

In the same space by Jeremy Dale Roberts

I first came across the poetry of Cavafy as a very young man, browsing through the shelves of Rustem's dingy bookshop in Metaxas Square in Nicosia. I was electrified by its beauty, candour and sensuality; and although it never occurred to me for a moment to set those lines to music—I would not have been competent—Cavafy 'hung around' in the lumber-room of my imagination for the next twenty years or so—waiting.

Having not written for the voice for a long time, I was casting around for a suitable text. I was looking for something personal, authentic: 'taken from the life'. Not lyrical, but prosaic, low-key. I looked at diaries, letters—for instance, Ivor Gurney's wonderful letters and scraps from the Front in the Great War. All at once I realized that Cavafy's poems were exactly what I required: a kind of veracity—where the 'song' is in the head, and the music of everyday speech (demotic) is given value. Also—in my mid-forties—I was at last 'in synch' with Cavafy, looking back at his youth from a rather sad middle-age.

The work is about memory—also about timelessness—also intoxication: a half-life. Most of the poems I chose are brief—actually all facets of the same poem—and form an intermittently broken chain: a true cycle, in so far as the songs are bound together thematically, and the conclusion takes us back to the beginning. Memory is most obviously expressed in the form: in the repetition or 'recollection' of musical ideas, usually of a harmonic or textural nature. Indeed, the whole work is impregnated with a consistent harmonic tonality, or 'aroma': it is inescapable, obsessive—that is the point.

Memory is also resonance, vibration—for which the piano, with its three pedals, is the ideal medium. Often the texture is saturated with pedal: only the *-action-* of the words, often rapidly delivered as in speech, and the occasional injection of irony galvanizes the prevailing sense of reverie.

-J.D.R.

Love and Terror by Katerina Stamatelos

Cavafy is sometimes difficult to relate to: his extensive use of irony and Hellenistic language (which is by itself alienating) was making my decision hard. But I did find these very personal songs that had a profound effect on me.

I used the four (all except "Terror") in a tonally static way. Still, I tried to construct them in a slight and "subdued" arch-form, with "I Went" as the peak of this arch.

"Terror" was split into 3 sections: each one starting from the beginning of the poem, but going just a little further with each section. The complete "Terror" poem is heard only as "Terror III". I used a form-by-itself for these 3 sets of the song: a simple arrow. My intention was that "I Went" (as the peak of the arch-form) would be intensified by "Terror III" and then drop into the resignation of "Long Ago".

Immobility, stagnation, resignation: these were my guidelines throughout the cycle.

For the "Terror" songs, I was further guided by the practices of the Chorus in an Ancient Greek tragedy: circling around in jerky movements, sometimes agonizing, other times imploring, or simply falling into a frenzy/trance.

Far Off by Richard Pearson Thomas

Far Off was composed in 1991 and premiered in 1992 by tenor Tom Bogdan at the Greenwich House Music School in New York City. The text consists of six short poems by the beloved Greek poet Constantine Cavafy (1863–1933), translated by Rae Dalven. These sensual poems, all tinged with the haze of distant memory, could have been written in the time of Plato as easily as one hundred years ago—or even today. The cycle begins and ends with strummed modal chords which suggest the poet singing with harp. In between, he is swept away by the passions which these revived memories awaken in him.

- Richard Pearson Thomas

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UNIVERSITY OF IOWA SCHOOL of MUSIC

Center for New Music
Concert

2:00 p.m. Saturday, 6 March, 2010

Riverside Recital Hall

Season 44 Concert XII



John Muriello, *baritone*
David Gompper, *piano*

Featuring the works of

Dale Roberts
Stamatelos
Thomas
Gompper



DIVISION OF PERFORMING ARTS
COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS & SCIENCES

Center for New Music *Concert*

John Muriello, *baritone*
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6 March, 2010, 2 p.m. RIVERSIDE RECITAL HALL

PROGRAM

Shades of Love

three songs on the poetry of Constantin Cavafy (2003)

- I. To Call up the Shades
- II. I Went/One Night
- III. Return/Far Off

David GOMPPER
(b. 1954)

In the same space

nine poems of Constantin Cavafy (1976)

- I. In the same space
- II. To call up the Shades
- III. Voices
- IV. Days of 1903
- V. When they are roused
- VI. Morning Sea
- VII. Gray
- VIII. Afternoon sun
- IX. In the evening

Jeremy Dale ROBERTS
(b. 1934)

INTERMISSION

Love and Terror

five poems of Konstantinos Kavafis (2009)

- I. To Call Up the Shades
- II. Terror (I)
- III. Come Back
- IV. Terror (II)
- V. I Went
- VI. Terror (III)
- VII. Long Ago

Katerina STAMATELOS
(b. 1951)

Far Off

A song cycle of poems by Cavafy, for baritone and piano

- I. Morning Sea
- II. Body, Remember
- III. At the Café Entrance
- IV. One Night
- V. In Despair
- VI. Far Off

Richard Pearson THOMAS
(b. 1957)

BIOGRAPHIES

JOHN MURIELLO, associate professor of voice, has carried on a varied performing career in opera, operetta, musical theatre and concert work. Stage credits include Tartuffe in Kirk Mechem's *Tartuffe*, the Lecturer in Argento's *A Water Bird Talk*, Ko-Ko in *The Mikado*, Marcello in *La Bohème*, Voltaire in *Candide*, Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte*, and Sir Toby Belch in Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*. Muriello has concertized in London at The Wigmore Hall and in Moscow at the Moscow Conservatory, as well as throughout the lower forty-eight.

Concert and oratorio solo credits include Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, Vaughan William's *Five Mystical Songs*, Orff's *Carmina Burana*, and the Brahms *Requiem*. Muriello has performed with several contemporary music festivals, at the Union of Composers Autumn Festival in Moscow, the Banff Centre for the Arts in Canada, at the University of Michigan, The University of Iowa, and James Madison University. He has worked with the Skylight Opera Theatre, Opera Carolina, Lyric Opera Cleveland, L'Opera Français de New York, Ohio Light Opera, Seaside Music Theatre, Cedar Rapids Opera Theatre, and La Gran Scena Opera di New York (as Miss Sylvia Bills, America's most beloved retired diva).

Muriello's directing credits include *H.M.S. Pinafore* for Cedar Rapids Opera Theatre, and *The Fantasticks*, *She Loves Me* and *A Little Night Music* for The University of Iowa School of Music. He received his Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Muriello's recently released CD of Richard Pearson Thomas' song cycle *Ossessione*, and a set of American songs from Tin Pan Alley to Sondheim, is available on Albany Records.

DAVID GOMPPER, piano, has lived and worked professionally as a pianist, a conductor, and a composer in New York, San Diego, London, Nigeria, Michigan, Texas and Iowa. He studied at the Royal College of Music in London with Jeremy Dale Roberts, Humphrey Searle and Phyllis Sellick. After teaching in Nigeria, he received his doctorate at the University of Michigan, taught at the University of Texas, Arlington, and since 1991 has been professor of composition and director of the Center for New Music at The University of Iowa. In 2002–2003 Gompper was in Russia as a Fulbright Scholar, teaching, performing and conducting at the Moscow Conservatory. In 2009 he received an Academy Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters in New York City.

Gompper's compositions are heard throughout the United States and Europe. In 1999 his *Transitus* (for wind ensemble) premiered at Carnegie Hall, and a number of his works have premiered in London's Wigmore Hall, including: *Homage a W. A. (William Albright)* for piano; and *Shades of Love*, a song cycle on the poetry of Constantin Cavafy. Subsequent returns to Moscow have included premieres and performances of *Crossed*, *Music in the Glen*, *Six Love Poems*, *Star of the County Down*, *Butterfly Dance*, *Spirals* and *Ikon*. His latest work for violin and piano, *Ikon*, was taken on a 14-concert tour throughout the U.S. and Europe last fall with Wolfgang David, a violinist from Vienna with whom Gompper actively collaborates as a pianist and composer. They have recorded three CDs on the Albany and VDE-Gallo labels.

He recently completed several new compositions including a 28-minute song cycle called *The Animals* on poetry of Marvin Bell written for Stephen Swanson, and an organ work for Konstantin Volostnov. His Violin Concerto and other orchestral works were recorded by the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra (London) in December 2009 for a release on Naxos in early 2011.

NOTES

Shades of Love by David Gompper

Written at the end of my 10-month sabbatical in Moscow in the summer of 2003, I chose five poems that were subsequently embedded into three songs. The order of the poems stress three voices — future, present and past, and are unified by highlighting three recurring themes: light/night, senses (vision, body, lips, etc.), and memory. The basic pitch set is derived from the poet's Greek surname, Kabaphes (B-flat, A, F, E-flat). The inward motion inherent in the voice leading (perfect fifth, major third) reflects in many ways the thrust of his poetry and his life: itself inward looking, solitary, personal and still.

I have reflected upon Cavafy's poetry for some 25 years—only now to find resonance with such sentiments—, having been introduced to this work by my teacher, mentor and friend, Jeremy Dale Roberts, to whom the cycle is dedicated.

This program is supported in part by The Elizabeth M. Stanley Performance Fund.