Penguin Books, 1997), xxxvi.

knowledge, Juana pleaded with her mother to be dressed as a boy so that she could attend the university in Mexico City since women were not yet allowed to study there.⁵²

Her mother sent Juana at age thirteen to Mexico City to live with a wealthy aunt and uncle; it was there that she studied Latin and was introduced to life in the court of the Spanish viceregency. Her beauty and wit attracted immediate attention, and at the age of sixteen, she became a lady-in-waiting to the vicereine, Leonor Carreto, Marquise of Mancera. In his biography, Calleja recounts a story at court: because her extraordinary intellect had astounded the court, she was challenged and tested on her knowledge by forty men, intellectuals and scholars of all disciplines, from the university in Mexico City. According to the Marquis, she passed the challenges of the men unflinchingly and defended herself “like a Royal Galleon against canoes.”⁵³ At the age of twenty, she was declared by her intellectual jury to possess the learning of a doctor.⁵⁴

Seventeenth-century Mexico was a restrictive, sexist society. Women had few options: they could have a family life caring for children, live a life in the court, or live a life in service to the Church. Juana chose to enter the Convent of the Barefoot Carmelites of San José in 1667. She explains her choice to become a nun in *La Respuesta*:

I took the veil because, although I knew I would find in religious life many things that would be quite opposed to my character (I speak of accessory rather than essential matters), it would, given my absolute unwillingness to enter into

⁵²Kirk, Pamela, *Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz: Religion, Art, and Feminism* (New York: Continuum Publishing Company, 1998), 19.

⁵³Ibid., 21.

⁵⁴María Elena de Valdés, *The Shattered Mirror: Representations of Women in Mexican Literature* (Austin: University of Texas Press), 75.

marriage, be the least unfitting and most decent state I could choose, with regard to the assurance I desired of my salvation. . . . These [things] were wanting to live alone and not wanting to have either obligations that would disturb my freedom to study or the noise of a community that would interrupt the tranquil silence of my books.⁵⁵

Her tenure there was short-lived, however. She stayed only three months due to the adverse effects on her health brought on by the rigorously strict disciplines of the order. Two years later, she assumed the religious name of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz and became a nun at the Convent of Santa Paula, a more relaxed Hieronimite order of San Jerónimo, where she would remain for the rest of her life.

The next twenty years were intellectually fruitful for Sor Juana, during which she concentrated her energies on her pursuits of intellectual study, reading, and writing. Her convent quarters became a well-respected and highly-frequented salon, attracting both intellectuals and the culturally elite of Mexico City, and was active with artistic and literary discussions, poetry readings, and performances of plays. Her vast library, thought to be one of the largest personal collections in the Western Hemisphere during that time, was reported to contain estimates ranging from four hundred to four thousand volumes, as well as an extensive collection of scientific and musical instruments.⁵⁶

While in the convent, Sor Juana maintained a good relationship with the viceregal court. In 1680 she became close friends with the new vicereine, María Luisa Manrique de Lara y Gonzaga (also known as the Marquise de la Laguna or the Countess of

⁵⁵Juana Inés de la Cruz, *La Respuesta / The Answer*, trans. By Electa Arenal and Amanda Powell, 2d. ed. (New York: The Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 2009), 51.

⁵⁶Dowling, "The Colonial Period," 59.

Paredes). During their eight year relationship, María Luisa became a patroness to Sor Juana and a champion of her work. In 1688 when the Countess was called back to Spain, she not only helped to spread Sor Juana's literary reputation across the Atlantic but was also influential in getting some of her writings published. When Sor Juana died, two volumes of her poetry had already been published; the third and final volume was published posthumously in 1700.

In 1690 significant changes occurred in Sor Juana's life. In that year she wrote a private letter, *Carta atenagórica* (Letter Worthy of Athena), in which she criticized a Jesuit priest's theology from a famous sermon forty years earlier. The fact that a woman would challenge the theology of a priest sparked a fire of outrage from the Bishop of Puebla, and he published Sor Juana's letter along with a public reproach directed to her, written under the pseudonym Sor Filotea de la Cruz. In his letter the Bishop asked her to renounce her secularism in favor of renewed devotion to her service to the Church.⁵⁷ Sor Juana's response by letter to the Bishop in 1691 became her final and most famous work, *La Respuesta de la poetisa a la muy ilustre Sor Filotea de la Cruz* (The Response of the Poet to the Most Illustrious Sor Filotea). In this letter, Sor Juana not only defended herself against the accusations of the Bishop, but she challenged the entire male establishment of the Church and her society. She wrote an autobiographical account of her lifelong devotion to learning, which served to defend the intellectual rights of all women to study, teach, write, and participate actively in all levels of society. Sor Juana's

⁵⁷Stavans, "Introduction," in *Poems, Protest, and a Dream*, xiv.

expertly-crafted argument, supported by rational thought and logical rhetoric, is now recognized as one of the first public proclamations of feminist thought in the Western Hemisphere.⁵⁸

With Sor Juana's viceregal patrons away in Spain, there was no one to defend her against the wrath of the Church. The Archbishop of Mexico, Francisco Aguiar y Seijas, was recognized as "one of the most notorious misogynists in the history of the Church in Mexico," and he now had the necessary means to punish Sor Juana.⁵⁹ He demanded that she cease her public writing and devote her life to penance and servitude or be forced to leave the convent. Sor Juana never recanted her statements, but she did acquiesce to the authority of the Church: in 1694 she signed a series of documents of abjuration, including one signed in her own blood, and lived the rest of her life in the convent without further writing. She sold most of the books in her collection and spent her time in the convent in penance and servitude. Although she did submit to the demands of the Church, Paz describes her decision, not as a sign of surrender, but rather as "a form of martyrdom for the cause of women's liberation – she never recanted, creating a silence that is deafening even at a distance of three hundred years."⁶⁰ Shortly thereafter, an epidemic swept through the convent. While tending to her fellow sisters in the infirmary, Sor Juana herself became ill, and she died in 1695 at the age of 46.

⁵⁸Valdés, *The Shattered Mirror*, 73.

⁵⁹Ibid., 74.

⁶⁰Ibid., 86.

The Poetry

Baroque Spanish poetry is rich in colorful language and metaphors. There is a seemingly never-ending variety of highly organized poetic forms, including sonnets, romances, *décimas*, *redondillas*, et al., each distinguished by a rhyme scheme and highly specified meter comprised of a set number of stressed and unstressed syllables in each line. These forms, combined with the natural rhythm and melody of the Spanish language, create verse that has a strong, inherently metric feel and musicality. Sor Juana demonstrated command of all of these classic literary forms. She is considered unmatched in her brilliance and wit within the strict forms of rhyme and meter, not just adhering to the forms, but mastering them with elegance and grace.⁶¹

Sor Juana wrote a considerable body of work for practical liturgical use in the church: sacramental plays called *autos* and one-act plays called *loas*. In addition to these dramatic works, she also wrote two secular comedies for the stage. She wrote around fifteen or sixteen *villancicos*, or carols, which comprise about one fourth of her work. Although not all of them are completely sacred, most of them are songs meant to be performed in the Church during Feast Days, such as the Nativity of Christ, the Immaculate Conception, and the Assumption of the Virgin Mary. Each *villancico* is an extended work and is made up of a cycle of eight or nine songs, intended for performance during matins, that combines elements of popular culture with the ritual of the Church.

⁶¹Dowling, "The Colonial Period," 58.

Often incorporating the rhythms of popular songs and dances into the verses, they served to “delight and instruct a popular audience through ritual, spectacle, and humor.”⁶²

Sor Juana’s intellectual curiosity was vast, encompassing a wide array of subjects. She displayed an interest in music and associated with the contemporary composers and musicians of Mexico City. There is evidence that she wrote a scholarly treatise on music, which was lost. Entitled *El caracol* (The Snail), Sor Juana developed her ideas on music theory through geometry, describing harmony as a spiral.⁶³

Sor Juana’s poems were not published in chronological order, and the specific chronology is unknown or vague at best. Méndez Plancarte, who edited what is now considered the standard edition of her work, grouped her poems first by poetic form; within the forms he grouped them thematically.⁶⁴ Some of her most famous works include *El sueño* (The Dream, also sometimes published as *Primero sueño*, First Dream), a 975-line *silva*, or epistemological poem, considered by most literary scholars to be her poetic masterpiece as well as the most important philosophical poem in the Spanish language.⁶⁵ One of her most famous works for the stage is *El Divino Narciso* (The Divine Narcissus), a sacramental play. Of all of Sor Juana’s poetry, one of her most well-known poems is a *redondilla* entitled “Hombres necios,” or “Foolish men.” In this

⁶²Ibid., 63.

⁶³Emilie Bergmann, “Sor Juana’s ‘Silencio Sonoro’: Musical Responses to Her Poetry,” in *Cuadernos de música, artes visuales y artes escénicas* 4: 1-2 (October 2008-September 2009), 181, http://www.javeriana.edu.co/revistas/Facultad/artes/cuadernos/admin/upload/uploads/CUADERNOS_volumen_4_11%20BERGMANN.pdf (accessed 9 July 2010).

⁶⁴Paz, *Sor Juana, or, The Traps of Faith*, 277.

⁶⁵Electa Arenal and Amanda Powell, *The Answer La Respuesta Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz*, Expanded Second edition (New York: The Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 2009), 17.

satirical poem, she addresses the gender issues of her day in no uncertain terms: she criticizes men for manipulating women, and she reprimands women for remaining passive and submissive to men.⁶⁶

Although she was a nun, it is interesting that the majority of Sor Juana's writing is secular. Sor Juana published over two hundred poems; of these, around fifty of them are love poems, which are her most enigmatic works. Much of her love poetry is dedicated to María Luisa, the vicereine and Sor Juana's protector and patroness. To our twenty-first-century sensibility, it may be surprising that a nun would write a body work that included amorous poetry, especially poems addressed to another woman. Some sources do claim that the Church expressed disapproval of Sor Juana's devotion to her secular studies, considered her poetry "a most unworthy and profane endeavor," and issued reprimands to her, warning her of sacrilegious misconduct.⁶⁷ Because of the mystery surrounding the relationship Sor Juana had with María Luisa, her sexuality also comes into question. Many scholars invite the discussion of a homosexual relationship between Sor Juana and her patroness. Octavio Paz explains the existence of these love poems with a more rational approach and cautions modern readers who might make conjectures about Sor Juana's life based on her writing. Paz explains that Sor Juana's voice in her poetry is never that of a nun. It was not until the Age of Romanticism several centuries later that the idea of the author's life became unified with his or her work, and

⁶⁶ Stavans, "Introduction," in *Poems, Protest, and a Dream: Selected Writings/ Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz* by Margaret Sayers Peden, xxxii.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, xviii, xi.

contemporary readers cannot apply this modern-day sensibility to Sor Juana's life and work. In Baroque language,

the poem is not a testimony but a verbal form that is . . . the reiteration of an archetype and a variation on the inherited model. . . . Like all poets of her time, Sor Juana does not attempt to express herself; she constructs verbal objects that are emblems or monuments that illustrate a vision of love transmitted by poetic tradition.⁶⁸

While it is more exciting to entertain the idea that Sor Juana was writing in her poetry about a forbidden homosexual relationship with Maria Luisa (as some sources suggest), it is more realistic to suggest that Sor Juana was using the poetic rhetoric and metaphors of her time to express friendship, gratitude, and devotion to her protector. Paz invites caution when making conjectures about an artist's life based on their work: "Their life does not entirely explain the work, nor does the work explain the life."⁶⁹

Likewise, Larsen also expresses herself as being

ill at ease with the search for lesbianism as the mark for Sor Juana. I was really curious as to why people are looking so very hard to take the life of a genius poet and put on it such a contemporary reading of morality because I don't find that in the poetry, and my search is always in the poetry.⁷⁰

⁶⁸Ibid., 279.

⁶⁹Ibid., 3.

⁷⁰Larsen, interview, 5 October 2010.

CHAPTER V

THE SONGS: AN INTERPRETIVE GUIDE

As undeniably fascinating as Sor Juana's life is, Larsen points out that a complete understanding of the poet's identity is not crucial to experiencing these songs for the listener and performer. What is essential to Larsen is creating music that is free of parameters and not defined or restricted by the strength of Sor Juana's persona. Recognizing that Sor Juana's presence could easily become a dominant force in the songs, Larsen worked intently to remove all preconceptions and find the essence of her words. After struggling to determine the voice of the poems – male or female, human or divine – Larsen came to the realization that personification in the poetry is not possible to definitively know. More importantly, it is not necessary to know in order for one to understand the emotional message that speaks clearly from the words. In these songs, Larsen allows the voice of the speaker and the presence of the one spoken to remain unrestricted and undefined, saying only that “the singer is the one who utters; the poetry is a flow of infinity.”⁷¹ She preserves the purity of the language so that the words can most effectively convey the emotional energy in the work. The few direct references that Larsen makes to Hispanic culture are subtle or presented in an unexpected harmonic

⁷¹Larsen, interview, 13 October 2010.

context. The universality of emotion in the poetry transcends the boundaries of time, culture, or specificity of gender.

De toda la eternidad represents a departure from many of Larsen's more well-known song cycles. She is often drawn to first-person texts in her vocal music, leading to works that have a specific voice, frame of reference, and perspective. Several cycles come to mind – *ME (Brenda Ueland)* (1987); *Songs from Letters: Calamity Jane to her daughter Janey, 1880-1902* (1989); and *Try Me Good King: Last Words of the Wives of Henry VIII* (2000) – that use letters or diaries of historical and contemporary women as their texts. The stories and perspectives are fixed, and the narratives are those from real lives. This is not the case with *De toda la eternidad*. Larsen takes a metaphysical approach with these songs, forming a cycle that is not a narrative but rather a presentation of space and emotion. Rather than trying to clarify the details through the music, she leaves the parameters undefined, thereby allowing room for multiple interpretations and creating a cycle that is successful on both the physical and the spiritual levels.

Larsen's desire to leave interpretive room partially explains why she chose to set these poems in their original Spanish rather than use an English translation. Larsen has long loved the poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke, and she has set his poetry in several vocal works – *Selected Poems of Rainer Maria Rilke* for soprano, flute, guitar, and harp; *Three Rilke Songs* (1980) for high voice and guitar; and *Beloved, Thou Hast Brought Me Many Flowers* (1994) for mezzo soprano, piano, and cello. Because writing music that communicates directly to her audience is paramount to her, Larsen has chosen to set these poems in English translation rather than in the original German so that they will speak

with greater impact to English-speaking audiences. However, she felt that Sor Juana's poetry did not need that same directness or clarity. She wanted the beauty of the Spanish language and the perfection of Sor Juana's verse to remain intact. She also felt aesthetically that the Spanish poetry retains a mysticism and a greater emotional impact than an English translation would be able to convey.

This cycle is not a narrative. There is no story or progression of linear time. The voice of the speaker does not provide the continuity of the cycle as the perspective shifts with each song; rather, Larsen finds her unifying message in the following line from the opening poem of the cycle: "Un Instante que estuvo fuera del tiempo . . . de toda la Eternidad/ A moment that stood outside of time . . . of all eternity." She was captivated by this idea of a moment outside of time, suspended in eternity, and this became the unifying concept. Larsen felt upon reading the poem that Sor Juana was able to use the form of the poetry – her words, rhythm, and meter – to free time, and she wanted to try to recreate this same sense in a musical format.⁷² The challenge for her became to find a way to take music, which exists within fixed formal boundaries, and somehow remove it from the frame: in other words, how to create infinity with the piano and voice as the mediums. This idea of time freed from its boundaries becomes the crux of the cycle.

Larsen had to take this intangible idea of a suspended moment in eternity and find something tangible to *embody* this concept. She chose to use love as the embodiment because of its ability to be representative both of the measurable and the immeasurable, the finite and the infinite. Each of these songs presents a sense of eternal space using

⁷²Ibid.

love as the moment of suspension. By using the concrete idea of love in its many forms, these songs depict intangible ideas in a tangible way. The music conveys, in a clear, direct way, pure emotion and sensation.

This cycle thus becomes a series of vertical moments that encapsulate a sense of eternity through the idea of love. Larsen captures this sense of suspension in time in the songs through the repetition of rhythms, musical motives, and the text. Because this cycle is a moment outside of time, there is a feeling of stasis: the music never actually moves forward. Larsen says that the listener feels “emotional urgency precisely because there is no passage of time.”⁷³ Each song in this cycle contains a specific texture, rhythmic idea, and flow of energy that depicts an eternal moment, in which all of the emotional weight of love is suspended in the balance. Larsen writes music that is cloaked in ambiguity and mysticism.

At every level, *De toda la eternidad* is about the juxtaposition of opposing forces: the sacred versus the secular, the human versus the divine, the immediacy and intimacy of a specific moment versus the vastness and emotional emptiness of eternity, concrete physical sensation versus disembodied suspension, movement versus stasis. These dualities are present in the poetry with Sor Juana’s own blending of the sacred and the secular, as the interesting mix of poems chosen for the cycle reflect. The first two poems are from Sor Juana’s *villancicos*, religious works used in practical worship. The last three are secular poems. The lines between the sacred and the secular become blurred in

⁷³Larsen, *De toda la eternidad*.

Larsen's settings. She balances these opposing forces by writing music that, while retaining a sense of the familiar, is reinvented in a new or unfamiliar context. It is music that can represent both human and divine love, both mortality and immortality, equally well.

The poems are translated by the author and have been reproduced from the *Obras Completas de Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz (O.C.)*, edited by Méndez Plancarte, volumes I (*Lírica personal*) and II (*Villancicos y Letras Sacras*). Méndez Plancarte's number for the poem is included to aid in locating the poem.

Un Instante me escuchen

O.C. 279. *Villancico* written for the Cathedral in Puebla for the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, 1689. V, lines 1-12

¡Un Instante me escuchen,
que cantar quiero
un Instante que estuvo
fuera del tiempo!

Listen to me for a moment,
For I would like to sing
a moment that was
outside of time!

Escúchenme mientras cante,
que poco habrá que sufrir,
pues lo que quiero decir
es solamente un Instante.

Listen to me while I sing,
that you will suffer only a little
because what I want to say
is only a moment.

Un Instante es, de verdad,
pero tan Privilegiado,
que fué un Instante cuidado
de toda la Eternidad.

A moment it is, truly,
but so exceptional,
that was a moment so cared for
of all eternity.

From this poem, Larsen extracted the core idea of the cycle, which is the moment suspended in eternity that will be depicted in each of the following songs. In its original

form, the poem is very specific. This *villancico* would have been used in the Church to open an event of celebratory worship for the religious festival of the Immaculate Conception. The tone of the words is celebratory, joyously heralding the ultimate eternal instant, the moment of creation. In the lines that follow this poetic excerpt, Sor Juana describes the pure moment of creation, which held in its eternity the infinite past through the infinite future.⁷⁴

The first duality of the cycle is the juxtaposition of the joyous nature of the poem with the ambiguous feeling of the song. The music does not portray the celebratory emotions of the poem; rather, it contains in its spaciousness the potential energy that hangs in the moment. “Un Instante” is a moment, suspended in emotional distance and detachment, and serves as a perfect prologue for the emotional intensity in the songs to follow. The music creates a sense of something otherworldly and spiritual. Rather than a celebratory expression of excitement, the phrases hang in the air as monotonous, emotionless chant.

This song is a study in concise form. Larsen creates another juxtaposition: in a span of only twenty-four measures, the song, while small and contained in its conception, is able to portray the vast spaciousness of eternity. Larsen compares herself to an architect. In the same way that a great architect can create a sense of “up and out” even in a small building, she attempts to do this in a concise musical form.⁷⁵ The texture is

⁷⁴Lines 13-16 of this villancico read: *Dios, que con un acto puro / mira todo lo criado, / del infinito pasado / al infinito futuro . . .* (God, with a pure act / saw all that was created / from the infinite past / to the infinite future).

⁷⁵Larsen, interview, 5 October 2010.

expansive and spacious: layers of tolling of bells in every register of the piano create a mystical atmosphere. Each measure begins with a low bass note that sustains through the measure, usually followed by a bell-tone in the high treble range, which is then followed by the middle voices that fill in the texture. The song opens with the sound of a tritone: the first note of the song is a low A-flat, followed by an octave D in the treble. Because of the octave displacement, the dissonance is somewhat softened, but it still does sound unsettled, as if the song is not beginning at all but is rather a continuation of something that has already begun.

Two repeating rhythmic ideas permeate this song, one in the vocal line, and one throughout the piano part. In the poem, the words “un Instante” are repeated five times in the space of only twelve lines. Larsen capitalizes on the rhythmic repetition already in the poem and enhances it by adding an extra repetition of text in the fourth measure, thus using the rhythmic motive of “un Instante” six times throughout the brief song. This rhythmic motive – a grouping of two sixteenth notes, with the stress on the eighth note and the release on the quarter note – becomes a mantra that permeates the cycle. The repetition of this rhythmic gesture gives the vocal line a sense of the metric flow of chant. “Un Instante” becomes a mantra throughout the song with its hypnotic repetitions, which adds to the sense of cloudy mysticism that pervades this setting. (See Figure 1).

Figure 1. “Un Instante me escuchen,” mm. 1-2.

The musical score for "Un Instante me escuchen," mm. 1-2, is presented in a standard format. The vocal line is written in a single staff with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. It begins with a whole rest in the first measure, followed by the lyrics "¡Un in - stan - te me es - cu - chen, que can -". The dynamic marking *mf* is placed above the first note of the vocal line. The piano accompaniment is written in two staves (treble and bass clefs) with a 4/4 time signature. The right hand features a repeating rhythmic motif, described as "bell-like" and "semp. sim.", with a dynamic marking of *p*. The left hand has a more active bass line, with a dynamic marking of *p* and a "sost. ped." marking. The score includes various performance markings such as "molto legato" and "bell-like" for the piano, and "sost. ped." for the pedal points in the bass line.

A mesmerizing rhythmic motive in the piano also imbues the song with a sense of uninterrupted continuity. Every measure of this song contains the same repeating rhythm. The pitches are often sustained and layered in different registers, but the rhythm pattern by sound of attack is a deconstructed habañera motive. The eighth note on the upbeat of beat three in the bar is unmistakable, and it provides a sense of dance-like rhythmic regularity. The rhythm fills every measure and creates a feeling of monotony, timelessness, spaciousness, and stasis. There is no forward movement; rather the music always returns back to the same sense of space.

Larsen generally resists text painting in her vocal music, but she does create emotional intensity through the use of significant intervals. In this song, the vocal lines are comprised either of very small intervals or very large intervals. Most of the phrases move in the ambiguity of a whole-tone scale, framed at the beginnings and endings of the phrases with half steps. Every vocal line concludes with a descending gesture except the

last. At two moments in the song, in measures 11 and 15, she writes two moments of vocal suspension: the ascending half-step from F-natural to F-sharp is suspended for a half note, and it almost sounds as if the phrase will stop there. However, it is only a pause, and the phrase begins its descent. On the very last vocal phrase, on the words “la Eternidad,” Larsen writes a leap from F-sharp to the F-sharp an octave higher. This time, the voice hangs there, suspended at its peak. The song ends with the sound of the voice, actually suspended on the high F-sharp. The piano continues the phrase, but the song ends with an indefinite sense of closure.

Figure 2. “Un Instante me escuchén,” mm. 22-24.

The musical score for measures 22-24 of "Un Instante me escuchén" is presented in three systems. The first system (measure 22) shows the vocal line starting with "dad," and the piano accompaniment. The second system (measure 23) shows the vocal line with "la e - ter - ni - dad." and the piano accompaniment with a "morendo" marking. The third system (measure 24) shows the vocal line ending on a high F-sharp and the piano accompaniment with a "ppp" marking and a "ped." marking. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

This ending is a perfect example of what Larsen calls “slider theory,” a term that she has coined for an effect that attempts to reproduce in acoustic music the concept of the “fade in/ fade out” that recording engineers have produced and has become a part of our modern aural consciousness.⁷⁶ Larsen writes these final two measures of the song as

⁷⁶Larsen, interview, 5 October 2010.

if she is slowly sliding down the mixer bar: the sound fades, but it sounds as if it could have been continuing. The idea of the sound continues; our concrete glimpse of it fades.

¡Afuera, afuera, afuera!

O.C. xxxvii (attributed to Sor Juana). *Villancico* written for the Cathedral in Puebla for the Feast of the Assumption, 1681. IV, lines 17-31.

¡Afuera, afuera, afuera,
aparta, aparta, aparta,
que trinan los clarines,
que suenan las dulzainas!
Estrellas se despeñan,
Auroras se levantan.
Bajen las luces,
suban fragancias,
cuadrillas de jasmínes,
claveles y retamas,
que corren,
que vuelan,
que tiran,
que alcanzan,
con flores,
con brillos,
con rosas,
con llamas.

Go out, go out, go out,
separate, separate, separate,
The trumpets are singing,
The flutes are playing!
Stars are plunging,
Dawn is rising.
The lights come down,
The fragrances rise,
teams of jasmine,
pink carnations and yellow broom,
running,
flying,
throwing,
catching,
with flowers,
with brilliance,
with roses,
with flames.

This poetic excerpt depicts the glorious moment of the Assumption. In exuberant, colorful language, it captures the sublime glory of the moment of religious ecstasy as manifested in the physical earth. The images are ecstatic: light is dawning, flowers are blossoming, nature is bursting alive. Sor Juana writes tightly constructed phrases and, with an economy of words, creates a poem that vibrates with the energy of creation, new

life, and the dawn, celebrating the vibrant energy of religious ecstasy as revealed and expressed through nature.

Larsen's music is in complete harmony with the exuberance of the text. Whereas the first song of the cycle is pregnant stasis suspended in sound, "¡Afuera, afuera, afuera!" explodes with primal energy that never stops moving. Not only does this music symbolize the ecstasy of the religious experience described in the poem, it also represents equally well a very earthbound force: the primal nature of unbridled sexual energy. The exuberance and drive of the music portray the duality of both the sublime experience of the divine and the elemental drive of human nature. Larsen's music captures the idea of all-consuming, opposing energies that represent both an unrestrained, primal nature as well as a more delicate, tender, and sublime side. The vocal phrases are short and fragmented, spontaneously bursting forth, for the first twenty-two measures of the song. The continuity of this song is created through the rhythmic drive and flow of the piano.

In the opening of "¡Afuera, afuera, afuera!" the energy that was suspended in the first song is finally released. It is interesting that for a text about dawning and the Assumption, Larsen chooses to open the song with a five-octave descending C major scale in the piano juxtaposed with percussive punctuations of accented major seconds on the black keys. Exploring another duality, the purity of the white keys of the scale is balanced by the earthiness and sharpness of the dissonant interval on the black keys. In the second measure, the regularity of the rhythm pattern begins. The piano settles into a constant drive of sextuplets. There is no strong sense of meter, only flow and drive, with emphases on the interior interval of a descending half step, F down to E. (See Figure 3).

Figure 3. “¡Afuera, afuera, afuera!” mm. 1-3.

The musical score for "¡Afuera, afuera, afuera!" mm. 1-3 is presented in three systems. The first system (mm. 1-3) features a piano introduction in 4/4 time. The treble clef staff contains a melodic line marked "loco" with a dynamic of *f*. The bass clef staff provides a rhythmic accompaniment. The second system (mm. 4-5) shows the vocal entry with the lyrics "A - fue - ra," and a dynamic of *f* (with alarm). The third system (mm. 6-8) continues the piano accompaniment with a dynamic of *mf* and includes performance instructions "1/2 ped." and "sim."

This constant rhythmic drive is interrupted at only two moments in the song: in mm. 6-9 and mm. 15-21, the constant sense of motion stops and is replaced by a celebratory fanfare in shifting meters. Again, there is the juxtaposition of opposites: the brightness of white-key triads in the right hand is countered by the darkness of black-key triads in the left hand.

A clarification is needed for the metric proportion of the fanfare sections in mm. 6-9 and 15-21. After consulting with Larsen, it was discovered that the rhythmic relationship is incorrectly notated. The sixteenth-note value of the opening section

becomes the eighth-note of the fanfare section, and vice versa when the music returns to duple meter; the marking in the score is incorrectly reversed.⁷⁷

The vocal line opens with a distinctive, sharply angular motive on the word “afuera”: an eighth note followed by an octave leap on two thirty-second notes resolves down a half step and sustaining through the end of the bar. Larsen continues this motive on the second iteration of “afuera” (the text repetitions are in the form of the original poem), and extends it for the third iteration by changing the leaping interval from an octave to a tritone. This musical material is repeated verbatim on the words “aparta, aparta, aparta.” It is pure energy without restraint. Larsen continues the melodic idea of exuberance in the wild, leaping octaves in the fanfare of mm. 18-21.

A new section begins in m. 23. The flow of constant sextuplets, along with the occasional group of seven notes at the end of the bar that drives into the downbeat, returns in the piano, but the register shifts to the treble. The moving energy of the song has been redirected, the shift in register giving the music a delicate character. For the first time in the song, the voice exhibits longer, lyrical lines. Larsen makes her first use of text repetition in this song using an idea that she will use in later songs in the cycle. The line of text “Estrellas se despeñan” begins the new lyrical section in m. 23. In mm. 26-28, Larsen adds a repetition of this phrase of text and repeats the melodic phrase, transposing it down a fourth, and the rhythm and direction of the melody are modified in the second half of the phrase. The lyricism in this entire section is fluid. The vocal line

⁷⁷Larsen, interview, 13 October 2010.

is supple, playing with the rhythms of the words as it shifts back and forth from duple to triple subdivisions.

The energy intensifies as the music starts to blossom in m. 36. The register in the piano drops back into the low bass range, and trills in the treble range add brilliance to the texture. On the words “con brillos,” the voice sings an augmentation of the “afuera” motive, slowly reintroducing the motive, building in intensity, and finally bursting open on the words “con llamas.” Larsen repeats this phrase of text two more times, as the flames become more wild and uncontrollable, finally climaxing with another octave G-sharp leap on the final iteration of the word. As in the first song, Larsen ends the vocal line with an octave leap; however, this one does not remain hanging or suspended, but is pulled back down to the low G-sharp. After the vocal cutoff, two short fragments of piano motives from the opening two measures fill the silence left by the voice: the descending scale, followed by silence; and then the same pitches of the driving sextuplet. This time the direction is reversed and the line descends.

Figure 4. “¡Afuera, afuera, afuera!” mm. 42-44.

42 freely

mas.

f

ff

fff

5

Of all five of the songs, “¡Afuera, afuera, afuera!” has the most clearly defined ending. The last piano gesture has a definite rhythmic drive to the downbeat of the last measure, and the final note, a low A-flat, has the solid grounding of a sense of tonic. Larsen said that she did consider omitting this final gesture, but she decided to leave it in because she felt it was necessary for the listener. She explains,

One thing has to happen in the body of the listener: they’re going to have to change their sense of breathing to move from the second to the third song. . . . Had I not done it, people would hold their breath. By putting in the last two measures, people exhale. It is a physical release. I want them to get ready for the next song and not take a breath. It really is theatrical.⁷⁸

Larsen always considers the audience throughout her compositional process. She never writes music in the abstract; rather, she is always considering the energy of the *gestalt* of the work. When she breaks her compositional process down to the essentials, she includes all elements of the work:

it is the idea, the energy, the performers, and the listeners. Actually, when I was young, I used to get criticized all the time for caring about the audience. It was very unfashionable to care about the audience, but my process is actually human beings breathing, responding, emoting. . . . For me, not only is there an imagined audience, but there is a real audience. I’m really thinking about how they breathe. You have to make them transition.⁷⁹

⁷⁸Larsen, interview, 13 October 2010.

⁷⁹Ibid.

Tersa frente, oro el cabello

O.C. 132. Décima dedicated to María Luisa, Marquise de la Laguna

Tersa frente, oro el cabello,
cejas arcos, zafir ojos,
bruñida tez, labios rojos,
nariz recta, ebúrneo cuello;
talle airoso, cuerpo bello,
cándidas manos en que
el cetro de Amor se ve,
tiene Fili; en oro engasta
pie tan breve, que no gasta
ni un pie.

Smooth face, golden hair,
arched eyebrows, sapphire eyes,
burnished complexion, red lips,
straight nose, ivory neck;
elegant figure, beautiful body,
pure, white hands in which
the scepter of love is seen,
Phyllis holding; set in gold
foot so slender, that it does not waste
even a foot.

The pervading image of this poem is one of complete purity and perfection of beauty. This poem describes the loved one from a distance in reverential, almost holy, terms. The object is untouchable in its perfection, beauty defined by purity and regal stature. The terms are glowing and would not be out of place in describing the image of the Baroque Madonna and child. The passage of time, if any, is imperceptible. The words create a sense of stillness, and the moment of eternity is the purity and contentedness of completeness.

This song forms the perfect center to this cycle. After the rhythmic exuberance of the second song, “Tersa frente, oro el cabello” is perfection in utter calm and stillness. The music is languorous, and the meter is ambiguous. For the first nine measures of the song, Larsen constantly changes the meter, gently shifting among bars of 6, 5, 4, or 3 beats, and removing all sense of expectation for the downbeat. The opening rhythmic idea in the piano is actually a familiar rhythmic motive, now reinvented and obscured. The ostinato of the habañera rhythm in the piano from the first song, “Un Instante me

escuchen,” returns and is further deconstructed to present a new feeling of suspension. Using a beautiful chord cluster, the piano plays a dotted quarter note, followed by an eighth note tied to a quarter note. The ties in the bar obscure the stressed beats, but the rhythmic figure is the same, only veiled. The use of the quarter-note triplet in the melodic motive in the second measure also obscures the meter. Time is irrelevant in this song.

Figure 5, “Tersa frente, oro el cabello,” mm. 1-3.

The musical score for measures 1-3 is in 6/4 time. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 50, and the dynamics are 'p' (piano). The piano accompaniment consists of a dotted quarter note followed by an eighth note tied to a quarter note. The melody is marked 'extremely smoothly' and 'gently' with a triplet of eighth notes. The score includes a fermata over the eighth note of the triplet in measure 2.

When the voice enters in m. 5, Larsen surrounds the vocal phrases with the same spaciousness found in the poetry. In the first five lines of the poem, Sor Juana divides the eight-syllable line into two groups of four syllables, separated by a caesura. Larsen further emphasizes this break musically by writing space: she separates “Tersa frente” from “oro el cabello” with an entire measure of vocal silence, during which the piano continues the mesmerizing rhythmic dotted-quarter-note motive. The notes of each short phrase are the same, but Larsen alters the rhythm to fit to slight rhythmic differences in the text. (See Figure 6). Again, a bar of rest follows. Larsen offers more connection between “cejas arcos” and “zafir ojos,” and the vocal line begins to fill in the space and

create continuity. From measures 10 through 16, the first sense of forward motion in this song is felt. The meter stays in a constant three beats per bar in this section.

Figure 6, “Tersa frente, oro el cabello,” mm. 4-7.

The image shows a musical score for measures 4 through 7. The top staff is the vocal line, and the bottom two staves are the piano accompaniment. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The time signature is 3/4. The vocal line begins with a rest in measure 4, followed by a triplet of eighth notes in measure 5: B-flat, A-flat, G. The lyrics "Ter - sa fren - te," are written below the vocal line. In measure 6, there is another rest, and in measure 7, the vocal line continues with a quarter note B-flat, an eighth note A-flat, and a quarter note G. The lyrics "o - ro el ca-bel - lo," are written below. The piano accompaniment consists of chords in the right hand and arpeggiated chords in the left hand. The tempo marking "(quietly glowing)" is placed above the vocal line in measure 5.

In m. 17, the brief burst of momentum slows. Shimmering, arpeggiated chords in the piano sustain and allow the voice to respond freely to each gesture. In m. 27, the piano returns to the dotted quarter note motive. The voice enters in m. 28, repeating the first two lines of text, to the same melodic material, now with the space between the measures eliminated. Measure 28 is an exact repetition of m. 5; m. 29 imitates the shape of m. 7, but starts on a higher pitch (E-flat instead of C). On the words “cejas arcas,” Larsen writes the peak of the vocal line on the high G-flat. Again, Larsen employs her “fade out” technique: after two iterations of “zafir ojos,” the song gently fades into silence. (See Figure 7).

Figure 7, “Tersa frente, oro el cabello,” mm. 28-32.

28

Ter - sa fren - te, o - ro el ca-be - llo ce - jas ar - cos,

31

rit. very gently

stimmering, gently za - fir o - jos, za - fir o - jos.

In “Tersa frente, oro el cabello,” the speaker and the object are undefined. The description could be that of a human, a saint, or even a divine figure such as the Madonna. Larsen, rather than creating boundaries to clearly define a concrete image, communicates in this song a sensation of warmth or light, demonstrating her ability to write music that involves other senses of the listener rather than just hearing. Through her own sensation while composing this song, the piece becomes, more than anything else, a contemplation of light and radiance that the listener can almost feel emanating from the beloved. Larsen recalls,

In [writing] this song, I actually remember myself contemplating, but not the face. I didn't have someone's face in front of me. I just put myself in a state of contemplation and felt a lot of sunlight on my face as I was writing this song. And in writing this song, I do remember turning my face up and feeling lots and lots of light as I was working on this piece.⁸⁰

This is a perfect representation of how Larsen seeks to embody sensation in her music. In an article, she describes her desire to write music that involves more of the listener's senses than only hearing. She explains, "In music, I want to give the listener not the sound of a bird as much as the feeling of flight, not footsteps on a mountain so much as the sense of climbing."⁸¹ Sor Juana's poem is complete in its description, and Larsen allows the words to sing in their perfect simplicity without manufacturing anything further. She enhances the words by allowing the music to convey what the words cannot: the physical sensation of warmth, light, and radiance that creates a moment of pure beauty, stillness, and quiet in the center of the cycle.

⁸⁰Larsen, interview, 13 October 2010.

⁸¹Larsen, "The Nature of Music," *Pan Pipes of Sigma Alpha Iota* 77 (Winter 1985), 3.

Esta tarde

O.C. 164. Sonnet (Petrarchan form)

Esta tarde

Esta tarde, mi bien, cuando te hablaba,
como en tu rostro y tus acciones vía
que con palabras no te persuadía,
que el corazón me vieses deseaba;
y Amor, que mis intentos ayudaba,
venció lo que imposible parecía:
pues entre el llanto, que el dolor vertía,
el corazón deshecho destilaba.
Baste ya de rigores, mi bien, baste;
no te atormenten más celos tiranos,
ni el vil recelo tu quietud contraste
con sombras necias, con indicios vanos,
pues ya en líquido humor viste y tocaste
mi corazón deshecho entre tus manos.

This afternoon, my dear, when I spoke to you
how in your face and your actions I saw
that with words I could not persuade you,
I wanted that you saw my heart;
and Love, that my attempts would help
to accomplish what seemed impossible:
between the crying, the pain pouring out,
the undone heart distilled and emptied.
Enough of the strictness, my love, enough.
let not these tyrannical jealousies torment you,
not even despicable suspicion disturb your peace.
with stubborn shadows, with vain signs,
because already in liquid mood you saw and
touched
my heart undone between your hands.

In the notes to the score, Larsen refers to this song as the “human touch point of the cycle.”⁸² The words of the poet have the most poignant immediacy seen to this point in the songs; there is indeed the strongest sense of the presence of flesh and blood in these words. This is the first song in the cycle to address the object directly: twice, the speaker refers to “mi bien,” and the familiar, informal *tu* pronoun form is used throughout the poem. The suspended moment here is one of love filled with the desperation and fear of loss. The speaker is pleading, struggling in vain to convince the lover of his or her faithfulness. The fear of loss of the loved one looms heavily and holds the weight of an eternity.

⁸²Larsen, *De toda la eternidad*.

Of all of the poems, this one in the cycle seems to relate most immediately to something palpably human, but Larsen still found another layer of meaning. She identified this struggle between the human and the Divine: between imperfect man or woman and the perfection of the Creator.⁸³ Fascinated with convent culture, Larsen was able to relate the struggles that she witnessed with nuns and their complicated relationship as brides of God to the struggle depicted in this poem. The complete antithesis of the previous song, “Esta tarde” is restless, uncomfortable, and verging on insanity. Larsen uses constant repetition to create this sense of struggle, the waves of panic increasing as the speaker becomes more and more desperate. Motives from previous songs reappear, and Larsen uses repetition of melodic and rhythmic ideas as well as lines of text to heighten the emotional urgency.

The piano enters immediately with the “afuera” vocal motive from the second song: the octave leap in thirty-second notes followed by the descending interval of a second. This motive appears throughout the piano in both the right hand and left hand at irregular intervals. The energy of this motive has now been transformed from one of excitement to a representation of frantic emotion. The left hand of the piano part contains a relentless succession of eighth notes in harmonic tritones, this unceasing procession of eighth notes stopping only at two places in the music to free the voice from its rigid metric confines. (See Figure 8).

⁸³Larsen, interview, 13 October 2010.

Figure 8, “Esta tarde,” mm. 1-2.

When the voice enters with “Esta tarde, mi bien, cuando te hablaba,”⁸⁴ the line begins with the same rhythmic idea as the opening vocal line of the first song on the words “Un Instante me escuchén.” Larsen employs a heavy-handed use of text repetition to create a form that becomes almost frenzied in its repetition. In m. 7, Larsen repeats the text fragment “no te persuadía” before writing a complete repetition of the first three lines of text, “Esta tarde, mi bien, cuando te hablaba...no te persuadía,” using the identical rhythm and melodic structure as the first iteration, only now transposed down a minor third. After what is now the fourth iteration of “no te persuadía,” which becomes more desperate at each repetition, Larsen interrupts the constant eighth-note rhythm with a moment of free recitative in m. 14 on the words “que el corazón me vieses deseaba.” In the following measure, the monotonous rhythm of the eighth notes resumes, continuing only for two measures before being again interrupted by a halt in the continuity of the

⁸⁴See Appendix C for a note on the missing pronoun “te” in the score.

rhythm for a moment of tenderness created by recitative in the vocal line. These metrically free recitative passages further suspend the moment.

In m. 20, the relentless, unforgiving passage of eighth-note tritones resumes and becomes increasingly more frantic. These tritones in the left hand of the piano represent the unrelenting lover, impervious to the desperate pleading of the vocal line. The right hand of the piano is the mounting anxiety and despair in the mind of the speaker. Harmonic thirds played in angular syncopation – a hint to the macabre dance rhythms found in the final song – depict the mind of the speaker becoming more desperate and unhinged. When the voice enters in m. 22, the melodic shape is identical to the melody of the opening phrases but with a modified rhythm, this time incorporating triplets. The rhythm of this verse beginning “Baste ya de rigores, mi bien, baste” is the most complex rhythmic notation found in any of the songs, but it is a painstakingly exact transcription of the actual rhythm and inflection of the spoken text. While the notation looks complex, it is actually intuitive: all the singer must do is speak the Spanish correctly, and the line sings.

Figure 9, “Esta tarde,” mm. 22-23.

The musical score for Figure 9 shows a vocal line starting at measure 22. The melody is written in a treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The time signature is 3/4. The lyrics are: "Bas - te ya — de ri - go - res, mi bien, bas - te, no te a - tor - men - ten más ce - los ti - ran - os". The melody features several triplet markings (indicated by a '3' below the notes) and a complex rhythmic pattern that closely follows the natural inflection of the Spanish text. The score ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign.

In this stanza Larsen repeats the text of “no te atormenten más celos tiranos” three times, each time extending the line with another segment of the text and transposing the

sequence down one whole step (first starting on a B in m. 23, an A in m. 24, and a G in m. 26). On the second repetition in mm. 24-25, Larsen extends the line of text to continue with “ni el vil recelo tu quietud contraste.” In m. 30, the melodic sequence abruptly begins again and builds to a frenzy as the poet speaks of the lover holding her (or his) undone, broken, and exhausted heart between her two hands. In m. 30, the piano has an ascending eighth-note figure in tritones, now doubled in octaves in the right hand, that abruptly crash into dissonance with two iterations of the “afuera” motive. In the original version of these songs, Larsen had included a final low E-flat to be played in the bass after a clearing of the pedal. This final note functioned much like a tonic and offered a sense of relief or closure to the song. After hearing the premiere of the work, Larsen felt unsatisfied with that ending, and she chose to omit the final bass note in her revisions to the score. The sensation of despair is more palpable with the sounds of the unresolved dissonance ringing in the air.⁸⁵ (See Figure 10).

⁸⁵Larsen, interview, 13 October 2010.

Figure 10, “Esta tarde,” mm. 35-36.

Diuturna enfermedad de la Esperanza

O.C. 151. Sonnet

Diuturna enfermedad de la Esperanza

Diuturna enfermedad de la Esperanza,
 que así entretienes mis cansados años
 y en el fiel de los bienes y los daños
 tienes en equilibrio la balanza;
 que siempre suspendida, en la tardanza
 de inclinarse, no dejan tus engaños
 que lleguen a excederse en los tamaños
 la desesperación o confianza:
 ¿quién te ha quitado el nombre de homicida?
 Pues lo eres más severa, si se advierte
 que suspendes el alma entretenida;
 y entre la infausta o la felice suerte,
 no lo haces tú por conservar la vida
 sino por dar más dilatada muerte.

Long-lasting illness of Hope,
 which entertains my tired years
 and in faith of the good things and the damages
 you hold the scales in balance.

Which always suspended in the delay
 of inclining, your deceptions
 which arrive to exceed in size
 desperation or trust.

Who has taken from you the name of murderer?
 Because you are more severe if one is warned
 that you suspend the delayed soul
 and between the unfortunate or the happy luck
 you do not do it to conserve life
 but to give a more prolonged death.

Sor Juana enters a metaphysical realm with this sonnet. The words in this poem are a direct address to Hope, the entity which is trusted by the human psyche to hold the scales of fortune and misfortune in balance; however, in providing false hope to the speaker, it has served, not to save life, but in the end to provide a longer and more

agonizing death. The tone is accusatory and full of darkness and despair as the speaker refers to Hope as an illness (“enfermedad”) and accuses Hope of being a murderer.

The last song of this cycle shares a close relationship to the first. Larsen saw these two songs as companions that frame the cycle. In her own words, “Both are a sense of eternal space, just colored differently.” Always considering sensation, she conceptualized in colors to help shape the idea of infinity: where Larsen saw in the first song shades of blues and pinks, the last song of this cycle is “shades of off-mustard and gray. . . not beautiful harmonies, almost sick, hallucinogenic.”⁸⁶ “Diurturna enfermedad de la Esperanza” is also the darkest and most difficult song of the cycle, both because of its complexity of text and its musical density. Of all of the songs, this is the only one, by Larsen’s own admission, without form.⁸⁷ It is through-composed, taking the performer and the listener on a meandering journey of difficult emotions and harmonies. The visceral image Larsen saw as she was composing this song was “the soul escaping the Embodiment, like a snake coming out of its skin.”⁸⁸

This song begins with a piano introduction of five bars, and it paints a texture that is an inverse and a distortion of the first song. While “Un Instante” opened with a whole note in the bass range, everything is now reversed. “Diurturna enfermedad” opens with an F octave in the high range of the piano, the grace-note bell tones are now in the bass and are distorted, now appearing as a diminished interval. The opening measure also contains

⁸⁶Ibid.

⁸⁷Ibid.

⁸⁸Ibid.

a melodic motive that will reappear at the end of the song. On the second half of m. 1, the right hand has a melodic motive: A - C - B. This shape of a rising minor third that falls down a minor second sounds empty and unfinished. The right hand plays a ghostly melody in the harmonic intervals of sixths, and in m. 3, the primary rhythmic figure enters in the left hand, which Larsen describes as a “vague, dark tango” that permeates the atmosphere of this song. This rhythmic ostinato is the habañera motive, also used in the first and third songs, in its most overt form. This time, however, it is presented in a diminution, now twice as fast as it was in its original presentation.

Figure 11, “Diuturna enfermedad de la Esperanza,” mm. 1-4.

This dance rhythm in the piano is the one place in the cycle where Larsen makes a musical reference, although subtle, that sounds specifically Hispanic. Larsen chose this tango rhythm deliberately because of the cultural connotation of that particular dance.

The tango becomes a metaphor, as she explains:

The tango, as a whole culture, evokes very strong feelings about yearning without consummation in our modern world. And I wanted to create this sense of yearning and connect it right into the emotion of the listener... Now I don't know

any other musical gesture at work in the culture that brings you so directly into the whole...But the tango does. And it's just through a century of conditioning.⁸⁹

The rhythmic motive is the underlying presence of the entire song, never yielding, never changing. It is a constant figure in the dense dissonance developing around it.

The voice enters at the end of m. 5 with a melodic line that is characterized by strong, highly stylized dance rhythms. Just as in the first song, every vocal phrase descends: the energy in the struggle of “Esta tarde” is now spent, and the speaker is left only with despair. The vocal line is a study in extremes. Just as in the opening song of the cycle, the vocal line moves either in very small intervals (half-steps or whole steps) or very large, angular intervals (tritones or octaves). The panicked anxiety of “Esta tarde” has given way to a song that has a strong, regular sense of meter juxtaposed with tonality is completely distorted and polytonal. This juxtaposition between the regularity of the meter and the density of the dissonance evokes a jagged expression of pain. In m. 13, there is one moment of relief. On the phrase “tienes en equilibrio la balanza,” the piano settles for a brief moment on an F major tonality before the descent into madness continues. It is a brief, fleeting moment of false hope. While the scales may seem to be in balance, the peace that Hope offers is a lie.

In m. 18, Larsen gives the singer the evocative performance marking of “as if fighting to keep mental balance,” and this is portrayed deftly in the music as the line descends from the high F-sharp down a scale in the Dorian mode. On the word

⁸⁹Ibid.

“desesperacion” the voice makes a sudden leap up the octave from low to high F and then directly down again, illustrating a resurgence of fight in the speaker.

Figure 12, “Diuturna enfermedad de la Esperanza,” mm. 18-19.

18 (as if fighting to keep mental balance) (*)f

lle-guen a ex-ce-der-se en los to-ma-ños la des-es-per-a-cion o con fi-

cresc. f sos. ped. sos. ped. sos. ped.

Over the course of the next two pages, the music becomes even more dense, raw, and emotionally painful. Motives from the previous songs weave in and out of the dense texture. Snippets of the “afuera” motive appear in both the piano and the vocal line, the angular eighth notes of the left hand accompaniment of “Esta tarde,” the syncopated right hand rhythms of the same song. Until the climax, Larsen begins all of the vocal phrases in this section with an octave leap.

“Diuturna enfermedad” reaches its peak when the poet despairingly accuses Hope “no lo haces tu por conservar la vida sino por dar más dilatada muerte.” At this moment, Larsen indicates “a complete release of tension,” and all of the energy dissipates. The quality of the music changes dramatically as the tonality settles around E-flat. The tango rhythm continues, but the vocal line settles on three pitches in a repeating sequence: B-

flat - D-flat - C-natural. This pattern of intervals, an ascending minor third and descending half step, is the same as the motive introduced by the piano in the first measure. It is also a retrograde of the final vocal motif of the first song. In “Un Instante,” on the words “la eternidad,” the voice sings the pitches F-sharp - G-sharp - A - F-sharp. If this pattern is reversed, F-sharp - A - G-sharp, the motive of the end of “Diuturna enfermedad” appears.

Figure 13, “Diuturna enfermedad de la Esperanza,” mm. 36-39.

36 *rit.* *morendo*
 con - ser - var ————— la vi - da más di - la - ta - da ————— muer -

38 *niente*
 - te. *niente*

The repetition of this motive creates a feeling of numbness and resignation. Larsen repeats fragments of text from the final ideas: “suspend the soul...conserve life...bigger death.” These incomplete thoughts complete the suspension. The speaker has been freed from the moment and the pain, and is left with only time and space. The final sensation of the cycle is, as Larsen describes it, “yearning unfinished.”⁹⁰ The sense of spaciousness and detachment returns on this final page of music, and as they fade away, the sounds continue to hang in the space of eternity.

⁹⁰Ibid.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

One of Larsen's primary challenges with this cycle was to create a musical language that, while not cast in a seventeenth-century Baroque Spanish idiom, would fit Sor Juana's poetry. With *De toda la eternidad*, Larsen succeeds in bringing Sor Juana's language to life by creating an atmosphere that allows Sor Juana's Baroque texts to connect for contemporary audiences. Although Sor Juana's poetry is over three hundred years old, the genius of her verse is still emotionally relevant to readers today. Larsen filtered through the issues of cultural relevance, gender, and sexual orientation to create songs that have a sense of emotional intensity, regardless of their time and place. Her music realizes Sor Juana's ideas in a distinctively contemporary style, referencing Latin American culture without using generic Spanish gestures to create a clichéd musical stereotype. Larsen found it most important to be true to the words of Sor Juana's poetry, and, rather than attempting to paint a clearly-defined, fixed interpretation from these words, she opens up many possibilities of interpretation through her musical settings.

Each of these five poems communicates, through brilliance of language and imagery, a specific sense of emotional tangibility contained in an expansive space. Together, the songs create a cycle that takes both performers and listeners on a fascinating journey. In her quest to create a series of moments outside of time, suspended in eternity, Larsen uses the idea of love as the embodiment that fills the space. Each song

is concise in form and yet escapes its own boundary. Using precise and economic forms, she writes songs that escape their own framework to convey a space and an emotional impact larger than the individual song themselves.

De toda la eternidad is an intriguing juxtaposition of opposing forces. Together, the words and the music create a merging of the sacred and the secular, the divine and the human, male and female. These entities and ideas remain blurred and undefined in the music. In fact, much of the allure of the cycle is derived from the sense of mysticism that this music conveys. Ultimately, because of the emotional strength found in the words and the music, definitions are unnecessary. Each song, in a miniature form, is able to encapsulate a vast expansiveness, leaving with the listener a sense of immense possibility and the endlessness of eternity.

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APPENDIX A:
CHRONOLOGY OF THE LIFE OF SOR JUANA

- 1648 Born December 2, according to baptism records, in Chimalhuacán, Mexico
- 1651 Born November 12, according to first biographer, Father Diego Calleja
- 1661 Moves to Mexico City to live with her aunt and uncle
- 1665 Sor Juana enters the viceregal court of the Marquis and Marquise of Mancera as a lady-in-waiting
- 1667 Enters the convent of San José, Order of the Barefoot Carmelites, but leaves after 3 months
- 1669 Enters the convent of Santa Paula, Hieronymite order of St. Jerome, where she would serve for the remainder of her life
- 1680 Marquise and Marquis de la Laguna arrive at the viceregal court in Mexico City
- 1689 First volume of Sor Juana's writing published in Spain
- 1690 *Carta atenagórica* (Letter Worthy of Athena) published by the Bishop of Puebla under the pseudonym Sor Filotea de la Cruz
- 1691 Sor Juana writes her response, *La Respuesta de la poetisa a la muy ilustre Sor Filotea de la Cruz* (Response to the Most Illustrious Poetess Sor Filotea de la Cruz)
- 1692 Second volume of Sor Juana's writing published in Spain
- 1693 Sor Juana offers a general confession
- 1694 Sor Juana signs a declaration to cease all public and secular writings and activities
- 1695 Dies April 17 during an epidemic in the convent
- 1700 Third volume of Sor Juana's writing published in Spain along with her first biography

- 1910 Biography *Juana de Asbaje* written by Mexican poet Amado Nervo and dedicated to “all women of my country and my race,” sparking renewed interest in Sor Juana’s life and work
- 1955 Sor Juana’s *Obras Completas* compiled and published by Alfonso Méndez Plancarte

APPENDIX B:
OTHER MUSICAL SETTINGS OF SOR JUANA

Several Spanish-speaking composers, both European-born and New World-born, have set various poems of Sor Juana to music. The following is a listing of composers and their works in general chronological order. María Teresa Prieto (1896-1982) was born in Spain but migrated to Mexico in 1936 during the Spanish Civil War. Her *Canciones modales* (1963) for voice and piano is a set of six songs (each written in a different mode), the first two songs of which are settings of poems of Sor Juana (México: Ediciones Mexicanas de Música). Eduardo Hernández Moncada (1899-1995), a Mexican composer and conductor, set three sonnets in his work *Tres Sonetos de Sor Juana* (1979) for voice and piano (México: Ediciones Mexicanas de Música). Spanish composer Rodolfo Halffter (1900-1987) was born in Madrid but moved to Mexico in self-imposed exile after the Spanish Civil War in 1939. He wrote musical settings of two sonnets: *Dos Sonetos*, op. 15 (1946) for voice and piano (Madrid, Spain: Union Musical Española).

German-born composer Arno Fuchs (b. 1909) wrote *Un Soneto de Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz* for voice and piano while he lived in Mexico from 1936-1956. Mexican composer Domingo Lobato Bañales (b. 1920) set the poem “En aquel amor inmenso” as the first song of a set of two, entitled *Viento Nevado de Jazmín* for voice and piano.

Female Mexican composer Marcela Rodríguez (b. 1951) wrote a cycle of arias for soprano and chamber orchestra (piano, string quartet, and percussion). Written and premiered in 1995, the work is entitled *Funesta: Seis arias sobre textos de Sor Juana Inés*

de la Cruz. Rodriguez uses mostly poetic fragments of her texts, but the second aria is a complete setting of Sor Juana's Sonnet 164, "Esta tarde, mi bien, cuando te hablaba," the same poem that Larsen used as the fourth song of her cycle. Rodriguez's musical language is angular and dissonant. Rodriguez is also in the process of composing an opera based on Sor Juana's life and plans to incorporate the six arias from her existing song cycle into the opera.⁹¹ This work has been recorded on a compact disc entitled *Funesta*, which also includes other vocal works by Rodriguez, and is released by Urtext Digital Classics (catalog number JBCC036).

Sor Juana's texts have inspired not only solo vocal settings but choral settings as well. Rocío Sanz (1933-1993) is a Costa Rican composer, teacher, and writer who set several of Sor Juana's *villancicos* to music in a work for mixed choir (a capella) entitled *Sucédio en Belén* (1976), which won her first prize in the choral music competition of the Teatre Nacional de Costa Rica.⁹² Mexican composer and pianist Federico Ibarra Groth (b. 1946) also set a *villancico* to music for choir for his work *Villancico VI: Juguete* (1970) for mixed chorus and instrumental ensemble.

Larsen returned to Sor Juana's poetry for a choral work entitled *A Young Nun Singing* (2003), for women's voices, a capella. For the purpose of this particular piece, Larsen felt that the overall work would be more effective if performed in English, so she used one of Sor Juana's poems in English translation as the text for the second

⁹¹Alberto Perez-Amador Adam, "Artist Portrait: Marcela Rodriguez," 15 May 2003, <http://www.culturebase.net/artist.php?238> (accessed 28 June 2010).

⁹²Jorge Luis Acevedo Vargas. "Sanz, Rocío." In *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/45170> (accessed 16 November 2010).

movement.⁹³ Several other American composers have gleaned inspiration from Sor Juana. Avant-garde composer and Professor Emeritus at the University of Chicago, John Eaton (b. 1935), distinguished by his use of microtonal and electronic music, has written several works inspired by Sor Juana. *Tocotín* (1998), written for mezzo-soprano and guitar is a song on poetry that Sor Juana wrote in the indigenous Mexican language of Nahuatl (taken from the prologue of *El Divino Narciso*). Eaton also wrote a dramatic cantata based on Sor Juana's sacramental play *El Divino Narciso* (1998). Eaton remarked that he was "seldom as inspired in his creative life [as he was] by Sor Juana's creative vision," and he cites his cantata as his favorite chamber composition to date.⁹⁴ He also set three of Sor Juana's sonnets in his work *Sor Juana Songs* (1998), composed for voice and piano. Eaton's *Sor Juana's Dream* (1999), for mezzo soprano, guitar, piano and electronics, sets selected passages from Sor Juana's poetic masterpiece *Primero Sueño* to music.

Minimalist composer John Adams (b. 1947), best known for his operas such as *Nixon in China* and *Doctor Atomic*, turned to poems of strong Hispanic women in his nativity oratorio *El niño* (1999-2000). He selected writers representing the pre-Christian era through the twentieth century and included poems of Sor Juana. Adams describes Sor Juana as "a combination of Emily Dickenson and Hildegard von Bingen – a very spiritual

⁹³Larsen, interview by author, 5 October 2010.

⁹⁴Enrique Alberto Arias, "Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz: Mexico's 'Tenth Muse,'" in *Musical Voices of Early Modern Women: Many-Headed Melodies*, ed. Thomasin Lamay, Women and Gender in the Early Modern World (Aldershot, England: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2005), 330.

figure, but her work has a truly radical intensity. I think of Olivier Messiaen when I read her poetry. It's religious, ecstatic, and not very accessible."⁹⁵

While not using her words directly, other composers have used Sor Juana's life for the source of inspiration for their work. Daniel Crozier and Peter Krask wrote a one-act chamber opera entitled *With Blood, With Ink* (1993), based on Sor Juana's life as depicted in Octavio Paz's biography entitled *Sor Juana, or, The Traps of Faith*. The opera was premiered at Peabody Conservatory in 1993 and was revived again at Peabody in 2000.

⁹⁵Bergmann, "Sor Juana's 'Silencio Sonoro': Musical Responses to Her Poetry," 186.

APPENDIX C:
CORRECTIONS TO THE POETRY IN THE SCORE

There are some inconsistencies with some of the words in the score when compared to the existing poetic sources. Larsen is in the process of revising the score so that the text matches the original poetic sources.

Un Instante me escuchen

m. 9 – “canto” should read “cante”

Tersa frente, oro el cabello

m. 15 – “rectra” should read “recta”

Esta tarde

m. 3, 9 – “Esta tarde, mi bien, cuando hablaba” should read “cuando *te* hablaba”
The syllabification should read “cuan - do - te” with one syllable on each eighth note of the triplet in beat 3 of measures 3 and 9.

Diuturna enfermedad de la Esperanza

m. 12 – “equilibria” should read “equilibrio”

m. 18 – “tomaños” should read “tamaños”

m. 22 – “homicide” should read “homicida”

m. 30 – “ no la haces” should read “no *lo* haces”

m. 33 – “sino par dar” should read “sino *por* dar”

APPENDIX D:
IRB CONSENT FORMS



THE UNIVERSITY of NORTH CAROLINA
GREENSBORO

OFFICE OF RESEARCH COMPLIANCE
2718 Beverly Cooper Moore and Irene Mitchell Moore
Humanities and Research Administration Bldg.
PO Box 26170
Greensboro, NC 27402-6170
336.256.1482
Web site: www.uncg.edu/orc
Federalwide Assurance (FWA) #216

To: Robert Wells
Music
343 Music Building

From: UNCG IRB

Date: 8/24/2010

RE: Notice of IRB Exemption
Exemption Category: 2.Survey, interview, public observation
Study #: 10-0295

Study Title: Libby Larsen's Song Cycle De Toda la Eternidad with Poetry by Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz

This submission has been reviewed by the above IRB and was determined to be exempt from further review according to the regulatory category cited above under 45 CFR 46.101(b).

Study Description:

The purpose of this study is to provide a performance analysis of American composer Libby Larsen's only song-cycle in Spanish, De toda la eternidad. This project will explore the fusion of Larsen's unique musical language with the intriguing poetry of Mexican nun Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz.

Investigator's Responsibilities

Please be aware that any changes to your protocol must be reviewed by the IRB prior to being implemented. The IRB will maintain records for this study for three years from the date of the original determination of exempt status.

CC: Christy Wisuthseriwong, Chris Fariior, (ORED), Non-IRB Review Contact, (ORC), Non-IRB Review Contact

FROM :

FAX NO. :612-347-5078

Aug. 31 2010 09:47AM P2

Aug. 30. 2010 3:51PM Music Academy of NC

No. 0202 P. 2

Primary Subject Consent Form

Student Investigator: Christy L. Wisuthsriwong

Contact Information: 1921 New Garden Road, Apt. I-105, Greensboro, NC 27410
336-617-5006 (home), 336-253-6912 (cell)
clwisuth@uncg.edu, clwisuth@gmail.com

Topic: Libby Larsen's song-cycle *De toda la eternidad* on poetry by Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz

Research goal:

The purpose of this study is to provide a performance analysis of Libby Larsen's song cycle in Spanish, *De toda la eternidad*, musical settings of poetry by Mexican nun Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz. Human participants are needed to gather the pertinent conceptual and performance related data about these songs.

As a participant, you will be asked to discuss the composition being studied. The student investigator will ask you to elaborate on the conception of the work, the compositional process, performance considerations, the specific nature of the text, and the poet. Data collection will occur by way of personal interview. The interview will require approximately four hours. At any time, you may withdraw from this study by notifying the researcher. In this case, all your recorded data to the point of withdrawal will be destroyed. Furthermore, all data collected for this study will be stored in the principle investigator's home office in a secure filing cabinet.

Research method:

Personal interviews of primary subject.

Method of recording data:

Personal interview of primary subject will be audio recorded.

Confidentiality:

Confidentiality will not be maintained. However, the participant will have the right to ask that any specific comments not be published.

Time Commitment for participant:

No less than 1 and no more than 5 hours. Minimal e-mail and phone calls as needed.

Data storage/Length of storage:

Data will be stored indefinitely. Data and consent forms will be stored in a file cabinet in the investigator's home office.

Participant withdrawal:

The participant may voluntarily remove himself from the study at any point without penalty.

Risks:

There is no risk for participating in this study. However, the participant will have the right to request that any specific comment not be published.

UNCG IRB
Approved Consent Form

Valid 8/24/10 to 8/23/11

FROM :

Aug. 30. 2010 3:51PM

Music Academy of NC

FAX NO. :612-347-5078

Aug. 31 2010 09:48AM P3

No. 0202 P. 3

Benefit to participants:

There are no direct benefits for participating in this study. However, this research project will detail a lesser-known work of Ms. Larsen's compositions, and this exposure may lead to more performances and purchases of this work.

Benefit to society:

Society will have an understanding of another facet of Ms. Larsen's compositional work, a work that is not as well-known as many of her other works. In addition, society will gain a deeper understanding of Ms. Larsen's work in composing for the voice.

By signing this consent form, you agree that you understand the procedures and any risks and benefits involved in this research. You are free to refuse to participate or to withdraw your consent to participate in this research at any time without penalty or prejudice; your participation is entirely voluntary. Your privacy will not be protected because you will be identified by name as a participant in this project.

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro Institutional Review Board, which ensures that research involving people follows federal regulations, has approved the research and this consent form. Questions regarding your rights as a participant in this project can be answered by calling Mr. Eric Allen at (336) 256-1482 in the Office of Research Compliance at UNC-G. Questions regarding the research itself will be answered by Ms. Christy Wisuthseriwong at (336) 253-6912. Any new information that develops during the project will be provided to you if the information might affect your willingness to continue participation in the project.

By signing this form, you are agreeing to participate in the project described to you by Christy Wisuthseriwong.


Participant's Signature

08-31-10
Date

APPENDIX E:

COMPOSER'S RELEASE FOR USE OF SCORE EXAMPLES

FROM :

FAX NO. :

Mar. 28 2011 12:28PM P2

This release form grants the author, Christy Wisuthseriwong, the composer's permission to reprint the following examples from the musical score *De toda la eternidad* (Libby Larsen Publishing, 2002) in her paper, entitled Libby Larsen's *De toda la eternidad: Creating Infinity Through the Words of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz*, to be submitted to The University of North Carolina at Greensboro in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts.

"Un Instante me escuchen"

mm. 1-2
mm. 22-24

"¡Fuera, fuera, fuera!"

mm. 1-3
mm. 42-44

"Tersa frente, oro el cabello"

mm. 1-3
mm. 4-7
mm. 28-32

"Esta tarde"

mm. 1-2
mm. 22-23
mm. 35-36

"Diuturna enfermedad de la Esperanza"

mm. 1-4
mm. 18-19
mm. 36-39



Libby Larsen

03-28-11

Date