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VIRGIL THOMSON: THREE PICTURES

A SOLEMN MUSIC | A JOYFUL FUGUE | THE FEAST OF LOVE |
COLLECTED POEMS | FIVE SONGS FROM WILLIAM BLAKE

VIRGIL THOMSON (1896–1989)

A SOLEMN MUSIC

A JOYFUL FUGUE

THE FEAST OF LOVE

COLLECTED POEMS

FIVE SONGS FROM WILLIAM BLAKE

THREE PICTURES FOR ORCHESTRA

THOMAS MEGLIORANZA baritone

KRISTEN WATSON soprano

BOSTON MODERN ORCHESTRA PROJECT

GIL ROSE, CONDUCTOR

[1] **A SOLEMN MUSIC** (1961–62) 6:47

[2] **A JOYFUL FUGUE** (1961–62) 4:54

[3] **THE FEAST OF LOVE** (1964) 7:43
Thomas MeglIORANZA, baritone

[4] **COLLECTED POEMS** (1959) 4:55
Thomas MeglIORANZA, baritone
Kristen Watson, soprano

FIVE SONGS FROM WILLIAM BLAKE (1951)
Thomas MeglIORANZA, baritone

[5] **The Divine Image** 2:25

[6] **Tiger! Tiger!** 2:26

[7] **The Land of Dreams** 2:54

[8] **The Little Black Boy** 3:48

[9] **And Did Those Feet** 3:02

THREE PICTURES FOR ORCHESTRA

[10] **The Seine at Night** (1947) 8:57

[11] **Wheat Field at Noon** (1948) 6:20

[12] **Sea Piece with Birds** (1952) 4:22

TOTAL 58:31



BETTY FREEMAN

By Virgil Thomson

Comparing history to a stream, no doubt an urgent idea when new, seems nowadays less vigorous, especially regarding the arts. So also does belief in their continuing progress, as if any series of related events involved necessarily a destination.

Myself, I prefer to think of the arts as a museum or as a wine cellar. These comparisons would leave room for paying honor to great soils, great years, great workmen, also for preserving ancient methods. Museums and libraries are mainly devoted anyway to conserving works and ways that it is no longer practical to imitate.

Gertrude Stein used to say that nothing changes from generation to generation except what people are looking at. Actually, what people have thought they were looking at, arranged in chronological order, makes up whatever consistent fairy tale that history can be imagined to illustrate. And though repeating patterns do seem to recur in any such narrative, organic development is notoriously difficult to identify. In the arts, certainly, the creating, elaborating, and transmitting of techniques are basic procedures, but among these there are few long-term growths. They are more like inventions—say the fish net, the wheelbarrow, or pie crust—which once they have come miraculously into being stay on. And as for the game of “influences,” which reviewers, and sometimes even historians, like to play, it is in my view about as profitable a study as who caught cold from whom when they were all sitting in the same draft.

Nevertheless, since what people are looking at changes constantly, everything can seem to be changing. Also, the things that don’t change, like wheelbarrows and fish nets and pie crust, are always there. Playing games and eating and childbirth and death, for example,

change almost not at all; they merely get arranged into stories about people doing them, into literature. And in this literature people move around and talk; sometimes they even sing. This makes for plays and films and operas. And in all these kinds of entertainment the element that affects people most intensely, that makes chills to run up and down the spine, the digestive apparatus to work faster, and the breath to hold or catch, is music. This element has no precise meaning and no dictionary. But it does provoke intensities; and it provokes these so rapidly and so powerfully that all the other elements—the verbal ones and the visual ones for sure—more often than not call on music's transports for reinforcing their own cooler communications. Music's lack of specific meaning, moreover, allows it to be attached to other continuities without contradicting them. The way that singing can give acoustical reinforcement to speech—can shape it, help it to run along and to carry—this is music's gift to liturgical observances, to prayers, hymns, and magical incantations, as well as to mating ceremonials like social dancing....

Now the defining of our sentiments has long been a preoccupation of religions and of governments. And the most powerful of these tie-ups has always been music's marriage to poetry. Music has no connection at all with touch, taste, or smell; and Muzak piped into art galleries has never taken on. Films and dancing do require music, but they don't want it overcomplex. Actually Igor Stravinsky's most elaborate ballet scores—*Petrouchka*, say, and *The Rite of Spring*, even *The Firebird*—have tended to shed their choreographies and to survive purely as concert pieces.

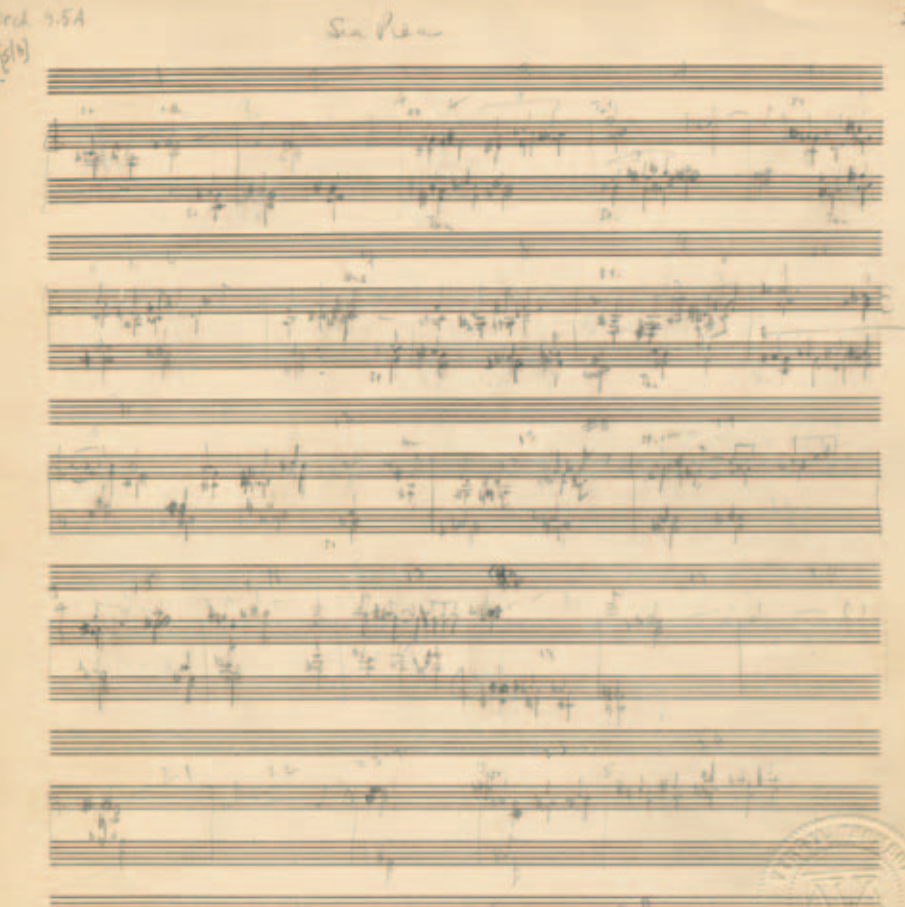
More durable matings have long taken place between music and words, and the music in any such union is likely to prove stronger than the words. How often has a fine melody worn out its verse and taken on another! Or crossed a frontier and changed its language! Tunes move as easily from the secular to the sacred as from the Ganges to the Mississippi. And all that is part of the way things change in what people are looking at. What does not change, or hardly at all, is the way words and music fit when they do fit. That too seems to

be a constant. Instrumental styles vary with fashion, but the singing of prose and poetry changes little throughout the life of a language....

The question often asked, "Where is music going?" is to my mind unanswerable because I cannot see it going anywhere. Nor is anyone standing on its bank. Music, to my view, is not a stream in which a composer drops his line and with luck pulls up a fine fish. Nor is it a mysterious wave-force traveling from past to future which may, also with luck, carry us to higher ground. It is not like that at all. It is merely everything that has been done or ever can be done with music's permanent materials. These are rhythm, pitch, and singing. The first, being mainly imitation, is highly communicative. The second, let us call it harmony, is calculative in the handling, intensely passional in the result. The third, the words-and-music operation, appeals to everybody and is the avenue, almost the only avenue, to lasting fame. But it is also a discipline, never forget, and a game, like chess or contract bridge, to be played for high stakes against religions, governments, and music's whole secular establishment. That play, which will decide your life or death as an artist, cannot be avoided.

The purpose of this essay is to warn young composers away from a relaxed attitude toward their art. Look out, I say, lest its permanent pitfalls trip you. Music itself is not in motion. But you are. So do be watchful. Please. Unless, of course, you are a "natural" and can write music without remembering its past. But that involves the discipline of spontaneity, the toughest of all disciplines. Just try it sometime.

Virgil Thomson, *Virgil Thomson: A Reader, Selected Writings 1924-1984* ("Music Does Not Flow")



VIRGIL THOMSON PAPERS MSS20 GLIMORE MUSIC LIBRARY, YALE UNIVERSITY

NOTES

A SOLEMN MUSIC (1961–62) was premiered in 1962 by the New York Philharmonic, under the direction of Nadia Boulanger, and A JOYFUL FUGUE (1961–62) was premiered in 1963 by the Philadelphia Orchestra, conducted by Eugene Ormandy. Both works are scored for full orchestra.

THE FEAST OF LOVE (1964) was commissioned by the Library of Congress and premiered in 1964 by David Clatworthy, baritone, and the National Symphony Orchestra under Walter Hendl. The work is scored for baritone and chamber orchestra.

COLLECTED POEMS (1959) is scored for soprano, baritone, and chamber orchestra.

FIVE SONGS FROM WILLIAM BLAKE (1951) was commissioned by the Louisville Philharmonic Society for American baritone, Mack Harrell, who gave its world premiere in Louisville in 1952. The songs are scored for baritone and orchestra.

THREE PICTURES FOR ORCHESTRA, comprised of three independent works for full orchestra—The Seine at Night (1947), Wheat Field at Noon (1948), and Sea Piece with Birds (1952)—is the result of three separate commissions from the Kansas City Symphony, the Louisville Orchestra, and the Dallas Symphony Orchestra, respectively.

By Charles Fussell

What was it about Virgil Thomson that made him endlessly fascinating to so many people? He was kind, generous with his friendship, not inclined to estrangement once he accepted you, witty, and a superb cook who knew how to select just the right mix of dinner guests. He was also notorious for being loud and rude, especially in a noisy restaurant, after his hearing had failed. With clanging background noise and loud conversations, he would simply nod off, unable to participate in the table talk. Always a provocateur at heart, he loved to inject

startlingly rude remarks to draw attention to himself, and it was during these fits that the only person who could calm him was Paul Sanfaçon, the painter Maurice Grosser's younger partner. In those years, Paul and Maurice were Virgil's close family.

Paul Sanfaçon was a thoroughly capable younger man who was of great help to both Maurice and Virgil as they grew older. Alas, both Maurice and Paul died before their beloved friend, a loss Virgil once expressed as more than he could bear. Those who knew Virgil longest and best—including his secretaries Louis Rispoli and Jay Sullivan, friends Richard and Norma Flender, Betty Allen, Craig Rutenberg, Gerald Burby, plus a long list of younger composers and performers—were deeply taken with this captivating, many-sided human being. He had opinions on everything and was intolerant of contradictions. Yet, over his long years, he was generous and kind to an army of companions and is remembered with deep admiration and affection. When the remaining friends are together, it is some measure of greatness that we never fail to speak of him, sharing an endless slew of hilarious stories stemming from his naughty wit, all the while feeling him very much alive in our collective presence. These remembrances give us a feeling of continuity in and appreciation for our past ties to this wonderful man.

I met Virgil Thomson in 1977 at a dinner given by mutual friends in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, and we continued to see each other at the Chelsea Hotel, his home in New York City, as he used to say, “for only the past 40 years!” At that time, I was teaching at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, and conducting their new music ensemble. In December 1979, we presented an all-Thomson festival of chamber, orchestral, and choral music, attended by Thomson, Jack Larson (his librettist for *Lord Byron* and author of a new choral text, *A Peace Place*, being given its premiere), along with Maurice Grosser, and many friends from New York and Boston. Our orchestral concert included *The Feast of Love*, *Five Songs from William Blake*, and *The Plow that Broke the Plains*, and an on-stage interview with Thomson and me.

Over the next few years, I became acquainted with Thomson's major works, saw in action his ideas about text setting, orchestration, and the general clarity and directness of his musical language. With him, I attended performances and recording sessions of his two Gertrude Stein operas, chamber concerts in Boston, Washington, DC, and New York City, and conducted many of his chamber works during my years in Boston. Additionally, I transcribed *A Joyful Fugue* for winds and arranged a song, “What Is It?” on a text by Thomas Campion (originally for voice and piano), for the same chamber ensemble as an earlier set of *Four Campion Songs*.

His last book, *Music with Words*, occupied Thomson's final years. I helped him gather and choose musical examples, edited the text a bit, and as far as I am aware, this important book remains the only work on text setting of the English language by a composer. The Yale University publication should be in every composer's library, placed equally with all the major orchestration books. It is, in fact, a kind of “orchestration for voice.”

Thomson first composed *A Solemn Music* for orchestra and shortly after added *A Joyful Fugue* to complete this slow-fast, prelude and fugue set [1, 2]. Interestingly enough, this “joyful” fugue is composed in C minor, but it ends suddenly with a brilliant C major cadence. At Thomson's suggestion, I arranged *A Joyful Fugue* for concert band to complete the band set, a version which has now become part of the standard wind ensemble repertoire. In this BMOP/sound release we have, for the first time, the complete and original orchestra version.

The Feast of Love is a setting of the anonymous second- or fourth-century poem *Pervigilium Veneris* (Vigil of Venus), which describes the three-day celebration of Venus, the “procreatrix” of the natural world [3]. Featuring baritone with small orchestra, the work opens with an accompaniment in simultaneous duple and triple time, over which the vocal line oscillates between rousing syncopations, suggesting the erotic sensualities of a Bacchic rite. The moods and keys shift between excited and calm, culminating in a fervent prayer

to Apollo for the restoration and sustainment of fertility, so that “all shall know love...the unknowing...as well as the knowing.”

As everyone knows, Thomson's setting of the English language was a lifelong passion, by which work he has set the standard. *Collected Poems*, for soprano and baritone, has versions for both piano and chamber orchestra [4]. A cycle, or any work, for two singers is somewhat unusual in vocal literature—the only other example in Thomson's repertoire is *The Cat* (also for soprano and baritone), a bitingly sarcastic work based on a text by Jack Larson. I suppose singers, in recital, seldom want to share a stage, but in this case the work has an advantage of lasting only about 7 minutes. Here, American poet and playwright Kenneth Koch is the inspiration, with his humorous and bouncy work comprised of alternating bold, uppercase titles and comical one-line poems. Thomson, always keenly aware of verbal cadences and linguistic wit, perfectly matches the text with shifting and subtle music.

Long interested in the poetry of William Blake, Thomson sought to construct a five song cycle with contrasting moods. In “The Diving Image” and “Tiger! Tiger!,” Thomson uses as his text source *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*, Blake's most popular collection of poems [5, 6]. The former presents a utopian vision, through a hymn-like setting, in which mercy, pity, peace, and love comprise the “human form divine”; the latter artfully communicates simultaneous fear and wonder through anxious, fleeting rhythms and a vigorous baritone line. There are two versions of “Tiger! Tiger!”: one in the setting as heard on this disc, and the second in a G. Schirmer, Inc. collection, *Romantic American Art Songs*. (Romantic indeed?)

“The Land of Dreams,” an extraction from Blake's *Poetical Sketches*, employs a bi-tonal, altogether more dissonant and unsettled language than the direct tonalities of the other four [7]. It opens in a folk song character, and then modulates through subtle changes of key and mood. “The Little Black Boy” takes its listeners back to *Songs of Innocence and*

of Experience, providing the setting for a conversation between a mother and her son [8]. One can imagine the controversy stirred by the use of this text:

And I am black, but O! my soul is white.... Thus did my mother say, and kissed me;
And thus I say to little English boy: When I from black and he from white cloud free....
And be like him, and he will then love me.

On advice from Betty Allen and other friends, Thomson had, at one point, removed it from the original set of Blake songs. This version was released in 1979 on CRI Recordings (sung by Mack Harrell with the Philadelphia Orchestra). Later, the song was restored and the entire set was performed at an all-Thomson festival in Amherst, Massachusetts in 1979, later at Boston University, and most recently at the Tanglewood Music Festival in 2009. The song cycle concludes with “And Did Those Feet,” which takes as its text the preface of the epic poem, *Milton* [9]. Throughout the Blake songs, it is the vital interplay of rhythms between vocal lines and their steady accompaniment patterns that spring the music to life.

Considered some of his finest symphonic works, *Three Pictures for Orchestra* were originally separate commissions each published independently: *The Seine at Night* (1947), *Wheat Field at Noon* (1948), and *Sea Piece With Birds* (1952) [10–12]. (It was only recently that all three pieces were issued as a set.) Unlike the tone paintings of Claude Debussy or Richard Strauss, the three “pictures” are exactly that—photographic compositions to be experienced in the same way one might experience a painting. By employing a large orchestra of triple winds, full brass, harp, percussion, and strings, Thomson created the fullest, most sustained, and might I add, loudest, music in his *oeuvre*. (Though his *Mass for the Dead* from 1960 may be the one exception.)

The introductory pages of all three scores contain brief though detailed descriptions by Thomson himself. *The Seine at Night* is a (his?) “memory of Paris and its river.... The stream is so deep and its face so quiet that it scarcely seems to flow.... In the distance...

fireworks, casual rockets flare. Later...fine rain hangs in the air." He goes on to explain how "the melodic contours are deliberately archaic...the harmony for purposes of perspective is bitonal...polytonal...there are scales...sets of...triads...four-note chords...organ sonorities." Of *Wheat Field at Noon*, Thomson says, "it is a series of variations on a theme containing the twelve tones of the chromatic scale arranged as four mutually exclusive triads." Thomson termed the work a "landscape piece," and with regard to melody, Thomson describes its movement "within a harmonic continuum that is static because it is acoustically complete. The only aid that has been provided to the listener for perceiving motion is a differentiation of color among the four real parts."

The music in *Sea Piece with Birds* is gloomy—almost menacing—and Thomson's use of twelve-tone themes and clashing harmonies give this rendering a very stormy climax indeed. Thomson explains: "*Sea Piece with Birds* is an attempt to portray the undertow of the sea, the surface tension of waves, and the flight of birds.... The musical texture is that of double, and sometimes triple, chromatic harmonies." For the dissonant harmonic language of these *Three Pictures*, Thomson had a theory that chromatic, opposed chords could be clearly heard as long as each was kept complete in a uniform timbre (all brass, or winds, or strings), placed in different registers, and thereby clearly distinguished to the ear.

In Thomson's book on American composers *American Music since 1910*, he includes a chapter by Victor Yellin on the operas of Virgil Thomson. The opening line states: "Virgil Thomson's main contribution to American music is his blending of the musical elements of melody, harmony, and rhythm into a musical style proper to American speech," a statement clearly approved by the composer himself.

The final chapter in *American Music Since 1910*, "106 American Composers," shows Thomson's openness to, and clear evaluation of, an astonishing variety of musical styles. His volumes of criticism reflect an essentially benevolent response to worldwide musi-

cal composition within his lifetime. The list of 106 composers moves from Antheil to La Monte Young, with Harry Partch and Edgar Varèse in between; all given sharp and mostly friendly assessment.

Virgil has left us not only his music, and his wealth in a foundation to support American composers in recordings and performance, but also a literary heritage, wise and humane, that elevates the musical profession to a high position in our national life.

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[3] The Feast of Love

Tomorrow all know love;
Love knows all tomorrow.

Spring, singing spring!
Singing in spring, lovers love and all birds mate;
Under spring's warm rain Diana's woods unbind their hair.

Tomorrow shall all know love;
The unknowing shall know as well as the knowing.

She who loves coupling lovers has made them myrtle tents
And under bird-filled trees leads dance with song;
Tomorrow all shall love; Venus commands.

All shall love tomorrow,
All who have never loved.

In west wind's warmth, clusters blush and swelling buds burst open;

Star-lit globes of heavenly moisture tremble, hesitate, explode;
By dawn the virgin vests are all undone.

As Venus tears their robes away
And purple flowers burst into flame,
The shameless rose, glowing like gems and fire,
From out its moistened sheath reveals her hidden splendor.

Holy Diana, Venus brings to thy wood
Maidens of no less modesty than thine;
Absent thyself tonight: shed no beast's blood.

She would invite thee, wert thou less chaste;
For three nights wouldst thou hear their festive sound,
As joyful companies traverse thy glades.

All night they dance to celebrate the spring
With braided garlands and with myrtle boughs,
With Ceres and with Bacchus, god of song,
Venus triumphs in Diana's wood.

Love is for all tomorrow;
Tomorrow the unknowing and the knowing know love.

Tomorrow remember the union primeval,
When fluid from Zeus shot through the foam
To beget among rearing sea horses
Dione* out of the sea.

Love shall find all tomorrow;
Tomorrow the unknowing as well as the knowing shall love.

And now from out of the clouds of spring,
Rains fill the lap of our mother-earth,
Then moves through sea and sky and back to the land for feeding all.

Venus, who governs all on land or sea,
Has given each living thing a fecund seed,
Commanding all to love and to give birth.

Venus's voluptuous ways people the countryside,
Where Love was born, a country boy.

There love doth multiply the herds;
Bulls rest with cows on yellow broom,
Ewes lie in the shade with rams,
And singing is neglected by no bird.

Where swans call raucously from pool to pool,
Tireus's daughter, by the poplar sings,
As if her passionate sweet song
Were all of love, not of her sister's death.

*Venus the earth-mother

She sings, not I; my voice is lost.
O, when shall the soaring swallow mount again?
O, glance at me, Apollo, lest I remain
Forever mute, a ruin on the plain!

Tomorrow all know love:
Love knows all tomorrow.

Spring, singing spring!
Singing in spring, lovers love and all birds mate;
Under spring's warm rain Diana's woods unbind their hair.

Tomorrow shall all know love;
The unknowing shall know as well as the knowing.

She who loves coupling lovers has made them myrtle tents
And under bird-filled trees leads dance with song;
Tomorrow all shall love; Venus commands.

All shall love tomorrow.
All who have never loved.

From *Pervigilium Veneris* (anonymous, second- or fourth-century A.D.), translated by Virgil Thomson.
Text reprinted by permission of G. Schirmer, Inc.

[4] Collected Poems

BUFFALO DAYS.

I was asleep when they waked up the buffalo.

THE ORANGE WIVES.

A mountain of funny foam went past.

GREAT HUMAN VOICES.

The starlit voices drip.

COLOURFUL HOUR.

A few green pencils in a born pocket.

EXPRESSION.

New little tray.

SLEEP.

The bantam hen frayed its passage through the soft clouds.

MINERAL WICK

Town soda.

SOMEWHERE

Between islands and envy.

CECILIA

Look, a cat.

THE SILVER WORLD

Expands.

JEWELRY SEVENTHS

Minor wonders.

AN ESKIMO COCA COLA

Three-fifths.

THE EXCEPTION PROVES THE RULE

Eight-fifths.

Nine-fifths.

Three-fifths.

Six-fifths.

THE WATER HOSE IS ON FIRE

Grape line.

THE LINGERING MATADORS

Eskimo City.

EGYPT

Passiveness.

IS THERE A HOUSE INSIDE THAT FUEL ENGINE

Extra aging will bring your craft over against the rosy skies.

WHY WEREN'T THEY MORE CAREFUL?

Actions.

PEANUT BUTTER CANDY

Ichthious.

THE BRINDLE COWS

Dairy farm, dairy farm,

H-O-T

H-E-A-D.

IN THE MERRY FOAM

Ask them for blue patience of lovers.

MY MIX UP

The cherries after a show'r.

MILKWEED EMBLEMS

The chambered Nautilus is weak.

SUPPOSE

Red and white riding hoods.

THE GREEN MEDDLER

Aged in the fire.

A HOUSE IN MISSISSIPPI

Who stole all my new sander supplies?

WICK'D OBJECTS

Aeroliths.

FRESH LIMES

A couple's bedroom slippers.

THE CHIMNEY

The window.

PAINTED FOR A ROSE

The exacting pilgrims were delighted with yellow fatigue.

NOONS

Bubbles.
ROOMS
Simplex bumble bees.
IN THE RANCHHOUSE AT DAWN
O, Corpuscle O, wax town,
THE OUTSIDES OF THINGS
The sky fold and then the bus started up.
THE BLACK LION
Never stop revealing yourself.
IN THE COOL MUD
At breakfast we could sob.
THE HAND PAINTED EARS OF DEATH
O, look inside me.
ALABAMA
Alabama!

Text of "Collected Poems" from *Thank You and Other Poems*.
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Five Songs from William Blake

[5] *The Divine Image*

To Mercy, Pity, Peace and Love
All pray in their distress;
And to these virtues of delight
Return their thankfulness.

For Mercy, Pity, Peace and Love
Is God, our Father dear,
And Mercy, Pity, Peace and Love
Is man, His child and care.

For Mercy has a human heart,
Pity a human face,
And Love, the human form divine,
And Peace, the human dress.

Then every man, of every clime,
That prays in his distress,
Prays to the human form divine,
Love, Mercy, Pity, Peace.

And all must love the human form,
In heathen, Turk, or Jew;
When Mercy, Love and Pity dwell
There God is dwelling too.

[6] *Tiger! Tiger!*

Tiger! Tiger! burning bright,
In the forests of the night;
What immortal hand or eye,
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
On what wings dare he aspire?
What the hand, dare seize the fire?

And what shoulder, and what art,
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
And when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand? and what dread feet?

What the hammer? what the chain,
In what furnace was thy brain?
What the anvil? what dread grasp,
Dare its deadly terrors clasp!

When the stars threw down their spears
And water'd heaven with their tears:
Did he smile his work to see?
Did he who made the Lamb make thee?

Tiger! Tiger! burning bright,
In the forests of the night:
What immortal hand or eye,
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

[7] *The Land of Dreams*

Awake, awake my little boy,
thou wast thy mother's only joy.
Why dost thou weep in thy gentle sleep?
Awake, thy father does thee keep.
Oh, what land is the land of dreams?
What are its mountains and what are its streams?
O father, I saw my mother there,
among the lilies by waters fair.
Among the lambs clothed in white,
she walked with her Thomas in sweet delight.
I wept for joy; like a dove I mourn.
Oh, when shall I again return?
Dear child, I also by pleasant streams
have wandered all night in the land of dreams;
but though calm and warm the waters wide,
I could not get to the other side?
Father, O father, what do we here,
in this land of unbelief and fear?
The land of dreams is better far—
above the light of the morning star.

[8] *The Little Black Boy*

My mother bore me in the southern wild,
And I am black, but O! my soul is white;
White as an angel is the English child,
But I am black, as if bereav'd of light.

My mother taught me underneath a tree,
And sitting down before the heat of day,
She took me on her lap and kissed me,
And pointing to the east, began to say:

"Look on the rising sun: there God does live,
And gives his light, and gives his heat away;
And flowers and trees and beasts and men receive
Comfort in morning, joy in the noonday.

"And we are put on earth a little space,
That we may learn to bear the beams of love;
And these black bodies and this sunburnt face
Is but a cloud, and like a shady grove.

"For when our souls have learn'd the heat to bear,
The cloud will vanish; we shall hear his voice,
Saying: 'Come out from the grove, my love and care,
And round my golden tent like lambs rejoice.'"

Thus did my mother say, and kissed me;
And thus I say to little English boy:
When I from black and he from white cloud free,
And round the tent of God like lambs we joy,

I'll shade him from the heat, till he can bear
To lean in joy upon our father's knee;
And then I'll stand and stroke his silver hair,
And be like him, and he will then love me.

[9] *And Did Those Feet*

And did those feet in ancient times
Walk upon England's mountains green?
And was the holy Lamb of God
On England's pleasant pastures seen?

And did the Countenance divine
Shine forth upon our clouded hills?
And was Jerusalem builded here
Among those dark Satanic mills?

Bring me my Bow of burning gold
Bring me my Arrows of Desire!
Bring me my Spear! Oh, Clouds unfold!
Bring me my Chariot of Fire.

I will not cease from Mental Fight.
Nor shall my Sword sleep in my hand,
Till we have built Jerusalem
In England's green and pleasant Land!

"The Divine Image" excerpted from *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* (1794).

"Tiger! Tiger!" excerpted from *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* (1794).

"The Land of Dreams" excerpted from *Poetical Sketches* (1783).

"The Little Black Boy" excerpted from *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* (1794).

"And Did Those Feet In Ancient Time" prelude to the epic poem, *Milton* (1804-1810).

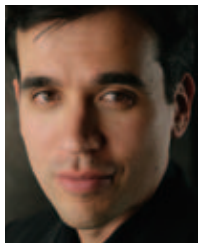
BETTY FREEMAN



Virgil Thomson was a many-faceted American composer of great originality and a music critic of singular brilliance. Born in Kansas City, Missouri on November 25, 1896, Thomson studied at Harvard University. After a prolonged period in Paris where he studied with Nadia Boulanger and met Cocteau, Stravinsky, Satie, and the artists of Les Six, he returned to the United States where he was chief music critic for the *New York Herald Tribune*.

Virgil Thomson composed in almost every genre of music. Utilizing a musical style marked by sharp wit and overt playfulness, Thomson produced a highly original body of work rooted in American speech rhythms and hymnbook harmony. His music was most influenced by Satie's ideals of clarity, simplicity, irony, and humor. Among his most famous works are the operas *Four Saints in Three Acts* and *The Mother of Us All* (both with texts by Gertrude Stein with whom he formed a legendary artistic collaboration), scores to *The Plow That Broke the Plains* and *The River* (films by Pare Lorentz), and *Louisiana Story* (film by Robert Flaherty). In addition to his compositions, he was the author of eight books, including an autobiography.

Included in his many honors and awards are the 1949 Pulitzer Prize for Music, a Brandeis Award, the gold medal for music from the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters, the National Book Circle Award, the Kennedy Center Honors, the National Music Council Award, and 20 honorary doctorates.



Thomas Meglioranza, baritone, considered “one of America’s finest young baritones” by *New York Newsday*, is winner of the 2005 Walter W. Naumburg Competition, the Franz Schubert/Modern Music Competition in Graz, the Concert Artists Guild Competition, and the Joy in Singing Award.

Engagements from 2008–2010 include John Harbison’s new Fifth Symphony with the Boston Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Leonard Slatkin, Handel’s *Messiah* with the Minnesota Orchestra, Schoenberg’s *Ode to Napoleon Buonaparte* with pianist Peter

Serkin and the Brentano String Quartet, Copland’s *Old American Songs* with the National Symphony Orchestra, Roberto Sierra’s *Missa Latina* with the Houston Symphony, and Peter Maxwell Davies’s *Eight Songs for a Mad King* with the Los Angeles Philharmonic. He has also been appointed Visiting Artist in Voice at the Longy School of Music in Cambridge, MA.

An “immaculate and inventive recitalist” (*The New Yorker*), Mr. Meglioranza’s recital of World War I songs at the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society made the *Philadelphia Inquirer*’s list of “Top Ten Classical Music Events of 2009.” Other recent recitals include an American song program at Wigmore Hall, *Harmonielehre Cabaret* at the Café Sabarsky, and a program of British Music Hall songs at the Bard Music Festival.

Mr. Meglioranza’s portrayal of Prior Walter in the North American premiere of Peter Eötvös’s *Angels in America* with Opera Boston was described as “immensely touching” (*The Boston Globe*). Other opera performances include the title role in *Don Giovanni* with Julius Rudel and the Aspen Opera Theatre, and Chou En-lai in *Nixon in China* with Opera Boston. He also recently created the title role in Gordon Chin’s *Mackay: The Black Bearded Bible Man* in Taipei.

He has sung Baroque music with the New York Collegium, Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, American Bach Soloists, Apollo’s Fire, Les Violons du Roy, Portland Baroque Orchestra, and Music of the Baroque, among others, and pre-Baroque music with such groups as the Waverly Consort, Pomerium, and Liber Unusalis.

A graduate of Grinnell College and the Eastman School of Music, Mr. Meglioranza is also an alumnus of the Tanglewood Music Festival, the Aspen Music Festival, the Marlboro Music Festival, and the Steans Insitute at Ravinia Festival.



PHILIP FRAZER

Kristen Watson, soprano, hailed by critics for her “blithe and silvery” tone and “winning stage presence,” has made solo appearances with the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, Mark Morris Dance Group, Boston Baroque, and the Handel & Haydn Society at such venues as Walt Disney Concert Hall, the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, and Boston’s Symphony Hall. Praised for her “keen musicianship, agility, and seamless control,” Ms. Watson has been recognized by the Concert Artists Guild, Oratorio Society of New York, Joy in Singing, American Bach Society, and Louisville Bach Society competitions and was granted the Lorraine Hunt Lieberson Fellowship with Emmanuel Music.

Opera audiences have heard Ms. Watson as the Voice of the Fountain in Osvaldo Golijov’s acclaimed opera *Ainadamar*, directed by Peter Sellars with Opera Boston. She has performed in productions with Boston Lyric Opera, Opera New England, Boston University Opera Institute, Opera Providence, and the Opera Theater of Pittsburgh in such roles as Tytania in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, Adele in *Die Fledermaus*, Polly Peachum in *The Beggar’s Opera*, and Monica in *The Medium*. A versatile crossover artist, Ms. Watson has made several solo appearances with the Boston Pops under Keith Lockhart, performed as a featured soprano

alongside Greek tenor Mario Frangoulis, and shared the stage with veteran actress Shirley Jones in Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Carousel*.

Other solo performances include appearances at the Carmel Bach Festival, Aston Magna Festival, and the Cactus Pear Music Festival, and with the Rhode Island Philharmonic, Evansville Philharmonic, Gulf Coast Symphony Orchestra, Topeka Symphony Orchestra, Cape Cod Symphony Orchestra, New Bedford Symphony Orchestra, Pittsburgh Camerata, and the Walden Chamber Players. An enthusiastic supporter of modern and contemporary music, Ms. Watson has also premiered works of new composers, such as the members of Altavoz, a consortium of Latin-American composers living in various cities around North America and Europe.

Kristen Watson is originally from Topeka, Kansas, and holds degrees from Carnegie Mellon University and Boston University.



LIZ LINDER

Gil Rose is recognized as an important conductor helping to shape the future of classical music. Critics all over the world have praised his dynamic performances and many recordings. In 1996, he founded the Boston Modern Orchestra Project (BMOP), the foremost professional orchestra dedicated exclusively to performing and recording music of the 20th and 21st Centuries. Under his leadership, BMOP's unique programming and high performance standards have attracted critical acclaim and earned the orchestra eleven ASCAP awards for adventurous programming as well as the John S. Edwards Award for Strongest Commitment to New American

Music. In 2007 Mr. Rose was awarded Columbia University's prestigious Ditson Award as well as an ASCAP Concert Music award for his exemplary commitment to new American music. Since 2003 Mr. Rose has also served as Music Director of Opera Boston, a dynamic opera company in residence at the historic Cutler Majestic Theatre. During his tenure, Opera Boston has experienced exponential growth and is now acknowledged as one of the most important and innovative companies in America. He has curated the Fromm concerts at Harvard University and served as the Artistic Director of the Ditson Festival of Contemporary Music at Boston's Institute of Contemporary Art.

As a guest conductor, Mr. Rose made his Tanglewood debut in 2002 and in 2003 he debuted with the Netherlands Radio Symphony as part of the Holland Festival. He has led the American Composers Orchestra, the Warsaw Philharmonic, the National Symphony Orchestra of the Ukraine, the Cleveland Chamber Symphony, the Orchestra della Svizzera Italiana, and the National Orchestra of Porto, as well as several appearances with the Boston Symphony Chamber Players.

Since 2003, he has served as the Artistic Director of Opera Unlimited, a contemporary opera festival, and has led the world premiere of Elena Ruehr's *Toussaint Before the Spirits*, the New England premiere of Thomas Adès's *Powder Her Face*, as well as the revival of John Harbison's *Full Moon in March* with "skilled and committed direction" according to *The Boston Globe*. In 2006 Opera Unlimited presented the North American premiere of Peter Eötvös's *Angels in America* to critical acclaim.

Also recognized for interpreting standard operatic repertoire from Mozart to Bernstein, Mr. Rose's production of Verdi's *Luisa Miller* was hailed as an important operatic event. *The Boston Globe* recognized it as "the best Verdi production presented in Boston in the last 15 years." *The Boston Phoenix* has described Mr. Rose as "a Mozart conductor of energy and refinement." Mr. Rose's recording of Samuel Barber's *Vanessa* for Naxos has been hailed as an important achievement by the international press. In the 2007–08 season he led the Boston premier of Osvaldo Golijov's opera *Ainadamar* with Dawn Upshaw. In the 2009–10 season he led new productions of Rossini's *Tancredi* with Eva Podles, the premier of Zhou Long's new opera *Madame White Snake*, and Offenbach's *La Grande-Duchesse de Gérolstein* starring Stephanie Blythe.

Gil Rose's extensive discography includes world premiere recordings of music by Louis Andriessen, Dominick Argento, Derek Bermel, Lisa Bielawa, John Cage, Robert Erickson, Lukas Foss, Charles Fussell, Michael Gandolfi, John Harbison, Alan Hovhaness, Lee Hyla, David Lang, Tod Machover, Steven Mackey, William Thomas McKinley, Steven Paulus, David Rakowski, Bernard Rands, George Rochberg, Elena Ruehr, Gunther Schuller, Elliott Schwartz, Ken Ueno, Reza Vali, and Evan Ziporyn on such labels as Albany, Arsis, Cantaloupe, Centaur, Chandos, ECM, Innova, Naxos, New World, and BMOP/sound, the Grammy-nominated label for which he serves as Executive Producer. His recordings have appeared on the year-end "Best of" lists of *The New York Times*, *Time Out New York*, *The Boston Globe*, *Chicago Tribune*, *American Record Guide*, *NPR*, and *Downbeat Magazine*.

The **Boston Modern Orchestra Project** (BMOP) is widely recognized as the leading orchestra in the United States dedicated exclusively to performing new music, and its signature record label, BMOP/sound, is the nation's foremost label launched by an orchestra and solely devoted to new music recordings.

Founded in 1996 by Artistic Director Gil Rose, BMOP's mission is to illuminate the connections that exist naturally between contemporary music and contemporary society by reuniting composers and audiences in a shared concert experience. In its first twelve seasons, BMOP established a track record that includes more than 80 performances, over 70 world premieres (including 30 commissioned works), two Opera Unlimited festivals with Opera Boston, the inaugural Ditson Festival of Contemporary Music with the ICA/Boston, and 32 commercial recordings, including 12 CD's from BMOP/sound.

In March 2008, BMOP launched its signature record label, BMOP/sound, with John Harbison's ballet *Ulysses*. Its composer-centric releases focus on orchestral works that are otherwise unavailable in recorded form. The response to the label was immediate and celebratory; its five inaugural releases appeared on the "Best of 2008" lists of *The New York Times*, *The Boston Globe*, National Public Radio, *Downbeat*, and *American Record Guide*, among others. BMOP/sound has received two Grammy Award nominations—in 2009 for its recording of Charles Fussell's *Wilde* Symphony for baritone and orchestra (Best Classical Vocal Performance), and in 2010 for its recording of Derek Bermel's *Voices* for solo clarinet and orchestra (Best Instrumental Soloist Performance with Orchestra). *The New York Times* proclaimed, "BMOP/sound is an example of everything done right." Additional BMOP recordings are available from Albany, Arsis, Cantaloupe, Centaur, Chandos, ECM, Innova, Naxos, New World, and Oxingale.

In Boston, BMOP performs at Boston's Jordan Hall and Symphony Hall, and the orchestra has also performed in New York at Miller Theater, the Winter Garden, Weill Recital Hall at



Carnegie Hall, and The Lyceum in Brooklyn. A perennial winner of the ASCAP Award for Adventurous Programming of Orchestral Music and 2006 winner of the John S. Edwards Award for Strongest Commitment to New American Music, BMOP has appeared at the Celebrity Series (Boston, MA), Tanglewood, the Boston Cyberarts Festival, the Festival of New American Music (Sacramento, CA), and Music on the Edge (Pittsburgh, PA). In April 2008, BMOP headlined the 10th Annual MATA Festival in New York.

BMOP's greatest strength is the artistic distinction of its musicians and performances. Each season, Gil Rose, recipient of Columbia University's prestigious Ditson Conductor's Award as well as an ASCAP Concert Music award for his extraordinary contribution to new music, gathers together an outstanding orchestra of dynamic and talented young performers, and presents some of the world's top vocal and instrumental soloists. *The Boston Globe* claims, "Gil Rose is some kind of genius; his concerts are wildly entertaining, intellectually rigorous, and meaningful." Of BMOP performances, *The New York Times* says: "Mr. Rose and his team filled the music with rich, decisive ensemble colors and magnificent solos. These musicians were rapturous—superb instrumentalists at work and play."

Virgil Thomson

A Solemn Music	The Feast of Love	Five Songs from William Blake
A Joyful Fugue	Collected Poems	Three Pictures for Orchestra

Producer	Gil Rose
Recording and postproduction	Joel Gordon and David Corcoran

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A Solemn Music and A Joyful Fugue were recorded on September 7, 2008 in Jordan Hall at New England Conservatory (Boston, MA). *The Feast of Love, Collected*

Poems, and Five Songs from William Blake were recorded on September 29, 2009 in Distler Hall at Tufts University (Medford, MA). *Three Pictures for Orchestra* were recorded on December 21, 2009 at Mechanics Hall (Worcester, MA).

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