

In My Dreams: Creating a Song Cycle Based on the Poetry of Child Sex

Trafficking Survivors, with music by Gerard Yun

by

Melissa Walker Glenn

A Research Paper Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Musical Arts

Approved November 2010 by the
Graduate Supervisory Committee:

Carole FitzPatrick, Chair
Dale Dreyfoos
Robert Mills
Melissa Pritchard
Rodney Rogers

ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

December 2010

ABSTRACT

In My Dreams is a song cycle for mezzo-soprano, narrator, and piano, based on the poetry of survivors of childhood sex trafficking. It was created to raise awareness of trafficking through music and poetry through the expression of individual dreams and voices. *In My Dreams* recounts the devastating loss of childhood and celebrates empowering words of survival. The poetry was collected in poetry workshops held in Calcutta and Delhi India in January 2009. After the poems were selected, translated, and edited, composer Dr. Gerard Yun set them to music.

This document outlines the process of creating and performing this unique humanitarian cycle. It also includes the full score, poetry, and composer's notes. Topics discussed include: experiences in finding and collecting poetry; collaboration with the composer, Dr. Gerard Yun; form and structure of the cycle; how each piece was molded to give voice to its inspired poem. Every song is analyzed from both a musical and performance perspective to give an account of the challenges and triumphs of the work and the process of undertaking it, as well as a better understanding of the background leading to its composition.

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To Wan-yi Lo, collaborative pianist, Lynette Kidman, narrator, and Rohit Dasgupta, translator, I sincerely thank you for your artistic contributions. A heartfelt thank you is extended to Bishan Sammadar, STOP (Stop Oppression and Trafficking of Children and Women), Sanlaap, and others who graciously donated poetry and provided the means whereby it might be collected.

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INTRODUCTION

And so from this news-letter [*sic*] we will reach out to the young through the young themselves. Those few, who will get the chance to express themselves in this newsletter, will be the beacon of hope to the millions who are still silently suffering. We will always keep our hands outstretched in the hope that some more children and youth will reach out and join us in our journey to raise a voice against all forms of abuse and exploitation. The future of the world lies in the children and youth.
–Nandini Mazumder¹

Background Information

According to the United Nations, there are 2.5 million people trafficked into modern-day slavery at any one time, with an estimated 1.2 million children being trafficked every year.² It was during a two-hour car ride from Rochester to Ithaca, NY in 2007 that I became aware of the pervasiveness of modern-day slavery. My passenger, a friend who volunteered with Cornell University’s chapter of Justice for Children International,³ informed me of the stories, statistics, and the ongoing fight to abolish trafficking—even sex trafficking among children.

While not ignorant to solitary incidences of rape, incest, or rape camps during wartime, I was shocked that organized, widespread slavery still exist—that even children could be so dehumanized, debased, and abused in the same way

¹ Nandini Mazumder, “Editorial,” *Youth Speak*, October 2008, A1.

² U.S. Department of State, “Trafficking in Persons Report 2010,” <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2010/> (accessed September 1, 2010)

³ Justice for Children International is now named “Love 146.” Their website which includes stories and statistics of child sex trafficking, can be found at <http://www.love146.org>

Africans were during the trans-Atlantic slave trade or Jews had been during the reign of the Nazis. I wondered why I, a person with higher education who had traveled to several countries, was not aware of this earlier. Why in high school and undergraduate school had I learned so extensively of the abominable, never-to-be-repeated history of African slaves in the Americas, without any mention that history was in fact repeating itself? A desire was ignited within me to spread consciousness, fight for the rights of these victims, and abolish this degrading crime.

As a trained musician, I considered hosting a benefit concert to raise awareness about trafficking. This is where the idea for my doctoral project first began to take shape. It was exciting to consider using the doctoral project for the betterment of humankind. The challenge was how to realize these humanitarian goals while simultaneously fulfilling the academic requirements for a doctoral project at Arizona State University. One of my options would meet the requirements: to create an original recording. This was an exciting idea, since it would generate a recording dedicated to the cause, in addition to providing music that could be performed at one of the required doctoral recitals. Furthermore, beyond the scope of this paper, the new music could be performed at churches and civic centers in a volunteer effort to raise consciousness. It would also be catalogued in ASU's libraries to serve as a resource for other humanitarian-minded musicians in the future.

The first challenge in putting together this ambitious and somewhat daunting project was to find a composer. Fortunately, a volunteer presented

himself. From 1998-2000 I had attended Southern Utah University before transferring to Brigham Young University-Hawaii to complete a bachelor's degree in vocal studies. Dr. Gerard Yun, who had taught at Southern Utah University, and currently teaches at Wilfred Laurier University in Ontario, Canada, enthusiastically volunteered to compose the music. With my limited budget, I had expected to collaborate with a graduate student in composition also in need of a large project. I was lucky to instead enlist the help of an experienced musician, Dr. Yun, who believed strongly in the project and was willing to give of his time.

FINDING AND COLLECTING POETRY

Finding the right composer fell into place relatively easily. Finding the poetry to set to music was a more complicated task. Searches to find poetry by survivors of sex trafficking seemed nearly impossible, though I certainly did attempt them. Most accounts of trafficking are written as case studies or narratives, not in poetic form. On the rare occasions I was able to locate such a poem from an article or book, it was usually graphic and abrasive. Desiring the outcome of the cycle to be an empowering and even optimistic one, this did not seem to be a good fit. The search helped me discern that explicit, abrasive type of poetry was not right for this particular project.

Art song typically uses poetry written in the classical tradition. It seemed that for an audience to be bombarded with song after song of the harsh realities of trafficking would induce a negative guilt reaction rather than a positive, empowered, and hopeful one. Finally, poetry about ordinary things—love, nature, family—humanizes and individualizes girls who have been dehumanized and lumped into groups of “those girls in far-off places who have been through horrible things.”

Yun agreed with these goals. In his own words, he concurs,

I consciously avoided the guilt-ridden tones of other “issue awareness” works (usually crisis-related, Holocaust, war, etc.). So, you’ll find almost nothing like that in the musical structures. They are also not in the poetry at all. So, it would have been an act of personal projection to impose such emotions. I also felt that it would be manipulative of the audience, something desirable in film music, but I think, inappropriate in this work. I

hope the simple humanness of the poetry and the accessibility of the music will stir a desire to see a repulsive issue in a closer light.⁴

I finally started to make headway when Dr. Kay Norton referred me to Professor Melissa Pritchard who teaches in the English Department at Arizona State University. She, like Yun, was enthusiastic about the project and willing to volunteer her time. When we were able to meet together in the fall of 2008, we discussed the project and my need for poetry. She was already involved with anti-trafficking, and had been to India twice while working with a group called Kalam: Margins Write. Kalam is an organization that works with youth who have been trafficked or whose mothers had been trafficked. She also proved invaluable to the project with her knowledge of writing and poetry, in which I had little training. Kalam: Margins Write had published a few collections of poetry, offering precisely what the project called for: poetry on subjects any other person might have written about, but if one read between the lines, heartbreak and disillusionment were found. Young Indian poets trained the youth in the program, so the resultant works were mature and artistic. Pritchard and I attempted to secure permission to use this wonderful poetry, but ultimately we were denied that permission.

Research into other sources again commenced, yet no major progress was made. Then in a brainstorming session with Pritchard, she drafted a list of contacts she had who were somehow involved in anti-trafficking. Nearly all of the contacts on the list resided in India. Pritchard had recently been invited back

⁴ Gerard Yun, "Composer's Notes," Appendix C.

to India to work with one of Kalam's partner organizations, the Seagull Arts Organization. It made sense in every way but financially that the journey to India was the solution to finding poetry for the project. Pritchard had invaluable connections and the ability to conduct poetry workshops. Fortunately, grants were secured which covered the expense of travel to India.

Calcutta, India

The plane to Calcutta, India landed a mere two and a half months after this brainstorming session with Pritchard. The only formal plan that had been completely coordinated before we arrived was a two-day poetry workshop with girls living in the outskirts of Delhi in STOP's (Stop Trafficking and Oppression of Children and Women) safe home. Professor Pritchard was also scheduled to conduct a writing workshop in Calcutta for the Seagull Arts Organization. The program director, Bishan Sammadar, was one of the poets who had taught the Kalam program when it was more functional. He now held a position with Seagull. Though Seagull is an arts organization in India, it is not directly involved with trafficking. Pritchard nonetheless gave a poetry workshop, and I held a music workshop.

The connections made through doing the workshops at Seagull were extraordinary. I had explained my project to Sammadar in an email, but the idea became much more significant and urgent once discussion took place in person. Sammadar also expressed his disillusionment with some decisions made by Kalam, and wholeheartedly endorsed the project. He then organized meetings for

us with his colleagues at two local anti-trafficking organizations: New Light and Sanlaap.

New Light is a wonderful organization nestled in the heart of the second largest brothel district in Calcutta, called Kalighat. This organization endeavors to reconnect trafficked girls with their parents and return them to their home countries. Visiting New Light helped me understand the logistics of trafficking and its aftermath. It was explained to us that in order for the girls—whose paperwork is usually taken away by the traffickers upon arrival in India—to return, the parents must be tracked down, brought to India, and then all must travel together back to their home country—usually Nepal or Bangladesh. Oftentimes, however, the parents consider their daughters to be shamed, and though the girls are victims, they do not wish to have their daughters brought back with the accompanying stigma. New Light's primary operating purpose, which I saw, was to care for the children of sex-trafficked women. The children were for the most part too young to compose poetry. I met one little boy of about three years who was born HIV-positive by birth. When it was time to leave, he wrapped his arms around me and held on, not wanting to let go.

We next met with representatives from Sanlaap, the largest and oldest anti-trafficking agency in India. This group turned out to be an unexpected and incredibly important contributor of poetry for the project. We met at one of their drop-by centers where the youth volunteers met and children in the brothel districts could come by and have a safe, clean place to socialize. We arrived at about 10:00am, just before the start of a youth leadership meeting, and talked to

Ilona, a beautiful fair-skinned woman, about trafficking and Sanlaap's mission. Ilona did not have the traditional red painting in the part of her hair that married Indian women wear. She instead had a Western looking wedding ring. She said, "My family worries that I bring bad luck to my husband by not painting myself (with red). I ask them, 'What is my husband doing to bring luck to me, then?'"

Sanlaap donated four newsletters to us that had been funded by UNICEF, each of which contained poetry. Unfortunately, participants of the Kalam program wrote many of the poems, so we could only consider the few poems that were not connected to Kalam. When the youth volunteers arrived, Ilona had us introduce ourselves and explain our venture. Pritchard and I saw an opportunity and seized it. She asked if there was time for a poetic exercise, and Ilona agreed. Some of the first poems were collected during this impromptu poetic exercise. Before coming to India, we were aware that most of the people we would work with would not be experienced poets. As a solution, Pritchard brought poem templates they could work with, as well as samples of poetry. The template for this group was entitled "I can hear." The poets took this basic framework and made it their own, spinning their words and experiences within. A few of the volunteers had been a part of the Kalam group, and their poems were more advanced.

After the youth were done writing their poems, they each took a turn reading them aloud. Rohit Dasgupta, an intern from Seagull Arts Organization and our translator, translated them for us, line by line, after which everyone in the

circle clapped. They were proud of their work and looked forward to hearing their words set to music. Many asked when they could hear the CD.

Almost immediately Pritchard and I were able to discern which poems were better written, touching, and more suited for the project; and conversely which were more haphazard, overly simplistic, and less thought provoking. I was grateful we had had the foresight to bring poetic materials to the meeting “just in case,” and that we had been proactive in seizing the opportunity to obtain more poetry. This unexpected poetry collected in Calcutta was of great value, because the girls we worked with later in Delhi were far less eloquent than the young men and women we worked with in Calcutta.

Sammadar asked us if we would like to visit Sonagachi, the largest brothel district in Calcutta, and we agreed. It was too dangerous to go at night, but even visiting during the day the sheer number of women and teenagers lined up for sale was astonishing. Sex can be purchased for as little as \$.25 in Calcutta, and with 2.5 million women and children working in the nation’s sex industry in India (approximately 500,000 are under 18), it is not surprising that more than 5 million people are HIV positive.⁵ As we walked through the mazes of Sonagachi, the women followed us around, asking us questions about where we were from, or how Pritchard did her makeup. Inevitably, however, there would be a couple of men who approached the small throng and stared warningly until Sammadar

⁵ Tom Vatar, “Welcome to Sonagachi: Calcutta’s Largest Brothel Area is Thriving,” *Irish Independent*, May 12, 2004. <http://www.tomvatar.com/india/welcome-to-sonagachi-%E2%80%93-calcutta%E2%80%99s-largest-brothel-area-is-thriving/> (Accessed September 16, 2010).

ushered us away from the group. I thought it important to visit the brothel district as performance research. One thing I learned through visiting, which I took into account when selecting and performing the poems, were the individual dispositions of the women and youth I met there. There were women who were angry, women with eerily vacant stares, and surprisingly, young girls who seemed happy.

Before we left Calcutta, we had a meeting set up with Najma,⁶ one of the poets who had been part of the Kalam project. When Pritchard had initially suggested meeting with Najma, I was hesitant, as she had been one of the Kalam poets. Before meeting in person, we called her to explain that any poems she donated for the cycle must be poems she had not written in conjunction with Kalam. She agreed, and met us in the offices of Seagull. Najma is a talented writer, one who meticulously writes and re-writes her poems, critiquing them until she is finally satisfied with them. She shyly handed over her artistic prose to Sammadar, who translated for us.

I was impressed, as was Pritchard. These were poems of a very high caliber. We complimented her and she smiled. I told her that we would use at least one of the poems, and asked her how she would feel having her poems set to song. She gave us the largest measure of outward emotion I had yet seen by offering a broad smile and still somewhat timidly saying, "I would like that." *It's 2pm* and *I Thought I Wore the Watch Last Night* were penned by Najma. Calcutta was an immense success.

⁶ Name has been changed.

Delhi, India

The morning after landing in Delhi, a young woman who works for STOP picked us up in the organization's van, and we made the one-hour journey to the safe house located outside of Delhi. A wonderful woman named Vithica who would act as our translator was also in the van. Vithica is very progressive, with a "love marriage,"⁷ western clothing, and experience translating for the United Nations and working for the Free the Slaves Organization.

Before arriving, we had no idea how many would attend the workshops, nor what their ages or experience with being sex trafficked would be. As it turned out, most of the girls were fourteen. This was different from the age group we worked with in Calcutta, where the average was 18-22 years old. Of the girls who elected to participate in the workshop, about a fourth had themselves been trafficked. The rest of them came from households where their mothers had been trafficked and were therefore at high risk for being sold. Some came from environments where they were hiding under their mother's beds, feeling powerless and scared in a small dirt hole tucked into the alleyway of some dirty street.

We conducted two days of workshops, breaking in the middle of the day to eat lunch. Lunch was served to us in a room separate from the one where the girls ate, because all of the rooms upstairs were not available to the public. This is one of the things the leaders did to help the girls feel safe, in addition to having

⁷ It was explained to me that a "love marriage" is where you choose your spouse, whereas in an arranged marriage, he or she is chosen for you.

a security guard and high cement walls. After introducing ourselves, Pritchard gave an introductory workshop on poetry. Writing poetry was a somewhat difficult concept for the girls, who had been exposed to books, but little poetry. Some were not well educated. It was an obstacle for many to capture the concept of poetry, never mind artistic poetry.

Pritchard would explain a template, coach them to write with the help of this template, and then the girls would read their poems aloud. This was a similar format to the impromptu poetry workshop in Calcutta, except it was much more difficult for the Delhi girls to grasp. Calcutta's poets were older, which meant their life experience and reasoning were more advanced. In addition the Delhi girls were at that pubescent age where their lives revolve around friends. As a result, they thought less individually and more collectively, and often asked each other what they were writing, to ascertain what they should also be penning. The outcome was that many poems were quite similar to each other, with less creativity and greater inhibition.

We recognized this problem after the first set of poems was read aloud, so Pritchard chose a second template wherein the girls chose an item in nature as an inspiration for their poem. They internalized the object and then compared their feelings. This was more successful, for though the girls continued to consult each other instead of trusting their instincts and feelings, more creativity and individuality was fostered. It also gave us a treat we had not planned on receiving: some of them sketched images of their items (like a leaf or a bird). These visuals were inspirational to the composer. It was also not surprising to

find there were a few girls whose poetry naturally stood out as more intelligent, artistic, and intuitive.

For the second day of workshops we decided to go outside and have them work by themselves to encourage individual expression. This worked somewhat better, and the resulting poetry was more insightful. We still struggled to have them write something unique, so we brainstormed and finally came up with an idea for the final poem. We wrote the names of colors, objectives, and adjectives, placing them in three different bowls. Each girl selected a color, emotion, and object out of each bowl. She was then to compose a free-form poem from her randomly selected words.

We were very excited at what these poems could bring, but it proved to be a difficult exercise for them. All of the poems were written in story form. While they might possibly be interesting as short stories, they were a tricky fit for a song, even with editing. We also did not have time to read them all as we had with the other poems. While it was not very helpful for our purposes, however, it was of use for their psychologist who had been there during the entire process. “I have been pushing for these workshops and others similar to this,” she said, “because this gives them tools to talk about their experiences. It gives them a creative outlet to deal with their trauma.” She continued, “I am so grateful that you have come here today, because by listening to some of these poems, I have received better insight as to what they are going through, so now I know how to help them better.”

The girls seemed like ordinary girls, despite the traumatic experiences they had survived. I have no doubt that they still struggle, but light and hope radiate from their eyes. In these two days of workshop, I saw proof that healing really can happen, even after the most dismal events. And while it may or may not be a complete healing, there was no longer the desperation, the blank expressions, the resignation, or the anger I saw in the eyes of the girls for sale in the brothels. There was friendship, love, and safety.

CREATING THE CYCLE

Poetry Translation and Selection

After the poetry was collected and before the music could be composed, the poetry needed to be translated and selected. There were roughly twenty poems collected in Calcutta and almost two hundred from Delhi. While in Calcutta, a young man named Rohit Dasgupta was sent by Bishan Sammadar to act as our translator and oversee logistical matters. He proved to be an invaluable resource, having earned a bachelor's degree in English, experience writing poetry, and fluency in English, Bengali (spoken in Calcutta), and Hindi (spoken in Delhi). He was later hired to translate the poetry.

The first hurdle in translating the poetry was that there simply was not enough time to accurately translate more than two hundred poems. Furthermore, without any knowledge of Bengali or Hindi, I was not able to skim the poems' contents to discern which ones to have Dasgupta translate. Rather than allot several months for Dasgupta to translate every single poem, I decided to let Dasgupta use his artistic and literary judgment in reading and selecting the poems with the most potential for use in the cycle.

Every poem that originated from Calcutta was translated. Not only were there only twenty poems from that area to translate, it seemed many would likely be useful because of the age, experience, and maturity of the authors. While some of the youth had never written poetry, many had; and the overall age was greater than the poets of Delhi. The poetry of Delhi was another matter. As many of the girls were young, and inexperienced writers, many poems read as essays or

stories, and were not useful for the project. With this in mind, I asked Dasgupta to select only the poems with potential to be set as songs to translate. In an email, he wrote:

I found most of the poems very similar...the poems were really of very [*sic*] elementary level and I did not see how you might be able to use them. Anyway after spending a lot of time reading them I finally picked out the few I thought good enough, and of a bit more mature thought and I have translated them for you...The others were all again not well constructed or were just immature in thought.⁸

Thus, not only was Dasgupta an integral part of the project because of his translation skills, he also helped to select the poetry used in the cycle.

After these selected poems were translated, there were about 30-40 poems from which to choose. Next came the process of editing. Dasgupta translated the poetry as literally as he could, after which I made edits or word choices that sounded more fluid. He would then approve the edits to ensure they were still authentic to the meaning and phraseology of the poem. Some words were slightly altered for an American audience. For example, “autowallah” became “driver.”

The next step in the process was to decide on poetry that could function as a cohesive group in a song cycle format. After reading through the poetry many times, a pattern emerged: several songs were written about dreams. From the 30 or 40 poems, 13 were selected which made mention of or alluded to literal or figurative dreams. Soon after whittling down the poetry choice, Dr. Yun and I met in person at Southern Utah University to have a composition meeting. While waiting in the music building to sit down at a piano with him, I had what felt was

⁸ Rohit Dasgupta, Email to author, February 28, 2009.

a flash of inspiration. A natural cycle emerged, in which overcoming obstacles, lives, and dreams combined together. I called it the “Dream Sequence.”

The Dream Sequence: The literal and figurative dreams one experiences in life comprise the progression of the cycle. It is a sequence that anyone who has experienced and healed from abuse, neglect, or any other traumatic event could relate to. It also gives hope and help to those who have not yet overcome their past. The four parts in chronological order are:

- 1) Childhood hopes and dreams
- 2) The shattering of these dreams
- 3) Healing from these dreams and rebuilding oneself
- 4) Creating, realizing, and bringing to pass new dreams

The songs progress through this sequence, with the opening in the cycle following the first part and so on through the sequence.

The “Dream Sequence” was a concept that lent itself easily to composition and provided an overall arc to the work. It also inadvertently solved another problem. As mentioned, the poetry from Calcutta was more mature, more fitting to art song. Yet I did not feel it right to only include the poetry of Calcutta and disregard the two days of workshops in Delhi and the efforts of the young girls we met there. By using the dream sequence, we were able to include poetry that was younger and more innocent, because it fit the mold of the first part, of the childhood hopes and dreams. In fact, to use a more mature poem such as *I Thought I Wore the Watch* would have been inappropriate. The dreams and hopes of a child were literally expressed through the voice of a younger person.

Compositional Process

Though Yun had received all the poetry via email, the first work on actual composing commenced upon our meeting in Utah. It began with a request: that I help him by improvising melodies over patterns in the keys he chose. This was a bit daunting a task as I am not a composer or improviser, but it did prove helpful in reacquainting him with my voice, as well as demonstrating the emotional and musical motivations and turns I felt from my study of each poem.

After reviewing the “Dream Sequence” concept and placing the poems in an order that fit accordingly, we improvised through the poems. After first discussing the meaning and mood of the text, Yun selected a key (usually with an accompanying drone) he felt fit the mood according to our discussion. We then went about improvising and making notes of our impressions. For example, note was taken of a line that should be repeated, a natural break that might appear in the poem, or perhaps where there might be a beat or mood shift. Through working together we were able to better discern the spirit of each piece—whether the energy of the poem dictated a legato line, staccato markings, a childlike playfulness, or similar things.

From March to July of 2009 Yun was unable to devote large amounts of time to composing. During this time, I sent him information I thought might be helpful to prevent the project from stagnating: You Tube videos of a song that the youth at Sanlaap had sung for us, since he wanted to weave pop and folk elements into the cycle, a video of a folk song the girls in Delhi had sung for us, a Bollywood video of a children’s song for part one of the dream sequence, and

many poetic insights. Before sending Yun poetic insights, I consulted with Dasgupta to ensure my interpretation of the text was legitimate.

Thirteen poems were selected for the cycle, but as we began working together and the compositions took shape, there were some poems we ultimately discarded. In the end, only ten of the thirteen intended poems were used. *I am a Son of the Earth* was one of these omitted poems. Though moving, it did not fit well in juxtaposition to the other poems. In Yun's words,

No matter how I set it, it just doesn't work very well... I sketched several versions before thinking we should chuck it or read it in the Postlude. One is very lyrical (but somehow doesn't really fit the text) and all the others sound like musical versions of the Boy Scout oath. I am still thinking that we should cut it, but let me know what you think.⁹

We also eliminated *I Can Hear the Cry of Many Voices*. The poem was omitted for two reasons. First, the name of someone in the room was mentioned in the poem, and since the Institutional Revenue Board dictated the writers must remain anonymous to protect their identity, mentioning the name of someone else in the room was not permissible. The other reason I edited it was because the poem seemed disjunct, as though the writer was allowing her mind to wander in the middle of the poem as he looked around the room before returning. Even after editing the poem, however, the message was so similar to another poem in the cycle (*I Can Hear Them*) that I was not convinced it added something new to what this one already contributed. The final song that was originally selected but ultimately not included was *I am a Girl*. The poetry in the beginning of the cycle,

⁹ Gerard Yun, Email to author, October 17, 2009.

which reflects childhood and innocent dreams, is indeed simpler in nature. I felt, though, that *I am a Girl* was so overly simplistic as to not lend itself to song.

I am a Son of this Earth

I am a son of this earth
I am the future
I shall serve my country
This I promise
I will write, study, and observe
I shall learn and try to understand others.

I will love you
And love all others
I will not discriminate against
Man, woman, or anyone
The light of knowledge and the light of hope
Shall fill my world.

I shall remain behind no more
And uphold the name of my nation.

I Can Hear the Cry of Many Voices

I can hear the cry of many voices
This room is charged with energy
And I am feeling restless in it
For a long time A*****¹⁰
Has been clicking his pen away.
Can he not hear the disturbing sound?
I can hear the sound of my pen grazing on the paper
My pen is telling me,
“I want to write more, pour more words out.”
If you can place this sound
In the depths of your heart
Yet today my ears will remain shut.
If you can, listen closely
Because I know your ears shall not respond
And you shall not listen to this cry

I am a Girl

I am a girl who needs love
Who needs education
Who needs friends
Who needs a family

¹⁰ Name omitted to maintain anonymity.

I am a girl who needs food for survival
Who needs to study more
Who needs respect
Who needs freedom

I am a girl who needs love
Who needs education
Who needs friends
Who needs a family

Collaboration

Dr. Yun and I had agreed from the beginning that this project would be a joint composition. I am first and foremost a performer, and do not have much training in compositional techniques. Regardless, I had worked with the poets, visiting their neighborhoods, teaching them to sing, and walking the streets of the brothels of India. Yun often drew upon these experiences and impressions, particularly when something was not coming together quite right.

Since Yun resides in Ontario, Canada, and I in Arizona, this was mainly accomplished through email and regular video chats. By utilizing video chat, Yun and I were able to discuss ideas, hum melodies and even sing and play through songs together. We discussed at length about what should and should not be left in, what was working, and what was not. The idea of collaborating with a composer, of helping in the creative process was exciting, frustrating, and completely new. I was accustomed to selecting and perfecting polished and completed scores from the library stacks or music stores. It was an incredible opportunity for personal and musical growth as I discerned what did or did not work for the cycle and my voice.

Aside from discussing ideas with each other, I also enlisted the help of other trained ears to assist in the work of creating the compositions. Yun was open to outside feedback and making changes that would improve the composition. Professor Carole FitzPatrick aided in the polishing of the vocal lines, suggesting a vowel that was more easily sung in that part of the range, or discerning whether a difficulty in the melody was a compositional matter or vocal-technical issue. I also had several coachings with my collaborative pianist, Wan-Yi Lo, and Dr. Andrew Campbell, who were of great help in the compositional process. This was especially beneficial in terms of the accompaniment and how it fit with the vocal line, given their extensive collaborative abilities. All of these coaches were instrumental in the editing and revising of the pieces.

The poetry was submitted to Dr. Yun in the spring of 2009, with a final doctoral recital scheduled for December 1st, 2009, where it premiered. July approached, and I had not received music. Yun assured me the cycle was easy and that I would have no difficulty learning it. My concern, however, was not so much the level of musicianship the songs required, but that even the simplest of songs must be worked into the muscle memory of the vocal folds. This takes time. In assuaging this concern, Yun worked first on the vocal lines and sent them to me. I was able to get these lines into my voice while he “fleshed out” the accompaniment.

Challenges Encountered

The last time Yun had heard me sing was in 2000, so he was creating a cycle to fit someone's voice he was really no longer familiar with. Though I had sent him a recording and was able to sing for him in person in Utah before the composition process really began, it was still challenging, because we lived such a great distance from each other. I learned a valuable lesson in having a work commissioned—that though I knew my range and where I generally felt comfortable singing, I was not entirely cognizant of specifics: what keys worked best for me, exact places in a tessitura I would have trouble enunciating, etc., as well as I thought I did. As a result, the range was for the most part fine, but there were problems with the tessitura of some songs. For example, some melodic lines required enunciation in the passaggio (E-F). Similarly, some difficult vowels for me [æ] and [ʌ] were written in this same area.

Dr. Yun's composing background is primarily in orchestration. As a result, the accompaniments were not as refined as they perhaps could have been. He stated, "The accompaniment will need expanding on all movements to make better use of the keyboard. But, the basics are in place. Please apologize to the pianist(s) involved right upfront for me. I am a much better orchestrator than piano accompaniment writer!"¹¹ He repeatedly stated he could hear the songs accompanied by orchestra, and expressed the desire to one day perform them as such, given the means and opportunity.

¹¹ Gerard Yun, Email to author, October 14, 2009.

The result is that the piano part is at times overly simple. One could say that because the melodies are kept simple to reflect the unsophisticated nature of the poetry itself, the piano part is doing likewise. Yet the piano part, being refined, expanded, and explored, could offer more subtle complexities, allowing the singer to express the nature of the poetry while better maintaining the audience's interest musically. Yun himself said in his notes intended for Lo or a future pianist,

Most of these accompaniments are problematic from...general principle and structural viewpoints. First, they are low on the keyboard. This is due to my own inexperience in writing piano accompaniments for mezzo-sopranos...as well as some technical limitations. If you see/hear opportunities for varieties of voicing that utilize the keyboard better, please make a note and contact me. There are probably many of them.¹²

One way the piano part could be expanded is by utilizing more octaves. Currently the accompaniment stays within the range of a choir, without the lowest and highest extremities of the instrument being explored. Overall, the piano part simply needs to be filled in. This was more a question of time and priority rather than artistic choice by the composer. As he wrote in an email, "I received all your emails and am thrilled that you are all into the work and feeling positive about it. That helps me, as there are gaping holes and errors. But, I can patch and they will be better soon (that's why we have revisions!)."¹³ In a later email he also writes, "I can't wait to listen and really want to get rewrites scheduled on the song cycle. I

¹² Gerard Yun, "Composer's Notes," Appendix C.

¹³ Gerard Yun, Email to author, October 26, 2009.

always hear so many flaws in the writing. But I think that's how we get better. We can always get better.”¹⁴

Here Yun speaks of the improvement of not just the accompaniment, but all flawed aspects of the cycle. As a performer, this was very difficult for me. I am accustomed to songs by Schumann or Mozart, plucked from library stacks and already polished. Yun saw the work as more of a process, stretching out over many different performances, while I expected a finished product by the doctoral recital.

¹⁴ Gerard Yun, Email to author, September 10, 2010.

STRUCTURE AND REVISION

Increasing Variety and Expression

Though stasis and repetition were one of Yun's compositional techniques and the poetry was not complex in nature, the audience's attention still had to be maintained through the thirty-minute cycle. This was achieved through a variety of means: slight alterations of the piano and melodic lines, tempo changes, and dynamic markings. Changes to the melodic lines are discussed in the next chapter under the subheading of stasis or non-movement.

Tempo was an area in which much could be done to add variety to the cycle. Many of the songs were indicated to have slow markings. In order to avoid an overall sluggish quality, and to alter the tempi to what felt right for my voice, the following changes were made from Yun's original markings: *My Special Place* went from 74 to 88 to the quarter note, *In My Dreams* from 63 to 92 at the A section and 76-100 at the B, *Sometimes in the Night* from 84-100+ during the piano introduction to 102 when the voice enters, *I Thought I Wore the Watch Last Night* from 80 to 120 at the onset. The tempo for *It's 2pm* was retained. *I Can Hear Them* was increased from 70 to 82, and *When I Laugh* from 72 to 88, with an *agitato subito presto* added at measure 20. *Create Another Earth* was increased from 60 to 70 and then 70 to 80 where the dance-like section begins at measure 13. Aside from the overall tempi of each piece, expression and dynamics markings were added to heighten the drama.

Another issue of performing a cycle in need of possible revisions was that compositional work on details which aided in the actual performance of the cycle

were omitted in favor of more urgent vocal and piano line changes as the time to premiere the cycle drew closer. For example, various songs were missing dynamics markings. Yun admitted, “Note I’ve been light on dynamics. I’ve saved it for the last pass on everything. Sorry.”¹⁵ Many of the dynamics markings seen in Appendix A of this paper were added into the Sibelius files of the song in preparation for this publication. In his Composer’s Notes, Yun also said,

I spoke to Melissa of this piece seeming to write itself. That was true for the most part. Almost all the main structural themes and ideas came quickly and easily. The time it took to get the piece in performable shape was due to my own inability to work out the inevitable problems of style juxtaposition and integration, as well as some of the weird issues that were set up intentionally at the beginning of the project.¹⁶

On the other hand, it was exciting and unexpected to have artistic freedom in choosing and adding expression. After many years of obedient fidelity to score markings, to be able to consider which dynamics and markings would best convey the message of the poetry was an incredible artistic opportunity. The help of coaches and their ears was also enlisted, particularly those of Lo. Dramatic shifts between forte and piano were employed to once again heighten the drama and give spice and variety to each of the songs.

Musical Style

Another challenge of the compositional process was deciding the style in which the cycle would be composed. Since the cycle would be performed as part of the doctoral degree on a degree recital that would include art songs, the logical

¹⁵ Gerard Yun, Email to Author, October 20, 2009.

¹⁶ Ibid.

thing to do was to write them in classical style. I felt, though, that we had to be very careful in doing this, for while I enjoy singing classical music and it is the genre I am most trained in, I wanted the music to reach a broad audience. In order for that to happen, it would need to be accessible to audience members who had not necessarily been trained in music. In other words, I did not want esoteric 20th century art songs. The accessibility I sought included such features as tonality, attractive melodies, and moving music. A good approach to take might be music akin to folk songs, or “crossover” music, somewhere between classical and pop.

In considering the poetry itself, some of it lent itself to classical composition, and others to a more simplistic pop style genre. The result was somewhere in-between classical and pop styles. Within the cycle itself there are slight variations in style, depending on what each particular poem demands. Theoretically this was a perfect solution for the premiere, because a somewhat classical approach appropriately matched the venue of a doctoral recital, and a somewhat popular approach met the goal of reaching a broader audience.

A problem for me as a performer was that the majority of my training as a singer had been in classical vocal technique rather than contemporary commercial methods. Before beginning vocal training at the age of 18, I had sung mostly musical theatre and pop music in a relatively unhealthy way. While I now had many years of training, it was difficult not to revert to old habits when singing a style of music my body associated with unhealthy technique. Since some songs in the cycle lean slightly toward classical, and others slightly toward pop, I was

constantly reevaluating my technical and stylistic approach to each song, trying to reconcile my training with what the song called for. I thought I had been successful until I listened to a live recording of the recital and discovered to my dismay that many notes were under pitch.

With a scheduled date to make a professional recording of the cycle only a few weeks away, I had to quickly reevaluate my technical approach with the help of Professor FitzPatrick. She assessed how I had indeed reverted toward old habits and ideologies of pop singing technique, and had in turn dropped the soft palette to achieve what I thought was an authentic sound for the style. With this in mind, I set about practicing the cycle again, with an intense focus on keeping the palette raised. The outcome was much more successful. While there was the occasional note I needed to fix with another recording take, the intonation was significantly improved and the technique stable, while still maintaining authenticity of style.

Form and Concepts

While one of my goals in putting together this project was to raise consciousness of trafficking, the intent was to raise this awareness through individual poems and stories—through one voice at a time. As such, this work is not meant to make comprehensive statements or generalities about trafficking as a whole. Part of the reasoning for this is that global issues such as trafficking can appear to concern the “other;” some small group of people living in remote villages in developing countries. Perhaps it is simply easier for us to place such incomprehensible issues far outside of our cities and ourselves. Truthfully, if I

had had the same contacts in the U.S. that Pritchard had in India, I would have preferred using poetry from sources from within this country.

One of the reasons it was important for me to recount personal stories, then, was because I did not want the girls to be seen as statistics. I wanted these girls to seem real, to have narratives which touched and inspired, that brought one a little bit into their world so they left invested in their lives and futures. From a compositional point of view, then, it was important to write with the individuality of each poem in mind. In Yun's words, we're "Taking a Snapshot" with each song.

I always felt we were seeing the children in a snapshot sort of way. This appealed to me immediately. So, the point is not to create the definitive work on child trafficking or to imply any sort of generality from the work. This snapshot allows us, artists and audiences, a glimpse and a little bit of voice that we can hear from the children.¹⁷

Another important aspect of the composition was interweaving optimism throughout the work. As I mentioned previously, it was never my (or Yun's) goal to create a guilt-ridden work, which would purposefully depress or shame the audience into action. My personal feeling was that a cycle that inspired hope and the possibility of change would inspire others to action. In order for this idea to come to fruition, there needed to be aspects of positivity throughout the songs and cycle. I knew that given the life story and experiences of the poets there would be moments of depression, horror, and frustration in the work. To not include them would have been to create something trite and unrealistic. There was a balance to be had, and I do believe we found that balance.

¹⁷ Ibid.

The *Prologue* and *My Special Place* begin the cycle by addressing the grimness of the subject at hand. Yet while the opening dialogue of the *Prologue* acknowledges harsh realities it also introduces hope of survival right from the onset. “The words you will hear tonight, the songs Melissa will sing for you, show the disillusionment and pain of a lost childhood, yet they also speak of resilience, of the rekindling of love and the renewal of hope.”¹⁸ The song *In My Dreams* highlights both a childlike positivity and innocence, while artistically alternating it with a more serious and foreboding B section. In this way, the song *In My Dreams* is reflective of the cycle *In My Dreams*. There are elements of both horror and hope. How it ends is the determining factor. It ends brightly on tonic in the key of C Major, just as the final *Postlude* does.

One of the concepts Yun employed in his compositional technique of the cycle was the incorporation of drones or pedal tones. Even during our meeting in Utah when we began by improvising, the drone as a means of formal construction and Indian pastiche was a strong possibility. The drone concept is dominant in the *Prologue*, where a drone on the pitch of D establishes the first musical moments of the cycle, and the harmonies are built from this drone. One pitch at a time is added until a chord is first formed in the left hand above D, which continues to build in m. 5 in the right hand (Ex. 1). The *Prologue*, then, is literally built on the drone. In the *Prologue*'s bookend piece, the *Postlude*, m.1 is a repeat of m. 8 in the *Prologue*. This ties the beginning and end of the cycle together through the medium of droning.

¹⁸ See Appendix B for complete text.

21 See chord progressions and drone above. Maintain pedal D throughout.
Melodic notes and principal drone combinations appear below.

Singer and pianist may either continue to repeat previous music under spoken text or they are permitted to improvise in the style.

Example 1. Gerard Yun, *Prologue*, mm.21-22

This is a bit less obvious in the song *Sometimes in the Night*, where short-lived F and G \flat drones function like closely related pedal points, and are the inspiration for Yun's chosen sonorities. At times two drones are employed simultaneously, as in the B section of *In My Dreams*, with the open fifth of A and E in the bass. Another example of this open fifth drone is throughout *I Thought I Wore the Watch Last Night*. Once more the fifth does not stand alone, but comprises essential building blocks of the chords. It is again used in broken fashion in the accompaniment (Ex. 2).

9 *mp*
 Since the morn-ing I have been dis-turbed... by last night's

13 *f*
 sad-ness. Ah, ah

Example 2. Gerard Yun, *I Thought I Wore the Watch Last Night*, mm. 9-17

Yun says this about his reasoning for using drone:

The work was originally intended to explore melodies above static drones, which happens quite a lot. Any vertical sonorities were to be derived from coincidence of horizontal movement (more heterophonic than harmonic). But, harmonies certainly established themselves. I had quite a time trying to avoid making them “functional”. But, western harmonies are ubiquitous in global music today because they work very well in moving music from one point to another. The one truly Indian piece of popular music that is quoted at length in the cycle is very “American folk” in its construction. This was welcome and appropriate allowing the cycle to not slip into the exotic or the foreign. I did manage to avoid the sense of “key relationships” in favor of a more universal sense of key tones (specific pitches upon which varied structures are built).¹⁹

This statement sheds light on why there are not many traditionally Western harmonies. It is fascinating how the cycle evokes a much greater sense of tonality

¹⁹ Ibid.

overall than atonality, even with Yun's use of vertical sonorities, vague sense of key, and intentional use of nontraditional chords.

Yun made reference to *It's 2pm* in talking of the song which was based on a popular Indian melody. This shows that vertical sonorities and heterophony²⁰ are not a hard and fast rule. Indeed, there are elements of both heterophony and homophony in most of the songs. The *Prologue*, as discussed previously, was built from the reference point of a drone. Yet even *It's 2pm*, which sounds to the ear as almost completely built on Western harmonic standards of counterpoint, thirds, and sixths, has many non-chord tones and vertical sonorities built in, as seen in mm. 19-25 (Ex. 3). In these measures non-chord tones, seventh chords, and major seconds are written on strong beats. This is soon replaced by completely predictable progress of IV-V7-I in the next system. Even here the melody line in measures 29 and 30 clashes with the accompaniment. Despite these dissonances, however, the song still manages to maintain an overall pop/folk sound and feel.

²⁰ Heterophony can be considered a texture that is horizontal rather than vertical, wherein there are simultaneous variations of melody.

19

M. The thin glim-mer of sun's rays on a win-ter af-ter - noon

28

Your black checked shirt is hang-ing on a brown line out - side. And your black

Example 3. Gerard Yun, *It's 2pm*, mm. 19-35

The cycle is written in an arc form, which was directly inspired by the combination of poems we choose for composition. Given that there were so many authors, but wanting the songs to come together in song cycle format as opposed to many unrelated songs, it was necessary to find a way to unify them. One way this was done was by selecting poems that could possibly fit under a theme. We were lucky to find so many poems that spoke of dreams, both literal and figurative. They were placed in chronological order, in order of the progression of life. Thoughts of childhood, then youth, maturity, and finally wisdom and understanding were explored. Even with this unification via an arc of maturity and understanding, Yun desired the poems be more tightly bonded as a cohesive unit.

The first unifying factor that seemed to help me was making sure there was a prologue and postlude... This element of construction helped me to see the piece as a whole (a container for these poems). The prologue and postlude became places to really introduce or comment – an ok place for the spoken word which is encountered by listeners/audience in a less abstract way than the singing voice (there needed to be a place for both in this work). The other movements went through their various metamorphoses and there are pairs actually related to one another.²¹

Eastern Influence

Another element we considered was the extent to which Eastern influences would permeate the score. The poetry from which the music was inspired was from India, so it seemed natural to include elements that reflected the culture and atmosphere of its origin country. Ideas included raga²², ornamentation, and drone. Although I was willing to try vocal ornamentation on the songs, we ended up discarding the idea. With little experience singing non-Western ornamentation, I felt the results were not very authentic.

Dr. Yun presented the idea of including an instrumental part to the cycle, played by an instrument that was uniquely Indian, such as the sitar. I was initially in favor of this idea, but ultimately dismissed it because of the feasibility of performance. While it was possible to find a tabla or sitar player in the Phoenix area, I worried about taking the cycle to other cities or states in the future where it would be difficult to locate and collaborate with such a player. I thought it best to limit the number of performers and avoid potentially inaccessible instruments. In the end, the cycle was a mostly Western work with elements of Eastern influence

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ragas are a mode, or Indian melodic form, upon which much of classical Indian music is based.

or pastiche, including drone, structure, and motif. While perhaps not true to the country of origin and its writers, it was written in a way true to the most authentic performance that I, as a classically trained Westerner, could honestly portray.

Is this a Western piece? An Indian piece? An Indian piece as seen through Western stereotypes? I am writing a book on Global Music Ethics so these questions are close to my mind, and have been for several decades. I opted finally to set the piece as a song-cycle with its own style which is referential to a number of established styles: western classical (Schubert, Schumann, Reich, Pärt), popular Indian-West crossovers (Sheila Chandra), and principals of improvisation loosely based on raga practice.²³

Eastern influence through motif appears in the accented note first seen in the Prologue. This motif of a flitting minor second is written in grace notes and triplets in the melody and grace notes in the alternate melody seen in the *Prologue* (Ex. 4).

Example 4. Gerard Yun, *Prologue*, mm. 15-20

²³ Ibid.

This same accented motif returns in *Sometimes in the Night* during the piano interlude (Ex. 5).

31

più mosso poco a poco

Example 5. Gerard Yun, *Sometimes in the Night*, mm. 31-35

Though it is not quite as obvious, the same motif can be found in its triplet form written into the accompaniment of the right hand in *I Thought I Wore the Watch Last Night*. Later in this same song, the original grace note form returns in the vocal line of the outburst (Ex. 7).

6

9 *mp*
Since the morn-ing I have been dis- turbed_ by last night's

13 *f*
sad- ness. Ah, ah

Example 6. Gerard Yun, *I Thought I Wore the Watch Last Night*, mm. 6-17

A less obvious reference to Indian culture is *It's 2pm*, which draws its chord progression directly from a Bengali song the youth sang at our workshops in Calcutta entitled *244-1139*.²⁴

²⁴ Yun orally discerned the chord progression of *244-1139* through listening to recordings on You Tube.

Stasis or non-movement

There are many passages in both piano and vocal lines that remain static—a drone in the piano accompaniment, as it opens the prologue, or places where the singer speaks multiple words on the same pitch, or with only slight alterations to the vocal line. Examples in the vocal line include mm. 47-48 in *I Thought I Wore the Watch Last Night* (Ex. 7). This was Yun’s purpose in employing this compositional concept.

47

Yet the mem-ries have re-mained. Like a paint-ed can-vas.

mf

Example 7. Gerard Yun, *I Thought I Wore the Watch Last Night*, mm. 47-66

This is a weird concept for sure. This stasis comes from the concept...that this cycle captures only a few moments in the thoughts of the children. Drones also imply a sort of stasis, where the constantness [*sic*] of the drone provides support for everything else...In some pieces the insistence is obvious and in others the drone may seem completely absent (it is never absent actually).

The stasis I try to achieve throughout and on many levels is sometimes fairly obvious – harmonic stasis, or insisting on one type of left hand sonority spacing, repeated notes or motives. Sometimes it is melodic stasis, insistence of one note over and over or a melody that only goes so high (Db) even if we “want” it to just soar.²⁵

²⁵ Ibid.

Bearing in mind that the stasis happens most prominently in the beginning of the cycle, where on the timeline they are children and have not yet overcome the experience of trafficking, the stasis illustrates the concept of being stuck. The children want to rise above their situations, but are not yet able to do so. This concept might be more easily understood than Yun's other goal in writing with stasis—to demonstrate that the listeners are only capturing a few moments in the thoughts of the children. The latter goal as accomplished through the means of non-movement might be too abstract for the audience to catch by simply listening to the cycle. The drone does well to represent the concept of the lack of freedom their young spirits were experiencing, but the stasis in the vocal part could too easily be viewed as the poet being lost in thought.

As a performer, I was concerned that the amount of non-movement in the piece would not read well to an audience; that it would simply be interpreted as boring or uneventful, instead of with the deeper philosophical meaning Yun wished to convey. Unsure if this was simply my opinion or others, I conferred with the coaches with whom I was working, and decided to strive for a compromise. Some of the repetition would remain, but occasional notes were altered to make the vocal line more interesting (See Ex. 8 and 9).

Example 8. Gerard Yun, *I Thought I Wore the Watch Last Night*, Original Version, mm. 22-26

Example 9. Gerard Yun, *I Thought I Wore the Watch Last Night*, Revised Version, mm. 22-26

Sometimes the concept of repetition did seem successful. In mm. 32-36 of *In My Dreams*, the singer intones a repeated ostinato over which the narrator dramatizes text from the poem. True to Yun's concept, the mantra-like part of the singer effectively communicates the strong but immobilized desire of a girl chanting comforting words, while the audience is still kept engaged through the increasing drama and additional voice of the narrator (Ex. 10).

26

Dreams No one No one No one

SPOKEN: In my dreams, there is happiness everywhere. There is love. There are friends around me. In my dreams, I will build a palace. And my friends will in that house. There will be love and unity for all. . . In my dreams.

Più mosso ♩=76

32

Text is read freely over repeating ostinato.

I _____ will build a pal-ace and my friends will live in that house, I _____ will build a pal-ace and my

Example 10. Gerard Yun, *In My Dreams*, mm. 26-33

Of this particular passage, his desired use of repetition, and the inherent challenge of portrayal, Yun says,

There are elements of minimalism here, especially in the earlier movements. I nearly drove myself batty with intricate repeated patterns, which in progressive revisions were eventually discarded. I think it was one of those ideas...inflicted from my training as a western, classical musician.

The most important repetition ended up being the “In My Dreams” theme that recurs throughout the work. That was not intentional in the initial sketches of the work, which featured instead a recurrence of the chanting theme first heard in the Prologue. In fact, both melodic material and harmonic material were developed from that small idea and are scattered throughout the cycle. The theme itself never comes back despite its constant recurrence in the early sketches.²⁶

In direct answer to my pleas for more variety in the work, Yun states,

I know you keep wanting more variety, but part of the challenge of this work is making as much as we can out of stasis (allegory for the way things are . . . the way life is) until we find complete freedom within (that is then projected outward . . . I know, weird philosophy; but clearly I've thought way too much about these parallels and allegories)... For me that means the story is not over, that we've captured just a snapshot and the true ending of this story is up to all of us. Do we help, add to society's awareness of this problem, or what? If the piece has a very final sense of completion then to me it says, "story over" which is not my intent for this one. I want the audience to find a continued interest.²⁷

The viability of this snapshot allegory, then, becomes a question of interpretation: the success of the performer's interpretation for the audience, and the ability of the audience to understand the interpretation of the performer and composition.

I think I personally could have done more to express Yun's desire from a dramatic standpoint—to build the tension during repeated, non-stasis movements, to be purposeful in an expression of minimalism. This was particularly true in songs where there was the constant juxtaposition between lyric and static. It was difficult for me to convey these goals vocally—I did not know how to artistically and effectively communicate the distinction in a way I knew the audience would understand. Were Yun's ideologies accurately portrayed? In the end, I am not

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Gerard Yun, Email to Author, November 11, 2009.

convinced that they were. Perhaps other musicians in the future could be more successful in conveying the intended reasoning behind the stasis to the audience.

THE SONG CYCLE

Prologue

Yun's thoughts on the *Prologue*:

I wanted to set up a solid relationship between spoken and sung texts... The main theme presented after the marching along of the drone is a tune that came out very insistently back in March of 2009 when I first worked with Melissa in person. I kept the theme because it came through so strongly. The basic drone relationships also were established at that first conceptual meeting. The basic "argument" is between the D drone (D and A variations) – this is dominant through the first half of the piece – and the G drone (D and G variations), which creates a transition to an actual key area – C major.²⁸

As the first song that gives background, concept, and meaning to the cycle, the *Prologue* is of utmost significance. It must draw the audience in while simultaneously explaining the premise of the music and the poetry that inspired it. If the cycle were written in story format or the poetry were obviously about trafficking the premise would not need to be recounted. A pre-cycle lecture was a viable option. The best solution we found was to integrate the spoken word. The *Prologue* provided the vehicle to a powerful introduction to *In My Dreams*.

Yun's conception for the *Prologue* was to have the piano drone underneath the narration while the singer is "lost in thought, trying to organize her thoughts."²⁹ The vocal line commences as background to the spoken word featured in the foreground. It was the composer's desire that the singer and pianist would improvise their respective parts. I was open to this, and pianist Wan-Yi Lo and I experimented with working within the mode of the piece, but as

²⁸ Gerard Yun, "Composer's Notes," Appendix C.

²⁹ Gerard Yun, Phone conversation with author, August 6, 2009.

neither one of us have training in jazz or other types of improvisation, it was an obstacle for us. If the music had been written so that only the voice part was improvised, it might have worked. The piano part was also written to be improvised, though, and as Lo is not a jazz pianist, it was difficult for us to collaborate while both experimenting in a new style.

Though the poetry is derived from the East, the musicians were trained in Western art music. Lo requested she be given a written score like she was accustomed to. I requested Yun compose a melody line that would simulate improvisation, for I did not wish to begin the cycle feeling uncomfortable and unsure. As his added performance comment says in the score, “Singer and pianist may either continue to repeat previous music under spoken text or they are permitted to improvise in the style.” Both are an option, depending on the preference and abilities of the musicians.

The *Prologue* introduces the themes and motives of the cycle. One motive is the drone. The piano begins on a D drone, which functions as the heartbeat of the piece.

Drones also imply a sort of stasis, where the constantness [*sic*] of the drone provides support for everything else. The presence of the drone eventually leaves the awareness of the listener as it falls into the background. The drones (there really are only two) in the song cycle parallel this phenomenon. In some pieces the insistence is obvious and in others the drone may seem completely absent (it is never absent actually).³⁰

³⁰ Gerard Yun, “Composer’s Notes,” Appendix C.

Performance Guide

Yun specifies that he does not want the drone in the piece to be rhythmically exact. In fact, he wants unsteady tempi at times. In notes specifically given for the benefit of the pianist, Yun states,

That low D should be pretty gentle [*sic*] persuaded towards consistency. Please don't pound. Anything that moves should be foreground. Lots of pedal, but you'll have to figure out what works for your ears so far as when the texture is just too muddy. Part of the musical gesture here is the muddled thoughts, lack of clarity. So, the texture should definitely not be "classical clean."

Once you have the modal language, please feel free to improvise although be very subtle and stay underneath the voice (think of your part as changing the color of the drone – hard to do on a piano for sure).³¹

The narrator plays the most prominent role of this song. Her tone is impassioned but conversational, as one might give a moving speech or honestly perform a monologue. There is nothing "artsy" about the performance, such as *Sprechstimme*, and the narrator may feel free to emphasize any words she pleases. The goal is to be personal, subjective, and specific—in short, to tell a story.

Here, as is true with all the songs in the cycle, the singer may choose whichever vowel she prefers. I chose [a] for the low register, because it is the easiest vowel to carry in that part of my voice. The purpose of the introduction is to establish an atmosphere of unrest. The singer enters with the vowel of her choosing in a gentle, haunted way, with a slightly breathy tone. Leaning into the graces notes, a motive introduced in the *Prologue*, is appropriate to the Indian influence Yun wished to convey. He writes "absentmindedly, detached," because

³¹ Ibid.

the focus of the song is not on the singer, but on the narrator. This is more a dramatic objective than a literal one, because to interpret “absentmindedly, detached,” as a dynamic, therefore singing the line quietly, means the voice will not carry in the low register.

Much of this resonates in the chest, and appropriately so. A more chest-centered mix allows an earthy quality to permeate the voice. The singer should repeat the final system as needed until the narrator finishes, so she does not need to rush. As discussed, the piece is designed for improvisation, and it is the composer’s desire that it be done this way if both pianist and singer are comfortable.

My Special Place

Yun's thoughts on *My Special Place*:

This movement is more imaginative and hopeful in a pipe dream sort of way and begins very idyllically. That deteriorates quickly. There is, for me, a conflict between the wonderful thoughts and whatever "reality" has created the need for this "special place" of refuge. Whenever simple harmonies come into play, as they do here, they are often impure, that is, they having lots of coloring notes that fog the texture and change the impact (certainty) of the ideas. Many things remain unresolved.³²

The prologue segues into *My Special Place* with a haunting little melody that carries it effortlessly into this first traditional song (traditional in that singer sings the text). The original key of g minor was transposed down a major 2nd to f minor, which worked much better in my voice. The song is written very similarly to Italian recitative, as it happens over sparse accompaniment. In other words, the singer bears the weight of moving the melody and speech along. Rather than having the recitative precede and be separated from the aria, however, multiple recitative sections are interspersed between sections of flowing, melodic harmony and appealing melody.

Originally our concept was to compose the song completely in major to reflect childlike innocence, knowing that later in the cycle darker, more disillusioned songs would come. Instead the song foreshadows that darker world, with the next song *In My Dreams* serving to illustrate the innocence of childhood dreams. Mm. 38-39 of the example below reflect this change in thought (Ex. 11). Where previously the last sung note resolved to an F, it was changed to suspend the G to evoke the underlying lack of peace in days ahead.

³² Ibid.

35 **poco rit.**

I can see on-ly I can see and feel...

f *ff* *p*

ritard

40

Example 11. Gerard Yun, *My Special Place*, mm. 35-43

Performance Guide

For the singer it is important to not stagnate the flow, but to remember forward motion of the breath and tone during the more speech-like parts so it does not “stagnate.” This is especially true on the first line, which is the first sung line with text of the cycle, “My special place is where I sing and dance...” The piano comes to a halt before the line begins, so the singer must take care not to halt the breath but keep the sound spinning. The beautifully melodic line is traded between the vocal and piano part, with one voicing it and then the other, without much overlap. This represents the struggle between what the child hopes for life and what she fears or senses might actually become of it. It can also represent the dismal and oppressive life around her. In keeping with Yun’s concept of stasis,

the singer is not truly allowed to soar for long moments without being overtaken by the piano or the constraints of minimalism in the recitative. In a conscious attempt to block out the possible tumult of the world around her, she repeats the words “Only I can see,” to herself three times with increasing desperation as she attempts to cling to her dreams.

Though the song is written in a minor, it still needs to reflect more of a childlike sadness than a mature, jaded discouragement. This can be achieved by retaining a very sweet, *dolce* quality to the voice. In this way the singer remains more or less naive, while all the while beneath her the “wise” voice of the piano foreshadows the sadness to be realized. Yun instructs,

Use lots of rubato in order to get the character of opening sections. The opening should be pretty sweet and dreamy, not strict at all. Allow yourself a lot of flow. Measures 15-17 are sort of a fake-out, as if things get strict. They don't, yet. Think of these three measures as a bit of an antithesis to the freedom of the intro. Make these three measures “less fun, less sweet, less free, perhaps even less “musical.” From about mm 21 you should play very strictly, almost robotically up until the motion stops at the recit section. The musical allusion is as if she is trying to “hold it together” despite the fact that this section feels like it wants to run forward or have plasticity – hold it as strictly as possible. It is possible to build intensity throughout this as well. In the recit section you may certainly roll the chords and play “colla voce.”³³

As Yun states, *rubato* is key in this piece, both for the pianist and the singer.

More often than not it is not simultaneous *rubato*, but that the singer speaks, then the pianist (Ex. 12).

³³ Ibid.

11 *subito lento*
 My special place is where I sing, and dance, and read my sto-ry books.
rit.
colla voce

15 *a tempo* *mp* Where my friends are al-ways a -

Example 12. Gerard Yun, *My Special Place*, mm. 11-18

Measures 25-26 build to the key word “lovingly.” An *accelerando* is suggested from mm. 34-35 where the final, emphatic “I can see and feel” is stated. The piano part does not slow until m. 42, so the momentum should build until then.

If the main body of song is felt in two, there will be a cleaner juxtaposition with the freer phrases. Measures 31-33, marked “stile recitativo,” are free, and do not need to be kept in strict time. Finally, in keeping with the idea of a lack of resolution in the final two measures of the vocal part, it is advisable to sing the final pitch of G with straight tone until the last couple of beats, as one would in a contemporary musical theatre ballad.

This direction from Yun relates to this song as well as similar places in the songs that follow,

There are minimalist-type patterns that need to be fairly robotic. This is especially true in the middle of two: “My Special Place,” “Sometimes in the Night” and others... These were intended as minimalist markers at least initially. In fact, an early version of one movement is completely minimalist. I couldn’t stand it and rewrote a less strict version. Generally, try to allow any “overuse” of repeated notes, drones, etc. to fall into the background while moving lines take the foreground.³⁴

³⁴ Ibid.

In My Dreams

Yun's thoughts on *In My Dreams*:

This movement establishes what becomes a unifying element in the work – the “In My Dreams” theme. There is great generosity in this poem and sense of purity in the scene – hence the certainty and purity of the key area –C.

The pretty, little theme is just that, short-lived and pretty. It can't last. And there are more menacing and insistent elements that poke through the piece. Both spoken voice and singing voice are combined to ward off the effects of this. In effect then, the melody becomes mantra -- a short, repeated prayer, a reminder that things can be better, a mantra of optimism (weirdly the triplet became the marker of optimism for me and grace notes from the prologue became omens of trouble).

The secondary theme mirrors the hard work of getting ones head out of the negatives and back to a decent state. It too becomes almost mantra like while the speaking voice continues in the foreground. Frankly, the thought behind this poem seems almost Herculean to me. It is expressed so simply and eloquently.³⁵

There are two poems with this title, from which the cycle's name is derived. This song offers the audience a vision of both the positive daydreams of the child, and the darker, fearful preempting of the possible life that lies ahead for the same child. The piano begins with an innocent, playful introduction reminiscent of a young person playing outside and happily reflecting upon what she imagines her future to be. The walking bass embodies this lightheartedness, and the key of C major captures the optimistic spirit of the child.

³⁵ Ibid.

In measure 28, however, the child begins to catch glimpses of what could become a darker reality in her future. The part is marked “menacing,” but the a minor section is short-lived as the song reverts quickly back to C Major (Ex. 13).

10
 — No one is brok - en, In my dreams. *più mosso*
menacing

16
 Ideally text should be read in the rhythm indicated. But, naturalness of delivery is priority
 In my dreams, 3 No one 3 No one
 lu lu (etc.)
ritard

Example 13. Gerard Yun, *In My Dreams II*, mm. 10-20

This in turn inspires the mantra she repeats to herself in m. 32. Being able—at least for now—to cast aside inklings of fear, she returns to triumphantly declare in mm. 39-40 that “I will live,” and “we will live!” before returning to a sweet reiteration of the opening of the song, again in C Major (Ex. 14). Note that when the musical idea of impending terror appears in a minor, the walking bass is replaced by a drone on the pitch of A.

37 *molto rit.*
 will build a pal-ace and my friends, my friends, my friends will live and I will live, and we will live!

41 *Lento e dolce*
 In my dreams... No one is ill... No one is bro - ken, in my dream

mp
Lento

Example 14. Gerard Yun, *In My Dreams II*, mm. 37-45

The spoken voice plays an integral part of this song, emphasizing the message of the text, while also representing the internal struggle she endures as she tries to convince herself that her dreams can indeed become a reality. Though the text was written for the narrator to use specific rhythms, I asked Yun if this rhythm could be interpreted as a suggestion, since I desired the spoken voice to sound natural and not contrived. He agreed.

A vocal part that needed to be amended was the mantra section. First, melodically it was difficult for me because it required clear diction on sixteenth notes in the passaggio (Ex. 15). It seemed that if the purpose of the line was to embody a speech-like quality, it should be written in the register of my voice

where I normally speak, or from C4-G5. To correct this, Yun completely rewrote the B section so the entire section sat securely in the chest-mix part of the voice.

28
I _____ will build a pal - ace and my friends will live in

29
that house, I _____ will build a pal - ace and my friends will live in
(repeat and build as needed for reader to complete poetic text)

30
that house, I _____ will build a pal - lace and my friends will live in

31
that house, I _____ will build a pal - ace and my friends will live in

Example 15. Gerard Yun, *In My Dreams*, Original Vocal Line, mm. 28-31

The word stresses in the B section were also in need of polishing. In the first version, the words “that house” were abruptly clipped and the only word emphasized was “I.” It felt quite rushed (Ex. 16). If it were written for a clarinet or other instrument, it might have worked. Being written for voice, the rhythms needed to be changed to reflect natural speech patterns. An excellent revised version was made, with emphasis now on key words such as “friends,” and “live” (Ex. 17).

31

that house, I will build a pal-ace and my friends will live in that house, I

Example 16. Gerard Yun, *In My Dreams*, Original Version, mm. 31-32

I will build a pal-ace and my friends will live in that house, I will build a pal-ace and my

34

friends will live in that house I will build a pal-ace and my friends, my friends, my friends will live

Example 17. Gerard Yun, *In My Dreams*, Revised Version, mm. 32-36

Performance Guide

The A section is lyrical and the B section is speech-like, so a shift in legato is necessary. It is important not to let the simple, short phrases of the A section become unconnected lines. Legato must be observed if there is to be a contrast with the B section. In the B section the attention is shifted from the singer to narrator and back. Though it might appear to happen first, the narrator's dialogue written above m. 28 is not articulated until the singer has sung once through mm. 32-36 (Ex. 18). In other words, once the singer has finished the first ending she returns to m. 32 to repeat her part and *then* the narrator enters with the spoken word. Done otherwise, the narration and vocal line compete for attention and comprehension. This must be well-rehearsed to assure the narrator completes her lines by the middle of m. 38, so the singer can properly finish the thought with "I will live, and we will live."

26

Dreams No one No one No one

SPOKEN: In my dreams, there is happiness everywhere. There is love. There are friends around me. In my dreams, I will build a palace. And my friends will in that house. There will be love and unity for all. . . In my dreams.

Più mosso $\text{♩} = 76$

32

Text is read freely over repeating ostinato.

I _____ will build a pal-ace and my friends will live in that house, I _____ will build a pal-ace and my

Example 18. Gerard Yun, *In My Dreams*, mm. 26-33

Given that the final text of the B section, “I will live, and we will live,” is the high point of the song, it makes sense for the tempo and dynamic level to be subdued at the return of A beginning in m. 41. Another focal point of the poem is the phrase “No one is broken.” This line of text is a powerful declaration of understanding that the past does not need to define whom one is or who she can become. In stating this, she is refusing to be a victim or see herself as less of a

person. The phrase is sung four times throughout the song, so a possible acting choice would be to show the process of coming to believe the statement.

Sometimes in the Night

Sometimes in the Night exudes intense energy and anxiety. It is different from anything else in the work. Toying with the idea of building up this anxiety and then subduing it made it even more musical. At m. 31, for example, the interlude begins and tension is heightened as the listener is catapulted to a world in which the next nightmare, the one concerning her mother, is about to begin (Ex. 19).

31

più mosso poco a poco

Example 19. Gerard Yun, *Sometimes in the Night*, mm. 31-35

Speaking of the musical affects used to create this tension, Yun writes,

The basic effect is a "time pattern" or monotonous rhythm signifying time passing in the night. This gets interrupted with the "interruption motif" that starts the piece and recurs throughout. It signifies a sort of anxious or nervous bell tolling -- a call back to a harsh, anxious, and uncomfortable reality. Note though that the chords soften in that motif in order to signify a gathering of composure and then back to the passing time, waiting, and passing images.³⁶

Poetically, this text crosses into the second major section of the "Dream Sequence" where the poetry takes a darker, more ominous turn. Interestingly, this poem is the only one about a dream experienced in sleep, rather than a daydream or dream in the sense of an idea about the world. This literal dream captures a

³⁶ Ibid.

memory and is laced with nostalgia. There is a harmonic heaviness and unease woven throughout in conjunction with a fairly diatonic melody. It is not until the end of the song we discover that the dream was actually a nightmare. At my request, the song was transposed from g minor to f minor, where it fit much more comfortably and offered a darker quality that matched the character of the song. In contrast with *My Special Place*, where the recitative-like lines are sparsely accompanied, the places where stasis is employed maintain similar accompaniment patterns with the exception of m. 15. One of the most beautiful and moving lines of the song is the melisma on the word “mother,” which evokes the yearning and emotion the girl feels when she dreams about her mother (Ex. 20).

36

At times I al-so see Mo - ther Mo -

poco rit

41 *meno mosso*

ther On the roof near the clothes line, Her hand stretched out af-ter put-ting the

3

Example 20. Gerard Yun, *Sometimes in the Night*, mm. 36-44

This is especially poignant when considering that some of the girls who contributed poetry were not actually trafficked, but had been raised in the brothel district by a mother who brought the men into their dwelling.

Performance Guide

Lo and I chose to increase the tempi in many of the songs to add variety, and a tempo increase (from mm. 84-100) in this particular song accentuates the intensity of the text. Measure 4 was marked “as if waiting for time to pass by,” yet we did precisely the opposite by accelerating with intensity until slowing a measure or two before the singer’s entrance (Ex. 21). We chose that interpretation because it seemed that the intensity of the first three measures was too short-lived, too fleeting to really be established. I do think that Yun’s markings could be strictly observed in a different collaboration between other musicians—it is more a matter of preference.

♩=100+ *Suddenly Awakened*

♩=100+

ff *mp* *accel.*

8 *mp*

rit. Some-times in the night, I see Fa - ther in

Example 21. Gerard Yun, *Sometimes in the Night*, mm. 1-13

The words “Clutching bags from market,” are marked “freely,” but for optimal drama it is best to jump immediately from the pianist’s D \flat seventh chord to “Clutching” so that no momentum is lost before easing into any freedom of the phrase. It is after this phrase that Lo and I observed, “As if waiting for time to pass by,” to portray a hot, slow, muggy afternoon in Calcutta. In m. 31 the intensity, begun and sustained by the piano, again builds like a locomotive, only slightly slowing in mm. 36-37. Here a tempo must be found which is quick enough to relay an underlying anxiety, yet not so fast that the singer can not enunciate the words (Ex. 19).

The penultimate phrase, beginning with the pick-up to m. 48, is sung *marcato* to bring out the climax of the text. This same intensity is again picked up at m. 55 under “nightmare,” where both singer and piano push forward as they escalate into terror. The singer should take care to release into her chest voice when singing phrases such as “His nose drips wet with sweat,” or “Trying to pick them up.” If these phrases are head-mix heavy, the voice will not carry and the passion and darkness will not come through in that part of the voice.

I Thought I Wore the Watch Last Night

“Watch” is for me, the most anxious and emotive poem in the entire set. It is also the most disturbing and least hopeful. The sense that one is losing something very important by losing the watch . . . very poignant. So, at the outset, the D drone disintegrates into a dissonant sonority, which is used throughout the piece. The pace is rushed and there is a lot of recitation, almost desperate parlando, in the movement. This short movement is meant really to be a quick snapshot into a not-so-pretty moment. The melody is understandably angular at times, more reflective of disturbingly anxious thought patterns than anything else. Stasis is again achieved through over pounded sonorities; in this case, those build on G.³⁷

Once again the music alternates between melodic lines with full accompaniment beneath and recitative accompanied by sparse chords, similar to Baroque arias. The line “I thought I wore the watch last night, but I did not,” is repeated three times throughout at three strategic places: beginning, middle, and end. A simple change was made to place a fermata on a different word of the second part of the phrase. In the first instance of the phrase, the emphasis is on “I,” the second, “but,” and the third, “not.” This brought a new level of poetic interpretation by causing the listener to evaluate the repeated phrase in a new way each time.

This song is a prime example of the struggle between pop and classical technique I encountered when learning and performing the cycle. The higher notes of the song like E \flat were more easily sung using a classical approach, but then the “ah,” of wordless exasperation in m. 14 and the spoken part required a less formal, more raw means of expression (Ex. 24).

³⁷ Ibid.

Many changes were made to the vocal line to more effectively approximate speech patterns. For example, in m. 21 the vocal line was changed to reflect a more natural speech flow and to place emphasis on “snapped” rather than “him.” Similarly, rhythmic changes and slight pitch adjustments were made in mm. 24-25 to add some level of variety without giving the line a completely sonorous ideal. The musical examples below show a comparison between the original and modified vocal lines.

18

Be-fore the au-to-wal-lah could e - ven greet me I snapped at him!

Example 22. Gerard Yun, *I Thought I Wore the Watch Last Night*, Original Version, mm. 18-21

18

mf

Be-fore the dri-ver could e - ven greet me I snapped at him!

Example 23. Gerard Yun, *I Thought I Wore the Watch Last Night*, Revised Version, mm. 18-21

The accompaniment for *I Thought I Wore the Watch Last Night* cleverly fits the mood of the piece. Before Yun began composing this particular song, I expressed to him that I felt the text called for a quickly moving, anxious accompaniment with a simple, almost halted melody. During the Utah meeting,

we had written “beautiful triplets/wistful memory” and “white parallel 7ths” in the margins of the second part of the song, beginning at “My moist eyes stare listlessly at my left hand,” and continuing until the end. Throughout the final page of the song these sevenths are found.

Performance Guide

A distinction should be made between the intensity required in this song versus that of the previous *Sometimes in the Night*. The previous song is indeed intense, but in a darker, nightmarish way. *I Thought I Wore the Watch Last Night*, on the other hand, is more demonstrative of the type of anxiety that nags at you. It is an underlying feeling that something is wrong, but you cannot quite identify what.

Diction is essential in this cycle, and this is perhaps the most challenging song in the collection to clearly enunciate. The initial tempo of 80 was increased to 120 to more accurately reflect the poet’s nervousness, bringing a challenge to not slur the sixteenth notes of the vocal entrance. If the singer maintains a sense of forward motion, she will be less likely to lessen her energy and intensity through the ebb and flow of the passages.

The phrase “A similar watch again,” may be either spoken or half-sung. It is a capella so the voice will carry either way. It was my experience that employing a more classical technique in this song was most useful. The only issue with this was the outburst of “Ah” from mm. 14-17, in which a slightly more raw, guttural sound is needed; or that at least in some way the result is the phrase sound more like an outburst than a controlled melisma (Ex. 24).

Example 24. Gerard Yun, *I Thought I Wore the Watch Last Night*, mm.13-17

The singer can break out of the monotony of repeated notes by building toward peaks in phrases. For example, by aiming for the B \flat on “listlessly” in mm. 34-35, a small musical phrase is built.

Example 25. Gerard Yun, *I Thought I Wore the Watch Last Night*, mm. 31-38

The same goal of heading for “even” in mm. 19-20 prevents the previous notes from stagnating. On the last page starting with the line “This was the gift...” the

pianist is plays few chords, and vocalist has the opportunity to stretch the rhythms of the text to fit the emotion of the poem to her own interpretation.

It's 2pm

Yun's thoughts on *It's 2pm*:

I chose to write the text carrying material for this piece over 244-1139, the Bengali pop/folk song that many of the girls were singing when Melissa worked with them in India. It seemed to make sense to do this since it provided a hopeful (or distracting) backdrop to the poetry – so many interpretations of the song's presence in this context reflects [*sic*] the almost ephemeral nature of thoughts on this topic... Sometimes though, background music (as most of us use it) allows us to settle our thoughts and think, perhaps about nothing, so that we can gain composure. The thoughts of the poem are definitely of an anxious nature. So, the use of background music (background music for music) seems appropriate.

The thoughts in this poem are very sad. The poet is in a lonely and desperate place and from my perspective there is nothing very redeeming about the one thing she hopes for (that this guy will show up finally and give her some attention). So, the only thing that stabilizes this movement is appropriately the consistency of the pop song constantly going underneath. No matter what words are being sung or whether the thoughts are -- good, dark, bright, or bad -- there is the pop song doing whatever it does (reassuring, stabilizing, distracting). Even with the melodic and hope-filled song underneath this piece is sad. Perhaps the presence of the catchy tune makes it even sadder.³⁸

The same talented and experienced poetess who composed the previous text wrote *It's 2pm*. This poem was the most difficult to interpret from a poetic standpoint, and without an assuredly accurate interpretation of the text, it was difficult to know how to set the poem musically. It was not until I conversed with Rohit Dasgupta about the poem's meaning I realized I had been interpreting the poem's meaning from an incorrect cultural standpoint. I initially thought the girl had low self-esteem and was seeking validation from the boy she loves. It

³⁸ Ibid.

seemed to me the quintessential song of the lonely girl who dates rebellious and emotionally unavailable men in the hopes of filling an inner emptiness.

Based on this interpretation, we envisioned less tonality in the melody instead of the beautiful sweeping lines planned in other songs. The colors mentioned in the poem, the “black checked shirt,” “brown threats,” “black shoes,” “blue window,” and “cigarette stained lips,” are dark hues. The concept for the song, then, was full of shadows to reflect emptiness and low self-esteem. It was to be the heavy point of the cycle. Of struggling conceptually with the approach to this song, Yun said,

Okay, I’m going to shoot for “It’s 2pm” being the heavy point. It makes sense structurally. And it makes sense poetry-wise too. I don’t relate well to these two poems yet (I Thought I Wore the Watch Last Night and It’s 2pm). And so, they haven’t floated themselves out to me like the other poems have. The other poems are, they’re kind of writing themselves. These two are tough.³⁹

Talking with Dasgupta and asking his interpretation of the poem given his background and friendship with the poet (whom I could not contact) were turning points in the writing process. He corrected my analysis by saying,

The community these girls comes [*sic*] from, these kind [*sic*] of guys (out of work, [*sic*] most part uneducated, and violent) are very common and they cannot reciprocate the intensity of feelings that the girl (like in this poem) has. This I think is an important point in understanding the poem since this is something that almost all the girls would face coming from that part of society.⁴⁰

In light of this new interpretation, it seemed there is a mixture of fear, longing, and hope. The line “So with much hope,” reflects genuine optimism.

³⁹ Gerard Yun, Phone Conversation with Author, August 26, 2009.

⁴⁰ Rohit Dasgupta, Email to Author, July 15, 2009.

Yun did something unexpected and quite creative with the song in light of this new more realistic interpretation of the poem. With an aspiration to have hints of Indian influence woven throughout the cycle, he asked if there had been any songs that the youth had sung or referenced during our time in India. Indeed there were—the youth sang a song called *244-1139* for us at the poetry workshop held at Sanlaap in Calcutta.

Yun took the chord progression in the song and composed a new melody for the text. These are the lyrics of *244-1139*, translated from Bengali to English:

I have got a job Bela, are you listening?
No one can stop us now.
You can send back that proposal
And tell mother you are not marrying.

I have indeed got a job.
Just a few more months
They will pay 1100 now,
Confirm the job after three months...
Bela, why are you silent, why don't you say something?

Hello... 'Is that 2441139?'
Bela Bose are you listening?
I have got you after a dozen wrong numbers
I will not lose you now at any cost...

Hello... 2441139?'
Please call Bela Bose, just once.
Meter's running on this public telephone
This an important, very important matter...

This time our dreams will really come true
After all this long wait
We have spent many a day in dusty dingy cabins by the road
Waiting with heavy breaths...

Just a few more days Bela, then freedom.
That blue-walled house in Kasba will be ours
In this white-black, trouble-ridden, bittersweet city

We will start our colorful life...

I have got a job indeed
Those times of sobs, of brawls are gone now
Hello... Can you hear me or not?

Bela, why are you crying silently?
I have indeed got a job
Those times of sobs and brawls are gone
Hello... Can you hear me?

Hello? Hello?
2441139, 2441139⁴¹

In a way, the message of *244-1139* is very similar to that of *It's 2pm*. In both songs the final question remains unanswered. Underneath the bittersweet lyrics of both is an encouraging, expectant sounding chord progression.

While the song is written in D \flat major with simple chord structures, there are many important dissonances throughout the song where a clash of negative and positive emotions is expressed. The first sung note of B \flat against the A \flat and C in the piano in m. 4, the D \flat against the E \flat suspended the entire m. 23, the C against B \flat of m. 81 are examples of this (Ex. 26).

78

I wait for ev'-ning when the sun goes down You will stand on

Example 26. Gerard Yun, *It's 2pm*, mm. 78-86

⁴¹ Anjan Dutt, "Anjan Dutt calls Bela Bose on 244-1139," Life Rules, entry posted November 4, 2009, <http://gaurigharpure.blogspot.com/2009/11/anjan-dutt-calls-bela-bose-on-2441139.html> (Accessed September 29, 2010).

Similar to *I Thought I Wore the Watch Last Night*, there were many changes to rhythm and melodic line to emphasize key words, and eliminate awkward rhythms—essential to a song such as this, which relies so heavily on melody.

27

noon _____ Your black checked shirt is hang-ing on a brown line out - side.

Example 27. Gerard Yun, *It's 2pm*, Original Version, mm. 27-34

28

_____ Your black checked shirt is hang-ing on a brown line out - side. And your black

Example 28. Gerard Yun, *It's 2pm*, Revised Version, mm. 28-35

This is the most pop-oriented song of the cycle. Many elements of pop/folk are evident, the first being the usage of the chord progression taken straight from a current pop song sung by the youth of Calcutta. Another characteristic of pop music idiom is the entrance of the singer on [u], humming the melody before launching into the words.

Performance Guide

Again, to embody the pop/folk style, Yun wanted to expand the piano part with arpeggios, rolling chords, and the like. He did not get around to this, so he directed the pianist to improvise, as one might expand the part of a hymn or simplistic pop tune. Again, Lo was not comfortable improvising but ultimately was able to add simple arpeggios (basically measure one repeated throughout the song) that were sufficient to complete and magnify the piano part.

Given the style of the song, it was imperative I apply a pop technique without falling back on old habits of singing pop music with a closed throat and low palette. Fortunately, after listening to the recording of my recital I was able to recognize and adjust intonation issues accordingly before making the recording. To achieve this, I focused on beginning each phrase on the breath with an open throat, and reset that position each time I began a new phrase.

The rhythm does not need to be strictly observed, and can be stylized with some freedom, including small slides down or scoops up to notes (in moderation). Also along this line, I feel it important to observe more daily speech-like vowels in this song as one would in a musical theatre or pop song. The vowels are less rounded and slightly more lateral than they would be in classical literature. If approached purposefully, the notes on strong dissonances do not sound like accidents against the strength of the popular progression beneath.

One should maintain a sad demeanor when performing the song so the bitterness can be expressed through the singer, and the sweetness through the pianist's part.

I Can Hear Them

Yun's thoughts on *I Can Hear Them*:

This poem was problematic textually as a lot of non-metrical and non-rhyming texts can be for composers. So, I rearranged the elements into those to be spoken and those to be sung, making one comment on the other – sort of like my mind is like normally.

I composed perhaps 4-6 versions of this work in various styles. The first ones sounded like marching themes from *Les Miserables* and there were quieter one [*sic*], minimalist ones, and lyrical ones. My favorite was a very poor imitation of Gorecki's mature, minimalist style. None of them really worked. I realized one night very late, that there was nothing in this cycle that was really simple and prayerful, something reflective, and perhaps without the anxiety of the rest of the work. That moment found its expression in this movement. And while it is not anxious or angular at all, the piece is still sort of disturbing. While the poem says, "I can hear" the question is really "Can you hear them?" Somehow the simple setting manages to leave you with that question – Am I hearing them? What is it I need to hear? The very tonal (almost theory-exercise-like) setting is reminiscent of hymns, while the suspensions create a lament effect. With the music, for me, this poem becomes a prayer of hope that someone, maybe lots of someones, will hear and respond. It is a prayer asking for awareness and openness – simple things that elude us in our very distracting lives.⁴²

I Can Hear Them is a hymn-like, straightforward song. With singer and piano alone it might sound plain, but the addition of narration evokes a moving and poignant anthem. The most effective way to sing the song is cleanly and simply. The passion comes more from the narration than the vocal part, and the phrasing should be discernable but discreet. In other words, text takes precedence over music.

This song marks the beginning of part three of the "Dream Sequence," where the victim is becoming a survivor. It is noteworthy that this is the first

⁴² Gerard Yun, "Composer's Notes," Appendix C.

poem to speak directly to the audience, using the word "you" in a non-rhetorical way. The poet is asking questions, raising concerns, and challenging the fairness and validity of what she has been taught. The first part of the poem concerns her surrounding environment, drawing the listener in to her world. By the middle of the song, she is victoriously standing up for herself. This is a very rousing song, which builds to "Or have your ears been silenced to their voices?" a phrase which for the first time during the cycle breaks the fourth wall and serves as a call to action for each audience member (Ex. 29).

2

43 Can you hear their pleas?
Has society muffled your ears to their cry? Or have your ears been silenced to their voices? *mf*

ing. want - ing. sound and voi - ces. Cry -

54

ing. want - ing. sound and voi - ces.

65 *mp*

I can hear them. their whis- pers. their

Example 29. Gerard Yun, *I Can Hear Them*, mm. 43-71

Some artistic liberties were taken with the text to format it for voice and narration. This is the poem in its original form:

I can hear the whispers of my friends,
Can you hear them?
I can hear the cry of the peddler in the streets,
Can you hear him?
I can hear the song of birds,
Can you hear it?
I can hear the sounds of the factory next door,
Can you hear them?
Many different sounds and voices
Have embedded themselves in my heart
Like the shouts of a thousand children.
They are crying, they want to live,
Can you hear their pleas?
Has society muffled your ears to their cry...?
Or have your ears been silenced to their voices?

This is the text the singer sings:

I can hear them
Their whispers, their cries, their songs, I hear them.
Crying, wanting, sound and voices.

This is the narrator's script:

I can hear the whispers of my friends.
Can you hear them?
I can hear the cry of the peddler in the street.
I can hear the sounds of the factory next door.
I can hear the song of birds.
Can you hear them?
Many different sounds and voices have embedded themselves in my heart,
Like the sounds of a thousand children.
They are crying, they want to live.
Can you hear their pleas?
Has society muffled your ears to their cry?
Or have your ears been silenced to their voices?

The narrator's text adheres closely to the original poem, only skipping a few repeats of "Can you hear them," rather than the every-other-line repeat seen in the original poem. The singer's text takes much greater liberty through piecing together and highlighting key words. Like the *Prologue*, the spoken voice is the primary instrument, with the singer acting more as accompaniment. Our initial thought was to combine *I Can Hear Them* with the similar poem, *I Can Hear the Cry of Many Voices*. As explained previously, we decided to discard the combination idea in favor of only using *I Can Hear Them*. Yun writes, "I took apart *I Can Hear* ... cut out the entire first poem, switched the spoken text with the sung text, and while I retained one "chord" or drone motif, I basically revamped the entire work. It just rolled out like that."⁴³

Performance Guide

Overall, this piece is incredibly straightforward, and its beauty is found in its directness and sincerity. It is a duet between singer and narrator, as though they were the same person, or two people working to achieve similar goals. The same directions apply to the narrator here as they did in *In My Dreams*, in that the narrator's text should be given powerfully, authentically, and conversationally.

The four-bar phrase is prominent in this song, and an unadorned arc across the phrases adds shape without distracting from the cleanness of the lines. A bit more passion can be added at m. 41 after the narrator's monologue; then at m. 65 the calm hymn-like quality of the song once more reigns. *I Can Hear Them* must have a more full, open sound than *It's 2pm* to reflect its hymn-like style. For the

⁴³ Gerard Yun, Email to Author, September 28, 2009.

pianist, the chords may be arpeggiated beneath the narrator's monologue for movement. Once again, this movement gives way to stillness for the final repetition of text from m. 65 to the end.

When I Laugh

Yun's thoughts on *When I Laugh*:

This is really a weird piece. Truthfully, it is the most disappointing one for me as I really was bent on finding musical figurations that made sense with “crazy-woman” laughter. I feel that I was most unsuccessful as a composer in this particular movement. But, the poem is so good. It really reads as if she means “madness” while what she really means is “madly in love.” I hope to revisit this one in a future version. Perhaps I need to meet someone who is truly whacko [*sic*] and in love all at the same time.⁴⁴

This song, part of the third group in the “Dream Sequence,” is different in character from others in the cycle. It is about people telling the girl that she is crazy or indeed broken, but instead of accepting these opinions as truth, she uses humor to make light of the situation. Since this poem is one of the few less ponderous poems in the cycle, I requested a lighter tone and texture to match the text and add a new vibrant color to the cycle. It seemed the most natural way for me to infuse humor was to keep the melody bouncy and spritely, perhaps by employing *staccati*. Lyrical lines, used frequently in the other pieces, did not seem to express the quality of the poem. Playing with tempo during the last lines to catch the audience off guard with the punch line, “Madly in love!” was another idea. A clipped or cartoon-esque ending could finish the piece nicely.

There were moments of the light, spritely, quickness I had envisioned. The runs on the word “mad,” were brilliant, introducing a new type of melismatic, agile writing not seen in other songs in the cycle, and enabling word painting to express laughter and madness (Ex. 30).

⁴⁴ Gerard Yun, “Composer’s Notes,” Appendix C.

Example 30. Gerard Yun, *When I Laugh*, mm. 15-19

These runs are written with the purpose of sounding like a laugh. Yun states,

[It] should be spastic. The beginning is free and slow, and then goes strict for a couple of measures than back to free. The tempos are varied, never stays strict for long. Accompaniment is colla voce. Your madness determines the tempi. Make tons of notes on this one because it should sort of be crazy and free. Also deceptive, right? Should sound like you're nuts when you're just in love. When you are on the high note at the end the acc. should fly (accel.)⁴⁵

Notice he mentioned the deceptiveness of the song—not deceptive in a sinister way, but rather a misleading way, playing into the notion people have that she truly is crazy. It is not until the final line when she declares “Madly in Love!” that we realize the joke is on us. During this same line, the piano resolves underneath the singer as she holds a high G (Ex. 31).

Example 31. Gerard Yun, *When I Laugh*, mm. 31-37

⁴⁵ Gerard Yun, Email to Author, October 21, 2009.

Again in his composer's notes, Yun reiterates to "Make this as manic as you can. It is madness (this thing called love)."⁴⁶

This was the most difficult song of the entire cycle to sing. The notes, range, and rhythm were fine—though the vowel [æ] (as in the words "mad" and "laugh") has always been a difficult one for me, particularly in the *passaggio*. The concepts Yun outlined, the ideas he was going for, made sense conceptually, but implementing the concepts was another issue altogether. For me to sing maniacally but at a slower speed seemed counterintuitive. Also, it was a challenge to carry off the ideas—the mania—collaboratively, particularly during the phrases that visually would suggest almost long, languid lines. After preparing for and then listening to the premiere performance, I asked permission to exclude *When I Laugh* as part of the cycle when making the recording.

This is a song I would like to revisit in the future for a possible revision with Yun. Perhaps if it were revised to be light and agile with less *rubato* required, it would be a more easily achieved task for both singer and pianist. I would like to explore the use of humor in this piece—especially because there is so little opportunity for it elsewhere. There are some elements that really work, like the sixteenth-note runs, and the piece does add a new color and quality to the cycle unobserved in other songs. For now, however, it is not included in the cycle.

⁴⁶ Gerard Yun, "Composer's Notes," Appendix C.

Create Another Earth for Me

Here is the use of a regular tonal melody as cantus firmus as in “2pm” and “In My Dreams II.” I’ve already written about the cantus firmus melody and how that came about. Here’s a reprint of that. Whoa, I am block quoting myself:

The wordless melody came out while I was working on the piece at my in-laws’ home near the beautiful St. Lawrence River. Something about the flow of that river and the bucolic scenery is there in the insistence of that melody. There was nothing to do but write down the melody and set the text to a countermelody above.⁴⁷

Create Another Earth for Me marks the beginning of the fourth phase of the Dream Sequence. It is infused with hope and optimism for the future. In creating the concept of the song, I envisioned soaring lines, lots of “light,” and clear melodies. “Joy welling up,” is what we actually notated during our meeting in Utah. We also looked at starting the first line a cappella or with light accompaniment, with the second line adding and building. It seemed the line “the will to live” should be repeated, with each instance more climactic, beautiful, and triumphant. The piece would soar.

Yun struggled with many revisions of the piece before finding one that fit these ideals. We discussed options of sixteenth notes, block chords, arpeggios, and walking bass in the accompaniment. The melody line of the song was altered over the course of the compositional process, though much remained the same. The main “thesis,” per se, of the song from mm. 1-10 was kept, while mm. 18-26 are discarded in favor of something completely different (Ex. 32).

⁴⁷ Ibid.

Lento ♩ = 72

Cre-ate a-no-ther Earth for me. Where there is no need for a
zurikhalten

7
sun-set, a sun set. piano interlude Life, bound by chains of time.

16
Let it float in o-pen light!

22
The will to live car-ries my weight as though on wings, as though on wings.

Example 32. Gerard Yun, *Create Another Earth for Me*, Original Vocal Line, mm. 1-28

In his own words he says,

OK, I've been through several of my versions of Create Another Earth for me. I went back to the draft of the one I wrote last week. It uses a similar technique to 2441139/ It's 2pm and that is why I rejected it. Also, In My Dreams uses a walking bass (something I will lessen in In My Dreams II). This version uses a walking bass and a sort of playful, lyrical melody (though it is clearly original). I like the vocal melody on this version very much. And I like how the lyrical piano melody embodies the light, lyrical sense of the world that she wishes to have created -- a new Earth where the sun never sets. Yet, the melodic setting of the word "sunset" always wants to go downward, leaving another element (harmony or subsequent instrumental melody) to buoy up the piece. I see this poem as a struggle between "reality" (downer) and "hope" (the New Earth). In fact, most of these pieces share elements of this relationship.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Gerard Yun, Email to Author, October 17, 2009.

As a composer, Yun was willing to follow his instincts and ignore his classical training if necessary to create what the cycle most needed. He states,

It (*Create Another Earth for Me*) can link well with what precedes it (*I Can Hear* and *When I Laugh*). But, it occurs just before *In My Dreams II*, where that walking bass might make a small appearance. My training says that it doesn't work. But, my instincts say that it is perfect.⁴⁹

The result is a Bach-like passacaglia bass in the accompaniment beneath a perfectly tonal melody that, when combined, mesh magically in moments and at other times collide in a way that is at once jarring and simultaneously interesting. At first Lo and I were unsure how to make the idea work. My suggestion was to keep the melody and change the accompaniment beneath to have the two parts not clash. Lo's suggestion was to keep the passacaglia bass idea and change the melody so there would be no dissonances on strong beats. In the end, it was Dr. Andrew Campbell's suggestion that facilitated the piece working in just the way it was composed. He suggested the bass part be played more Bach-like, or Pachelbel-Canon like. He also advised increasing the tempo starting at m. 13 with a cut-time feel. Once these changes were made, the piece worked quite nicely.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

6 *mp*
no need for a sun-set, a sun set.

12 *♩=80*
♩=80 Fresh, Relaxed, Unburdened
poco

Example 33. *Create Another Earth for Me*, mm. 6-17

Performance Guide

Tempo is key in this song. With the appropriate tempo (around 80 beats per quarter note) beginning at m. 13, the melody dances and is free and easy to sing (Ex. 33). If taken any faster, there is an anxiety that belies the exultant nature of the text. Even more detrimental is a slower tempo, in which the Baroque-like bass simply does not work and the melody drags. Tempo is also important in free sections when the line “Create another earth for me,” is sung. The singer must resist the urge to keep the melody strictly in time to relay the freedom from the chains of the earth the poet feels. Rhythm may be stretched to create that affect.

These are Yun’s directions for the pianist’s runs.

The opening gesture/run should be fast and not at all clean. In other words, keep the pedal down and make it a bit of mess with a lot of direction to the

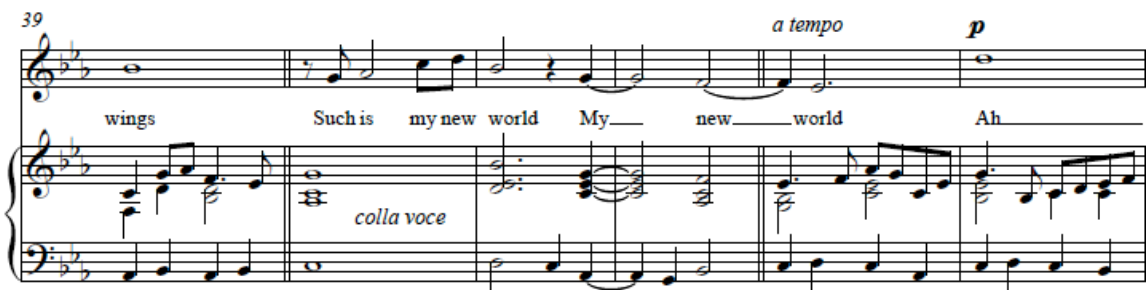
stopping point. The musical gesture is an allegory to a hand scooping up a bunch of dirt. The dirt sort of gets all over. It is what I see when I think of someone saying this text.⁵⁰

This text is infused with joy and light, and the pianist may encourage this sentiment by keeping the bass notes light while the singer spins the melody atop the piano part. A clear example of this is mm. 25-27 where Yun has painted the word “float” (Ex. 34).



Example 34. Gerard Yun, *Create Another Earth for Me*, mm. 24-28

The challenge is to maintain this goal of soaring while the piano is playing something that lends itself more to bounciness than long, flowing, legato lines. One must also keep the song moving forward in m. 33 when stasis is employed. Similar to *It's 2pm*, strong beat dissonances must be sung purposefully and confidently so they do not sound like mistakes, as in m. 44 (Ex. 35).



Example 35. Gerard Yun, *Create Another Earth for Me*, mm. 39-44

⁵⁰ Gerard Yun, “Composer’s Notes,” Appendix C.

In My Dreams II and Postlude

Yun's thoughts on *In My Dreams II*:

The poetry for *In My Dreams II* is very different from the first poem of the same title, despite the fact that I immediately saw them as companion pieces – strong, hopeful, and optimistic. The tricky part of this movement was dealing with the ending. The sense of completion that this sort of definitive melody can give a work was very tempting. But my own sense is that the musical work and the work on human trafficking awareness are simply not finished. Not even close. So, although I was tempted to end the entire cycle with this movement, I held to having a postlude over which the narrator could speak.⁵¹

Yun's thoughts on the *Postlude*

In fact, *In My Dreams II* is the front end of the *Postlude*. It made sense that somehow the melody of the Prologue had to finally give way to the vision of “*In My Dreams*” since the overall sense of the cycle is one of hope. But, musically, by then the original C major melody was now in Ab (to best accommodate the countermelody) and the initial Prologue melody was in a sort of modal D. Somehow, quickly, I had to find a way to C major that wasn't too contrived. The *Postlude* gave me an opportunity to do that as well as resolve the drone issues from the D-A drone to the D-G drone that conveniently set up a return of *In My Dreams* in C as backdrop for the reading.⁵²

These two songs are combined in this section because they are meant to combine in performance, as well. *In My Dreams II* leads directly to the *Postlude* without pause. *In My Dreams II*, features a pretty, celebratory melody of having overcome a life of oppression. This song was intentionally kept short, since it is linked to the *Postlude*. Significant changes to the original accompaniment of *In My Dreams II* were made at Professor Carole FitzPatrick's suggestion. The original design of broken chords (Ex. 36) was replaced with block chords that more accurately represent the joyful and triumphant message of the text (Ex. 37).

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

12

I will have a small house. Where peo-ple-will live to - ge-ther in har - mo

Example 36. Gerard Yun, *In My Dreams II*, Original Version, mm. 12-16

13 *tempo*

I will have a small house. Where peo-ple-will live to - ge-ther in har - mo - ny.

mf

Example 37. Gerard Yun, *In My Dreams II*, Revised Version, mm. 13-17

Part of why *In My Dreams II* transitions into the *Postlude* (Ex. 38) is because *In My Dreams II* has an inherent finality in both text and music, yet there is still much to say, to share before the cycle ends.

34 //

in my Dreams!

segue to Postlude

ritard

tempo *attaca*

Example 38. Gerard Yun, *In My Dreams II*, mm. 34-38

One might question why after such a triumphant end to the piece, the ominous music of the B section of the first *In My Dreams* would return as a segue way into the *Postlude*. I myself was initially confused at the sudden mood shift within the parameters of such a positive message, and asked Yun if we could remove these jarring moments. This was his answer:

The part that you wish to cut is foreshadowing and a repetition of a signal motif from previous in the piece. So, I am not removing it. It also finishes out the movement providing the segue to the postlude...while I don't want to diminish any of the optimism in the cycle, there is this little dark element that keeps coming back. That's signaled by the part you wish to cut.⁵³

Retaining these moments, then, sends a message that while these youth have been able to rise above their difficult and unfortunate circumstances, there are many children still enslaved in bondage. This serves not as a guilt-inducer, but a reminder, a call to action, to restore dignity to other girls who have yet to find a way to escape trafficking and heal from its effects.

As *In My Dreams II* links to the *Postlude*, the original drone of the *Prologue* returns. The D in bass clef is present, as well as the open fifth of A. This time, however, the pivot note is G, as the key transitions from a semi-ambiguous d minor to C major. The first *In My Dreams* was written in C Major, and so this return to the key symbolizes a return to optimism and hope. Since there are no accidentals in C Major, this can be seen as representative of clarity

⁵³ Gerard Yun, Email to Author, November 11, 2009.

and light. The original key of C Major for *In My Dreams II*, however, was entirely too high for me (Ex. 39).

Example 39. Gerard Yun, *In My Dreams II*, mm. 19-22

The key was transposed to A \flat Major with minor adjustments in the melody, and it is not until the *Postlude* that the resolution of C Major is realized. The *Postlude* returns to the simple, almost idyllic innocence of the first *In My Dreams*, as the singer hums the *cantus firmus* from *In My Dreams*. The cycle has come full circle back to a peaceful state and more hopeful view of the world seen through the eyes of a child. One note changed to better illustrate this was the D \flat of “Love” to an E \flat in m. 28 (Ex. 40). Though it is again a dissonance on a strong beat in a song with much less dissonance than others, “love” is the most important word of the song, so it seemed fitting that it would have the highest pitch.

Example 40. Gerard Yun, *In My Dreams II*, mm. 23-28

In speaking of his reasoning behind quoting the first *In My Dreams*, Yun says,

...It works for me to have *In My Dreams* come back, but as a *cantus firmus* ...optimism becomes part of the texture instead of something to strive for and only dream about. The new/counter melody is much more static and limited than other melodies. It is almost recitation. But, I wanted to have the qualities of a sort of proto-melody (not quite developed). For me that means the story is not over, that we've captured just a snapshot and the true ending of this story is up to all of us. Do we help, add to society's awareness of this problem, or what? If the piece has a very final sense of completion then to me it says, "story over" which is not my intent for this one. I want the audience to find a continued interest.⁵⁴

We seriously took into consideration what to include in the text of the *Postlude*. We knew we wanted there to again be narration, to balance out and create bookends with the *Prologue* that opened the work. Our agreed-upon goal was to write narration that would honor and thank the poets, to reflect on the cycle, and to engage and relate with the audience members. We also considered including literal quotes from the poets—either poetry that was not included in the music, or a portion of one of the more poignant poems.

As with the *Prologue*, I wrote a draft of these ideas, which I then turned over to Professor Pritchard. Pritchard, a much more experienced and talented writer than I, crafted my words and combined them with her own, and the end product was polished and moving. Pritchard's version had included quotes from the children and poems as we had imagined, but ultimately they were cut to shorten the somewhat lengthy narration.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

Performance Guide

The singer, as voice for the poet, is more confident and mature in the *Postlude* than she was in the *Prologue*. She no longer meanders, lost in thought. This represents the growth the singer, or the girls, has experienced throughout the cycle.

The music for *In My Dreams II* is closer to musical theatre or pop than classical, but the lines are very long and as such, I feel it is important to use a more classical, even operatic sound. The singer's most dramatic lines occur in *In My Dreams II*. In the *Postlude*, just as with the *Prologue*, the singer accompanies and supports the narrator. Ultimately, it is the spoken word, symbolic of the voice of the children, which carries the message and heart of the piece to its close.

CONCLUSION

The song cycle *In My Dreams* was created to raise awareness of trafficking through music and poetry. It focuses not on definitions and statistics, but on individual dreams and voices. It recounts the devastating loss of childhood and celebrates empowering words of survival. There is not one song without elements of sad, foreboding, or ominous music. This was done purposefully, for there is no survivor of war that escapes without scars. Yet we witness many bright shining moments, proving that overcoming even the most difficult and trying experiences is achievable. Hope is a choice, and escaping slavery is possible.

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APPENDIX A
MUSICAL SCORE WITH NARRATION SCRIPT

In My Dreams

1. Prologue

Text edited by
Rohit K. Dasgupta and Melissa Walker

G. Yun

Ominously
♩=84

Reader may begin anytime after singer enters

Singer may use any vowel

This system contains the first two staves of the score. The top staff is a vocal line in 4/4 time, marked 'Ominously' and '♩=84'. It features a series of whole notes with a repeat sign after the first four measures. A box above the staff indicates 'Reader may begin anytime after singer enters'. The bottom staff is a piano accompaniment in 4/4 time, also marked '♩=84'. It begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic and includes a right-hand (*r.h.*) melodic line. A box above the staff indicates 'Singer may use any vowel'. Pedal points are indicated by 'Ped.' at the bottom of the piano staff.

Alternate Melody
(absentmindedly, detached)

mp

This section provides an alternate melody for the vocal line. The top staff is a vocal line in 4/4 time, marked '*mp*' and '*(absentmindedly, detached)*'. It features a series of eighth notes with a repeat sign after the first four measures. The piano accompaniment in the bottom staff continues with the same harmonic structure as the first system, with pedal points indicated at the bottom.

¹⁵

This system contains the final two staves of the score. The top staff is a vocal line in 4/4 time, marked with a measure rest and a fermata. The piano accompaniment in the bottom staff features a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand, marked with a '3' above the notes. Pedal points are indicated at the bottom of the piano staff.

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21 See chord progressions and drone above. Maintain pedal D throughout.
Melodic notes and principal drone combinations appear below.

Singer and pianist may either continue to repeat previous music under spoken text or they are permitted to improvise in the style.

24

NARRATOR:

In January 2009, Melissa Walker left for India with Professor Melissa Pritchard. Their goal was to travel to Calcutta and Delhi, to hold poetry workshops and collect poems from survivors of childhood sex trafficking. Some of the poems would later be set as songs. They agreed to encourage the children to write about anything, about ordinary things; though Melissa wondered what young girls forced to service up to twenty men a day before they were rescued would find to write about. Then she met some of these youth, and walked through the brothel districts they had been rescued from. She witnessed their strong spirit as they sat inside classrooms and outside on grassy lawns in winter sunlight... writing, quietly reading their poems aloud, applauding for one another, their loyal bonds of affection deeply obvious. The words you will hear tonight, the songs Melissa will sing for you, show the disillusionment and pain of a lost childhood, yet they also speak of resilience, of the rekindling of love and the renewal of hope. Their voices tell us that if they can escape the terrible exploitation of sex trafficking and begin to heal, dream, and hope for better lives, then so can millions of other trafficked children who are still silenced and suffering in bondage...and so can we.

2. My Special Place

$\text{♩} = 88$ *Sweetly, Dreamily*

The musical score is written for voice and piano. It begins with a tempo of 88 beats per minute and a mood of 'Sweetly, Dreamily'. The piano accompaniment starts with a forte (*f*) dynamic in the bass line and a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic in the treble line. A pedal point is indicated with a 'Ped.' marking and a triangle symbol. The score includes several dynamic markings: *dim.* (diminuendo), *subito lento* (suddenly slow), *rit.* (ritardando), and *colla voce* (in time with the voice). The lyrics are: 'My special place is where I sing, and dance, and read my story books. Where my friends are always a-'. The score is divided into systems, with measures 6, 11, and 15 marked at the beginning of their respective systems.

19

round ah

24 *espress.*

Where my mo-ther and fa-ther and bro-ther and sis-ter lov-ing - lystay

27

Where lit-tle chil-dren smile _____ all _____ the time

31 *stile recitativo* *a tempo*

Where one day I will have a small house _____ It is a place that on-ly I can see on-ly

p *mf*

35 **poco rit.**

I can see on-ly I can see and feel.

f *ff* *p*

40

3 *3* *ritard*

3. In My Dreams

Pensively ♩ = 63

Mezzo-soprano

Piano

mf

In my dreams_

5

M-S.

— No one is ill — No one is bro - ken, No one is — No one is woun- ded_

Pno.

10

M-S.

— No one is brok - en, In my dreams.

più mosso

Pno.

menancing

16

Voice

Ideally text should be read in the rhythm indicated. But, naturalness of delivery is priority.

M-S.

In my dreams, 3 No one 3 No one

lu lu_ (etc.)

Pno.

ritard

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21

Voice

is il-li-ter-ate or woun-ded No one! is bro-ken in my

M-S.

Pno.

26

Voice

Dreams No one No one No one

SPOKEN: In my dreams, there is happiness everywhere. There is love. There are friends around me. In my dreams, I will build a palace. And my friends will in that house. There will be love and unity for all. . . In my dreams.

M-S.

Pno.

Più mosso ♩=76

32

Text is read freely over repeating ostinato.

Voice

I _____ will build a pal-ace and my friends will live in that house, I _____ will build a pal-ace and my

M-S.

Pno.

34

M.S.  1.
 friends will live in that house I will build a pal-ace and my friends, my friends, my friends will live

Pno. 

37 *molto rit.*

M.S. 
 will build a pal-ace and my friends, my friends, my friends will live and I will live, and we will live!


Pno.  *molto rit.*

41 *Lento e dolce*

M.S. 
 In my dreams. No one is ill. No one is bro - ken, in my dream

Pno. *mp* *Lento* 

46

M.S. 
 No one is brok - en, In my dreams.

Pno. 

4. Sometimes in the Night

$\text{♩} = 100+$ *Suddenly Awakened*

The musical score is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat). It consists of four systems of music, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The first system (measures 1-7) features a piano introduction with a tempo marking of $\text{♩} = 100+$ and a dynamic of *ff*. The piano part has a driving eighth-note accompaniment in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The second system (measures 8-13) begins with a vocal line starting at measure 8, marked *mp* and *rit.*. The lyrics are "Some-times in the night, I see Fa-ther in". The piano accompaniment continues with a steady eighth-note pattern. The third system (measures 14-18) features a vocal line starting at measure 14, marked *f* and *freely*. The lyrics are "my dreams— Clut-ting bags from mar-ket". The piano accompaniment includes a section marked *agitato e accel.* with triplets in the right hand and a *colla voce* section. The fourth system (measures 19-23) features a vocal line starting at measure 19, marked *mp*. The lyrics are "His nose drips wet with sweat, Spec-ta-cles slip-ping from his". The piano accompaniment continues with a steady eighth-note pattern.

$\text{♩} = 100+$ *ff* *mp* *accel.*

8 *mp* *rit.* . . . Some-times in the night, I see Fa-ther in

14 *f* *freely* *agitato e accel.* *colla voce* *mp*
my dreams— Clut-ting bags from mar-ket

19 *mp*
His nose drips wet with sweat, Spec-ta-cles slip-ping from his

24

eyes, try-ing to pick them up.

subito ff

31

più mosso poco a poco

36

At times I al-so see Mo - ther Mo -

poco rit

41

meno mosso

ther On the roof near the clothes line, Her hand stretched out. af-ter put-ting the

45

sa-ri on the line, she takes my cat in her lap, car-res-sing her... Yet I ne-ver...

rit. e dim **ff**

49

see them to-ge-ther. This dream is but a

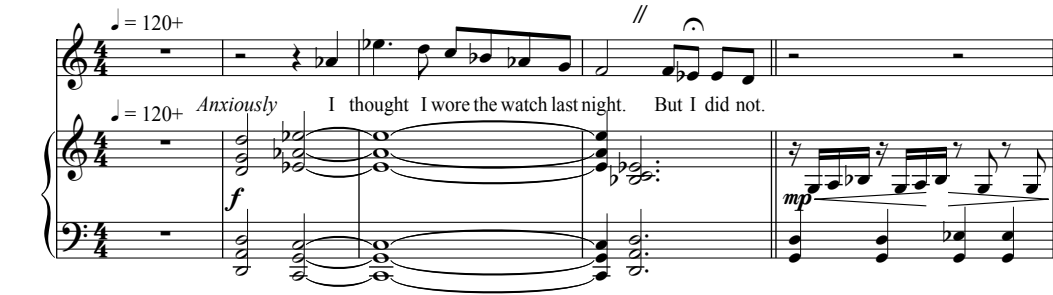
54

night - - mare...

ff *pù mosso*

5. I Thought I Wore the Watch Last Night

$\text{♩} = 120+$ // $\text{♩} = 120+$ *Anxiously* I thought I wore the watch last night. But I did not.



6



9 *mp* Since the morn-ing I have been dis- turbed_ by last night's



13 *f* sad- ness. Ah, ah



18 *mf*

Be-fore the dri-ver could e - ven greet me I snapped at him!

22 *f* 3

Then que-stioned my rude-ness May-be my per-i-od will start soon in the emp-ty af-ter noon

27 *f* //

I thought I wore the watch last night. But I did not.

31 *mf* *mp*

My moist eyes stare

35

list-less-ly at my left hand. the watch you gave me for my birth day no lon- ger

39 *p*

— a-dorns my hand. This was the gift I che-rished most a-bove all gifts you show-erd on

colla voce

43

me. To-day that re-al-i-ty is lost.

ritard

47 *spoken*

Yet the mem-ries have re-mained. Like a paint-ed can-vas. I don't know. In the mar-ket

mf

51

will I e-ver find a si-mi-lar watch a - gain? I thought I wore the watch last night. But I did not.

ff

6. It's 2 p.m.

Strolling Waltz $\text{♩} = 54$ Sing this section sotta voce, as if just humming along to a recording.

Strolling Waltz $\text{♩} = 54$ Ooh ooh - - -

9 It's two P

19 M. The thin glim-mer of sun's rays on a win-ter af-ter - noon

28 Your black checked shirt is hang-ing on a brown line out - side. And your black

36

shoes like dark night. are kept on the door - step. My eyes are

44

tir-ed with an-ti-ci - pa- tion. I stare at the blue of your room.

53

you are not there Yet I am con-stant-ly re-min-ded

Gb Ab

62

of your ci ga-rette stained lips and the smell of al - co-

70

hol that has o-ver powered my af-ter noons. So with much hope

78

I wait for ev'-ning when the sun goes down You will

86

stand on my door - step and I will I will whis - per

94

p

"Can you give me ten min-utes of your time?

102

It's two P M.

7. I Can Hear

Pregando (prayerfully) ♩ = 82 *mp*

The musical score is written in 3/4 time with a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat). It consists of three systems, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The piano part features a steady accompaniment of chords and moving lines in both hands, marked *p sostenuto*. The vocal line includes lyrics and dynamic markings such as *mp* and *mf*.

I can hear them. their wis pers—

11 — their cries their songs I hear them.

21 Spoken: "I can hear the whispers of my friends. Can you hear them? I can hear the sounds of the factory next door. I can hear the cry of the peddler in the street. I can hear the songs of birds. Can you hear them?"

32 Spoken: Many different sounds and voices have embedded themselves in my heart. Like the sounds of a thousand children. They are crying, they want to live. *mf*

Cry —

2

43 Can you hear their pleas?
Has society muffled your ears to their cry? Or have your ears been silenced to their voices?
mf

ing, want - ing, sound and voi - ces. Cry -

54

ing, want - ing, sound and voi - ces.

65 *mp*

I can hear them. their whis - pers - their

72

cries - their songs I hear them.

8. When I Laugh

f ♩ = 88 Freely *tempo e accel.*

When I laugh I laugh a-lone Peo-ple call me mad ah

colla voce

6 *poco dim.* I know the rea-son I know the rea-son for their laugh - ter-

10 *f* *tenderly, slower* If I look at the sky and re - cite a po - em They still call me

15 mad ah ah

Detailed description: This is a musical score for a song titled "8. When I Laugh". It is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The score is divided into four systems, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The first system starts with a forte dynamic (f) and a tempo marking of "88 Freely". The piano part begins with a "colla voce" instruction. The second system starts at measure 6 and includes a "poco dim." (poco decrescendo) instruction. The third system starts at measure 10 and is marked "f" and "tenderly, slower". The fourth system starts at measure 15 and features a melodic flourish in the vocal line. The piano accompaniment consists of chords and rhythmic patterns that support the vocal melody.

20 *Agitato subito presto*

Some times when I sit down a - lone and cry

26 *tempo*

they come and ask me, "Are you rea-lly mad?" Then I cry out loud and say_

31

"Yes! I real-ly am mad!_(wild laughter) Mad-ly in love!

9. Create Another Earth For Me

Freely, imploring
♩=70

accel. *f* *3*

Cre-ate a-no-ther Earth for me. Where there is

mf *ff* *colla voce*

mp

no need for a sun-set, a sun set.

poco *più mosso*

♩=80 *Fresh, Relaxed, Unburdened*

12

18

Life bound by chains of time

The musical score is written for voice and piano. It begins with a tempo of ♩=70 and a dynamic of *f*. The voice part starts with the lyrics 'Cre-ate a-no-ther Earth for me. Where there is'. The piano accompaniment features a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The score includes various dynamics such as *mf*, *ff*, *colla voce*, and *mp*. There are also performance instructions like *accel.*, *Freely, imploring*, and *più mosso*. The tempo changes to ♩=80 at measure 12, with the instruction *Fresh, Relaxed, Unburdened*. The score is divided into systems, with measures 6, 12, and 18 marked at the beginning of their respective systems. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 4/4.

24

— Let it float in o pen

29

light! In op-en light! The will to live car-ries my weight as_

34

— though on wings. as though on wings, as though on

39

wings Such is my new world My new world Ah

colla voce

a tempo *p*

45 *accel.*

accel.

subito f

Pia.

51 *f*

Cre-ate a-no-ther Earth for me. Where there is no need for a sun-set, a sun

ff

colla

57 *mf*

set. A Sun - - set

mf

dim. poco a poco

62 *mp* *rit.*

Sun - - set Sun - - set.

mp

rit.

p

10. In My Dreams II

Lyrical ♩=78-84

Musical score for measures 1-6. The system includes a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The piano part features a melodic line in the bass clef and a harmonic accompaniment in the treble clef. The tempo is marked as Lyrical with a quarter note equal to 78-84. The piano part includes a *mp* dynamic marking and a *ped.* (pedal) marking with a *simile* instruction.

Musical score for measures 7-12. The system includes a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The piano part includes a *menacing* dynamic marking and a *ritard* (ritardando) instruction.

Musical score for measures 13-17. The system includes a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The tempo is marked as *tempo*. The piano part includes a *mf* dynamic marking and a *ritard* instruction. The lyrics are: "I will have a small house. Where peo-ple-will live to - ge-ther in har - mo - ny."

Musical score for measures 18-22. The system includes a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The piano part includes a *mf* dynamic marking and a *ritard* instruction. The lyrics are: "My world will be filled with green! There will be moun-tains and ri-vers and small hou-ses scat-tered 'round! And"

23

All peo-ple know each oth- er. There is no sick-ness in this land. And love reigns su-

29

preme Love reigns su - preme.

Slower

34

in my Dreams!

segue to Postlude

ritard

tempo attacca

11. Postlude

Reader may begin narration at anytime. Music repeats as needed

accel.

tempo primo (as in prologue) *accel.*

7 *Lento (slower than earlier versions)*

pp Lu lu ____ (etc.)

rit.

14

17 1.2. etc.

1.2. etc.

Repeat as needed with or without singer.
 You may also repeat "da capo" if needed.
 Piano may finish alone or with singer.

NARRATOR:

To be able to speak the truth is one of the most powerful, affirmative experiences a human being can have. For these young people, to be able to experience and express beauty, self-acceptance and pride through the imagery and emotion of poetry is both revolutionary and ennobling.

On their way to India, Melissa Pritchard told Melissa Walker a story. On her first trip to Calcutta's brothel districts in 2006, when she first met some of the young people in her writing workshop, they were shy and cloaked in silence. Returning one year later, she was astonished to find these same girls, after participating in regular poetry workshops, giving readings, and starting their own literary journal, were talkative, asking intelligent questions about art. They spoke of wanting to be teachers, doctors, writers, and lawyers. She had never witnessed such dramatic proof of the power of creativity to transform broken lives into lives of hope, with a determination to reach back and help other children not yet rescued.

Let us close this special evening by thanking these gifted poets for the bravery of their words and the beauty of their hearts. Let us be inspired to action by their example, working to end the global crime of human trafficking, letting the light of their brave spirits illuminate for all of us a clear path toward justice and selfless love.

APPENDIX B

POETRY SELECTED FOR SONG CYCLE

My Special Place

My special place is where I sing and dance and read my story books
Where my friends are always around
Where my mother, father, brother, and sister lovingly stay.
Where little children smile all the time
Where one day I will have a small house
It is a place which only I can see and feel.
(Only I can see and feel)

In My Dreams

In my dreams
No one is ill
No one is broken
No one is illiterate
No one is wounded
In my dreams...

In my dreams
There is happiness everywhere
There is love
There are friends around me
In my dreams...

In my dreams
I will build a palace
And my friends will live in that house
There will be love and unity for all
In my dreams...

Sometimes in the Night

Sometimes at night
I see Father in my dreams
Clutching bags from the market
His nose drips wet with sweat,
Spectacles slipping from his eyes
Trying to pick them up.
At times I also see Mother
On the roof near the clothes line
Her hand stretched out.
After putting the sari on the line
She takes my cat in her lap, caressing her.
Both of them come in my dreams
Yet I never see them together.
This dream is but a nightmare.

I Thought I Wore the Watch last Night

I thought I wore the watch last night
But I did not
Since morning I have been disturbed with last night's sadness
Before the *autowallah* could even greet me
I snapped at him
Then questioned my rudeness.
Maybe my period will start soon...?
In the empty afternoon
My moist eyes stare listlessly at my left hand
The watch you gave me for my birthday no longer adorns that hand
This was the gift I cherished most
Above all the other gifts you showered on me.
Today that reality is lost,
Yet the memories have remained
Like a painted canvas.
I don't know...
In the market will I ever find a similar watch again?

It's 2pm

It's 2pm

The thin glimmer of the sun's rays on a winter afternoon

Your black checked shirt

Is hanging on a brown line outside

And your black shoes like the dark night

Are kept on the doorstep.

My eyes, tired with anticipation

Stare at the blue window of your room.

You are not there.

Yet I am constantly reminded of your cigarette stained lips

And the smell of alcohol

That has overpowered my afternoons.

So with much hope

I wait for the evening.

When the sun goes down

You will stand on my doorstep and whispering I will say,

"Can you give me ten minutes of your time?"

I Can Hear the Cry of Many Voices

I can hear the cry of many voices

This room is charged with energy

And I am feeling restless in it

If you can,

Place this sound

In the depths of your heart

If you can, listen closely

For I know your ears shall not respond

And you will not listen to this cry

I Can Hear the Whispers of My Friends

I can hear the whispers of my friends,
Can you hear them?
I can hear the cry of the peddler in the streets,
Can you hear him?
I can hear the song of birds,
Can you hear it?
I can hear the sounds of the factory next door,
Can you hear them?
Many different sounds and voices
Have embedded themselves in my heart
Like the shouts of a thousand children.
They are crying, they want to live,
Can you hear their pleas?
Has society muffled your ears to their cry...?
Or have your ears been silenced to their voices.

When I Laugh

When I laugh alone
People call me mad
I know the reason for their laughter.
If I look at the sky
And recite a poem
People still call me mad.
Sometimes when I sit down alone and cry
They come and ask me,
“Are you really mad?”
Then I cry out loud and say,
“Yes, I really am mad—
Madly in love!”

Create Another Earth for Me

Create another earth for me
Where there is no need for a sunset
Life, bound by chains of time—
Let it float in open light!
Create another earth for me
Where there will be no sunset
The will to live carries my weight as though on wings
Such is my new world.

In My Dreams

In my dreams

I will have a small world

Where people will live together in harmony

In my dreams

My world will be filled with green!

There will be mountains and rivers

And small houses scattered around

In my dreams

All people know each other

There is no sickness in this land

And love reigns supreme

In my dreams

APPENDIX C
COMPOSER'S NOTES

Melissa,

These notes are for your use. They outline my thoughts on the piece as a composer and some of the processes and procedures used. It is nice to be able to write these for you and your performers. You are welcomed [*sic*] to use these in your dissertation as well.

Thank you again,

Gerard

In My Dreams: Song-Cycle for Mezzo Soprano, Spoken Word, and Piano
Based on the anonymous poetry from children of human trafficking

General Comments

For me, as a composer, this is a very special work. It was not typical for me as a classical musician, singer, or teacher. This piece insisted on being written. Because Melissa did so much to bring this piece to light; it really is more her piece than mine. And in fact, it became part of the regular process to remove my own agendas, needs, and wants from the piece altogether. This is for me, a different kind of art. I grew a lot as a musician and composer while working on this piece. So, this piece accompanied a lot of introspection and thinking about music for me (none of that is really built into the music though as you will see). Thank you, Melissa for the opportunity to explore something wonderfully worthwhile.

We're Taking a Snapshot

First, I always felt we were seeing the children in a snapshot sort of way. This appealed to me immediately. So, the point is not to create the definitive work on child trafficking or to imply any sort of generality from the work. The fact that slavery still exists in our modern world is beyond repugnant and repulsive. It is propagated on the weaker ones, women, children – the voiceless. This snapshot allows us, artists and audiences, a glimpse and a little bit of voice that we can hear from the children.

I consciously avoided the guilt-ridden tones of other “issue awareness” works (usually crisis-related, Holocaust, war, etc.). So, you’ll find almost nothing like that in the musical structures. They are also not in the poetry at all. So, it would have been an act of personal projection to impose such emotions. I also felt that it would be manipulative of the audience, something desirable in film music, but I think, inappropriate in this work. I hope the simple humanness of the poetry and the accessibility of the music will stir a desire to see a repulsive issue in a closer light.

What I discovered through working with Melissa (always an inspiration) and reading the poetry over and over, was that these are works of optimism and optimism is a choice. Even my five-year old daughter seems to make choices daily between the world being a horrible place and the world being filled with hope and joy. That interplay is present in the song cycle, but the darkness is never “the message” either poetically or musically.

I spoke to Melissa of this piece seeming to write itself. That was true for the most part. Almost all the main structural themes and ideas came quickly and easily. The time it took to get the piece in performable shape was due to my own inability to work out the inevitable problems of style juxtaposition and integration, as well as some of the weird issues that were set up intentionally at the beginning of the project. I’ll cover those in some technical notes, for those who are so inclined.

There were all the usual questions. Is this a Western piece? An Indian piece? An Indian piece as seen through Western stereotypes? I am writing a book on Global Music Ethics so these questions are close to my mind, and have been for several decades. I opted finally to set the piece as a song-cycle with its own style which is referential to a number of established styles: western classical (Schubert, Schumann, Reich, Pärt), popular Indian-West crossovers (Sheila Chandra), and principals of improvisation loosely based on raga practice.

Vertical Sonorities: The work was originally intended to explore melodies above static drones, which happens quite a lot. Any vertical sonorities were to be derived from coincidence of horizontal movement (more heterophonic than harmonic). But, harmonies certainly established themselves. I had quite a time trying to avoid making them “functional”. But, western harmonies are ubiquitous in global music today because they work very well in moving music from one point to another. The one truly Indian piece of popular music that is quoted at length in the cycle is very “American folk” in its construction. This was welcome and appropriate allowing the cycle to not slip into the exotic or the foreign. I did manage to avoid the sense of “key relationships” in favor of a more universal sense of key tones (specific pitches upon which varied structures are built).

Construction

Form – multiple movements, originally conceived in arch form. Rather than this being a collection of movements thrown together. I felt compelled to relate them to one another. Melissa and I chose the order and discussed it at length. We also excluded some poems in favor of others. The first unifying factor that seemed to help me was making sure there was a prologue and postlude. I probably did this because I’ve written more academic papers at this point than I have musical

compositions (oh, that's just an awful admission) and a paper without an introduction and conclusion is just a bunch of paragraphs picked up off the roadside of your thoughts, right? Well, that is my bias. But, this element of construction helped me to see the piece as a whole (a container for these poems). The prologue and postlude became places to really introduce or comment – an ok place for the spoken word which is encountered by listeners/audience in a less abstract way than the singing voice (there needed to be a place for both in this work).

The other movements went through their various metamorphoses and there are pairs actually related to one another.

Cantus firmus, ground bass, counter melodies –

For years I've been haunted by a piece by an English composer that starts with a gorgeous and fully complete melody. Only when the singer finally enters he never sings that melody. Instead, all of his material is a commentary on that melody, somehow working with that melody, but not quite related in style or character.

I thought that this sort of “detached counterpoint” would be right for work with some of the source material 244-1139. Only the technique stuck with me since it seemed to capture simultaneous emotive and perceptual elements that are present in the poetry. So, I perhaps overused this. Not only is it used with the 244-1139 melody, but “In My Dreams” becomes cantus firmus for another melody in “In My Dreams II.” It is used in yet another movement as well in what was initially a discarded version of “Create Another Earth.” The wordless melody came out while I was working on the piece at my in-laws' home near the beautiful St. Lawrence River. Something about the flow of that river and the bucolic [*sic*] scenery is there in the insistence of that melody. There was nothing to do but write down the melody and set the text to a counter melody above.

Stasis or non-movement. This is a weird concept for sure. This stasis comes from the concept of the snapshot. That this cycle captures only a few moments in the thoughts of the children. Drones also imply a sort of stasis, where the constantness [*sic*] of the drone provides support for everything else. The presence of the drone eventually leaves the awareness of the listener as it falls into the background. The drones (there really are only two) in the song cycle parallel this phenomenon. In some pieces the insistence is obvious and in others the drone may seem completely absent (it is never absent actually).

The stasis I try to achieve throughout and on many levels is sometimes fairly obvious – harmonic stasis, or insisting on one type of left hand sonority spacing, repeated notes or motives. Sometimes it is melodic stasis, insistence of one note over and over or a melody that only goes so high (Db) even if we “want” it to just soar.

Repetition – this is probably obvious, but it might be worth saying that there are elements of minimalism here, especially in the earlier movements. I nearly drove myself batty with intricate repeated patterns, which in progressive revisions were eventually discarded. I think it was one of those ideas that was inflicted from my training as a western, classical musician.

The most important repetition ended up being the “In My Dreams” theme that recurs throughout the work. That was not intentional in the initial sketches of the work, which featured instead a recurrence of the chanting theme first heard in the Prologue. In fact, both melodic material and harmonic material were developed from that small idea and are scattered throughout the cycle. The theme itself never comes back despite its constant recurrence in the early sketches.

For the Pianist

Most of these accompaniments are problematic from some general principle and structural viewpoints. First, they are low on the keyboard. This is due to my own inexperience in writing piano accompaniments for mezzo-sopranos (think of those wonderful Schubert song accompaniments sounding so bizarre in the mezzo and baritone transpositions of the songs and you’ll know what I mean) as well as some of some technical limitations. If you see/hear opportunities for varieties of voicings [*sic*] that utilize the keyboard better, please make a note and contact me. There are probably many of them. The only real issue is unintentionally covering the voice. I probably go too far in avoiding covering the vocal line. I think this comes from teaching vocal students for so long. But, Melissa is a really strong singer and I’ve actually never heard an instance where her voice was covered by the piano, ever.

The next thing you’ll notice immediately is the almost monotonous use of octave and fifth relationships especially in the left hand. This is actually structural and intentional. This octave-fourth/fifth “motif” comes from the need to explore the relationship between two basic drones. I acknowledge that this droning can get monotonous (droning). It certainly doesn’t need to be overemphasized. Also, do whatever you can to keep the drone supporting the texture, but never dominating it. The drone elements should fall into the background for the listener and should never assert themselves in the foreground.

There are minimalist-type patterns that need to be fairly robotic. This is especially true in the middle of 2. “My Special Place,” “Sometimes in the Night” and others. As I worked with the piece though, I found myself trying to avoid the sameness. I’m very interested in your insights on this. These were intended as minimalist markers at least initially. In fact, an early version of one movement is completely minimalist. I couldn’t stand it and rewrote a less strict version.

Generally, try to allow any “overuse” of repeated notes, drones, etc. to fall into the background while moving lines take the foreground.

OK here are some specific comments on each movement. I hope they help.

Prologue: That low D should be pretty gentle persuaded towards consistency. Please don't pound. Anything that moves should be foreground. Lots of pedal, but you'll have to figure out what works for your ears so far as when the texture is just too muddy. Part of the musical gesture here is the muddled thoughts, lack of clarity. So, the texture should definitely not be “classical clean.”

Once you have the modal language, please feel free to improvise although be very subtle and stay underneath the voice (think of your part as changing the color of the drone – hard to do on a piano for sure).

My Special Place: Use lots of rubato in order to get the character of opening sections. It's a little manic. The opening should be pretty sweet and dreamy, not strict at all. Allow yourself a lot of flow. Measures 15-17 are sort of a fake-out, as if things get strict. They don't, yet. Think of these three measures as a bit of an antithesis to the freedom of the intro. Make these three measures “less fun, less sweet, less free, perhaps even less “musical.” From about mm 21 you should play very strictly, almost robotically up until the motion stops at the recit section. The musical allusion is as if she is trying to “hold it together” despite the fact that this section feels like it wants to run forward or have plasticity – hold it as strictly as possible. It is possible to build intensity throughout this as well. In the recit section you may certainly roll the chords and play “colla voce.”

In My Dreams I: Two musical ideas. One is lyrical (In My Dreams) and the other is a little faster, ominous, and menacing (interlude). The “a minor” accompaniment should be a little pushy, but you'll just see how Melissa can get around these notes. They are low in her voice and the text is “chewy”.

Anytime you have walking bass accompaniments make sure they are more Bach-like than Rachmaninoff. A bit of separation will work nicely to give these sections some clarity and buoyancy.

Sometimes in the Night: Ok, see all those f-g half notes in the right hand. Just keep that going sometimes, don't hit it every time. I find myself not even playing it after a while. Again, it is part of the drone (The G never asserts itself solidly until the end of the cycle. Before that it appears clustered with something else.) Make sure that the moving line has attention. Also, the recurring “waking” motif should be faster and louder than the rest of the piece. It should have a distinct character.

I Thought I Wore the Watch: Be careful not to let this get “poundy.” [*sic*] It should be a bit robotic and insistent though. Careful here of too much pedal or it’ll be really muddy.

It’s 2pm: Melissa says you’re doing a great job making this into a folk style. You might listen to a performance of the Bengali song on YouTube to get the “horse’s mouth.” It’s an ear-worm [*sic*] for sure. Here’s the link. Catchy.
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QFzS2Yw4ROs>

The version in the song cycle is much more tame, like a memory of the song tamed down for waiting around the house, but still in mind.

Can You Hear? No comments. Pretty straightforward, eh?

When I Laugh: Make this as manic as you can. It is madness (this thing called love).

Create Another Earth: The opening gesture/run should be fast and not at all clean. In other words, keep the pedal down and make it a bit of mess with a lot of direction to the stopping point. The musical gesture is an allegory to a hand scooping up a bunch of dirt. The dirt sort of gets all over. It is what I see when I think of someone saying this text. Again, in this movement you have walking bass. Make it nice and Bach-like (Passaglia? [*sic*]).

In My Dreams II and Postlude: I think this is the only time I risk jumping all over the vocal line. So, be gentle. Ha, ha. Play with tempo variations in the transitions to see what works best for you. If Melissa needs vocal support please leave out my notes and give her some of hers. Some of the vocal notes are not easy to find. Make note of these if you can. I’ll add them to the score at a later time.

Thoughts for Melissa and anyone else who is curious. Movement by Movement

Prologue

Originally I wanted to set up a solid relationship between spoken and sung texts. That didn't pan out as planned, but we kept it in the first version. I'm curious to see how that all works out. The main theme presented after the marching along of the drone is a tune that came out very insistently back in March of 2009 when I first worked with Melissa in person. I kept the theme because it came through so strongly. The basic drone relationships also were established at that first conceptual meeting. The basic "argument" is between the D drone (D and A variations) – this is dominant through the first half of the piece – and the G drone (D and G variations) which creates a transition to an actual key area – C major.

My Special Place

This movement is more imaginative and hopeful in a pipe dream sort of way and begins very idyllically. That deteriorates quickly. There is, for me, a conflict between the wonderful thoughts and whatever "reality" has created the need for this "special place" of refuge. Whenever simple harmonies come into play, as they do here, they are often impure, that is, they having lots of coloring notes that fog the texture and change the impact (certainty) of the ideas. Many things remain unresolved.

In My Dreams I

This movement establishes what becomes a unifying element in the work – the "In My Dreams" theme. The poem is such a wonderful thought. That somehow, in my dreams nothing will be bad or go wrong. There is great generosity in this poem and sense of purity in the scene – hence the certainty and purity of the key area –C.

The pretty, little theme is just that, shortlived [*sic*] and pretty. It can't last. And there are more menacing [*sic*] and insistent elements that poke through the piece. Both spoken voice and singing voice are combined to ward off the effects of this. In effect then, the melody becomes mantra -- a short, repeated prayer, a reminder that things can be better, a mantra of optimism (weirdly the triplet became the marker of optimism for me and grace notes from the prologue became omens of trouble).

The secondary theme mirrors the hard work of getting ones head out of the negatives and back to a decent state. It too becomes almost mantralike [*sic*] while the speaking voice continues in the foreground. Frankly, the thought behind this poem seems almost herculean to me. It is expressed so simply and eloquently.

The melody for In My Dreams also was formed early, just after, or while working with Melissa in March of 2009. At that meeting almost everything was improvised out on the white keys of the piano.

I Thought I Wore the Watch

The next two poems, “watch” and “It’s 2pm” were the most troublesome for me. They are clearly the most sophisticated of the poems and were written by an older girl. The messages conveyed are at once more layered and complex.

“Watch” is for me, the most anxious and emotive poem in the entire set. It is also the most disturbing and least hopeful. The sense that one is losing something very important by losing the watch . . . very poignant. So, at the outset, the D drone disintegrates into a dissonant sonority, which is used throughout the piece. The pace is rushed and there is a lot of recitation, almost desperate parlando, in the movement. This short movement is meant really to be a quick snapshot into a not-so-pretty moment. The melody is understandably angular at times, more reflective of disturbingly anxious thought patterns than anything else. Stasis is again achieved through over pounded sonorities, in this case, those build on G.

It’s 2pm

I chose to write the text carrying material for this piece over 244-1139, the Bengali pop/folk song that many of the girls were singing when Melissa worked with them in India. It seemed to make sense to do this since it provided a hopeful (or distracting) backdrop to the poetry – so many interpretations of the song’s presence in this context reflects the almost ephemeral nature of thoughts on this topic. My mind goes back and forth with all kinds of emotions. The pop song is at once grounding, reassuring, and very disturbing.) Sometimes though, background music (as most of us use it) allows us to settle our thoughts and think, perhaps about nothing, so that we can gain composure. The thoughts of the poem are definitely of an anxious nature. So, the use of background music (background music for music) seems appropriate.

The thoughts in this poem are very sad. The poet is in a lonely and desperate place and from my perspective there is nothing very redeeming about the one thing she hopes for (that this guy will show up finally and give her some attention). So, the only thing that stabilizes this movement is appropriately the consistency of the pop song constantly going underneath. No matter what words are being sung or whether the thoughts are -- good, dark, bright, or bad -- there is the pop song doing whatever it does (reassuring, stabilizing, distracting). Even with the melodic and hope-filled song underneath this piece is sad. Perhaps the presence of the catchy tune makes it even sadder.

I Can Hear (or Can you hear?)

This poem was problematic textually as a lot of non-metrical and non-rhyming texts can be for composers. So, I rearranged the elements into those to be spoken and those to be sung, making one comment on the other – sort of like my mind is like normally.

I composed perhaps 4-6 versions of this work in various styles. The first ones sounded like marching themes from Les Miserable and there were quieter one, minimalist ones, and lyrical ones. My favourite [*sic*] was a very poor imitation of Gorecki's mature, minimalist style. None of them really worked. I realized one night very late, that there was nothing in this cycle that was really simple and prayerful, something reflective, and perhaps without the anxiety of the rest of the work. That moment found its expression in this movement. And while it is not anxious or angular at all, the piece is still sort of disturbing. While the poem says, "I can hear" the question is really "Can you hear them?" Somehow the simple setting manages to leave you with that question – Am I hearing them? What is it I need to hear? The very tonal (almost theory-exercise-like) setting is reminiscent of hymns, while the suspensions create a lament effect. With the music, for me, this poem becomes a prayer of hope that someone, maybe lots of someones, will hear and respond. It is a prayer asking for awareness and openness – simple things that elude us in our very distracting lives.

When I Laugh

This is really a weird piece. Truthfully, it is the most disappointing one for me as I really was bent on finding musical figurations that made sense with "crazy-woman" laughter. I feel that I was most unsuccessful as a composer in this particular movement. But, the poem is so good. It really reads as if she means "madness" while what she really means is "madly in love." I hope to revisit this one in a future version. Perhaps I need to meet someone who is truly whacko and in love all at the same time.

Create Another Earth

Here is the use of a regular tonal melody as cantus firmus as in "2pm" and "In My Dreams II." I've already written about the cantus firmus melody and how that came about. Here's a reprint of that. Whoa, I am block quoting myself:

The wordless melody came out while I was working on the piece at my in-laws' home near the beautiful St. Lawrence River. Something about the flow of that river and the bucolic scenery is there in the insistence of that melody. There was nothing to do but write down the melody and set the text to a countermelody above.

In My Dreams II

The poetry for In My Dreams II is very different from the first poem of the same title, despite the fact that I immediately saw them as companion pieces – strong, hopeful, optimistic. The tricky part of this movement was dealing with the ending. The sense of completion that this sort of definitive melody can give a work was very tempting. But my own sense is that the musical work and the work on human trafficking awareness is simply not finished. Not even close. So, although I was tempted to end the entire cycle with this movement, I held to having a postlude over which the narrator could speak. (see Postlude)

Postlude

In fact, In My Dreams II is the front end of the Postlude. It made sense that somehow the melody of the Prologue had to finally give way to the vision of “In My Dreams” since the overall sense of the cycle is one of hope. But, musically, by then the original C major melody was now in Ab (to best accommodate the countermelody) and the initial Prologue melody was in a sort of modal D. Somehow, quickly, I had to find a way to C major that wasn’t too contrived. The Postlude gave me an opportunity to do that as well as resolve the drone issues from the D-A drone to the D-G drone which conveniently set up a return of In My Dreams in C as backdrop for the reading.

APPENDIX D
PERMISSION



Melissa Glenn <melissawalkerglenn@gmail.com>

Permission

Gerard Yun <gerard.yun@gmail.com>

Tue, Oct 12, 2010 at 11:07 AM

To: Melissa Glenn <melissawalkerglenn@gmail.com>

Melissa:

Here's permission to use the work:

To Whom it May Concern:

Melissa Walker Glenn has my permission to use copyrighted and non-copyrighted notation from the song cycle "In My Dreams" which I composed in cooperation with Melissa in 2009.

Sincerely,

Dr. Gerard Yun,
Waterloo, Ontario, Canada
October 2010

[Quoted text hidden]

To: Carole Fitzpatrick
MUS

From: Mark Roosa, Chair
Soc Beh IRB

Date: 12/10/2008

Committee Action: **Exemption Granted**

IRB Action Date: 12/10/2008

IRB Protocol #: 0812003512

Study Title: Poetry Collection for Song Cycle

The above-referenced protocol is considered exempt after review by the Institutional Review Board pursuant to Federal regulations, 45 CFR Part 46.101(b)(2) .

This part of the federal regulations requires that the information be recorded by investigators in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects. It is necessary that the information obtained not be such that if disclosed outside the research, it could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability, or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

You should retain a copy of this letter for your records.

APPENDIX E

CD RECORDING OF *IN MY DREAMS*

CONSULT ATTACHED FILES