

Spanish composer, Fernando Obradors was a conductor and pianist whose love of music was instilled in him by his mother. Although he was a largely self-taught composer, he eventually ended up in Paris to continue his music study. He wrote in a variety of genres but vocal music is among his most well-known. *Canciones clásicas españolas* are settings of seven Spanish poems spanning multiple centuries and multiple poets. The overarching theme of this cycle is love, whether it is a romantic interest, family member, or friend. The influence of Spanish dances, flamenco, and Spanish guitar are highlighted through specific melodic flourishes, harmonic textures, and dance-like rhythms throughout the set.

*La mi sola, Laureola* is inspired by a 16th century Spanish song (solmization *villancico*) wherein the text corresponds to solfege syllables (la mi sol la). The melody and harmony highlight the melancholic words of Leriano, who longs for Laureola.

La mi sola, Laureola.	My only, Laureola.
Yo el cautivo Leriano	I the captive Leriano
aunque mucho estoy ufano	Although I am very proud
Herido de aquella mano	Wounded from that hand
Que en el mundo es una sola.	That in the world there is only one.
La mi sola, Laureola.	My only, Laureola.

*Al amor* provides a sharp energetic contrast to *La mi sola, Laureola*. The poet for these lyrics is 17th century poet, Cristobal de Castillejo, a staunch advocate for the use of traditional Spanish poetic form over that of the Italian. The accompaniment imitates the excited heartbeat of infatuation. Skittering flourishes in the melody evoke a heart skipping a beat in anticipation. The dancing rhythms emulate the passion of a new relationship.

Dame amor, besos sin cuento	Give me love, kisses without count
Asido de mis cabellos	Grabbing my hair
Y mil y ciento tras ellos	And 1000 and 100 after them
Y tras ellos mil y ciento	And after them 1000 and 100
Y despues...de muchos millares, tres!	And after...of many thousands, three.
Y porque nadie lo sienta	And why no one feels it
Desbaratamos la cuenta	Let's forget the count
Y...contemos al revés.	And...count backwards.

*¿Corazón, porqué pasáis?* narrates the worries and uncertainties of a young lover's perception of her beloved. Rapid rhythms in the accompaniment mirrors the staccato of an unsure heart. also Dissonant harmonies also create uncomfortable feelings of uncertainty. A chromatic melody and mixed meter further embody the riddle that is an undetermined love story.

¿Corazón, porqué pasáis	Heart, why do you pass
Las noches de amor despierto	The nights of love awake
Si vuestro dueño descansa	If your owner rests
En los brazos de otro dueño?	In the arms of another?
Ah!	Ah!

The anonymous 18<sup>th</sup> century lyrics of *El majo celoso* describe a young lover's jealousy and the attempts of the beloved to quell those jealous emotions. Hurried, staccato articulations of the accompaniment indicate the beloved's anxiety as they try to instill a level of trust in their partner. Shifting tonalities and articulations capture the different tactics she attempts.

Del majo que me enamora  
 He aprendido la queja  
 Que una y mil veces suspira  
 Noche tras noche en mi reja.  
 Lindezas, me muero de amor loco y fiero  
 Quisiera olvidarte mas quiero y no puedo!  
 Le han dicho que en la Pradera  
 Me han visto con un chispero  
 Desas de malla de seda  
 y chupa de terciopelo.  
 Malezas, te quiero, no creas que muero  
 De amores perdida por ese chispero.

Of the nice guy that make me fall in love  
 I have learned the complaint  
 That one and 1000 times sighs  
 Night after night in my window.  
 Darling, I am dying of love crazy and wild  
 I want to forget you but I want to and I cannot!  
 They have told him that in the meadow  
 They have seen me with another  
 One of silk garments  
 and velvet jackets.  
 Darling, I love you, you don't know that I'm  
 dying of love helpless for another.

*Con amores, la mi madre* resembles a lullaby but, in this case, is sung by the young woman to her mother. The lyrics come from a 15<sup>th</sup> century poem by Juan Anchieta, a Basque composer of the Renaissance. The young woman's quasi lullaby is an attempt to calm her own psyche to find peace after a past relationship. The rocking accompaniment conjures the motion of the rocking chair she uses to soothe herself.

Con amores, la mi madre,  
 Con amores me dormí;  
 Así dormida soñaba  
 lo que el corazón velaba.  
 Que el amor me consolaba  
 Con más bien que merecí;  
 Adormecióme el favor  
 que amor me dio con amor  
 Dio descanso a mi dolor  
 La fe con que le serví.  
 Con amores, la mi madre,  
 Con amores me dormí.

With love, my mother,  
 With love I fall asleep;  
 So asleep I dreamed  
 of what the heart watched.  
 That love consoled me  
 With more good than I deserved;  
 The aid lulled me to sleep  
 What love gave me with love  
 Give rest to my pain  
 The faith with which I served  
 With love, my mother,  
 With love I fall asleep.

The lyrics of *Del cabello más sutil* originate from a traditional Spanish folk song. Obradors' delicate setting evokes the beloved being drawn closer by the braids in her hair. She daydreams that she is the cup that "kisses his lips" every time he takes a drink. The flowing arpeggios of the piano provide a fluid stream of sound to surround the delicate vocal line and envelop the tenderness of the poetry.

Del cabello más sutil  
 Que tienes en tu trenzado  
 He de hacer una cadena  
 para traerte a mi lado.  
 Una alcarraza en tu casa,  
 Chiquilla, quisiera ser,  
 Para besarte en la boca  
 Cuando fueras a beber. Ah!

Of the most subtle hair  
 That you have in your braids  
 I have to make a chain  
 To bring you to my side  
 A carcass in your house  
 Little girl, I would like you to be  
 To kiss you on the mouth  
 When you went to drink. Ah!

*Chiquitita la novia* begins with extravagant bravado followed by a flashy vocal cadenza. There is no sense of subtlety in its musical setting or language; a sharp contrast to the previous song. A *flamenco* influence is readily apparent in the vivid accompaniment imitating the rhythmic flourishes of a Spanish guitar. The lyrics were taken from an unspecified Spanish songbook and describe a wedding: the bride, the bridegroom, and a bed. What happens after is left up to the imagination. The song ends in the same way it began, holding nothing back.

Ah!  
Chiquitita la novia, chiquito el novio,  
Chiquitita la sala u el dormitorio.  
Por eso yo quiero chiquitita la cama  
Y el mosquitero.  
Ah!

Ah!  
Little girlfriend, little boyfriend  
Little room and the bedroom.  
That's why I want the tiny bed  
And the mosquito net.  
Ah!

Translations © Kalli Sonnenburg, 2020

### **A Suite O'Bairnsangs (1953)**

### **Thea Musgrave (b.1928)**

Scottish composer and conductor, Thea Musgrave, studied at the Paris conservatory with Nadia Boulanger, a highly sought after musical mind. *A Suite O Bairnsangs* was commissioned for the Scottish Festival at Braemar while Musgrave was still a student of Boulanger's. Musgrave's musical language and texture has been described as rich and powerful with a strong sense of drama. Her works span many genres, including vocal solos, operas, and orchestral works. This particular set is of five poems and nursery rhymes by Maurice Lindsay, an award-winning Scottish broadcaster, writer, and poet. The songs are witty and childlike with contrasting moods to draw the listener in. Each song reveals a child's perception of the world with curiosities about God or a higher power, who they are, and how their actions affect the world.

*The Man-in-the-Mune* is a curious opening number filled with pointillistic articulations that bring out a childlike character in an otherwise harmonically complex setting.

The man in the mune's got a cleikintheback  
An he wllna come oot tae play.  
He sits by himsel on a shimmer o Heaven  
An hears what the starnies say,  
But his cheeks gae back.  
He purls his broo  
an his auld heid shaks wi' rage  
Thru the reengan clouds that jostle the yirth,  
Whan God's on the rampage.

The man in the moon's got a crick in his back  
So he will not come out to play.  
He sits by himself on a crossbar of heaven  
And hears what the stars say,  
But his cheeks go black  
He furls his brow  
And his old head shakes with rage  
Through the bustling clouds that jostle the  
earth when God's on the rampage.

The use of the Locrian mode in *Daffins* (Daffodils) paints a mysterious atmosphere for a beautiful and lyrical melody. The unwavering and dissonant piano arpeggios create an unsettling stream of sound. Lyrics and music come together to evoke the image of a deity that controls the weather and affects nature.

The wind that blew yestreen,  
Gar't trees aa rear their heids  
An warsse i the dark as gin  
It socht tae steal their cleeds.  
It maun hae shogged the sun  
Birlan abune the warld,  
For off his flaman fiery baa,  
A few bricht gairs it harled  
Syne drapt them roun' the fruits  
O ilk forfochen tree.  
Cool lauchan pools o yalla licht  
Daffins maist blyth tae see.

The wind that blew last night,  
Made trees rear up their heads  
And wrestle as it tried to steal  
The clothes from off their beds.  
It must have shaken the sun  
Birling around the world  
For off his flaming fiery ball  
A few bright sparks it hurled  
And dropped them round the roots  
Of every breathless tree.  
Cool laughing pools of yellow light  
Daffins most fair to see.

The jolly and upbeat nature of *Willie Wabster* portrays childlike imagination. The quick tempo and rhythms make a tongue-twister of the text, offering the playfulness of a child's storytelling and questioning. It is the most humorous of the set as Musgrave cleverly captures the playfulness of Lindsay's text. The words suggest that Willie Wabster has control over the movements in the sky: the stars, the sun, and the moon. But who is Willie Wabster?

Hae ya seen Willie Wabster?  
He;s well-kennt frae Scrabster  
Tae yont the siller Tweed.

Have you seen Willie Wabster?  
He's well known from Scrabster  
South to the silver Tweed.

He scarts his fingers owre the lift,  
An sets the starns a shoggin  
When thunnerclouds'll haurdly drift,  
He gies ilk yin ajoggin.  
An when the mune off-ends his sicht,  
He coosts it owre his shoulder,  
An while's tae snuff the sun's gowd light  
His winds begin tae fluther.

He runs his fingers through the sky  
To keep the stars a moving  
When thunder clouds go slowly by,  
He gives them each a shoving.  
And when the moon off-ends his sight,  
He casts it o'er his shoulder;  
And so's to snuff the sun's bright light  
His winds go swaggering bolder.

He gars come dingan on the town,  
The raindrops oot o heaven,  
Draps frae his pooch an dangles doun  
In bauns, the colours seven  
Sma winner that I'm aften scared,  
For I'm no certain whether  
He's God himsel, the warld's ae laird  
Or jist his clerk-o-wether.

He makes the raindrops out of Heaven  
Come driving on the town,  
He drops and dangles down  
In ribbons, all the colours seven.  
Small wonder that I'm often scared  
For I'm not certain whether  
He's God, the landlord of the world,  
Or just his clerk of weather.

Perhaps the most enchanting song of the set, *A Bairn's Prayer at Nicht* is also the most simple in melody and harmonic texture. The limited melodic range allows for the sweetness and simplicity of a young child's voice. The accompaniment's trance-like quality grounds the words of the prayer in naïve sincerity.

The starns crack the lift tae let light in.  
Sae please may the holes let oot my sin.

The stars crack the sky to let light in.  
So please may the holes let out my sin.

The final song of this set, *The Gean (The Cherry Tree)*, embodies nature's vitality. "Trees dancing in the winds of Spring" are highlighted by Musgrave's sprightly and syncopated rhythms. The "earworm" of the verse is destabilized by chromatic harmonies when describing the cherry tree who stands "ladylike and proud". Could the cherry tree be expressing disapproval of the supposed immaturity of the other trees?

Aa the trees are dansan wi the winds  
of spring  
Ilka greenleaf glancan in a hielan fling.  
Abies thunder geantree  
sae ledylik and prood  
Tosht up for aa the lave tae sae  
wi tassels o a cloud.

All the trees are dancing with the winds  
Of spring  
Every green leaf glancing in a highland fling.  
Except for yonder cherry tree  
so ladylike and proud  
Dressed up for all the rest to see  
With tassels of a cloud.

Translations © Maurice Lindsay, 1950

### **The Shape of Love** **A cycle conceived by Kalli Sonnenburg**

These songs were chosen to tell a love story. As different genres and decades of music are represented, so are the different stages of a relationship. Our story begins as a woman dreams about her perfect love story (*Dream a Little Dream of Me*). She finds herself falling for someone but, because of past hurts, she hesitates to admit it (*If I Loved You*). As their relationship progresses, emotional and physical connections form and deepen. While our protagonist fears getting too emotionally attached she finds herself getting caught up in the physicality of their relationship (*Fever*). She eventually begins to trust him and admits to being "crazy in love" (*How Sweet It Is*). Unfortunately, her insecurities begin to surface and she begins to second guess their relationship. She questions the sincerity of his intentions and worries that another woman could be a better choice than her (*Jolene*). Her lover swears he did nothing wrong and that she shouldn't be worried (*Billie Jean*). However, his reassurances are not enough and she ends the relationship. She feels as though she's wasted her time wants nothing to do with him (*Don't Speak*). Flash forward to a few years later and the two reconnect but there are still too many unresolved feelings (*With Him*). She leaves him again and mourns, resigning herself to the fact that he was never hers to lose in the first place (*August*). Our love story comes full circle with our protagonist feeling hopeful that she might find love again (*I Wanna Dance With Somebody*).

Thank you to Mandy Moreno for her excellent musicianship and for her help in co-creating the arrangements for this set.

**Dream a Little Dream of Me (1931)****Dreams**

This now standard American tune was written by Fabian Andre, Wilbur Schwandt, and Gus Kahn. It became a favorite of many recording artists including Ella Fitzgerald, Louis Armstrong, Doris Day, and Cass Elliot, to name a few. It has also enjoyed success in multiple countries, including the US, UK, South Africa, and Ireland.

**If I Loved You from *Carousel* (1945)****Hesitation**

From Roger and Hammerstein's 1945 musical *Carousel*, this timeless ballad not only highlights the desires of Billy and Julie, but it highlights their fears and reservations as well. This love song is built off of conditions and the word "if" is used quite frequently, so as not to give too much away emotionally. They both are fearful of what the other might think of them and don't want to admit that they are just human. No matter what they say though, it is clear that they care deeply for each other and by the end of the full duet, it is clear that they do love each other.

**Fever (1956)****Passion**

This sultry song, penned by Otis Blackwell and Eddie Cooley, was originally recorded by the artist Little Willie John but is largely associated with the recording by Peggy Lee in 1958, though her version altered slightly in music and lyrics. Since then, many artists have recorded this song including Elvis Presley, Christina Aguilera, Beyonce, and Madonna. This song is obviously not about an actual fever but is about the physical rush of desire.

**How Sweet It Is (1965)****Elation**

Originally sung by the American singer Marvin Gaye, this song has been recorded by artists in many genres, including pop, soul, and even country. Writers, Holland and the Dozier brothers, were a songwriting team who defined the "Motown sound." This joyous song that was supposedly written because a man needed a fantasy world since the woman he loved barely knew he existed. James Taylor's remake of this chart-topping song enjoyed great success as well.

**Jolene (1974)****Insecurity**

This is arguably one of Dolly Parton's most famous and most performed songs, still popular to this day. In fact, it won the 2017 Grammy Award for Best Country Duo/Group Performance for her version with pop *a capella* group, Pentatonix. Ms. Parton wrote it because she was nervous that her husband would be taken away by a stunning red-headed woman who worked at their bank. Parton needn't have worried. She and her husband have been married since 1966. *Rolling Stone* magazine includes this song in their list: "The 500 Greatest Songs of All Time."

**Billie Jean (1983)****Defense**

This Grammy Award winning song was recorded by Michael Jackson in 1982 and subsequently released in 1983 on his album *Thriller*, considered to be the best-selling album of all time. True events inspired this song as he was being harassed by a fan who insisted that he was the father of her child. He wrote this to deny her accusations.

**Don't Speak (1995)****Heartbreak**

This indie pop/alternative hit by Gwen Stefani and her brother, Eric Stefani, appears on No Doubt's album, *Tragic Kingdom*. Originally written as a love song about Gwen and her then boyfriend, it went through several edits and, after their relationship ended, this final draft was the result. The lyrics were Gwen's way of saying that she doesn't want to talk about the relationship or why it ended because it hurts too much.

**With Him (2019)****Echo**

From the outstanding album *Love Me Love Me Not: The Music of Joey Contreras*, this breathtaking ballad encapsulates the feelings of pain, nostalgia and loss upon seeing a former and realizing how much you still love and miss them despite the passage of time: jealousy you feel over the new relationship they're in and how fine they seem to be without you in their life and anger at yourself for still feeling so deeply for them even though you know you never were going to be enough for them.

**August (2020)****Healing**

From Taylor Swift's quarantine project "Folklore", this song is part of a trio that tells the story of a love triangle. The point of view of *August* is that of the "outsider". She is remembering the meaningful, yet short-lived relationship she had with the man in August and wishes the relationship could've been real and that they could be together. But, in the end she realizes he didn't feel the same way about her. Swift's co-writer, Jack Antonoff, is a popular indie pop/rock musician who has worked with names such as Sara Bareilles, Lorde, and Troye Sivan. He has played a significant role in Swift's music, especially in her most recent albums: *Lover*, *Folklore*, and *Evermore*.

**I Wanna Dance With Somebody (1987)****Hope**

This chart-topping hit recorded by Whitney Houston has become a pop classic. George Merrill and Shannon Rubicam worked together to produce this hit for Ms. Houston after their success with her song "How Will I Know," in 1985. Rubicam says the song was meant to speak to someone's wish to dance through life with a special someone. Reportedly, Houston's label was concerned that the song wasn't suitable for her however, history has proved them wrong. The songs won the Grammy Award for Best Female Pop Vocal Performance and topped the charts in 13 other countries.