Domenico Bruni was an Italian *catastro* soprano in the Classical era. Though he was not known as a composer, two solo songs are attributed to him. His pieces are characteristic of the Baroque era with a focus on structural purity and simplicity, great emotion, yet still a calm fluidity to the overall movement of the song. Bruni places an emphasis on exhibiting the voice and its technical capabilities over the poetic element of the pieces.

“La vezzoza pastorella” or “The lovely shepherdess” is a traditional pastoral poem written in ternary form. The poem’s author remains anonymous. The A section begins with a sweet, lilting melody as the words narrate a shepherdess gathering wildflowers in search of her beloved shepherd. Customary to the Italian Baroque, the B section shifts to minor with a change in emotion to the bitter pain of heartbreak. The return to the A section includes ornamentation on the theme in accordance with Bruni’s focus on exhibiting the voice.

**La vezzoza pastorella**

_Domenico Bruni_  
_(1758–1821)_

_Seligkeit, D. 433_  
_Franz Schubert_  
_(1797–1828)_

Franz Schubert was an Austrian composer and is considered the preeminent composer of the German *Lied*, having written some 600 *Lieder* and nine symphonies. His music bridged Classical and Romantic music with rich harmonies and beautiful lyricism in his melodies. Schubert took this Romantic concept of the song cycle and became a master of the form, paving the way for numerous Romantic composers in the evolution of the song cycle into a more sophisticated and increasingly complex art form.

“Seligkeit” or “Bliss” composed in 1816 is a setting of a poem by one of Schubert’s favorite poets, Ludwig Christoph Hölty (1748-1776). Hölty was a gifted lyric poet whose work was characterized by love of nature and personal expression. The poem describes heaven as a joyous celebration, and Schubert translates that celebratory atmosphere into the whimsical nature of a Viennese waltz combined with the earthiness of a folksong. The mood of the piece shifts in the third stanza with strains of melancholy interspersed in Hölty’s words at the mention of the woman, Laura.
Freuden sonder Zahl
blühn im Himmelssaal
ingeln und Verklärt, 
wie die Väter lehrten.
O da möchte ich sein, 
und mich ewig freun!

Jedem lacht traut
eine Himmelsbraut;
Harp und Psalter klinget,
und man tanzt und singet.
O da möchte ich sein, 
und mich ewig freun!

Lieber bleib ich hier
lächelt Laura mir 
einen Blick, der sagt, 
daß ich ausgeklaget.
Selig dann mit ihr,  
bleib ich ewig hier!

Ich wollt ich wär ein Fisch,  
so hurtig unt frisch; 
und kämst du zu angeln, 
Ich wurde nicht manglen
Ich wollt ich wär ein Fisch, 
so hurtig unt frisch. 

Ich wollt ich wär Gold 
dir immer im Sold; 
und thätst du was kaufen,  
käm ich gelaufen.
Ich wollt ich wäre Gold, 
dir Immer im Sold. 

Doch bin ich wie ich bin, 
und nimm mich nur hin! Willst du bess’re besitzen, 
so laß dir sie schnitzen.
Ich bin nun wie ich bin;
so nimm mich nur hin!

—translation by Richard Stokes

"Liebhaber in Allen Gestalten" was composed in 1817. The celebrated poet, novelist, and playwright Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832) is the author of "Liebhaber in Allen Gestalten" or "Lovers in all situations." The poem depicts the speech of a lover who wishes to be reincarnated into something that would bring her closer to her beloved. Goethe’s original poem includes eight stanzas, but Schubert’s composition only sets stanzas one, three, and nine. Schubert places the words into strophic form with staccato markings and faster tempo in the accompaniment and a melody of narrow leaps and short phrases evoking a cheerful atmosphere in the piece. The final stanza of Goethe’s poem takes a turn with the lover abandoning her flirtatious tone to announce that her beloved must love her as she is or not at all, a final ultimatum.

Ich wollt ich wär ein Fisch,  
so hurtig unt frisch; 
und kämst du zu angeln, 
Ich wurde nicht manglen
Ich wollt ich wär ein Fisch, 
so hurtig unt frisch. 

Ich wollt ich wär Gold 
dir immer im Sold; 
und thätst du was kaufen,  
käm ich gelaufen.
Ich wollt ich wäre Gold, 
dir Immer im Sold. 

Doch bin ich wie ich bin, 
und nimm mich nur hin! Willst du bess’re besitzen, 
so laß dir sie schnitzen.
Ich bin nun wie ich bin;
so nimm mich nur hin!

—translation by Pierre Mathe
Samuel Barber was one of the most celebrated composers of the twentieth century. Barber avoided the musical modernism movement of the time in favor of using nineteenth century Romantic harmonic structure and form. Although reminiscent of the Romantic era, Barber’s compositions are reflective of his voice infused with a subtlety that relied deeply on melody, polyphony, and complex musical textures. His music is at once lyrical, rhythmically complex, and harmonically rich. Barber is well-known for his symphonic compositions including the beloved \textit{Adagio for Strings}, but he also showed a particular flair writing for piano and voice. A fine baritone, Barber’s love of poetry and his intimate knowledge and appreciation of the human voice inspired his appealing vocal writing.

“The Daisies” was published by G. Schirmer in 1936 as the first of Barber’s \textit{Three Songs, Opus} 2. Written when he was seventeen, Barber’s song features a simple, lyrical vocal line set to a charming text by Irish poet and storyteller James Stephens (1880-1950). Barber dedicated the song to his mother, Marguerite McLeod Barber, who was affectionately nicknamed Daisy. Carefree and sweet, “The Daisies” displays the lyricism that would later become the hallmark of Barber’s compositional style.

In the scented bud of the morning O,
when the windy grass went rippling far!
I saw my dear one walking slow
in the field where the daisies are.

A lark sang up, from the breezy land;
a lark sang down, from a cloud afar;
as she and I went, hand in hand,
in the field where the daisies are.

Strings in the earth and air,
make music sweet.
Strings by the river
where the willows meet.

Strings in the earth and air,
make music sweet.
Strings by the river
where the willows meet.

We did not laugh, and we did not speak,
as we wandered happily, to and fro,
I kissed my dear on either cheek,
in the bud of the morning O!

There’s music along the river,
for love wonders there.
Pale flowers on his mantle,
dark leaves on his hair.

All softly playing,
with head to the music bent,
and fingers straying,
upon an instrument.

“Strings in the earth and air” is set to text by Irish novelist James Joyce (1882-1941), who was known for his experimental use of language and exploration of new literary methods. Barber frequently created songs from writings by Joyce. This text is drawn from Joyce’s collection called \textit{“Chamber Music.”} The song is brief, yet endearing and touching in its brevity. The predominant melodic line, a simple and smooth scale figure, imitates the sound of the strings which the text exclaims makes the music of air and nature when strummed by love.
“Sure on this Shining Night” is the third song in a collection published as *Four Songs*. The text is based on an untitled lyric from American poet, novelist, journalist, screenwriter, and film critic James Agee’s (1909-1955) first published collection of poems, *Permit me Voyage*. The song’s structure resembles songs crafted by masters like Johannes Brahms and Robert Schumann. The melody soars over smooth, peaceful harmonies evoking a sense of wonder and gratitude for life “this side the ground.”

Sure on this shining night of star-made shadows round, kindness must watch for me this side of the ground.

The late year lies down the north. All is healed, all is health. High summer holds the earth. Hearts all whole.

Sure on this shining night I weep for wonder wandering far alone of shadows on the stars.

from *Wuthering Heights*  
I have dreamt

Bernard Herrmann was an American composer best known for his work in composing scores for motion pictures. Herrmann’s music is characterized by frequent use of ostinato, novel orchestration, and an ability to portray character traits not altogether obvious from the plot. Although most of his work was in film scores, Herrmann wrote several concert pieces during the last years of his life in London.

*Wuthering Heights* is the sole opera written by Herrmann in 1951. His first wife, Lucille Fletcher (1912-2000), wrote the libretto based on the first part of Emily Bronte’s (1818-1848) novel. The opera is cast in a prologue, four acts, and an epilogue that repeats the music of the prologue. The plot focuses on the mutual passion of Catherine Earnshaw and Heathcliff who are united by their kindred spirits, but divided by social convention and family jealousy.

Catherine’s aria “I have dreamt” concludes act two with Catherine considering another suitor’s proposal of marriage with her maid Nelly, but she can not shake her strange dream of late and shares her premonition with Nelly in the aria. As the dream unfolds, she finds herself in heaven, but all she wishes is to be back at Wuthering Heights. She equates marrying the suitor, Edgar, to such a heaven. Librettist Lucille Fletcher takes the words directly from Bronte’s novel, and Herrmann composes a dream scene into the music with fluid, entrancing arpeggiating chords in the accompaniment and triplets in the melody creating an impression of haziness and surreality.
Reynaldo Hahn was a Venezuelan-born French composer, conductor, music critic, and theater director. Hahn’s family moved to Paris when Hahn was three years old, where he thrived in the ideal environment for artists and writers. At ten, he was accepted into the Paris Conservatoire. It was there that at the age of thirteen, Hahn produced his first and most recognized song, “Si mes vers avaient des ailes.” Recognized as a composer of songs, he wrote just over 100 songs in the French classical tradition of the mélodie. Surrounded by significant poets like Sarah Bernhardt and Marcel Proust from a young age, Hahn had a deep appreciation and understanding of poetry which profoundly affected his compositional style. He put his efforts toward creating musical phrasing and rhythmic gestures that would allow the words to speak for themselves in his mélodies.

In 1888 at the Paris Conservatoire, Hahn composed “Si mes vers avaient des ailes.” The text is drawn from the poetry of Victor Hugo (1802-1885), the author of the renowned novels *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* and *Les Misérables.* Although Hugo was a master of epic plots and characters, he was also capable of small and unpretentious lyrics of the greatest tenderness as illustrated in this poem. As Hahn’s debut piece, this mélodie encompasses all the distinguishing marks of his style. The slow unfurling of the accompaniment shapes the vocal line out of which the intimacy and beauty of the melody transport the listener to a new realm as if Hugo’s stanzas truly do have wings.

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À Chloris

*Si mes vers avaient des ailes*  
Reynaldo Hahn  
*(1874–1947)*

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My verses would flee, sweet and fragile,  
to your gardens so lovely,  
if my verses had wings,  
wings as the bird has.

They would fly, these sparks,  
to your laughing hearth,  
if my verses had wings,  
wings as the spirit has.

To you, pure and faithful,  
they would hurry, night and day,  
if my verses had wings,  
wings as Love has!

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Translation by Emily Ezust
Hahn set “À Chloris” in 1916 to the text of Theophile de Viau’s (1590-1626) Baroque era poetry. Hahn’s elegant composition matches the splendor of the Baroque period. The vocal line is composed of short fragments that capture the natural speech cadences in combination with longer lyrical lines. The piano accompaniment has its own melody with a Baroque style ornamentation in the bass line. This art song is a fine example of Hahn’s sensitivity and affinity for allowing the poetry to dictate the music.

S’il est vrai, Chloris, que tu m’aimes,
mais j’entends, que tu m’aimes bien,
je ne crois point que le rois memes
aien un bonheur pareil jo mein.

If it be true, Chloris, that you love me,
(and I’m told you love me dearly,) I do not believe that even kings
can match the happiness I know.

Que la mort serait importune
de venir changer ma fortune
a la félicité des cieux!

Even death would be powerless
to alter my fortune
with the promise of heavenly bliss!

Tout ce qu’on dit de l’ambroisie
ne touche point ma fantaisie
au prix des graces de tes yeux.

All that they say of ambrosia
does not stir my imagination
like the favor of your eyes!

—translation by Richard Stokes

from L’amico Fritz

Son pochi fiori

Pietro Mascagni
(1863–1945)

Pietro Mascagni was an Italian composer primarily known for his operas. His works include fifteen operas, one operetta, several orchestral and vocal works, and piano compositions. Mascagni’s 1890 masterpiece Cavalleria rusticana ushered in one of the greatest sensations in opera history, the Verismo movement. Verismo is a style of opera marked by melodramatic, often violent plots with characters drawn from everyday life.

L’amico Fritz is an opera in three acts that premiered in 1891. Italian writer, Nicola Daspuro (1853-1941) wrote the libretto based on the French novel L’ami Fritz by Emile Erckmann and Pierre Chatrian. Mascagni composed this opera to be judged solely on its musical value and intentionally selected a libretto that would be as simple and unpretentious as possible. The plot entails a simple love story between young Suzel and the landlord Fritz that unfolds with gentle awakenings and sensible realities of love and ends with a wedding. The success of the opera lies in the beauty of Mascagni’s music which creates the ambience of a charming, sweet romance.

“Son pochi fiori” is sung by Suzel in act one, scene one as she offers wild violets to Fritz on his birthday. The aria is reflective of Suzel’s character with a shy sweetness in the recitative portions that is followed by this unexpected emotional outburst of joy. Mascagni’s attention to natural speech cadences infuses the text with the intended emotion and allows for full expression of the text.
Son pochi fiori, povere viole,
son lalito d’aprile
dal profumo gentile;
ed è per voi
tale audace al sole...
Se avessero parole,
le udresti mormorar:
Noi siamo figlie timide e pudiche.
Siamo le vostre amiche;
morremo questa sera,
ma morremo felici
di dire voi, che amate gli’infelici:
Il ciel vi possa dar
tutto quel bene che si può sperar.
ed il mio cor aggiunge
una parola modesta, ma sincera:
Eterna primavera La vostra vita sia,
ch’altri consola...
Deh, vogliate gradir
quanto vi posso offrir!

Just a few flowers, humble violets,
they are the breath of April
with their tender fragrance;
and for you
I have snatched them from the sunshine....
If they could speak,
you would hear them say:
We are timid and shy daughters of spring.
We are your friends;
we shall die this evening,
but we are happy
to wish you, who love the unfortunate:
May heaven grant you
all the good things that it is possible to hope for.
and in my heart adds
a modest but sincere word:
May your life which brings comfort to others
be eternal spring...
Ah, desire to accept
all that I can offer!

—translation by Tina Grey