UH 440 Honors Thesis

Title:
The poetry of Emily Dickinson in song:
An analytical comparison of musical settings

Submitted by:
Holly A. Robinette
Fall 2004

Advisor:
Dr. Julie Wieck
Vocal Department,
WSU School of Music and Theatre Arts
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TO THE UNIVERSITY HONORS COLLEGE:

As thesis advisor for Holly Robinette,

I have read this paper and find it satisfactory.

Date: 9/26/04

Thesis Advisor

Précis

While selecting vocal repertoire over the past several years, I have observed the high frequency of Emily Dickinson’s poetry in American art song literature. An art song is a solo vocal work that usually involves the setting of an existing poem with a piano accompaniment. My first encounter with a 20th century art song was a setting by Aaron Copland called, “Heart! We will forget him,” a poem by Dickinson. Around the same time, I came across a song with the same poem, but by a different composer, John Duke. The interpretations were very dissimilar, and it prompted me to see how many other musical settings were available using the poetry of Emily Dickinson. I was shocked to discover that there are over 3,000 musical compositions using Dickinson’s poetry!

This discovery led to a further investigation of Dickinson songs, beginning at the WSU Music Library and continuing online. As I studied more works, I began to raise questions about the process a composer goes through to write such a song. How do they choose the poetry, and what is the appeal of Emily Dickinson to so many? How do they achieve their own interpretation? To answer these questions, I developed a more formal process that would help me explore the creation of an art song, using different settings of Emily Dickinson’s poetry in order to make comparisons. I narrowed the songs for analysis down to three groups, each centering around one poem and containing three songs. The first set contains three musical settings of Dickinson’s “Heart! We will forget him”(1858), including songs by Aaron Copland (1951), Robert Baksa (1967), and John Duke (1978). The second grouping focuses on “Good Morning Midnight”(1862), with works by Arthur Farwell (1936), John Duke (1978), and André Previn (1999). The last trio of songs revolves around “Wild Nights!”(1861), representing Lee Hoiby (1988), Edwin Penhorwood (1993), and Lori Laitman (1997).
In approaching this, I determined several components to analyze in each piece. These included: the edition and arrangement of the text, the role and structure of the piano accompaniment, the translation of the poem into a vocal line, the use of tempo to set a song's mood, the importance of rhythm in text setting and the piano part, the effect of dynamics and articulations, and the function of the harmonic structure.

The analysis led to the uncovering of many different compositional techniques used by composers to achieve their own musical interpretations of the poetry. Alterations to the text often change the destination of the song. The use of an extreme vocal range can bring dramatic emphasis to the text. The tempo usually has a direct correlation to the mood of the piece. By focusing on the aforementioned elements, I was able to form these and many other conclusions regarding each musical setting.

My hope is that this analysis can serve as a unique contribution to the research of American art songs and the interpretation of Emily Dickinson's poetry. It provides a very specific focus, and includes detail where other analyses of these songs has been much more broad. It may also benefit vocalists who enjoy singing contemporary art songs, inviting them to take a closer look at this selection of American literature. It should give them detailed insight into the structure behind these songs, encouraging them to draw their own conclusions regarding a composer's musical interpretation.
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Introduction

The twentieth century was the first to produce a wealth of American composers, who wrote in a unique American style for the American people. During the first half of the century, these composers strove to create their own identity, one separate from the European traditions of classical music. Aaron Copland, one of the foremost composers to develop a new American sound, described this search for a new identity: “We wanted 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 had envisaged.”

Americans recognized this new style in Copland works such as Billy the Kid (1938) and Appalachian Spring (1944), two of his well known ballets. But he also focused his compositional efforts on a smaller musical form, the vocal art song. The art song is a solo vocal work that usually involves the setting of an existing poem with a piano accompaniment. Copland’s best known set of art songs is the 12 Poems of Emily Dickinson, written in 1950 for a female singer. This song cycle was the synthesis of not only an American style of music, but also, American poetry. Many other composers also began to find their niche in writing art songs, often turning to American poetry for inspiration. While many of them were able to collaborate with living poets, they also turned to the works of poets from the past. Emily Dickinson, whose mysterious life and poetry formed the basis for Copland’s settings, became a subject of interest and a source of poetry for many other composers.

My first encounter with both the 20th century American art song and the poetry of Emily Dickinson occurred when I began to study “Heart! We will forget him,” from Copland’s 12 Poems of Emily Dickinson, for voice lessons. I was struck immediately by the depth of emotion
conveyed in this brief song, contained within two verses of text and two short pages of music. Not long after beginning this piece, I came across a song with the same title, but this time by a different composer, John Duke. It soon became apparent how dissimilar this song was from the Copland version. Instead of the contemplative, internal struggle that Copland portrayed, it was fast, declamatory, and angry, achieving an entirely new interpretation of the poetry.

This discovery led to a further investigation of art songs containing the poetry of Emily Dickinson, which was greatly advanced by the finding of *Musicians Wrestle Everywhere*, a book by Carlton Lowenberg that indexes over 1,615 musical settings of Dickinson’s poems and letters by 276 composers. More recent research by Carolyn Lindley Cooley suggests that this number has increased to 3,000 settings in the last ten years or so, since Lowenberg’s findings were first published. The sheer volume of musical settings is evidence of the overwhelming interest in Dickinson’s poetry by inspired composers who have sought to express their own interpretations.

This led me to study more individual songs, each settings of Dickinson’s poetry, some even with the same poem. Studying these works prompted me to raise questions about the process a composer goes through to write such a song. How do they choose the poetry, and what is the appeal of Emily Dickinson to so many? How do they achieve their own interpretation, and what kind of musical and artistic decisions do they make that help set their song apart from others?

To begin to answer these questions, I developed a more formal process that would help me explore the creation of an art song, using different settings of Emily Dickinson’s poetry in order to make comparisons. The following analysis includes three musical settings each of three Dickinson poems, spanning a wide range of interpretations and compositional styles.
Methods of Analysis

Selection of Songs

With thousands of songs to select from, the first step in the research process was to collect an appropriate sampling of Dickinson settings that would lend themselves well to analysis and comparison with other songs sharing the same text. I began this process without access to Lowenberg's complete inventory of songs, and instead, gathered every available score from the WSU Music Library that contained solo vocal songs using the poetry of Emily Dickinson. In addition, I researched composers online, and was able to find and obtain sheet music for several more recent compositions.

Following the acquisition of numerous scores, I grouped songs together by poem, looking for possible sets of pieces that could be used for comparison. When singing and playing through each piece, I looked for contrasting styles and unique interpretations. I wanted to represent pieces from a variety of decades, including songs written in the last several years. I also tried to look at as many different composers as possible, in order to study and compare a wide variety of compositional styles. The selection of songs available to me represented only American composers. Since most musical settings of Dickinson's poetry are by American composers, I decided to limit my analysis to them.

After going through this process several times, the songs were finally narrowed down to three groups, each centering around one poem and containing three songs. The first set contains three musical settings of Dickinson’s “Heart! We will forget him” (1858), including songs by Aaron Copland (1951), Robert Baksa (1967), and John Duke (1978). The second grouping focuses on “Good Morning Midnight” (1862), with works by Arthur Farwell (1936), John Duke

**Components for Analysis**

In order to fairly and thoroughly analyze each song, I compiled a list of musical characteristics and other components to be examined for each piece. These characteristics, on their own or in combination, are the direct result of a conscious decision on behalf of the composer, contributing directly to the interpretation of the poem.

**Text**

Examination of the text in each song was of primary consideration. It was important to first determine the edition of the poem available to or used by the composer. Virtually none of Emily Dickinson’s 775 poems were published during her lifetime, but were discovered, edited and published posthumously. *The Poems of Emily Dickinson*, edited by her niece, Martha Dickinson Bianchi and Alfred Leete Hampson, was published in 1937, and for a time, was the primary source for composers.⁴

In 1955, a more critical edition became available, edited by Thomas H. Johnson, who reexamined the original manuscripts and published a more accurate reproduction of Dickinson’s complete poems.⁵ Although this edition is beheld as more scholarly than the compilation published in 1937, composers may have chosen the former because of its familiarity to them. In this analysis, an editorial discrepancy is only apparent in “Heart! We will forget him,” and will be discussed accordingly.

Also in relation to the text, a composer may decide to take an artistic license by altering
the poem in some way, by repeating words, phrases, or entire stanzas, mixing phrases together, or even rearranging the order of the poem. Other composers make the decision to leave the poem completely intact, without alteration. Any of these decisions regarding the text affect the entire interpretation of the poem, and then directly relate to how it is treated musically.

**Accompaniment**

The piano accompaniment in most contemporary art songs closely relates to both the vocal part and the text, playing an important role in the ensemble of the piece. It helps in setting the mood of the song, frequently reinforcing melodic motifs, and giving the piece a sense of structure by providing transition material between sections. How the accompaniment accomplishes these things may be affected by its texture, its rhythmic, melodic, and harmonic structure, its use of registers and range, and its relationship to the vocal line. It provides a framework for the whole song. By studying the accompaniment of each song for this analysis, much was revealed regarding a composer’s style and interpretation of the poem.

**Vocal line**

The vocal line, or sung melody, is an integral part of the composer’s interpretation of the text. He must determine how best to musically represent the poem, considering the natural cadence and inflection of the spoken text, and translating this to musical phrases. These phrases can then be examined for their contour, or shape, their rhythmic and melodic structure, and the way they accent or bring out certain parts of the text. A composer may emphasize parts of the text by building a musical climax from a phrase, and this kind of text stress occurs in almost every song included in this analysis.

A composer’s writing style is also revealed in the vocal part. Some tend to write melodies
with stepwise movement; others with large leaps, or a combination of the two. Some of the songs
are characterized by long, legato phrases, and others are more disjunct, with short, choppy
phrases. The melodic line may stay within a moderate vocal range, to keep it similar to the
speaking voice, perhaps, or it may require a wide range to help dramatize the text and infuse it
with emotion. The vocal line is the heart of the song and the composer’s interpretation of the text.

**Tempo**

The tempo is instrumental in setting the mood of a piece, and the difference between a
slow or fast tempo can completely alter the interpretation of the poem. At the beginning of a
song, a composer usually indicates the tempo by a speed the correlates to a metronome marking.
They also often include a word or phrase that gives more insight about the tempo and how it
contributes to the mood of the song, such as *Allegro con fuoco* (fast with fire).

Since the tempo is so closely related to mood, any changes, whether gradual or abrupt, are
worth noting. This may include a sudden shift to an entirely different tempo, which a composer
may use to create distinct sections in the piece, or times of *accelerando* or *ritardando* (speeding
up or slowing down), that create a feeling of push and pull, propel the movement forward, or
bring it to a temporary halt.

While studying the changing tempi throughout a song, it is important to compare it to the
shifts in the text or musical changes and determine whether they occur simultaneously or
separately.

**Rhythm**

Rhythm is a very important part of setting the text to a musical phrase, and the composer
faces the challenge of keeping a rhythmic pattern similar to a natural speaking pattern, or
consciously deciding to alter it. Many composers may determine certain rhythmic patterns before composing a single note. John Duke, for example, explained the process he would go through: “I now make a regular practice of making a ‘rhythmic sketch’ or planning out of the time values of a melody in accordance with my feeling for the natural rhythmic utterance of the words before I attempt to conceive the melody as definite pitch variations.” This would then ensure, “that the words will reinforce and become part of the whole melodic conception.”

Rhythm is also an important component of the accompaniment, which often contains a motor rhythm, or constant beat, that keeps the momentum of the piece moving forward the entire time. Like other changes, a variation in rhythmic patterns is usually significant, whether in the accompaniment or vocal line.

**Dynamics and Articulations**

Dynamics are used in conjunction with other musical components to help build a climax, taper a phrase, and show contrast. If most of a song is kept within a moderate dynamic range, then the entrance of extreme dynamics, whether loud or soft, will bring emphasis to the text or other part of the music.

Articulations are the other markings a composer uses to specify what is supposed to happen musically. These may include an accent, staccato, tenuto, or portamento. A composer may also include directions to the singer or pianist that are not represented by a diacritical marking, and this is especially typical of 20th century music. The more specific the musical score is, the better idea the performer has regarding the desired interpretation by the composer.

**Key and Harmonic Structure**

Of all the musical components, the harmonic structure is one of the most difficult to
analyze. Much of traditional harmonic theory has been disregarded by modern composers, who often write music that is atonal, or lacking a specific home key. Therefore, it is more difficult to identify tonal regions or common chord progressions that are otherwise the basis of Western music. It is still possible, however, to find repeated sonorities and intervals that almost become motifs, and determine their significance in context of the whole song.

Findings and Discussion of Analysis

The Appeal of Emily Dickinson

It is very well to analyze these groups of art songs, but the question must be asked: Why Emily Dickinson? What about her poetry entices so many composers? To help answer these questions, I studied Dickinson’s life and poetry on my own, in an attempt to understand this mysterious and extraordinary figure. I also searched for the opinions of those who were so greatly attracted to her work: the composers themselves.

Emily Dickinson was born in 1830 in Amherst, Massachusetts, to a strict religious family. Her father, a politician and lawyer, encouraged her to become educated, within the boundaries that were appropriate for women, sending her to different schools for girls. Her mother was mostly concerned about her domestic duties, staying confined to the house. Emily’s siblings included an older brother and a younger sister, and the three of them were close in age and good friends. Emily led a fairly normal and social childhood, forming close friendships with other girls her age. She was a good student and recognized early on by her teachers for her exceptional writing talent.

As she became older, Emily increasingly began to avoid social functions, finding excuses
to stay home. By 1858, she was writing poems frequently, sending them to her sister-in-law, Susan, for perusal and critique. There were several influential men in her life who were also recipients of her poetry, including the Reverend Charles Wadsworth, Samuel Bowles, and Thomas Wentworth Higginson, the latter being an instrumental figure in getting her poetry published after her death.

Dickinson became more isolated as time passed, as her immediate family experienced turmoil and conflict, her closest friends failed to correspond with her, and as she grieved for the loss of many loved ones, including her nephew, Gilbert, dying at the young age of nine. Following her own death in 1886, her sister found copies of over one thousand poems Emily had written, sitting in her dresser. Higginson, along with Mabel Loomis Todd, released the first volume of her poetry in 1890, publishing more in subsequent years.

Although composers seem to possess a wide variety of opinions and reasons for using the poetry of Emily Dickinson, there appear to be several common threads tying them together. Most composers agree that her poetry is unique and, in many ways, unconventional. Many composers appreciate Dickinson’s ability to say so much with so little. Emma Lou Diemer says she has been, “struck by the uniqueness of her poetry: its conciseness and depth.” John Dowd agrees, feeling that “the poetry expresses a very highly charged emotion in the most economical way.” “In her poetry every sentence is filled with meaning,” comments Robert Starer, “every word is precisely right.”

The fact that Dickinson was a woman has appealed to many composers, both male and female. Sharon Davis explains, “My prime reason for choosing Emily Dickinson’s work for this composition was the need of a direct channel of expression from a woman writer to a woman
singer.” Robert Baksa admits that, “Most of the 20th century poets I really enjoy are women... I have to have an emotional climate in a poem,” and Dickinson’s poetry achieves this.

Composers cite different reasons for creating musical settings of Emily Dickinson’s poetry. Some find that her imagery lends itself to musical interpretation. Others feel that her sense of rhythm and phrasing are ideal for musical settings. Brice Farwell, son of the composer, Arthur Farwell, describes his father’s rationale for turning to Dickinson: “Her short almost staccato lines fell readily into melodic phrases, her vivid descriptive words stimulated a harmonic response, and her underlying metrics were easily captured in musical rhythms.” Robert Starer concurs, stating that, “above all, the rhythm of her language is so musical.”

But some disagree, finding the unconventional length and structure of her phrases a challenge to transfer to music, embracing it nevertheless. “Perhaps one of the reasons why so many composers have been attracted by her lyrics is (besides obvious matters of feeling and mood) the challenge of her rhythms,” observes Richard Sewall, in his foreword to *Musicians Wrestle Everywhere*. J.P. Dabney, who researched this aspect of Dickinson’s poetry, maintained, “that rhymes having imperfect cadences ‘are just as tonally satisfying to the ear as [those having] perfect cadence because, although they have not the sense of absolute finality of the tonic, or true rhyme, they produce upon the ear the same tonal impression.”

Still others express a personal and even spiritual connection with Dickinson’s poetry, one that stirs their soul. “Emily Dickinson’s writing style is of a highly personal nature, evocative, subtle, unpretentious,” comments Mark Dal Porto. It has also been described as sensitive, poignant, and compassionate. Ted Diaconoff explains that, “As a composer I respond to the intensity of Emily Dickinson’s poetry. I react musically to her communication of inward states of
the mind and soul.” Arthur Farwell once said “[She reveals] to us in new colors and new relations the beauty of the visible universe, and then, by this exhaustless and compounded symbolism, [brings] us home to the awe and wonder of the boundless universe, which our spiritual selves inhabit.” According to Farwell, Dickinson brings a completely new perspective to the world we live in, one that is deep and spiritual.

The Analysis

In the following analysis of nine songs, some musical examples are given; however, room does not permit the inclusion of an example for every musical reference. The scores for each song are included in the Appendix for the purpose of further perusal.

Heart! We will forget him

Dickinson wrote “Heart! We will forget him” in 1858, during her early years as a poet. It is one of “only a few of Dickinson’s early first-person poems,” and probably reflects one of her personal experiences. In it, the writer urges her heart to detach itself from a young man, afraid that if she dwells on him too long, she will not be able to forget him, which is something she feels she must do.

The first observation to be made about “Heart! We will forget him” is that there are slight text differences depending on the edition used. Below, these editions are compared, with the 1937 Bianchi and Hampson edition on the left, and the 1955 Johnson edition on the right (italics mine):

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<th>Heart, we will forget him!</th>
<th>Heart, we will forget him!</th>
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<tr>
<td>You and I, to-night!</td>
<td>You and I--tonight!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You may forget the warmth he gave,</td>
<td>You may forget the warmth he gave--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will forget the light.</td>
<td>I will forget the light!</td>
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When you have done, pray tell me, 
*That I my thoughts may dim;*
Haste! lest while you’re lagging, 
I may remember him!

When you have done, pray tell me
*That I may straight begin!*
Haste! lest while you’re lagging
I may remember him!
Although only one phrase has been altered in these editions, it does affect the musical interpretation, depending on the edition used by the composer.

Of the three songs being compared, Aaron Copland was the first to write his setting of “Heart! We will forget him,” as a part of the aforementioned 12 Poems of Emily Dickinson. In writing this song cycle during 1950, Copland read a lot about Dickinson, and was interested by “the notion that one day she simply, ‘went upstairs and never came back down.’”20 “Heart!” is the only ‘love’ song of the cycle, and its beauty was once heralded by an anonymous British critic who said that, “this song is as exquisitely touching as any that has come out of America.”21

In this song, Copland sets the mood with the tempo, marked at once as Very Slowly (dragging), which already indicates a sense of reluctance, and gives the pianist a two measure introduction, where the accompaniment begins a quiet, steady quarter-note pattern, which is supposed to be “very expressive and legato.” The singer enters in measure 3, determined to “forget him”, as the vocal line ascends, crescendos, and speeds up, as if determined to get it over with. It slows back down, however, for “You and I,” with a significant break separating it from “tonight,” which is also quieter and lower in register. These first two phrases, as included in Example 1, characterize the rest of the song, as Copland utilizes shifting tempi, dynamics, and range to convey the anguish felt by the poet, who struggles between following her heart and doing what must be done.

At the time Copland wrote this, only 1937 edition of the poem was available to him, which is significant because he decided to make the alternate phrase, “That I my thoughts may dim,” the musical climax of the entire song. He prepares for this climax in the previous phrase, “When you have done, pray tell me,” beginning in measure 21, indicating that the tempo should be “moving
forward.” At meas. 24, the vocal part takes a dramatic leap, from an A natural up to a high G, which is the highest sung note in the song, and also the loudest, at fortissimo. The word “I” is agogically accented, being held for three beats before the rest of the descending phrase is sung. The accompaniment is also at a fortissimo dynamic, and the only articulation markings in the whole song are here, with both accents and tenutos in the right hand, as well as instructions to play molto marcato, furthering the emphasis of the phrase. If the climax at “I” indicates determination to forget him, the rest of the phrase reveals that the poet remains unconvinced. The vocal line descends, and both the vocal part and accompaniment slow down and decrescendo.

In the penultimate phrase, Copland uses rhythm as a word painting device, with a quick
sixteenth note to demonstrate "Haste" in meas. 29, and tempering this with "lagging" in meas.30, illustrated by a dotted quarter note. Both rhythms deviate from the otherwise steady quarter note pattern from the rest of the song. The song ends poignantly, with a breath marked right before "him," and a final half step, reluctantly ending on the tonic note, E-flat. The piece ends very quietly, with the singer sustaining the E-flat over an E-flat M7 chord.

Robert Baksa composed "Heart! We will forget him," in 1967, along with fifteen other Dickinson songs, all written within a few years of each other. As Baksa was quoted earlier, he looks for an "emotional climate" in poetry, and found it in the verses of Emily Dickinson. After selecting a text, Baksa says he first determines, "what the piano is going to say." He gets a ‘couple of germ ideas,’ and then goes through and looks for ‘shapes in the text that will give interesting vocal lines.’ He establishes accent patterns and the relative importance of words. ‘Then harmony has to underpin it all–its tension and resolution has to enhance the meaning of the text.’22 Evidence of each of these steps is apparent in “Heart! We will forget him.”

Baksa also uses the 1937 version of the poem, even though he composed "Heart!" over ten years after Johnson’s scholarly version was published. Ruth Friedberg, in analyzing his Dickinson settings, conjectures that, “Quite probably, they were the versions he had known over a period of time and the Johnson work may not as yet have been widely distributed.”23 His inclusion of this edition, however, may not be as critical as his actual treatment of the text. Baksa’s use of repetition and rearrangement of the poem appears to have a more significant effect on his overall interpretation. Following is a comparison of the original poem (on the left), to how it appears in his song (on the right):
Heart, we will forget him!
You and I, tonight!
You may forget the warmth he gave,
I will forget the light.

When you have done, pray tell me,
That I my thoughts may dim,
Haste! lest while you’re lagging,
I may remember him!

Heart! We will forget him,
you and I tonight.
Heart! We will forget him,
we will forget him tonight.
You will forget the warmth he gave,
I will forget the light.
I will forget the light.
Heart! we will forget him,
you and I tonight.

When you have done pray tell me,
that I my thoughts may dim.
Haste! lest while you’re lagging,
lest while you’re lagging,
I may remember him,
I may remember him.

Baksa’s alteration of the text appear to emphasize the poet’s efforts to convince herself that she must forget him, she *must!* Wherever the text is repeated in the song, the melodic line usually remains the same, but is often transposed down, as if to indicate that the phrase is repeated more quietly, under the breath.

The song begins with the accompaniment, a pattern of quarter note blocked chords that provide a stable, slow tempo throughout the piece with an occasional ascending scale in the right hand to give the song momentum. The opening melodic phrase, “Heart! We will forget him,” rises above the piano part, emphasizing the word “will” by making it the highest note in the phrase and lengthening it with a dotted quarter note. The statement by Baksa that the harmony must “underpin” the whole song, and that its “tension and resolution has to enhance the meaning of the text” is demonstrated very clearly in the next phrase, “you and I tonight,” in measures 4 and 5. While the accompaniment changes harmony in measure 5 to the E-flat 9 chord, the singer continues to sustain the B-natural over the B-flat in the piano, creating a dissonance that then resolves on beat two. By creating this harmonic tension between the accompaniment and the vocal part, as shown in Example 2, Baksa is able to bring out the complex emotions of the text.
Everything remains in a moderate range as the song unfolds. The vocal line includes mostly stepwise movement within a limited range, and stays very lyrical. The first major dynamic shift occurs in meas.18, as the accompaniment crescendos through a four bar interlude, then dies down as the melody comes floating in on a high F, the beginning of the repeated phrase, “Heart! We will forget him, you and I tonight.” The new text, “when you have done, pray tell me,” appears in bar 29, with the emphasis placed on “done,” which is sustained for over a measure. The following phrase, “that I my thoughts may dim,” then occurs almost like an afterthought.

Dynamically, the song grows, building urgency to the word, “Haste!” in meas.35, which is also sung off the beat, preceded by a declamatory chord in the accompaniment. The emphasis on “lagging” is then provided by the repetition of the text and melody, which is a minor third lower the second time (Example 3). “I may remember him,” the final phrase of the song, is repeated as well, with alterations the second time, as the rhythm slows down to quarter notes, and an ascending line builds to “I may remember him.” A haunting C-sharp minor 9th chord in the last measure of the accompaniment brings the song to a troubled conclusion.
Example 3 ms. 35-37

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Haste! lest while you're lag-ging,
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John Duke’s “Heart! We will forget him!” is one of six Dickinson songs, written in 1968, after he had already composed one-hundred forty songs. Duke was fascinated by “the controversy over her poetry,” and, “profess(ed) great admiration for many of the verses, particularly the ones he had set.” In his own library, he had an entire shelf devoted to different editions of Dickinson’s poetry, and critical and biographical works as well, which he studied in preparation for his Dickinson settings.

From just the first two measures of this song, one notices very apparent differences in Duke’s interpretation as compared to Copland’s or Baksa’s. The indicated tempo is much faster, and the beginning is also marked *Passionato*, which further reveals the mood. The piano begins, with a declamatory E minor chord, followed by “Heart!”, sung at fortissimo on a high G. The rhythm of the next phrase emphasizes “forget him!”, which transitions directly into the frenzied accompaniment, as shown in Example 4. This piano part is characterized by a triplet sixteenth figure in the right hand, creating a fast motor rhythm that drives the rest of the song. This intense accompaniment gives the whole poem a sense of urgency. The only time in the whole song where the motor rhythm is interrupted occurs at meas.16, “while you’re lagging,” where the sixteenth
notes slow to half notes. It is the only moment where the music suggests a fear of failure, or at least a sense of reluctance.

**Example 4, ms.1-2**

\[
\text{Passionato } J = 100
\]

The intensity of the accompaniment is transferred to the vocal part, where Duke employs short phrases, a wide range, and frequent large leaps. The upper register is often used to help emphasize words, such as “Heart!” in meas.1, “warmth,” in meas.5 and “I” in meas.7. The text, while not repeated in any way, does contain the phrase “I may straight begin!” from the Johnson edition. To bring out the determination of this phrase, at meas.13, Duke slows the rhythm to straight quarter notes, and sets the words “I,” “straight” and “begin” on strong beats, as they continue on an ascending line. The accompaniment crescendos through the next measure, building to “Haste!” in meas.15, which is accented by a forte dynamic and a strong F major chord in the piano part, followed by a nervous sounding tremolo in the right hand. As mentioned before, the whole momentum of the song slows down for “while you’re lagging,” in meas.16, as the accompaniment seems to drag with half notes, the vocal part slows to quarter notes, and both follow a decrescendo and ritardando marking.
The tapering of this phrase is starkly contrasted in the next measure, with a return to a tempo and a sudden shift to fortissimo, as the vocal part soars up to a high A for “I”, supported by full chords in the accompaniment. The rest of the phrase, “remember him,” plunges down into the lower register, full of conviction. The accompaniment speedily travels upward and then back down, ending with dramatic octaves on E in the bass register.

It is interesting to compare the three interpretations of “Heart! We will forget him.” Both Copland and Baksa’s versions are slower and introspective, while Duke’s is more outwardly passionate and even angry. Each song contains a musical climax, but each composer selects a different part of the text to represent this emotional turning point. For Copland, it is “That I my thoughts may dim,” (Example 5), the alternate phrase from the Bianchi edition of the poem. Baksa’s largest build up is to “Haste! lest while you’re lagging,” in meas.35-36 (Example 3), but he really does not have an evident climax. Duke makes his more obvious, with the dramatic “I remember him!” at the song’s conclusion (Example 6).

Example 5, Copland, ms.24-27
Each composer relies on different tools to help achieve their interpretation of the poetry. Copland best illustrates the waning desires of the heart with his expert use of changing tempi and his sensitive melodic phrasing. Baksa’s simple accompaniment and use of text and melodic repetition bring out the true longings and fears of the poet. Duke’s dramatic use of dynamics and vocal range, in combination with his frenzied accompaniment, emphasizes the urgency of the text, as well as the acute pain being felt.

**Good Morning Midnight**

Emily Dickinson composed, “Good Morning Midnight” in 1862, her most productive year, writing 294 other poems, according to recent research. In this first-person poem, Dickinson presents night and day as dark and light, with the poet returning to the dark night after being rejected by the day. The text remains the same across different editions:

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Good Morning—Midnight—
I’m coming Home—
Day—got tired of Me—
How could I—of Him?
```
Sunshine was a sweet place—
I liked to stay—
But Morn—did’nt (sic) want me—now
So—Goodnight—Day!

I can look—cant I—
When the East is Red?
The Hills—have a way—then—
That puts the Heart—abroad—

You—are not so fair—Midnight—
I chose—Day—
But—please take a little Girl—
He turned away!

Dickinson could have been talking about several forms of rejection she experienced in her life. By choosing not to submit to the Christian religion under which she was raised, she was fearful of death and an end to life, often dwelling on heaven and the afterlife. Perhaps feeling that she had been rejected by God, she finally accepts that she belongs to the Midnight, or dark, rather than the Day, or light where God dwells. It may also refer to the people for whom she cared very deeply, but who were not able to reciprocate with the same affection. From her perspective, their failure to write her often (as was usually the case), resulted in their rejection of her. In this poem, her appeal for acceptance, either by God or people, is heartfelt and desperate.

Arthur Farwell, who reacted to Dickinson’s, “communication of inward states of the mind and soul,” preferred her poetry over all others, composing thirty-nine songs containing her poetry. His “Good Morning, Midnight!” Op.101, was included in a set of four Dickinson songs, composed in 1936. It begins very slowly and quietly, with a two bar introduction in the accompaniment. This piano part is deliberate, almost plodding, and remains in the bass clef for the majority of the song. A mournful bass line is framed by the tonic and dominant chords of E-flat minor, ending on a jazzy sounding C-flat minor ninth chord at the end of measure two (see Example 7). This two bar pattern is then repeated twice, with the entrance of the melody in
meas.3. The vocal part is divided into short phrases, revolving around the Eb minor triad, and often including the 7th, alternately raised or lowered. Along with the slow accompaniment, it gives the impression of weariness and reluctance.

**Example 7, ms.1-2**

As the poet reminisces about the light of day, a sudden shift occurs in the song. In meas.7-8, the phrase, “Sunshine was a sweet place, I liked to stay,” appears in the upper register, and the accompaniment also leaves the bass clef temporarily, hovering around a major tonality for several bars, as the music depicts the joy of daytime. But the realization that, “Morn didn’t want me now,” brings the poet slowly back to earth, and the singer has almost a full bar of rest before reluctantly yielding, “So good night, Day!” in meas.9-10.

The initial accompaniment returns in bar 11, with the continuation of the text, “I can look, can’t I? When the East is red?” The melodic line here is similar to the first section of the song, with slight variations. The line ascends for “puts the heart abroad,” in meas.15, sustaining “abroad,” as the poet temporarily feels the joy of day once again, just thinking about the hills. Then, in disappointment, she admits that, “You are not so fair, Midnight,” in meas.16, to the same melodic phrase as “Good Morning, Midnight!” of meas.3. Breaking free, the melody sails up to a
high G-flat in the next measure, on “I chose Day,” and for two bars, the music becomes more expansive, trying to capture once more the feeling of Day. In a desperate plea, the vocal part returns to the high G-flat to stress “please take a little Girl,” in meas.19. The accompaniment returns back to its plodding line, slowing down even more, and “He turned away,” is sung sorrowfully over the E-flat minor triad once again.

“Good morning, Midnight,” is the first song in John Duke’s *Six Poems by Emily Dickinson*, which also contains “Heart! We will forget him!” While it shares stylistic similarities to “Heart!”, Duke’s setting of “Good morning, Midnight” provides great contrast, showing how a composer can rely on different compositional tools to help express different poems. The accompaniment is much simpler, introducing an augmented version of the melody over soft C minor triads. The vocal part arrives in meas.4, echoing the melodic strains of the introduction, coming “home” to a sustained C in meas.7, over the C minor harmony in the accompaniment. With an *allegretto* tempo, Duke’s interpretation, although still downhearted, is less hesitant than Farwell’s, as if the poet is resigned to her fate (Example 8).

Example 8, ms.4-7
Duke also creates a new mood for the second stanza, with a three measure piano interlude before, “Sunshine was a sweet place,” in bar 15. Unlike the choppy phrases he used in “Heart! We will forget him!”, Duke now writes in long, lyric lines, placing this melody in the upper register, similar to Farwell. In meas.17, “I liked to stay,” the phrase swells with emotion, only to come back down for the dejected line, “But morn didn’t want me now,” in the subsequent measures.

There is a distinct third section, as the poet dares to ask if she can look towards day as the sun comes up, and there is a return to shorter phrases in the vocal part. These seem to suggest timidity at first, and then excitement, as the poet connects to the joy brought by day. The music grows from piano at the beginning of, “The hills have a way then,” in meas.28, to a forte for, “That puts the heart abroad.” As the poet reminisces, the music decrescendos and slows down, then returning to a tempo for the descending line, “You are not so fair, midnight,” in bar 34. “I chose Day,” is simple and matter-of-fact, but the last line, with an emphasis on, “please take a little girl,” implores Midnight to consider taking pity on the girl that Day, “turned away!” The accompaniment quietly concludes the piece, similarly to the introduction, ending softly on an open C minor chord.

André Previn may be best known as a world-renowned conductor and pianist, but he is also a composer, having achieved great success with his 1998 opera, A Streetcar Named Desire. He has also composed songs for a number of American singers, including Three Dickinson Songs, which he wrote for the soprano, Renée Fleming, in 1999. Each of the three poems chosen for this set include the imagery of morning, day, and night, with, “Good Morning Midnight” as the final song in the cycle.

Previn’s setting of “Good Morning Midnight” is similar to Farwell’s and Duke’s in that it
has three distinct sections, relating to the shifts in the text. The beginning is marked
“Reflectively,” with a quarter note at 66, and the singer is given some freedom with tempo as the
accompaniment only has one chord per measure for the first several bars. The first sonority played
by the piano includes two open fifths, and then the vocal part begins “morning” with a major
seventh interval. These intervals are both featured prominently throughout the song, in the
melody, as well as the accompaniment. For the phrase, “coming home,” in meas.3, Previn uses a
tonic sounding chord to suggest “home,” like Farwell does for the same phrase. His use of a C
major chord, however, suggests a warmer feeling towards Midnight, although it is somewhat
tainted by the minor sevenths in the right hand (see Example 9). A descending chromatic scale in
the melody illustrates Day growing tired in meas.4-5, and subsequently, the rhythm slows down to
indicate that the poet could never grow tired of him.

Example 9, ms.1-4

In a moment of transition, the initial melodic phrase is echoed in the right hand of the
accompaniment at meas.7, but the mood changes entirely at meas.10, where the tempo picks up
(“A little faster”), and the piano part creates a dream-like state, with a quick thirty-second note
embellishment in the right hand. “Sunshine was a sweet place,” is a very pure, lyrical phrase,
sitting in the upper register, and “I liked to stay” gently descends, expressing true contentment.

This dream state is interrupted with the appearance of dissonant major 7ths in the melody for, “But morn didn’t want me now,” in bars 14-15. A strong rallentando in meas.16 helps illustrate the regret felt by the poet in telling Day goodnight. The accompaniment replies with major 7ths in the bass, transitioning into the third section. The contour of these phrases and their rhythmic structure looks similar to the dream-state part of the middle section, but the mode is minor and the harmonies are much more dissonant.

The clash in the initial sonority at meas.23 brings out the pain in, “I can look, can’t I, When the East is red?” A rolled G7th chord on the downbeat of meas.27 sets up the beautifully arching line, “that puts the heart abroad.” As the vocalist sustains a high G for “abroad,” the top voicing in the accompaniment continues to ascend, building momentum to, “You are not so fair,” which spills over with a burst of anger, beginning with a high A and descending over an octave to F-sharp. After a pause, “midnight” is sung quietly with disappointment, as the G-natural in the vocal part clashes with the G-sharp in the accompaniment. The poet is not totally defeated, however, as the decisive phrase, “I chose day,” is sung strongly in the next measure, followed by a series of rising E major chords in the piano.

In measure 34, a swift figuration in the right hand of the accompaniment, similar to the beginning of the second section, descends to a sustained chord of open fifths, followed by the word, “but,” sung by itself. The piano part is repeated exactly in the next measure, emphasizing the poet’s hesitancy in finally asking Midnight to “please take a little girl,” sung as an E major descending scale over a sustained tone cluster in the accompaniment. The initial melodic phrase is quoted softly in the piano, perhaps foreshadowing that the poet really is “coming home” soon.
There is a rest of complete silence before the ascending line, "He turned away!" in meas.39, followed by a similar melodic quote in the bass of the piano part. A polytonal chord on the downbeat of meas.41 sets up the final phrase, and the only repeated text. "He turned away!" is sung again, with a similar melody as before, but floating a minor third higher on the final note, underscored by a canon of melodic quotes in the accompaniment, dying away to a pianissimo.

In each of these three songs, the composers rely on different elements to achieve their interpretations. Farwell’s deliberate tempo, economical accompaniment, incorporation of jazz harmonies, and short melodic phrases contribute to the reluctance and discouragement of his musical interpretation. Duke’s work also includes a simple textured accompaniment, but it is wider-ranging and provides the song with continued momentum. His use of varying length phrases in the vocal part emphasizes the changing moods throughout the text. Previn’s utilization of a more complex accompaniment and frequent use of non-traditional harmonies is integral to his interpretation, as well as his use of changing tempi and dynamic range.

What may be more interesting than the differences, however, are the similarities between these pieces. Each song contains four distinct sections, based on changes in the text, and the composers have essentially made the same divisions. The first section begins with, “Good morning midnight,” the second with, “sunshine was a sweet place,” the third with, “I can look, can’t I,” and the fourth with, “You are not so fair, midnight.” They also seem to have chosen similar phrases from the text to emphasize, notably, “Sunshine was a sweet place,” which begins the second section in each song, and “puts the heart abroad,” at the end of the third section. Each composer chose to treat, “Sunshine was a sweet place,” in a comparable manner, as compared in Example 10. In each song, this phrase moves to a higher register in the vocal part, and the
accompaniment shifts dramatically in mood. “That puts the heart abroad,” is written as an ascending line, emphasizing “abroad” in all three songs. Previn is the only composer to musically connect this phrase to the next, “You are not so fair.”

Example 10

a. Farwell

Sun-shine was a sweet place, I liked to stay But

b. Duke

Sun-shine was a sweet place I liked to stay.

c. Previn

A little faster \( \frac{d}{8} = 80 \)

Sun-shine was a sweet place. I liked to stay—
Wild Nights!

When selecting poems for the first published volume of Dickinson’s poetry in 1891, Thomas Wentworth Higginson hesitated to include “Wild Nights!”, concerned that, “the malignant read into it more than that virgin recluse ever dreamed of putting there.”26 The poet describes her desire to spend an exciting night with a certain gentleman, throwing all caution to the wind to be together. While some have interpreted the imagery of this poem to be sexual, contemporary scholars, like Dickinson’s friend, Higginson, believe instead that it, “signifi(ies) enclosure in an embrace, a powerful Victorian image.”27 The poem reads:

Wild Nights—Wild Nights!
Were I with thee
Wild Nights should be
Our luxury!

Futile—the Winds—
To a Heart in port—
Done with the Compass—
Done with the Chart!

Rowing in Eden—
Ah, the Sea!
Might I but moor—Tonight—
In Thee!

Higginson, in continuing his thoughts about the poem, exclaimed, “Yet what a loss to omit it! Indeed it is not to be omitted,”28 and he decided to include it.

Lee Hoiby must have been inspired on Christmas Day of 1986, as he wrote “Wild Nights” in its entirety on that day, and later included it in his song cycle, The Shining Place, which contains four other settings of Dickinson’s poetry. The wildness of the text is personified almost entirely in the accompaniment (Example 11), as the vocal part seems simple and almost pedantic by itself. With constant thirty-second notes at a 72 metronome marking, the piano part clips along at a fairly good pace, not letting up until the final chord of the song. Spanning a wide range, the
accompaniment arpeggiates up and down the keyboard, frequently changing dynamics and exploring a variety of tonal regions.

Example 11, ms.1-2

The vocal part arrives quietly in meas.3, as the first two “Wild Nights!” are contained within a whole step of each other. The excitement of this night is slowly revealed, as the melodic line from “thee” through the next “Wild Nights” gradually ascends a chromatic scale, increasing in volume and climaxing on a high G in meas.12, as the accompaniment has grown to a fortissimo.

The next measure is supposed to be held back, to draw out, “should be Our,” before returning to the original tempo at, “luxury!” The piano continues as a solo for three measures, expanding the tempo once more and diminishing in volume.

Melodically speaking, the next stanza of text gets more interesting, with more rhythmic variations (even syncopation, at “Heart in port,” meas.21-22), and larger intervals. “Done with the Compass,” in bars 23-24, sounds very march-like, followed by “Done with the Chart!”, where elongated note values emphasize “Done,” on a high F, and “Chart,” which is placed in the lower register, on a D (Example 12),
For the third stanza, the accompaniment slows from thirty-second notes to triplet sixteenths, and the time it takes for the piano to arpeggiate up and down the keys is doubled. To contribute to this expansion, the melodic phrases are lengthened, often with one word being stretched over two or more measures. The first phrase builds to “Eden” in meas.33, emphasizing the perfect garden that awaits their arrival. The anticipation of sailing away is expressed in, “Ah, the Sea!”, as the final word is sung over four full measures. The accompaniment begins to ascend
once again, and the vocal part resumes in meas.43, where “Might I” is sung on a C-sharp rising a perfect fourth to F-sharp, descending back to C-sharp for “but,” which quickly moves to “moor” on B. The melody remains on this B for the rest of the song, sustaining “thee” of, “moor tonight in thee,” for seven measures. It is interesting that this mid-range B is the final “mooring” point for the song, but perhaps it indicates the place that the poet is satisfied to remain, as long as she is with him. The piano concludes the song, continuing for six measures past the vocalist, gradually descending and slowing, closing with an E-major triad.

Edwin Penhorwood is an up and coming composer, as well as a faculty member at Indiana University. Among his published songs are two Dickinson settings, including “Wild Nights!”, composed in 1993. Like Hoiby’s setting, this song rushes along with a lot of adrenaline, propelled by an extremely fast accompaniment that is also based on ascending and descending arpeggiations, in parallel motion. Everything about this song is extreme: the dynamics encompass a wide range, often increasing from loud to louder (fortississimo at some points); the tempo, marked as Allegro con fuoco (Fast with fire), remains speedy throughout; and the vocal part sits in a very high tessitura, contributing to its dramatic effect. Penhorwood has also made an extreme decision regarding the text, electing to repeat the first two stanzas after the poem is sung once, omitting this first two lines. This decision definitely affects his interpretation of the poem, changing the destination of the song from, “Might I but moor tonight in thee!” to “Done with the compass, Done with the chart!”

From the fortissimo downbeat in the first bar of accompaniment to the entrance of the melody in meas.3, this song begins very dramatically. The “nights” of “Wild nights!” in the first two phrases is sustained on a high F-sharp, a dissonant tritone over the C-minor chords in the
piano part. This is followed by, “Were I with thee,” sounding like a trumpet fanfare. The subsequent phrase, “Wild nights should be our luxury,” is very similar in contour to the first melodic sequence, but with slightly different intervals.

At meas. 11, the dynamic is mezzo-piano for the first time in the song, and the lyrical melody is doubled in the accompaniment for, “Futile the winds to a heart in port.” It does not remain quiet for long, however, as the next measure is already at a forte dynamic, and “Done with the compass,” moves to a higher register. The music continues to propel forward, climaxing at “Done with the chart,” setting “Done” at a fortissimo high B-flat. “Rowing to Eden,” as meas. 18, returns to the middle register, and is melodically similar to “Futile the winds,” from meas. 11. At this point, the accompaniment has moved towards a constant triple eighth-note pattern, still moving in parallel motion.

“Ah! The sea!” and “Might I but moor,” from meas. 20 to 23, gradually ascend into the higher register, setting up for the more dramatic phrase, “tonight in thee!” in meas. 23 to 25. “Thee” is sustained on a high B-flat, clashing with the B-naturals in the accompaniment, finally resolving to a B-natural on beat three of meas. 25. The piano continues the momentum, increasing to a fortississimo dynamic, repeating the opening melody in the top voice, in preparation for the return of the first stanza, which starts in the second phrase, “Wild nights! should be our luxury!” The music from meas. 30 to 35 parallels meas. 7 through 12 exactly. “Done with a compass,” is raised a half step, and the final phrase, “Done with the chart,” by a whole step. In meas. 38, next to the fortissimo marking by the high C for “Done,” is the word enraptured, which suggests the euphoric state of mind held by the poet as she encounters the “Wild Night!” with reckless abandon. The piano part accelerates to the end, completing the song with a fortississimo
polychord containing a C major triad over a D major triad, at the very upper end of the keyboard.

Lori Laitman’s “Wild Nights” is included in her song cycle, *Days and Nights*, which contains three settings of Emily Dickinson, and three of other poets. “Wild Nights” dramatically concludes the cycle, and like Hoiby and Penhorwood’s versions, it moves along at a good rate. The accompaniment, however, is much thinner in texture, and instead of a fast motor rhythm, it relies alternately on a syncopated pattern and a steadier lyrical section in the middle, shown in contrast at Example 13. The vocal part requires a wider range than the other two songs, and often includes directions for the singer to slide from note to note, especially over larger intervals.

Laitman has made the decision to repeat parts of the text, but not out of order, like Penhorwood. At the end of the song, she does include the phrase, “Wild Nights!” one more time.

**Example 13. ms.3-4 and 39-42**
The accompaniment begins with a lyrical melody played *rubato* over rolled minor seventh chords, which transitions directly into the syncopated pattern in meas.3, played with octaves in the bass outlining an F major triad, and blocked chords in the right hand, alternating between F major and A-flat minor triads. “Wild Nights!”, in meas.5, begins on a high A and slides down to an A-flat, over an octave, and is repeated once before the more lyrical, “Were I with thee” in meas.8 and 9. The third “Wild Nights” slides down a perfect octave, and the succeeding phrase is slowly drawn out, with “luxury” stretched out dramatically over two measures. The melody for “luxury” is repeated in the accompaniment at bar 16, and the syncopated pattern returns at 17, with the repetition of the first stanza. This repetition is similar, musically, to the first section, but somewhat embellished, as if the poet gets increasingly excited just thinking about the “Wild Night!” For example, the second “Wild Nights!” goes up to a high B before returning to the low A. “Were I with thee” is repeated in meas.23-24, getting sequentially higher, and leading into the third “Wild Nights,” which descends a ninth, and then one more half step. “Luxury” lasts three measures, following a sequential pattern which is then continued in the accompaniment for three measures.

Like the other two settings of “Wild Nights,” the second stanza is treated more lyrically, with a *Flowing* ascending eighth note pattern, interspersed with excerpts of previous melodies. Beginning with “Futile the Winds,” this verse contains more sustained, lyrical phrases that sit very high. The musical climax for this section emphasizes, “To a heart in port,” rather than “Done with the Compass, Done with the Chart!”, which instead helps taper the section, preparing for a return to the *Primo Tempo* in meas.65. “Rowing in Eden,” contains a syncopated rhythm like the accompaniment and is repeated, but transposed higher. There is a sudden return to the lyric arpeggios in the accompaniment, as well as a softer dynamic, in meas.77, and “Might I but moor
Tonight” gently descends, echoing the melodic structure of “luxury” earlier.

A small ritardando occurs before “in Thee,” as if to hold back before unleashing the exhilaration felt by the author when she can finally enjoy his warm embrace. Laitman chooses to repeat this phrase three times, and each repetition rises to a higher register, ending on a high A for the final repetition, as the piano part crescendos and accelerates underneath. “Wild Nights!” is exclaimed once more in meas.88, sliding from a high B at fortissimo down an octave, as the accompaniment has an ascending glissando In conclusion, the vocalist has instructions to end on an unpitched “sizzling sound.” (Example 14)

Example 14 ms. 88-90

While there are distinct differences in these three interpretations of “Wild Nights!”, each composer uses similar techniques to portray the passion and excited anticipation of the text. A very fast tempo is prevalent in all three songs, and it is especially evident in the accompaniments of Hoiby’s and Penhorwood’s settings, with sixteenth and thirty-second note motor rhythms
continuous throughout. Each song contains a wide dynamic range, as well as a wide vocal range, most notably in Penhorwood's and Laitman's versions. Musical changes that reflect shifts in the text are also similar; for example, the phrases, "Futile the winds to a heart in port" and "Rowing to Eden!" are written more lyrically in relation to the rest of the vocal line of each song, respectively.

One interesting dissimilarity involves the conclusion of each song. Lee Hoiby is the only composer to keep the text completely intact, and therefore, his setting is the only one to end with, "Might I but moor tonight in Thee!" It is also the only song that slows down and grows quieter at its closing. The other two songs, on the other hand, include their loudest musical climax at the very end, as Penhorwood concludes with "Done with the chart," and Laitman with "Wild Nights!"

Discussion

While this analysis has given me a much broader perspective of art songs and a composer's creative process, it would have yielded different results had I changed my approach. Had I chosen different poems, composers, songs, or even a different poet, the results of my analysis could have taken on new angles. Rather than focusing on songs by a variety of composers, I could have analyzed works within a song cycle, such as Copland's 12 Poems of Emily Dickinson. This kind of analysis, however, is more frequently done, and I believe that the specific songs chosen for this project are being compared for the first time.

This analysis, by nature, is of course subjective, especially since I did not have the opportunity to actually talk to the composers and ask them about their writing process or their thoughts on a particular piece. My analysis, therefore, is based primarily on my own observations
and interpretations of their compositions, relying on my own musical knowledge and the expertise of others. By comparing the same components in each song, however, I attempted to make my analysis as even and objective as possible.

Concluding Remarks

This analytical project has taught me an immeasurable amount, shedding new light on poetry, Emily Dickinson, the structure of an art song, American composers, and the process of translating an existing poem into a musical interpretation. Going back to the first songs I studied, the settings of “Heart! We will forget him,” by Aaron Copland and John Duke, I am now able to understand what individualizes these interpretations. In the future, I know I will be more aware of details in any song I sing, and how they relate to the entire piece and text.

My hope is that this analysis can serve as a unique contribution to the research of American art songs and the interpretation of Emily Dickinson’s poetry. It provides a very specific focus, and includes detail where other analyses of these songs has been much more broad. It may also benefit vocalists who enjoy singing contemporary art songs, inviting them to take a closer look at this selection of American literature. It should give them detailed insight into the structure behind these songs, encouraging them to draw their own conclusions regarding a composer’s musical interpretation.
Notes


8. Ibid., p.33.


12. Lowenberg, *Musicians wrestle everywhere*, p.34.


15. Ibid., p.xxiv.

16. Ibid., p.31.

17. Ibid., p.32.

18. Ibid., p.34.


39
20. Friedberg, *American Art Song and American Poetry*, p.120.

21. Ibid., p.125.

22. Ibid., p.11.


25. Habegger, *My Wars Are Laid Away in Books*, p.405. This poem count is according to R.W. Franklin’s recent tally; Johnson believed it was 366 poems in 1862.


27. Ibid., p.180.
Appendix: Scores of Songs
To Marcelle de Manziarly

5. Heart, we will forget him

Music by
AARON COPLAND

VOICE

Very slowly (dragging) \( d \approx 60 \) "p"

Heart ... we will for -

PIANO

very expressive and legato

You and I, to-night.

You may for-get the warmth he

gave.

I will for-get the light...

*Grace note on the beat*
moving forward

When you have done, pray tell me,

That I my thoughts may dim

return to - - - - a tempo)

Haste lest while you're lagging, I

may re - mem - ber him.
Heart! We will forget him
(1967 - 1999)

Moderately slow (\( \text{d} = 66 \))

Heart! We will forget him, you and I.

Heart! We will forget him to-night.

You will forget the warmth he gave,
I will forget the light,
Baksa: Emily Dickinson Songs

that I my thoughts may dim.

Haste! lest while you’re lagging, lest while you’re lagging

I may remember him,

I may remember him.
Baksa: Emily Dickinson Songs

I will forget the light.

Heart!

we will forget him, you and I tonight.

When you have done pray tell me
2. Heart! We will forget him!

Passionato \( \text{J} = 100 \)

You and I to-night:

You may forget the warmth he gave
When you have done, pray tell me
That
I will forget the light:
I may straight begin!

Haste! lest while you're lagging I re-

member him!
Good Morning, Midnight!

Poem by
Emily Dickinson

Music by
Arthur Farwell
Op. 101, No. 4

Slowly

Good morning Mid-night!

I'm com-ing home,
Day got tired of me
How could I of him?

Sun-shine was a sweet place,
I liked to stay
But Morn did'nt want me now...
So good night, Day! I can look, cant I?

When the East is red? The hills have a way, then, that puts the heart a-broad.

You are not so fair, Mid-night I chose Day. But

please take a lit-tle Girl He turned a-way!
Good morning, Midnight, I'm coming home.

Day got tired of me How could I of

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WARNING! Any person who copies or arranges all or part of the words or music of this musical
Sunshine was a sweet place— I liked to stay. But morn didn't want me now, So good night day!
I can look—can't I—

When the East is red?
The hills have a way
then That puts the heart a-

rit. — a tempo

broad.

You are not so fair, mid-night,
I chose Day.

But please take a little girl.

rit. — — a tempo

He turned away!

43

SMP 2345-25
3. Good Morning Midnight

Reflectively $J = \text{ca. 66}$

Good morning midnight, I'm coming home.

Day got tired of me. How could I of him?

A little faster $J = 80$

Sunshine was a sweet place.

I liked to stay--

But morn didn't want me now, So good night day!
I can look, can’t I, When the East is red? The hills have a way then

that puts the heart abroad. You are not so fair, midnight.

I chose day but

please take a little girl...

He turned away! He turned away!
WILD NIGHTS

Emily Dickinson

Allegro (~ = 72)

con ped.

Wild Nights—

Wild Nights!

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"WARNING! Any person who copies or arranges all or part of the words or music of this musical composition shall be liable to an action for injunction, damages and profits under the United States Copyright Law."
Were I with thee

Wild

Nights
tratt.  molto  a tempo

should be Our lux u ry!

tratt.  molto  a tempo

allargando

dim. ed allargando

a tempo

Fu tile the Winds To a

a tempo

Heart in port
Wild Nights!

for Connie

Emily Dickinson

Allegro con fuoco  \( \text{\textbf{\textit{\( d = 120 - 132 \)}}} \)

Edwin Penhorwood

Wild nights!

Wild nights!

Were

I with thee,

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Wild nights should be our luxury!

Futile the winds to a heart in port,
cresc. poco a poco

E - den!

Ah!

the

E - den!

Ah!

the

E - den!

Ah!

the

E - den!

Ah!

the

E - den!

Ah!

the

E - den!

Ah!

the

E - den!

Ah!

the

E - den!

Ah!

the

E - den!

Ah!

the

E - den!

Ah!

the

E - den!

Ah!

the

E - den!

Ah!

the

E - den!

Ah!

the

E - den!

Ah! The
be our luxury!

Futile the winds to a

heart in port,

Done with the
compass,

Done with the
cresc.
colla voce

a tempo
chart.

a tempo
cresc.
Wild Nights

for Melissa Coombs

EMILY DICKINSON

LORI LAITMAN

J= 168

Wild Nights!—Wild Nights!—Were I with
your Wild Nights!—Wild Nights!—Were I with
thee

lyric

simile...

lyric

simile...

sing.

lyric

simile...

sing.
our luxury!

Nights! Were I with thee

pianist-take time on triplet

Wild Nights! Wild Nights!
Flowing  accel.

Pedal ad lib

Slower, Flowing

Slower, Flowing  lyric, legato

Pedal every 2 measures

Fu
Rowing in Eden

Ah, the Sea!

Rowing in Eden

Ah, the
Sea!

Might I but moor To-night

in Thee!

poco a poco cresc.
poco a poco cresc. accel.

Thee!

poco a poco cresc. accel.

a sizzling sound
hiss here - no pitch

Wild Nights! Sss__

gliss on black keys
Selected Bibliography


