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## An Examination of vocal music by John Musto

Stephanie R. Thorpe  
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AN EXAMINATION OF VOCAL MUSIC

BY JOHN MUSTO

by

Stephanie R. Thorpe

Bachelor of Arts  
Briar Cliff University  
1999

Master of Arts  
University of Iowa  
2002

A music document submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the

**Doctor of Musical Arts  
Department of Music  
College of Fine Arts**

**Graduate College  
University of Nevada, Las Vegas  
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**Dissertation Approval**  
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Doctor of Musical Arts


  
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ABSTRACT

**An Examination of Vocal Music  
by John Musto**

by

Stephanie R. Thorpe

Dr. Tod Fitzpatrick, Examination Committee Chair  
Associate Professor of Voice  
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

John Musto, a contemporary composer based in New York, is known for his vocal, piano, and orchestral compositions. Musto is an active performer, who accompanies his own compositions in performance and on recordings. Several festivals and foundations have commissioned his compositions, many of them vocal works.

This document will examine a song set, a solo song and two song cycles by John Musto, which represent the composer's developing vocal compositional style from beginning to present. Equally informed by classical and jazz techniques, his style is comprised of popular idioms, ambiguous key structures, irregular rhythms and meters, unpredictable intervallic movements, and large vocal ranges.

*Two by Frost*, "Triolet," *Quiet Songs*, and *Dove Sta Amore...*, provide the material for my study of John Musto's compositional style. Musto's first set of songs, *Two by Frost*, was composed in 1982 and published in 1987; and "Triolet," a solo song with poetry by Eugene O'Neill, was published in 1987. The cycle, *Quiet Songs*, published in 1991, was

commissioned by the New York Festival of Song and premiered in 1990 by soprano Amy Burton and pianist Steven Blier.

As a result of winning the Concert Artists Guild International Competition in 1991, soprano Lauren Wagner commissioned John Musto to compose *Dove Sta Amore...* for soprano and piano. The song cycle was first composed for voice and piano, rescored for voice and orchestra and premiered by the Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra in Jacksonville, Florida on March 2, 1996. The orchestral version was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in Music in 1997. *Dove Sta Amore...* was published in 1998 in a piano/vocal format.

John Musto, Amy Burton, Steven Blier and members of the New York Festival of Song gave extensive interviews throughout the course of my research and continue to be accommodating and encouraging. Musto's vocal compositions were recently published in one volume with slight revisions to some songs and significant alterations to others. I will discuss each of these modifications in the document. My document will also address Musto's songs through compositional and stylistic analysis, performance practice, vocal and dramatic issues, as well as pedagogical aspects.

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## CHAPTER 1

### JOHN MUSTO: BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

John Musto, a contemporary composer based in New York, is known for his vocal, piano, and orchestral compositions. This document examines a song set, a solo song and two song cycles by John Musto, which represent the composer's developing musical language from his first published songs to his fully formed compositional style.

Musto's vocal music is firmly grounded in classical technique and highly influenced by jazz and popular music. His vocal works range from songs influenced by popular and folk music, jazz improvisations, sacred styles, to exercises in modal and serial techniques. Most of his vocal compositions are challenging to both the singer and accompanist. This document discusses the stylistic, technical, textual, and musical accessibility of the vocal music of John Musto.

Born in 1954, John Musto was raised in Brooklyn, New York. Musto's musical training came early. His father, well known jazz guitarist Vincent Musto, did not force his sons to follow in his footsteps, however, both John and his older brother began piano lessons at the ages of four and five, respectively. Musto's recollection of the reasons behind beginning piano lessons is simply, "because my older brother was taking piano lessons."<sup>1</sup> His first piano teacher, Albert Guastefeste, a graduate of the Juilliard School, was also a jazz pianist who played frequently with Vincent Musto. John's first lessons in

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<sup>1</sup> John Musto, interview with Stephanie R. Thorpe, September 18, 2008, New York City.

improvisation were with his father and pianist Albert Guastefeste, and also during frequent jam sessions at the Musto home.

He never studied guitar with his father, but merely “picked it up.”<sup>2</sup> Musto freely admits that he plays guitar by ear, not by reading music, and only as a pastime.<sup>3</sup> As I interviewed the composer about his upbringing, he retrieved a beautiful acoustic guitar given to him on his fiftieth birthday by his wife, Amy Burton. For someone who never formally studied the guitar, Musto plays brilliantly.

John Musto’s Catholic upbringing provided him with his first musical job. At age eight, Musto began playing organ for the Bensonhurst Parish, a non-paid position he held until the eighth grade.<sup>4</sup> He excelled at improvisation on the organ but recalls, “I remember loving the sound of the pedals but not being able to reach them. One day I decided to go for it and fell right off the bench. I wound up playing almost all the pedals, a sixteen-foot tone cluster in the middle of ‘Praise to the Lord.’ It woke a few people up.”<sup>5</sup>

Continuing his religious education, he attended the Jesuit High School in Brooklyn. Upon graduating from high school he enrolled in the Manhattan School of Music. There, he majored in piano performance and studied with Seymour Lipkin. During this time, he apprenticed himself to Jim Wooton, the piano technician at the Metropolitan Opera. As a piano technician, Musto found his skills in demand at the Manhattan School of Music.

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<sup>2</sup> John Musto, interview with Stephanie R. Thorpe, September 16, 2008, New York City.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> John Musto, interview with Stephanie R. Thorpe, September 18, 2008, New York City.

<sup>5</sup> Cori Ellison, “Music: Stepping to the Plate, as Pianist, as Opera Composer,” *The New York Times*, May 7, 2000, <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9503E0DB1039F934A35756C0A9669C8B63&&scp=27&sq=Cori%20Ellison&st=cse> (Accessed July 17, 2008).

His work as a piano technician paid the balance of his debts as a student and counted as work-study credits associated with his music scholarship.

After graduation, he often supplemented his income by playing in rock bands, jazz clubs, and by arranging popular music. As a full-time piano technician, he met pianist Paul Jacobs, who became his teacher, mentor and friend until Jacobs's death of AIDS in 1983.<sup>6</sup> Upon his death, Jacobs's Steinway grand piano, originally Samuel Barber's, became a fixture in Musto's living room. The piano has since been restored to its original glory and produces a marvelous sound.

The first to admit that he is a self-taught composer, Musto is drawn to composition through his affinity for improvisation and popular song. Musto "learned to write music by playing it. Lots of it."<sup>7</sup> He comments:

The very act of learning to play a piece of music is to rethink it with the composer, retrace his footsteps (fingersteps) and then in the best performances, re-compose it onstage. In this sense, I will always be studying composition. The obvious advantage for a composer in being a performer is that you can champion your music yourself. But it also makes networking easier: I find myself on stage with many wonderful musicians who are looking for new repertoire.<sup>8</sup>

In the late 1980s, John Musto developed enough work as a composer and pianist to discontinue his piano technician business. With his first compositions being published,

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<sup>6</sup> Cori Ellison, "Music: Stepping to the Plate, as Pianist, as Opera Composer," *The New York Times*, May 7, 2000, <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9503E0DB1039F934A35756C0A9669C8B63&&scp=27&sq=Cori%20Ellison&st=cse> (Accessed July 17, 2008).

<sup>7</sup> John Musto, "What are the pros and woes of being a self-taught composer?" *newmusicbox.org*, May 1, 2002, <http://www.newmusicbox.org/page.nmbx?id=37hf06> (Accessed July 17, 2008).

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

Musto began receiving residency and recording offers as well as compositional commissions.<sup>9</sup>

Musto continues to enjoy a long relationship with The New York Festival of Song and its artistic director, Steven Blier. Blier's first experience with Musto occurred when he employed Musto as his piano technician. After Musto tuned Blier's piano, he began to play. Intrigued by Musto's talent, Blier asked what he was playing and Musto responded, "Just one of my compositions."<sup>10</sup> Shortly after, Musto began working closely with Blier and The New York Festival of Song.

In a telephone interview, Steven Blier spoke highly of Musto and his skills as both a performer and composer. The two men often perform together on duo piano compositions and Blier states that Musto has "always been very warm, generous, and accepting of the way I play. I feel like I'm tagging along. He is very stimulating to work with and pulls me to a higher level. I don't feel fit to shine his shoes. If I can keep up, I must be okay."<sup>11</sup>

In addition to his busy composing and performing careers, Musto has also been a Visiting Professor at Brooklyn College. During his time at Brooklyn College he taught composition and contemporary music ensemble courses. He is often a Guest Lecturer at The Juilliard School and The Manhattan School of Music. Musto is adamant in stating he does not lecture, but instead teaches master classes in which he coaches his own compositions.

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<sup>9</sup> Cori Ellison, "Music: Stepping to the Plate, as Pianist, as Opera Composer," *The New York Times*, May 7, 2000, <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9503E0DB1039F934A35756C0A9669C8B63&&scp=27&sq=Cori%20Ellison&st=cse> (Accessed July 17, 2008).

<sup>10</sup> Steven Blier, telephone interview with Stephanie R. Thorpe, September 21, 2008.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.



The Concert Artists Guild, the Vail Valley Music Festival, and the Wolf Trap Foundation, among others, have commissioned his compositions, several of them vocal works. In addition to his composing career, Musto is an active performer and frequently accompanies his own compositions in performance and on recordings. He often performs at the Metropolitan Museum, the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, the Spoleto Festival, Joe's Pub at the Public Theatre, as well as Songfest.

Musto continually strives to find balance between his life as a performer and his life as a composer. This is something Musto admits he has "never quite figured out. When [I have] a performance coming up, what happens is, practicing takes precedence."<sup>12</sup> In separate interviews with *The New York Times* in 2000 and 2006 he expressed his opinions on composing, performing, and his career choices.

I want to make time for more performing. It revitalizes my energies for composing. If anything went wrong in the twentieth century, it's that the composer abandoned the stage. Can you imagine a choreographer who's never danced? But now there are composers with doctorates who can't play 'Chopsticks.' It should be a law, like jury duty. Every composer should have to step up to the plate, in front of a paying audience, at least once a year.<sup>13</sup>

Audiences now don't really know who the composer is. The composer is somebody who stands up in the audience for a bow at the end of a piece and gets pointed at. Or the person who gives you a pre-concert lecture. And I've done that, and it's fine. But to have a composer as a musician onstage, saying, 'I made this piece, and this is how it goes,' and interact with the audience onstage – that's what I wanted to do.<sup>14</sup>

Because he was exposed to many different styles of music during his childhood, Musto now possesses the ability to navigate easily from one genre to another. When

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<sup>12</sup> Anne Midgette, "Caramoor Festival Resuscitates the Performing Composer, John Musto," *The New York Times*, June 23, 2006, [http://www.nytimes.com/2006/06/23/arts/music/23cara.html?\\_r=1&oref=slogin&pagewanted...](http://www.nytimes.com/2006/06/23/arts/music/23cara.html?_r=1&oref=slogin&pagewanted...) (Accessed July 17, 2008).

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

asked if he conceived of his music as being tonal, atonal, modal, or jazz-based, Musto quickly replied, “Yes, all of the above.”<sup>15</sup>

Steven Blier describes Musto’s compositional style as a “mixture of improvisation and colloquial counterpoint.”<sup>16</sup> In a telephone interview, Blier reflected upon Musto’s compositional style.

John’s inherent voice is the blues.<sup>17</sup> His compositional style is very modal but does not always have a strong tonal center.<sup>18</sup> John uses a great deal of fourth and fifth intervals as well as major and minor chords.<sup>19</sup> He is a fleet-fingered pianist, and his writing for the instrument incorporates beautifully written but demanding keyboard filigree.<sup>20</sup> His love of ragtime and blues, and of American popular song from Gershwin to Randy Newman co-exists with his connection to the European tradition and the modern schools.<sup>21</sup>

Drawn to composing vocal music in the early 1980s by association with singers such as his wife, soprano Amy Burton and baritone William Sharp, Musto quickly decided that “the text is the most important thing.”<sup>22</sup> Musto wants each text setting to be sensible. The texts should not be too complex or dense. Each setting must leave room for music. The listener should get it on the first hearing.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> John Musto, interview with Stephanie R. Thorpe, September 16, 2008, New York City.

<sup>16</sup> Steven Blier, telephone interview with Stephanie R. Thorpe, September 21, 2008.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Steven Blier, program notes for *Modern Scenes From American Life*, The New York Festival of Song, February 23, 1994, Greenwich House Music School.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> John Musto, interview with Stephanie R. Thorpe, September 16, 2008, New York City.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

When searching for a poem, Musto states, “The music comes after multiple readings. There is music in there already. You simply have to uncover it.”<sup>24</sup> Musto finds that each composition “starts with atmosphere – this sets the tone of the piece. The words dictate the tune. They are intertwined. The introduction grows out of the tune and the text.”<sup>25</sup>

During our interview, Amy Burton effortlessly described her husband’s music as

[T]heatrical, in the sense of inherent drama, well-made in the sense that John is a master craftsman. There is nothing random about his compositions. Everything is very thought out. The text sings. John finds the right musical language for each text. His compositions are virtuosic. He is a performer who writes music people want to sing and play, music that is satisfying to perform.<sup>26</sup>

A number of vocal works are composed for and dedicated to his wife, Amy Burton, who provided the text for “Intermezzo,” a song found in *Quiet Songs*. Several other works were composed for baritone, William Sharp, and other voices for which Musto's songs and cycles were commissioned.

Musto cites his compositional influences as Leonard Bernstein, Frederic Chopin, J.S. Bach, William Bolcom, and Randy Newman. Of William Bolcom, Musto says, “I feel like I’ve studied with Bill from afar. He is a composer in the tradition of everything, pianist and performer. He is a tremendous inspiration and model.”<sup>27</sup>

Musto’s compositional style, while equally informed by both classical and jazz techniques, is comprised of popular idioms, ambiguous key structures, irregular rhythms and meters, unpredictable intervallic movements, and large vocal ranges. Highly

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<sup>24</sup> John Musto, interview with Stephanie R. Thorpe, September 16, 2008, New York City.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Amy Burton, interview with Stephanie R. Thorpe, September 15, 2008, New York City.

<sup>27</sup> John Musto, interview with Stephanie R. Thorpe, September 16, 2008, New York City.

influenced by ragtime, a style he terms as elegant and wistful, many of his tempo markings, motives, and time signatures pay homage to the style.<sup>28</sup>

Many of Musto's vocal compositions do not use key signatures because "they never stay in one key. [They are] fluid harmonically."<sup>29</sup> Counterpoint is prominent throughout his compositional style, although his earlier works are slightly more understated than the later compositions. While Musto is a contemporary composer whose style is heavily influenced by popular music and jazz, a classical musical style is present throughout his vocal compositional output.

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<sup>28</sup> John Musto, interview with Stephanie R. Thorpe, September 16, 2008, New York City.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

## CHAPTER 2

### “NOTHING GOLD CAN STAY” AND

### “THE ROSE FAMILY”:

#### *TWO BY FROST*

*Two by Frost*, composed in 1982, is John Musto’s first published vocal composition. Published in 1987 by Southern Music Publishing Co, Inc., now Peer Music Classical, *Two by Frost* represents the composer’s early style. Musto quickly establishes rhythmic, melodic, harmonic, intervallic and textual patterns within his compositions. Musto's later compositions use many of the patterns established in his earliest works.

In 2008, Musto published his songs in one volume entitled, *John Musto: Collected Songs*. There are two volumes available, one for high voice and one for low voice with piano accompaniment. The high volume contains most of the original keys. Mr. Musto’s opinion of transposition is, “It’s fine. If pieces are keyboard specific, [transposition] sometimes doesn’t work.”<sup>30</sup>

Many songs were altered between publishings, some changed slightly and some significantly. When asked why the songs were revised from previously published volumes, Mr. Musto replied, “I don’t like to publish right away. You have to see how a

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<sup>30</sup> John Musto, interview with Stephanie R. Thorpe, September 18, 2008, New York City.

song lives and behaves onstage before publishing. Sometimes it changes. That is why I changed things. We were performing them differently onstage.”<sup>31</sup>

*Two by Frost* was composed for Amy Burton shortly after she and John Musto met. When asked about the set, Burton disclosed, “John courted me with those songs.” Not long after the couple met, Burton accepted a contract with San Diego Opera and left New York City for two months. In their correspondences, Musto asked Burton questions about her range; such as notes which were easy and where her voice felt comfortable. Burton was later presented with the set as a gift.

*Two by Frost* features the poetry of American poet, Robert Frost. Many composers have set Frost’s poetry to music. He remained uninterested in these settings, maintaining that poetry suffered from its association with music.<sup>32</sup> Frost preferred to make music out of the “sound of sense... the sound of voice behind a door that cuts off the words.”

#### “Nothing Gold Can Stay”

The poem, “Nothing Gold Can Stay,” was significant to the couple’s growing relationship. Musto remarked to Burton that what he remembered of her overall was a sense of “gold.” *Two by Frost* was the first song set that Burton heard by John Musto. She found them to be “beautiful without being saccharine. Composed to fine poetry, they were distilled but carefully made.”<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> John Musto, interview with Stephanie R. Thorpe, September 16, 2008, New York City.

<sup>32</sup> *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*, s.v. “Frost, Robert (Lee)” (by John McLaughlin), <http://www.oxfordmsuiconline.com:80/subscriber/article/grove/music/48344> (Accessed July 17, 2008).

<sup>33</sup> Amy Burton, interview with Stephanie R. Thorpe, September 15, 2008, New York City.

“Nothing Gold Can Stay” first appeared in the *Yale Review* in 1923 and later that year in the collection, *New Hampshire*. The poem is a lament of mutability; seasons change, flowers wither, and people grow older.<sup>34</sup> *The Robert Frost Encyclopedia* states the poem becomes

...a poem about poetry as it invites us to notice the effort and power of language to arrest the changes it records – to hold what in nature is always slipping away. Beginning with the most subtle of changes in early spring, Frost shows how the exquisite yields to the ordinary, the infinite promise of beginnings giving way to the attritions of time. Not only does Frost connect such changes to Eden, the golden age from which our culture traces its descent; he reenacts that mythic fall from grace by dramatizing, within four rhymed couplets, the coming of change to a world of momentary perfection.<sup>35</sup>

Musto’s setting of “Nothing Gold Can Stay” is marked by heavy use of accidentals. The piece is tonally ambiguous. Several intervallic patterns exist within the song – most prevalent are the major second and the perfect fifth. Very little changed between printings of these songs from Peer Classical’s *Selected Songs of John Musto* to the *Collected Songs of John Musto*. The revisions made in *Two by Frost* were intended to enhance the visual clarity for the performers.

The song begins with a whole-tone chord in the accompaniment and a descending major scale in the vocal line ending on C #<sup>5</sup>. The composer describes the descending motive as a “golden moment fading” until the “golden key” of C # major.<sup>36</sup> In most cases throughout the song, if the melody is rewritten in pitch order without octave displacement, the melody is simply a descending whole-tone scale. This pattern

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<sup>34</sup> Nancy Lewis Tuten and John Zubizarreta, ed., *The Robert Frost Encyclopedia* (Westport, Connecticut and London: Greenwood Press, 2001), 239.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> John Musto, interview with Stephanie R. Thorpe, September 16, 2008, New York City.

continues throughout the sixteen-measure song, most easily seen in mm. 1-4 (see Music Example 1). When the pattern was presented to the composer, he commented, “Yes, you’re right, I did that on purpose.”<sup>37</sup>

Music Example 1: *Two by Frost*, “Nothing Gold Can Stay,” mm. 1-4  
*John Musto: Collected Songs* ©2008

Moderately (♩ = 63)

Na-ture's first green- is gold, Her hard-est hue to hold.

A contrapuntal texture begins in m. 8 in the accompaniment – duple versus triple, while on the simplest level it is a descending scalar pattern in both treble and bass accompaniment. Beginning in mm. 10-11, a new pattern presents itself, a minor second followed by a major second, with several ascending minor and major sixths. These patterns are prevalent in Musto’s later compositions.

The composer’s use of the Phrygian mode in mm. 12-13 was not a purposeful choice; he simply used the mode that “sounded good.”<sup>38</sup> The dynamic marking *piano* in the vocal and accompaniment lines provides text painting for, “So dawn goes down to day,” with an upward octave leap signifying the rising sun. The new edition of the song includes a mistake in the poem on this line. The poem should read, “So dawn goes down

<sup>37</sup> John Musto, interview with Stephanie R. Thorpe, September 16, 2008, New York City.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.



to day,” while the new edition reads, “So dawn goes down to-day.” There is a slight difference in the meaning of these two versions (see Music Examples 2 & 3).

Music Example 2: *Two by Frost*, “Nothing Gold Can Stay,” mm. 12-16  
*John Musto: Selected Songs* ©1987

The musical score for Music Example 2 consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line is written in a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The lyrics are: "So dawn - goes down to day. Noth-ing gold can stay." The piano accompaniment is written in two staves (treble and bass clefs) with a key signature of one sharp. The tempo is marked *p* (piano). The score shows measures 12 through 16, with the vocal line starting in measure 12 and the piano accompaniment starting in measure 13.

Music Example 3: *Two by Frost*, “Nothing Gold Can Stay,” mm. 12-16  
*John Musto: Collected Songs* © 2008

The musical score for Music Example 3 consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line is written in a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The lyrics are: "So dawn goes down to - day. Noth-ing gold can stay." The piano accompaniment is written in two staves (treble and bass clefs) with a key signature of one sharp. The tempo is marked *Tempo I* and *p* (piano). The score starts at measure 12, with the vocal line beginning in measure 12 and the piano accompaniment beginning in measure 13. The piano accompaniment features a recurring motif of minor and major seconds in measures 15-16.

The return of the vocal line in m. 14 is similar to the melody found in mm. 1-2, with slight rhythmic differences. The line, “Nothing gold can stay,” begins as an exact repetition of the opening line with a quarter rest following the word, “gold.” When I coached this song with the composer, he asked that I make the word “gold” special.<sup>39</sup> Recurring minor and major seconds are found in the accompaniment in mm. 15-16 with the composer’s “golden” key of C # major ending the piece with a C # major  $\frac{6}{4}$  chord.

<sup>39</sup> John Musto, coaching with Stephanie R. Thorpe, September 18, 2008, New York City.

## “The Rose Family”

“The Rose Family” is the second song in the *Two by Frost* set. It is the only song of the *Two by Frost* group to be recorded. Dame Felicity Lott recorded “The Rose Family” on the album, *My Garden*, for Hyperion Records, released in 1998. The poem is a play on Gertrude Stein’s 1913 poem “Sacred Emily,” in which one finds the famous line, “Rose is a rose is a rose is a rose.”<sup>40</sup>

Part of the family *Rosaceae*, roses are divided into six large subfamilies. Frost mentions the apple, pear, and plum as all being roses. These common fruits are technically members of the larger rose family.<sup>41</sup> Frost’s intention, according to *The Robert Frost Encyclopedia*, is to deny the flower’s denotation in the *Rosaceae* family and reaffirm its membership in the family of poetic tradition, using it to substantiate the shared qualities of flower and lover.<sup>42</sup>

“The Rose Family” features recurring use of ascending perfect fourths and descending major thirds. There is also continual use of the augmented fourths as well as major sevenths. Musto gives no key signature and the tonal center is slightly ambiguous. However, the piece centers around G $\flat$  major. Heavy use of accidentals is present in this piece as well. Musto transposed this song before publishing it in the *Selected Songs* volume. The original key was G major, one half step higher than the current key.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Nancy Lewis Tuten and John Zubizarreta, ed., *The Robert Frost Encyclopedia* (Westport, Connecticut and London: Greenwood Press, 2001), 313.

<sup>41</sup> *American Rose Society Online*, s.v. “Botany of Roses and Related Articles” (by Malcolm M. Manners), [http://www.ars.org/About\\_Roses/bot-rose\\_family.html](http://www.ars.org/About_Roses/bot-rose_family.html) (Accessed September 27, 2008).

<sup>42</sup> Nancy Lewis Tuten and John Zubizarreta, ed., *The Robert Frost Encyclopedia* (Westport, Connecticut and London: Greenwood Press, 2001), 313.

<sup>43</sup> John Musto, interview with Stephanie R. Thorpe, September 16, 2008, New York City.

Musto's alterations between the publishing of the *Selected Songs* and the more recent *Collected Songs* are time signatures, tempo markings, and other indications that allow for clearer reading. While the song is marked *allegretto* in both editions, the new edition includes a specific ( $\text{♩} = 72$ ) marking.

In mm. 1-4, an ascending  $G\flat$  major scale is present in both the accompaniment and vocal lines with contrary motion in the accompaniment that expands outward to return inward in m. 4. A four-note melodic and rhythmic motive, Theme I, is found in mm. 1-2 and is repeated throughout the piece (see Music Example 4).

Music Example 4: *Two by Frost*, "The Rose Family," mm. 1-3  
John Musto: *Collected Songs* ©2008

Allegretto ( $\text{♩} = 72$ )

The score consists of three systems. The first system shows the vocal line in treble clef with lyrics: "The rose is a rose, And was al - ways a". The second system shows the piano accompaniment in treble and bass clefs, marked "mp legato". The third system continues the piano accompaniment. The key signature has one flat (B-flat major) and the time signature is 3/4.

A new section begins in m. 4 with a metric shift from  $\frac{3}{4}$  and  $\frac{4}{4}$  in the *Selected Songs* edition to  $\frac{2}{2}$  and  $\frac{3}{2}$  in the *Collected Songs* edition. In m. 5, the meter returns to  $\frac{2}{2}$  and presents a new theme, Theme II, a three-note pattern of an ascending perfect fourth and, most often, a descending minor third (see Music Example 5). The tempo marking of *animato* in m. 5 remains the same between editions, but the *Collected Songs* edition includes an additional marking of ( $\text{♩} = 84$ ) (see Music Example 5).

Music Example 5: *Two by Frost*, “The Rose Family,” mm. 4-6  
*John Musto: Collected Songs* ©2008

4 *poco rall.* , **Animato** (♩ = 84)

rose, But the theo-ry now goes \_\_\_\_\_ That the

The accompaniment in m. 9 employs counterpoint using the three-note motive of Theme II. In m. 10, the accidentals change from flats to sharps, indicating a new key area. A descending four-note motive similar to Theme I is featured in the accompaniment in m. 11. This motive leads into a recurrence of Theme I in both accompaniment and vocal lines.

The vocal line of mm. 12-13 is an almost exact repetition of the opening vocal line. Theme I returns a perfect fifth higher than its first entrance. A shift to G major occurs in m. 15 and is marked *molto meno mosso* in the *Selected Songs* edition and Tempo I in the *Collected Songs* edition. Theme II returns in m. 16 in the accompaniment. The pattern is similar to that of the accompaniment in m. 9, with the exception that each overlapping note of the theme is an augmented fourth apart (see Music Example 6). A coda/quasi-return to Theme I in mm. 17-19 reintroduces a descending G $\flat$  major scale in the vocal line. The song ends on a plagal cadence. Musto describes this return to the beginning as “book-ending itself with the first line to the last.”<sup>44</sup>

<sup>44</sup> John Musto, interview with Stephanie R. Thorpe, September 16, 2008, New York City.

Music Example 6: *Two by Frost*, "The Rose Family," mm. 12-15

John Musto: *Collected Songs* ©2008

10

And so's—the plum, I sup-pose. The

8va-A 7

8va-3

f

mp legato

13

Tempo I

mp

dear on-ly knows what will next prove a rose. You, of course, are a

p

Detailed description: This image shows a musical score for the song "The Rose Family" by John Musto, covering measures 10 through 15. The score is written for voice and piano. The vocal line is in the upper staff, and the piano accompaniment is in the lower two staves. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major or D minor), and the time signature is 3/4. The score includes dynamic markings such as *p* (piano), *mf* (mezzo-forte), *f* (forte), and *mp legato* (mezzo-piano, legato). There are also performance instructions like "Tempo I" and "mp". The lyrics are: "And so's—the plum, I sup-pose. The dear on-ly knows what will next prove a rose. You, of course, are a". The score features various musical notations including slurs, ties, and articulation marks.

*Two by Frost* is a beautiful set of two songs dedicated to Amy Burton, the composer's wife. The set is best suited for singers at, or beyond the intermediate level. An advanced student/professional singer would perform this set well. The songs lie mainly in the middle voice. This compositional choice makes the set approachable by many voice types.

One finds evidence of Musto's later works in these early pieces; large intervallic leaps, swift rhythmic and metric changes, contrapuntal textures, and melodies that push the boundaries of tonality. In these early compositions, Musto employs limited dynamic markings and use of text painting; the vocal line also stays within a constricted range.

However, Musto's sense of prosody is impeccable in these early songs. While uncomplicated in comparison to Musto's later vocal compositions, *Two by Frost* continually challenges the performer.

## CHAPTER 3

### “TRIOLET”

“Triolet” is a single song published in 1987 by Peer Music Classical, dedicated to Amy Burton, with poetry by American playwright Eugene O’Neill. Featured on two separate recordings, “Triolet” is featured on the album, *Sure on this shining night: The romantic song in America* with tenor Robert White and pianist Samuel Sanders, recorded for Hyperion Records in 1997. Dame Felicity Lott, soprano, assisted by Graham Johnson, also recorded “Triolet” on the collection, *My Garden*, for Hyperion Records in 1998.

Pronounced [ˈtɹi.ə.ɪ.ə.ɔʊ.let], the poem follows a specific form taken from the definition of the name of the song. A triolet, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, is a verse or poem that is a stanza of eight lines, constructed on two rhymes, in which the first line is repeated as the fourth and seventh [lines], and the second [line] is the eighth [line].<sup>45</sup>

Eugene O’Neill, American poet and playwright, is most known for his theatrical works than his poetry. Originally titled “Triolet of my Flower,” the poem is undated and unsigned. The poem was included in O’Neill’s many letters and poems to Beatrice Ashe Maher, his girlfriend while he studied at Harvard.

Although “love” is never mentioned, “Triolet” is a love poem. The lover imagines his heart as a rose, which he implores to lie on the breast of his beloved. In his poetry,

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<sup>45</sup> *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, “Triolet,” <http://www.oed.com> (Accessed August 29, 2008).

O'Neill often associates his lady's breasts with sleep and rest.<sup>46</sup> The line, "I crave thy rest alone / apart," may be interpreted as longing for peaceful rest for his love and for himself.<sup>47</sup> The word "apart" indicates the lover is separate and precious as well as distant in location.<sup>48</sup>

Inspired by Randy Newman's 1981 film score for *Ragtime*, "Triolet" is a simple piece, but upon further inspection, the song is actually quite difficult and complex on many levels.<sup>49</sup> Musto played Newman's "Ragtime Theme" during our first interview session. The leading tone to tonic chordal movement of "Triolet" is heard plainly within Newman's composition.<sup>50</sup>

"Triolet" is in the key of D $\flat$  major. The song's meter is  $\frac{3}{4}$  with rhythmic emphasis placed on beat two, a pattern seen in Musto's later vocal compositions. Quite often, the vocal line is not harmonically reinforced until beat two. The rhythmic emphasis on beat two is a pattern regularly seen in ragtime compositions. Highly syncopated, ragtime is most frequently in  $\frac{2}{4}$  and  $\frac{6}{8}$  meters, further supporting the sensation of a misplaced beat.<sup>51</sup> With its  $\frac{3}{4}$  meter, "Triolet" is loosely defined as a ragtime waltz.

The song has a recurring pattern of a diminished D $\flat$  chord leading into the tonic. Musto simply considers this chord a leading tone, not a diminished D $\flat$  chord. The

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<sup>46</sup> Stephen A. Black, *Eugene O'Neill: Beyond Mourning and Tragedy* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 2002), 167.

<sup>47</sup> Eugene O'Neill, "Triolet," *John Musto: Collected Songs* (New York: Peer Music Classical, 2008), 217.

<sup>48</sup> M.V. Elder, unpublished data.

<sup>49</sup> John Musto, interview with Stephanie R. Thorpe, September 16, 2008, New York City.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> *Performing Arts Encyclopedia*, s.v. "History of Ragtime" Library of Congress, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/diglib/ihas/loc.natlib.ihas.200035811/default.html> (Accessed March 14, 2009).



opening two measures begin a pattern of “ragtime groove” that continues to repeat throughout the song (see Music Example 7).

Music Example 7: “Triolet,” mm. 1-13  
*John Musto: Collected Songs* ©2008

Ragtime waltz (♩ = 96)

*mp*  
Sleep on her breast,

*p*

7  
Rose of my heart! Flow-er so blest, Sleep on her breast;

The chordal movement in the treble clef throughout the piece is mainly major sixths with the occasional minor sixth. Paul Sperry, distinguished tenor and Professor of Voice at The Juilliard School, describes Musto as the “Master of the Sixth.”<sup>52</sup> The sixth interval, often present in popular forms such as ragtime, blues, and jazz styles, is also found in many of John Musto’s vocal compositions.

The bass clef accompaniment, which often harmonically emphasizes beat two, is distinguished by patterns of intervallic movement in perfect fourths, fifths, and eighths,

<sup>52</sup> Shirley Thompson and John Campbell, review of *The Tidewater Art Song Season Opening Concert*, *Artsong Update*, August 30, 2002, <http://www.artsongupdate.org/Reviews/CNU/CNU.htm> (Accessed July 17, 2008).

with occasional minor sevenths. Initially composed for baritone, the original key minimized the harmonic emphasis on the second beat, prompting Musto to transpose the song higher.<sup>53</sup> During an interview, Musto played snippets of both versions. His theory is that the vocal line and consequent harmonic emphasis of beat two is “more pungent with a soprano.”<sup>54</sup>

Adjacent tones are prevalent throughout the song, in both the accompaniment and the vocal line. The opening measures of the accompaniment repeat often. The opening four measures of the accompaniment are replicated in mm. 5-8 (see Music Example 7). Contrary motion occurs between the vocal and accompaniment lines. When the accompaniment line features dotted rhythms, the vocal line progresses in straight rhythms and vice versa.

The vocal line reenters in m. 10, reiterating the  $G^{\flat 4}$  and  $A^{\flat 4}$  found in the treble accompaniment of m. 9. The vocal line becomes an amalgamation of the intervallic patterns found in the treble and bass accompaniment, with the inclusion of minor second tone clusters between the vocal and accompaniment lines until m. 13 (see Music Example 7).

A new key area is presented in mm. 14-16 (see Music Example 8). This new key area is similar to mm. 3-4, only a minor third lower. Another key area is introduced in mm. 17-20, with new rhythmic and motivic textures (see Music Example 8). Beat two is still harmonically emphasized, continuing the minor and major second intervallic motion seen in previous measures. Musto describes this sudden change as “very snaky” and

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<sup>53</sup> John Musto, interview with Stephanie R. Thorpe, September 16, 2008, New York City.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

there is no particular reason for the change other than the section is the “penultimate part of a very short song that needs to do something.”<sup>55</sup>

“Triolet” returns to D $\flat$  major in m. 21. Enharmonic spellings between the accompaniment and vocal lines are found in mm. 21-23. This pattern is present in later vocal compositions. Musto states that he employs enharmonic spellings when the same note has two different meanings.<sup>56</sup> The last two measures are similar to the opening measures, one octave lower (see Music Example 8).

Music Example 8: “Triolet,” mm. 14-26

John Musto: *Collected Songs* ©2008

14 *p*  
I crave thy rest, a-lone, a-

20 *mf* *rubato* *a tempo*  
part! Sleep on her breast, Rose of my heart.

Poem used by permission of Yale University. *pp* *p*

<sup>55</sup> John Musto, interview with Stephanie R. Thorpe, September 16, 2008, New York City.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

“Triolet” is a concise example of Musto’s developing compositional style. Deceptively difficult, “Triolet” is best performed by the advanced student/professional singer and accompanist capable of sophisticated nuance. Heavily influenced by popular music, “Triolet” must be interpreted with a classical technique, “not crooned.”<sup>57</sup> The song features large intervallic leaps, contrapuntal texture, and quickly shifting rhythms and meters typical of Musto’s compositional style.

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<sup>57</sup> John Musto, interview with Stephanie R. Thorpe, September 16, 2008, New York City.

## CHAPTER 4

### *QUIET SONGS*

The New York Festival of Song commissioned and premiered *Quiet Songs*. The cycle was composed in 1990 and published in 1991 by Peer Music Classical. Although each song features poetry by a different poet, the cycle is unified by themes of “finding, losing, or letting go of something”<sup>58</sup>

“maggie and milly and molly and may”

E. E. Cummings’ poem “maggie and milly and molly and may” is the first song in the *Quiet Songs* cycle, but the fourth song composed for the collection.<sup>59</sup> The key is tonally ambiguous with copious use of accidentals. The song features a highly chromatic vocal line with intervallic leaps of major sevenths, major sixths, and minor sixths that are typical of John Musto’s compositional style. The accompaniment features whole-step motion and major sixth chord clusters. His significant use of syncopation is an acknowledgement of his musical upbringing, steeped in the styles of popular and jazz music genres.

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<sup>58</sup> John Musto, interview with Stephanie R. Thorpe, September 16, 2008, New York City.

<sup>59</sup> Christopher Sawyer-Lauçanno, *E. E. Cummings: A Biography* (Naperville, Illinois: Sourcebooks, Inc., 2004), x.

“maggie and milly and molly and may” focuses on the mystery that is identity.<sup>60</sup>

Christopher Sawyer-Lauçanno’s poetic analysis observes that each of the

...four girls are described as who they are by what they find at the beach. The singsong of the rhyme belies the deeper intent, which is that who we are determines what we seek out in life. What the girls find, in some sense, is predetermined by our own natures, for the objects retrieved are neutral. It is what we see in them that create their value. Or as the last couplet concludes, “For whatever we lose (like a you or a me) / it’s always ourselves we find in the sea.”<sup>61,62</sup>

Upon inspection, each character has a different vocal line, melodically, registrationally, and rhythmically, as well as distinct accompanimental lines. Musto illustrates the text through repeated motivic material in ascending and descending pitch levels. Whenever the poem mentions the sea or beach, the accompaniment begins a rocking  $\frac{6}{8}$  motion typically used to portray water images. Composers throughout musical history, including Musto, have used this musical device to indicate water images through flowing eighth notes and gently rocking tempi.

The opening five measures begin the narrative of the four girls and their summer adventures at the beach. Maggie’s motivic material enters in m. 6 with a rocking  $\frac{6}{8}$  movement in the treble accompaniment line while the bass accompaniment line features straight rhythmic motion against dotted treble rhythmic motion. Throughout mm. 9-13, the vocal and accompaniment lines mimic each other rhythmically (see Music Example 9). Musto’s superb use of text painting is apparent throughout these measures through

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<sup>60</sup> Christopher Sawyer-Lauçanno, *E. E. Cummings: A Biography* (Naperville, Illinois: Sourcebooks, Inc., 2004), 520.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> E. E. Cummings, “maggie and milly and molly and may,” *John Musto: Collected Songs* (New York: Peer Music Classical, 2008), 53.

the stuttering vocal and accompaniment lines as Maggie forgets her troubles after finding a singing shell.

Music Example 9: *Quiet Songs*, “maggie and milly and molly and may,” mm. 9-13  
*John Musto: Collected Songs* ©2008

Poco meno mosso (♩ = 46)

9 mag - gie dis - co - vered a shell that sang so sweet - ly she

12 could - n't re - mem - ber her troub - les and

colla voce

Tempo I

legato

At m. 13, Milly’s story begins with new accompaniment that becomes quite difficult, not only duple against triple, but sextuplet versus quintuplet and vice versa, as well as ten thirty-second notes against fourteen thirty-second notes. The final eighth note of m. 13 on the text, “and,” should be G #<sup>4</sup>, not G<sub>4</sub>.<sup>63</sup> After m. 14, Musto makes a significant change between the *Quiet Songs* and *Collected Songs* editions. In the *Selected Songs* edition, Milly’s story begins a minor third above the end of Maggie’s story. The new

<sup>63</sup> John Musto, “Errata,” *johnmusto.com*, <http://www.johnmusto.com/Site/Errata.html> (Accessed February 24, 2009).

*Collected Songs* edition begins Milly’s adventure on the same pitch level as Maggie’s escapade (see Music Examples 10 & 11).

Music Example 10: *Quiet Songs*, “maggie and milly and molly and may,” mm.16-17  
 John Musto: *Quiet Songs* ©1991

Music Example 10 shows a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line is marked *rubato* and includes the lyrics "whose rays five lan - guid". The piano accompaniment includes fingerings (6, 5, 14, 10) and is marked *colla voce*.

Music Example 11: *Quiet Songs*, “maggie and milly and molly and may,” mm. 16-17  
 John Musto: *Collected Songs* © 2008

Music Example 11 shows a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line is marked *rubato* and includes the lyrics "whose rays five lan - guid". The piano accompaniment includes fingerings (6, 5, 14, 10) and is marked *f colla voce*.

Musto’s reasoning behind this change is purely text-based. He wants the text, “and milly befriended a stranded star / whose rays five languid fingers were,” to be clearly understood by the listener.<sup>64</sup> The *Selected Songs* edition calls for the soprano to sing the line, “whose rays five languid fingers were,” in an extremely high tessitura. In both editions, this poetic line is without accompaniment and marked *colla voce* with a duple

<sup>64</sup> John Musto, interview with Stephanie R. Thorpe, September 16, 2008, New York City.



rhythmic motion that continues to m. 18 when the accompaniment returns with a triple against duple rhythmic texture in both accompaniment and vocal lines.

Contrary motion is frequently present throughout Musto's vocal compositions. Used as a contrapuntal technique harmonically, melodically and rhythmically, contrary motion creates the effect of the accompaniment and/or vocal lines moving independently of one another. With this technique, Musto often achieves a "floating vocal line that is part but not part of the accompaniment [line]."<sup>65</sup>

In m. 20, the *Collected Songs* edition establishes the same key center found in the *Selected Songs* edition. Marked *presto subito*, a brief cluster chord in m. 20 abruptly initiates Molly's adventure with a crab. The cluster chord is quickly followed by contrary motion of duple versus triple and inward versus outward movement between the treble and bass accompaniment.

The vocal motive in mm. 20-22 is reminiscent of Wagner's *Ride of the Valkyries*, which is exactly the impression Musto intends.<sup>66</sup> Text painting is apparent in mm. 23-25 with a syncopated C #<sup>5</sup> reiterated on the text, "which raced sideways / while blowing bubbles," depicting the crab's sideways progression.<sup>67</sup> Molly's expedition is encompassed in mm. 20-26 (see Music Example 12).

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<sup>65</sup> John Musto, interview with Stephanie R. Thorpe, September 16, 2008, New York City.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> E. E. Cummings, "maggie and milly and molly and may," *John Musto: Collected Songs* (New York: Peer Music Classical, 2008), 52.

Music Example 12: *Quiet Songs*, “maggie and milly and molly and may,” mm. 21-26  
 John Musto: *Collected Songs* ©2008

21 mol - ly was chased by a hor - ri - ble thing which raced side - ways *mf*

24 while blow - ing bub - bles and *mp*

*perdendosi*

The marking *perdendosi*, a directive indicating the music should die away, gradually diminishing in volume, rhythm, and tone, begins the transition to the third section in m. 26.<sup>68</sup> Section three is marked *meno mosso* and calmly depicts the story of May, whom Musto calls an “introverted thinker.”<sup>69</sup> The accompaniment figures in mm. 27-28 are essentially the same and descend mainly in whole-steps, with the exception of the ascending G #<sup>2</sup> to B<sup>2</sup> in m. 28. The chords in m. 29 punctuate May’s vocal line an eighth note after her melodic movement.

The rocking motion of the sea returns in m. 30 and the vocal line mimics the opening measures. The accompaniment of mm. 33-36 is an almost exact repetition of mm. 2-5.

<sup>68</sup> *Music Dictionary Online*, “*Perdendosi*,” <http://www.music.vt.edu> (Accessed September 05, 2008).

<sup>69</sup> John Musto, interview with Stephanie R. Thorpe, September 16, 2008, New York City.

The vocal line duplicates the opening melodic line with slightly different rhythmic notation. Different rhythmic notation between editions is present in m. 35. The current edition marks “ourselves” as two eighth notes, B<sup>b4</sup> to C<sup>5</sup>, while the previous edition holds the C<sup>5</sup> for two beats (see Music Examples 13 & 14).

Music Example 13: *Quiet Songs*, “maggie and milly and molly and may,” mm. 35-36  
*John Musto: Quiet Songs* ©1991

The musical score for Music Example 13 consists of two systems. The top system is the vocal line, written in a single treble clef with a key signature of one flat and a 3/4 time signature. It contains two measures of music. The first measure has the lyrics "al - ways our - selves" and the second measure has "we - find in the sea". The tempo marking "poco rubato" is placed above the second measure. The bottom system is the piano accompaniment, written in grand staff (treble and bass clefs). It features a melodic line in the left hand (labeled "l.h.") that is arpeggiated and spans across both measures. The tempo marking "colla voce" is placed below the piano part in the second measure.

Music Example 14: *Quiet Songs*, “maggie and milly and molly and may,” mm. 35-36  
*John Musto: Collected Songs* © 2008

The musical score for Music Example 14 is identical in structure to Music Example 13, but includes a measure number "35" at the beginning of the vocal line. The vocal line and piano accompaniment are the same as in Example 13, with the tempo markings "poco rubato" and "colla voce" respectively.

In m. 36, the vocal line deviates slightly from the melodic line of the opening six measures. The vocal line is *a capella* and features whole-step motion, a descending major sixth, followed by an ascending whole-step and ending with an ascending half step to sustain E<sup>4</sup> for four beats. As the E<sup>4</sup> is sustained, the accompaniment, treble in both hands, is reminiscent of the interval set used in “The Rose Family.” While the lower

treble accompaniment line chromatically ascends in triplet figures, the upper treble line is a triplet figure of an ascending major seventh followed by a descending perfect fourth that climbs the scale as well. The final chord in m. 39 is an  $E^3-D\#^2-E^1$  expanded chord cluster.

### “Intermezzo”

The second song in the cycle is “Intermezzo” with text by Amy Burton, the composer’s wife. Burton wrote the poem as a response to her first experience with death and a loss of such magnitude.<sup>70</sup> After perusing several items she had written, Musto eventually found the text in her diary and used it, initially without permission. In our interview, Musto swiftly expressed his opinion that he believes “people do not keep journals or diaries unless they want them to be read.”<sup>71</sup>

Musto considers “Intermezzo” a prelude to “Quiet Song.”<sup>72</sup> The thematic material found in this piece returns in the third song, “Quiet Song,” and the final song of the cycle, “Lullaby.” Only thirteen measures long, the vocal line is present for five measures, less than half the length of the song. Tonally ambiguous with shifting meters of  $\frac{4}{4}$ ,  $\frac{5}{4}$ , and  $\frac{7}{4}$ , the first four measures are a modified twelve-tone row. The composer uses twelve-tone composition not as a serial technique but as a way to “lead the ear, as if there is fresh snow every step of the way.”<sup>73</sup> The row is doubled in both the treble and the bass accompaniment lines until m. 4 where both treble and bass double  $C^4$ /middle C,

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<sup>70</sup> Amy Burton, interview with Stephanie R. Thorpe, September 15, 2008, New York City.

<sup>71</sup> John Musto, interview with Stephanie R. Thorpe, September 16, 2008, New York City.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

providing the singer with the entrance note three beats in advance (see Music Example 15).

Music Example 15: *Quiet Songs*, “2b. Intermezzo,” mm. 1-6

John Musto: *Collected Songs* ©2008

Slowly, simply (♩ = 96)

The image displays a musical score for Music Example 15. The top system shows the piano accompaniment for measures 1 through 6. The right hand (treble clef) plays a melodic line with a dynamic marking of *p* (piano). The left hand (bass clef) provides harmonic support. The bottom system shows the vocal line starting at measure 5, with a dynamic marking of *mp* (mezzo-piano). The lyrics are: "You are with me and I am with you I". The vocal line begins with a note that is three beats ahead of the piano accompaniment. The piano accompaniment continues to play throughout the vocal line.

The vocal line begins in m. 5 and its beginning intervallic movement is the same as the accompaniment line one whole-step higher. The similarities end there, as the vocal line continues in mainly chromatic motion. The accompaniment line does not move forward from the doubled C<sup>4</sup> until beat four of m. 5. Upon resuming movement once more, the accompaniment is a continuation and combination of the initial tone row and the intervallic movement of the vocal line. This progression continues until the last two beats of m. 6 in which the vocal line initiates a chromatic descent and is joined one beat later by the accompaniment lines.

Leading into m. 7, the accompaniment lines change clefs, with the lower line of treble returning to the bass clef. This shift initiates a contrapuntal line that generally echoes the

vocal line. This contrapuntal motion ends with a chord cluster on beat one of m. 8 in both the accompaniment and the vocal lines, followed by a quarter note rest in the accompaniment and vocal lines.

The use of silence as a compositional and text-enhancing technique is a typical Musto device. The vocal line continues unaccompanied until beat one of m. 9, in which the twelve-tone row returns one whole-step above its initial entrance. The end of the tone row is found in a measure of  $\frac{5}{4}$  in which a  $B\flat^1$  enters, concluding the song on a  $B\flat$  major chord.

#### “Quiet Song”

“Quiet Song” is the third song of the cycle. Initially a gift to Amy Burton, it became the genesis of the cycle when the New York Festival of Song commissioned a vocal cycle from the composer.<sup>74</sup> The piece was inspired by Burton’s portrayal of Baby Doe in *The Ballad of Baby Doe* by Douglas Moore in the late 1980’s.<sup>75</sup> The vocal line of Baby Doe is filled with large intervallic leaps, and sustained passages in a high tessitura, which quickly return to a mid-range tessitura. During our interview, Burton remarked that when Musto visited her during rehearsals of *The Ballad of Baby Doe*, she recalled him spending a large amount of time in the orchestra pit observing the score and the performance of the orchestra.

The choice of poetry for “Quiet Song” is significant as well. Originally titled, “Quiet Song in Time of Chaos,” the poem was written by Eugene O’Neill as a gift to Carlotta,

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<sup>74</sup> Amy Burton, interview with Stephanie R. Thorpe, September 15, 2008, New York City.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

his third wife, on December 28, 1940. The poem concerns the nomadic lives of the poet and his wife pertaining to the sentiment that home is not a structure or place, home is with each other.<sup>76</sup> The theme of finding home with one another is an issue Musto and Burton struggled with initially and continue to encounter as their careers take them in separate directions.<sup>77</sup> The date of the poem also happens to be the wedding anniversary of John Musto and Amy Burton.<sup>78</sup>

O'Neill's "Quiet Song" describes different forms of silence. Beginning with a precise location, "Here is home," love is personified as sitting by the hearth. The poem is highly introspective: love "smiles into the fire, / as into a memory of happiness."<sup>79</sup> "Quiet" and "faith" are characterized as having eyes and the ability to be silent, respectively. These ideas are rendered present and tangible. Peace comes from existing comfortably in silence. This moment is a pure one, which neither person wishes to leave. Contentment is the ability to exist together in the same time and space with untroubled minds.

The different locations of quiet are resolved in the final lines, "In my heart within your heart is home. / Is peace. / Is quiet." Finally, after all the separate settings within the poem, two locations exist in one space: "my heart within your heart." Home and love are

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<sup>76</sup> Shyamal Bagchee, "Perspectives on O'Neill: New Essays" (*English Literary Studies*, University of Victoria, 1988), 87.

<sup>77</sup> Amy Burton, interview with Stephanie R. Thorpe, September 15, 2008, New York City.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Eugene O'Neill, "Quiet Song," *John Musto: Collected Songs* (New York: Peer Music Classical, 2008), 63-64.

real places, the real space within the self as it relates to another person, the real space in which we exist.<sup>80</sup>

Musto classifies “Quiet Song” as an aria, not a song.<sup>81</sup> Fifty-two measures long, “Quiet Song” consists of four sections. Each section describes a sense of home, peace, quiet, love, faith, silence, and sadness – all aspects of an evolving relationship with a significant other. Musto made one noteworthy change at the end of the poem. The last section of O’Neill’s poem reads

Here  
Where is here?  
But you understand  
In my heart  
Within your heart  
Is home.  
Is peace.  
Is quiet.<sup>82</sup>

Musto’s opinion is that the rest of the poem and the return of the “home interval,” a sonority used in the opening measures of the piece, infer the line, “But you understand.” For these reasons, Musto purposefully did not include this line in the musical setting of “Quiet Song.”<sup>83</sup> The piece begins in D major. The accompaniment line from mm. 1-2 introduces a D<sup>4</sup> and F #<sup>4</sup>, a chord Musto considers the “home interval” (see Music Example 16).<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> M.V. Elder, unpublished data.

<sup>81</sup> John Musto, interview with Stephanie R. Thorpe, September 16, 2008, New York City.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.



Music Example 16: *Quiet Songs*, “3b. Quiet Song,” mm. 1-2  
*John Musto: Collected Songs* ©2008

Moderately (♩ = 92) *mp*

Here Is

The accompaniment in mm. 3-7 harmonically reinforces the vocal line. A repetitive rhythmic pattern in the vocal line is established in mm. 3-7, with the exception of m. 5. This pattern consists of a sustained half note followed by a half note rest with a quarter note pick-up to the next measure. The aria proper and Section I begins in m. 7 with “Here is love that sits by the hearth...”<sup>85</sup>

The vocal line fluctuates between chromatic movement and wide intervallic leaps that are often unsupported by the accompaniment. The accompaniment is almost completely separate from the vocal line and moves in contrary motion in mm. 8-11 where the pianistic texture gives way to an overall tertial chord progression, a common compositional choice by Musto.

The accompaniment lines in mm. 11-12 move in contrary motion to the vocal line, returning to harmonically support the voice in mm. 13-14, when the vocal line returns to the text, “quiet.” The first mention of “quiet” in m. 5 is an ascending whole-step motion

<sup>85</sup> Eugene O’Neill, “Quiet Song,” *John Musto: Collected Songs* (New York: Peer Music Classical, 2008), 63.

between the two syllables of “quiet” (see Music Example 17). The second “quiet” in m. 14 includes the same ascending whole-step motion (see Music Example 18).

Music Example 17: *Quiet Songs*, “3b. Quiet Song,” m. 5  
*John Musto: Collected Songs* ©2008

Music Example 18: *Quiet Songs*, “3b. Quiet Song,” mm. 12-14  
*John Musto: Collected Songs* ©2008

The end of m. 14 leading into m. 15 begins Section II with a new key area that outlines E $\flat$  major. In this section, the treble and bass accompaniment lines move independently of one another in syncopated rhythmic motion. Beginning in m. 14, the bass accompaniment moves in octaves until m. 20 while the treble accompaniment advances one beat after the bass. The treble accompaniment is relegated

to smaller intervallic movements than the bass accompaniment. This accompanimental pattern of one hand following another is often present in Musto's vocal compositions.

The vocal line of Section II, mm. 15-23, is rarely supported by the accompaniment. However, the melodic line of Section II is similar to the opening section. The return of the text, "quiet," once again finds an ascending whole-step motion between the two syllables of "quiet." The accompaniment continues the whole-step motion into mm. 22-23, leading into Section III in m. 24.

Section III begins in m. 24 with continued whole-step motion as well as perfect fourth and fifth intervallic movement. Musto uses syncopation and rhythmic displacement throughout the section. As stated earlier in this document, when the vocal line is placed in a different rhythmic meter from the accompaniment line, i.e. duple versus triple, Musto simply wishes to achieve the sense of a floating vocal line that is "part, yet not part of the accompaniment."<sup>86</sup>

Due to the composer's highly developed sense of prosody, there is evidence of text painting for the duration of the section. For the first time the word "quiet" is a descending whole-step instead of ascending. Musto's choice of a descending whole-step versus ascending is purely reliant on the preceding text of, "Here. / Sadness, too, is quiet."<sup>87</sup> The descending whole-step motion is meant to communicate the feeling of sadness.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> John Musto, interview with Stephanie R. Thorpe, September 16, 2008, New York City.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

The song changed slightly between editions in mm. 24-26. In the earlier *Selected Songs* edition, one finds an F #<sup>4</sup> on the text, “Here,” held for one and one-half beats from beat four of m. 24 to beat one of m. 25. The *Collected Songs* edition holds the F #<sup>4</sup> in m. 24 for a single quarter note only. The section continues with poetry distinctly modified from the rest of the poem. In previous sections the poetry defines the various types of quiet with minimal descriptions. In Section I, the poetry personifies love as a person. Section II characterizes “faith” as remaining unafraid of silence.

The longest section of the composition is represented in mm. 24-39, as well as the longest poetic segment concerning one theme. The main focus of this section is sadness, in which O’Neill uses earthly symbolism and seasonal metaphors to define the emotion and liken it to “quiet.” Rhythmic displacement is present for the duration of the section, beginning with duple versus triple and increasing in varying degrees (see Music Example 19). The vocal line of Section III is the most reminiscent of Moore’s *The Ballad of Baby Doe* with increasingly larger intervallic leaps, longer vocal phrases marked by rhythmic displacement, and a high tessitura.

The accompaniment is generally more supportive of the vocal line than in the previous section, usually providing the vocal line’s entrance pitch at least one eighth note in advance, but rarely in the same octave. “Time’s hair has grown whiter,” the last line of the section in m. 38, is the highest three measures of the piece, extending the voice to a C #<sup>6</sup>. Musto has included an optional B #<sup>5</sup> in the *Collected Songs* edition (see Music Example 20).

A piano interlude from mm. 39-42 leads into the final section in m. 43. The interlude requires a pianist of considerable talent and experience. Marked by challenging rhythmic



The descent of the accompaniment abruptly halts in m. 43, presenting A #<sup>2</sup> and B<sup>2</sup> in octaves in the bass leading to an accented two-beat/four-note build of an E major seventh chord in the treble with the reentrance of the vocal line on the text, “Here. / Where is here?”<sup>89</sup> The “home interval” of m. 1 returns in mm. 44-46. The same intervallic movements of mm. 2-4 repeat in mm. 44-46. The bass accompaniment moves only on the weaker beats of two and four in mm. 43-45. The vocal line in mm. 46-48 is given little harmonic support by the accompaniment.

Beginning with the pick-up beat to m. 49, the vocal line is reminiscent of the opening five measures with the same text and similar intervallic movements of perfect fifths, major sevenths, and a final ascending whole-step on the word, “quiet.” In this final section, Musto quickly shifts the dynamic markings of both the vocal and accompaniment lines from *mezzo piano* to *piano* and back, closing the piece with a dynamic marking of *piano* and the voice in a high tessitura. Musto indicates a *poco crescendo* marking in the accompaniment, concluding the piece with a *pianissimo* marking in the bass accompaniment in its lowest register.

John Musto’s *Collected Songs* edition includes two versions of both “Intermezzo” and “Quiet Song.” The first versions of “Intermezzo 2a” and “Quiet Song 3a” are one whole-step lower than “Intermezzo 2b” and “Quiet Song 3b,” which are in the same keys as the earlier *Selected Songs* edition. Musto’s reasoning behind the addition of the two new versions is simply to provide a lower key for those voices that found the extended

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<sup>89</sup> Eugene O’Neill, “Quiet Song,” *John Musto: Collected Songs* (New York: Peer Music Classical, 2008), 69.

vocal range of “Quiet Song” difficult.<sup>90</sup> Both songs are available in lower keys, as “Intermezzo” is a prelude/annex to “Quiet Song” (see Music Examples 21 & 22).

Music Example 21: *Quiet Songs*, “2a. Intermezzo,” mm. 1-6  
*John Musto: Collected Songs* ©2008

2a. Intermezzo

Amy Elizabeth Burton John Musto

Slowly, simply (♩ = 96)

5 *mp*  
 You are with me and I am with you I

Music Example 22: *Quiet Songs*, “3a. Quiet Song,” mm. 1-4  
*John Musto: Collected Songs* ©2008

3a. Quiet Song

Eugene O'Neill John Musto

Moderately (♩ = 92)

*mp*  
 Here is home. Is peace. Is

*mp*

<sup>90</sup> John Musto, interview with Stephanie R. Thorpe, September 18, 2008, New York City.

## “Christmas Carol (To Jesus on His Birthday)”

Edna St. Vincent Millay’s poem, “Christmas Carol (To Jesus on His Birthday)” provides the setting for the fourth song in the *Quiet Songs* cycle. Musto chose the poem because “it is one of the most striking poems I’ve ever read... especially the end.”<sup>91</sup> The composer’s sense of irony is quickly apparent in his choice of Millay’s text. According to Ms. Burton, the composer has a “dark view of religion.” Due to his religious background, he found the poem particularly poignant.<sup>92</sup>

Edna St. Vincent Millay, poet, playwright, and Bohemian “free woman” of the roaring twenties, settled in New York City where she wrote plays in verse for the Provincetown Players.<sup>93</sup> Originally titled, “To Jesus on His Birthday,” the poem instantly puts the reader into a conversational relationship with Jesus.<sup>94</sup> Millay’s poem describes the devaluation of Christmas. The day named for the birth of Christ is now merely one day off work, tinsel ribbon, presents, and sanctimonious sermons heard by those who attend church services on this one day a year.

It is worth noting that although this is a ‘Christmas Carol’ (according to John Musto’s re-titling of the poem), the imagery describes Christ’s death more than his life or birth. The poem makes the commercialized Christmas holiday more of a funeral than a birthday, and the poem more a eulogy than a carol.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> John Musto, interview with Stephanie R. Thorpe, September 18, 2008, New York City.

<sup>92</sup> Amy Burton, interview with Stephanie R. Thorpe, September 15, 2008, New York City.

<sup>93</sup> *The Oxford Companion to Twentieth-Century Poetry in English*, *Oxford Reference Online*, s.v. “Millay, Edna St. Vincent” (by Anne Stevenson), <http://www.oxfordreference.com/views/ENTRY.html?subview=Main&entry=t58.e792> (Accessed July 17, 2008).

<sup>94</sup> M.V. Elder, unpublished data.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*



The song begins with D octaves in extreme registers of the keyboard moving inward to an A # - C # chord in both treble and bass clefs, again moving further inward to a C - E ♭ chord. Musto intends these chords to be interpreted as the church bells calling the congregation to the service.<sup>96</sup> Following these opening chords, both the treble and bass accompaniment plays Theme I two octaves apart from m. 1-3. Musto states, “This theme is simply the surplus notes that were not used in the opening chords.”<sup>97</sup> Entirely original, the theme is meant to sound like a Protestant hymn and takes its inspiration from Musto’s early experiences playing organ for the Bensonhurst Parish Catholic church services.<sup>98</sup> The first line uses all twelve notes of the scale, not as a serial technique, but again, as a way to “keep the ear engaged” (see Music Example 23).<sup>99</sup>

Music Example 23: *Quiet Songs*, “Christmas Carol (To Jesus on His Birthday),” mm. 1-3  
*John Musto: Collected Songs* ©2008  
 Maestoso (♩ = 63)

<sup>96</sup> John Musto, interview with Stephanie R. Thorpe, September 16, 2008, New York City.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

The extended register use in the accompaniment of the opening three measures continues in mm. 4-5 with octave F<sup>1</sup> and F<sup>2</sup> in the bass line and octave F<sup>5</sup> and F<sup>6</sup> in the treble line and an additional E<sup>4</sup> and B<sup>4</sup> between the extreme Fs. Again, these chords should be interpreted as church bells. The vocal line from mm. 5-9 is delivered in a *secco recitativo* fashion. Unaccompanied, the vocal line in these measures is separated in m. 7 by the same chords found in mm. 4-5. Throughout this opening recitative, the vocal line is prosodic and syncopated (see Music Example 24).

Music Example 24: *Quiet Songs*, “Christmas Carol (To Jesus on His Birthday),”  
mm. 4-9, John Musto: *Collected Songs* ©2008

The musical score for Music Example 24 consists of two systems of music. The first system covers measures 4 and 5. The vocal line begins in measure 4 with the lyrics "For this your moth - er sweat-ed in - the cold, -". The piano accompaniment features a *mf* dynamic. The second system covers measures 7 and 8. The vocal line continues with "For this you bled u - pon the bit-ter tree: -". The piano accompaniment includes a *poco f* dynamic marking. The score is written in 3/4 time and includes various musical notations such as clefs, notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

In mm. 10-14, the vocal line is delivered in a *recitativo accompagnato* fashion. In this section, the vocal line becomes more lyric in its approach. Theme I reappears in the accompaniment in m. 9 and leads into the return of the voice in m. 10. A portion of

Theme I is heard again in the accompaniment in m. 11 and leads into the reentrance of the voice in mm. 12-14 (see Music Example 25).

Music Example 25: *Quiet Songs*, “Christmas Carol (To Jesus on His Birthday),”  
mm. 12-16, *John Musto: Collected Songs* ©2008

12 *Meno mosso* *mp* *A tempo*

A pa-per wreath; A day at home for me.

15 *f* *simile*

The mer-ry bells ring out, the peo-ple kneel;

*con fxa*

The latter half of m. 14 is marked *a tempo* and is the beginning of the aria proper. Theme I returns once more in mm. 14-15. A second treble line, used to keep the music dictation clear to the performers, enters in m. 15 and continues through m. 18 with a return of the same chords found in m. 1. A “man of God” enters in m. 17 and the vocal

line from mm. 18-20 becomes chant-like with even rhythmic declamation over uneven, syncopated rhythmic and melodic motion in the accompaniment (see Music Example 26).

Music Example 26: *Quiet Songs*, “Christmas Carol (To Jesus on His Birthday),”  
mm. 18-19, *John Musto: Collected Songs* ©2008

The image displays a musical score for two measures, 18 and 19. Measure 18 features a vocal line in treble clef with lyrics "With voice of hon - ey and with eyes of steel" and a piano accompaniment in G major with a *sub. p* dynamic. Measure 19 features a vocal line with lyrics "He drones your hum - ble Gos - pel to the" and a piano accompaniment with a *hazy, distant* dynamic. The piano part in both measures consists of sustained chords and moving lines in both hands, creating a rich harmonic texture.

A new section, which is a study in opposites, begins in m. 20. The accompaniment becomes quite extravagant in its rhythmic and melodic texture while the vocal line enters in m. 23 on the text “less” at a *mezzo piano* dynamic level. On its second repetition a minor third higher, the vocal line features a *crescendo* to a *mezzo forte* dynamic level where it remains for the final repetition of “less” on A<sup>5</sup>, a major sixth above the second

appearance. Musto alters mm. 22-24 slightly between editions. The older edition has a *forte* dynamic marking beginning in m. 22 in the bass accompaniment that states a modified version of Theme I. The *forte* dynamic marking is not present in the new *Collected Songs* edition.

“Christmas Carol” is highly syncopated in mm. 22-29 with much interplay and interchange between the accompaniment and the vocal line (see Music Example 27). The A<sup>5</sup> “less” is marked *dolce* and begins a section in which vocal line establishes rhythmic notation influenced by the uppermost treble line directly preceding its entrance. The pulsing interior treble line that enters in m. 25 is meant to be reminiscent of a heartbeat and supports the text, “Less, less, less / than the wind that blows,” and leads the listener to the next line, “Are all your words to us you died / to save.”<sup>100</sup> Contrary motion leads the accompaniment inward to a final descent as the singer sustains the word, “died.”<sup>101</sup>

Theme I reenters in m. 29 leading into Section III in m. 30. The treble accompaniment of m. 30 leading into m. 31 is intervallically the same as the ensuing declamatory vocal line, “O Prince of Peace!”<sup>102</sup> The bass accompaniment is a modified continuation of Theme I that descends in scalar fashion. The opening church bells return in m. 33 (see Music Example 28).

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<sup>100</sup> Edna St. Vincent Millay, “Christmas Carol (To Jesus on His Birthday),” *John Musto: Collected Songs* (New York: Peer Music Classical, 2008), 73.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid, 74.

Music Example 27: *Quiet Songs*, “Christmas Carol (To Jesus on His Birthday),”  
 mm. 22-26, *John Musto: Collected Songs* ©2008

22

*mp* *mf* *dolce*

Less, less, less —

25

than the wind that blows Are

*sub. mp* *cant.*

*l.h.* *l.h.*

The return of the opening church bells continues with the C-E $\flat$  chord in m. 34 with the addition of a pulsing E $\flat^3$  that once again represents a heartbeat. Musto musically quotes the hymn tune of “*Stabat mater dolorosa*” in m. 35. The Latin translates to “The grieving Mother beside the cross weeping” and is wholly significant to Millay’s poetry. Musto’s inclusion of this musical quote is another reference to his religious upbringing.

His earliest recollections are of being in church singing the “*Stabat mater dolorosa*” and the other stations of the cross.<sup>103</sup>

Music Example 28: *Quiet Songs*, “Christmas Carol (To Jesus on His Birthday),”  
mm. 27-33 John Musto: *Collected Songs* ©2008

27  
all your words to us you died to save.

pp distant  
p pp  
(gradually release)

30  
O Prince of Peace! O Star-on's dew - y rose!

f  
f maestoso  
(gradually release) \* sub - loco

In the earlier edition, the “*Stabat mater*” quote is written out as “*Stabat mater iuxta Crucem*,” and in the *Collected Songs* edition, Musto quotes it as “*Stabat mater dolorosa*” (see Music Examples 29 & 30). The translation is the same. The inclusion of the “*Stabat*

<sup>103</sup> John Musto, interview with Stephanie R. Thorpe, September 16, 2008, New York City.

*mater*” with a pulsing heartbeat-like gesture is significant, as Musto used the “*Stabat mater*” in his song, “Heartbeats,” found in the *AIDS Quilt Songbook*.<sup>104</sup>

Music Example 29: *Quiet Songs*, “Christmas Carol (To Jesus on His Birthday),”  
mm. 35-38, John Musto: *Quiet Songs* ©1991

The score for Music Example 29 consists of three staves. The top staff is the vocal line, starting with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The lyrics are: "The stone the an - gel rolled a - way with tears is back u -". The middle staff is the piano accompaniment, starting with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The lyrics are: "(Sta - bat ma - ter lux - ta cru - cem...)". The bottom staff is the piano accompaniment, starting with a bass clef and a key signature of one flat. The dynamics are marked *p distant* and *pp*.

Music Example 30: *Quiet Songs*, “Christmas Carol (To Jesus on His Birthday),”  
mm. 35-37, John Musto: *Collected Songs* ©2008

The score for Music Example 30 consists of three staves. The top staff is the vocal line, starting with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The lyrics are: "The stone the an - gel rolled a - way with". The middle staff is the piano accompaniment, starting with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The lyrics are: "(Sta - bat ma - ter do - lo - ro - sa.)". The bottom staff is the piano accompaniment, starting with a bass clef and a key signature of one flat. The dynamics are marked *mp* and *p distant*.

The vocal line reenters in m. 35 and ascends in perfect fourths and fifths on the text, “The stone the angel rolled away with tears.” A modified version of the “*Stabat mater*” musical quotation returns in the accompaniment in mm. 37-39, one whole-step below its previous entrance. This modification includes a pulsing  $D^b^3$  that comes to a sudden stop

<sup>104</sup> The *AIDS Quilt Songbook* is a collection of songs originally masterminded by the late baritone William Parker. According to a review by Keith Ward, the *AIDS Quilt Songbook* stands as one of the most important musical responses to AIDS. The songs in this compilation were written with the clear purpose of naming the virus along with its social as well as personal and medical complications in contemporary life.



with the text, “Is back upon your mouth these thousand years” (see Music Example 31). A return of the opening chords/church bells in m. 41 is sustained over three measures, again using Musto’s compositional device of “book-ending a song with material from the beginning.”<sup>105</sup>

Music Example 31: *Quiet Songs*, “Christmas Carol (To Jesus on His Birthday),”  
mm. 38-43, *John Musto: Collected Songs* ©2008

38

tears is back up - on your mouth these thou - sand

41

years.

*p*

<sup>105</sup> John Musto, interview by Stephanie R. Thorpe, September 16, 2008, New York City.

## “Palm Sunday: Naples”

“Palm Sunday: Naples,” with poetry by Arthur Symons, provides the text setting for the fifth song of the *Quiet Songs* cycle. When Burton was asked about this setting, she immediately recalled that her husband wanted her to approach this song as Pavarotti would perform a Neapolitan song with his many and well-known mannerisms.<sup>106</sup> In a separate interview, Musto recalled the voice of Pavarotti and described it as having “clarity like a big, open blue sky.”<sup>107</sup>

Arthur Symons, 1865-1945, is a poet whose work was at the heart of the Nineties movement and influenced the poets of the Symbolist movement.<sup>108</sup> Naples, the city that inspired the poem, had a profound effect on Symons. He wrote, “No city ever filled me with such terror as Naples.”<sup>109</sup> The narrow alleys, crowded and dirty streets, and poverty of the Neapolitan people gave Symons “...more respect for civilization.”<sup>110</sup>

Symons’s poem begins with an opening request, “Because it is the day of Palms, / Carry a palm for me, / Carry a palm in Santa Chiara, / And I will watch the sea.” This request is for someone to carry a palm on Palm Sunday, while the person stares at the sea. The poem then describes the visual images of observing “the little sail lean sideways on

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<sup>106</sup> Amy Burton, interview with Stephanie R. Thorpe, September 15, 2008, New York City.

<sup>107</sup> John Musto, interview with Stephanie R. Thorpe, September 16, 2008, New York City.

<sup>108</sup> *The Oxford Companion to Twentieth-Century Poetry in English*, Oxford Reference Online, s.v. “Symons, Arthur (William)” (by Julian Symons), <http://www.oxfordreferenceonline.com/views/ENTRY.html?subview=Main&entry=t58.e1184> (Accessed July 17, 2008).

<sup>109</sup> Karl Beckson, *Arthur Symons: A Life* (Oxford: Clarendon Press: 1987), 165.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

the sea,” the “white clouds,” and the “blue sea.”<sup>111</sup> The person sees the world objectively and does not project metaphors.

The poem continues, “I have grown tired of all these things. / And what is left for me? / I have no place in Santa Chiara. / There is no peace upon the sea.”<sup>112</sup> Here, the sense of restlessness within the person comes to the forefront. The person is not idle, but sad. The sea gives no peace. There is no rest in Santa Chiara or in the church.

The last repetition of the text, “carry a palm in Santa Chiara, / carry a palm for me,” implies a subtle hope.<sup>113</sup> The person will never again carry the palm on Palm Sunday, implying that the palm someone else carries is an offering for his or her soul, like the lighting of a candle in the Catholic Church.<sup>114</sup>

Rocking figures representing the motion of the sea are present throughout much of the song. Every stanza of the poem includes a description of the sea. The song opens with a B $\flat$ <sup>3</sup> in the bass accompaniment line, supplying the singer with their B $\flat$ <sup>4</sup> entrance note. The voice lilts through the opening four measures, with *rubato*, *mormorando*, and *colla voce* markings over extravagant accompaniment figures. The opening four measures constitute chorus-like thematic material often found in Neapolitan songs.

Section A is represented in mm. 1-8, a chorus-like section that returns several times throughout the song. Extended accompaniment techniques are once again present in mm. 8-9 with the addition of a third accompaniment line (see Music Example 32).

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<sup>111</sup> Arthur Symons, “Palm Sunday: Naples,” *John Musto: Collected Songs* (New York: Peer Music Classical, 2008), 76-77.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 79-80.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 76.

<sup>114</sup> M.V. Elder, unpublished data.

Music Example 32: *Quiet Songs*, "Palm Sunday: Naples," mm. 1-9

John Musto: *Collected Songs* ©2008

Andante grazioso (♩ = 144)

Be - cause it is the day of Palms, Car - ry a

palm for - me. Car - ry a palm in San - ta Chia - ra,

And I will watch the sea.

The first verse begins in m. 10 with an octave leap from C #<sup>4</sup> to C #<sup>5</sup> and back to the C #<sup>4</sup> in the vocal line. Every consecutive interval following the opening octave leap descends from mm. 10-12 in scalar fashion, i.e. major seventh, major sixth, and minor sixth, always returning to the opening C #<sup>4</sup> with very little help from the accompaniment (see Music Example 33). The rhythmic and melodic activity of the accompaniment from mm. 10-14 is quite repetitive.

Music Example 33: *Quiet Songs*, "Palm Sunday: Naples," mm. 10-12  
 John Musto: *Collected Songs* ©2008

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Brisk sixteenth notes against eighth notes in the accompaniment of m. 15 lead into a new key area and a poetic shift in both the melodic and rhythmic composition. Section B, encompassed in mm. 15-20, is similar to the opening eight measures. Again, it resembles a chorus-like section often found in Neapolitan songs with a lilting vocal line over a sparse but expressive accompaniment (see Music Example 34).

Music Example 34: *Quiet Songs*, "Palm Sunday: Naples," mm. 16-21  
 John Musto: *Collected Songs* ©2008

Accompaniment similar to the first verse, found in mm. 10-14, returns in m. 20. A piano interlude in mm. 27-29 leads into a quasi-return of the opening section from mm. 30-37. While the poetry is the same, the rhythmic and melodic patterns are slightly more exaggerated than the opening section (see Music Example 35).

Music Example 35: *Quiet Songs*, “Palm Sunday: Naples,” mm. 28-33  
 John Musto: *Collected Songs* ©2008

The image displays a musical score for two systems of music. The first system, starting at measure 28, features a vocal line in treble clef and piano accompaniment in grand staff. The vocal line begins with a rest, followed by the lyrics "Be-cause it". The piano accompaniment includes a melodic line with a "loco" marking and a bass line with a trill. The second system, starting at measure 31, continues the vocal line with the lyrics "is the day of Palms," and the piano accompaniment. The score concludes with a double bar line and a "Ped." marking in the bass line.

A shift to Section C begins in mm. 37-40. This section is encompassed in mm. 41-49, and is a combination of vocal rhythms and compositional lines from Sections A and B with highly expressive piano writing that is mainly present when the voice is not.

Section D, the final section, is also a combination of sections A and B with new material over existing mannerisms. This last section is contained in mm. 50-64. An

accompanimental coda is found in mm. 63-66, combining rhythmic and melodic motives from all the sections throughout the song.

### “Lullaby”

The final composition of *Quiet Songs* is “Lullaby” with poetry by Léonie Adams. Affectionately termed the “bone song” by the composer’s wife, soprano Amy Burton, the poetry is dark, depicting the sometimes slow and arduous descent from sickness into death.<sup>115</sup> When asked about “Lullaby” during our interview, the composer shared his experiences of sitting at the bedsides of friends and mentors who had passed away from AIDS, memories which inspired his setting of this particular poem.<sup>116</sup>

Musto went on to speak quite vividly of being at the bedside of his mentor, teacher, and friend, Paul Jacobs, when he passed away. Musto found this poem particularly striking for the line, “Your eyes in sleepy fever gleam, / Your lids droop to their dream.”<sup>117</sup> He felt he had seen that feverish look in too many faces.<sup>118</sup>

Musto’s experiences with death and dying led him to understand in some instances one has to give the dying person permission to go. “It’s amazing how hard a person will fight to stay alive.”<sup>119</sup> The last line of the poem, “Here is the pillow. / Rest.” is an example of giving the dying individual permission to leave their earthly existence.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> Amy Burton, interview with Stephanie R. Thorpe, September 15, 2008, New York City.

<sup>116</sup> John Musto, interview with Stephanie R. Thorpe, September 16, 2008, New York City.

<sup>117</sup> Léonie Adams, “Lullaby,” *John Musto: Collected Songs* (New York: Peer Music Classical, 2008), 84.

<sup>118</sup> John Musto, interview with Stephanie R. Thorpe, September 16, 2008, New York City.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> Léonie Adams, “Lullaby,” *John Musto: Collected Songs* (New York: Peer Music Classical, 2008), 86.

Burton finds the song one of Musto's most beautiful compositions, full of "sadness, strangeness, and gossamer lines."<sup>121</sup> Steven Blier, renowned pianist and artistic director of The New York Festival of Song, recalls playing the cycle for a soprano whom he thought would sing the pieces beautifully because she was a highly expressive singer. Every song prior to "Lullaby" was sung amazingly well, while in the midst of "Lullaby" he recalls that the soprano stopped singing. When he looked up to assess the situation he saw her standing onstage weeping, the song had affected her so deeply.<sup>122</sup>

Léonie Adams, 1899-1988, though not prolific, is a painstaking and severe poet.<sup>123</sup> The gentle title, "Lullaby," and the soothing opening lines of the poem are belied by the emotional intensity and passion of the poem's content.<sup>124</sup> Musto repeats the opening "lullay" nine times. The original first line of the poem reads, "HUSH, lullay."<sup>125</sup>

The imagery of the poem chronicles the dissolution of the physical existence. Treasures rust, trinkets crumble into dust; the worldliness of life is meaningless in the face of death. Adams's uses images of spaces that are devoid of life. The physical being is empty and the bodily act of "play" is over by the ending of the body itself. The eyes closing in "sleepy fever" implies the ravages of sickness upon the body.

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<sup>121</sup> Amy Burton, interview with Stephanie R. Thorpe, September 15, 2008, New York City.

<sup>122</sup> Steven Blier, telephone interview with Stephanie R. Thorpe, September 21, 2008.

<sup>123</sup> *The Oxford Companion to Twentieth-Century Poetry in English*, Oxford Reference Online, s.v. "Adams, Léonie" (by Emily Grosholz), <http://www.oxfordreferenceonline.com/views/ENTRY.html?subview=Main&entry=t58.e7> (Accessed July 17, 2008).

<sup>124</sup> M.V. Elder, unpublished data.

<sup>125</sup> Glenn Richard Ruihley, *An Anthology of Great U.S. Women Poets: 1850-1990, Temples and Palaces* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: The Mosaic Foundation: 1997), 307.



The image of “wandering late alone” is symbolic of a dying person’s final journey. As the “flesh frets on the bone,” the body begins to fail, followed by the line, “your love fails in your breast.”<sup>126</sup> In this line, the emotional presence of love within the body is dying, too. Even love cannot stop decay. The final line, “Here is the pillow. / Rest,” is the permission the observer offers to the dying person the ease their journey into death. In the end, the listener’s pity goes not to the dying person, but to the observer, who is left with their love.<sup>127</sup>

The opening two measures appear to be randomly placed pitches and rhythms. Closer examination reveals a pattern of intervals that center around the major second and minor third along with the ubiquitous major sixth. The third measure is a musical quote from “Quiet Song,” continuing the syncopation found in the first two measures. Overall, the introduction to “Lullaby” is an amalgamation of “Intermezzo,” “Quiet Song,” and “Christmas Carol.”

A musical quotation of “Quiet Song” leads into the vocal entrance in m. 8. A recitative-like opening is found in mm. 8-21. The only text in these opening measures is “hush, lullay” (see Music Example 36). The “Intermezzo” theme returns during the recitative from mm. 18-21, guiding the recitative into the song proper in m. 22.

The initial vocal line of the song proper descends mainly in whole-step motion, while the accompaniment shifts to treble clef only. A new section, describing the earthly items the dying person mourns losing, begins in m. 29 with open fourths between the vocal and accompaniment lines. Syncopated rhythms are still prevalent. These rhythms are present

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<sup>126</sup> Léonie Adams, “Lullaby,” *John Musto: Collected Songs* (New York: Peer Music Classical, 2008), 86.

<sup>127</sup> M.V. Elder, unpublished data.

in the vocal line while triplet motion is present in the treble accompaniment with scalar motion in the bass accompaniment.

Music Example 36: *Quiet Songs*, “Lullaby,” mm. 1-9  
*John Musto: Collected Songs* ©2008

Slowly ( $\text{♩} = 44$ )

pp

rall. poco

A tempo ( $\text{♩} = 88$ )

3

6

p mp

Hush. Lul-lay, lul - lay,

sost. rca \*

This rhythmically shifting section continues until m. 36 with a return of the song proper. An almost exact repetition of the opening mm. 23-25 is seen in mm. 37-38. The last section of “Lullaby” begins in m. 41, using motivic material similar to mm. 4-6. Musto uses this compositional device of repeating motivic material from the beginning to assist in the transition to the final section of “Lullaby.”

This section introduces a pulsing rhythm that the composer meant to signify an irregular and fading heartbeat.<sup>128</sup> The vocal line is descriptive of someone who is struggling to continue breathing and living. With faltering rhythmic motion, the overall shape of these final vocal phrases are depicted by a quick leap upward, a struggle to stay in the higher tessitura, and the inevitable fall of each phrase (see Music Example 37).

Music Example 37: *Quiet Songs*, “Lullaby,” mm. 44-51  
*John Musto: Collected Songs* ©2008

44 *Poco più mosso* ( $\text{♩} = 108$ ) *mp*  $\wedge$

You wan - der late

*con  $\text{f}^{\text{co}}$*

48

a - lone,

<sup>128</sup> John Musto, interview with Stephanie R. Thorpe, September 16, 2008, New York City.

The struggle ends in m. 59 when the accompaniment line descends from a high tessitura to silence in m. 61. The few remaining heartbeats sound in mm. 62-63. The last vocal phrase, “Here is the pillow. / Rest.,” gives the dying individual permission to pass on (see Music Example 38).<sup>129</sup> The final measure is a cluster chord reminiscent to the flat-line of a heart machine as the observer sits by the patient's bedside in a stark hospital room.

Music Example 38: *Quiet Songs*, “Lullaby,” mm. 57-64  
 John Musto: *Collected Songs* ©2008

57 *rall.*  
 love fails in your breast.

59 *cant.*

61 *a piacere* *a tempo*  
 Here is the pillow. Rest.

*pp* *p* *mp* *ppp*

<sup>129</sup> John Musto, interview with Stephanie R. Thorpe, September 16, 2008, New York City.

Few revisions were made from the first edition of *Quiet Songs* to the current edition. Overall, the songs are performed faster, the editorial and accompaniment markings in the present edition are much clearer to the performers than in the previous edition. The vocal line is more clearly marked as well, with the addition of comprehensive dynamic and accent markings.

The cycle calls for an intelligent empathic connection to the text for the text is as important as the music and the two are inextricably intertwined. While the cycle is linked by overall themes of “finding, losing, or letting go of something,” each song features poetry by a different poet, which requires the singer to quickly shift emotions and characters.

The vocal line is further complicated by Musto’s continual use of large intervallic leaps, chromatic passages, and challenging rhythmic movements. Paired with demanding accompaniment that often conflicts with the vocal line, only an advanced student/professional singer and a gifted accompanist may be able to perform the cycle well.

Amy Burton and John Musto recently recorded *Quiet Songs* along with several other pieces. When asked how she approached learning the cycle, Burton said only that it was “a heavy cycle in terms of poetry and mood, but John says, ‘Nobody complains about Mahler.’”<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> Amy Burton, interview with Stephanie R. Thorpe, September 15, 2008, New York City.

## CHAPTER 5

### *DOVE STA AMORE...*

As a result of winning the Concert Artists Guild International Competition in 1991, soprano Lauren Wagner commissioned *Dove Sta Amore...* for soprano and piano. After Musto finished the cycle in 1993, Wagner did not feel that the cycle fit her voice and Cyndia Sieden eventually premiered *Dove Sta Amore...*<sup>131</sup>

The cycle was then rescored for voice and orchestra and premiered by Dominique Labelle and the Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra in Jacksonville, Florida on March 2, 1996. The orchestral version was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in Music in 1997. Peer Music Classical first published the piano/vocal format of *Dove Sta Amore...* in 1998, and recently released a new edition of the cycle found in *John Musto: Collected Songs*. A multitude of changes were made between the two editions, many small, all of which will be discussed in the following chapter.

When asked about the poetry for the cycle, Musto explained his thoughts on his poetic choices. “All of these [poems] are very cinematic, like snapshots of people in their relationships.”<sup>132</sup> *Dove Sta Amore...* is linked through a series of relationships, all detailing some facet or degree of love. A commitment-phobic girl unsure of whether or not she loves her boyfriend, a woman who loves her husband far more than he loves her,

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<sup>131</sup> John Musto, interview with Stephanie R. Thorpe, September 16, 2008, New York City.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

a father's love for his family, a parent's love for their child, and finally, a woman who tries to explain her philosophy of love. Burton's program notes for the cycle state that *Dove Sta Amore...* "takes its name from the last song in the cycle. The words themselves, translate both as question and answer ("Where lies love / Here lies love") and thus provide a conceptual and musical roadmap for the entire cycle."<sup>133</sup>

### "Maybe"

With an opening dedication to soprano Cyndia Sieden and Steven Blier, the original performers, the cycle begins with "Maybe," a poem by Carl Sandburg. Sandburg, 1878-1967, is the poet for the first three songs of the *Dove Sta Amore...* cycle. A Pulitzer Prize winner, Sandburg is the "first important American writer to grow up in a household where English was the second language – the first was Swedish – and this gives his approach to rhythm and diction something more than idiosyncrasy."<sup>134</sup> Musto's one-word description of the mood "Maybe" creates is "non-committal."<sup>135</sup>

"Maybe" rests on the idea of ambiguity, repetition and questioning. Unlike the other poems of *Dove Sta Amore...*, "Maybe" is essentially a question to the self – the woman looks outward rather than inward. She looks to the wind on the sea, the wind on the prairie, and hopes someone can guide her. She looks ahead to a future in which she will

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<sup>133</sup> Amy Burton, program notes for *John Musto: Dove Sta Amore... for Soprano and Orchestra* (New York: Peer Music Classical, 1996), ii.

<sup>134</sup> *The Oxford Companion to Twentieth-Century Poetry in English*, Oxford Reference Online, s.v. "Sandburg, Carl" (by George MacBeth), <http://www.oxfordreference.com/views/ENTRY.html?subview=Main&entry=t58.e1048> (Accessed July 17, 2008).

<sup>135</sup> John Musto, interview with Stephanie R. Thorpe, September 16, 2008, New York City.

“maybe” decide. Yet she mentions none of her feelings specifically, especially her love or lack thereof for the man. Instead, she states, “maybe I can marry him.”<sup>136</sup>

The lightness of the poem, with its repetitive uncertainty and simple, lyrical images, is a direct contradiction to the seriousness of the problem: should I marry him? Her word choice is not that of someone passionately conflicted but someone who is casually wondering.<sup>137</sup>

With highly syncopated rhythms throughout, the song immediately establishes a ‘swing-time’ feel, which the singer continues at the first vocal entrance. The ‘swing-time’ rhythmic texture is quite deliberate on Musto’s part; he feels that the popular dance rhythm “communicates nonchalance.”<sup>138</sup> Steven Blier finds the poem’s “jaunty rhythms evoke a mixture of charm and callousness.”<sup>139</sup>

Sandburg’s poem repeats ‘maybe’ eight times, while Musto goes one step further and repeats it ten times throughout the course of the song. The heavy repetition of ‘maybe’ is a strong description of the woman’s commitment-phobic personality and her dilemma of whether or not to marry her lover. She waxes philosophical on the subject when she states, “Maybe I can marry him, maybe not. Maybe the wind of the prairie, the wind on the sea, maybe.”<sup>140</sup>

Jazz influence is found throughout the short song in both the vocal line and accompaniment with the use of syncopated rhythmic stresses, chordal textures, heavy use

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<sup>136</sup> Carl Sandburg, “Maybe,” *John Musto: Collected Songs* (New York: Peer Music Classical, 2008), 87.

<sup>137</sup> M.V. Elder, unpublished data.

<sup>138</sup> John Musto, interview with Stephanie R. Thorpe, September 16, 2008, New York City.

<sup>139</sup> Steven Blier, program notes for *Dove Sta Amore...*, New York Festival of Song, October 2, 1996: Weill Recital Hall.

<sup>140</sup> Carl Sandburg, “Maybe,” *John Musto: Collected Songs* (New York: Peer Music Classical, 2008), 87-88.



of major and minor thirds, the ever-popular major sixth often linked to popular music, and the “blue” note that is typically associated with jazz music. The vocal range is large, comprising slightly less than two octaves and must be sung with utmost lyricism while incorporating the jazz/popular rhythms.

Changes made by the composer between editions are quickly found in the substitution of  $\frac{4}{4}$  and  $\frac{2}{4}$  in the new edition versus the confusing  $\frac{12}{16}$  and  $\frac{6}{16}$  of the first edition (see Music Examples 39 & 40). Musto’s reasoning for this change is to make the new edition easier to read for both the singer and the pianist. While the time signatures of the first edition are preferred by the composer simply because they reduce the need to mark triplet figures throughout the song, the most recent edition is the most approachable by both the singer and pianist.<sup>141</sup>

Music Example 39: *Dove Sta Amore...*, “Maybe,” mm. 1-3

*John Musto: Dove Sta Amore...* ©1998

Moderately (♩ = 82)

The image shows a musical score for the first three measures of the piece "Maybe" from the song "Dove Sta Amore...". The score is written for voice and piano. The voice part is on a single treble clef staff, and the piano accompaniment is on a single bass clef staff. The time signature is 4/4. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The tempo is marked "Moderately" with a quarter note equal to 82 beats per minute. The dynamics are marked "mf". The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, slurs, and phrasing slurs. The first measure starts with a quarter rest followed by a quarter note, then a half note, and a quarter note. The second measure consists of a half note and a quarter note. The third measure consists of a half note and a quarter note. The piano accompaniment consists of a series of chords and single notes.

The motivic material of rising whole-step and minor third movement is found in mm. 1-4 and repeats throughout the short song. The vocal line continues this movement

<sup>141</sup> John Musto, interview with Stephanie R. Thorpe, September 18, 2008, New York City.

with its entrance in m. 6 but quickly finds its own direction with a descending major sixth followed by an ascending minor sixth and a descending minor second.

Music Example 40: *Dove Sta Amore...*, “Maybe,” mm. 1-5  
John Musto: *Collected Songs* ©2008

Moderately (♩ = 82)

The ending descending minor second/half-step begins a pattern that continues throughout the song. A minor second is present at some point in the final three notes of almost every vocal phrase and is often continued by and echoed in the accompaniment line. This pattern occurs twice in m. 15, and Musto prefers that the singer observe a dramatic pause between the repeated ‘maybe’ (see Music Example 41).<sup>142</sup>

The pattern of rising thirds that appears throughout the cycle begins in m. 8 in the vocal line. This pattern reappears in the accompaniment line in m. 12, and is again seen in the vocal line in m. 16. Rising diminished thirds are also present in Section B.

<sup>142</sup> John Musto, coaching with Stephanie R. Thorpe, September 18, 2008, New York City.

Music Example 41: *Dove Sta Amore...*, “Maybe,” mm. 15-17  
 John Musto: *Collected Songs* ©2008

Section B begins in m. 23 and is a semi-recitative coda to the song. The vocal line entrance on D<sup>4</sup> in m. 23 is marked *colla voce* with a *rubato* marking as well over a sustained E minor ninth chord. When the accompaniment returns in m. 24, the rhythmic structure returns to *a tempo*. The new edition provides editorial markings only in the first and last phrases of the section, while mm. 27-29 in the first edition are over-edited in terms of the aforementioned markings.

Musto asks that the singer observe a short period of silence before the text, “I will say yes,” in m. 28.<sup>143</sup> The phrase, “I will say yes,” must crescendo into the final ‘maybe,’ which returns to the Section A. The woman utters her last ‘maybe’ with a descending minor second followed by a descending minor third which is immediately echoed in the accompaniment line a perfect fourth below the vocal line, concluding the piece with an ambiguous E $\flat$ -E $\flat$ -G $\sharp$ -B $\flat$  cluster chord (see Music Example 42).

<sup>143</sup> John Musto, coaching with Stephanie R. Thorpe, September 18, 2008, New York City.

Music Example 42: *Dove Sta Amore...*, “Maybe,” mm. 29-32  
John Musto: *Collected Songs* ©2008

The image shows a musical score for the piece "Maybe" from the song "Dove Sta Amore...". It consists of three staves: a vocal line and two piano accompaniment staves. The vocal line starts at measure 29 with the lyrics "yes, \_\_\_\_\_" and "May - be. \_\_\_\_\_". The piano accompaniment features a complex rhythmic pattern with many triplets. Dynamics include *a tempo*, *mf*, *p*, and *mp*. The score is written in a key with one sharp (F#) and a common time signature.

“Sea Chest”

The second song in *Dove Sta Amore...* comes in the form of Carl Sandburg’s poem, “Sea Chest.” Attracted to the poem due to a “chance comment made by a friend that relationships are seldom a fifty-fifty proposition.”<sup>144</sup> Simple to the point of difficulty, “Sea Chest” emulates the unmovable and unchangeable qualities of the relationship between the sailor and his wife. The vocal line possesses a folk-like quality allowing for greater textual emphasis. Amy Burton calls the setting “a simple sea shanty...”<sup>145</sup> The composer elaborates, calling the song a “sea shanty with three verses and a built-up pattern just like a folk song.”<sup>146</sup>

Sandburg’s poem is not three verses long. What Musto does to create the sense of length necessary for the folk-like impression is “stack” the poem line by line. The first line is repeated three times until finally adding on the second line of the poem to

<sup>144</sup> Steven Blier, program notes for *Dove Sta Amore...*, New York Festival of Song, October 2, 1996: Weill Recital Hall.

<sup>145</sup> Amy Burton, program notes for *John Musto: Dove Sta Amore... for Soprano and Orchestra*, Peer Music Classical (New York, New York: 1996), ii.

<sup>146</sup> John Musto, interview with Stephanie R. Thorpe, September 16, 2008, New York City.

complete the first verse. The second verse consists of the third line of the poem repeated twice, with liberties taken, until adding the fourth line of the poem to complete the second verse. The third verse is a continuous recitation of the poem in its entirety.

“Sea Chest” is an allegoric representation of the measure of love. The woman’s love is directed to the man, the man’s love is directed to the sea. The structure of this idea is linear, two separate people who end in union as the couple make an “old sea chest for their / belongings / together.”<sup>147</sup> The poem’s last words, “belongings / together,” while metrically equivalent, do not provide resolution to the song. Although this line implies compromise between the couple, it is unknown if the couple’s love is lost at sea or simultaneously convergent. What they made together continues to exist.<sup>148</sup>

In  $\frac{3}{8}$  meter, the accompaniment begins with a simple two-note rocking pattern on beats two and three, providing the illusion of a misplaced downbeat. Blier defines this effect as a “musical metaphor for the stability and sadness of their love...”<sup>149</sup> Musto insists that the misplaced downbeat effect “doesn’t mean anything at all.”<sup>150</sup> He simply sees a horizon stretching infinitely with a single boat rocking in the harbor.<sup>151</sup>

The two-note pattern is repeated and extended throughout the song with a *con pedale* marking, altered from the previous *molto pedale* editorial marking. Musto prefers the performers to interpret this marking with a flutter pedal effect. The *con pedale* marking

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<sup>147</sup> John Musto, interview with Stephanie R. Thorpe, September 16, 2008, New York City.

<sup>148</sup> M.V. Elder, unpublished data.

<sup>149</sup> Steven Blier, program notes for *Dove Sta Amore...*, New York Festival of Song, October 2, 1996: Weill Recital Hall.

<sup>150</sup> John Musto, interview with Stephanie R. Thorpe, September 16, 2008, New York City.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*

carries through until the last vocal phrase, creating a musical effect of a raucous encounter at sea. Musto adamantly wants the song sung with no emotion. He elaborates, “Folk singers sing without affect at all.”<sup>152</sup> He wishes the singer to interpret the song as a narrator looking at a photograph.<sup>153</sup>

Revisions between editions are quickly seen within the first measures. The first edition, published in 1998, opens with two measures of the repetitive rocking rhythm before the vocal line enters (see Music Example 43). The newest edition, published in 2008, resembles the orchestral version, which features an open fifth drone between G<sup>3</sup> and D<sup>4</sup> for two measures with a fermata over m. 2. The repetitive rocking motion between the aforementioned notes enters in m. 3 with the vocal line entering in measure six. Altogether, the new edition includes three extra measures as opposed to the first edition. Only one extra measure of the introductory rocking ostinato is included in the new edition (see Music Example 44).

Music Example 43: *Dove Sta Amore...*, “Sea Chest,” mm. 1-5

John Musto: *Dove Sta Amore...* ©1998

Gently rocking (♩. = 40)

The musical score consists of two staves. The top staff is the vocal line, written in treble clef with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and a 3/8 time signature. It begins with two measures of rest, followed by a vocal line starting in measure 3. The lyrics "There was a wo - man" are written below the notes. The dynamic marking *mp* is placed above the first note of the vocal line. The bottom staff is the piano accompaniment, written in grand staff (treble and bass clefs) with the same key signature and time signature. It features a repetitive rocking rhythm of eighth notes, starting in measure 3. The dynamic marking *p* is placed above the first note, and the tempo marking *molto* is written below the staff.

<sup>152</sup> John Musto, interview with Stephanie R. Thorpe, September 16, 2008, New York City.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

Music Example 44: *Dove Sta Amore...*, “Sea Chest,” mm. 1-7  
John Musto: *Collected Songs* ©2008

Gently rocking ( $\downarrow = 42$ )

There was a

*con Sord.*

The overall range of the piece is a little over an octave and a half, but the tessitura of the song lies mainly in the middle range of the soprano voice. “Sea Chest” is the second song out of the fourteen compositions discussed in this document that features a key signature. “Triolet” is the only other piece discussed that contains a key signature.

In the key of G minor, this folk-like melody carries with it a sadness that is heard musically and poetically. The first verse, containing the repeated line, “THERE was a woman loved a man / as the man loved the sea,” continues the rocking ostinato motion from the opening measures.<sup>154</sup> The opening perfect fourth of  $D^4$  to  $G^4$  in the vocal line in mm. 6-7 is an inversion of the rocking  $G^3$  to  $D^4$ .

The folk-like texture is quickly apparent in the vocal line with its repetitive melodic and rhythmic motion. Following the initial perfect fourth, the vocal line moves in scalar motion until “loved,” after which the vocal line quickly descends to the lower end of the female register only to return to the static sadness of G minor. The sixteenth note rhythmic pattern of “loved” returns every time the word returns (see Music Example 45).

<sup>154</sup> Carl Sandburg, “Sea Chest,” *John Musto: Collected Songs* (New York: Peer Music Classical, 2008), 90.

Music Example 45: *Dove Sta Amore...*, “Sea Chest,” mm. 8-21  
*John Musto: Collected Songs* ©2008

8  
 wo - man loved a man, there was a wo - man loved a

15  
 man, there was a wo - man loved a man as the man loved the

The text from the first five measures of the vocal line is reiterated in m. 11 a minor third higher than the first entrance. While the melody is not the same, the rhythmic pattern is quite similar. The sixteenth note rhythmic pattern on the text, “loved,” returns in m. 14. A descending major third like the first entrance, the text also includes the first use of an accidental  $E\flat^5$ . The third recitation of the text begins in mm. 16 and 17, which adds the final line of the opening verse, “...as the man loved the sea.”<sup>155</sup> This repetition uses the opening interval one octave higher, which quickly descends through a melodic obstacle course to rest back on the constant of G minor.

<sup>155</sup> Carl Sandburg, “Sea Chest,” *John Musto: Collected Songs* (New York: Peer Music Classical, 2008), 90-91.



Section A begins in m. 22 with an addition to the repetitive accompaniment line in the form of a four-measure accidental-filled interlude. The interlude moves mainly in half-step motion with *acciaccatura* embellishments until the fourth measure, which contains descending whole-tone eighth notes. The second verse begins in m. 26. This verse contains the second phrase of the poem, “Her thoughts of him were the same / as his thoughts of the sea.”<sup>156</sup> The opening vocal line of the second verse is an exact repetition of the first four measures of the vocal line of the first verse.

Increasingly larger interludes, similar to the first interlude of m. 22, separate the vocal line of the second verse. The rhythmic pattern becomes progressively more syncopated in direct reference to the increased length of the interludes. The accompaniment line diverts from its rocking pattern for the first time in mm. 37-39 (see Music Example 46). In mm. 39-43, the vocal line is an approximate mimic of the last vocal phrase of the first verse. The musical material of mm 42-46 is an exact repetition of mm. 22-25 with the addition of one extra eighth note in m. 46 (see Music Example 47).

The third and final verse begins in m. 46 and is the first time the listener hears the poem in its entirety. Musto asks the singer to interpret this last verse with a “whispering, mysterious texture.”<sup>157</sup> In mm. 46-49, the vocal line flows in a scalar fashion similar to the openings of the first and second verses with a continuation of the sixteenth note pattern on the word, “loved.” Sandburg’s text, “Her thoughts of him were the same as his thoughts of the sea,” causes a departure from the previously established melodic and

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<sup>156</sup> Carl Sandburg, “Sea Chest,” *John Musto: Collected Songs* (New York: Peer Music Classical, 2008), 91.

<sup>157</sup> John Musto, coaching with Stephanie R. Thorpe, September 18, 2008, New York City.

rhythmic patterns.<sup>158</sup> The first four notes of the line mimic the first four notes of the same text found in verse two. After the beginning four notes, the vocal line ascends and descends in an arpeggiated pattern that reaches a climax on the word, “same,” on G<sup>5</sup>.

Music Example 46: *Dove Sta Amore...*, “Sea Chest,” mm. 35-40  
*John Musto: Collected Songs* ©2008

35  
 same, were the same as his

41  
 thoughts of the sea. There was a

The last line of the poem, “They made an old sea chest for their / belongings / together,” departs from previously established patterns. Highly syncopated, the first part of the line marks the first time the dynamic texture of the song is *forte* (see Music Example 48). Throughout the song, the dynamic marking is *mezzo piano*, with the exception of these three measures.

<sup>158</sup> Carl Sandburg, “Sea Chest,” *John Musto: Collected Songs* (New York: Peer Music Classical, 2008), 91.

Music Example 47: *Dove Sta Amore...*, “Sea Chest,” mm. 48-59  
John Musto: *Collected Songs* ©2008

The image shows a musical score for the song "Sea Chest" by John Musto, covering measures 48 to 59. The score is written in a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a common time signature (C). It consists of two systems of music. The first system, starting at measure 48, features a vocal line in the upper staff and a piano accompaniment in the lower staff. The vocal line has lyrics: "wo - man loved — a man as the man loved the sea. Her thoughts of". The piano accompaniment includes a *cant.* marking. The second system, starting at measure 54, continues the vocal line with lyrics: "him were the same as his thoughts of the sea. They". The piano accompaniment includes a *cresc.* marking. The score uses standard musical notation, including treble and bass clefs, stems, beams, and various note values.

Musto breaks the line after “sea chest,” requiring the singer to breathe before returning to a *mezzo piano* dynamic marking and the scalar movement found in the first two verses of the song. The latter half of the line is unaccompanied until the rocking ostinato reappears in m. 65. A final interlude, similar to the opening interlude of verse one, sounds from mm. 66-71. The new edition includes an additional Section C that begins in m. 63, and also contains an extra two measures in which the  $G^4$ - $D^5$  chord is sustained with a gradual *decrescendo* into the marking, *niente* [nothing] (see Music Example 48).

Music Example 48: *Dove Sta Amore...*, “Sea Chest,” mm. 60-74  
 John Musto: *Collected Songs* ©2008

The musical score for "Sea Chest" consists of two systems. The first system (measures 60-74) features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line begins with the lyrics "made an old sea chest for their be-long-ings to-geth-er." and includes performance directions: *poco f*, *mp*, *rubato*, and *a tempo*. A square box containing the letter 'C' is positioned above the vocal line. The piano accompaniment includes *poco f*, *colla voce*, and *ppp*. The second system (measures 67-74) shows the continuation of the piano accompaniment, ending with the instruction *niente*.

“The Hangman at Home”

Carl Sandburg’s darkly humorous poem, “The Hangman at Home,” is the inspiration for the third song of *Dove Sta Amore...*<sup>159</sup> Steven Blier refers to Sandburg’s poem as “the purest example of gallows humor...”<sup>160</sup> He defines the song as a “typical Musto wrong-note rag.”<sup>161</sup> During our phone interview, Blier further characterized the song as having

<sup>159</sup> Carol Kimball, *Song: A Guide to Art Song Style and Literature*, rev. ed. (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard Corporation, 2006), 338.

<sup>160</sup> Steven Blier, program notes for *Dove Sta Amore...*, New York Festival of Song, October 2, 1996: Weill Recital Hall.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*

“rag-like patterns, including the tempo and style of ragtime. “The Hangman at Home” is a “rag that has gone seriously off the rails.”<sup>162</sup>

Musto considers “The Hangman at Home” to be the most difficult song of the cycle. According to the composer, the song must sound improvised.<sup>163</sup> Burton also agrees with the composer on the difficulty of “The Hangman at Home.” She finds that there are “always notes to slip in” with each performance.<sup>164</sup> The composer wants the performer to act as a “narrator telling a story, [to] sell the poem.”<sup>165</sup> The motivation to “sell the poem” must come from the poem itself. “[The poem] is a musical analog for what is being said.”<sup>166</sup>

Sandburg’s “The Hangman at Home” involves a series of questions. The questions range from humorous to introspective. Has the hangman’s occupation become part of his soul? Is it what he talks about at home, to friends, to family? Does his occupation prevent him from playing with his children? Can he look directly at a baby, the symbol of new life, and not think about his consistent ending of life?<sup>167</sup> The poem is ambiguous, never providing a clear answer.

Beginning with everyday descriptions; family meals and daily discussions, the poem shifts to lyrical similes, “Or does his face light up like a / Bonfire of joy?”<sup>168</sup> Sandburg

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<sup>162</sup> Steven Blier, telephone interview with Stephanie R. Thorpe, September 21, 2008.

<sup>163</sup> John Musto, interview with Stephanie R. Thorpe, September 16, 2008, New York City.

<sup>164</sup> Amy Burton, interview with Stephanie R. Thorpe, September 15, 2008, New York City.

<sup>165</sup> John Musto, interview with Stephanie R. Thorpe, September 16, 2008, New York City.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid.

<sup>167</sup> M.V. Elder, unpublished data.

<sup>168</sup> Carl Sandburg, “The Hangman at Home,” *John Musto: Collected Songs* (New York: Peer Music Classical: 2008), 97.

provides literary tropes; the moon is personified with a face, and the “moon-gleams mix” with the beauty of “baby ears and baby hair.”<sup>169</sup> After this crescendo of imagery, the poem falls back into a dry voice to conclude, “It must be easy for him. / Anything is easy for a hangman / I guess,” implying that the answer can only be speculated.<sup>170</sup>

The opening two accompaniment measures are jazz-influenced in the quartal versus triple ascending arpeggio that descends mainly in whole-step fashion. This introduction is reminiscent of the piano patterns of Musto’s earlier song, “Recuerdo.”<sup>171</sup> The composer includes two sixteenth grace notes at the beginning of m. 2 in the new edition. Other changes between editions consist of a slightly faster tempo marking from ( $\text{♩} = 90$ ) to ( $\text{♩} = 92$ ), and the inclusion of detailed tempi markings throughout the song. Comparatively, the new edition includes twenty new or changed tempi markings from the first edition. *Rubato* is used throughout in the new edition, further adding to the song’s improvisatory atmosphere (see Music Examples 49 & 50).

The accompaniment line often supports the vocal line, frequently providing the singer’s note directly before or on the singer’s entrance. The opening seventeen measures are recitative-like in nature. In this opening section, the listener hears the general theme of the poem, which asks the question, “WHAT does the hangman think

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<sup>169</sup> Carl Sandburg, “The Hangman at Home,” *John Musto: Collected Songs* (New York: Peer Music Classical: 2008), 98.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid.

<sup>171</sup> Carol Kimball, *Song: A Guide to Art Song Style and Literature*, rev. ed. (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard Corporation, 2006), 338.

about / when he goes home at night from work?”<sup>172</sup> The poem continues in the third person, further supporting Musto’s desire that the performer act as a narrator.

Music Example 49: *Dove Sta Amore...*, “The Hangman at Home,” mm. 1-3  
*John Musto: Dove Sta Amore...* ©1998

Moderately (♩ = 90)

What does the

Music Example 50: *Dove Sta Amore...*, “The Hangman at Home,” mm. 1-3  
*John Musto: Collected Songs* ©2008

Moderately (♩ = 92)

What does the

The first ten measures are highly speech-like in rhythmic and melodic texture. With the exception of the vocal range, which spans over an octave, the phrase patterns are similar to normal speech. A duple versus triple rhythmic texture between the accompaniment and vocal lines begins in m. 10. The vocal line of mm. 15-17 becomes

<sup>172</sup> Carl Sandburg, “The Hangman at Home,” *Dove Sta Amore...* Peer Music Classical (New York, New York, 1998), ii.

more lyrical over the “rapid-fire filigree” in the accompaniment (see Music Example 51).<sup>173</sup> This textural contrast is a typical Musto mannerism, which he employs to highlight the vocal line.

Music Example 51: *Dove Sta Amore...*, “The Hangman at Home,” mm. 12-18  
*John Musto: Collected Songs* ©2008

The musical score is presented in three systems, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major/D minor) and the time signature is 3/8.

- System 1 (mm. 12-14):** The vocal line begins with a rest in m. 12, followed by the lyrics "do they ask Him if it was a" in m. 13. The tempo markings are *poco rit.* and *meno mosso*. The piano accompaniment features a rapid, filigree-like pattern of eighth notes in the right hand, with triplets and a *loco* section in m. 13. The dynamic is *mf*.
- System 2 (mm. 15-16):** The vocal line continues with "good day's work And ev- 'ry-thing went". The tempo marking is *ritornando*. The piano accompaniment continues with the filigree pattern, including a section marked *poco f*.
- System 3 (mm. 17-18):** The vocal line concludes with "well or do they Stay". The tempo marking is **A** *Tempo I*. The piano accompaniment features a more rhythmic pattern with triplets and a dynamic of *p*. A *(con. loco)* marking is present at the bottom of the piano part.

<sup>173</sup> Steven Blier, program notes for *Dove Sta Amore...*, New York Festival of Song, October 2, 1996: Weill Recital Hall.



Section A begins in m. 17 in both editions, with a significantly faster tempo shift in the first edition and a return to Tempo I in the new edition. The triple versus duple rhythmic texture, mainly between the treble, lower treble, and bass accompaniment, continues in mm. 17-25. The vocal line continues its speech-like texture, contrasting with the accompaniment, which rarely supports the voice in this section (see Music Example 52).

Music Example 52: *Dove Sta Amore...*, “The Hangman at Home,” mm. 19-26  
*John Musto: Collected Songs* ©2008

29  
*mf* *poco a poco accel.*  
 off — some — top - ics — — — — — and talk a - bout The weath - er,

22  
 base - ball, pol-i-tics And the com-ic strips in the

25  
 pa - pers — — — — — And the mov - ies? — — — — —  
*loco*

The transition to Section B begins in m. 30, which is a reiteration of mm. 1-2 an octave and one half-step higher. According to the score, Section B technically begins in m. 33. One easily hears the new section begin in the latter half of m. 32. Section B is comprised in mm. 31-45.

During Section B, the performers must feel a sensation of “pushing and pulling and changing.”<sup>174</sup> This section continues the difficulty level of Section A while declaiming the playful text. Use of contrary motion between the accompaniment and vocal lines is prevalent throughout the section while the accompaniment still supports the vocal line. Musto extends the vocal line on the text, “Or does his face light up like a / Bonfire of joy...,” while continuing the rapid movement of the accompaniment underneath (see Music Example 53).<sup>175</sup> As seen previously, Musto uses contrary motion as a compositional pattern to highlight the text.

Section C begins in m. 46 with the declamation, “It’s a good and dandy world we live / In” (see Music Example 53).<sup>176</sup> The editorial markings of *rubato* followed by *meno mosso* ( $\text{♩} = 78$ ) are found only in the newer edition. Contrary motion between the vocal and accompaniment lines returns from mm. 48-54. A double eighth-note figure from mm. 54-55 repeats three times as the text asks the question, “the hangman – / How does he act then?”<sup>177</sup> The final three measures continue in contrary motion between the vocal

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<sup>174</sup> John Musto, coaching with Stephanie R. Thorpe, September 18, 2008, New York City.

<sup>175</sup> Carl Sandburg, “The Hangman at Home,” *John Musto: Collected Songs* (New York: Peer Music Classical, 2008), 97.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*, 98.

and accompaniment lines, ending both together, with an E<sup>b</sup>-G<sup>4</sup> chord in the accompaniment and a G<sup>4</sup> in the vocal line (see Music Example 54).

Music Example 53: *Dove Sta Amore...*, "The Hangman at Home," mm. 42-47  
John Musto: *Collected Songs* ©2008

*meno mosso* *accel.*

42 face light up like a Bon - fire of

45 joy and does he say: It's a good and dan-dy world we live in. And if a

*colla voce* *a tempo I* *rubato*

*f* *colla voce*

Music Example 54: *Dove Sta Amore...*, “The Hangman at Home,” mm. 53-60  
 John Musto: *Collected Songs* ©2008

The musical score is presented in three systems, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The first system (measures 53-54) begins with the tempo marking *stretto* and the time signature 3/4. The vocal line starts with the lyrics "Ba - by ears and ba - by hair - the". The piano accompaniment features triplets and a glissando. The second system (measures 55-56) continues the lyrics: "hang-man - How does he act then? It must be eas - y For him." The piano accompaniment includes a *gliss.* and a *loco* section. The third system (measures 57-60) is marked *A tempo I* and contains the lyrics: "An - y - thing is eas - y for a hang - man. I - guess." The piano accompaniment includes a *p* dynamic marking.

“How Many Little Children Sleep”

The fourth song of the *Dove Sta Amore...* cycle, “How Many Little Children Sleep,” features text by James Agee. While the previous song, “The Hangman at Home,” playfully suggests a strange home-life, Agee’s poem illustrates the reality of a parent’s

sense of helplessness when raising a child. Always hopeful their child will grow up to be healthy and happy, a parent's worst nightmare is their child becoming a sociopathic monster.

John Musto learned that he and his wife, Amy, were expecting their first child prior to the composition of this piece. His philosophy on his impending fatherhood, "who will be a hangman, and who will be hanged," is demonstrated throughout this wistful song.<sup>178</sup> Musto choice to use the first five notes of "Rock-a-Bye, Baby," is an intentional one. In his opinion, the text for "Rock-a-Bye, Baby," is "hideous."<sup>179</sup> He asks that the song be interpreted "in the tradition of a lullaby."<sup>180</sup> His ideal interpretation for "How Many Little Children Sleep" is a resigned attitude.

The more philosophical and detached you are, the more you get out of a piece. The tone [of the piece] is resigned. The more stoic a singer is, the more effective a singer will be. Sing it very beautifully, but not involved.<sup>181</sup>

James Agee, 1909-1955, is a poet, author, and screenwriter, who is almost as well known for his hard and fast living as for his literary works. The loss of his father at the tender age of six and the subsequent abandonment by his mother who sent him off to boarding school highly influenced Agee's writing. Agee's writings show his constant search of the ideal family and home life. Famous for poems "Sure on this shining night" and "Knoxville: Summer of 1915," both set by Samuel Barber, "How many little children sleep" illustrates the angst mixed with hopefulness that accompanies raising children.

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<sup>178</sup> Steven Blier, program notes for *Dove Sta Amore...*, New York Festival of Song, October 2, 1996: Weill Recital Hall.

<sup>179</sup> John Musto, interview with Stephanie R. Thorpe, September 16, 2008, New York City.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid.

“How Many Little Children Sleep” continues the line of questioning established by “The Hangman at Home.” While “The Hangman at Home” directs the questioning toward a man who kills people for a living, “How Many Little Children Sleep” questions the future of children who will inevitably move from the innocent passivity of sleep to the adult world of pain and death.

In this poem, love is not redemptive for the children or their families. The parents who watch their children swear, “by all we love,” that loss of innocence and death will not seize their children.<sup>182</sup> The near certainty of loss in this poem is terrifying. The final stanza is nearly identical to the preceding line. The first line of text, “by all he loves, by all he knows,” changes to “by all he knows, by all he loves.”<sup>183</sup> The difference is subtle; the earlier line conveys a sense of searching. Agee’s final lines are casting about for hope and finding none.<sup>184</sup>

Set in a lilting meter of  $\frac{6}{8}$ , the accompaniment wastes no time in establishing the lullaby-texture of the song. In the first two measures, the bass-dominant accompaniment with a treble  $D^4$  drone launches an accompanimental pattern that is found throughout much of the piece. The vocal line enters in m. 3, in which the first five notes of “Rock-a-Bye, Baby” accompanies the text, “How many little...”<sup>185</sup> The “Rock-a-Bye, Baby” theme disappears in mm. 4-6 to be replaced by perfect intervals and whole-step motion in the opening line of text (see Music Example 55).

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<sup>182</sup> James Agee, “How Many Little Children Sleep,” *John Musto: Collected Songs* (New York: Peer Music Classical, 2008), 100.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*, 101.

<sup>184</sup> M.V. Elder, unpublished data.

<sup>185</sup> James Agee, “How Many Little Children Sleep,” *John Musto: Collected Songs* (New York: Peer Music Classical, 2008), 99.

Music Example 55: *Dove Sta Amore...*, “How Many Little Children Sleep,” mm. 1-8  
*John Musto: Collected Songs* ©2008

Simply, quietly (♩ = 44)

The musical score consists of two systems. The first system (measures 1-4) features a vocal line in treble clef and a piano accompaniment in bass clef. The tempo is marked 'Simply, quietly' with a quarter note equal to 44 beats. The dynamics are 'mp' for the vocal line and 'p' for the piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: 'How man-y lit - tle child - ren sleep To'. The second system (measures 5-8) continues the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: 'wake, like you, on - ly to weep: How man - y oth - ers'. The piano accompaniment in the second system includes a '7' chord marking in the bass line.

The aforementioned accompaniment pattern continues until the latter half of m. 7, in which the accompaniment line reinforces the vocal line through harmonies oriented around the perfect fourth. Beginning in m. 7, Musto generates a pattern in which the accompaniment line mimics the vocal line (see Music Example 55). Directly after the line, “Only to weep,” the accompaniment approximates the intervals of the vocal line’s first four notes a perfect fifth higher and three notes later (see Music Example 56). This pattern continues until m. 13 with the return of the “Rock-a-Bye, Baby” theme and the beginning of Section A.

The accompaniment of mm. 14 and 15 under the text, “weep and kill,” is a close approximation of the opening accompaniment fused with the opening vocal line. The accompaniment at m. 16 begins a musical sequence that ascends until the entrance of the voice at the end of the measure.

Music Example 56: *Dove Sta Amore...*, “How Many Little Children Sleep,” mm. 9-12  
 John Musto: *Collected Songs* ©2008

9  
 play who will Like you, and all men,

Instead of a steady drone as seen in the opening section, Musto disrupts a  $G^4$  drone with an *acciaccatura*  $G^5$  that occurs slightly before beats three and six in mm. 17-19 (see Music Example 57). In reverse of the pattern discovered in mm. 7-12 in which the accompaniment line imitated the vocal line, the vocal line now imitates the accompaniment line beginning in m. 18. This pattern continues until m. 21.

Music Example 57: *Dove Sta Amore...*, “How Many Little Children Sleep,” mm. 13-17  
 John Musto: *Collected Songs* ©2008

13 *mp* **A**  
 weep and kill. And man - y par - ents

A return of the *acciaccatura* occurs in m. 24, with a  $D^5$  *acciaccatura* leading to a  $C^5$ - $B^4$  lilt over a descending bass line and a  $D^4$  drone (see Music Example 58). This pattern continues for two measures, leading into a return of the “Rock-a-Bye, Baby”



theme in m. 26, including the D<sup>5</sup> *acciaccatura* and the D<sup>4</sup> drone. Returning in m. 29, the vocal line continues the forward motion of the song and the drone disappears after m. 30.

Music Example 58: *Dove Sta Amore...*, “How Many Little Children Sleep,” mm. 22-25  
John Musto: *Collected Songs* ©2008

22  
all we know, it never shall befall them so.

Section B is technically marked at the beginning of m. 30, but a new section is easily heard in m. 26 with the return of the “Rock-a-Bye, Baby” theme. This theme leads directly into the vocal line. The vocal line takes one measure to wind into a pattern of descending fifths in which the first note of the fifth ascends one half-step to descend another perfect fifth.

Section C technically starts in m. 40, although the section unofficially begins in m. 35 with the text, “Soon they must weep; / Soon they shall kill.” Returning to the opening pattern of imitating the vocal line directly after accompaniment’s entrance beginning in m. 35, the pattern reverses itself in m. 40 to provide the vocal line’s pitches directly before its entrance. The “Rock-a-Bye, Baby” theme returns in mm. 41-42. The same vocal pattern seen in m. 30 reoccurs in m. 44 a perfect fourth higher than its initial entrance (see Music Example 59).

Music Example 59: *Dove Sta Amore...*, “How Many Little Children Sleep,” mm. 42-45  
John Musto: *Collected Songs* ©2008

42 *mf cresc.*  
But in each one the

The final section, unofficially beginning in m. 50, presents a subdued and resigned vocal line with the text, “Soon they will weep; / Soon they will kill.” The dynamic marking *piano* is sustained until m. 54 in which the dynamic marking *mezzo-piano* accompanies the text, “No one wills it.” The editorial markings place Section D in m. 56.

The previously discussed accompaniment pattern of providing the vocal line’s pitches before its entrance or imitating the vocal line directly after its entrance is seen in m. 56-59. This pattern reverses itself from measure to measure beginning with providing the vocal line’s pitches directly before its entrance in m. 56, to imitating the vocal line directly after its entrance in m. 57. The “Rock-a-Bye, Baby” theme returns in m. 60 as the vocal line is finishing its last line of text, “But all will.” A quasi-coda is featured in mm. 61-62, including thematic material from both Sections B and C. The postlude of mm. 63-65 is a direct quote of the opening two measures until the final  $G^1$ - $B^2$ - $D^4$  major chord in m. 65 (see Music Example 60).

Music Example 60: *Dove Sta Amore...*, “How Many Little Children Sleep,” mm. 54-65  
John Musto: *Collected Songs* ©2008

The musical score consists of three systems. The first system (measures 54-57) features a vocal line starting with a *mp* dynamic and a piano accompaniment. A box labeled 'D' is placed above the vocal line in measure 55. The lyrics are: "No one wills it, but all, all, all." The second system (measures 58-61) continues the vocal line with dynamics *pp*, *rubato*, and *a tempo*. The lyrics are: "but all will." The piano accompaniment in this system includes a *p* dynamic. The third system (measures 62-65) shows the final vocal notes and piano accompaniment, with a *pp* dynamic. The score concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

“Dove sta amore”

The fifth and final entry of *Dove Sta Amore...* is Lawrence Ferlinghetti’s poem and title song, “Dove sta amore.” Symmetrical in form, the piece is the longest in the cycle.

Once again, the poetry is the deciding factor in Musto’s compositional process.

Ferlinghetti, a San Francisco Beat poet, uses double meanings in both English and Italian

throughout. “Wordplay” is a term that, when interviewed, John Musto, Amy Burton, and Steven Blier each used to describe “Dove sta amore.” Amy Burton writes that Ferlinghetti “riffs on the title phrase, mining its potential as an answer to its own question and the double meaning of “dove”...”<sup>186</sup> In Italian, “dove sta amore” translates to “where is love.” The poem later uses “dove” to mean ‘bird’, furthering the sense of wordplay.

Beat poetry began during the 1940’s in both New York City and on the West Coast. In the 1950’s, San Francisco became the heart of the movement. Jack Kerouac is thought to have coined the term “Beat generation,” describing the “down-and-out” status of himself and his peers.<sup>187</sup> Poets associated with the Beat generation are Allen Ginsberg, Gary Snyder, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, and Gregory Corso. The goals of these poets were to question mainstream politics, culture, changing consciousness, and to defy conventional writing styles.<sup>188</sup> Hallucinogenic drugs were often part of the path to higher consciousness as well as meditation and Eastern religion.<sup>189</sup>

The simple language of Ferlinghetti’s “Dove Sta Amore” is one of the poem’s strengths. This strength also distracts from the interesting sense of meter in the poem.

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<sup>186</sup> Amy Burton, program notes for *John Musto: Dove Sta Amore... for Soprano and Orchestra*, Peer Music Classical (New York, New York: 1996), ii.

<sup>187</sup> *The Academy of American Poets, Inc.*, “A Brief Guide to the Beat Poets” <http://www.poets.org/viewmedia.php/prmMID/5646> (Accessed February 20, 2009).

<sup>188</sup> Ibid.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid.

Each line of the poem contains three stressed syllables. The music comes from the balance between iambic or trochaic lines and lines consisting mostly of spondees.<sup>190,191,192</sup>

The rhythmic opening line, “Dove sta amore,” is comprised of three trochees. This is balanced by the three stressed syllables in the next line: “where lies love,” a pattern that is mirrored in the contrast between “in lyrical delight” and “the ring dove love.”<sup>193</sup>

In the four lines ending with “song,” the meter is defined as a spondee followed by a trochee, but more important is the effect created by this measure. Instead of ending on a stressed syllable, these lines end in the unstressed word “song.” This creates a gentle, lilting inflection. The pattern of short, stressed syllables juxtaposed with iambic or trochaic lines creates a poem reminiscent of a chant. It also provides the effect of a question and answer, appropriate to the idea of searching for love.

Perhaps the most noticeable aspect of Ferlinghetti’s poem is its repetition. The word “love,” appears nine times and its Italian counterpart, “amore,” appears four times throughout the course of the poem. Repetition of the word, “love,” is the backbone of the poem and the supporting language upon which it expands and builds.

Special emphasis is placed on the act of speaking, communicating, and playing with words. The first four lines alternate between English and Italian, calling attention to the universality of the quest for love. The fifth line, “the ring dove love” is simple nearly to

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<sup>190</sup> *Encarta World English Dictionary*, “iamb” – a unit or rhythm in poetry, consisting of one short or unstressed syllable or group followed by one long or stressed syllable, (Accessed February 20, 2009).

<sup>191</sup> *Encarta World English Dictionary*, “trochee” – a metrical foot that consists of one stressed syllable followed by an unstressed syllable, (Accessed February 20, 2009).

<sup>192</sup> *Encarta World English Dictionary*, “spondee” – a unit of rhythm in poetry (foot), consisting of two long or stressed syllables, (Accessed February 20, 2009).

<sup>193</sup> Lawrence Ferlinghetti, “Dove sta amore,” *John Musto: Collected Songs* (New York: Peer Music Classical, 2008), 103.

the point of childishness.<sup>194</sup> The line plays on the difference between the English “dove” and Italian “dove,” meaning “here.” It is a playful list of things associated with love: doves, rings, songs, etc.

The idea of speaking and communication is also emphasized by the question and answer nature of the poem, as well as the association with love as a song and the directive to “hear” it, as opposed to the more conventional use of visual imagery. In a sense, the poem answers its own question through music. It asks, “Where lies love?,” and answers, “Here lies love.”<sup>195</sup> The idea of love, as expressed in the text, is painful or sweet and is heard in the darkness or in the distance. The song, the sound, the act of speaking, is where love lies.<sup>196</sup>

Blier defines this song as a “playful cantata... --several brief sections precede a longer, more sustained central section, and then return in reverse order.”<sup>197</sup> In our telephone interview, he elaborated that “Dove sta amore” is “a little solo cantata in retrograde ABCBA, very playful, almost like it’s sung by Cupid. [If you] act like it’s about you and another person, it becomes cloying.”<sup>198</sup>

Both Musto and Burton consider the song “aria-like” in form. Burton states that “Dove sta amore” is a “short poem that is a little snippet of da Ponte, (Mozart’s most

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<sup>194</sup> Lawrence Ferlinghetti, “Dove sta amore,” *John Musto: Collected Songs* (New York: Peer Music Classical, 2008), 105.

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid*, 103-114.

<sup>196</sup> M.V. Elder, unpublished data.

<sup>197</sup> Steven Blier, program notes for *Dove Sta Amore...*, New York Festival of Song, October 2, 1996: Weill Recital Hall.

<sup>198</sup> Steven Blier, telephone interview with Stephanie R. Thorpe, September 21, 2008.

famous librettist).”<sup>199</sup> Musto explained several motivating factors in his composition of “Dove sta amore.” He began by describing it as Mozartean in fashion:

Amy sings a lot of Mozart. [There is a] certain stylized way of expressing yourself in an aria. [That] doesn’t work in today’s time, we listen differently now. [The song should be interpreted as] “scatting,” beating, improvisation with no particular order at all. Wordplay.<sup>200</sup>

Musto’s prefers the performer interpret “Dove sta amore” in such a way that it sounds “tossed off.”<sup>201</sup> Burton characterizes the song as “taking flight... in a jazzy whirlwind of roulades and vocalises, an upbeat if ambivalent aria on the mysteries of love.”<sup>202</sup>

He further defines the song as chiasmic in form, similar to Blier’s opinion of a retrograde cantata.<sup>203</sup> The Oxford English Dictionary defines chiasmic as “[being] arranged diagonally, crosswise, and characterized by chiasmus.”<sup>204</sup> Chiasmus is defined as a grammatical figure by which the order of words in one of two parallel clauses is inverted in the other.<sup>205</sup>

“Dove sta amore” is a prime example of the influence that Musto’s jazz and popular background had on his classical style. A jazz improvisation/experiment in many ways with its ascending and descending thirds, fourths, and ever-popular sixths, the song is

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<sup>199</sup> Amy Burton, interview with Stephanie R. Thorpe, September 15, 2008, New York City.

<sup>200</sup> John Musto, interview with Stephanie R. Thorpe, September 16, 2008, New York City.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid.

<sup>202</sup> Amy Burton, program notes for *John Musto: Dove Sta Amore... for Soprano and Orchestra*, (New York: Peer Music Classical: 1996), ii.

<sup>203</sup> John Musto, interview with Stephanie R. Thorpe, September 16, 2008, New York City

<sup>204</sup> *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, “Chiasmic” <http://www.oed.com> (Accessed February 12, 2009).

<sup>205</sup> *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, “Chiasmus,” <http://www.oed.com> (Accessed February 12, 2009).

comprised of three themes that sound, resound, return in inversion, and combine with each other.

Of all the revisions made between the editions of *Dove Sta Amore...*, it is the title song that is most transformed. Beginning with the first tempo marking, the new edition is marked “Freely” with no metronome marking. The first edition is heavily edited, with the first marking, *tempo rubato* (♩ = ca. 92) and three measures later, another marking of *tempo giusto* (♩ = 140) (see Music Example 61). Musto keeps the *tempo giusto* marking in the new edition, but simply titles it “lightly dancing” with the same metronome marking. The new edition includes a *colla voce* editorial marking under the vocal line (see Music Example 62). Both editions continually move between these two tempo markings.

Music Example 61: *Dove Sta Amore...*, “Dove sta amore,” mm. 1-4

John Musto: *Dove Sta Amore...* ©1998

The musical score for "Dove sta amore" (measures 1-4) is presented in two systems. The first system is marked *Tempo rubato* (♩ = ca. 92) and *(broadly)*. The vocal line begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic, singing "Do-ve sta a - mo - re,". The piano accompaniment starts with a fortissimo (*ff*) dynamic. The second system is marked *Tempo giusto* (♩ = 140) and *(lightly dancing)*. The vocal line continues with "do-ve sta a - mo - re" and is marked *mf*. The piano accompaniment continues with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings.

Within the first measure, a pattern of rising thirds sets the tone for the rest of the piece. The vocal line enters on a B<sup>3</sup> over a sustained octave B<sup>b4</sup> and B<sup>b5</sup> chord in the accompaniment. Rising minor and major thirds in the vocal line to the text, “Dove sta amore,” continue the opening accompanimental pattern. “Dove sta amore” is heard once again, this time descending a minor sixth, ascending a major third, descending a major



sixth, ascending another major third, and descending a minor seventh (see Music Example 62). This pattern returns throughout the song in many forms and keys.

Music Example 62: *Dove Sta Amore...*, “Dove sta amore,” mm. 1-4  
*John Musto: Collected Songs* ©2008

The image shows a musical score for the first four measures of the song "Dove Sta Amore...". It consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line is written in a treble clef with a 4/4 time signature. It begins with a rest in measure 1, followed by the lyrics "Do-ve sta a - mo - re," in measure 2, and "Do-ve sta a - mo - re" in measure 3. The tempo is marked "Lightly dancing (♩ = 140)". The piano accompaniment is written in a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). It starts with a forte dynamic (ff) and includes markings for "Tea" and "colla voce". The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings like *f* and *mf*.

Theme I commences in mm. 4-6, a pattern of rising thirds and fourths that also reappears many times throughout the piece. The vocal line returns in m. 7 with the English translation of “Dove sta amore,” “Where lies love.” The question/statement of “Where lies love,” begins a new accompanimental pattern, Theme II, comprised of quickly moving chords with intervals of fourths, fifths, and sixths. The vocal line in these measures is reminiscent of a minor third vocalise on the word, “love.” Theme I returns in m. 14 an augmented fourth higher than its initial entrance.

The “Dove sta amore” text returns in m. 17 with the same pattern of rising thirds. Theme II begins Section A, leading to a reiteration of “Dove sta amore” first on descending then ascending whole-tones, then descending and ascending in perfect fourths, a typical jazz improvisation (see Music Example 63). The vocal line rises higher, continuing to ask, “Dove.” Theme II ends abruptly in m. 29 with the vocal line entering unaccompanied on F #<sup>5</sup> descending to F #<sup>4</sup> to E<sup>4</sup> on the statement, “Here lies love.” A recurrence of Theme I is found in m. 31, leading into Section B and new text.

Music Example 63: *Dove Sta Amore...*, “Dove sta amore,” mm. 17-25  
 John Musto: *Collected Songs* ©2008

The musical score consists of two systems. The first system (measures 17-21) features a vocal line starting with a *mf* dynamic and the lyrics "Do-ve sta a-mo - re". The piano accompaniment begins with a *p* dynamic and includes the instruction "con Sord". The second system (measures 22-25) continues the vocal line with the lyrics "ve. Do ve." and the piano accompaniment. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

Section B technically begins in m. 34 with the text, “The ring dove love / In lyrical delight.” Strong syncopation accompanies the text until m. 38, in which a swiftly moving musical sequence leads into another repetition of these words. Classically speaking, the accompaniment in mm. 38-39 is a musical sequence. Non-classically speaking, the musical sequence resembles another instance of typical jazz improvisation. This is the sound the composer achieved as he played the sequence in our coaching session.

This jazz improvisation/musical sequence recurs in mm. 42-45, in which the vocal line reiterates the unaccompanied question/statement, “Dove sta amore” (see Music Example 64). Theme I returns in mm. 47-52, leading to another repeat of “Dove sta amore.” Theme III begins in m. 53. Similar to the first movement of Musto’s *Piano Trio*, composed in 1998, Theme III is a repetitive pattern in the accompaniment line

comprised of a rising major third, an ascending perfect eighth that descends a minor third.

This pattern repeats three times per measure.

Music Example 64: *Dove Sta Amore...*, "Dove sta amore," mm. 40-46  
John Musto: *Collected Songs* ©2008

The image shows a musical score for the song "Dove sta amore" by John Musto, covering measures 40 to 46. The score is written in 4/4 time and features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line begins at measure 40 with the lyrics "ring dove love in ly - ri - cal de - light". The piano accompaniment consists of a repeating rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. Dynamic markings include *sfz* (sforzando) and *p* (piano). The score continues to measure 43, where the vocal line begins with the lyrics "Do - ve sta a - mo - re" and is marked *freely* and *mf* (mezzo-forte). The piano accompaniment continues with the same rhythmic pattern.

Unlike his *Piano Trio*, this pattern repeats without much variation from mm. 53-95.

During these forty-two measures, the pattern remains undisturbed for only ten measures.

The major variation within these measures is one or two measures in which the pattern seems to restart itself, moving from two lines of treble accompaniment to two octaves below in the bass clef that quickly returns to its former treble octave (see Music Example 65).

Music Example 65: *Dove Sta Amore...*, “Dove sta amore,” mm. 53-60  
John Musto: *Collected Songs* ©2008

53 *a tempo* *mp*  
Hear

*simile*

*molto fda*

57  
love's hill song

The vocal line throughout this section is quite simple, sustained and slow moving in comparison to the accompaniment. Leaps upward of minor sixths and minor ninths, descending thirds, fourths, and augmented fourths comprise the first sixteen measures of the section. A whole-tone scale first seen in mm. 20-22 recurs in mm. 69-76 at a much slower and syncopated pace than its earlier entrance (see Music Example 66). Musto defines these sections as a form of “plainchant.”<sup>206</sup>

<sup>206</sup> John Musto, interview with Stephanie R. Thorpe, September 16, 2008, New York City.

Music Example 66: *Dove Sta Amore...*, “Dove sta amore,” mm. 69-76  
John Musto: *Collected Songs* ©2008

69

Love's

low plain song

In m. 76, the accompaniment pattern restarts itself once again leading into Section D. Musto defines Section D as an amalgamation of the “Siren Song of Odysseus” and “plainchant.”<sup>207</sup> Heavily revised between editions, Sections D and E are comprised of one roulade after another, containing no text other than, “Ah.” The “Ah,” is not present in the Ferlinghetti’s poem. Beginning slightly before beat two, an *accicatura* E<sup>5</sup> leads to a beat two D #<sup>5</sup>, beginning the vocalise. The “Ah” vocalise moves in mostly whole-step motion, alternating between sustained notes and triplets, with an occasional minor third and major seventh.

<sup>207</sup> John Musto, coaching with Stephanie R. Thorpe, September 18, 2008, New York City.

Musto's most extensive revision between editions is present in mm. 86-88. The first edition requires the performer to complete vocal gymnastics of descending sixths, whole-steps, ascending leaps of perfect fifths to descend another sixth and repeat the pattern two more times in triplet rhythm over the space of one measure (see Music Example 67). The pattern in m. 87 of the *Collected Songs* edition is significantly easier, descending in scalar motion until the last triplet, which descends in a minor then major third (see Music Example 68). After m. 87, the vocal line reverts to the original vocal line of the 1998 *Dove Sta Amore...* edition.

Music Example 67: *Dove Sta Amore...*, "Dove sta amore," mm. 86-88  
*John Musto: Dove Sta Amore...* ©1998

The musical score for Music Example 67 consists of two staves. The top staff is the vocal line, and the bottom staff is the piano accompaniment. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The vocal line begins with a long note marked 'ah' followed by a series of triplets. The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note pattern in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand.

Music Example 68: *Dove Sta Amore...*, "Dove sta amore," mm. 85-88  
*John Musto: Collected Songs* ©2008

The musical score for Music Example 68 consists of two staves. The top staff is the vocal line, and the bottom staff is the piano accompaniment. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The vocal line begins with a long note marked 'Ah.' followed by a series of triplets. The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note pattern in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand.

The next revision occurs in mm. 97-108. These measures are the same as the first edition, with optional lower notes included by the composer for those voices who are not comfortable singing the first version (see Music Example 69). It is during this section that the accompaniment returns to its earlier musical sequence between vocal entrances. Musto wants these musical sequences to be played like improvised jazz “licks.”<sup>208</sup>

Music Example 69: *Dove Sta Amore...*, “Dove sta amore,” mm. 97-99  
*John Musto: Collected Songs* ©2008

The vocal line of Section E features previously discussed patterns of whole-step motion with intervals of a third until m. 103, in which the vocal line ascends a minor third beginning on D<sup>4</sup>, descends a minor second, ascends a major third, descends another minor second, and ascends one last minor third to end on B<sup>b5</sup>. A new accompanimental pattern begins in m. 104. This pattern is similar to Theme III.

The vocal pattern in m. 105 is unlike any other vocal pattern previously seen, but is a continuation of the previous four measures. After a leap upward of a major seventh, the vocal line proceeds with its final three roulades, an assortment of half-steps, whole-steps, thirds, and fourths, finally ending on C<sup>6</sup> (see Music Example 70). In classical terms, this section is simply an octatonic scale often used by Mussorgsky and Stravinsky.

<sup>208</sup> John Musto, interview with Stephanie R. Thorpe, September 16, 2008, New York City.

Section F begins in m. 109 with a return of Theme III. In m. 112, the vocal line reenters and proceeds to use the same “plainchant” pattern seen in mm. 69-75. Other than sounding one octave higher, only the final descending minor seventh is different from the first pattern.

Music Example 70: *Dove Sta Amore...*, “Dove sta amore,” mm. 105-108  
John Musto: *Collected Songs* ©2008

Theme III is modified in m. 120 with the addition of the lowest bass registers in octaves entering on beat two until m. 124. The beat two entrance is a pattern found throughout Musto’s vocal music, further adding to the sense of syncopation that is present in many of his compositions, a tribute to his jazz upbringing.



The vocal line in mm. 123-131 marks the ending of Section F to the text, "Too sweet pain-song. / In passages of night." Theme I returns in m. 130, and the vocal line imitates the same theme in mm. 132-133 and the beginning of Section G.

Section H begins in m. 137 in an approximate repetition of mm. 33-41. While the pitches and rhythmic patterns remain the same, the addition of the text, "In passages of night," is the only difference that keeps this part of Section H from being an exact repetition of Section B.

A final musical sequence/improvisation in the accompaniment leads into the last rising third statement/question, "Dove sta amore." Section I begins in m. 151 with a quasi-return of Theme II. The same intervallic patterns seen in mm. 20-28 return in mm. 153-161 a major third below its initial entrance.

A final vocal musical sequence/jazz improvisation comprised of descending and ascending thirds and fourths enters in m. 162. Theme I reenters in m. 165, leading to a final statement/question, "Dove, dove sta," quickly followed by a "Hm" not found in the poem. The ending six measures from mm. 171-173 are an almost exact repetition of mm. 29-31 (see Music Example 71).

The final "Here lies love," sounds a whole-step lower than its initial entrance and is sustained five beats longer. Theme I returns in m. 172, leading to contrary motion between the treble and bass accompaniment lines that move inward to outward in perfect fifths (see Music Example 71).

The last vocal utterance of an ascending major third and minor third is heard in mm. 173-174 to the text, "Amore." The accompaniment gets the last word with a final instance of contrary motion. The chord begins two octaves apart to move outward in

perfect fifths until the final cluster chord of  $C^1-B\sharp^5-C^6-B\sharp^7-C^8$ , ending the outermost pitches of the chord eight octaves apart (see Music Example 71).

Music Example 71: *Dove Sta Amore...*, “Dove sta amore,” mm. 168-176  
 John Musto: *Collected Songs* ©2008

The image shows a musical score for the song "Dove Sta Amore...". It consists of two systems of music. The first system starts at measure 168 and includes a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line has lyrics "Hm", "Here", and "lies". The piano accompaniment features complex chords and textures. The second system starts at measure 172 and includes a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line has lyrics "love", "A - mo - re", and "gno". The piano accompaniment continues with complex textures. The score includes various performance instructions such as *mp*, *allargando*, *freely*, *poco f*, *p*, *mf*, *a tempo*, and *pp*.

*Dove Sta Amore...* is a highly complex song cycle. Both singer and pianist must be conversant in both classical and jazz piano styles. Musto’s adamant directive to the singer of *Dove Sta Amore...*, as well as his other vocal compositions follows:

When [a song] feels like a pop song, don’t sing it like a pop song. Sing it with your instrument fully engaged. Sing with the same voice and same approach. Do not croon.<sup>209</sup>

<sup>209</sup> John Musto, interview with Stephanie R. Thorpe, September 16, 2008, New York City.

Musto's choice of poetry and arrangement of each poem and consequent composition creates a cohesive cycle. His view that each poem is "cinematic, like snapshots of people in their relationships," further assists the singer in their connection to the text, while allowing a certain amount of distance, i.e. as the narrator of a situation, not directly in the situation.<sup>210</sup> The way in which he sets each poem is highly prosodic and allows the singer to perform each piece as he dictates.

*Dove Sta Amore...* has been performed around the world in both piano/vocal and orchestral versions. Patrice Michaels and Elizabeth Buccheri recorded the cycle in 2006 on their album *American Songs* by Cedille Records. Their recording of the cycle is of the 1998 first edition. Despite its vocal and pianistic difficulties, the cycle remains the most appealing of the vocal works analyzed in this document. With its popular song and jazz influences, *Dove Sta Amore...* is a superb example of the contemporary American song cycle.

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<sup>210</sup> John Musto, interview with Stephanie R. Thorpe, September 16, 2008, New York City.

APPENDIX I

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4. Comparison between editions of "maggie and molly and milly and may," (i.e. *John Musto: Quiet Songs, 1991 & John Musto: Collected Songs, 2008*).  
"MAGGIE AND MOLLY AND MILLY AND MAY" MUSIC BY JOHN MUSTO, TEXT BY E. E. CUMMINGS. JOHN MUSTO'S SHARE IS USED BY PERMISSION OF SOUTHERN MUSIC PUBLISHING CO., INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED
  
5. Comparison between editions of "Intermezzo," including "Intermezzo 2a & 2b," to show the difference in key signatures for the songs (*John Musto: Quiet Songs, 1991 & John Musto: Collected Songs, 2008*).  
"INTERMEZZO" MUSIC BY JOHN MUSTO, TEXT BY AMY ELIZABETH BURTON. JOHN MUSTO'S SHARE IS USED BY PERMISSION OF SOUTHERN MUSIC PUBLISHING CO., INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED
  
6. "Quiet Song," comparison between editions, including "Quiet Song 3a & 3b," *John Musto: Quiet Songs, 1991 & John Musto: Collected Songs, 2008*.  
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7. Comparison between editions of "Christmas Carol," *John Musto: Quiet Songs, 1991 & John Musto: Collected Songs, 2008*.

"CHRISTMAS CAROL (TO JESUS ON HIS BIRTHDAY) MUSIC BY JOHN MUSTO. TEXT BY EDNA ST. VINCENT MILLAY. JOHN MUSTO'S SHARE IS USED BY PERMISSION OF SOUTHERN MUSIC PUBLISHING CO., INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

8. "Palm Sunday: Naples": comparison between editions, *John Musto: Quiet Songs, 1991 & John Musto: Collected Songs, 2008*.

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9. "Lullaby": comparison between editions, *John Musto: Quiet Songs, 1991 & John Musto: Collected Songs, 2008*.

"LULLABY" MUSIC BY JOHN MUSTO. TEXT BY LEONIE ADAMS. JOHN MUSTO'S SHARE IS USED BY PERMISSION OF SOUTHERN MUSIC PUBLISHING CO., INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

10. Comparison between editions of "Maybe": *John Musto: Dove Sta Amore ..., 1998 & John Musto: Collected Songs, 2008*.

TEXT BY CARL SANDBURG. "MAYBE" BY JOHN MUSTO. USED BY PERMISSION OF SONGS OF PEER, LTD. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

11. "Sea Chest": comparison between editions, *John Musto: Quiet Songs, 1991 & John Musto: Collected Songs, 2008*.

TEXT BY CARL SANDBURG. "SEA CHEST" BY JOHN MUSTO. USED BY PERMISSION OF SONGS OF PEER, LTD. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

12. "Hangman at Home": comparison between editions, *John Musto: Quiet Songs, 1991 & John Musto: Collected Songs, 2008*.

TEXT BY CARL SANDBURG. "THE HANGMAN AT HOME" BY JOHN MUSTO. USED BY PERMISSION OF SONGS OF PEER, LTD. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

13. "How Many Little Children Sleep": comparison between editions, *John Musto: Quiet Songs, 1991 & John Musto: Collected Songs, 2008*.

TEXT BY JAMES AGEE. "HOW MANY LITTLE CHILDREN SLEEP" BY JOHN MUSTO. USED BY PERMISSION OF SONGS OF PEER, LTD. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

14. "Dove sta amore": comparison between editions, *John Musto: Quiet Songs, 1991*  
& *John Musto: Collected Songs, 2008*.  
TEXT BY LAWRENCE FERLINGHETTI. "DOVE STA AMORE" BY JOHN  
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APPENDIX II

CATALOG OF VOCAL COMPOSITIONS

BY JOHN MUSTO

<i>Two by Frost</i> (Robert Frost) .....	1982
"Nothing Gold Can Stay"	
"The Rose Family"	
<i>Canzonettas</i> .....	1984
"Western Wind" – anonymous	
"All Nights by the Rose" – anonymous	
"The Silver Swan" – Orlando Gibbons	
<i>Enough Rope</i> (Dorothy Parker) .....	1985
"Social Note"	
"Résumé"	
"The Sea"	
<i>Shadow of the Blues</i> (Langston Hughes) .....	1986
"Silhouette"	
"Litany"	
"Island"	
"Could Be"	
"Triolet" (Eugene O'Neill) .....	1987
"Lament" (Edna St. Vincent Millay) .....	1988
"Words To Be Spoken" (Archibald MacLeish) .....	1988
<i>Recuerdo</i> .....	1988
"Echo" – Christina Rossetti	
"Recuerdo" – Edna St. Vincent Millay	
"Last Song" – Louise Bogan	



<i>Quiet Songs</i> .....	1990
“maggie and milly and molly and may” – E. E. Cummings	
“Intermezzo (a)” – Amy Elizabeth Burton	
“Quiet Song (a)” – Eugene O’Neill	
“Intermezzo (b)” – Amy Elizabeth Burton	
“Quiet Song (b)” – Eugene O’Neill	
“Christmas Carol (To Jesus On His Birthday)” – Edna St. Vincent Millay	
“Palm Sunday: Naples” – Arthur Symons	
“Lullaby” – Léonie Adams	
Commissioned by The New York Festival of Song	
 <i>Dove Sta Amore</i> ... ..	1996
“Maybe” – Carl Sandburg	
“Sea Chest” – Carl Sandburg	
“The Hangman at Home” – Carl Sandburg	
“How Many Little Children Sleep” – James Agee	
“Dove sta amore” – Lawrence Ferlinghetti	
Commissioned by The Concert Artists Guild	
 <i>Penelope</i> (Denise Lanctot) .....	2000
“Prologue”	
“Penelope’s Lament”	
“Weaving Song”	
“Epithalamium”	
“The Suitors”	
“Odyssey”	
“Epilogue: Penelope’s Song”	
Commissioned by The Tisch Center for the Arts	
 “I Stop Writing the Poem” (Tess Gallagher).....	2000
 “Old Photograph” (Archibald MacLeish).....	2000
 “San José Symphony Reception” (Lawrence Ferlinghetti) .....	2000
 “Flamenco” (C. K. Williams) .....	2001
Commissioned by The New York Festival of Song	
 “Nude at the Piano” (Mark Campbell).....	2001
Commissioned by The Metropolitan Museum of Art	

*Viva Sweet Love* .....2004

“as is the sea marvelous” – E. E. Cummings

“Rome in the Café” – James Laughlin

“You came as a thought” – James Laughlin

“Crystal Palace Market” – James Laughlin

“sweet spring” – E. E. Cummings

Commissioned by The Marilyn Horne Foundation

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