

Socialist reality that was Hitler's regime. Despite his efforts to ingratiate himself into the Führer's artistic vision for music in Germany, certain works written during his former freer stylistic period continued to dog his efforts. His opera, *News of the Day* (1929), offended Hitler greatly with its nude bathtub scene, and, by 1936, any performances of Hindemith's works were banned by the state. He was never able to escape his Nazi-era epithet of "degenerate artist." By the time he sailed to America in 1939, when these songs were completed, he was ready to embark on a new life in the United States, free from state sponsored artistic control, going on to join the faculty at Yale University in 1940.

The seventeen songs included here were part of a new project Hindemith proposed to his publisher in 1933. In addition to text settings of poems by Friedrich Hölderlein (published in a separate volume by Schott), the composer chose other German language texts exclusively for this project.

Stylistically, the songs retain an expressionistic sensibility, harmonically adventurous, while the melodies remain sinuous and expansive in range. They are simple rhythmically, with standard meters remaining consistent throughout. Although all are moderate in range, the tessitura throughout frequently traverses the upper *passaggio*, and so are well suited to the voice of a technically adroit soprano or lyric mezzo soprano, or any male voice with a easy top register. Celebrated baritone Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau performed and recorded many of these, and a similarly sure hand with vocal color and an ability to create supple legato lines from frequently disjunct melodies make these eminently suitable for the more advanced singer looking for

unusual German repertoire. There are no English translations, although there is an informative preface describing, in brief, the history of this collection.

Cerrone, Christopher (b. 1984).

I Will Learn to Love a Person (2012).

- I) "That Night with the Green Sky";
- II) "Eleven Page Poem Page Three";
- III) "I will Learn to Love a Person and then I will Teach You and then We will Know";
- IV) "When I Leave this Place";
- V) "Are You OK?" (Text: Tao Lin).

The compositional style of Christopher Cerrone; a brilliant young composer who hails from Brooklyn, New York, has been described as having "the quality of glittery, half-lighted surfaces enhanced by Postminimalist patterns" (Mark Swed, *Los Angeles Times*). The song cycle, *I Will Learn to Love a Person*, is Cerrone's first major vocal work since his opera, *Invisible Cities*, which was a finalist for the 2014 Pulitzer Prize. The songs, originally conceived for soprano, clarinet, percussion, and piano, are now available through publisher Schott New York in a version for soprano and piano. The songs here are luminous, ethereal, and utterly about the poetry, itself a product of the so-called New Sincerity movement, defined by the composer in his preface as "autobiographical, direct, emotional, stripped down and self-doubting." The composer uses an amazing economy of means to bear the poetry along in each song. It might seem that the minimalism inherent in Cerrone's music, with his recitative-like, syllabic setting of text, and use of very simple harmonic elements, would eschew any rhapsodic element. But in every one of the five songs included in this cycle, Cerrone manages to create

effective vocal lines that emerge with bell-like clarity from a miasmatic piano accompaniment. Variety is created by a strong rhythmically driven approach in the second and fourth songs, and a more static and declamatory one in the first, third, and fifth songs. Meter changes are frequent. Cerrone is meticulous in his instructions and markings for both singer and pianist, and singers are requested to use vibrato sparingly, not avoiding it altogether, but not employing a "bel canto" approach. These songs are a magical and compelling setting of a true 21st century poetry.

Abel, Mark (b. 1948). *The Palm Trees are Restless: Five Poems of Kate Gale, for soprano and piano* (2014).

- 1) "The Storm Drain";
 - 2) "Los Angeles";
 - 3) "Crater Light";
 - 4) "Shura";
 - 5) "The Great Divorce."
- Publisher: Classical Vocal Reprints. Available for high and medium high soprano. Duration: 21'28".

Mark Abel is a California based composer with an already impressive body of vocal work who demonstrates from a compositional mélange of rock, jazz, and classical influences, "a stylistic meld that successfully combines elements of all three: the expressive depth of classical music, the in-your-face impact of rock, and the free-flowing and quasi-improvisatory nature of jazz" (*Home is a Harbor*, CD Delos DE3495 booklet).

With *The Palm Trees are Restless*, Abel has set the haunting and very sensual lyrics of Los Angeles poet Kate Gale (from the book *Echo Light*, Red Mountain Press) to great effect. Premiered by Grammy-award winning soprano Hila Plitmann (see

“Listener’s Gallery,” p. 115, for the CD review), all the songs utilize the high register of the soprano voice, with optional lowering of certain lines down an octave in the newly edited version offered by Classical Vocal Reprints. They are harmonically tonal, with a few spoken lines, and although meter changes are frequent, the songs are not rhythmically difficult. Abel’s directions to both singer and pianist throughout the cycle are couched in emotional language, for example, “wistfully,” “ecstatically,” or “urgently.”

In the first song about an enigmatic sexual encounter, “The Storm Drain” ($D^{\#}_4-A_5$), the piano accompaniment is flowing and, at times, dense. Although the voice soars to an A_5 at the climax of the piece, the tessitura remains mostly in the middle voice. The vocal line in “Los Angeles People” (D_4-C_6) lies above the staff for many lines of this acerbic text, depicting the relentless sunshine and the pressure of life in the city where “you must be thin . . . to cast a shadow. You must drive a cool car . . . You must have blond highlights.” “Crater Light” (D_4-C_6) recounts a conversation in a bar between the poetess and the abysmal man trying to seduce her, with the broken chords in the piano his narcissistic, misguided wooing. “Shura” ($C^{\#}_4-B_5$) is an elegiac remembering of a sister’s face in beautiful decay, and the final “The Great Divorce” ($C^{\#}_4-C_6$) is by far the most exacting of all the songs, with the soprano expressing her hysterical rage with difficult texts on high repeated notes at breakneck speed.

The Palm Trees are Restless is an excellent choice for a very particular kind of soprano voice able to negotiate the demanding tessitura, text delivery and dramatic arc of these five songs.

Sequels to two previously reviewed anthologies have been issued this year. The excellent *Japanese Art Song Anthology, Volume I*, Kumiko Shimuzu and Mutzumi Moteki, editors, was reviewed in the May/June, 2015 issue of the *Journal of Singing*. Volume II, which contains eleven new songs, is now available through Classical Vocal Reprints, in both high and medium low keys.

Bärenreiter-Verlag, publisher of the *Rameau: Airs de d’opéra* series, whose first two volumes in an eight volume series were also reviewed in the *Journal of Singing* last year, has just released another volume in the series. *Rameau: Airs de d’opéra, dessus/sopranos volume 2*, contains twenty-eight arias for the *dessus*, or soprano voices distinguished by tenderness, and a touching and pathetic quality. Once again, as in the earlier volumes, the editors have included valuable introductory material, a result of the remarkable scholarly collaboration between the Centre de Musique Baroque de Versailles and the Société Jean Phillippe Rameau. The history of Rameau’s operas, and the notable singers who sang these roles, are discussed at length. Voice teachers seeking interesting and unusual repertoire for young college-age voices are well served by this meticulously prepared series, as are more established singers seeking excellent new editions of this long neglected composer’s repertoire.

Kathleen Roland-Silverstein is a highly regarded concert soloist and specialist in the music of the 20th and 21st centuries. She has been a featured singer with many music festivals, including the *Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival*, the *Britten-Pears Institute*, and the *Tanglewood Music Festival*. She has appeared frequently with the Grammy award-winning *Southwest Chamber Music*

Society of Los Angeles, and with the *Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra*. International performances include concerts in Sweden, Vietnam, Cambodia, and Germany. The soprano has recorded, with American composer Libby Larsen, the song cycle, *Songs from Letters: Calamity Jane to her daughter Janey*, and *Aura*, for orchestra and soloists, by Cambodian composer Chinary Ung. Dr. Roland is a Fulbright senior scholar, an American Scandinavian Foundation grantee, and has conducted master classes on the topic of Scandinavian song at the Tanglewood Festival, Songfest, the University of Southern California, and the Manhattan School of Music. She is a member of the faculty at the Setnor School of Music at Syracuse University, and is the author of a new anthology of Swedish art song, *Romanser: 25 Swedish Art Songs with Guide to Swedish Lyric Diction*. Dr. Roland-Silverstein is currently working on a second book about the art song of Finnish composer Jean Sibelius.

I spot the hills
With yellow balls in autumn.
I light the prairie cornfields
Orange and tawny gold
clusters
And I am called pumpkins.
On the last of October
When dusk is fallen
Children join hands
And circle round me
Singing ghost songs
And love to the harvest moon;
I am a jack-o’-lantern
With terrible teeth
And the children know
I am fooling.

Carl Sandberg,
“Theme in Yellow”