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I HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE DOCTORAL ESSAY PREPARED UNDER MY  
SUPERVISION BY:

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ENTITLED:

A Performance Guide to *Eve-Song* by Jake Heggie

BE ACCEPTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE  
DOCTOR OF MUSICAL ARTS DEGREE

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## ABSTRACT

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Over the past decade Jake Heggie has become widely recognized as an innovative composer who specializes in American art song and opera. Of the more than 200 songs in his current catalogue, his first commissioned cycle, *Eve-Song*, can be considered an important addition to the world of twentieth century art song as it stands as only one of four extant song cycles or monodramas featuring the Eve of biblical times. *Eve-Song* features the poetry of Los Angeles writer Philip Littell and offers a take on the experiences of biblical figures Adam and Eve spoken largely in first-person by Eve who is presented as a progressive feminist.

This essay explores many aspects of the cycle including its genesis, biographies of the composer, poet, premiering soprano (also the dedicatee), and patron, the process of its creation and premiere, and analyses of the songs. Additionally, this song cycle is examined in the context of art song tradition with a specific focus on American song composers who paved the way for writing such as Heggie exhibits in *Eve-Song*. Because the subject of the poems for this cycle is the biblical Eve, a figure of longstanding theological and cultural significance, this essay examines the poetry in the context of relevant bible passages, biblical criticism, and the poet's avowed feminist interpretation of her. The analysis of each poem serves to bring to the performer a deeper understanding of the song text and the musical implications in each piece while additionally providing suggestions pertinent to performance practice. This essay is meant

to aid performers in the preparation of a full informed collaborative performance of this work as well as to compile and provide critical information to the lexicon of modern American art song .

## **A Performance Guide to *Eve-Song* by Jake Heggie**

Michelle Marie Fiertek

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the  
Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Musical Arts  
The Hartt School, University of Hartford  
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**EVE-SONG from THE FACES OF LOVE**

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## **DEDICATION**

This essay is dedicated to the educational pioneer of our family, my mother,  
Rosemary Ann Deming.

The process was supervised by three beautiful souls looking down from heaven:  
Samuel Carola (my grandfather), Sara Cieslukowski (my beloved friend),  
and Brianna Angelica Fiertek (my daughter).

With love and support all things are possible.

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## Chapter One

### **Introduction**

Over the past decade Jake Heggie has become widely recognized as an innovative composer who specializes in American art song and opera. His catalogue as of 2012 includes 9 operas/stage works including his highly acclaimed *Dead Man Walking* and his most recent opera *Moby-Dick*, 11 choral works, more than 200 art songs, 13 vocal works with chamber accompaniment, and 19 instrumental, chamber, or orchestral works. Heggie is drawn to poetry that he finds personally inspiring, and for many of his songs he gravitates toward setting both texts by classic revered American authors such as Emily Dickinson, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Walter Benton, and Anne Sexton, as well as contemporary American authors such as Maya Angelou, Terrance McNally, Gene Scheer, and Philip Littell.<sup>1</sup> Heggie's songs are widely sung and recorded by well known artists, with seventeen albums to date featuring his work as sung by the likes of Frederica von Stade, Jennifer Larmore, Joyce DiDonato, Susan Graham, Bryn Terfel, Ben Heppner, Renee Fleming, and Isabel Bayrakdarian. His work has been commissioned by opera houses including San Francisco Opera, The Dallas Opera, San Diego Opera, Calgary Opera, State Opera of South Australia, Houston Grand Opera, Madison Opera, Opera Pacific, and Opera Colorado, as well as by Carnegie Hall. Heggie is also known for his excellent master-classes and coaching activities at universities across the country, with his most recent appointment being that of Guest Artist at University of Oregon (March 13-14, 2013). In 2007 his work was lauded here in Connecticut with the commission and performance of the song cycle

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<sup>1</sup> A complete list of Heggie's works may be found on his website <http://www.jakeheggie.com>.

*Rise and Fall* for University of Connecticut faculty soprano Constance Rock. In 2012 Heggie returned to SongFest in Malibu, CA for his second year as artist faculty.

Heggie's songs are often featured alongside those of fellow well-established modern American composers such as John Harbison, John Musto, Libby Larsen, Ben Moore, Tom Cipullo, Lori Laitman, and Ricky Ian Gordon. Of those songs his cycle *Eve-Song* can be considered an important addition to the world of twentieth century art song as it stands as only one of four extant song cycles or monodramas featuring the Eve of biblical times.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, of those four substantial vocal works *Eve-Song* is only one of two which portray her as a woman with modern sensibilities. Commissioned by James Schwabacher, the cycle was first performed February 27, 2000 at Old First Church in San Francisco by soprano Kristin Clayton with the composer at the piano. *Eve-Song* features the poetry of Los Angeles writer Philip Littell, and offers a take on the experiences of biblical figures Adam and Eve spoken largely in first-person by Eve who is presented as a progressive feminist.

This essay explores many aspects of the cycle including its genesis, biographies of the composer, poet, premiering soprano (also the dedicatee), and patron, the process of its creation and premiere, and analyses of the songs. Each song in the cycle is analyzed in multiple ways. First, salient musical characteristics are addressed. These include, but are not limited to, musical form, tonality and mode, functional harmony, cadences, recurring motives/themes, rhythm and meter, and stylistic influences. Second, the relationship between the poetry and the music is addressed. This includes exploring how musical aspects interact with the text, including, but not limited to, questions such as 1) are motives specific to character; 2) do modulations connote a

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<sup>2</sup> The other three works mentioned are Gabriel Fauré's song cycle *La Chanson d'Ève*, Ezra Laderman's song cycle *Songs for Eve* and the monodrama *Testament of Eve* written for mezzo-soprano, orchestra and tape by Jean Eichelberger Ivey.

shift in poetic progression, and how so; and 3) how do changes in pitch, texture, register, or contour reflect the poetic intent? Finally, this song cycle is examined in the context of twentieth and twenty-first century song tradition, with a specific focus on American song composers who have paved the way for writing such as Heggie exhibits in this cycle. As part of this examination Heggie's musical style, teachers, and musical influences are addressed.

Since the subject of the poems for this cycle is the biblical Eve, a figure of longstanding theological and cultural significance, this essay examines the poetry in the context of relevant bible passages, biblical criticism, and the poet's avowed feminist interpretation of her. The analysis of each poem will serve to bring to the performer a deeper understanding of the song text and the musical implications in each piece while additionally providing suggestions pertinent to performance practice.

This essay makes reference to, and brief discussion of, other existent large scale vocal works about Eve. As previously mentioned, these include Gabriel Fauré's song cycle *La Chanson d'Ève*, Ezra Laderman's song cycle *Songs for Eve*, and the monodrama *Testament of Eve* written for mezzo-soprano, orchestra and tape by Jean Eichelberger Ivey.

Finally, as part of the email interviews conducted with Heggie and Littell,<sup>3</sup> performance suggestions, comments, or notes for each piece specified by the aforementioned will be included.

This essay is meant to aid performers in the preparation of a full informed collaborative performance of this work as well as to compile and provide critical information to the lexicon of modern American art song .

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<sup>3</sup> Unfortunately, Clayton was unable to respond to the interview questions the author posed.

Surprisingly, although Heggie has proven to be a major figure in the world of twentieth and twenty-first century classical music, this work will join only five existing dissertations, one masters thesis, and one Undergraduate Research Symposium presentation written solely on the topic of Heggie's compositions. Because twentieth and twenty-first century vocal music post-dating Samuel Barber is too commonly left out of the voice studio, it is my hope that this essay will help make *Eve-Song*, a work which merits performance and study, more accessible to voice teachers, vocal coaches, and song performers.

My interest in Jake Heggie began in late 1999 during my undergraduate studies at Arizona State University. The three volumes of *The Faces of Love: The Songs of Jake Heggie* had recently been published and the corresponding recording released, and I was immediately drawn to the folks song settings they contained as well as to the cycle *Eve-Song*. I performed selections from this cycle as part of one of my undergraduate solo recitals in 2000. It was then my pleasure to revisit the opening song, *My Name*, in 2007 as part of a master class Heggie was conducting during my masters degree at California State University, Long Beach. The opportunity to coach this powerful and expressive song with the composer reignited my interest in both Heggie's compositions and this cycle in particular.

## Chapter Two

### **Jake Heggie and Twentieth Century Song**

Given that America was built upon the principle of melding European culture with the vibrant and determined spirit of a new land, by its very nature we must examine American art song in two specific ways: through a lens of American composers whose work was firmly rooted in European traditions as well as those composers who would create new music out of an appreciation for the unique qualities of American folk and popular music. Of the former, Ruth C. Friedberg makes an interesting point when she states that Americans are schizophrenic in their artistic thinking because they experience, “the need to escape from, to rebel against, to go beyond or outside of the British and European heritage, mingled strongly with the desire to learn from, to emulate, and to draw the water of life out of this same fountainhead.”<sup>4</sup> Of the latter she states:

Following the threads of their own national identity, laced with the European origins from which most sprang, American composers have created a distinctive and vibrant musical tradition in song, which has shaped our culture, contributed to the development of the intrinsically American forms of folk, jazz, and musical theater, and, during the last century, increasingly achieved distinction and identity from international musicians and audiences.”<sup>5</sup>

In some ways Heggie’s song output reflects this ambivalence. Among his acknowledged influences or models are Debussy and Ravel, two important European masters of the early twentieth century. At the same time, Heggie has been able to draw upon the achievements of

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<sup>4</sup> Ruth C. Friedberg and Robin Fisher. *American Art Song and American Poetry*, 2nd ed. (Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2012), 1.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., ix.

classic American art song masters such as Virgil Thompson, Aaron Copland, Samuel Barber, and his own teacher Ernst Bacon. A third, additional element is found in Heggie's propensity to freely incorporate elements from the world of popular music and jazz, stretching and blurring the boundaries between such categories as art song and popular song. The result is an eclectic and original synthesis of these various strands.

In interviews Heggie has often been asked about his musical influences, and he begins by citing Debussy, Ravel, and Poulenc.<sup>6</sup> Although Heggie does not include Fauré in this list, he does add that he has always loved his songs.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, after studying the body of Heggie's work, his dedication to the power of the human voice, and the expressive possibilities of song on an intimate scale, Fauré seems a natural addition. It would stand to reason that Debussy serves as many a composer's inspiration. In *A French Song Companion* Johnson says of Debussy:

If there is one composer who seems to encapsulate both the most delicate and passionate aspects of the mélodie, whose command of literature ranges from the lyrics of the salon to the greatest of French poetry, both new and old, and whose musical mastery is equal to the demands of the greatest texts, it is this mysterious man...<sup>8</sup>

He questions, "...which twentieth-century composer refuses to acknowledge Debussy, in some respects at least, as his precursor?"<sup>9</sup> A true revolutionary with a genuine appreciation for the human voice, Debussy is celebrated for his ability to create distinctive music that exacts poetic meaning by breaking traditional theoretical rules. There is an oft-quoted conversation with his

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<sup>6</sup> Anonymous, "FanFaire celebrates Jake Heggie: America's most popular composer of opera and song." *FanFaire*. <http://www.fanfaire.com/Heggie/interview.html> (accessed August 9, 2010); David Mermelstein, "He's Got a Song in His Art." *L.A. Times* (November 10, 1996). [http://articles.latimes.com/1996-11-10/entertainment/ca-63102\\_1\\_art-songs](http://articles.latimes.com/1996-11-10/entertainment/ca-63102_1_art-songs) (accessed July 17, 2012).

<sup>7</sup> Jake Heggie, email message to author, March 21, 2013.

<sup>8</sup> Graham Johnson and Richard Stokes, *A French Song Companion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 92.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 92.

teacher Ernest Guiraud where upon Guiraud states, “I am not saying that what you do isn’t beautiful, but it’s theoretically absurd.” To this Debussy famously responds, “There is no theory. You have merely to listen. Pleasure is the law.”<sup>10</sup> Although there are theoretical similarities between Debussy and Heggie at play in *Eve-Song* which will be discussed later, it is more importantly the fact that Heggie is inspired by the effect of music on the listener rather than the aptness of a theoretical approach that links the two composers. Of his compositional process Heggie says:

I think about what kind of musical character best describes the psychological state that would compel the person to say those things...And through all that, somehow music starts to happen and I just sort of stay out of the way. The idea happens, then a tune happens and then the texture that is behind the tune.<sup>11</sup> I do whatever I feel is necessary to tell the story in a way that is honest and direct and clear. If someone hears influences of other composers or pieces or styles, it’s rather unavoidable...I am wrapped up in the message of the text, and I’m trying to find the best and clearest way to tell it.<sup>12</sup>

With regard to Heggie acknowledging Ravel as an influence, one need only examine Ravel’s well-known *Histoires Naturelles* to appreciate the link between the composers in terms of bringing a character to life. The manner in which Ravel was able to communicate the essence of each animal through the music would be inspirational to any song composer intent on cultivating dramatic truth and authenticity in their work. Heggie shares with these revered composers a willingness to swim against the stream.<sup>13</sup> He cites a personal turning point during

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<sup>10</sup> Edward Lockspeiser, *Debussy: His Life and Mind* (London: Cassell & Company, 1962), 1:204-8.

<sup>11</sup> Carolyn E. Redman, “‘Songs to the Moon’: A song cycle by Jake Heggie from poems by Vachel Lindsay” (D.M.A. diss., The Ohio State University, 2004), 14.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>13</sup> With respect to this idea one can also cite the scandal of Ravel’s famous incorporation of the mute ‘e’ of spoken French in *Histoires Naturelles*.

the writing of a cycle for countertenor Brian Asawa post-UCLA:

I just decided I'm not at the university anymore, and I wrote the piece just how I wanted to write it. It was the most liberating experience I ever had! It sounds jazzy, and it also has Broadway influences in it. I trusted my instincts, and it was hugely successful. So I just decided that this is how I would write in the future.<sup>14</sup>

When exploring the influence Poulenc might have had on Heggie one finds union between the two composers not only in that their music is replete with jazz influences, not only in the fact that both have struggled against the perception that their music might be considered “lightweight,” but also in their personal attributes. Both have been celebrated for their openness of heart and their concern for music’s connection to humanity. Heggie has said, “I have learned to be fearless as a composer and write honestly and from the heart. Then it can’t be wrong.”<sup>15</sup>

He has also offers a more global view:

...all of us, struggle with the fact that we are ultimately alone. That no matter how many human connections we make, we’re an individual vessel walking around this earth and we seek to connect and find common threads and people who will help us fill that void and emptiness. When we find it, it’s miraculous. I think that’s what we all struggle with and that’s when music can really bring us together.<sup>16</sup>

Heggie follows a long history of American admiration for the innovations of the French masters. For inspiration and instruction many American composers in the early twentieth century sought out renowned composer, conductor, and teacher Nadia Boulanger who taught out of her home in Paris. Although one of Boulanger’s hallmarks was the fact that she was known to

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<sup>14</sup> Carolyn E. Redman, “‘Songs to the Moon’: A song cycle by Jake Heggie from poems by Vachel Lindsay” (D.M.A. diss., The Ohio State University, 2004), 13.

<sup>15</sup> Robins, Cynthia, “A Composer Who Writes from the Heart,” *San Francisco Examiner* (October 2, 1996), <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/e/a/1996/10/02STYLE6384.dtl&hw=jake+heggie&s> (accessed August 4, 2012).

<sup>16</sup> Kendra Allyn Lynch, “A comparative analysis of four pieces by Jake Heggie” (master’s thesis, California State University, Long Beach, 2006), 106.

have been skilled at coaxing out of a composer his own personal “voice,” there can be no mistaking the fact that to be part of her studio in Paris was to derive inspiration from European musical style. Among her students were the composers Virgil Thompson, Aaron Copland, and Roy Harris, three men who certainly left their mark in the history of American music.

Thompson, a composer devoted to the voice, is best known for his operas *Four Saints in Three Acts* and *The Mother of Us All*. He is celebrated for his commitment “to solving the problems of musical declamation in the English language that he felt had hardly been addressed.”<sup>17</sup> Copland was a composer who would make his mark on the American musical scene by incorporating the music of the people, American folk and jazz, into his works. He was celebrated for his ability to infuse his pieces with a certain uniquely “American” spirit that the country so desperately needed on the heels of The Great Depression. Friedberg notes that there was a growing desire among the American composers in Boulanger’s studio for an *American* musical identity. “‘We wanted,’ said Copland, ‘to find a music that would speak of universal things in the vernacular of American speech rhythms...music with a largeness of utterance wholly representative of the country that Whitman has envisaged.’”<sup>18</sup>

Finally, it is Harris, a composer one might not traditionally connect with the voice as he wrote no operas and very few songs, who occupies a place of particular importance in the life and history of Jake Heggie. Heggie was married to Johana Harris (Roy Harris’s fourth wife) after the elder composer’s death, and cites her as one of the most significant inspirations in his

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<sup>17</sup> Ruth C. Friedberg and Robin Fisher. *American Art Song and American Poetry*, 2nd ed. (Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2012), 94.

<sup>18</sup> Aaron Copland, *Music and Imagination* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1952), 104.

compositional life.<sup>19</sup> When one reads the sole biography that exists on the life of Johana Harris, one comes to understand the significance she had on Roy Harris's compositional output.<sup>20</sup> Friedberg notes that Roy Harris was, "very articulate about his aims as a composer and tried to establish verbal equations between the American character and American music."<sup>21</sup> Even more interesting in light of the modality and blurred tonality present in *Eve-Song* is his theory, published in a 1933 essay, that as Americans, "Our rhythmic impulses are fundamentally different from the rhythmic impulses of Europeans; and from this unique rhythmic sense are generated different melodic and form values." He adds that he has noticed two tendencies in American composers, "(1) the avoidance of definite cadence which can be traced to...our national aversion to anything final, our hope and search for more satisfying conclusions; (2) the use of modal harmony which probably comes from ennui of the worn-out conventions of the major and minor scales..."<sup>22</sup> In short, Heggie has often recounted that Johana Harris served as his main influence when composing, and one can be sure that some of what she imparted was her love of and gift for musical improvisation. It was a hallmark of her first husband's work and it is certainly a style that comes through in Heggie's vocal compositions.

A discussion of both students of Boulanger and pioneers of American art song would be remiss not to mention Ned Rorem (b.1923), a student of Thompson and Copland and a friend of

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<sup>19</sup> In the 2000 Opera News article "High Scorers" Heggie comments, "During the 1908's composition became more important to me, and I got a degree from UCLA. But I learned more about composition from Johana than [from] any teacher. It was her language." He goes on to say that certain composers served as models for him, "Early on it was Vaughan Williams, Debussy, Poulenc and Britten. Then it moved to Barber, Bernstein, Porter, Gershwin and Coward, but mostly it has been Johana Harris." (Savage, "High Scorers," 13)

<sup>20</sup> Ethel Paquin, *Johana Harris: A Biography* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2011).

<sup>21</sup> Ruth C. Friedberg and Robin Fisher. *American Art Song and American Poetry*, 2nd ed. (Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2012), 67.

<sup>22</sup> Roy Harris, "Problems of American Composers," in *American Composers on American Music*, ed. Henry Cowell (Stanford, CA.: Stanford University Press, 1933), 151-54.

Boulanger, who was responsible for bringing great national attention to American art song and American poetry. In his songs one finds the influence of cabaret, jazz, modal writing and French impressionistic style, as well as recurring motives and polytonal chords. Significantly all of those qualities are embodied in *Eve-Song*. Although Rorem has not been mentioned in interviews where Heggie is asked to recount his primary musical influences, Heggie did take the opportunity to pay homage to the composer during a 2006 concert which featured his and Ricky Ian Gordon's music at Weill Hall at Carnegie Hall. In a concert review Bruce-Michael Gelbert recalled that, "Heggie and Gordon took a break from their own creations to play music by composers who have influenced them...Heggie chose the gentle melancholy of Ned Rorem's 'The House on the Hill,' the finale of his song cycle, *What Is Pink?*, employing Edward Arlington Robinson's poem about an abandoned abode, devoid of its people."<sup>23</sup>

Lastly, one must take note of Heggie's first composition teacher Ernst Bacon (1898-1990), a largely self-taught composer who "set out to write music that expressed the vitality and affirmation of our own country" and held the position that "music is an art, not a science. He felt that its source should be intuitive and imaginative, rather than abstract and analytical."<sup>24</sup>

"His chief aim as a composer was to express the spirit of America in music as Whitman, Emerson, Melville and others did in literature. He was deeply interested in our country's history and folklore, as well as its indigenous music; and the poetry, folk songs, jazz rhythms and geography of America as well as the landscape itself, which he hiked, climbed, and also painted -- all of these elements found their way into his music."<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Gelbert, Bruce-Michael. "Weill Hall: Ricky Ian Gordon & Jake Heggie." TheaterScene.net (March 14, 2006). [http://www.theaterscene.net/ts%5Carticles.nsf/\(AlphaW\)361E016540FA2F5E85257132006C6755?OpenDocument](http://www.theaterscene.net/ts%5Carticles.nsf/(AlphaW)361E016540FA2F5E85257132006C6755?OpenDocument) (accessed February 2, 2013).

<sup>24</sup> The Ernst Bacon Society, <http://www.ernstbacon.org/styled-5/aboutbacon.html> (accessed March 3, 2013).

<sup>25</sup> The Ernst Bacon Society, <http://www.ernstbacon.org/styled-5/aboutbacon.html> (accessed March 3, 2013).

According to Philip L. Miller, “As a composer, Bacon is best known for his songs, which show unusual sensitivity to the color and inflection of words and a masterly use of syncopation to give the impression of natural speech.”<sup>26</sup> It was through Bacon that Heggie began to fully appreciate the dramatic power of poetry as well as the classical singing voice. With this eye-opening relationship Heggie’s approach to songwriting would forever be changed.

In tracing the first significant steps from popular music to art song one must also look back on popular composers who melded the American experience into their music in a perhaps less cultivated, more publicly accessible way. They include Cole Porter (1892-1965), George Gershwin (1898-1937), and a composer who would possessed the rare skill of being as adept at writing popular musical theatre as he was at composing classical works of the highest order, Leonard Bernstein (1918-1990). It is interesting to note that Heggie lists all three of these men as primary musical influences in his own life and writing. In addition to the composers previously mentioned, Heggie cites Vaughan Williams, Britten, Barber, Copland, Adams, and Sondheim.<sup>27</sup> He also notes the fact that he continues to be inspired by his contemporaries. In personal interviews conducted as part of Redman’s 2004 doctoral dissertation Heggie adds Hundley and Musto to this list as well as contemporary musical theater composers such as LaChiusa and Flaherty.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Philip L. Miller, “Bacon, Ernst,” *Grove Music Online*, *Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/01726> (accessed March 19, 2013).

<sup>27</sup> Anonymous, “FanFaire celebrates Jake Heggie: America’s most popular composer of opera and song,” *FanFaire*, <http://www.fanfaire.com/Heggie/interview.html> (accessed August 9, 2010); David Mermelstein, “He’s Got a Song in His Art,” *L.A. Times*, (November 10, 1996), [http://articles.latimes.com/1996-11-10/entertainment/ca-63102\\_1\\_art-songs](http://articles.latimes.com/1996-11-10/entertainment/ca-63102_1_art-songs) (accessed July 17, 2012).

<sup>28</sup> Carolyn E. Redman, “‘Songs to the Moon’: A song cycle by Jake Heggie from poems by Vachel Lindsay” (D.M.A. diss., The Ohio State University, 2004), 11.

Known as a composer who writes songs that are “accessible” and “singer-friendly,” the largest portion of Heggie’s catalogue consists of vocal works. He has said, “The ability to draw a normal breath - like we all do - but then to have this glorious sound come out with the exhalation. It’s just miraculous.”<sup>29</sup> And, “The voice still takes my breath away. It is the most expressive, most magical instrument ever. The inspiration comes from the voice.”<sup>30</sup> It stands to reason that this deep reverence for the voice would foster Heggie’s appreciation for the work of like-minded composers. Interestingly, upon examining the life of Richard Hundley one finds many similarities with Heggie’s own experiences. Friedberg notes that, “While growing up in Kentucky, Hundley’s musical gods had been Stravinsky, Beethoven, and Wagner, but a chance hearing of Samuel Barber’s *Knoxville: Summer of 1915* had effected a radical change that steered him toward the voice as a medium of expression.”<sup>31</sup> Like Heggie, Hundley had the opportunity to gain the audience of great singers at the Metropolitan Opera (he spent four years singing in the Met chorus). He began to show his music to some of the singers, and soon they were programming them on recitals. For instance, Friedberg mentions that, “Anna Moffo, too, was taken with the songs that Hundley played for her while she was changing in her dressing room. When she started to program them on recitals, the composer felt that [he] was made.”<sup>32</sup> In addition, the two composers share a connection in the support of famed mezzo-soprano Frederica von Stade. It was von Stade who performed Hundley’s *Astronomers* on a 1982 CBS recording

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<sup>29</sup> Heather Goyete and Marty Sohl, “Jake Heggie, Opera Composer,” *UCLA Spotlight* (July 1, 2002), [http://www.spotlight.ucla.edu/alumni/jake-heggie\\_opera](http://www.spotlight.ucla.edu/alumni/jake-heggie_opera) (accessed August 9, 2010).

<sup>30</sup> Tom Savage, “High Scorers: Jake Heggie,” *Opera News* 64.7 (Jan 2000): 10, 12-13.

<sup>31</sup> Ruth C. Friedberg and Robin Fisher. *American Art Song and American Poetry*, 2nd ed. (Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2012), 335.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 335.

(Digital 37231).<sup>33</sup> He also lists similar musical influences as Heggie, citing Barber, Harris, Copland, and Thompson among them.<sup>34</sup>

In addition to an appreciation for the voice as a tool of musical expression, Heggie shares much with other admired contemporary composers. With John Musto it is perhaps the fact that piano is his instrument of choice or that, like Heggie himself, Musto is known for his integration of jazz and improvisation. Friedberg states, "...it is noteworthy that he is a self-taught composer, and his biographical sketches imply that his improvisational experiences in jazz gave him the confidence which led naturally into the classical composition process."<sup>35</sup> Perhaps Musto's piano style reminds Heggie of Johana Harris. When discussing the second song in Musto's cycle *Recuerdo* (which has the same title) Freidberg not only notes the incorporation of ragtime rhythms, chromaticism, and blue notes, but she adds, "John Musto, of course, is a skilled pianist, and there are many virtuoso touches in the accompaniment, such as the piano's aural bursting into the poetic vision of a sunrise."<sup>36</sup>

Finally, Heggie finds a shared voice as a contemporary art song composer in Ricky Ian Gordon. They have in common the fact that they take inspiration from music of all genres. Just as Heggie grew up in a house where he was often exposed to jazz music and musical theater soundtracks, Freidberg notes that Gordon took advantage of growing up in Long Island in close proximity to the cultural activities of Manhattan. "By his early teens, Ricky Gordon was making up his own songs, and in the next few years set about absorbing musical experiences of all

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<sup>33</sup> Ruth C. Friedberg and Robin Fisher. *American Art Song and American Poetry*, 2nd ed. (Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2012), 336.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 336.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 379.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 381.

varieties, becoming an ardent fan of both Joni Mitchell and the Metropolitan Opera.”<sup>37</sup> Gordon began a degree in piano performance at Carnegie Mellon, but soon returned to NYC and its vibrant world of musical theater. Like Heggie, his music is tonal and has a strong jazz influence. It has qualities of the classical as well as the musical theater world. While some reviews have been critical of Heggie for the cross-over style of his songs, others stand in support of the fact that the use of popular influences does not automatically negate their artistic value. Wes Blomster writes:

Ives, Bernstein, Rorem: they all wrote songs - lots of them. But their works have never found a place on the perch next to Schubert and Schumann. Now two Americans are changing that: Jake Heggie and Ricky Ian Gordon. Both men are pegged, somewhat too easily as ‘post-Broadway’ or ‘post-Sondheim’; but two world premieres indicate that it’s time to see them as original and unique voices that elevate the status of American song.<sup>38</sup>

Heggie is often asked in interviews to expound upon his personal compositional style. In 2005 Heggie was interviewed by *FanFaire*, and they asked him if there was such a thing as “Heggie style.” He answered, “You know, I don’t know. I’m the wrong person to ask. Because I write just from my gut. I know that it’s always lyrical and tonally based - and that there are elements of jazz, as well as opera and classical influences. But it’s a real sort of eclectic mix of influences.”<sup>39</sup> It can seem like Heggie spends a good amount of time defending the idea that it is permissible for the listener or the singer to enjoy his work. In a 2005 *FanFaire* interview it was

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<sup>37</sup> Ruth C. Friedberg and Robin Fisher. *American Art Song and American Poetry*, 2nd ed. (Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2012), 391.

<sup>38</sup> Wes Blomster, “American Song on the Rise: World Premieres by Heggie and Gordon,” *American Record Guide* 74, no. 4 (July 2011): 11, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/887526560?accountid=11308> (accessed January 18, 2013).

<sup>39</sup> Anonymous, “*FanFaire* celebrates Jake Heggie: America’s most popular composer of opera and song.” *FanFaire*. <http://www.fanfaire.com/Heggie/interview.html> (accessed August 9, 2010).

offered:

If there is one adjective that correctly describes Heggie's music, it's 'accessible.' To some, particularly those with elitist tendencies, 'accessible' is a bad word, but not to Heggie, who makes no apologies for his music. 'Oh no,' he says, 'I want the audience to feel challenged because they're listening to something new, but not to feel alienated because they can't understand what's coming up.'<sup>40</sup>

Upon reviewing Heggie's newest release *Passing By: Songs by Jake Heggie*, Ralph Lucano of American Record Guide (ARG) discusses the fact that he went back in time to examine an ARG review of Heggie's earlier album *Faces of Love*. Of that review he states, "Mr. Boyer described the music as more pop than art song, much influenced by blues and jazz. Now, 10 years later, those influences still present, but Heggie seems to have gravitated more toward the serious."<sup>41</sup> In 2005 Heggie was asked how his early writing compared to his then current writing. He answered:

Very different. I've stripped away the layers. I've become more direct. My earlier stuff was more obscure. And now I'm much clearer with the musical line, and the dramatic line as well. I think what happened when I was writing *Dead Man Walking* was that I suddenly realized that all along I've been a theater composer. That was for some reason a big discovery for me. I never thought of myself as a theater composer. I had thought of myself as a song-writer. Then it made sense why I was interested in particular texts and particular themes now - because they were theatrical."<sup>42</sup>

Later, in an interview for the doctoral essay "New Trends in American Art Song Repertoire," he revisited this idea stating:

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<sup>40</sup> Anonymous, "Opening Night at the Ellie Caulkins Opera House: Jake Heggie, composer/pianist." *FanFaire*. <http://www.fanfaire.com/Ellie/6e-heggie.htm> (accessed August 19, 2012).

<sup>41</sup> Ralph V. Lucano, "Guide to Records - HEGGIE: Songs," *American Record Guide* 73, no. 6 (November 2010): 138, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/821005937/accountid=11308> (accessed March 19, 2013).

<sup>42</sup> Anonymous, "FanFaire celebrates Jake Heggie: America's most popular composer of opera and song," *FanFaire*, <http://www.fanfaire.com/Heggie/interview.html> (accessed August 9, 2010).

I'm a theater composer. Everything I do has a storytelling component or a narrative...I'm a theater guy so I'm always looking for that in my work. As far as performers are concerned, I expect the [*sic.*] to bring tremendous imagination. I write songs for singing actors. That's the kind of person who is going to know what to do with my songs. My hope always, is that a singer is going to bring a lot of individuality and really inhabit the songs so that they are really saying something, not just standing there singing. That is very important.”<sup>43</sup>

In a 2010 article about his recently celebrated opera *Moby-Dick*, Heggie discussed the fact that the moment the character of Ahab came to life for him in his first aria he was able to write the whole opera. “When I had the aria, I had found my musical world. I could go back to the beginning and write the two acts of opera straight through, very quickly.”<sup>44</sup> When one takes a step back to gain perspective on Heggie’s vocal output, one cannot help but notice his focus on the voice, his love of opera, and his predilection for intimate settings and chamber works. Indeed, in looking retrospectively at *Eve-Song* we are able to see the birth of Heggie the opera composer in small scale. This early song cycle offers the singer a chance to mine the depths of extreme emotions and fundamental questions about existence. A fully informed performance of the work, however, can only be possible after investigation of the cycle’s history and the poetic and musical inspiration behind its inception.

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<sup>43</sup> Grant Whitfield Knox, “New Trends in American Art Song Repertoire” (D.M.A. performance doc., Northwestern University, 2011), 60-61.

<sup>44</sup> Matthew Gurewitsch, “Ahab Sings! (The Whale Does Not),” *New York Times*, (April 23 2010), <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/04/25/arts/music/25moby.html> (accessed August 9 2010).

## Chapter Three

### **The Creation of *Eve-Song*: Composer, Poet, Singer, Patron**

#### **The Genesis of *Eve-Song*:**

Although one might imagine the undertaking of a new musical composition as a situation which finds the composer sequestered away, bent over a desk or piano keyboard and scrawling furiously, it is often not so with song, particularly when the poet is a living contemporary of the composer. Often, as in case of *Eve-Song*, the process of writing a song or song cycle can be an extremely collaborative effort. For instance, when discussing the process of his work with contemporary poet Gene Sheer, Heggie says:

There is certainly a back and forth between us during the process. Gene will send me a first draft of something and I'll tell him which part really sets my mind on fire. And if something is not working, I'll tell him that too. Then he'll shape it so that it works for both of us and for the song cycle...If I have the opportunity of working with a living writer, it has to be that way. It's just the way I am.”<sup>45</sup>

In addition the singer who is to perform the piece might be part of the composition process, along with taking into consideration the goals or needs of the patron. In this section I aim to present *Eve-Song* as just that kind of collaborative effort.

*Eve-Song* was a cycle originally commissioned by James Schwabacher, a patron of the arts living in San Francisco, specifically for Kristin Clayton. Of the inception of the project Heggie recalls:

I met James (Jimmy) Schwabacher when I started working in the PR Dept at San Francisco Opera. I think I had to interview him for an article and we hit it off really

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<sup>45</sup> Grant Whitfield Knox, “New Trends in American Art Song Repertoire” (D.M.A. performance doc., Northwestern University, 2011), 58-59.

well... When I told Jimmy that I was a song composer, he was eager to hear my work. I played him some of my old stuff and he liked it. Around that time I had the opportunity to write a cycle (“Encountertenor”) for countertenor Brian Asawa – my first big piece in a very long time, and the piece that led me back to songwriting. We had a reading of it at Jimmy’s house, and much to my surprise, he said he wanted to commission a cycle for the series – and he was planning a recital for my friend Kristin Clayton. So he paid me \$500 and I asked Philip Littell to write new words – it was my first-ever commission! The breakthrough pieces for me at that time, then, were Encountertenor (1995), Thoughts Unspoken (1995), and Eve-Song (1996).<sup>46</sup>

Of the topic for the cycle, and his thoughts on writing for Clayton, Heggie says:

It was my idea. Just came to me as something I’d like to explore. The biblical Eve, but through a modern lens. I’ve always been a big champion of women and women’s rights – and I wanted to create a three-dimensional picture of Eve: her struggles, her love, her passion, her naivete, her wisdom – Eve the mother and grandmother – the child. I also wanted to create a real showpiece for Kristin that would put her through her paces. Kristin has a lot of that nurturing, vulnerable, naïve-yet-knowing, sensual, earthy quality to her personality – and one of the most beautiful, soulful and connected voices I had ever heard.<sup>47</sup>

Clayton was to sing the world premiere as part of a planned 1996 solo concert performance in Schwabacher’s Debut Recital series, one which was to close the series on May 19, 1996. When it came to choosing the poet, Heggie immediately thought of Littell, and made the suggestion to Schwabacher who Heggie recalls, “loved it.”<sup>48</sup> Of the collaboration with Littell, Heggie has stated:

I talked to Philip about the idea of Eve looking back on her days in the Garden and he called me two days later and said, ‘Well, I think I’ve written it’. He read me a couple of verses that were so beautiful, I was really moved. Then he faxed me eight poems, and a couple of them were epics. I couldn’t believe anyone could be so fast and understand a

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<sup>46</sup> Jake Heggie, email message to author, March 21, 2013.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

character so clearly. It challenged me. I came up with some of the best music I've ever written.<sup>49</sup>

Recently he added:

I was blown away - and it set my imagination on fire. He also raised the bar on the project! And I do think it was the best music I'd written at the time. It was pushing me into real arioso writing and storytelling (which had always appealed to me) - and the use of themes that carry through. I learned a huge amount from writing that piece.<sup>50</sup>

For his part, Littell offers, "When Jake asked me, her voice leaped onto the page. So I trusted that," and adds that the writing was, "instinctive."<sup>51</sup> When asked what input Clayton had in the compositional process Heggie offered, "She was incredibly enthusiastic and supportive. So as soon as I'd written something, I'd share it with her."<sup>52</sup> The creative process took an interesting turn, however, when the recital date was cancelled by Clayton due to vocal issues that presented themselves upon the birth of her first child. Heggie remembers, "...just as I finished the piece, Kristin had her first baby and her voice went away. So we had to postpone the recital a couple of years...The cycle just sat there unsung until she was ready. And when we went back to it, we made some changes - but the galley proofs for Schirmer were already done, so there was no time to put those changes in the score.<sup>53</sup>

Clayton's recital finally took place on Sunday, February 27, 2000, as the opening of the Schwabacher Debut Recital series in its new location at Old First Church in San Francisco. The

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<sup>49</sup> Jan Breslauer, "Just the Right Words," *L.A. Times* (September 20, 1998), <http://articles.latimes.com/1998/sep/20/entertainment/ca-24477> (accessed August 9, 2010).

<sup>50</sup> Jake Heggie, email message to author, March 21, 2013.

<sup>51</sup> Philip Littell, email message to author, March 21, 2013.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

program featured a first half which included songs by R. Strauss, G. Fauré, F. Liszt, and C. Ives. The second half of the recital was reserved for *Eve-Song*, with the composer at the piano. Anna Carol Dudley, who was present that evening to review the recital, stated that Heggie, “informed the audience that the songs were meant to make full use of [Clayton’s] vocal gifts,” and felt she “rose magnificently to the challenge.”<sup>54</sup> She also noted that as an encore Clayton performed *If You Were Coming in the Fall*, the song which had won Heggie the G. Schirmer National Art Song Competition in 1995.

### **Jake Heggie - Composer**

John “Jake” Stephen Heggie was born on March 31, 1961, in West Palm Beach, Florida to parents John Francis Heggie and Judith (Judy) Rohrbach Heggie. John, who was named for his father and grandfather before him, would take the nickname “Jake” as his common name.<sup>55</sup> Heggie was the third of four children which included two older sisters Joanne (1957-2003) and Jill (b. 1959) as well as a younger brother Jason (b. 1965). The son of Hungarian immigrants, John Sr. had strong musical interests and significant skill as a saxophone player, although he entered the medical field when a career as a musician was discouraged by his parents. John and Judy Heggie had met at Columbia University in New York, NY, where they were in medical school and nursing school, respectively, and married in 1955. Due to the demands of their medical professions the family moved often, but by the time Heggie was five years old they were

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<sup>54</sup> Anna Carol Dudley, “Recital Review: Clayton’s Comeback in the New Not the Old,” *San Francisco Classical Voice* (February 27, 2000), [http://www.sfcv.org/arts\\_revs/clayton\\_2\\_29\\_00.php](http://www.sfcv.org/arts_revs/clayton_2_29_00.php) (accessed November 4, 2012).

<sup>55</sup> Heggie offers that, “My grandfather was John Stephen and my father was John Francis - they named me John but didn’t want me to be Little John or John Jr. or Johnny or most especially not Jack...so they called me Jake from day one. (My mom had an Uncle Jake).” (Jake Heggie, email message to author, March 21, 2013).

settled in the intimate town of Bexley, Ohio. It was here that he would begin his study of piano, first with instructor Anne Swesty and later with Joe Weisburg. From his first lesson, Heggie was completely enamored with the piano and its possibilities. He said, “I loved my lessons right from the start. On the first day we learned to play, *Hot Cross Buns*. I remember it so clearly. I ran home and said, ‘Mom, listen to this, I learned to play a song!’ From that time on I would practice the piano for hours, rather than play outside.”<sup>56</sup> Popular music had always been a source of inspiration to Heggie, and it has been widely noted that he grew up in a house filled with the sounds of artists such as Frank Sinatra, Peggy Lee, Ella Fitzgerald, and Artie Shaw.<sup>57</sup> He later credited the important influence jazz had on his own music to this early exposure. It was in 1972 while studying with Weisburg that Heggie’s father committed suicide by gun, a tragedy that, understandably, had a profound effect on him. In email correspondence with Rebecca Beasley Heggie states, “Immediately after my father’s death, I decided not to play the piano any more. But my mother encouraged me to continue, so I stopped my studies with Joe Weisberg and started studying with Anna Mae Millard in Bexley. She pushed me a lot further.”<sup>58</sup> Millard exposed Heggie to more complex classical works for the piano, which inspired him. It was during this time that Heggie also began to experiment with composition, initially wooed by the showy, virtuosic music of classical masters such as Beethoven and Liszt. He remembers:

At the time I had been playing piano a lot and I was especially impressed with Liszt and Beethoven pieces that were full of black notes. I thought to myself, ‘I can do that!’ So as a

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<sup>56</sup> Carolyn E. Redman, “‘Songs to the Moon’: A song cycle by Jake Heggie from poems by Vachel Lindsay” (D.M.A. diss., The Ohio State University, 2004), 2.

<sup>57</sup> Kendra Allyn Lynch, “A comparative analysis of four pieces by Jake Heggie” (master’s thesis, California State University, Long Beach, 2006), 5.

<sup>58</sup> Rebecca Choate Beasley, “The influence of Sister Helen Prejean on the life and work of Jake Heggie as seen in the song cycle ‘The Deepest Desire: Four Meditations on Love’” (D.M.A. diss., University of North Texas, 2008), 116.

result, I started writing pieces to try and sound like these composers. They had no depth or meaning at all, because all I was trying to do was to be impressive by writing a lot of notes.<sup>59</sup>

His early experiments with composition were not limited to the piano. Heggie remembers, “When I was a teenager, I set my own texts and wrote pop songs and musical theater ballads. (I was sure I'd be writing for Barbra Streisand or Carly Simon. No dice.)”<sup>60</sup> Despite his newfound interest in composing, it wouldn't be for another five years that Heggie would take formal lessons in the art. When he was 16 Heggie's mother made the decision to move the family to Martinez, CA. The move would allow the family to distance themselves from the stigma of suicide, which was undoubtedly significant in a city with the relatively small population of less than fifteen thousand, and it would also allow Jake a fresh start socially, as his high school years were stressful. It has been noted that, “Heggie felt very isolated and awkward throughout his early teen and high school years. He attributes these feelings to the circumstances surrounding his father's death and his intense interest in music and composition”<sup>61</sup> In an interview with NY Times writer Ralph Blumenthal Heggie revealed that his personal struggle with his own sexuality was also a large part of his social difficulties. He felt different, which left him feeling isolated. “‘I didn't know what or how to call it...a great double whammy,’ he said of his father's death and

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<sup>59</sup> Carolyn E. Redman, “‘Songs to the Moon’: A song cycle by Jake Heggie from poems by Vachel Lindsay” (D.M.A. diss., The Ohio State University, 2004), 2.

<sup>60</sup> Jake Heggie, “Houston Grand Opera: First, the Words....,” *Playbill Arts* (February 20, 2008), <http://www.playbillarts.com/features/article/7569.html> (accessed August 9, 2010).

<sup>61</sup> Kendra Allyn Lynch, “A comparative analysis of four pieces by Jake Heggie” (master's thesis, California State University, Long Beach, 2006), 6.

his sexual confusion.”<sup>62</sup> Heggie’s confusion, and later revelations about his own sexuality would come to play a great role in his compositional style and ability.

Throughout his early teen years Heggie composed. These early attempts featured more bravura than substance. “I was impressed with making lots of noise with lots of notes. I spent all my extra money from my paper route buying scores, records, and especially music paper.”<sup>63</sup> “At the time when I started composing I hadn’t put the connection together that (the music) had to really mean something, so I was just writing pieces that had bazillions of notes and looked really impressive but meant nothing.”<sup>64</sup> About song writing in particular during those early years Heggie says:

I guess I knew by the time I was about 14 or 15 - I was really passionate about it by then. There was vocal music all around me as I was growing up. I guess it was a very natural thing for me. I started off writing these big piano pieces. But then in my teens I just found that I had this affinity for setting words. And so I was writing my own words - very Broadway-type songs.”<sup>65</sup>

It was the move to Martinez, CA and the impact of those he met there that would support Heggie’s growth and development as a song writer. During his early time in California Heggie studied piano with Doris Marliave in Walnut Creek, CA. It was Marliave who soon introduced him to a composer’s group through the Performing Arts Society of Contra Costa in Orinda,

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<sup>62</sup> Ralph Blumenthal, “For an Operatic Life, Check of the Composer’s,” *New York Times* (March 13, 2008), [http://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/13/arts/music/13jake.html?\\_r=1&ref=jake\\_heggie](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/13/arts/music/13jake.html?_r=1&ref=jake_heggie) (accessed August 9, 2010).

<sup>63</sup> Cynthia Robins, “A Composer Who Writes from the Heart,” *San Francisco Examiner* (October 2, 1996), <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/e/a/1996/10/02STYLE6384.dtl&hw=jake+heggie&s> (accessed August 4, 2012).

<sup>64</sup> Jake Heggie, “Jake Heggie on Innerviews with Ernie Manouse,” Video Interview, <http://www.rbot.net> (accessed July 30, 2012).

<sup>65</sup> Anonymous, “*FanFaire* celebrates Jake Heggie: America’s most popular composer of opera and song.” *FanFaire*. <http://www.fanfaire.com/Heggie/interview.html> (accessed August 9, 2010).

California.<sup>66</sup> It was through this group that at age sixteen Heggie would come to know composer Ernst Bacon, who would subsequently become his first composition teacher and song-writing mentor.

There was a group called Performing Arts Society and it was mostly these aspiring composers. Most of them were women in their forties, fifties, sixties and once a month they'd go to Ernst Bacon and show him what they were working on and he'd do a sort of a class lesson. So I tagged along a couple times and I liked him so much and what he had to say that I asked if I could study privately with him and he said yes.<sup>67</sup>

It was in these lessons with Bacon that Heggie was introduced to the world of classic poetry. "When I was a teenager, I set my own texts and wrote pop songs and musical theater ballads...But when I was 17...Bacon, introduced me to poetry by Emily Dickinson and Walt Whitman and after that, nothing was the same. Those poems leapt off the page and sang to me."<sup>68</sup>

After graduation from high school in 1979 Heggie spent two years in Paris during which time he enrolled in the American College of Paris. The escape to a bustling, cosmopolitan city in an exotic foreign country had many selling-points. First, Paris provided a connection to the musical past much richer than could be found in America. Second, it allowed Heggie time to "find himself." Of this new beginning Heggie states, "I wanted to get far away from everything comfortable and familiar and immerse myself in a different culture where nobody knew me. I even decided to go by my name "JOHN" instead of Jake and see if I could become a different

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<sup>66</sup> DeMar Austin Neal IV, "The Song Cycles for Baritone and Piano by Jake Heggie" (D.M.A. diss., Florida State University, 2010), 1-2.

<sup>67</sup> Alanna Keenan, "A Performer's Guide to Jake Heggie's *The Deepest Desire: Four Meditations on Love*" (D.M.A. diss., Louisiana State University, 2009), 4-5.

<sup>68</sup> Jake Heggie, "Houston Grand Opera: First, the Words....," *Playbill Arts* (February 20, 2008), <http://www.playbillarts.com/features/article/7569.html> (accessed August 9, 2010).

person—one who either wasn't gay or was fine with being gay. I wanted to reinvent myself.”<sup>69</sup>

While in Paris he attended classes, worked, studied piano privately, and taught lessons himself, but as he neared the end of his degree program Heggie felt that what he truly needed was a structured educational system. In 1981, after graduating with an Associate of Arts degree in general education, Heggie decided that it was time to return to the U.S. and focus his energy on musical studies at an American university. The fall of 1981 found Heggie enrolled at UCLA where he would join the studio of famed pianist Johana Harris on the recommendation of friends. Of the teachers he studied with during his years at UCLA there were a few in particular who made a significant and long-lasting impression on him and his music-making. For example, Heggie studied art song repertoire and accompanying with James “Jim” Low, who, according to Heggie, “...was so passionate about song, he loved it inside out, upside down.... He made lists of important songs to know, lists of songs about flowers, throughout history up to the modern day.... So I learned a lot about art song through that whole period.”<sup>70</sup> However, there was no one instructor who would come to mean more to him during his studies at UCLA than pianist Johana Harris. Their relationship began as teacher/student in 1981, but it would soon flourish into marriage in 1982. Being that Johana was 70 years old at the time and Heggie was merely 21, the union raised eyebrows. Heggie explains that their relationship was profound on a personal level and they shared a mutual respect and love, although romantically it was a very complex situation. “At first it was very joyful and we made music together, traveled as a 2-piano team ... but personally, it was not easy. She loved me in a very heterosexual way, and that was just not

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<sup>69</sup> Rebecca Choate Beasley, “The influence of Sister Helen Prejean on the life and work of Jake Heggie as seen in the song cycle ‘The Deepest Desire: Four Meditations on Love’” (D.M.A. diss., University of North Texas, 2008), 116.

<sup>70</sup> Kendra Allyn Lynch, “A comparative analysis of four pieces by Jake Heggie” (master’s thesis, California State University, Long Beach, 2006), 111.

the reality for me.”<sup>71</sup> Heggie knew he was homosexual at the time, but was uncomfortable with living in that truth. He was also very unsure of what the reaction of his family and friends would be if they found out. When asked if Johana knew he was gay Heggie has stated, “She knew, but she didn’t want to know.”<sup>72</sup>

In 1984 Heggie graduated from UCLA with a Bachelor of Arts, and the couple began to tour extensively playing duo piano music. In addition to his touring schedule with Harris, from 1986 to 1988 Heggie was enrolled in a Master of Music program at UCLA in composition (with a minor in piano performance).<sup>73</sup> It is significant in that it was during his work in this degree program that he was awarded his first prize in composition, the Henry Mancini Prize in 1987. The award celebrates a student composer who stands out from the rest. As the couple engaged in their performance tours, bad technique that had plagued Heggie since his early studies began to catch up with him. By 1989 he was suffering the full effects of focal dystonia<sup>74</sup> in his right hand, an injury which ultimately prevented him from continuing to perform. More specifically, Heggie suffered from focal hand dystonia, often called “writer’s cramp”, which affects the fingers, hand, and/or forearm, and is often seen particularly in writers, certain musicians or athletes, and typists. “My fingers started curling up when I played,” Heggie has recalled. “I compensated for the problem, which, of course, just aggravated it. Finally, I just couldn’t

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<sup>71</sup> Rebecca Choate Beasley, “The influence of Sister Helen Prejean on the life and work of Jake Heggie as seen in the song cycle ‘The Deepest Desire: Four Meditations on Love’” (D.M.A. diss., University of North Texas, 2008), 113.

<sup>72</sup> Ralph Blumenthal, “For an Operatic Life, Check of the Composer’s,” *New York Times* (March 13, 2008), [http://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/13/arts/music/13jake.html?\\_r=1&ref=jake\\_heggie](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/13/arts/music/13jake.html?_r=1&ref=jake_heggie) (accessed August 9, 2010).

<sup>73</sup> DeMar Austin Neal IV, “The Song Cycles for Baritone and Piano by Jake Heggie” (D.M.A. diss., Florida State University, 2010), 4.

<sup>74</sup> Dystonia itself is “a movement disorder that causes the muscles to contract and spasm involuntarily. The neurological mechanism that makes muscles relax when they are not in use does not function properly.” Dystonia Medical Research Foundation, <http://www.dystonia-foundation.org> (accessed January 4, 2013).

play.”<sup>75</sup> After his initial diagnosis Heggie did find a path to recovery in lessons with Nina Skolnick at the University of California at Irvine <sup>76</sup> which utilized the “Taubman method.”<sup>77</sup> His studies with Skolnick required Heggie to go back to basics, and in an interview he recounted aspects of the journey: “I worked with a wonderful teacher in Southern California who started me back at C major scales - as slow as possible - just one finger at a time, and teaching me to play with very natural technique and without any tension”.<sup>78</sup> Heggie remembers that the process was about giving himself permission to start over after so many years of performing and perfecting his music making while ignoring the physical ramifications.<sup>79</sup> It was this inability to continue performing coupled with the personal strain of denying his true sexuality that gradually led Heggie to a place of depression. He had stopped performing (and for the most part composing) in order to focus on recovery and his search for a job that would pay the bills. He decided that if he was not going to be able to be in music as a performer, he would work in the music business as a separate part of the creative process. Interestingly enough, a time that seemed so dark in hindsight was, in fact, the beginning of his path to success. In 1989 that he took an administrative position with a private concert series in Beverly Hills and it was through booking endeavors for this concert series that Heggie first met Frederica von Stade. He later

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<sup>75</sup> David Mermelstein, “He’s Got a Song in His Art.” *L.A. Times*, (November 10, 1996), [http://articles.latimes.com/1996-11-10/entertainment/ca-63102\\_1\\_art-songs](http://articles.latimes.com/1996-11-10/entertainment/ca-63102_1_art-songs) (accessed July 17, 2012).

<sup>76</sup> DeMar Austin Neal IV, “The Song Cycles for Baritone and Piano by Jake Heggie” (D.M.A. diss., Florida State University, 2010), 5.

<sup>77</sup> “The Taubman Approach is a groundbreaking analysis of the mostly invisible motions that function underneath a virtuoso technique. The resulting knowledge makes it possible to help pianists overcome technical limitations as well as cure playing-related injuries. It is also the way that tone production and other components of expressive playing can be understood and taught.” The Golandsky Institute, <http://www.golandskyinstitute.org> (accessed December 9, 2012).

<sup>78</sup> Jake Heggie, “Jake Heggie on Innerviews with Ernie Manouse,” Video Interview, <http://www.rbot.net> (accessed July 30, 2012).

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

took a position in the PR Department at UCLA Center for the Arts. Although these jobs allowed Heggie to work in the field of music, he was not able to express himself as he needed to in the form of performance or composition. Additionally, in the early 1990's Johana Harris was diagnosed cancer, a condition that would ultimately be the cause of her death in 1995. It was a mutual decision with his wife in 1993 that Heggie should reclaim his own life, musically and personally, by moving to San Francisco for a fresh start.

The move was important for so many reasons. First, I needed to start living my own life as a gay man, and Johana recognized and supported that...I was feeling stifled professionally and personally in Los Angeles and knew I had to start over in a new place - but not so far away that I couldn't be near her or see her often. I also felt that if I was going to have a chance at pursuing a musical career, it would be much more likely in San Francisco.<sup>80</sup>

Thus, Heggie began a new life in San Francisco working in the PR Department at U.C. Berkeley. Little did he know that a mere four months into that job his life would be changed forever. In the spring of 1994 a writing position in the PR Department of the San Francisco Opera (hereafter SFO) had opened up, and Heggie was brought in as a candidate for the position through his friend Elena Park who was the public relations director for the opera company at the time. After a successful introduction to Lotfi Mansouri, General Director of SFO from 1988-2001, Heggie was hired and thus began his journey to personal success. His new job consisted of writing about every aspect of the company, and Heggie's life received an injection of inspiration from the magnitude of the artistic creativity he was now surrounded by every day. He would sit in on many rehearsal for the operas, and the voices got him excited about the idea of composing again. For Heggie, the importance of this stirring of hope and excitement cannot

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<sup>80</sup> Tom Savage, "High Scorers: Jake Heggie," *Opera News* 64.7 (Jan 2000): 10, 12-13.

be easily brushed aside. He was coming from a place where he believed his life as a musician, in any respect, was over. He had, in fact, thrown out all of his early compositions. Of this he has stated, "It was kind of too painful to have it around you, because it was all those childhood hopes and dreams in that one box."<sup>81</sup> Amidst this new inspiration one name stands out from the crowd, and it is that of famed soprano Frederica von Stade. At the time (Sept. 1994) she was rehearsing for the world premiere of Conrad Susa's opera *Les Liasons Dangereuses* (which coincidentally featured a libretto by Littell), and she remembered Heggie from their previous meeting with the Beverly Hills performing arts series. Heggie was so inspired by her voice and her artistry that he set three folk songs for her (*Barb'ry Allen*, *The Leather-Winged Bat*, and *He's Gone Away*), which he presented to her as an opening night gift. She came in early for the next performance in order to read through them with Heggie. To his joy and surprise she said, "These are really good. Would you like to give a concert together sometime?" Their relationship would blossom into an extraordinary friendship, and each can be found in many interviews extolling the qualities of the other. Of their relationship, Heggie has said:

She began to ask me to play for her and commissioned pieces and also arranged commissions for me. She has been my biggest champion. She also came into my life right around the time that Johana died. Ms. von Stade had no idea, but one piece that Johana had always improvised on in recitals was *Danny Boy*. It just so happened that this was the very first piece Flicka (von Stade) asked me to arrange.<sup>82</sup>

Heggie recounts that she began telling other great singers who were working at SFO that he wrote songs. He would compose in his spare time at home, and found himself in the enviable

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<sup>81</sup> Kendra Allyn Lynch, "A comparative analysis of four pieces by Jake Heggie" (master's thesis, California State University, Long Beach, 2006), 101.

<sup>82</sup> Carolyn E. Redman, "'Songs to the Moon': A song cycle by Jake Heggie from poems by Vachel Lindsay" (D.M.A. diss., The Ohio State University, 2004), 5.

position of having great singers come through and ask if he had written anything that might be right for them to sing. Thus, his songs began to be performed. Ultimately Heggie says that his time away from playing allowed, in a sense, a fresh start for his compositional inspiration. “Not playing the piano due to my hand injury helped me focus my energy. It wasn’t until I recovered and got away from academe that I found the voice and the ease I liked, and that I could relate to. When composing, I think about the people I am writing the music for, both the performers and the people who are in the audience.”<sup>83</sup> However, it wasn’t simply being surrounded by great artists, or being away from stringent academia that allowed Heggie to find his true voice in songwriting. It was also the fact that he had come out as a gay man and felt an incredible freedom in living that personal truth. Heggie states, “When I finally dealt with being gay and open and happy about it and not ashamed, my music changed. It opened up and became more honest; it became the music I always wanted to write but never could. And it suddenly became the music that singers and audiences responded to”.<sup>84</sup> With this new freedom, inspiration and confidence Heggie’s music had the luster it needed to attract the interest of many a famous singer who passed through. He was surrounded at SFO by some of the world’s best singers and, now that von Stade was his advocate, the word spread quickly that Heggie might be able to provide new, exciting, quality material for those singers to feature in their personal performances.

In addition to spreading the word about the quality of Heggie’s work to other great singers, von Stade (“Flicka”), who had become a personal friend, did two more things that helped propel Heggie’s compositional career forward. Heggie states that she, “gave me addresses of Martin

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<sup>83</sup> Tom Savage, “High Scorers: Jake Heggie,” *Opera News* 64.7 (Jan 2000): 10, 12-13.

<sup>84</sup> Quote from Guthmann, Edward. “In the Key of Life.” Advocate 822 (10 October 2000) p. 59 quoted in Kendra Allyn Lynch, “A comparative analysis of four pieces by Jake Heggie” (master’s thesis, California State University, Long Beach, 2006), 14.

Katz, Marilyn Horne, and others and told me to send songs around.”<sup>85</sup> Further, she agreed to lend her name and talent to the demo Heggie submitted for the G. Schirmer American Art Song Competition in February of 1995. Von Stade recording two of the aforementioned folk-song settings for the demo (*Barb’ry Allen* and *The Leather Winged Bat*),<sup>86</sup> but it was ultimately Kristin Clayton’s<sup>87</sup> recording of his setting of the Dickinson poem *If You Were Coming in the Fall* that resulted in Heggie being one of seven winners of the June 1995 competition, for which part of the prize was the publication of his winning song.<sup>88</sup> Heggie had met Clayton, at the time an Adler Fellow<sup>89</sup> at SFO, in 1994 and they became friends quickly. It was in 1996 that Heggie received his first commission, the cycle *Eve-Song* that is the topic of this paper. The commission came from James Schwabacher, and both the commission and the man are discussed at a later point in this essay. Heggie was also provided the opportunity to release an album of his songs. As part of the liner notes to *Faces of Love: The Songs of Jake Heggie* he offers “special thanks to Gordon Getty, a San Francisco composer and the generous philanthropist whose foundation underwrote much of the expense of this recording.”<sup>90</sup> Because of his connections he was afforded the rare luxury of having his work for the album sung by some of the most famous and respected singers in the performing world today such as Renee Fleming, Frederica von Stade, Carol

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<sup>85</sup> Rebecca Choate Beasley, “The influence of Sister Helen Prejean on the life and work of Jake Heggie as seen in the song cycle ‘The Deepest Desire: Four Meditations on Love’” (D.M.A. diss., University of North Texas, 2008), 111.

<sup>86</sup> Jake Heggie, email message to author, March 21, 2013.

<sup>87</sup> Clayton is the same soprano that *Eve-Song* was commissioned for, and her biography is included in this essay.

<sup>88</sup> Heggie recalls that all seven of the winning songs were published in one book. It was during this process that he met Bill Holab at G. Schirmer. Holab would champion Heggie’s songs and be instrumental in seeing that the volumes of *Faces of Love* were published. (Jake Heggie, email message to author, March 21, 2013).

<sup>89</sup> Information about this fellowship opportunity can be found at <http://sfopera.com/Opera-Center/Adler-Fellows.aspx>

<sup>90</sup> Jake Heggie, *Faces of Love: The Songs of Jake Heggie*, BMG/RCA Victor 63484, 1999, CD Liner Notes, 13.

Vaness, and Brian Asawa. At the same time these famed singers were recording and performing Heggie's works as part of their own projects too. In late 1996 Jennifer Larmore made her West Coast recital debut at the Veterans Wadsworth Theater in Brentwood, CA and included Heggie's setting of the folk song *He's Gone Away* on the program.<sup>91</sup> She also included a performance of the three folk song settings Heggie had presented to von Stade that fateful night in 1994 on her 1997 album *My Native Land*. Also significant was the invaluable publishing opportunity that would piggyback that album: the first of three volumes of his songs (*Faces of Love: The Songs of Jake Heggie*, Book I) was released in 1999, and the next two followed in February/March 2000. It was through these musical scores that singers across the country would become acquainted with his art songs and performances, many on college campuses, would abound. Now not only could amateur and professional singers alike listen to an amazing recording of Heggie's work, but they could perform the songs themselves in concert, widening the composer's public exposure across the country.

Of course it wasn't only his art songs that would propel Heggie into the spotlight. In 1995 the singers at SFO were not the only ones taking note of his musical abilities. Heggie's work had also caught the attention of his boss, General Director Lotfi Mansouri. The birth of what was to be Heggie's first opera *Dead Man Walking* (hereafter *DMW*) took place in November of 1995, and began with a simple comment from Mansouri to Heggie - "Have you ever thought about writing an opera?" Heggie often tells of being called into Mansouri's office soon after. He was expecting to take notes for another press release, and instead was offered the opportunity to write a new opera for the 2001-2002 season. Bobby McFerrin had been scheduled to write an opera,

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<sup>91</sup> David Mermelstein, "He's Got a Song in His Art." *L.A. Times*, (November 10, 1996), [http://articles.latimes.com/1996-11-10/entertainment/ca-63102\\_1\\_art-songs](http://articles.latimes.com/1996-11-10/entertainment/ca-63102_1_art-songs) (accessed July 17, 2012).

but this commission eventually fell through leaving a hole in the SFO schedule.<sup>92</sup> Mansouri was known as a leader who loved to take risks. Heggie has said, “Mansouri called me into his office and said, ‘I want you to write a new opera for the millennium. And I want to send you to New York to meet with Terrance McNally. I think you would make a great team.’”<sup>93</sup> Heggie describes the whole experience as a “Cinder-fella story.”<sup>94</sup> Although Mansouri did send Heggie in May of 1996 to meet with famed playwright McNally, McNally was busy with projects both professional and personal, and they did not have a meeting of the minds for over a year. Heggie recalls, “...I got a surprise phone call in February 1997. Terence wanted to meet and talk about the opera. We met in June and he said the words ‘Dead Man Walking’ and life again took a surprising turn. It was the last thing I’d expected to hear - and it was an inspired idea.”<sup>95</sup> In January of 1998 Mansouri awarded Heggie the distinction of being the first CHASE Composer in Residence, a position that would allow Heggie to write the opera and, for the first time in his life, to focus solely on composing for the next two and a half years. *DMW* was workshopped in August 1999 with Clayton in the role of Sister Helen, and the opera premiered October 7, 2000. It was directed by Joe Mantello, conducted by Patrick Summers, and featured performances by mezzo-soprano Susan Graham (Sister Helen), baritone John Packard (Joseph DeRocher), and mezzo-soprano Frederica von Stade (mother of DeRocher).<sup>96</sup> Meanwhile, in 2000 Heggie’s

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<sup>92</sup> Carolyn E. Redman, “‘Songs to the Moon’: A song cycle by Jake Heggie from poems by Vachel Lindsay” (D.M.A. diss., The Ohio State University, 2004), 6.

<sup>93</sup> Jake Heggie, “Houston Grand Opera: First, the Words....,” *Playbill Arts* (February 20, 2008), <http://www.playbillarts.com/features/article/7569.html> (accessed August 9, 2010).

<sup>94</sup> Jake Heggie, “Jake Heggie on Innerviews with Ernie Manouse,” Video Interview, <http://www.rbot.net> (accessed July 30, 2012).

<sup>95</sup> Jake Heggie, “Houston Grand Opera: First, the Words....,” *Playbill Arts* (February 20, 2008), <http://www.playbillarts.com/features/article/7569.html> (accessed August 9, 2010).

<sup>96</sup> Jake Heggie, <http://www.jakeheggie.com> (accessed October 18, 2012).

connection to the more intimate medium of art song was as strong as ever, and was celebrated when the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center presented an evening of his songs, with the composer at the piano.

The new decade brought many exciting professional endeavors including: a position as Composer in Residence with EOS Orchestra (2001-2002); the July 2002 premiere of *The Deepest Desire* w/Susan Graham; the March 2004 premiere of his two-act opera *The End of the Affair*; a 2005-06 Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship; the premiere of the musical scene *At the Statue of Venus*<sup>97</sup> (libretto by McNally) on Sept 10, 2005; the Nov. 2006 premiere of the one-act opera *To Hell and Back* (libretto by Gene Scheer); and the exciting announcement in January 2008 of the commission for what would be Heggie's large sale operatic follow-up to *DMW*, *Moby-Dick* by Dallas Opera (with SFO, San Diego Opera and Calgary Opera). It also saw the February 2008 premiere of Heggie's chamber opera *Three Decembers* (libretto by Scheer), not to mention the many national and international opera companies that made *DMW* part of their season repertoire.

Today Heggie's career continues to be celebrated, and new compositions abound.<sup>98</sup> Recent vocal works include *Another Sunrise* (libretto by Gene Scheer), a dramatic scene for soprano and chamber ensemble. Upcoming operas include the commission of *Great Scott*, a new collaboration between Heggie and McNally, which will star mezzo-soprano Joyce DiDonato and is scheduled to open the 2015/16 season at Dallas Opera. The composer continues to reside in San Francisco with his husband and son.

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<sup>97</sup> It was in this production that the role written originally for Fleming was taken over by Clayton. More information on this topic can be found in Clayton's biographical section within this essay.

<sup>98</sup> An up-to-date list of the composer's work as well as a current discography can be found at <http://jakeheggie.com>.

## Philip Littell - Poet

Philip Littell was born in New York City on June 24, 1950. He was the newest addition to a wealthy family of “writers and journalists - going back to the War of 1812”<sup>99</sup> and his father, Blaine Littell, was a newscaster who worked for CBS. Littell is very open in interviews about the fact that he grew up around wealth, labeling himself a “*Social Register* boy from Manhattan.<sup>100</sup> He also grew up around the arts, with two grandfathers who were conductors, a mother who studied opera and a father who played improvisational jazz piano.<sup>101</sup> Of his own artistic passions Littell has said, “I wanted to be an actor since I was seven.”<sup>102</sup> Much of his early life was spent living abroad and attending private schools in both London and America. He trained as an actor at the American Academy of Dramatic Arts, and spent a brief period of time enrolled in Columbia University, although he would ultimately drop out of Columbia in 1969 to join the Army and fight in the Vietnam War, although he was, thankfully, never sent into the war -zone.<sup>103</sup> When asked how his experience in the war had informed his life of artistic work Littell replied:

...my experience was intensely positive. It really socialized me in a way that I have been grateful for ever since...The army basically taught me that no one cares what you do in this life, but that you should. It taught me that I could make my way in the world and interact with every kind of person, it liberated me into my fundamental unimportance (a lesson I have to relearn apparently from time to time) which is the basis of freedom of choice and

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<sup>99</sup> Rubin, Merle, “Rock for the Cabaret Crowd,” *The Christian Science Monitor* (November 8, 1989), <http://m.csmonitor.com/1989/1108/llargo.html> (accessed March 15, 2013).

<sup>100</sup> Doug Sadownick, “Breaking the Gay Code,” *The Advocate* 580 (July 2, 1991): 82.

<sup>101</sup> Stuart Timmons, “He’s in With The In Crowd,” *The Advocate* 541 (January 2, 1990): Special Section, 2

<sup>102</sup> Rubin, Merle, “Rock for the Cabaret Crowd,” *The Christian Science Monitor* (November 8, 1989), <http://m.csmonitor.com/1989/1108/llargo.html> (accessed March 15, 2013).

<sup>103</sup> Philip Littell, email message to author, March 21, 2013.

action. The courage I found to join up in the middle of the war was the courage that keeps me going today in my work. Never unaccompanied by fear.<sup>104</sup>

In 1976 he moved out West to Los Angles to pursue his career. Of his choice to move away from New York Littell has said, “New York was a place to avoid myself. Los Angeles challenged me like nowhere else.”<sup>105</sup>

Often referred to as the quintessential Renaissance man, Littell’s career as an actor would lead him to work in nearly every genre on the stage, appearing in plays that ranged from classical to avant-garde, cabaret, rock bands, performance art, and film. In his early L.A. years he collaborated with people including director David Schweizer. Of Littell Schweizer has said, “There’s such an intensity around him, a glorious self-consciousness. He lives to perform, but his is a total creative sensibility—conceptualizing the whole stage. His impact on a piece is enormous, no matter how he’s enlisted.”<sup>106</sup> Schweizer first directed Littell in a 1980 Taper Lab staging of Len Jenkins’ “Kid Twist”; then in 1984’s “The Weba Show.” Of the latter, Timmons notes that Littell frequently stole the show as an antic, voiceless foil to schmaltz chanteuse Weba Garretson.<sup>107</sup> In 1986 Littell co-created and performed *Plato’s Symposium*, a modern staging of the classical text which touches on love, mortality, and homosexuality. Sadownick describes it as “one of the triumphs of gay theater in Los Angeles.”<sup>108</sup> Performances in musicals and revues followed including *Kiss The Glass* (1989), a musical which explores love and war between the

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<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Rubin, Merle, “Rock for the Cabaret Crowd,” *The Christian Science Monitor* (November 8, 1989), <http://m.csmonitor.com/1989/1108/llargo.html> (accessed March 15, 2013).

<sup>106</sup> Jan Breslauer, “Aria Ready for This?,” *L.A. Times* (January 19, 1992), [http://articles.latimes.com/1992-01-19/entertainment/ca-553\\_1\\_san-francisco-opera](http://articles.latimes.com/1992-01-19/entertainment/ca-553_1_san-francisco-opera) (accessed August 2, 2012).

<sup>107</sup> Stuart Timmons, “He’s in With The In Crowd,” *The Advocate* 541 (January 2, 1990): Special Section, 2.

<sup>108</sup> Doug Sadownick, “Breaking the Gay Code,” *The Advocate* 580 (July 2, 1991): 82.

sexes and later *The Wandering Whore* (1997), a musical portrait created in collaboration with composer Eliot Douglass about the sexual underworld of 18th century London.

With a resume as eclectic as the man it describes it was inevitable that Littell's work would also lead him to the world of opera. In 1987 he was cast as the Dancing Master in Long Beach Operas's production of *Ariadne auf Naxos/Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*. Additionally, and also off the beaten path, during the late 1980s Littell formed his first band called The Society Boys (the band would eventually evolve into the group What Is Said) which specialized in a type of theater song that Littell would dub "cabarock." "'Cabarock' is (in the words of one fan) a kind of 'Wagnerian' performance incorporating drama, music, words, and dance. As the prefix 'caba' suggests, the songs are witty and ironic - geared to a sophisticated cabaret audience."<sup>109</sup>

In addition to his work as a multi-faceted performer, Littell also began writing poetry in 1980. For many years he resisted the notion of writing, but has said, "I realize now that I always wrote, but I never paid attention to it."<sup>110</sup> It also took Littell a long time to come to terms with the fact that what he ultimately dreamed of doing was not merely writing poetry, but writing and singing his own songs. He has said that the illness and death of his close friend and colleague, composer Jerry Frankel, "brought it home to all of us how important it was to make our time count."<sup>111</sup> Of his early lyric writing Littell shares, "I went to visit my mother, who lives in Italy, and wrote every day. Not poems, songs. By the end of the visit I had a few good ones. The

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<sup>109</sup> Rubin, Merle, "Rock for the Cabaret Crowd," *The Christian Science Monitor* (November 8, 1989), <http://m.csmonitor.com/1989/1108/llargo.html> (accessed March 15, 2013).

<sup>110</sup> Penelope Moffet, "'Cabarock' Resounds With Echoes of Africa, Folk, and Rock," *L.A. Times* (August 14, 1988), [http://articles.latimes.com/1988-08-14/entertainment/ca-701\\_1\\_philip-littell](http://articles.latimes.com/1988-08-14/entertainment/ca-701_1_philip-littell) (accessed August 9, 2010).

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

lyrics were my dowry. When I got back I threw them at musicians.”<sup>112</sup> It has since been said, and Littell agrees, that his lyrics are strongest when he’s sailing closest to the edge of self-revelation. “I’m not indulging in self-pity, I hope, but in self-examination.”<sup>113</sup> It is even more interesting to reflect on Littell’s skill in the area of self-examination in light of the fact that his character Eve embarks on the same noble quest.

Littell’s breakthrough as a lyricist came when he was commissioned by the San Francisco Opera to work with composer Conrad Susa as the librettist for a new opera based on the Pierre Choderlos de Laclos novel *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*. *The Dangerous Liaisons* premiered to great acclaim in 1994, and Littell was subsequently invited back to SFO as librettist for the 1998 premiere of André Previn’s opera *A Streetcar Named Desire* based on the famed Tennessee Williams play of the same name. It was colleagues in common - particularly conductor Randall Behr, Littell’s former roommate - that led Littell to his work with SFO.<sup>114</sup> Since its inception in 1988 Littell had been performing the AIDS song cycle *No Miracle: A Consolation*, another collaboration with composer Eliot Douglass (among other composers). In her review of a performance of that work from 1994 Foley writes that, “As Littell’s heartfelt response to the AIDS crisis, this is as much diary as drama. Teeming with references about personal friends and fellow artists who have passed on, the cycle is continuously expanding to fit present realities.”<sup>115</sup> At some point the powerful songs from this cycle found their way to SFO musical administrator

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<sup>112</sup> Stuart Timmons, “He’s in With The In Crowd,” *The Advocate* 541 (January 2, 1990): Special Section, 2

<sup>113</sup> Rubin, Merle, “Rock for the Cabaret Crowd,” *The Christian Science Monitor* (November 8, 1989), <http://m.csmonitor.com/1989/1108/llargo.html> (accessed March 15, 2013).

<sup>114</sup> Jan Breslauer, “Aria Ready for This?,” *L.A. Times* (January 19, 1992), [http://articles.latimes.com/1992-01-19/entertainment/ca-553\\_1\\_san-francisco-opera](http://articles.latimes.com/1992-01-19/entertainment/ca-553_1_san-francisco-opera) (accessed August 2, 2012).

<sup>115</sup> F. Kathleen Foley, “Theater Review: ‘No Miracle’ Sings With Humor, Emotion,” *L.A. Times* (November 5, 1994), [http://articles.latimes.com/1994-11-05/entertainment/ca-58743\\_1\\_philip-littell](http://articles.latimes.com/1994-11-05/entertainment/ca-58743_1_philip-littell) (accessed March 15, 2013).

Kip Cranna who subsequently recommended Littell for the 1994 *Dangerous Liaisons*. “What impressed me most with the lyrics for ‘No Miracle’ (was that the) songs’ texts were poetic, terse, economical and very good with imagery,” said Cranna.<sup>116</sup> Littell has stated that although it may seem like a far leap from “cabarock” to opera, in fact it isn’t. “I don’t think opera is different from the little shows I do,” he said in an interview. “If I’m playing Bebop Records to 10 people in folding chairs, they must be made to forget that they’re sitting in folding chairs just as much as these ladies and gentlemen must be made to forget that they’re sitting in a box at the opera.”<sup>117</sup> It was while working at SFO that Littell met Jake Heggie.

“Why do I get these jobs?” he asks rhetorically. “I’m useful. It’s not because I’m charming, or so damn talented. It’s because right now I’m of use in this particular situation.” In other words, Littell is both efficient and a team player. It is obvious that these attributes are well appreciated as Littell continues to be in demand as a librettist for an ever-growing list of contemporary American composers. Aside from his work with Heggie on *Eve-Song* his collaborations post-*Liaisons* included the church opera *The Wise Women* commissioned by the American Guild of Organists in 1995 and three 1996 commissions: *The Dreamers*, an opera by David Conte (the first original work for Sonoma City Opera); Stephen Hartke’s cantata *Sons of Noah*, written for the composer’s wife, Lisa Stidham; and *Naked Man* for the San Francisco Gay Men’s Chorus. Work as a librettist post-*Streetcar* continued to be abundant. To mention only a few of his projects, 1999 saw the performance of *Four Seasons*, Littell’s collaboration with Michael Torke. Written for Walt Disney Company’s “Millennium Symphonies,” *Four Seasons*

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<sup>116</sup> Jan Breslauer, “Aria Ready for This?,” *L.A. Times* (January 19, 1992), [http://articles.latimes.com/1992-01-19/entertainment/ca-553\\_1\\_san-francisco-opera](http://articles.latimes.com/1992-01-19/entertainment/ca-553_1_san-francisco-opera) (accessed August 2, 2012).

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

was performed by the New York Philharmonic and conducted by Kurt Masur. 2006 saw the production of two new operas: Littell's original *Every Man Jack* with Libby Larsen, a work based on the life of author and adventurer Jack London, for Sonoma City Opera; and *The Greater Good* with Hartke for famed Glimmerglass Opera in Cooperstown, NY, based on Maupassant's story "Boule de Suif," which "tells of the misadventures of a menagerie of bourgeois and aristocratic types who are traveling by coach in the middle of the Franco-Prussian War."<sup>118</sup> Littell's recent collaborations include *Billy, the Kid, and What He Did (A Play With Songs)* with Libby Larsen. Of his work with some of today's most celebrated classical musicians Littell has said, "'Certainly, the fun of working for classical composers is that it's very clear that your job is to get the music out of them,'...referring to the librettist's sequentially first, and therefore necessarily inspirational, role in the creative process. 'And I find that by doing the early listening, I am listened to in the end.'"<sup>119</sup>

Littell continues an active career as a writer, director and performer in Los Angeles.

### **Kristin Clayton - Soprano**

Kristin Clayton spent periods of her childhood and adolescence in Virginia and North Carolina, with her family settling at last in Lilburn, GA. Upon graduating from Parkview High School in 1983 Clayton began an undergraduate degree in vocal performance at Shorter College (now Shorter University) in Rome, Georgia. Studying with baritone John Ramsaur, Clayton

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<sup>118</sup> Alex Ross, "What's Next?," *The New Yorker* (August 21, 2006), [http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2006/08/21/060821crmu\\_music#ixzz2NdnLuSHT](http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2006/08/21/060821crmu_music#ixzz2NdnLuSHT) (accessed March 15, 2013).

<sup>119</sup> Jan Breslauer, "Just the Right Words," *L.A. Times* (September 20, 1998), <http://articles.latimes.com/1998/sep/20/entertainment/ca-24477> (accessed August 9, 2010).

focused on the required art song and operatic literature for lessons, but pursued her interests in musical theater in her free time. Ultimately it was asserted that she would have to commit to classical music if she were going to excel in her technical studies. Of that decision she recalls:

I felt a little sad about that. I didn't grow up listening to classical music. My dad's family was tobacco farmers who'd sit on the porch playing guitar and singing Johnny Cash and Jim Reeves, while my mom was from New York and a big fan of Neil Diamond and Barbara [sic] Streisand. Opera was another world to me.<sup>120</sup>

Ultimately Clayton would leave Shorter in 1987 to complete her undergraduate education at Brenau University's Women's College in Gainesville, Florida. At Brenau she would earn a degree in vocal performance, studying under the direction of soprano Laura Reesman and graduating in 1990. She would go on to complete a Masters in Vocal Performance on full scholarship at the University of Cincinnati in 1993 where she studied with soprano Barbara Honn. That same year Clayton was chosen as one of 22 students from all over the world to take part in the Merola Opera Program<sup>121</sup> which operates closely with San Francisco Opera Center and San Francisco Opera. The years 1994-1996 found her remaining in San Francisco as one of only 9 singers selected as an Adler Fellow,<sup>122</sup> and in 1994 she made her debut with San Francisco Opera in the premiere of the Susa/Littell collaboration *The Dangerous Liaisons*. Of the experience she remembers, "The composer was in rehearsals, making changes as we went. It

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<sup>120</sup> Maria Behan, "Down-to-Earth Diva," <http://artsweb.brenau.edu/Brenauwindow/Winter2008/Down-to-Earth%20Diva.pdf> (accessed November 11, 2012).

<sup>121</sup> Information about this program including other alumni can be found at <http://merola.org>.

<sup>122</sup> Information about this program can be found at <http://sfopera.com/Opera-Center/Adler-Fellows.aspx>.

was amazing not only to work with these people, but to be part of that creative process—working together to make something that never existed before.”<sup>123</sup>

It was during her time at SFO that she met Heggie, who was working in PR. Of their early times together Heggie remembers, “...I heard her sing, and from the first time I heard her sing, I said ‘Wow! That’s the kind of singer I love.’ And we just became friends , and then she got interested in recording my music and working with me and helping me develop projects...She’s a great singing actress! That’s exactly the kind of person I like to work with.”<sup>124</sup>

Those years were fruitful not only professionally, but personally for Clayton. In 1995 she met and married bass-baritone Bojan Knezevic (also a former Adler Fellow) and the couple would go on to have two children together. Clayton has acknowledged that upon having her first child she had to deal with physical repercussions that resulted in some vocal problems. It was for this reason that her Schwabacher Recital originally scheduled for May 19, 1996, during which she was poised to premiere *Eve-Song*, was postponed. Clayton has commented that as a result of the birth, for a time she was singing in a mezzo range rather than her usual soprano. This worked to her advantage when she aided Heggie in fleshing out the character of Sister Helen Prejean (a mezzo role which Susan Graham premiered) during the workshop process of his 2000 opera *Dead Man Walking*. Ultimately her issues were resolved, and the years following her Adler Fellowship were filled with performances. In addition to her continued work at SFO (*Pagliacci* and *Cosi fan tutte*) Clayton sang for the likes of Chautauqua Opera (*La Rondine*), Festival Opera (*Don Pasquale*, with her husband in the title role), in more intimate settings such

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<sup>123</sup> Maria Behan, “Down-to-Earth Diva,” <http://artsweb.brenau.edu/Brenauwindow/Winter2008/Down-to-Earth%20Diva.pdf> (accessed November 11, 2012).

<sup>124</sup> Anonymous, “Opening Night at the Ellie Caulkins Opera House: Jake Heggie, composer/pianist,” *FanFaire*, <http://www.fanfaire.com/Ellie/6e-heggie.htm> (accessed August 19, 2012).

as her return to Brenau in 2002 for the inaugural recital marking the opening of the John S. Burd Center for the Performing Arts, and finally, originating the role of opera diva “The Diva” in 2000 at Teatro Zinzanni (an interactive cabaret-style dinner theater in San Francisco). In fact, she has enjoyed her work with Zinzanni so much through the years that she continues to sing for their shows, alternating seasons with them and her traditional opera work.

It was in 2005, however, that her work with Heggie would thrust Clayton into the spotlight as she replaced famed soprano Renée Fleming in a work that had been commissioned especially for her. Heggie and Terrance McNally had written an original “mini-opera” for Fleming to premiere in honor of the grand opening of Denver’s new Ellie Caulkins Opera House. One and a half months prior to the September 10th premiere Fleming informed Heggie that she would have to bow out of that performance due to the ill health of her mother. As Heggie thought about who should fill her shoes it occurred to him that Clayton was a perfect choice. In an interview with *FanFaire* he described that decision making process:

I had played all of my compositions for (Clayton) for about 10 years-before they're premiered because she's so close to my sort of musical theatre aesthetic, and she's very smart about instincts - about what's working and what's not. She's got good gut reaction. I had played it for her as I was writing it, and she was really helpful. Then I realized it was a great piece for her too. She's covered Renée a lot at San Francisco Opera - she covered her in *Rusalka*, in *The Dangerous Liaisons*, and *Herodiade*. She has a very similar voice range...and so when I knew that Renée was having difficulty with her Mom, I thought we'd better have a cover just in case. So I asked Kristin to learn it. But she did not become the official cover until Renée had to back out.<sup>125</sup>

He was quoted as saying, “We are incredibly fortunate, as well as grateful, that the extraordinary Kristin Clayton is able to step in on very short notice to learn our piece and perform it at the

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<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

Celebration Concert...I have known Kristin for eleven years and have marveled as her sparkling talent has blossomed and grown.”<sup>126</sup>

The years that followed would see Clayton return to Opera Colorado (*The Magic Flute*), Festival Opera (*Don Giovanni*) as well as revisit *Eve-Song* in a 2007 concert “Theater in Song” presented by Cal Performances as part of their Composer Portrait series (2006-2007 season). They would also find her originating yet another role for Heggie, this time “Beatrice” in his 2008 Houston Grand Opera premiere of *Three Decembers* (formerly under the working title of “Last Acts”). It was a role that Clayton would go on to reprise for SFO in December 2008.

Always excited by the idea of creating a role, her recent work has included just that opportunity as in June 2010 Clayton originated the role of Grandma Georgina/Mrs. Gloop in the new opera *The Golden Ticket* by American composer Peter Ash and British librettist Donald Sturrock. The opera, a comedy based on Roald Dahl’s *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, was a co-production between Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, American Lyric Theater, and the Wexford Festival Opera in Ireland (where five performances were presented). Clayton had the opportunity to reprise her role in March of 2012 when the opera was part of Atlanta Opera’s season, and to sing for the cast recording. In a 2011 Clayton said, “I love singing at Opera Theatre of St. Louis. I get to do a lot of new operas there and I’ve acquired a reputation for being able to create new characters. So, it’s been fun.”<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> Anonymous, “Renée Fleming Bows Out of Opera Colorado World Premiere Commissioned to Inaugurate \$86 Million House,” *Opera News* (August 19, 2005), [http://www.operanews.com/Opera\\_News\\_Magazine/2005/8/News/Renée\\_Fleming\\_Bows\\_Out\\_of\\_Opera\\_Colorado\\_World\\_Premiere\\_Commissioned\\_to\\_Inaugurate\\_%2486\\_Million\\_House.html](http://www.operanews.com/Opera_News_Magazine/2005/8/News/Renée_Fleming_Bows_Out_of_Opera_Colorado_World_Premiere_Commissioned_to_Inaugurate_%2486_Million_House.html) (accessed March 16, 2013).

<sup>127</sup> Sean Martinfield, “Kristin Clayton: A Conversation with ‘The Diva’ of Teatro ZinZanni,” *San Francisco Sentinel* (October 26, 2011), <http://www.sanfranciscosentinel.com/?p=166029> (accessed March 10, 2013).

Most recently Clayton has appeared as a featured performer aboard various opera cruises. Of this new travel and performance opportunity she says, “This is a thing that the little girl from Georgia had no idea about - what opera can bring into your life!”<sup>128</sup> She also continues her ongoing relationship with Zinzanni. In 2011 she reflected back on her work there. “Five nights a week you have to think on your feet in front of a live audience. And, as you know, anything can happen! So, it really helps you prepare for just about any circumstance, to keep your concentration, get over your nerves and keep going. Its been a wonderful place to learn my true craft.”<sup>129</sup> In her current life she continues to alternate between ZinZanni and the traditional operatic world. She has said, “It’s very important for me to stay on track and not lose my technique and my connection to what real opera is about, in order to come back here and start fresh for the new show.”<sup>130</sup> Clayton resides in San Francisco with her husband and two children.

### **James Schwabacher - Patron**

*Eve-Song* was commissioned by tenor James Schwabacher, a well respected patron of the arts in San Francisco for the second half of the twentieth century. Born in 1920, Schwabacher came from a wealthy family that had earned its fortune in the office supply business, founding the company Schwabacher-Frey, and continued its growth with Schwabacher and Company, an investment banking firm. He grew up in a household where his family not only appreciated

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<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

music and regularly attended musical events, but his grandmother was a composer and pianist.<sup>131</sup> His own musical ability was discovered and fostered early in life, beginning with piano lessons at age five and the singing opportunities that followed soon thereafter. As a young adult he earned his undergraduate degree from U.C. Berkley, and it was there that he began his solo singing career in both opera and oratorio productions. Between graduating from Berkley in 1941 and pursuing a professional singing career Schwabacher spent five years as a first lieutenant in the army supporting the efforts of WWII. Upon returning to San Francisco he worked for the family business while simultaneously beginning to cultivate his singing career. Soon thereafter he joined the music faculty of Stanford University where, in addition to conducting the Glee Club, he had the opportunity to sing in many exciting productions including the West Coast premiere of Britten's *Peter Grimes* and Stravinsky's *Rake's Progress*. Schwabacher made his debut with the SFO in 1948 in *Die Meistersinger* (as Moser, tailor), and ultimately sang fourteen roles during four seasons. After his time at SFO he turned his attentions more to the performing of oratorio with roles such as the Evangelist in Bach's *St. John Passion* and *St. Matthew Passion*, as well as to art song and lecture recitals.

It has been much noted that Schwabacher was a rare combination of talent and wealth, and when a non-malignant growth on his vocal cords forced him to give his final performance in 1976 he turned his focus from performing to supporting the industry as an innovator and patron of the arts, a position which included initiating programs, funding, and giving private lessons to select students in his home.<sup>132</sup> In 1957 he co-founded the Merola Opera Program at San

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<sup>131</sup> Stanford University Libraries, Introducing the James Schwabacher Collection, <http://lib.stanford.edu/archive-recorded-sound/introducing-james-schwabacher-collection> (accessed October 1, 2012).

<sup>132</sup> Bach Cantatas Website, James Schwabacher (Tenor), <http://www.bach-cantatas.com/Bio/Schwabacher-James.htm> (accessed November 1, 2012).

Francisco Opera and served as its president for 30 years. The program was started in memory of Gaetano Merola, the founder of San Francisco Opera, and was designed to allow American singers to train here in the U.S. rather than in Europe. Merola is now the oldest training program for young singers in the United States.<sup>133</sup> “From a four-week program with only 14 singers, mostly from the Western United States, it has grown to a 12-week program which fosters and challenges 23 singers, five apprentice coaches, and one apprentice stage director from countries round the world each year.”<sup>134</sup> In 1979 Schwabacher was among a group of music patrons to found San Francisco Performances, an organization which “set out with an ambitious program designed to make an important contribution to the growth and vitality of an already vibrant arts scene,” and continues today to present “internationally acclaimed and emerging performing artists, [introduce] innovative programs, and [build] new and diversified audiences for the arts through education and outreach activities that also strengthen the local performing arts community.”<sup>135</sup> Additionally, and especially significant to the birth of the *Eve-Song* cycle, Schwabacher celebrated his love for art song and the intimate collaboration between voice and piano by founding the Schwabacher Debut Recital Series in 1983. The program, which continues to this day and is affiliated with the San Francisco Opera, has been the launching pad for many of today’s most well-respected singers such as Thomas Hampson, Susan Graham, Brian Asawa, and Anna Netrebko.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> San Francisco Opera, Merola Opera Program, <http://sfopera.com/Merola-Opera-Program.aspx> (accessed October 1, 2012).

<sup>135</sup> San Francisco Performances, About Us, <http://sfperformances.org/aboutus/aboutus.html> (accessed November 3, 2012).

<sup>136</sup> San Francisco Opera, Schwabacher Debut Recitals 2013, <http://sfopera.com/Opera-Center/Opera-Center-Performances/Schwabacher-Debut-Recitals.aspx> (accessed December 22, 2012).

Of Schwabacher Heggie has stated”

He was one of the greatest men in the history of San Francisco, being so passionate about opera and song and such a champion of young singers and young artists of all kinds, including composers...In an opera you can hide behind a character, a costume, makeup, or a wig. In recital, we get to know what you are as an artist. We get to see your soul. That's what Jimmy really loved. He wanted to see a singer's soul on stage, because that's what he brought when he performed.”<sup>137</sup>

Schwabacher passed away at age 86 on Tuesday, July 25, 2006, from complications of pneumonia.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> Carolyne Zinko, “James Schwabacher -- patron of arts, opera tenor,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (July 27, 2006), <http://www.sfgate.com/bayarea/article/James-Schwabacher-patron-of-arts-opera-tenor-2492207.php> (accessed January 4, 2013).

<sup>138</sup> Ibid.

## Chapter Four

### **On *Eve-Song***

*Eve-Song* was published in *The Faces of Love: The Songs of Jake Heggie, Book I* (of 3), which was first printed in October 1999.<sup>139</sup> It is a cycle of eight songs with poetry by contemporary American poet Philip Littell. The cycle has yet to be recorded as a complete work, although three tracks were recorded by soprano Sylvia McNair on the RCA album *Faces of Love: The Songs of Jake Heggie* which was released just prior to the musical scores in September 1999.<sup>140</sup> The songs in this cycle all treat the subject of the biblical Eve and offer a largely first-person account of her experiences in the Garden of Eden. Although specific musical and/or poetic aspects are discussed in detail in the body of this essay, there are certain fundamental and unifying themes that are present throughout the cycle. To begin, it is important to note that in the poetry of this cycle Eve's story is not one primarily rooted in biblical text, or even in the folkloric history surrounding the text. Rather, Eve here is given a feminist treatment.<sup>141</sup> Littell takes great liberties with the general story of Eve in the Garden of Paradise and presents her in a modern, feminist light. Heggie, who delights in the drama of completely rounded, multi-dimensional characters, brings this modern Eve to life by writing her musical story with a vividness that can only be compared to that of an operatic heroine. Indeed, in the

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<sup>139</sup> Jake Heggie, *Faces of Love: The Songs of Jake Heggie, Book I* [New York: Associated Music Publishers, Inc. (BMI), 1999].

<sup>140</sup> Jake Heggie, *Faces of Love: The Songs of Jake Heggie*, BMG/RCA Victor 63484, 1999. CD.

<sup>141</sup> “The primary concern of the feminist movement (and, correspondingly feminist scholarship) is to trace the mechanisms of women’s suppression, functioning in society and in individual lives. It is developing alternative plans of action or perspectives that enables women to achieve their full humanity.” (Schottroff, *Feminist Interpretation: The Bible in Women’s Perspective*, 48).

“Foreward” to *The Faces of Love: Book 1* Heggie writes, “For me, every song is a drama of its own, to be performed as seriously as a scene from a play or an opera. In each song I try to create a sense of the psychology and emotion behind the words in order to create a sense of character.”<sup>142</sup> During the course of this cycle Eve voices questions and feelings about such fundamental issues as her birth/creation and her worthiness, and even evaluates her obedience to God. Littell also addresses familiar moments in the story such as Eve’s temptation and ultimate eating of the forbidden fruit. The cycle opens with a soliloquy (“My Name”) during which Eve contemplates being “made up by a couple of men”<sup>143</sup> as opposed to having been born of a mother. Subsequent songs address her level of peace in the Garden of Eden as night approaches (“Even”), her desire to name the animals, and in contemplating them her realization that she has certain desires (“Good”), her conversation with the snake and her decision to bite into the forbidden fruit<sup>144</sup> (“Listen” and “Snake”), Eve’s nod to historical misogyny with a tongue-in-cheek lament on man’s misfortune to have involvement with females as they offer merely “bigger breasts” and “smaller brains” (“Woe to Man”), her experience with the unknown during labor and childbirth (“The Wound”) and finally her nostalgia for Eden and her lost innocence (“The Farm”). All said, it is an excellent example of a *bildungsroman*<sup>145</sup> in musical form.

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<sup>142</sup> Jake Heggie, *Faces of Love: The Songs of Jake Heggie, Book 1*, Foreward.

<sup>143</sup> It is interesting to note that the character of Eve in this song cycle has likewise been “made up by a couple of men” - those being Heggie and Littell.

<sup>144</sup> Although the Bible never says that the forbidden fruit is an apple it has often been referred to as such in both art and literature.

<sup>145</sup> *Bildungsroman* is a German term created from “*Bildung*” (education) and “*Roman*” (novel). Webster defines it as “a novel about the moral and psychological growth of the main character,” and it is Goethe’s novel *Wilhelm Meister’s Apprenticeship* that is used as a classic example. [Merriam-Webster Online, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/bildungsroman>, (accessed March 21, 2013)].

In terms of form and phrasing the songs accommodate the poems, which are often personal narratives, conversations, or soliloquies. Musically the songs are tonal, and in the cycle Heggie puts tonality to great use as a tool of expression, with songs featuring double tonal schemes, shifting tonalities, multiple modulations, and moments of bitonality. At the root of this expression are two fundamental polarities: the innocence of ignorance before Eve eats the forbidden fruit and the complexity of experience after she gains knowledge. As Heggie's goal is always to depict the dramatic situation musically, he uses modal passages to lend the music an archaic quality that can be associated with this prelapsarian innocence and juxtaposes this with a highly chromatic, jazz-influenced idiom which conveys the sensuality and conflict that comes from Eve's newly acquired worldliness. Of his musical inspiration Heggie offers:

Text, personality, motivation, emotion, location and the singer were all big elements in the writing. I was interested in the steady introduction of a jazz element in the pieces as I was writing – as Eve gains awareness and knowledge.<sup>146</sup>

With respect to the modal passages, the work owes a debt to French composers such as Debussy. In examining Debussy's celebrated *Chansons de Bilitis* ("Songs of Bilitis") we find that modal writing likewise provides a sense of antiquity which bolsters the idea that the poetry has been written by an ancient Greek poetess (albeit in this situation a fictional one). That said, these modal sections also owe a debt to folk music as modal writing has long been associated with the musical offerings of the common man.

It is generally put forth by mainstream biblical scholars that the Garden of Eden was not an actual historic location, but rather an archetypal location where anyone and anything might be found to exist. The Cambridge Bible Commentary (hereafter CBC) explains that:

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<sup>146</sup> Jake Heggie, email message to author, March 21, 2013.

This is the story of ‘Everyman’. The trees in the garden are not ordinary trees, but magical trees. The garden has strange creatures in it, a talking serpent (3:Iff) and a guard of cherubim (3:24). The whole purpose of the narrative is not to describe what once happened but to explain certain puzzling features of life and human experience known to the narrator.”<sup>147</sup>

Thus, the story has an etiological purpose. With aspects of the story and the humans therein hailing from folklore as well as mythology, the material in Genesis is often referred to as “story-myth.”<sup>148</sup> The CBC goes on to explain that, present in many different cultures, “story myths” were “not told for their entertainment value. They provide answers to questions people ask about life, about society and about the world in which they live.”<sup>149</sup> Likewise, Adam and Eve were not a man and woman who lived at a certain time in a certain place, but rather the “everyman” for ancient people to look to for stories that would help explain, and even justify, the hardships of their everyday lives. For example, the CBC offers that Genesis 3:14-17 provides answers to many questions ancient people might have had such as, “Why is the serpent such an odd creature crawling around in the dust? (verse 14). Why is there an instinctive mutual antipathy between snake and man? (verse 15). Why is childbearing painful? Why is man the dominant partner in the marriage relationship? (verse 16). Why is the life of the peasant farmer so hard? (verse 17).”<sup>150</sup> Because the themes in *Eve-Song* are about universal issues, Heggie sought to offer musical choices that supported this collectiveness.

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<sup>147</sup> Robert Davidson, *Genesis 1-11*, The Cambridge Bible Commentary on the New English Bible, ed. P.R. Ackroyd, A.R.C. Leaney, and J.W. Packer (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 27-8.

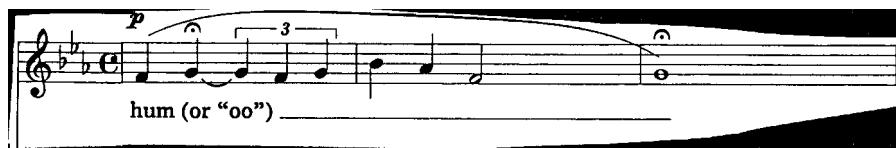
<sup>148</sup> Robert Davidson, *Genesis 1-11*, The Cambridge Bible Commentary on the New English Bible, ed. P.R. Ackroyd, A.R.C. Leaney, and J.W. Packer (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 10.

<sup>149</sup> Robert Davidson, *Genesis 1-11*, The Cambridge Bible Commentary on the New English Bible, ed. P.R. Ackroyd, A.R.C. Leaney, and J.W. Packer (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 10.

<sup>150</sup> Robert Davidson, *Genesis 1-11*, The Cambridge Bible Commentary on the New English Bible, ed. P.R. Ackroyd, A.R.C. Leaney, and J.W. Packer (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 43.

In *Eve-Song* Heggie uses unifying devices such as the sound/text “hum.” This primitive sound with its timeless, wordless quality provides a deep and fundamental connection to the “everyman” for whom this story is told. The hum develops during the course of the cycle into other sounds such as “oo,” “ah,” “mm” and “oh” as it undergoes a metamorphosis in meaning.

Examples of this use of primitive sound include:



Example 1. *Listen.* “Hum or oo,” mm. 2-4.



Example 2. *Good.* “Ah,” mm. 16-18.



Example 3. *Good.* “Mm,” m. 19.



Example 4. *Snake.* “Oh,” mm. 17-20.

Of the use of “hum,” Heggie says that he was inspired by Clayton’s southern roots, but adds, “Not just Kristin’s southern roots – but the need to express something that goes beyond words. Something internal for which sound alone is the richest expression of the moment.”<sup>151</sup>

Additionally, ideas in *Eve-Song* are expressed through musical themes, specifically the seven which have been listed below. These themes are presented in the order in which they occur in the cycle and are limited to include only the most pronounced occurrences.



Example 5. *My Name*. “Theme A/Nostalgia,” mm. 1-6.

Theme A is a simple, folk-like theme which initially appears in the form of parallel octaves.<sup>152</sup> However, just as Eve evolves from a simple opening hum into a living multifaceted character, so this simple modal theme generates some of the most important thematic material in the entire cycle. It is fitting to label this theme “Nostalgia” as it presents first with Eve recalling her history, later surrounding her decision to eat the forbidden fruit, and finally, at the end of the cycle, as Eve revisits her happier days in Eden. As Wagner so famously did with leitmotives in his operas, in this cycle Heggie puts forth themes that create a tightly unified musical language

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<sup>151</sup> Jake Heggie, email message to author, March 21, 2013.

<sup>152</sup> In addition to the uncomplicated texture the unison provides, it is significant that the octave was one of only three musical intervals considered harmonious by the Greeks. It is fitting in terms of the ancient origin of Eve and the Garden of Eden that this early idea about musical consonance is featured.

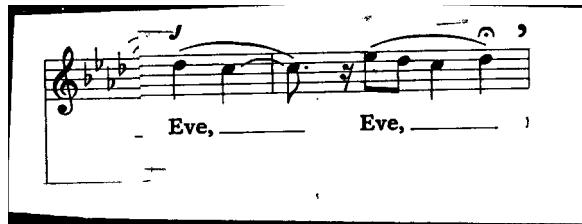
within themselves. Thus, Theme A/Nostalgia is a main theme from which others are drawn. Appearing at the onset of the first song and lasting 6 measures, it provides the seed for both the opening vocal line and two additional derivative motives listed below. Occasionally there exists another variant which will be labeled (Var.).

Song 1: mm. 1-6; mm. 75-76; mm. 90-92

Song 4: mm. 2-4 (Var.)

Song 5: mm. 81-92 (Var.)

Song 8: m. 25; mm. 28-31



Example 6. *My Name*. “Theme A1/Eve,” mm. 12-13.

At first appearance this theme, derivative of Theme A, is simply a descending major or minor second. This theme has been labeled “Eve” as it is used the first few times she voices her name. The rhythms of that decent vary and will not be differentiated. The motive transforms on occasion to an expanded form (Exp.) illustrated above in the second half of Example 6. The rhythms of (Exp.) also vary and will not be differentiated. This motive also appears in inversion (Inv.). It should be understood that (Inv.) will be noted as existing within the example, but may

not exist exclusively in said example. This motive is found in the vocal line (V.L.) unless otherwise noted.

Song 1: mm. 2-7 (Inv.); mm. 9-14 (Inv., Exp.); mm. 17-20; mm. 23-24 (Accomp.); m. 31 (Inv.); mm. 33-36 (Inv.); m. 39 (Exp.); mm. 41-42 (Accomp. & V.L., Exp.); mm. 48-51 (Exp.); mm. 58-59 (Exp.); m. 60 (Accomp., Exp.); mm. 61-62 (Exp.); m. 64 (Accomp., Exp.); m. 65 (Inv.); m. 68 (Accomp., Exp.); m. 69; m. 75 (Accomp.); m. 76 (Inv.); mm. 77-78 (Accomp.); mm. 85-89; m. 89 (Accomp.); mm. 92-93 (Accomp. & Inv.)

Song 2: m. 5 (Accomp.); mm. 9-10 (Accomp.); mm. 11-12 (Accomp., Inv.); m. 13; mm. 16-17 (Inv.); mm. 14-15 (Accomp., Inv.); m. 20 (Inv.); m. 24 (Exp. & Inv.); mm. 27-28 (Exp. & Inv.); m. 30; mm. 31-33 (Accomp.); mm. 35-42 (Inv.); mm. 46-60 (Accomp. & V.L., Inv.); mm. 65-68 (Exp.); m. 71; m. 73

Song 3: m. 6 (Inv.); mm. 12-13 (Inv.); m. 15 (Inv.); m. 17 (Inv.); m. 37 (Inv.); mm. 41-44; mm. 46-47

Song 4: m. 13 (Exp.); m. 14; m. 18; mm. 29-30 (Exp.); m. 31; m. 35; mm. 38-39

Song 5: m. 8; mm. 10-11; m. 14; m. 15 (Inv.); m. 20 (Inv.); m. 25; m. 26 (Accomp.); m. 27; m. 32 (Exp.); m. 33; mm. 34-35 (Accomp., Inv.); mm. 35-36 (Inv.); m. 38 (Accomp., Inv.); mm. 39-42 (Inv.); m. 53 (Inv.); mm. 57-59 (Inv.); m. 73 (Inv.); m. 78 (Inv.)

Song 6: mm. 1-5 (Inv.); mm. 10-11 (Inv.); mm. 13-17 (Inv.); m. 27; mm. 29-30 (Inv.); mm. 35-36; mm. 40-42; mm. 44-45 (Inv.); mm. 46-50 (Accomp. & V.L., Inv.); mm. 59-62 (Inv.); mm. 76-77 (Inv.)

Song 7: mm. 2-22 (Inv., Accomp. & V.L.); m. 23 (Accomp.); mm. 25-26 (Inv.); mm. 26-31 (Inv., Accomp.); mm. 27-28 (Inv.); mm. 30-31; mm. 34-37 (Inv., Accomp.); mm. 36-39; mm. 43-45 (Inv., Accomp.); m. 47 (Inv., Accomp.)

Song 8: mm. 2-3 (Inv., Accomp. & V.L.); m. 6 (Inv.); mm. 9-13 (Inv., Accomp. & V.L.); mm. 18-24 (Inv., Accomp. & V.L.); m. 26; m. 29 (Inv.); m. 31 (Inv.); mm. 32-38 (Inv., Accomp. & V.L.); mm. 41-42 (Inv., Accomp. & V.L.)



Example 7. *My Name*. “Theme A2/Eden,” m. 8.

Comprised of both rhythmic and melodic elements Theme A2 is derived from Theme A/Nostalgia as well as related to Theme A1/Eve, and for these reasons has been labeled “Eden.” It presents as two eighth notes followed by a longer value ranging from one to three beats. The movement from first to second eighth note is either a major or minor second. This motive is found in the accompaniment (Accomp.) unless otherwise noted.

Song 1: mm. 8-13; mm. 15-16; mm. 19-21; mm. 23-25; m. 40 V.L.; mm. 41-42; m. 63

(Accomp. & V.L.); mm. 77-80; m. 86; mm. 88-90

Song 6: m. 58; m. 60

Song 8: mm. 1-4; m. 6; mm. 9-13; mm. 16-17; mm. 19-22; mm. 39-41



Example 8. *My Name*. “Theme B/Growth,” m. 8.

Theme B is the second independent motive to appear. Labeled “Growth” for the fact that the theme ascends, it features an ascending line consisting of three to four notes rising in stepwise motion. Theme B/Growth presents primarily with quarter note values\* in its original form (Form 1). It later appears in three rhythmically altered forms: triplet ascending sixteenth notes (F2), triplet ascending sixteenth notes followed by an ascending whole note or dotted whole note (F3) or four ascending sixteenth notes which may or may not be followed by a larger rhythmic value such as whole note or dotted whole note (F4). This motive is found in the accompaniment unless otherwise noted. (\*Occasionally rhythm may vary to include eighth notes, dotted quarter notes, half notes, dotted half notes or whole notes. These variances will remain labeled F1).

Song 1: m. 8 (F1); mm. 11-12 (F1); m. 15 (F1); mm. 23-24 (F1); mm. 43-44 (F2); m. 46 (F2); mm. 52-53 (F3); mm. 55-62 (F3 & F4); mm. 68-69 (F4); mm. 77-78 (F1); mm. 85-86 (F1)

Song 2: mm. 6-7 (F1); mm. 9-10 (F1, V.L.); mm. 21-22 (F1, V.L.); mm. 25-26 (F1, V.L.); m. 28 (F1, V.L.); m. 55 (F1, V.L.); mm. 67-68 (F1, V.L.); mm. 79-83 (F1, V.L.)

Song 3: m. 19 (F1, V.L.); m. 21 (F4, V.L.); mm. 22-23 (F1, V.L.); m. 27 (F4, V.L.); m. 43 (F4, V.L.); m. 46 (F4, V.L.); mm. 49-50 (F1, V.L.)

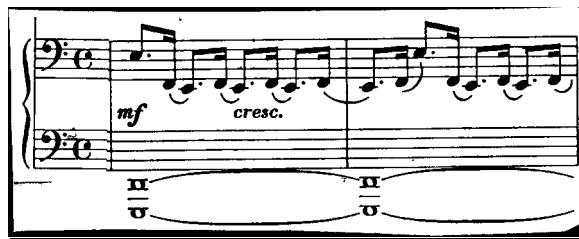
Song 4: m. 5-8 (F1, Accomp. & V.L.); mm. 20-24 (F1, Accomp. & V.L.); mm. 45-49 (F1, Accomp. & V.L.)

Song 5: m. 43 (F1, V.L.)

Song 6: m. 38 (F1, V.L.); mm. 53-54 (F1, V.L.); m. 58; m. 60

Song 7: mm. 9-10 (V.L.); m. 11; mm. 33-34

Song 8: mm. 1-2; mm. 4-7; mm. 9-14; mm. 15-16 (V.L.); mm. 16-17; mm. 19-21



Example 9. *Woe to Man.* “Theme C/Anxiety,” mm. 5-6.

In this theme there is an oscillation between two notes, note clusters, or sixteenth note sets. Rhythms vary and range from half notes to dotted eighth and sixteenth notes. It has been

labeled “Anxiety” due to the tension the musical oscillation implies. Theme C is found in the accompaniment unless otherwise noted.

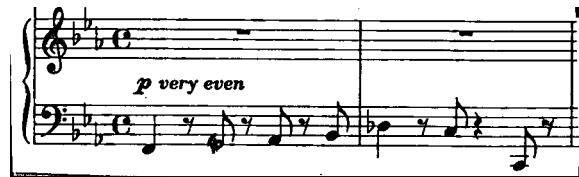
Song 1: mm. 9-10 (bass); mm. 39-40; mm. 52-54; m. 56; mm. 58-59; mm. 61-67; m. 69;  
m. 72

Song 2: m. 75 (V.L.)

Song 5: m. 24 (V.L.); m. 26 (V.L.); m. 60 (V.L.)

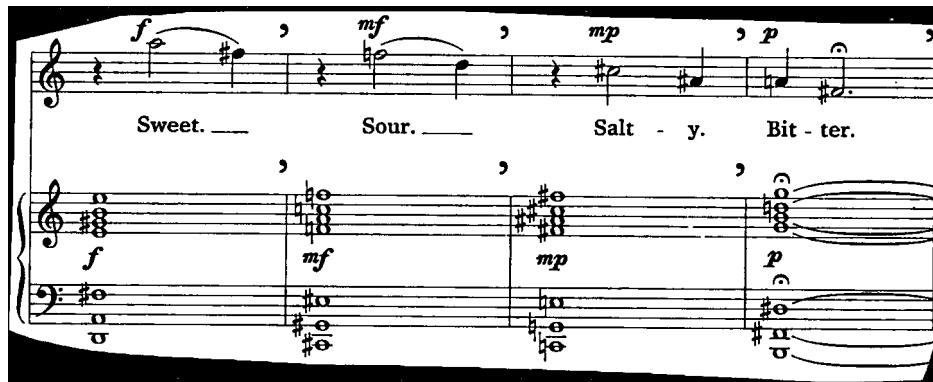
Song 6: mm. 5-6; mm. 21 (V.L.); m. 24 (V.L.); m. 37 (V.L.); m. 53 (V.L.); mm. 62-66;  
m. 66 (V.L.); m. 69 (V.L.)

Song 8: m. 23



Example 10. *Snake*. “Theme D/Temptation,” mm.1-2.

This 6-note ostinato which begins “Snake” (no. 5) is the primary accompaniment pattern for this song. It is transposed throughout but sustains its rhythmic integrity and has been labeled “Temptation” due to the fact that its presence is linked to the snake and his encouragement of Eve.



Example 11. *Snake*. “Theme E/Experience,” mm. 66-69.

Theme E consists of a descending major or minor third and has been labeled “Experience” as it is featured in the measures surrounding Eve’s first bite into the forbidden fruit. It is found in the vocal line unless otherwise noted.

Song 1: m. 34; m. 37; m. 45; m. 47; mm. 66; mm. 72-73; m. 74

Song 2: mm. 22-23; m. 48; m. 51

Song 3: m. 3; m. 5; m. 14; m. 16; m. 20; m. 33; m. 39; m. 42; m. 44

Song 4: m. 24

Song 5: mm. 3-5; m. 7; m. 9; m. 13; m. 15; mm. 21-22; m. 27 (Accomp.); m. 30; m. 33 (Accomp.); m. 34; mm. 35-36 (Accomp.); m. 37; m. 39; m. 41 (Accomp.); mm. 43-44 (Accomp.); mm. 50-53; m. 54 (Accomp.); m. 56; m. 58; mm. 62-64; mm. 66-69; m. 77

In addition to presenting the individual motives noted above Heggie finds opportunity to combine motives, even doing so within a single measure. Examples include “My Name” (no. 1), m. 23 where “Eden,” “Eve,” and “Growth” can all be found in the R.H. of the piano accompaniment as well as mm. 57-8 where “Growth” and “Eve” (Exp.) share the downbeat of m. 58 (examples below); and “Woe to Man” (no. 6), m. 58 (which recalls the opening song).



Example 12. *My Name*. Combination of themes no. 1, m. 23.



Example 13. *My Name*. Combination of themes no. 2, mm. 57-58.

The heroine in *Eve-Song* is caught in an interior war of self-worth. In this regard her portrayal in the cycle benefits from decades or even centuries of feminist reinterpretation of the patriarchal Judeo-Christian tradition. Littell comments, “I didn’t see her as a modern Eve. To me she is the historical Eve, speaking in my modern idiom of course.”<sup>153</sup> Heggie and Littell’s Eve is both a universal “Every-woman” and yet a very contemporary one. Of this Eve Heggie states, “We were interested in finding a fully formed, three-dimensional Eve. Not some mythological ideal. I have no interest in that. We wanted a flesh-and-blood person who seems real and powerful - not a victim, but somebody who is victimized.”<sup>154</sup> In this song cycle Littell’s Eve explores her identity as child and woman, as wife, mother, and lover. She wrestles with her intuition, desires, and her trust level. She ponders her inadequacies as well as the idea of free will. She continues to ask the questions women have been asking for over a century: “Was I an afterthought, or am I of value in God’s eyes?”, “Is it wrong to desire knowledge?”, and ultimately, “Does identifying with and celebrating my gender mean that I must accept that I am the root of all sin, the downfall of all men and therefore evil personified?” In *Eve-Song* Littell and Heggie paint a musical portrait of a woman struggling to find herself. All of these questions would have been unthinkable for a portrayal of Eve a century ago.<sup>155</sup>

Also unthinkable would have been the freedom of expression, with regard to biblical stories, that has allowed Littell to take liberties such as the liaison between “God” and “Damn

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<sup>153</sup> Philip Littell, email message to author, March 21, 2013.

<sup>154</sup> Jake Heggie, email message to author, March 21, 2013.

<sup>155</sup> There is vast literature available on this topic. The author refers you to seminal studies including: Stanton, Elizabeth Cady. *The Woman’s Bible*. New York: Prometheus Books, 1999; Schottroff, Luise, Silvia Schroer, and Marie-Theres Wacker. *Feminist Interpretation: The Bible in Women’s Perspective*. Translated by Martin and Barbara Rumscheidt. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998; and Fiorenza, Elisabeth Schüssler. *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins*. New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1994.

it," which creates what some might consider a blasphemous swear in "My Name" (no. 1), reference to Eve's nymphomania and God's penis, along with the proposed idea that Eve was a sexual partner who was not provided the opportunity to say no, and was therefore raped by Adam. Both the poet and composer were adamant that they felt no need to shy away from what might be considered a controversial approach to a biblical subject. Littell offers:

I have no patience with considerations of "blasphemy". I am not religious, not a "believer" and in fact pretty hostile to those mind-sets. She's an astonishing mythical construct. Certainly culturally I am of the Christian and Jewish tradition. I have always received, processed, used, quarried, the texts and legends as art. I'm very snobby about language and when language is powerful I am attentive.<sup>156</sup>

Heggie agrees, commenting:

I am a champion for women – and part of that means tearing down myths and stereotypes. I never heard a single word about blasphemy. Lots of laughs about the word penis... but so what? It's funny! Eve seems real and naïve and wonderful. Not just tragic or a vessel to be used.<sup>157</sup>

Eve's musical history is considerable, but of primary concern to this essay are the large scale cycles and works in which she is featured. To the author's knowledge there are only two extant song cycles in addition to *Eve-Song* which feature the biblical Eve. They are Gabriel Fauré's *La Chanson d'Ève*<sup>158</sup> and Ezra Laderman's *Songs for Eve*.<sup>159</sup> There also exists a monodrama *Testament of Eve* written for mezzo-soprano, orchestra and tape by Jean Eichelberger Ivey.<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> Philip Littell, email message to author, March 21, 2013.

<sup>157</sup> Jake Heggie, email message to author, March 21, 2013.

<sup>158</sup> Gabriel Fauré, *La Chanson d'Ève*, (Van Nuys, CA: Alfred Publishing Co., Inc.).

<sup>159</sup> Ezra Laderman, *Songs for Eve*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968).

<sup>160</sup> Jean Eichelberger Ivey, *Testament of Eve: Monodrama for Mezzo-Soprano, Orchestra, and Tape*, 1976.

*La Chanson d'Ève* is a cycle of ten songs with poetry by Belgian Symbolist poet (a friend of the more famous Maeterlinck) Charles van Lerberghe (1861-1907). From four volumes of cyclic poetry Fauré chose these ten poems and arranged them as he saw fit. Orledge comments, “The final order was chosen for aesthetic rather than chronological reasons, Ève’s character gradually deepening as she uncovers alone more and more of the natural secrets of God’s universe.”<sup>161</sup> The cycle, a work from Fauré’s third period, is characterized by its introspective and refined style. One would expect the most similarities to be found between the American works, but in fact there are a surprising number of comparative moments when examining the Fauré and Heggie side by side.<sup>162</sup>

To begin, the music for both cycles is modal, with some emphasis given to the phrygian and dorian modes. Further, there exist parallels between “Paradis” (no. 1) and “Even” (no. 2),<sup>163</sup> “Veilles-tu, ma senteur de soleil” (no. 7) and “Snake” (no. 5),<sup>164</sup> and “Dans un parfum de roses blanches” (no. 8) and “The Wound” (no. 7).<sup>165</sup> Interestingly, in another coincidental parallel between the cycles, Flint puts forth that Fauré uses two distinct motives which are similar to those found in *Eve-Song*: the “Phrygian Sigh” with a rocking half-step motion and “Ambiguous Third” which presents as any outline of a third in any direction, either diatonic or chromatic.<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>161</sup> Robert Orledge, *Gabriel Fauré* (London: Eulenburg Books, 1979), 138.

<sup>162</sup> Neither Heggie nor Littell knew of *La Chanson d'Ève* at the time *Eve-Song* was composed, and the author cites similarities that exist coincidentally. (Jake Heggie, email message to author, March 21, 2013; Philip Littell, email message to author, March 21, 2013).

<sup>163</sup> These include the illustration in both songs of nature and the haziness of dusk as well as the idea that nightfall brings a sense of uneasiness.

<sup>164</sup> Both address the idea that visibility makes one vulnerable.

<sup>165</sup> In both songs Eve steps out of her body, speaking in third person.

<sup>166</sup> Catrena M. Flint, “*La Chanson d'Ève*: Counterpoint in the late style of Fauré” (master’s thesis, McGill University, Canada, 1997), 28-9.

In addition, she states that a hallmark of *La Chanson d'Ève* is Fauré's layering of motives (which she refers to as "combinations"),<sup>167</sup> a technique found in *Eve-Song*. For further exploration of Fauré's *La Chanson d'Ève* the author refers you to the writings of Orledge, Kennedy, Marsh, and Flint among others.<sup>168</sup>

It is beyond the scope of this paper to draw comparisons between *Eve-Song* and Ezra Laderman's *Songs for Eve*, if only for the fact that the latter has yet (to the author's knowledge) to be studied in a scholarly light. Research does, however, exist on the poems that comprise the cycle. Poet Archibald MacLeish approaches Eve in a feminist manner according to Richard T. Felt. He states, "...Eve is neither the foolish ingénue who blatantly disobeyed God nor the wicked seductress who took advantage of Adam's faith; nor is she an unwitting instrument to be used by others, gods or devils. Eve is a powerful and self-confident force in Eden and in human destiny."<sup>169</sup> He adds, "Eve's actions are not disobedient; they are, rather, defiant and courageous...Eve is none other than the archetypal Great Mother, the life-giving and life-sustaining Goddess of fertility and birth."<sup>170</sup> The cycle for soprano and piano was commissioned by Judith Raskin on a grant from the Ford Foundation, and the soprano gave the first

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<sup>167</sup> Ibid., 2 & 43.

<sup>168</sup> Robert Orledge, *Gabriel Fauré* (London: Eulenburg Books, 1979); Margaret Ann Kennedy, "The Effect of Structure Upon the Performance Interpretation of *La Chanson d'Ève* by Gabriel Fauré" (D.M.A. diss., Indiana University, 1984); Stephanie Marsh, "Gabriel Fauré's *La Bonne Chanson*, op. 61 and *La Chanson d'Ève*, op. 95: Musical diversity versus thematic unity" (D.M.A. diss., University of Arizona, 1995); and Catrena M. Flint, "La Chanson d'Ève: Counterpoint in the late style of Fauré" (master's thesis, McGill University, Canada, 1997).

<sup>169</sup> Richard T. Felt, "Re-Visioning the Fall: Mythic Implications of Archibald MacLeish's *Songs for Eve*" (master's thesis, Florida Atlantic University, 2002), 32.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid., 33.

performance on October 2, 1963 at the University of Vermont. The cycle has a duration of 29 minutes.<sup>171</sup>

The monodrama *Testament of Eve* written for mezzo-soprano, orchestra, and tape by Jean Eichelberger Ivey is analyzed in detail in the 1983 dissertation “The Vocal Works of Jean Eichelberger Ivey.”<sup>172</sup> The work had its first performance on April 21, 1976 by the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra conducted by Leon Fleisher, with Elaine Bonazzi as mezzo soprano soloist. Text is by the composer.<sup>173</sup> The following commentary on her work was provided by the composer for the premiere performance:

To me as a woman, it is of special interest that in this myth, a woman makes the choice. She chooses knowledge and growth, as opposed to remaining a pampered pet forever in the Garden of Eden. And Eve, whose name traditionally means ‘Mother of all the living,’ makes this choice not for herself alone but for Adam and her children and all the human race to come....<sup>174</sup>

In *Testament of Eve* a conversation about the forbidden fruit which hangs from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil takes place between Eve and Lucifer, whose voice is provided by tape. During the course of the poem Eve says, “We are the pets of God” and struggles with the fact that she has a choice between innocence and knowledge. Interestingly, as in *Eve-Song*, Eve in *Testament of Eve* expresses herself through the use of the primitive sounds “hum” and “ah.” The monodrama has a duration of 20 minutes.<sup>175</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> Ezra Laderman, *Songs for Eve*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968).

<sup>172</sup> Rose Marie Muennich, “The Vocal Works of Jean Eichelberger Ivey” (PhD diss., Michigan State University, 1983).

<sup>173</sup> Jean Eichelberger Ivey, *Testament of Eve: Monodrama for Mezzo-Soprano, Orchestra, and Tape*, 1976.

<sup>174</sup> Rose Marie Muennich, “The Vocal Works of Jean Eichelberger Ivey” (PhD diss., Michigan State University, 1983), 98.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid., 95.

It is undeniable that the story of the Fall is something that inspires much creative interpretation and expression. In her book *Eve: A Biography* Pamela Norris notes that, “The Garden of Eden has continued to stimulate commentary and reworkings: it poses challenging questions about the relationship between men and women, and between humanity and God; about the power of language, and of food and sex; about memory and imagination; and the workaday world of childbearing and toil; and about suffering and happiness and death.”<sup>176</sup> *Eve-Song* offers a modern reworking for the musical world of a figure who is central to Judeo-Christian traditions, to say nothing of her resonance with world mythologies. Heggie and Littell lift her from the pages of Genesis and transform her into a modern, almost operatic character who expresses herself in a range of modern moods and manners, and with perspicacity befitting a contemporary woman.

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<sup>176</sup> Pamela Norris, *Eve: A Biography* (New York: New York University Press, 1999), 37.

## Chapter Five

### Analyses<sup>177</sup>

My Name • Even • Good • Listen • Snake • Woe to Man • The Wound • The Farm

#### 1. My Name:

(Vocal Range: C-sharp4 to A5)

Eve  
must be the sound I made  
as I was being made.  
Eve.  
Out I came, made up  
by a couple of men.  
Old man made me  
out of Adam's rib...  
Oh, did he?<sup>178</sup>  
God made Adam God made Adam God Adam *God Adam*  
God damn it,  
my children  
are going to know  
who their mother is.  
Mad<sup>179</sup> bad Eve the amnesiac,

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<sup>177</sup> The poems in this chapter appear in their original form as provided to the author by Littell. They are currently unpublished and are reprinted in this essay by permission of the poet. (Philip Littell, email message to author, March 21, 2013). Words that were provided to, but not set by, Heggie appear in italics. Additional minor textual changes made by Heggie are addressed in footnotes. Repetition of words or phrases by the composer, which are not part of the original poem, may receive commentary in the body of the analysis, but can be identified in your score.

<sup>178</sup> Reik notes with the same astonishment Eve expresses here that, “the strange nature of her [Eve’s] birth was accepted without much comment by most theologians of the older school...Even biblical scholars did not pay much attention to Eve’s being made from the rib of Adam—but when they did they offered rational, so to speak antiseptic, explanations.” (Theodor Reik, *The Creation of Woman: A Psychoanalytic Inquiry into the Myth of Eve*, 121). Reik does offer that there are certainly parallels to be found in the religion and mythology of other ancient people. He provides as examples: “The sagas of Greenland, in which the first woman was created from the thumb of a god; the myth of Karh of the Yuracarr, who produced a son for himself from a torn-off toenail; Dionysius sprang from the thigh of Zeus; Daksus from the toe of Brahma; [and] Pallas Athene was the daughter of Zeus from whose head she leapt in full armor...” (Ibid., 120)]. However, ultimately he asserts that, “Unlike quite a few Biblical scholars, we have faced the narrative of Eve’s creation and declared that it is a deliberately concocted nonsensical story, which means it is a hoax of the Hebrew tradition, a deception manufactured and imposed upon the uninitiated.” (Ibid., 127).

<sup>179</sup> It is written in the Hippocratic Corpus, an anonymous collection of writings from doctors during the fifth and fourth centuries BC that, “A woman’s larger, fleshier breasts were particularly prone to an excess of blood, which could lead to madness...The womb, too, might wander round the body causing fainting fits, suffocation, and a variety of other unpleasant physical symptoms...” (Norris, *Eve: A Biography*, 138-39).

Eve the nymphomaniac,<sup>180</sup>  
ME!

Was young man Adam completely unconscious,  
as I was manufactured?

Did he groan and whimper EVE  
as I slipped out?

Did God mutter EVE  
as he slapped me into shape?

Did I scream EVE  
at the inevitable rape?

Or was EVE

the last breath shaped into sound<sup>181</sup> by my mother's mouth as I came out?

I was too little to save her or to<sup>182</sup> remember anything about her... Eve.

WHAT ARE THEY TRYING TO TELL ME WITH THEIR STORIES?

I am allowed no clothing.

I am allowed no shame.

I have nothing to wear  
but my beautiful hair,<sup>183</sup>  
my body, my face,  
and MY NAME.

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<sup>180</sup> Although Eve was not always linked to the idea of a sexual temptress, Norris notes that it became so through an intricate narrative chain. “It is not surprising that the encounter between a naked girl and her clever persuader, the most sinuously phallic of all the beasts, should have come to be read as a seduction scene. The erotic implications of the temptation of Eve were finally spelt out in a narrative known as the *Apocalypse of Moses*, which probably dates to the first century AD, but the foundations were laid much earlier in works that sought to discover God’s purposes in creating the universe. Breathtakingly imaginative and ingenious, the writers of these often extravagant narratives invented a whole new set of stories that explored the Scriptures and gave free reign to a storyteller’s delight in fantasy. In the course of these reworkings, Eve became identified with dangerous sexuality, and the humble serpent took on the statue of an angel who dared to challenge God...At the heart of their encounter was lust.” (Norris, *Eve: A Biography*, 85). Also, “Although the Rabbis regarded the serpent as merely a reptile, there is a rabbinic story of the serpent’s passion for Eve; and Rabbi Johanan ben Zackai went much further, claiming not only that Eve copulated with the serpent, but that the serpent injected her with ‘filthy lust’.” (Norris, *Eve: A Biography*, 108).

<sup>181</sup> This phrase was changed to “into a sound” for the musical score. (Jake Heggie, *Faces of Love: The Songs of Jake Heggie, Book 1*, 45).

<sup>182</sup> In the musical score the word “to” was omitted in this phrase. (Jake Heggie, *Faces of Love: The Songs of Jake Heggie, Book 1*, 45).

<sup>183</sup> “As the first woman, created by God for Adam’s delight, Eve was thought to be endowed with every attraction, corresponding to the perfectionist tradition of Adam’s great physical beauty and God-like intellect.” (Norris, *Eve: A Biography*, 48).

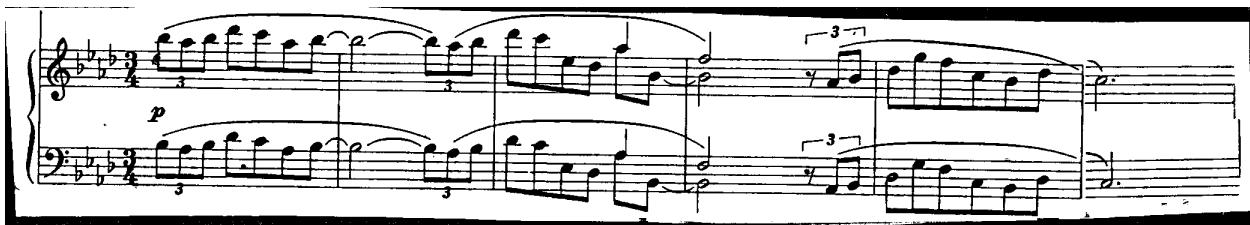
Eve's opening soliloquy, the longest piece in the cycle and a *tour-de-force* for the performer, meditates on her creation/birth, her name, and her place in the world. Littell offers, “*My Name* is an invitation to explore the onomatopoeia of EVE,<sup>184</sup> the different sounds that the word/name can contain, and what they can express about her self and the events of her life. It's an invitation to the singer and the composer to get wild and creative.”<sup>185</sup>

A single bar of introduction heralds Theme A/Nostalgia by way of parallel octaves, a sparse and uncomplicated texture that is used at various points throughout the cycle. It is suggestive in its simplicity of Eve's innocence before she succumbs to temptation. From this opening theme is drawn the derivation Theme A1/Eve which becomes the nascent musical moment Eve utters her own name. Although the key signature reads A flat major or F minor, neither is true. Here Heggie simply uses the key signature to provide the pitches for the mode of B flat Dorian. Fittingly, by utilizing a modal scale he evokes the sense that this music is of an ancient time, one perhaps predating civilization. Like the uncomplicated texture of the parallel octaves and the “hum,” this use of modality can be associated with the blissful naiveté Eve existed in prior to eating from the forbidden tree. Further still, Heggie uses rhythm to explore this early innocent time in Eve's life, lending the piece an ethereal quality by sustaining the melodic line over barlines and employing entrances that do not occur on the downbeats of measures. Thus, he creates an unmetered feeling, a style which he specifically requests the performer feature by instructing “*very free.*”

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<sup>184</sup> The singer should be aware that Littell's repetition of the word “Eve” throughout *My Name* provides an example of the literary technique *Leitwortstil*, or “Leading word style,” a distinctive convention of biblical prose first recognized by the writer/translators Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig. A *Leitwort* is said to be a word or a word-root is repeated for the purpose of conveying meaning. According to Robert Alter, this word-motif technique is often used in Hebrew narratives and is one which finds its origin in stories that began as oral history. (Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, 90-93). This technique is also seen in *Good* (no. 3).

<sup>185</sup> Philip Littell, email message to author, March 21, 2013.



Example 14. *My Name*. Song opening, mm. 1-5.

The vocal line provides its own sense of timelessness by beginning with a wordless hum rather than text. The “hum” is a primitive sound which is initially used to illustrate Eve sharing her story with her child/grandchild through a lullaby.<sup>186</sup> It functions as another unifying element in the cycle, undergoing metamorphosis both during this song and in subsequent songs. For example, in mm. 9-12 it is utilized to express the “sound of her creation/birth,” and ultimately results in the formation of her name/identity.<sup>187</sup> She is surprised that these primitive sounds have resulted in her name. She repeats it, savoring the birth of her identity, first in mm. 12-13 and then in mm. 17-19. It is during this repetition of her name that Theme A1 appears independently. With no proper parent present Eve has been left to name herself,<sup>188</sup> and has done so out of

<sup>186</sup> The illustrative aspect of this opening hum was provided by the composer during a coaching with the author in May, 2007 during a masterclass at California State University, Long Beach. As singers we come to understand that, although this is the first piece in the cycle, this is not simply the opening story in a timeline of Eve’s life, but rather commentary and reflection on her past experiences. Littell makes this clear as, at the end of “My Name,” Eve laments the fact that she has “no clothing” and is “allowed no shame.” As the knowledge of one’s naked sex is the first thing to be understood by Adam and Eve in the bible after they eat the forbidden fruit, Eve would not have this lament yet if one were simply viewing this cycle as a list of chronological events.

<sup>187</sup> In terms of interpretation, it is my opinion that the first 7 measures of “hum” are part of the lullaby - primarily a “hum” sound, but with a slight separation between the lips to allow the sound to carry (a slight “oo”). However, mm. 8-12 are the formation of Eve’s first sound which will ultimately be her name. Therefore, the “hum” should open to an “ah” at the F/pickup to m. 11 and stay on the “ah” to her first utterance of “Eve”.

<sup>188</sup> According to the bible Eve is actually named by Adam. Upon her creation by God from one of Adam’s ribs it is written, “The man said, “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called ‘woman,’ for she was taken out of man.”” [Genesis 2:23 (NIV)] Later it is written that, “Adam named his wife Eve, because she would become the mother of all the living.” [Genesis 3:20 (NIV)]

instinct. In this way she claims her identity/name as a personal expression of herself as a new being. Heggie uses a change in musical texture from polyphonic to monophonic (m. 14 and m. 18) to highlight Eve's philosophical musings.



Example 15. *My Name*. Texture change, mm. 16-18.

Heggie has commented in the past on his usage of this technique in other songs, and offers:

It is a deliberate musical and theatrical choice. Just as in the opera (Dead Man Walking) there were times when the music just stopped and there was a single a cappella line or spoken line. It suddenly just jolts you into a different place and theatrically that is a very important thing to be able to do, and to have at your disposal.<sup>189</sup>

During the course of "My Name" Heggie introduces two additional themes, Theme A2/Eden and Theme B/Growth:

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<sup>189</sup> Carolyn E. Redman, "'Songs to the Moon': A song cycle by Jake Heggie from poems by Vachel Lindsay" (D.M.A. diss., The Ohio State University, 2004), 62-63.



Example 16. *My Name*. Derivative Themes A1/Eve and A2/Eden, mm. 7-8.

These themes serve the purpose of providing unity and structure both within the song and the cycle as a whole. The form of “My Name” is ternary and can best be illustrated by the table below.

“My Name”					
Form	A	Transition*	B	(T)	A
Measure	1	30	52	68	77

\*Hereafter (T)

Table 1. *My Name*: Analysis of Form.

Eve as a character in this cycle is written with the operatic pictorialness of one whose story simply must be brought to life. In a manner reminiscent of a volatile teenager<sup>190</sup> she wrestles with her feelings of disdain, frustration, and outrage during this soliloquy, and Heggie offers a wide vocal range as well as significant shifts in dynamic level to illustrate this emotional storm. As we experience her story, it becomes clear that Eve in this song cycle is not a blanched, docile,

<sup>190</sup> Adam and Eve have traditionally been viewed as adolescents. Norris notes that, “The Rabbis argued that Adam and Eve were created fully in their prime, which is thought of as the age of twenty...” and that their story is a narrative of “...adolescent love, of the first perilous, blissful encounter with adult sexuality, with all its attendant fret and misunderstandings, the prevalence of emotion over reason, of sex over common sense.” (Norris, *Eve: A Biography*, 129).

humble simpleton, but rather a red-blooded modern woman with strong ideas, penetrating questions, and accomplished powers of perception. Here Eve does not see God as a supreme being who necessitates obedience, let alone subservience. She sees him instead as an “old man” - a clear degradation. In “Listen” (no. 4) she will go even further with this idea, equating being “like God” to simply being old and having a penis. Moreover, God is not the only male to provoke her contempt. Although she experiences some camaraderie with Adam due to the fact that he is also an orphan, she ultimately views him simply as one of the “couple of men” who made her, and indeed the one who will eventually rape her. She openly questions the story she has been told about her creation/birth singing, “Oh did he?” (mm. 28-29) in response to the idea that God made her out of Adam’s rib. Having been told that God also made Adam, Eve meditates on this idea by repeating it. She ultimately decides that she is being sold a party-line by these two men. Eve is being asked to simply accept the story of her creation, and this provokes fiery outrage. Emotionally it spurs her to claim her name and identity, and to embrace her flaws. Musically it inspires the building drama of a chromatically rising bassline (mm. 30-35) and the first of four key changes (m. 38).

It is significant that upon arrival in the new key we do not encounter a tonic chord. Eve asserts that her children will know her as their mother, and her words are strong in their conviction. The accompaniment, however, acknowledges her powerlessness. As with the opening, the key signature merely provides a given set of pitches rather than firmly establishing a new key. Rather than arrive on the tonic of a new key in m. 38 we are given a c minor chord, and an immediate move to E dorian in m. 39. Indeed, this entire transitional section (mm. 38-52) appears to be playing with the idea of moving to E as a tonal center, and then away from it.

Musically Heggie is mirroring Eve's emotional tumult. The harmony toys with the listener, utilizing first G sharps, then G naturals; a C sharp triad, then a C natural triad. It is significant that we find ourselves in musical transition during this section of the poem. Here Eve vows that her children will know her as their mother in order that they might never feel the pain she does. Musically Heggie seems to be reminding her that she is powerless, and that this is a hope rather than a certainty. Dramatically she explores the distasteful labels that have been assigned to her—"amnesiac" and "nymphomaniac"—until in mm. 48-51 she attempts to take control with "ME!," a musically augmented Theme A1/Eve. It is also significant that this moment of control brings us confirmation that we, upon changing keys in m. 52, are now firmly in E Dorian. Harmonically the section created between the first and second key changes has served as transitional. Now, with this second key change at m. 52 we find ourselves at the bottom of a musical and emotional ladder.

Eve begins searching for the creation/birth story she can attach to her name, and asks rhetorical questions about the experience she cannot remember. She asks, "What did Adam say when I was made, and did he whimper?", "What did God say, and was it a mutter?", "What did I say, and was it a scream?" and finally, "What did my mother say (if she actually did exist), and was my name spoken with her last breath?" Interestingly all of these questions suggest pain, rejection, or death. There is an amplification of emotion enhanced by Heggie's chromatically ascending bassline as Eve moves from the belief that it caused Adam great pain to "birth her" to the fact that God did not care enough about her to make a substantive sound (instead merely a mutter) and indeed was violent with her from the first moment ("slapping" her into shape), to the climax of this section (m. 65) where Eve offers that she did not willingly become one body with

her new husband, but rather was sexually assaulted by him.<sup>191</sup> The energy and momentum of the musical climb to this pinnacle point does an about-face in m. 69. In this transitional section the harmonic motion slows and we find a sense of musical clarity and repose. This change is fostered by a significant shift in the poetry. For the past sixteen measures Eve has been wrestling with guilt inspired by the thought that she might be responsible for pain, disgust, and violence. With the pickup to m. 69 we arrive at the greatest source of that guilt: that perhaps she is being told a lie by the men to spare her the real story. Perhaps she caused the death of her mother as a result of being born. Heggie uses rolled chords in mm. 74-75 to evoke a sense of reverence for the image of Eve's dying mother who names her out of love with her last breath. Again the primitive sound "hum" appears as Eve moans mournfully for her mother and then honors her death with a repetition of her dying breath, the "Eve" theme.

The musical score for 'My Name' shows a piano-vocal duet. The vocal line begins with a melodic line in G major, followed by a sustained note on 'Eve.' The piano accompaniment consists of sustained notes and chords. The vocal line features a 'hum' and the word 'Eve.'

Example 17. *My Name*. Death of Eve's mother, mm. 74-76.

<sup>191</sup> It is interesting that Eve "wonders" if she screamed as she was raped by Adam. That idea would seem to imply that she was unable to give consent as she was still not fully conscious, therefore supporting the assumption that copulation happened only moments after her creation. It is also significant that Littell chooses to follow this recollection of rape with the image of her mother at the time of her birth, a poetic moment seemingly akin to curling up in a fetal ball after trauma.

It is significant that it is the image of her dying mother (the only other woman she can relate to) and the feeling of tremendous personal guilt and helplessness that accompany it which inspire both our final key change (m.77) and the only moment of *ff* in the entire cycle. The poem in its original form utilizes all capital letters, but in the musical score “What are they trying to tell me with their stories?” is italicized. Either way, this sentence, which is ripe with guilt and frustration, is musically marked as being of primary importance when Heggie chooses it as the most dynamically significant; a statement weightier than such hardships as childbirth pain or a cry of woe for all mankind.

We understand that this cycle and its poetry is a personal emotional journey for Eve; one where she seeks to assuage her tremendous sense of guilt. Guilt about her mother, her choices, her husband, her God, her children, and ultimately the whole of mankind and the struggle between good and evil. Eve feels outrage, disbelief, frustration, and above all, vulnerability. She voices this by pointing out her nakedness not once, but three times in a row stating, “I am allowed no clothing,” “I am allowed no shame,” and “I have nothing to wear...”<sup>192</sup> In the end, however, she asserts her independence by insisting she will rise out of the hardship triumphant. She still has control over her name, and therefore her being and her choices. The song closes with its final “hum” - a sound now motivated by the feeling of resolve Eve has arrived at in her journey - and the “Eve” motive, both which recall the opening of the song. It seems that as long as Eve has her name that will have to be enough for her. She will look to no one but herself for truth and guidance. It is in this final line that we first understand that Eve will ultimately do as she wishes, even when that involves things which are forbidden.

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<sup>192</sup> “For the Israelites of the Yahwist period, nakedness, including the uncovering of genitalia, had strong connotations of public humiliation. The exposure of normally hidden parts of the body were often included in the punishment of criminals...” (Norris, *Eve: A Biography*, 27).

## 2. Even-ing:<sup>193</sup>

(Vocal Range: D4 to A-flat5)

in the evening<sup>194</sup>

I am at peace  
in the evening

I hear  
everything  
more clearly  
everything

to the hearer  
all the world  
does sing  
with a ringing  
and a  
quicken<sup>195</sup>

overhead  
the birds  
wheel and turn  
overhead  
the setting sun  
reddening  
no longer burns

at the water's  
edge a wind  
brushes by me  
with a susurration:  
grass and leaves

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<sup>193</sup> The title of the poem was changed to “Even” in the musical score. (Jake Heggie, *Faces of Love: The Songs of Jake Heggie, Book 1*, 47).

<sup>194</sup> It is interesting to note that the actual “evening scene” in the Bible takes place after both Adam and Eve have eaten the fruit. It is written, “Then the man and his wife heard the sounds of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day,\* and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden.” [Genesis 3:8 (NIV)] \*The CBC notes that Septuagint, an ancient translation of the Hebrew Bible into Greek, “correctly interprets this as ‘in the evening’ towards sundown when the heat of the day is cooled by the evening breeze.” (Davidson, *Genesis 1-11*, The Cambridge Bible Commentary on the New English Bible, 42).

<sup>195</sup> It should be noted that the term “quicken” is used both in this instance and in *The Wound* (no. 7) where it describes the feeling of early fetal movements. The fact that it is used here seems to communicate that Eve experiences Eden as “coming alive” just as she later will her first child.

flowers glow against  
the darkening trees  
eyesight and the light  
both go

every evening  
the forest darkens  
In the evening  
my senses  
sharpen

I have  
no peace at night

I have no peace at night.

“Even” is a song that presents multiple dualities. The poem details a passage from one point in time (evening) to the next (night) and Eve shares that while she feels “at peace” in the evening, she has “no peace” at night. Heggie uses an intriguing double tonal scheme to illustrate this shift. The accompaniment seems to simultaneously evoke the key of E flat and G phrygian, as the first four eighth notes (part of the ostinato which is a unifying element throughout the song) are G-A flat and D-E flat. The bass in m. 3 and m. 8 seems to steer us toward E flat with a DO-SOL movement (from E flat to B flat), while the vocal line heavily emphasizes G as the root of a phrygian mode.<sup>196</sup>



Example 18. *Even*. Double tonal scheme, mm. 1-4.

<sup>196</sup> It is interesting to note that there is a chromatic third relationship (M3) between these two keys, as the interval of a third is in itself a theme featured in the cycle (Theme E/Experience).

This blending of tonal centers seems to evoke the shift from the last moments of sun to the onset of darkness, and it is a satisfying moment when at m. 42 (section B) we arrive in E phrygian—thereby finding harmony as the sun sets. Even more intriguing is the recurrent F in the bass (also seen in the above Example 18) which, although it appears as a curiously unrelenting presence throughout the song, has no early harmonic functions<sup>197</sup> beyond providing color in the ostinato. It is not until the two subsequent songs [“Good” (no. 3) and “Listen” (no. 4)] reveal that the tonal center of F is designated as the snake’s tonic pitch in the cycle that we understand the persistent F in the bass of “Even” to alert us to the fact that the snake is lurking in the shadows of the Garden (watching Eve) as night falls.

Heggie has said that in setting “Even” he pictured, “...the young Eve by a brook in Eden at sunset,”<sup>198</sup> and he does much throughout the piece to evoke the feeling of being outdoors during this twilight time. As we experienced in the previous song “My Name” (no. 1), it is more difficult to feel the downbeats in “Even” as a result of the fact that sustained notes cross over barlines and entrances evade the downbeat.<sup>199</sup> Heggie uses opposition, such as rit./a tempo or poco rit./push ahead, in his tempo directions to create a feeling of animate undulation which seems a fitting musical illustration of the poetic idea that the night is alive and “breathing.”

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<sup>197</sup> Later it will act as V, aiding in the transition to *Good* (no. 3) which begins with B flat as its tonal center.

<sup>198</sup> Jake Heggie, *Faces of Love: The Songs of Jake Heggie*, Liner Notes, 10.

<sup>199</sup> In this way Heggie again owes a debt to French music. Jim Samson notes that, “despite an obvious diversity of procedure, there has been a general tendency for French composers to avoid the strong accents of German music either by means of a metrical and rhythmic flexibility analogous to the spoken language or by evenly flowing figurations whose measured pulses avoid firm accentuation.” (Samson, *Music in Transition*, 35).

The form of “Even” is ternary as seen in the table below:

“Even”				
Form	A	(T)	B	A
Measure	1	31	42	60

Table 2. *Even*: Analysis of Form.

In section “A” Eve states that she is at peace in the evening; during the transition she specifies what she sees in the sky (birds and sun), which is illustrated by the higher tessitura of the vocal line. The dynamic level of this song is largely *piano* throughout, fostering a sense of intimacy—as if you are having a private conversation where Eve is baring her soul to you. The one moment of contrast appears in m. 28 where a *f* marking is used to propel us into the transition, supporting not only the voice in a higher tessitura, but the excitement inherent in the text “ringing and quickening.” Section B offers opposition with Eve’s attention turning to a lower level of vision (the water’s edge) and the tessitura and dynamic level dropping accordingly. Although sections A and B possess different vocal lines the accompaniments share similarities including the R.H. eighth-note figures and syncopated L.H.

Throughout the poem Littell uses visual imagery to communicate the beauty and vitality of the Garden. He lulls with repetition of both words and phrases such as “in the evening,” “everything,” and “overhead,” and creates rhymes in multiple manners with words such as “evening,” “everything,” “sing,” “ringing,” and “quickening,” along pairings such as “leaves/trees,” “eyesight/light,” “both/go,” and “darken/sharpen.” These repetitions and rhymes act as unifying elements throughout. The highlight of the poem, however, is his recurrent use of the

intimate [ʃ] sound and the onomatopoetic effect of words such as “bruSHes” and “susurraTION.” Heggie takes the opportunity to employ classic text-painting in mm. 51-52 when the piano imitates the voice and provides the “susurration” or whisper/murmur. It is significant that Littell chooses the phrase “eyesight and the light both go” to describe the movement from evening to night, as the words evoke a sense of abandonment and vulnerability. Likewise, the contrast between A sections is significant: Heggie uses the same opening material with which Eve first expressed that she was “at peace” to now express that she has “NO peace.” In fact, the phrases “I am at peace” (mm. 9-11) and “I have no peace” (mm. 79-81) use exactly the same pitches and an almost identical rhythm.

Finally, as the song comes to a close, it is important for the singer to note the use of an elongated rhythm for the word “night” which closes the final two phrases. Heggie treats these final moments of Eve’s verbal offering as moments of sustained sound evocative of the primal “hum,” but now featuring a vulnerability via open vowel sound and therefore a dropped jaw and open lips.

### 3. Good:

(Vocal Range: E4 to G-sharp5)

Good  
Morning  
Whoever you are.  
Good morning.  
Do you have a name yet?  
Let me name you.<sup>200</sup>  
It must be the right name  
So I don't  
Forget.

What  
Shall I name you?  
What  
Is your name?  
I have not  
Eaten yet.  
Are you slow  
Or fleet?<sup>201</sup>  
Are you obedient?  
Are you  
Good to eat?

Almost  
Everything is good to eat.<sup>202</sup>

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<sup>200</sup> In Genesis it is Adam who names the animals. It is written, “Now the Lord God had formed out of the ground all the wild animals and all the birds in the sky. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds in the sky and all the wild animals.” [Genesis 2:19-20 (NIV)]. Of the naming, Norris points out that, “Naming can imply many things—possibly even that Adam had intercourse with the animals—but in the Jewish bible it usually means lordship or possession...animals are to be dominated, not venerated. Adam asserts his authority over the animals, but feels no special bond with them.” (Norris, *Eve: A Biography*, 1).

<sup>201</sup> This phrase was changed to “Are you fleet?” in the musical score. (Jake Heggie, *Faces of Love: The Songs of Jake Heggie*, Book 1, 53).

<sup>202</sup> It is apropos that Littell chooses the words “good to eat” as they are identical to the those written in some versions of the Bible about the forbidden fruit. Note the following passage: “The woman saw that the tree was beautiful [pleasing to the eye], that its fruit was good to eat [for food], and that it would make her wise.” [Genesis 3:6 (EXB)]. Additionally it bears specifying, as Norris writes, that the knowledge God wished to keep from Adam and Eve by forbidding they eat from *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil* seems to have be moral knowledge, the capacity for making ethical choices. Since they were given no explanation for the taboo, obedience to God’s command implied blind acquiescence rather than the informed choice on which morality depends. (Norris, *Eve: A Biography*, 27). The CBC adds, “The view taken here is that..the phrase *good and evil* is best taken as a Hebrew idiom whereby opposites are used to convey the idea of ‘everything’ ...*the knowledge of good and evil* forbidden to man, therefore, is the totality of knowledge.” (Davidson, *Genesis 1-11*, The Cambridge Bible Commentary on the New English Bible, 35).

Good morning.  
 If I could  
 I would eat the world  
 Because it's  
 Good.

Opening in the key of B flat major, “Good” provides a diatonic freshness we have not felt thus far in the cycle. As an antithesis to the dark night we left in “Even” (no. 2), Heggie offers this morning the tempo instruction “...with a lilt,” and includes an influx of staccato markings in the accompaniment with the performance instruction “*lightly*.”



Example 19. *Good*. Opening, mm. 1-5.

In addition to the revisited tonal center of B flat, “Good” contains three factors which recall “My Name” (no. 1) and in this way conveys an innocent simplicity reminiscent of the cycle’s opening: 1) an accompaniment comprised almost entirely of parallel octaves; 2) the vocalized primitive sounds of “ah” and “mm”; and 3) the fact that the topic of name is again at the forefront of the poem. In “Good” the impetus for the primitive sounds is two-fold. First, contemplation (mm. 14-19) as Eve meditates on the problem of finding the right name for each animal; second, sounds expressing the satisfaction of real, or imagined, satiation (mm. 39-41 and 49-50). Furthermore, while the act of “naming” as a measure of one’s significance is a recurring theme in the cycle, Littell again employs the literary technique *leitwortstil* by repeating both the words “good” and “name” throughout “Good.” In this way Eve is able to link her own situation to that

of the animals, seeking clarity in her own situation through information, and therefore control, gained in theirs. The intention (or subtext) of each question or statement rings through with clarity. When she voices: “Do you have a name yet?” she is asking, “Were you like me or were you born to parents who gave you a name?”; “Let me name you.” (Informing she will step into the role of their mother); “It must be the right name...” and “What shall I name you?” (Asserting that she takes this role seriously and is committed to providing the animals with what she was not given); and finally “What IS your name?” (Sharing that her name was the sound of her creation, and was inherently “meant for her.” She will now try to do her best to find the name that was truly meant for each animal in return). This idea is significant in that she identifies with the animals and respects them as equals rather than subordinates.<sup>203</sup> It is also significant in that it is foreshadowing.

“Good” is written in AA ' BA" form illustrated in the table below:

“Good”							
Form	A	(T)	A'	(T)	B	A"	Coda
Measure	1	14	19	23	29	38	46

Table 3. *Good*: Analysis of Form.

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<sup>203</sup> It is interesting to note that Littell is not the first writer to explore the idea of Eve naming the animals. The same situation occurs in Fauré’s *La Chanson d’Ève* (poetry by Charles van Lerberghe.) Also, in 1985 a one page essay by Ursula K. Le Guin appeared in *The New Yorker* entitled “She Unnames Them.” “Eve begins this little tale by unnamning all the animals, wild and domestic, slicing away generic names and their Linnaean qualifiers as well as the pet names of dogs, cats and parrots. Without the names that stood as barriers between her and other species, Eve finds that animal tears, desires, smells, and warmth are like hers; and that, as a result, the hunted can no longer be distinguished from the hunter. The effect is so empowering that she gives her own name back to ‘Adam’ and along with it the remaining remnants of hierarchy it contains.” (Jansen and Mariner, Review of *She Unnames Them*, by Ursula K. LeGuin, *The Radical Teacher*, no. 36 (1989): 33, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20709635> (accessed February 18, 2013).

In “Good,” despite the fact that we are reminded often of Eve’s prelapsarian innocence, we also see the first signs of impending sin. To begin, Eve’s focus on herself as both an equal and a surrogate parental figure to the animals spurns her self-awareness. She is hungry. At the pickup to m. 24 we experience a poetic and musical shift. For the first time Eve’s attention turns inward, away from the animals, to her own needs, and Heggie accentuates this shift by changing the texture from the otherwise constant parallel octaves to arpeggiated, alternating E flat and B flat chords. Being that the chord roots are a P4 apart, one cannot help but wonder if the listener is being set up for the quartal harmony of “Listen” (no. 4). Indeed, Eve’s hunger serves as the poetic connection between “Good” and “Listen” (no. 4). In the former it is for food; in the latter for knowledge. Furthermore, it becomes clear in “Good” that it will be easy for Eve to take an animal into her confidence. Therefore, it does not require a far stretch to understand how her upcoming conversation with the snake might occur.

In “Good” the vocal line is often disjunct, with large leaps illustrating Eve’s unbridled excitement (ex: high F sharp in mm. 17-18 “ah”) that quickly shift to more pensive moments, and therefore lower pitches (ex: lower octave E in m. 19 “mmm”). The extreme dynamic fluctuation and rhythmic syncopation used throughout are likewise emblematic of Eve’s emotional shifts. The vocal line ultimately has the contour of peaks and valleys pictorially evocative of one’s heartbeat, a suitable visual in preparation for “Listen” (no. 4) which introduces a shot of adrenaline as the snake appears with his offer. Heggie employs classic text-painting with his tempo markings for the questions “Are you slow” (marked “slower”), and “Are you fleet?” (marked “faster”). With the onset of these questions we are reminded of the curious Eve from “My Name” (no. 1). She asks the animals if they are obedient, meaning not to her as a

human, but to God. In this way Eve questions whether or not she is the only “creation” with this requirement, and her meditation on obedience evolves into a thoughtful “mm”<sup>204</sup> before she states that, “Almost Everything is good to eat.” In using the word “almost” she shares with the animals that she is forbidden one fruit. Eve continues to explore the idea of her obedience with her final telling sentence, “If I could I would eat the world Because its Good.” The words “if I could” are illustrative of both the restrictions God has placed on her and her contemplation of disobedience. The words “I would eat the world” are intriguing because one does not “eat the world,” but rather learns about and experiences it. Thus, a clear reference to her desire for knowledge is provided. Lastly, the words “Because it’s Good” make certain the fact that Eve longs to obtain the forbidden knowledge. So full of meaning, in fact, is this sentence that Heggie allows it to stand by itself, unaccompanied. Eve is emotionally ripe for her meeting with the snake, and a song that seemed so innocent sees the first seeds of sin sown.<sup>205</sup>

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<sup>204</sup> In my interpretive opinion this “mm” in mm. 39-41 should be sung as an “oo” or [u] which gradually becomes [ɔ] as you approach the word “Almost.”

<sup>205</sup> There are two additional aspects to these seeds of sin that are present. First, it bears mentioning that in this song Eve is concerned with naming the animals correctly, “So I don’t forget” (mm. 12-14). The idea that it is important to remember pervades the cycle. In the opening song Eve regrets that she cannot remember (referring to herself as an “amnesiac”; here she doesn’t want to forget; and we will find in “The Wound” (no. 7) that her feelings have reversed. There she wills her unborn child to “forget” in order to be born in a state of purity. It is undoubtedly her own sin she longs for the child to “forget.” Second, Heggie employs the tritone by using B flat lydian as the tonal center for mm. 38-43. It seems meaningfully placed in the vocal line (m. 40) as Eve ponders “eating,” foreshadowing (as the tritone historically does) evil and the sin she will ultimately commit.

#### 4. Listen:

(Vocal Range: C4 to G-sharp5)

Its entire body ripples back and forth  
like a sentence, fascinating.

Do you want to be like God?<sup>206</sup>

How do you mean?  
Be old and have a penis?  
I don't think so. No.

Do you want to be like God?  
You know what I mean.

Yes. I do.

My entire body ripples up and down  
like a story.<sup>207</sup> I am listening.

Like “Good” (no. 3), “Listen” recalls the cycle’s opening “My Name” (no. 1) in multiple ways. First, the vocal line of “Listen” begins with both the primitive “hum” and Theme A/Nostalgia. Additionally, it is written in F dorian, which presents an intriguing duality: the modal aspect, already understood to be an allusive reference to prelapsarian innocence; and the pitch F. If it is not clear already, one certainly comes to understand by “Snake” (no. 5), written in F minor, that Heggie has chosen that pitch as an identifying feature of the snake.

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<sup>206</sup> In *City of God*, a monumental analysis of the events in the Garden of Eden written between AD 412 and 427, Church Father (Saint) Augustine notes that, “Disguised as the serpent, ‘the arrogant angel’ approached Eve first, ‘no doubt starting with the inferior of the human pair so as to arrive at the whole by stages, supposing that the man would not be so easily gullible...’” (Norris, *Eve: A Biography*, 191). Conversely, feminist writer Sarah Hale published her *Women’s Record* in 1853 and argued that “Adam and the woman were together when visited by the tempting serpent, which confirms that ‘she was the spiritual leader, the most difficult to be won, and the serpent knew if he could gain her the result was sure.’ The woman took the decision to eat because of her ‘higher facilities of mind’, the ‘desire for knowledge and wisdom’, while the man ‘had no higher motives than gratifying his sensuous inclinations’.” (Norris, *Eve: A Biography*, 361).

<sup>207</sup> Although this sentence can be taken to mean that Eve has herself become like the snake, it also can have erotic connotations. For further discussion see footnote 179 “Although Eve was not always linked to the idea of a sexual temptress...”

“Listen” is based on a conversation between Eve and the snake,<sup>208</sup> and the musical form follows suit. It is written in “Double Variation” form as illustrated in the table below:

“Listen”							
Form	Intro.	A	B	A'	B'	(T)	A
Measure	1	5	9	20	29	41	45

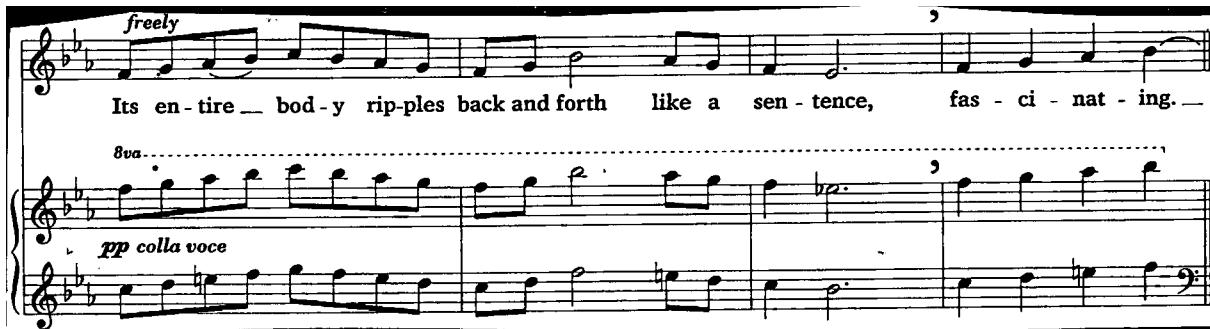
Table 4. *Listen*: Analysis of Form.

While both Eve and the snake have carefully delineated sections in terms of the poetry, the snake’s musical identity, illustrated in two constantly alternating forms, is pervasive. Littell equates the snake’s movement to the “ripple back and forth” of a sentence and the “ripple up and down” of a story. In turn, Heggie provides musical ripples by means of an undulating line of

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<sup>208</sup> Two significant facts about this setting necessitate examination. First, that the tempter who appears in Genesis 3 is a snake and second, that the conversation between the snake and Eve happens to be a private one that her partner Adam is not present for. Norris comments on both issues noting that, “In a community where women were expected to defer to masculine authority, it is probably significant that Eve appears to have been on her own when she encountered the serpent. Women who are left to wander alone will get into trouble is very much the theme of this section in the story. But why would they behave badly with snakes? Talking animals feature in many primitive stories, and the snake’s wily nature was a commonplace of Ancient Near East mythology, so he was the obvious choice as persuasive tempter. The story of the Garden of Eden may read as a folk tale that, among other things, explains why serpents crawl on their bellies and are generally disliked by human beings, but its survival in the Jewish Holy Books may suggest that this unsophisticated story had other resonances for nascent Israel. Lurking behind the woman’s encounter with the plausible serpent may have been priestly anxiety to warn women off the tempting Canaanite goddesses who were typically accompanied by snake avatars.” (Norris, *Eve: A Biography*, 22).

quartal harmony (Example 20) and a latin rhythm<sup>209</sup> (Example 21) evocative of sensuality and eroticism and featuring the “rubbing” of secundal harmonies to bring the snake to life.<sup>210</sup>



Example 20. *Listen*. Quartal harmony, mm. 5-8.



Example 21. *Listen*. Latin rhythm, mm. 10-12.

When Eve is speaking the snake hovers with a slither characterized by running lines of eighth notes in parallel fourths. When the snake is speaking the latin rhythm appears. The sexual

<sup>209</sup> In her discussion Kildegaard points out that this latin dance rhythm “evokes salsa, samba or rumba and the [sexual] associations we have with such dances.” (Kildegaard, “*Do You Want To Be Like God?*”: An analysis of Context and Text Painting in Jake Heggie’s *Eve-Song*,” 2012).

<sup>210</sup> In her International CMS Conference presentation from 2001 entitled “American art song in the new millennium” Irene Girton (Professor and Chair of the Music Department at Occidental College in Los Angeles) asserts that Heggie endows “Listen” and “Snake” with the greatest jazz elements in the cycle as a symbol of liberation, freedom and sexuality. She also poses the idea that “Heggie’s secundal harmony (in “Listen”) is a re-voicing of Ives’s quartal chords in his “The Cage” from 1904. This author refers you to Girton’s powerpoint slides which can be found at <http://www.slideserve.com/Lucy/american-art-song-in-the-new-millennium> (accessed November 11, 2012).

implications of this rhythm are supported by the composer's instruction "seductively" along with the intimacy of a *p* dynamic marking (mm. 9-19). It is with this juxtaposition of the modal, organum-style writing and the modern chromaticism that Heggie provides one of the most poignant musical moments in the cycle. Using this juxtaposition Heggie musically illustrates the meeting of Eve, in her modal purity, and the serpent, in his conniving chromaticism. This meeting is one of the most essential in all of *Eve-Song*. Using a latin dance rhythm as the serpent speaks, Heggie not only provides a foreshadowing of the sexual cognizance Eve will achieve after eating the forbidden fruit, but he signifies that Eve and the snake have begun a dance of temptation with one another. It is a dance that will lead Eve from prelapsarian innocence to postlapsarian experience in only a few steps.

During the conversation between Eve and the snake, he tries to appeal to her desire for knowledge by asking if she would like to "be like God." At first Eve pretends not to understand what he means, although in truth she does understand<sup>211</sup> and it is something she desires. Heggie illustrates the snake's growing persistence<sup>212</sup> by repeating the question as well as by increasing both the dynamic level (from *p* in m. 28 to *f* in m. 32) and the interval size for words "Do you" (in these same measures). The "oo" that follows at the pick-up to m. 39 shares the

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<sup>211</sup> In the bible it is written that Eve says to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.' In response the serpent says, "You will not certainly die. For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." [Genesis 3: 2, 3, 4, 5 (NIV)]

<sup>212</sup> As footnote 210 (above), in the bible the serpent merely refutes Eve's information. He does not, in fact, pressure her at all. After she hears what he has to say she sees that the fruit is attractive and eats it. It is also interesting to note that Littell omits any mention of the fact that Adam also eats the fruit.

characteristics of both a snake slither and a primal human wail.<sup>213</sup> Eve had at first given a negative, albeit untruthful, answer to the snake's question, which Heggie empowered by placing it on the downbeat of the measure and sustaining the word for two bars. In contrast, now Eve hesitates with the truth when she admits "yes" in mm. 42-44. Her response is now musically delayed to beat three of m. 42 and beat 4 in m. 43. This allows her time to absorb a major revelation—she has decided to be disobedient and go against God in eating the forbidden fruit. Littell provides the poetic fusion of Eve and the snake in the final line, "My entire body ripples up and down..." Heggie highlights this crucial moment when in m. 43 Eve enters on the snake's ending pitch of F-sharp and sings a vocal line evocative of the snake's movement. With this final statement we understand both that this decision to disobey sparks a ripple of chills in her body and that in venturing to go against God she has metaphorically become the snake.

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<sup>213</sup> Kildegaard makes a interesting point in her discussion when she states that it is unclear as to whether the dramatic vocalization in mm. 39-41 in sung by the snake or by Eve. It is true that these measures could be interpreted as the snake's final, primal moment of persuasion; they could also just as easily be interpreted as the swelling of emotion within Eve as she succumbs to temptation and to her own desire for the forbidden knowledge. (Kildegaard, "Do You Want To Be Like God?": An analysis of Context and Text Painting in Jake Heggie's *Eve-Song*," 2012).

## 5. Snake:

(Vocal Range: B3 to A5)

Snake,  
Is it true  
About the fruit?  
My intuition  
Tells me what you say about  
This fruit  
Is true.<sup>214</sup>

I'd like to find out, snake.  
I'd love to know.  
Go ahead in front of me  
Where I can see you.  
I will follow you.

Oh!

The snake is in the tree.  
Where I cannot see him.  
He is now the color of  
Shadows.

Very few things are  
As visible as I am  
When I'm clean.

When a thing is visible,  
It always means that the thing,  
The tree frog,  
Or that fruit,  
Means to be seen.

Visibility's  
A warning or  
An invitation  
And it never tells you

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<sup>214</sup> There is ongoing debate about whether the snake is meant to be seen as a pawn for Satan to speak through. The CBC agrees that snakes have long played a prominent role in ancient religious mythology, but asserts that the snake's role in Genesis bears no resemblance to a demonic figure that could be equated with Satan. "...here the serpent seems to have been demoted. He is merely one of the wild creatures that the Lord God had made, different only in that he is *more crafty* (verse 1)." (Davidson, *Genesis 1-11*, The Cambridge Bible Commentary on the New English Bible, 39).

Which.  
What's visible will either  
Feed you,  
Mate with you,  
Or kill you.  
Either way you gain  
Experience.

Here goes.

Sweet.  
Sour.  
Salty.  
Bitter.

And the taste of air,  
Of rottenness,  
Earth,  
And water.

Now I know.

“Snake” opens with a statement of Theme D/Temptation, an ostinato whose catchy groove has made this one of Heggie’s most popular stand-alone pieces with singers. This theme provides the musical backbone for a song that is rife with jazz elements such as syncopation, extended harmonies, swung rhythms, and vocal slides. Although transposed throughout the piece, Theme D/Temptation retains its rhythmic identity, and its presence creates a feeling of continuity and coherence as well as depicts the poetic idea that “temptation” is ever-present.

Example 22. *Snake*. “Theme D/Temptation,” mm. 1-2.

“Snake” has the most complex form of any song in the cycle, written in AABACA as illustrated in the table below:

“Snake”								
Form	A	(T)	A	B	(T)	A	C	A
Measure	1	16	22	30	45	50	66	71

Table 5. *Snake*: Analysis of Form.

The hip swagger of the snake ostinato/Theme D is playfully paired with Littell’s cool tongue-in-cheek opening words which juxtapose the phrases “true about the fruit” and “about this fruit is true”. However, it is his almost unyielding use of fricative sounds, specifically [f], [ʃ], [s], [v], [θ], [ð], [h], and [z], which bring the snake to poetic “life” throughout the song.<sup>215</sup> It is this use of fricative sounds, both voiced and unvoiced, that evokes a sense of the snake’s constant presence. However, because these are Eve’s words, they also serve as a reminder that Eve has made the metaphorical transformation into the snake.

In “Snake” Heggie utilizes jazz elements not only for the dangerous flavor of what was often referred to as “devil’s music” during the early twentieth-century, but as an aide to heighten the drama of Eve’s situation. For example, he uses syncopation and dotted rhythms to illustrate her halting nerves, apprehension, and distrust, and juxtaposes that with vocal slides, large jumps, and chromatic lines that illustrate Eve’s surges of surprise and excitement. We see such an instance in m. 17. Eve exclaims “Oh!” as the snake disappears. She has just requested that he

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<sup>215</sup> The words which feature these sounds, in order of appearance, are: snake, is, fruit, intuition, say, this, find, love, front, see, follow, shadows, very, few, things, visible, as, thing, means, that, the, frog, seen, visibility’s, invitation, never, tells, either, feed, experience, here, goes, sweet, sour, salty, taste, rottenness, and earth.

stay in front of her where she can see him, and in an instant he denies her. This shock, musically depicted by an octave leap in pitch and a dynamic jump from *p* to *f*, is infiltrated by intrigue as Eve's vocal line winds its way down a chromatic scale evocative of the snake's slither. With this vocalization she is yet again seen as having taken on the characteristics of the snake himself. That vocal line results in our first key change (m. 20), a half step modulation up that illustrates added excitement and anticipation. Indeed, movement in general is central to the song, and Heggie winds through a total of five keys in the course of it.

We began the song with a clear V-i movement in the bass of mm. 2-3 which solidly establishes the key of F minor, and Heggie uses chromatic movement on a larger scale in modulating to the aforementioned F# minor at m. 20 and G minor at m. 46. In the course of the F minor section, Eve ponders her own pale color against the green of the trees and the black of the shadows in the forest. She also contemplates the color of the forbidden fruit. Littell provides an intriguing line when Eve states in mm. 50-53, "Visibility's A warning or An invitation And it never tells you Which." Heggie follows this line with a musical comment that is equally as intriguing.



Example 23. *Snake*. Musical warning to Eve, mm. 53-55

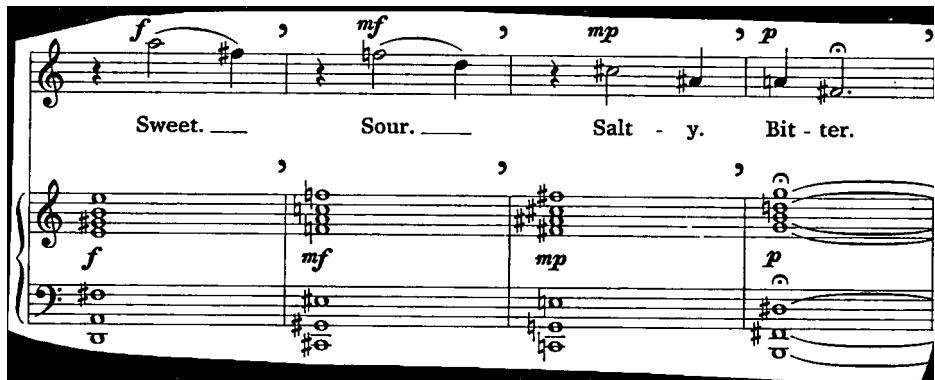
Kildegaard mentions in her discussion that the D in the R.H. accompaniment in this example serves as a “warning,”<sup>216</sup> and this begs the question, “Is D used as a warning elsewhere in the cycle?” Upon investigation there are curious moments that support this idea. The moments outside of “Snake” (no. 5) which seem most significant belong to “Even” (no. 2), “Good” (no. 3), and “Woe to Man” (no. 6).<sup>217</sup> Additionally, the F# in this “musical warning” begs to be appreciated as a nod to the F tonal area which serves to identify the snake himself. It is as if, as Eve stares at the fruit, the fruit ‘devilishly’ winks at her. We have arrived at the final few moments before Eve will make the decision that ultimately changes not only her life, but the lives of all mankind. It is the final showdown between Eve and the apple.

Eve has made her decision, and Heggie highlights her bite and the onset of forbidden knowledge in mm. 66 in three ways: 1) by moving to a C major key signature. This move serves the larger purpose of allowing for a musical blank canvas where Heggie employs the aural “shock” of polychords; 2) By creating a wedge shape using contrary motion (having the bass roots descend while the treble roots rise), thereby achieving the double effect of providing a distinct timbre for this moment of Eve’s “enlightenment,” and at the same time alluding to the increase in Eve’s knowledge (now that she has eaten the fruit) as the space between the chord roots increases; and 3) employing the descending thirds in the vocal line which have been labeled Theme E/Experience.

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<sup>216</sup> Anika Kildegaard, “*Do You Want To Be Like God?*”: An analysis of Context and Text Painting in Jake Heggie’s *Eve-Song*,” 2012).

<sup>217</sup> Specifically, the fact that D is featured in “Even” (no. 2) on the word “night” (a time when Eve feels no peace) found in mm. 77 and 83; that D is a prominent pitch in *Good* (no. 3) during the time (mm. 43-49) Eve contemplates the fact that “*Almost* everything is good to eat” and that if she could she would “eat the world because it’s good.”; that D is present in “Snake” (no. 5) as the aforementioned “warning” in mm. 51 (V.L.) and 53-55 (Accomp), but also the tense moment just before Eve bites the fruit, the word “goes” in m. 64; and finally, D as the initial wailing pitch in “Woe to Man” (no. 6) as well as the pedal point in the accompaniment for much of the first page.



Example 24. *Snake*. “Theme E/Experience,” mm. 66-69.

Heggie uses the dissonance of bitonality to illustrate the downside of acquiring this new knowledge, and just as Littell has assigned a new line for each “taste,” Heggie separates each layer of realization Eve gains from the other by employing breath marks to set each polychord apart. It is significant that each new “taste” becomes more intimate by way of decreasing dynamic levels which move from *f* in m. 66 to *p* in m. 69. Likewise, harmonic rhythm slows in mm. 69-84 as an illustration of Eve savoring and absorbing this forbidden knowledge. In addition to the dissonance of polytonality, Heggie utilizes the tritone, significant in its long standing connection to the devil, to heighten tension during the song in two different ways: 1) his use of B natural, rather than the B flat within the song (mm. 8 and 15); and his use of B natural as the final tonal center of the song (m. 71 to end). Eve has disobeyed and there is no going back. With a single bite she is corrupted. She tastes what has no taste, and her final words are speak volumes: “Now I know.”<sup>218</sup>

<sup>218</sup> Additionally, by so extensively highlighting Eve’s fall, Heggie provides a most striking musical dichotomy with the return of Theme A /Nostalgia (in variation) in mm. 81-82.

## 6. Woe to Man

(Vocal Range: E4 to B-flat5)

Woe to man  
Woe to man  
What can a man expect?<sup>219</sup>  
Think of all the riches, gifts,  
Woman brings in her train,  
Besides her obvious differences  
(Inside-out below the waist,<sup>220</sup>  
Bigger breasts, smaller brain)...<sup>221</sup>  
Can you think of any?  
Anything?  
She is nothing  
But trouble.<sup>222</sup>  
Nothing.

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<sup>219</sup> It is understood in biblical writing that a woman is a subordinate as she was created by God to be Adam's 'helper.' It is written "The Lord God said, "It is not good for man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." (Genesis 2:18, NIV).

<sup>220</sup> It is interesting here to note the thoughts of the Greek philosopher Aristotle (383-322 BC). Norris informs that he, "deduced from his study of natural history that the male of any given species was almost always superior to the female..." in his writings Aristotle asserts that men convert surplus blood into semen, but the inferior woman can only convert her surplus blood into menstrual flow. Therefore, "the female is as it were a deformed male." Also, he asserts that in generating a child in the womb the woman provides only the "material" whereas the man provides the Soul." (Pamela Norris, *Eve: A Biography*, 139). Indeed, in her essay McLaughlin notes that, "Thomas [Aquinas] follows Aristotelian biology in his assertion that the girl child represents a defective human being, the result of an accident to the male sperm..." (McLaughlin, Eleanor Commo, "Equality of Souls, Inequality of Sexes: Woman in Medieval Theology" in "Religion and Sexism: Images of Women in the Jewish and Christian Traditions", 217). Galen, the official doctor of the Imperial Court of Rome (AD 169-192) "cited the female lack of an external penis and facial hair as further proof of woman's inferiority." (Pamela Norris, *Eve: A Biography*, 140).

<sup>221</sup> Norris notes that, "The belief that women were physically inferior to men, biologically underdeveloped and closer to animals, inevitably affected the evaluation of women's mental capacities." (Pamela Norris, *Eve: A Biography*, 143).

<sup>222</sup> There is much documentation throughout history that women, left to their own devices, would run into trouble. This was thought to be the case even when a woman had a husband and her actions could therefore be supervised by a man. For example, Norris notes that Rabbi Eliezer, one of the more hard-line sages, on the topic of allowing women to remain idle if they had servants to do work for them said, '...idleness leads to unchastity', a hint of woman's tendency to sexual misbehavior that became a commonplace of medieval Christian thinking." (Pamela Norris, *Eve: A Biography*, 56). She also notes that sexual temptation was at the forefront of Early Church Father John Chrysostom's mind when he wrote, "What else is woman but a foe to friendship, an inescapable punishment, a necessary evil, a natural temptation, a desirable calamity, a domestic danger, a delectable detriment, an evil nature, painted with fair colours?" (Pamela Norris, *Eve: A Biography*, 125).

She is no thing<sup>223</sup>.  
Oh,<sup>224</sup> you haven't lived until  
A man has said that to you.

Wo-man  
Because she was made from man.<sup>225</sup>  
Woe to man  
Because he is born of woman.

*Cain.<sup>226</sup> Abel. Seth.  
Death. Death. Death.*

*Until I had daughters  
I was covered by my sons  
And when I had my un-named daughters,  
I could not control their brothers or their father...  
Eve's daughters of  
Eve's daughters of  
Eve.*

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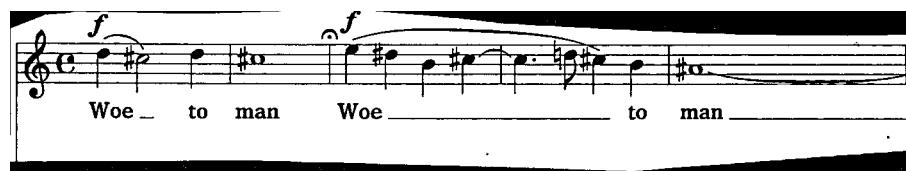
<sup>223</sup> Norris comments on the value of women historically noting, “At the root of biblical and rabbinic legislation about procreation was the ideal of inheritance as an indisputable line from father to son to grandson...Accordingly, boy children were valued above girls: at the birth of a boy, ‘all rejoice’, but at the birth of a girl, ‘everybody is upset’. Even more damning, ‘As soon as a male comes into the world peace comes into the world’, but a female ‘has nothing with her’. (Pamela Norris, *Eve: A Biography*, 63). In her essay Hauptman comments that, “It would be impossible to ignore in this discussion one of the blessings that an adult male Jew recites every morning, not because the prayer is so significant but because it, more than any other passage, has generated so much anger and scorn. The blessing reads: ‘Blessed be God, King of the universe, for not making me a woman.’ (Judith Hauptman, “Images of Women in the Talmud” in “Religion and Sexism: Images of Women in the Jewish and Christian Traditions”, 196).

<sup>224</sup> This exclamation was changed to “ah” in the musical score. The choice was likely made so that this “ah” would be unified with the added “ah”s at the end of the song. (Jake Heggie, *Faces of Love: The Songs of Jake Heggie, Book 1*, 66).

<sup>225</sup> The final three words of this line were changed to “born of man” in the musical score. (Jake Heggie, *Faces of Love: The Songs of Jake Heggie, Book 1*, 66).

<sup>226</sup> This author does not explore poetry that was excluded by Heggie as part of this song cycle, as is the case with the following nine lines.

“Woe to Man” opens with a theme very familiar by this point in the cycle, Theme A1/Eve. However, it is no longer used as a vehicle for innocent exploration of Eve’s name, but rather as a guttural wail which laments her newfound knowledge and bemoans the fact that with her sin she has tainted the lives of generations to come.



Example 25. *Woe to Man*. Opening, mm. 1-5.

With the vocal gestures of the first page of “Woe to Man” Eve seems not only to be weeping for mankind, but for herself that she is now jaded and scarred in her postlapsarian knowledge. The song, fundamentally in ABAA form, is comprised of two very different parts: a 21 bar vocalize-style lament which acts as an introduction, and the song proper that follows. The form appears in the table below:

“Woe to Man”								
Form	Intro	A	(T)	B	A	(T)	A	Coda
Measure	1	21	36	43	53	58	66	74

Table 6. *Woe to Man*: Analysis of Form.

It is in the song proper that Littell will use multiple instances of word play and soak the poem in verbal irony. As of the introduction we know only that Eve is in a state of personal turmoil. Fittingly, Heggie has chosen to mirror this emotional state in the music. The chromaticism and

large leaps of the vocal line are evocative of an anguished sob, and represent complete opposition to the naive Eve of earlier songs. Rhythmically Heggie plays with the idea of a tremor by assigning dotted rhythms to Theme C/Anxiety (mm. 5-6) and the leaping accompaniment lines that follow. The tonality of the entire first page might be completely unclear if we were to focus on the fact that D-sharp follows D-natural in the vocal line (mm. 3-4), that there is the oscillation (Theme C/Anxiety) between E and F in the accompaniment R.H. (mm. 5-6 and mm. 17-20), and that A-sharp appears as a prominent pitch in the vocal line (mm. 5-8). Even when we begin to understand that Heggie means for the tonal center to be D (D is used as the initial pitch, as an integral part of Theme C, and as a consistent pedal point), we continue to be thrown by the mode mixture of F natural/F sharp in m. 10. Clearly in her newfound knowledge Eve has been plunged into a state of emotional and musical chaos.

Harmonically D is functional, serving as the V of G mixolydian, our tonality at the onset of the song proper in m. 21. That, however, is not its primary purpose. It had already been mentioned that D has previously served as a warning in this cycle, and here we find no exception. Yet it is not Eve's lament, the somber warning, nor the initial moments of controlled musical chaos that form the larger body of the song. Rather, we are presented with the ultimate poetic and musical dichotomy: an epic wail for mankind followed by a whimsical deluge of verbal irony. Indeed, word play is in the driver's seat of this poem, and Littell is a master. He begins with the clever juxtaposition of "Woe to Man" and the contraction of that phrase into "Woman." In alluding to the fact that women are themselves man's greatest "woe" Littell gives a nod to historical misogyny, yet he goes on to twist the words to an ever greater degree when Eve notes that "Woman" has earned her name by being "made from man," and in turn man has

earned the warning “Woe to Man” because he has had (and will continue to have) the misfortune to be “born of woman.” Neither sex has a choice in the matter, and it seems the ultimate irony that women and men would in this way be found identical. Eve goes on to state that a woman is “nothing” and therefore “no thing,” the clever segmentation of the word mirroring the earlier implied contraction of phrase. Eve’s words throughout the poem drip with sarcasm, and in turn Heggie serves the poetry by infusing the song with the lightness and carefree attitude of popular cabaret style. The song is, in fact, a satire, drawing attention to the ego of man and the plight of ignoble women. Eve creates a caricature of herself as the cycle’s heroine with melismatic passages that might be lifted straight from a melodramatic operetta. The mature, postlapsarian Eve mocks her old naiveté with contrived vocal stylings, and Heggie utilizes extreme changes in dynamic levels as well as a higher tessitura throughout the piece both to illustrate dramatic expression and to mock the idea of classic femininity. Perhaps the most striking example of this is in mm. 74-76 when Heggie calls upon Theme E/Experience to lampoon Eve’s knowledge with vacuous sighs which offer a complete contrast to the previous song where the same theme highlighted the significance of her enlightenment.



Example 26. *Woe to man.* “Theme E/Experience” and “Theme A1/Eve,” mm. 74-77.

It is also significant that the final two notes in the vocal line (mm. 76-78) utilize Theme A1/Eve. This introspective musical moment transmits that Eve is indeed reflecting on her own self-worth although she has spent the song speaking about women in the larger sense.

Lastly, the fact that Heggie uses the influence of jazz in his writing has been discussed at length in this essay, and this song is likewise awash in such stylings. They are present in the form of syncopation, swung rhythms, chromatic bassline movement, mode mixture, vocal slides and falls, a vocal line imbued with the spirit of improvisation, and perhaps most significantly an accompaniment written in the style of stride piano. All of these elements serve not only to aid an atmosphere of counterfeit conviviality, but to evoke the style of the 1920's and 30's. In so doing Heggie shines the light of American history and women's flight for equality on the poem's misogynistic ideas.

## 7. The Wound

(Vocal range: E4 to G-sharp5)

The wound<sup>227</sup>  
Re-opened  
Opens  
The tomb<sup>228</sup>

Her womb  
Quickens<sup>229</sup>  
The woman  
Sickens  
And hungers  
Hugely

The world in her belly  
The sky in her head  
Limbs heavy  
She swells  
She swells

A drop of water<sup>230</sup>  
Will not hold  
Let it go  
Let go

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<sup>227</sup> Eve references the fact that she has had an initial “wound,” and that it has now been “reopened.” She can only be referencing her rape by Adam, committed just after she was created, but before she was fully conscious [discussed in *My Name* (no. 1)]. There is no doubt that the vaginal “wound” was created during this act of non-consensual intercourse, and is now “reopened” during the process of cervical dilation and childbirthing. The severity of the pain during the initial event can only be surmised, but the pain of this current event is historically linked to the Eve’s sinful eating of the forbidden fruit. In the bible it is written: “To the woman he said, ‘I will make your pains in childbearing very severe; with painful labor you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.’” (Genesis 3:16, NIV) Norris notes that there are colorful enhancements to this biblical passage in *Apocalypse of Moses* (a work which probably dates to the first century AD). In it God tells Eve that, “fearing death in childbirth she will cry out, ‘LORD, LORD, save me and I will never again turn to the sin of flesh.’ Even so God says, ‘you shall turn again to your husband’. Sexual desire is now built into the female psyche.” (Pamela Norris, *Eve: A Biography* (New York: New York University Press, 1999), 98).

<sup>228</sup> Littell opens this poem with a complex poetic phrase which provides much opportunity for interpretational debate. In my opinion he is referring to the birth of a child as an invitation for death, an idea which can be 1) rooted in the reality that childbirth itself could often be fatal for Israelite women, and 2) tied to a phrase found in *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, which Norris introduces in her book as “an apocryphal work that dates to around 190-175 BC: ‘Sin began with a woman,\* and thanks to her we all must die.’” (\*the use of ‘woman’ in the singular implies Eve) [Pamela Norris, *Eve: A Biography* (New York: New York University Press, 1999), 30-31]).

<sup>229</sup> The verb “quicken” is defined as: “to reach the stage of gestation at which fetal motion is felt.” [<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/quicken> (accessed February 18, 2013)].

<sup>230</sup> Refers to a rupture of the amniotic sac, a fluid-filled membrane surrounding and cushioning the baby.

Let go

Not yet

The new-born<sup>231</sup> baby

Will not let me

Let it go

Just yet.

What is already

In that head?<sup>232</sup>

Forget.<sup>233</sup>

Forget.

Forget.

In “Woe to Man” (no. 6) we saw Eve satirize her turmoil. Here, in the penultimate song of the cycle, Eve sings from a private and profound place as she meditates on the life she carries inside of her. However, there exists a parallel with the previous song in that both present moments when Eve speaks about herself in the third person. This similarity serves to bridge the two songs insofar as they both speak of Eve as an “Everywoman.” In “The Wound” this narrative mode is used to open the song. Kildegaard offers that Eve’s third person narrative

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<sup>231</sup> This text was changed to “new-formed baby” in the musical score. (Jake Heggie, *Faces of Love: The Songs of Jake Heggie, Book 1*, 69).

<sup>232</sup> In her essay Doyle ponders the idea that, “[A] child starts life in a symbiotic union with the mother in which the child has no separate identity but only an identity of ‘being part of the mother.’ (Doyle, Patricia Martin. “Women and Religion: Psychological and Cultural Implications” in “Religion and Sexism: Images of Women in the Jewish and Christian Traditions”, 29). Eve wonders aloud if the terms of her life have been relayed to her unborn child simply by virtue of the fact that the child will be born of her body.

<sup>233</sup> Eve wills her unborn child to “forget” even before the baby has the power to “know.” We understand then that she wishes for the child to be born innocently, unencumbered by her previous mistakes and sins. Schottroff notes that, “In the age of imperial Rome, the conceptions of women that in many cultures and religions were already misogynist became in a particular way even harsher...Eve becomes the embodiment of sin...” (Luise Schottroff, Silvia Schroer, and Marie-Theres Wacker, *Feminist Interpretation: The Bible in Women’s Perspective*, 227). It is a basic tenet of Catholicism that these “original sins” are passed down from Eve to all subsequent generations, a belief which inspires the need for baptism to take place as early as possible in a child’s life. The words of early Christian theologian Father Tertullian as he reminds women of their “tainted legacy” have been referred to in numerous scholarly biblical writings. “And do you not know that you are [each] and Eve? ...You are the devil’s gateway: *you* are the unsealer of that [forbidden] tree: *you* are the first deserter of divine law...*You* destroyed so easily God’s image, man. On account of *your* desert—that is, death—even the Son of God had to die.” (Pamela Norris, *Eve: A Biography* (New York: New York University Press, 1999), 196).

serves to highlight the fact that Eve is dissociating herself from the labor process that has begun.<sup>234</sup> Indeed, this would not be the first time in the cycle we have seen Eve cope with trauma in this way, first shifting focus away from her rape in “My Name” (no. 1) and then creating distance through mockery in “Woe to Man” (no. 6).

Of the opening phrase “The wound re-opened opens the tomb” Littell offers the following:

These are all situations I imagined, the very brutal aspects of sexual social relations between the sexes as human society took shape, the great difficulty of life, and of procreation and her great well of anger, all these things sparked me, or perhaps just showed up. The songs do traverse a stretch of time, from the bestiality and violence of rape as the norm, the physical apprehension of the primeval world, playful exploration of the elements of the myth, to the beginnings of a settled civil world, in spite of the horrendous process of creating human society. But we are still confronted constantly with extreme violence against women in all societies, so.... “The Wound” is about the dangers and physical processes and mind-processes to do with pregnancy and delivery.<sup>235</sup>

There are many complements to this song that can be found earlier in the cycle. For example, one can draw several parallels, both musical and poetic, between this song and “Even” (no. 2). To begin, Heggie employs a double tonal scheme here just as he did in “Even” with each voice suggesting a different tonic. In “The Wound” the accompaniment suggests E by means of its opening pedal (supported by the fourth below), while the vocal line suggests F sharp phrygian by using tonic and dominant pitches as its primary tones. Additionally, these are the only two songs in the cycle that employ time signatures (8/8 and 6/8 respectively) which result in a sense of lilting movement.

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<sup>234</sup>Anika Kildegaard, “*Do You Want To Be Like God?*”: An analysis of Context and Text Painting in Jake Heggie’s *Eve-Song*,” 2012.

<sup>235</sup> Philip Littell, email message to author, March 21, 2013.



Example 27. *The Wound*. Opening, mm. 1-4

In both cases Heggie is utilizing the time signature as an aid in text-painting, first in “Even” (no. 2) to illustrate the wafting evening breezes, and later in “The Wound” to suggest both a lullaby and the undulation of labor contractions.<sup>236</sup> In fact, Heggie employs numerous means of text-painting to depict Eve in the process of labor including: 1) the tempo instruction “*pushing* ahead little by little” (beginning at m. 22); 2) the rising vocal line when “she swells” as well as the descending vocal line illustrating “a drop of water” falling (the vocal line up to m. 32 seems to create a type of wave pattern); 3) the use of sixteenth notes and higher registration (at m. 26 both hands are in treble clef) to illustrate Eve’s anxiety, anticipation, and the pain of this “punishment”; and finally 4) dynamics which are subdued throughout the song but peak with the *f* marking at m. 27. during the height of her labor. All of these instances serve to create a large scale musical undulation which mirrors the contractions Eve is experiencing.

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<sup>236</sup> The change to 3/8 in m. 25 is significant in that it creates a “pause effect” to mark the moment Eve understands that labor is a long process - her water has broken, her contractions are painful, and still the baby does not come.

“The Wound” is written in ternary form as illustrated in the table below:

“The Wound”			
Form	A	B	A'
Measure	1	22	34

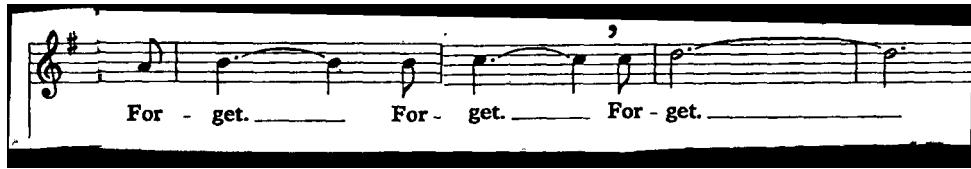
Table 7. *The Wound*: Analysis of Form.

Textually, as in “Even” (no. 2), Littell utilizes many traditional literary devices in “The Wound” including alliteration and assonance with phrases such as “hungers hugely” and words such as “wound,” “tomb,” and “womb”; rhyming words such as “quicken” and “sickens”; repetition of words or phrases such as “let it go,” “not yet,” and “forget”; and imagery in phrases such as “the womb quickens” and “the woman sickens.” Figures of speech appear as in the hyperbolic phrase “the world in her belly.” This phrase carries a double symbolic meaning first of hope for change and a better world, and second that the child Eve is carrying is her whole world in terms of importance. Likewise the phrase “the sky in her head” is used which illustrates the fact that Eve has great hopes for her unborn child and perhaps even herself.

The varied return of A in this song is particularly significant in that it reveals a reflective and poignant Eve. We encounter a deeply personal and pensive moment between Eve and her unborn child.<sup>237</sup> Theme A1/Eve is used in succession for the repeated “forget,” which recalls moments from “My Name” (no. 1) such as mm. 17-19. As stated previously, in the opening song Eve regrets that she cannot remember her creation/birth, referring to herself as an “amnesiac.”

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<sup>237</sup> Some might be tempted to interpret the drop of dynamic level and slowing of tempo to signal that the section beginning at m. 34 is post-childbirth. Littell comments that the baby has not been born, but is about to be. (Philip Littell, email message to author, March 21, 2013).



Example 28. *The Wound*. “Theme A1/Eve,” mm. 36-39.

Here in “The Wound” we find that her feelings have reversed. She now wills her child to “forget” in order to be born in a state of purity, without the “original sin” she has inflicted. It is interesting that the final “forget” (mm. 43-44) is assigned the pitch F-sharp as this happens to be the same pitch Eve sang when she first said “Yes” she wanted to be like God and would eat the apple (“Listen,” m. 42). This is the first moment that our human, fallible Eve expresses regret. As one would expect from an “Everywoman,” Eve does not want her child to suffer because of something she has chosen.

## 8. The Farm

(Vocal range: D4 to F-sharp5)

As I recollect  
It was more like a farm  
Than a garden.  
We all worked.<sup>238</sup>  
It was a nice farm.<sup>239</sup>  
Trees.  
Everything grew.  
Good soil  
And plenty of water.  
No, it didn't rain,  
We lived by the rivers.<sup>240</sup>  
The Tigris  
And the Euphrates.  
You might say  
That's where it all started.

This closing song highlights nostalgia for innocence lost. The poem is written in an easy, conversation style and, as with the opening “My Name” (no. 1), it seems certain that Eve is speaking to her own child/grandchild when recalling her life in Eden. The song is a simple yet enchanting through-composed piece fitting for the first time that we encounter a mature, grateful, and peaceful Eve. In it Heggie reflects musically on the opening song of the cycle, utilizing three of its themes to bring the cycle full circle. Although the vocal line evolves throughout the song, the featured themes, present in the accompaniment, provide unity throughout.

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<sup>238</sup> The Bible says, “The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.” It does not support the fact that Eve jointly worked the land. (Genesis 2:15, NIV).

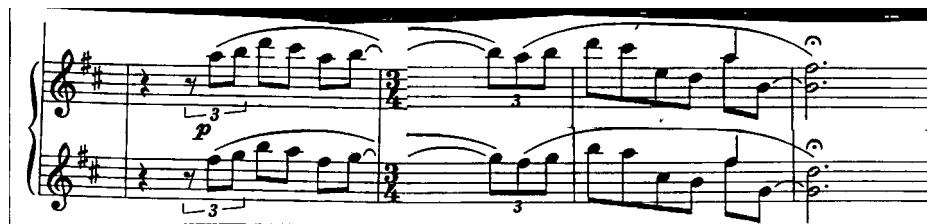
<sup>239</sup> Norris comments that, “The Eden story, with its well-irrigated garden, its fruit bearing trees and obedient animals, its suggestion of ease and harmony and, above all, immortality, records a nation’s dream, its passionate nostalgia for an existence at the vanishing point of memory, a paradisiacal state before history began.” (Pamela Norris, *Eve: A Biography*, 31).

<sup>240</sup> According to the Bible a river, after watering Eden, flowed from the Garden into four “headwaters”: Pishon, Gihon, Tigris, and Euphrates. (Genesis 2:10, 11, 13, 14, NIV).

The form of “The Farm” is illustrated in the table below:

“The Farm”				
Form	A	A'	(T)	B
Measure	1	9	24	28

“The Farm” opens with Theme A2/Eden and Theme B/Growth, and both are presented in a slightly augmented form in order to foster a sense of serenity and reflection. These themes are quickly followed in mm. 2-3 by Theme A1/Eve which is present throughout much of the song. Furthermore, Theme C/Anxiety makes an appearance in m. 23. It serves to signify that although Eve now recalls Eden as a peaceful home filled with contentment, there is more to the reality that meets the eye. Authenticity has lost its way as Eve looks back on Eden through the rose-colored glasses that the passage of time can so often provide. In response, Heggie ushers in a return of Theme A/Nostalgia, a return to the modality of innocence. This return begins as a fragment in m. 25, weaving between two phrases of the a cappella vocal line, and later blossoms into a full statement in mm. 28-31.



Example 29. *The Farm*. “Theme A/Nostalgia,” mm. 28-31.

Fittingly, he also reinstates the primitive and wordless hum to close the song, a sound which is now representative of Eve's meaningful communion with her own history, thus bringing the cycle full circle.

## Conclusion

Upon examination of *Eve-Song* certain key points become clear. Because Eve is a mythical and folkloric construct drawn from the everyday experiences and questions of people throughout history, she provides a rare opportunity to the singer. It is the opportunity to draw from one's own history and experience in creating the subtext needed to realize fully Eve's character both in the body of individual songs and in the cycle as a whole. In *Eve-Song* Littell offers a portrait of a young woman full of vitality who embarks on a quest for knowledge and understanding without fully digesting its perils. As Eve searches for her identity she struggles between fear and fury. She is weighted down by the idea that without parentage she might lack a proper tie to humanity. She worries there might be truth in the fact that men see her as "nothing." Eve has a ravenous desire for knowledge and validation that cannot be satiated. This is a journey we all can relate to in one way or another.

It is the goal of both Littell and Heggie that the singer bring to life a fully formed, truthful, and stimulating character in her portrayal of Eve. In turn, both celebrate the fact that the singer should take certain liberties in order to realize fully the character. Littell states that in writing "My Name" he offered, "an invitation to the singer and the composer to get creative and wild."<sup>241</sup> Heggie has often stated in interviews, and it bears repeating in this essay, that one of the most important aspects of performing his music is attention to bringing individuality and dramatic truthfulness to the songs. He is a composer who not only embraces the idea that a singer should follow their intuitive musical sense, but celebrates it. In *Eve-Song* Heggie supports Eve's journey with musical dualities. Her personal journey from prelapsarian innocence to

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<sup>241</sup> Philip Littell, email message to author, March 21, 2013.

postlapsarian sophistication and “knowledge” and finally nostalgia for her lost innocence is illustrated by the musical journey from modality and simple textures to chromaticism and jazz. It is fitting and significant that Heggie provides the singer an opportunity to bring individuality to the songs by employing a musical style that historically encourages such creativity. Heggie offers advice when it comes to bringing his jazz-based writing alive, saying:

What has influenced me most about jazz was the sort of freedom of line. What you see on the page is not what you hear. I think this is a very important aspect to the performance of my songs. It is not about a metronomic beat with everything falling on the right beat. It is about freedom of interpretation, pushing here, pulling there and being comfortable enough with the character and the style of the piece that you really make it your own.<sup>242</sup>

It is in wading through the historical propaganda and paying our respect to Eve though our desire to understand and identify with her that the singer can do just that with this cycle—make it her own. By identifying the dramatic and musical peaks of each song as well as stepping back and taking the opportunity to understand Eve’s journey from the beginning to the end of the cycle, the singer will be able to fully understand the woman she is to portray on stage. It is understood that singers must work from a subtext in order to offer a multi-layered performance, and Heggie’s use of primitive sound throughout the cycle provides yet another unique opportunity for personalization. Eve’s journey is the journey of every woman. A journey from childhood to adulthood, a course laden with hope and faith as much as it is with temptation and regret. Ultimately no one can answer the question of who Eve really is or what her intrinsic value might be except Eve herself. For every women, the situation is the same. In the end, women are worth what they believe themselves to be worth.

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<sup>242</sup> Carolyn E. Redman, “‘Songs to the Moon’: A song cycle by Jake Heggie from poems by Vachel Lindsay” (D.M.A. diss., The Ohio State University, 2004), 72.

In her book Norris cites a statement made by Angela Carter in *The Sadeian Woman*:

All the mythic versions of women, from the myth of the redeeming purity of the virgin to that of the healing, reconciling mother, are consolatory nonsenses', invented to obscure 'the real conditions of life', but the myth of Eve was developed to manipulate and control women rather than to console them, however reassuring the versions may have been for men...For over two thousand years, male commentators have plundered her history in an attempt to discover and pin down the nature of Woman, and in Eve's many faces we have a unique record of the male imagination at work, wrestling with the female other. But there is no longer any need for women to live under her shadow. Demystifying Eve—understanding where she came from and how her character evolved—is one way of leaving her behind, but the questions that still remain open for women are the riddles that men as well as women have confronted since the Garden of Eden. They are questions that each generation must ask anew as circumstances change and beliefs are readjusted. Who are we? Who do we want to be?...<sup>243</sup>

*Eve-Song* began with Eve as a mere child, and we leave her as an aging woman who is able to look back on her choices and actions with the wisdom and perspective of age, experience, and maturity. As is the case with all art, particularly a work like *Eve-Song* that provides an opportunity to cultivate a character while viewing her through a historical lens, it is certain that performers and audiences will continue to experience its resonance. It is my hope that the material presented in this paper will take the singer who embarks on the journey of *Eve-Song* to a new level of dramatic truthfulness. By taking the time to explore the poetic intention, the musical clues, and the thoughts of those responsible for these songs, singers will come to better understand Eve the heroine of *Eve-Song* and how they can best share her with an audience. The result of this process will undoubtedly result in a performance that is successful from a musical, literary, and artistic standpoint.

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<sup>243</sup> Pamela Norris, *Eve: A Biography*, 403.

For all of the singers who endeavor to find the truth in Eve in *Eve-Song*, of your portrayal of this heroine Heggie offers one final and essential piece of advice:

Don't judge Eve. Let her be real. Somebody who makes good and bad choices, but is essentially generous, fun, kind, enthusiastic...Find her as a real person. And trace that in the LINE of the songs and the LINE of the composition. And never ever oversing!!<sup>244</sup>

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<sup>244</sup> Jake Heggie, email message to author, March 21, 2013.

**Appendix A**  
**Email correspondence with Jake Heggie**  
**March 21, 2013**

Email correspondence with Jake Heggie  
March 21, 2013

With regard to your biography:

Q: No article yet has mentioned where your nickname Jake originated from during childhood.

A: My grandfather was John Stephen and my father was John Francis – they named me John but didn't want me to be Little John or John Jr or Johnny or most especially not Jack ... so they called me Jake from day one. (My mom had an Uncle Jake)

Q: Regarding the Schirmer competition, how many songs in total did you submit, and what were the two pieces that von Stade recorded for this submission?

A: I sent in three songs. "If you were coming in the fall" (recorded by Kristin Clayton); and "Barb'ry Allen" and "The Leather Winged Bat" (recorded by Flicka)

Q: Additionally, in terms of the prize, was it a printing of just the winning song? If so, how did the publishing contract for the three song books come about? The recording contract for "Faces of Love"?

A: Yes – just the winning song. All of the winning songs (I think there were seven?) were in one book. That's how I met Bill Holab at G. Schirmer – and he's the one who championed my songs and got the books published. Shortly after that, he left Schirmer and started his own business, Bill Holab Music.

With regard to *Eve-Song*:

Q: How did it come about that Schwabacher contacted you for the commission?

A: I met James (Jimmy) Schwabacher when I started working in the PR Dept at San Francisco Opera. I think I had to interview him for an article and we hit it off really well. He was a beloved member of the arts community in SF – he loved art song, cantata, opera, and young singers more than anything. That's why he created the Schwabacher Debut Recital series – to offer young singers a chance to give their first big recital in San Francisco following a summer at Merola. He was a founding member of the Merola Opera Program – and was its president for a long time. When I told Jimmy that I was a song composer, he was eager to hear my work. I played him some of my old stuff and he liked it. Around that time I had the opportunity to write a cycle ("Enountertenor") for countertenor Brian Asawa – my first big piece in a very long time, and the piece that led me back to songwriting. We had a reading of it at Jimmy's house, and much to my surprise, he said he wanted to commission a cycle for the series – and he was planning a recital for my friend Kristin Clayton. So he paid me \$500 and I asked Philip Littell to write new words

– it was my first-ever commission! The breakthrough pieces for me at that time, then, were *Enountertenor* (1995), *Thoughts Unspoken* (1995), and *Eve-Song* (1996).

Q: Who decided that the biblical Eve would be the topic for the commissioned cycle/how did that decision come about?

A: It was my idea. Just came to me as something I'd like to explore. The biblical Eve, but through a modern lens. I've always been a big champion of women and women's rights – and I wanted to create a three-dimensional picture of Eve: her struggles, her love, her passion, her naivete, her wisdom – Eve the mother and grandmother – the child. I also wanted to create a real showpiece for Kristin that would put her through her paces. Kristin has a lot of that nurturing, vulnerable, naïve-yet-knowing, sensual, earthy quality to her personality – and one of the most beautiful, soulful and connected voices I had ever heard.

Q: What made you feel that Littell was the writer to collaborate on the cycle with? Did Mr. Schwabacher have say in the topic or the choice of Littell?

A: I made the suggestion to Jimmy and he loved it. Philip had just experienced a big success as the librettist for *The Dangerous Liaisons* (composed by Conrad Susa) at the SF Opera in the fall of 1994. I was with Philip and Conrad a lot during that period – and it was the first time I'd seen an opera put together beginning to end. So inspiring. Since I was thinking of a very theatrical piece about Eve, I asked Philip. Kristin had also had a very small role in his opera – so he knew her.

Q: You have said "I talked to Philip about the idea of Eve looking back on her days in the Garden and he called me two days later and said, 'Well, I think I've written it.' He read me a couple of verses that were so beautiful, I was really moved. Then he faxed me eight poems, and a couple of them were epics. I couldn't believe anyone could be so fast and understand a character so clearly. It challenged me. I came up with some of the best music I've ever written." Is there anything else that comes to mind about the process of your collaboration?

A: It was just like that. We had discussed it for a little while and then he sent me the texts just as they exist. I was blown away – and it set my imagination on fire. He also raised the bar on the project! And I do think it was the best music I'd written at the time. It was pushing me into real arioso writing and storytelling (which had always appealed to me) – and the use of themes that carry through. I learned a huge amount from writing that piece.

Q: In my experience with the cycle I have come across many people who are offended by moments in the poetry considered blasphemous ("God damn it", "nymphomania" and reference to God's penis being some of the stand-outs). I was wondering if there were ever any concerns you (or for that matter Schwabacher or Clayton) had about that aspect of the poetry?

A: Absolutely not. We were interested in finding a fully formed, three-dimensional Eve. Not some mythological ideal. I have no interest in that. We wanted a flesh-and-blood person who seems real and powerful – not a victim, but somebody who is victimized. Like I said, I am a champion for women – and part of that means tearing down myths and stereotypes. I never heard a single word about blasphemy. Lots of laughs about the word penis ... but so what? It's funny! Eve seems real and naïve and wonderful. Not just tragic or a vessel to be used.

Q: Why did Kristin Clayton not sing the selections from *Eve-Song* on the “Faces of Love” recording?

A: I had to make tough choices for that CD. And pragmatically, I knew that the only way tracks would get any attention or get played was if a super famous singer recorded them. Sylvia loved those tracks and wanted to do them, and she was a big star. She also recorded them gorgeously. Kristin was understanding.

Q: Does an audio or video recording of the premiere of the cycle exist so as to document some of Clayton’s interpretive choices?

A: It exists somewhere – and I’ll bet Kristin has a copy she’d burn for you or loan you. No video, but definitely a CD. We changed a few things at the premiere that never made it into the score. I can give you her contact info.

Q: Do you have the original eight poems Littell faxed you in order to observe the evolution from written inception to final musical texts? I’m particularly interested in Littell’s line division, use of repeated words or phrases, and unusual use of capitalization.

A: I think they have been lost, sorry to say. But I’ll bet Philip has them. I don’t know how to contact him, but I’m sure you could track him down on the internet.

Q: Were you inspired by anything in addition to the situation and the text/character when writing these songs? To that end, there are a few parallels (poetic and musical) that can be drawn between Fauré’s *La Chanson d’Eve* and *Eve-Song*. Did that cycle play a part in your inspiration?

A: I didn’t know the Faure at all when I wrote these – though I have always loved his songs. Text, personality, motivation, emotion, location and the singer were all big elements in the writing. I was interested in the steady introduction of a jazz element in the pieces as I was writing – as Eve gains awareness and knowledge. I was definitely influenced by Kristin and her personality (she’s from the South – that’s where the humming comes from). Remember, too, that this was as I was getting to know the opera world – and a big transformation was happening for me personally: my move to San Francisco, coming out as gay, the passing of Johana Harris, singers suddenly interested in my work, the opportunity to live again in the field that means the most to me. I was exploding with energy, ideas, possibility – and immense gratitude for the opportunities to create.

Q: What motivated your choice to feature the primitive sounds “hum”, “oo”, “ah”, etc. in the cycle?

A: Not just Kristin’s southern roots – but the need to express something that goes beyond words. Something internal for which sound alone is the richest expression of the moment.

Q: Did Clayton have any input during the composition process?

A: She was incredibly enthusiastic and supportive. So as soon as I’d written something, I’d share it with her. But, just as I finished the piece, Kristin had her first baby and her voice went away. So we had to postpone the recital a couple of years – to 1998. The cycle just sat there unsung until she was ready. And when we went back to it, we made some changes – but the galley proofs for Schirmer were already done, so there was no time to put those changes in the score. (can’t remember what the changes were, but you’ll hear them on the recording of the premiere.)

Q: Of course I understand that you celebrate performer individuality, and that you welcome the singer, as an actor seeking truth on stage, to inhabit your songs and make them their own. That said, I’m sure that you have had the opportunity to hear many singers around the country sing selections from this cycle at various masterclasses and the like. Are there any comments/ performance suggestions that I could make note of that you might see/address somewhat frequently?

A: Don’t judge Eve. Let her be real. Somebody who makes good and bad choices, but is essentially generous, fun, kind, enthusiastic … Find her as a real person. And trace that in the LINE of the songs and the LINE of the composition. And never ever oversing!!

Q: Lastly I wanted to touch on the musical themes I have identified in the hopes that if I have missed something (or many things) singers should know about you will enlighten me. I have cited:

- the opening six measures of the cycle (Theme A/Nostalgia);
- two derivative motives: (A1/Eve) the descending M/m 2nd and (A2/Eden) the two eighth notes followed by longer value with M/m 2nd movement first appearing as the top R.H. accompaniment in *My Name* m. 8;
  - the ascending line consisting of three to four notes rising in stepwise motion (Theme B/Growth) first appearing in the top voice L.H. accompaniment in *My Name* m. 8
  - The oscillation between notes or note clusters (Theme C/Anxiety)
  - The 6-note ostinato in *Snake* (Theme D/Temptation)
  - The descending M/m 3rd (Theme E/Experience)

Also, along this line, I have yet to grasp the significance of the P4 pedals that permeate *The Wound*. My initial thought was that they related to the quartal harmony in *Listen*, perhaps

signifying the presence of the snake and inferring that childbirth as a punishment by God was the result of her sinful encounter with the snake. However, I felt like that might be grasping. What was your intention?

A: Oh lordy, Michelle. I do not analyze my music. I just write from my gut – try to respond in musical terms to what the character is saying and feeling. I know that is not helpful – but perhaps if we actually spoke and you shared with me what you were hearing, I might be able to be helpful on this point. It's been so long since I wrote them – but I'm sure some things would come back to me if we sat and listened together.

**Appendix B**  
**Email correspondence with Philip Littell**  
**March 21, 2013**

Email correspondence with Philip Littell  
March 21, 2013

Q: When you accepted the commission to write the poetry for *Eve-Song* (and the idea Heggie presented about Eve looking back on her days in the Garden) what was it that inspired you in terms of this modern Eve and her personal journey?

A: I didn't see her as a modern Eve. To me she is the historical Eve, speaking in my modern idiom of course. When Jake asked me, her voice leaped onto the page. So I trusted that.

Q: There are a few moments in the poems of *Eve-Song* that are similar in ways to some of the Charles van Lerberghe poems from Fauré's *La Chanson d'Eve*. Did that work serve as inspiration at all?

A: I have never heard the Fauré.

Q: Jake does not have the original poems you had sent him, and I wanted to include correct line division in the essay as well as to be informed about which words or phrases were repeated in your original poetry. He suggested you might have retained the original poems, and I wonder if I might be able to see them for that purpose? Also, you employ a non-traditional use of capitalization throughout the songs. What can the singer take away from that in trying to be true to your poetic intent?

A: I can send the PDF I found of my words the way I wrote them and set them out on a page. That'll help with your questions I'm sure. (Original poems sent via PDF file; Re-printed in the body of this essay by permission of poet)

Q: In my experience with the cycle I have come across people who are offended by moments in the poetry considered blasphemous\* ("God damn it", "nymphomania" and reference to God's penis being some of the stand-outs). I was wondering if you could speak to that aspect of the poetry? \**For the record, I am not one of those people.*

A: I have no patience with considerations of "blasphemy". I am not religious, not a "believer" and in fact pretty hostile to those mind-sets. She's an astonishing mythical construct. Certainly culturally I am of the Christian and Jewish tradition. I have always received, processed, used, quarried, the texts and legends as art. I'm very snobby about language and when language is powerful I am attentive.

Q: From a literary perspective should the repetition of the word "name" (particularly in *My Name and Good*) be properly labeled as *leitwortstil* or do you think its more correctly labeled as "thematic patterning" since the idea of name/identity is so central to the character Eve?

A: It was instinctive with me is all I can tell you. Fun examining it again through your eyes. My Name is an invitation to explore the onomatopoeia of EVE, the different sounds that the word/ name can contain (?), and what they can express about her self and the events of her life. It's an invitation to the singer and the composer to get wild and creative.

Q: In *The Wound*: 1) Could you speak to the phrase "The wound re-opened opens the tomb." 2) In your poem the phrase "new-born baby" appears, and in the song it was changed to "new-formed baby." Because the singer must decide whether or not the child has been born as of "What is already in that head?" this dichotomy makes that decision more difficult, especially given the fact that baby "will not let me let it go." Did you imagine the baby born by the end of the poem or still *in utero*?

A: I wasn't aware it had been changed to new-formed. These are all situations I imagined, the very brutal aspects of sexual social relations between the sexes as human society took shape, the great difficulty of life, and of procreation and her great well of anger, all these things sparked me, or perhaps just showed up. The songs do traverse a stretch of time, from the bestiality and violence of rape as the norm, the physical apprehension of the primeval world, playful exploration of the elements of the myth, to the beginnings of a settled civil world, in spite of the horrendous process of creating human society. But we are still confronted constantly with extreme violence against women in all societies, so.... The Wound is about the dangers and physical processes and mind-processes to do with pregnancy and delivery. And you're right, the baby has not been born yet. About to be.

Q: On a personal/biographical note, fighting in the Vietnam War seems a world away from expressing yourself as an artist. Were you drafted? How, in general, did your experience in the army inform your later artistic work?

A: I was in the army during the Vietnam war but I was lucky enough not to be sent into the war-zone... my experience was intensely positive. It really socialized me in a way that I have been grateful for ever since. I joined up, rather than waiting to be drafted, at 18. The army basically taught me that no one cares what you do in this life, but that you should. It taught me that I could make my way in the world and interact with every kind of person, it liberated me into my fundamental unimportance ( a lesson I have to relearn apparently from time to time) which is the basis of freedom of choice and action. The courage I found to join up in the middle of the war was the courage that keeps me going today in my work. Never unaccompanied by fear.

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