

Four Songs (1994) - André Previn (1929-2019)

These four songs by André Previn, titled "Mercy", "Stones", "Shelter", and "The Lacemaker", are based on the poems of Toni Morrison, Nobel Prize winner in Literature. Each song in the cycle explores a different theme and emotion through Morrison's poetic texts. "Mercy" addresses themes of compassion, forgiveness, and redemption, "Stones" reflects on resilience and inner strength, "Shelter" deals with the search for refuge and solace, while "The Lacemaker" evokes imagery of a lacemaker and reflects on beauty and artistic work. Previn's music complements and enhances the emotions and themes present in each poem, creating an auditory experience that deepens understanding and appreciation of Morrison's texts.

Vocalisse (1995)- André Previn (1929-2019)

In "Vocalisse", I glimpse a reflection, a duality in the very essence of being. If in "The Lacemaker" I explored the meticulous construction of the self, woven with threads of memory and society, in "Vocalisse" I find the denouement, the unraveling, the fading of carefully woven strands. It is a slow and painful unraveling of memories, people, juxtapositions of childhood, and social bindings. In this melody, the chant to melancholy is a soft whisper that pierces the soul, like a sip of bitter saliva facing the reality of separation and detachment.

Im Morgentaun from Fünf lieder aus "Der siebente Ring", Op. 3 (1908)- Anton Webern (1883-1945)

"Im Morgentaun" is one of the five songs that make up Anton Webern's cycle "Der siebente Ring". Composed in 1908, during a period of change in European music marked by the development of modernism and the emergence of the twelve-tone technique, Webern drew inspiration from German Symbolist poetry of the early 20th century for this song cycle. "Im Morgentaun" reflects the melancholic and evocative spirit of the poetry of the time, with imagery suggesting a twilight and mysterious atmosphere. Webern's music, characterized by its economy of means and attention to expressive detail, creates a sonic landscape that complements and enhances the poetic richness of the text. This composition is an early example of Webern's distinctive style, combining a romantic sensibility with an innovative approach to musical structure and language. "Im Morgentaun" captures the essence of the period in which it was composed, offering an intimate and poignant glimpse into the

composer's inner world during a time of profound cultural and artistic change in Europe.

An Leukon (1908)- Alban Berg (1885-1935)

This is one of Alban Berg's early compositions, created in 1908 during his study period with Arnold Schoenberg in Vienna. Inspired by the poetry of the Greek poet Alcaeus of Mytilene, Berg composed this song as part of a set of five songs, each based on a different poem by Alcaeus. The music of "An Leukon" reflects Berg's interest in intense emotional expression and exploration of human psychology through music. This work marks the beginning of Berg's career as one of the leading exponents of 20th-century musical expressionism.

De reve and De fleurs, selections from "Proses Lyriques" (1893)- Claude Debussy (1862-1918)

Claude Debussy composed the songs "De reve" and "De fleurs" as part of his cycle "Proses Lyriques" in 1893, during a period of cultural and musical effervescence in France known as the Belle Époque. In this context, Debussy sought to depart from the musical conventions of late Romanticism and explore new forms of expression through music and Symbolist poetry. The poems that inspired these songs, written by Pierre Louÿs, reflect themes such as dreams, imagination, the ephemeral beauty of flowers, and the transitoriness of life. Debussy, with his unique sensitivity and innovative use of harmonic color and musical texture, creates sonic landscapes that complement and enhance the richness of the poetic texts. These songs represent a turning point in Debussy's career, marking his transition to a more experimental and avant-garde musical style that would influence future generations of composers.

Emily's Aria (Take me Back) from "Our Town" (1938)- Ned Rorem (1923- 2022)

Ned Rorem composed the aria 'Emily's Aria' as part of his opera 'Our Town,' based on Thornton Wilder's play. Premiered in 2006, the opera reflects the emotional depth and timelessness of the original work, capturing the essence of life and death in a small American town. The aria serves as a poignant moment within the opera, conveying themes of love, loss, and the passage of time. Emily's Aria is sung at a crucial and emotional moment in the opera, where the character Emily Webb

reflects on her life and loved ones after her death. It encapsulates the central message of the work, inviting audiences to appreciate the beauty and fragility of human life.

El majo olvidado from “12 Tonadillas en estilo antiguo” (1914)- Enrique Granados (1867-1916)

Enrique Granados composed these "Tonadillas en estilo antiguo" in 1914, as a tribute to the 18th-century Spanish musical style. "El majo olvidado" is one of the standout pieces in the cycle, reflecting the passion and colorful essence of Spanish folklore through its music and poetry. Granados, a prominent Spanish composer and pianist, was deeply influenced by the rich musical heritage of his homeland. His compositions often drew inspiration from Spanish folk melodies and dance rhythms, incorporating them into his own unique style. Granados's work contributed significantly to the promotion and recognition of Spanish music on the international stage.

La maja y el ruiseñor from “Goyescas” (1916)-Enrique Granados (1867-1916)

"Goyescas" stands as one of Enrique Granados's most renowned works, drawing inspiration from the paintings of Francisco de Goya. Within this opera, "La maja y el ruiseñor" holds a significant place, portraying the beauty and melancholy of the romance between the maja (a term referring to a stylish woman) and the nightingale in 18th-century Spain. In this aria, the nightingale's song becomes a poignant symbol of longing and desire, contrasting with the maja's feelings of love and sorrow. Granados masterfully captures the essence of the scene, infusing the music with rich harmonies and evocative melodies that transport the listener to the enchanting world of Goya's paintings. Through "La maja y el ruiseñor," Granados conveys the timeless themes of love, passion, and the fleeting nature of beauty, making it a standout moment in the opera and a beloved piece in the repertoire."

Cantares from Poema en forma de canciones (1917)- Joaquín Turina (1882-1949)

This is a collection of songs based on poems by Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer. Turina's music reflects the passion and sensitivity of Spanish Romanticism, with a rich harmonic palette and emotional vocal expression. Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer was a prominent Spanish Romantic poet known for his lyrical and introspective poetry. His

works often explored themes of love, nature, and the supernatural, influencing many composers of his time. Joaquín Turina, deeply influenced by Bécquer's poetry, admired the poet's ability to evoke deep emotions and sought to capture the essence of his words in his musical compositions. Turina's settings of Bécquer's poems showcase his admiration for the poet's literary genius, creating a symbiotic relationship between poetry and music that resonates with the Romantic spirit.

Punto de Habanera from Cinco canciones negras (1945)- Xavier Montsalvatge (1912-2002)

"Punto de Habanera" is one of the five "canciones negras" composed by Xavier Montsalvatge. These songs capture the richness and vitality of Caribbean popular music, blending elements of the Cuban habanera with the sensibility of the 20th century. In "Punto de Habanera," Montsalvatge creates a festive and rhythmic atmosphere, reflecting the joy and energy of Cuban music. Contextually, these songs were composed during a period of cultural renewal in Cuba and the Caribbean, where traditional music was experiencing a revitalization and rebirth. Montsalvatge, by incorporating elements of popular music into his compositions, contributed to the recognition and dissemination of the region's rich musical heritage.

Contrabandista (1805)- Manuel García (1775-1832)

"Contrabandista" is a comedic zarzuela written by Manuel García, a prominent composer and tenor of the Romantic era. The zarzuela, a form of Spanish musical theater that combines music, singing, and spoken dialogue, was highly popular in 19th-century Spain. "Contrabandista" recounts the adventures and misadventures of a group of smugglers in the Spanish countryside, exploring themes of love, honor, and justice. García's music reflects the passion and drama of the story, with emotive arias and energetic choruses capturing the essence of the zarzuela genre. Contextually, this zarzuela is set within a period of cultural effervescence in Spain, where the zarzuela became an important form of artistic expression, both for popular entertainment and for reflection on social and political issues."