"An Alphabet of Soldiers": Jake Heggie’s Farewell, Auschwitz

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“AN ALPHABET OF SOLDIERS”:

JAKE HEGGIE’S FAREWELL, AUSCHWITZ

by

Lori Jo Guy

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate School
and the School of Music
at The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Musical Arts

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May 2017
ABSTRACT

“AN ALPHABET OF SOLDIERS”:
JAKE HEGGIE’S FAREWELL, AUSCHWITZ

by Lori Jo Guy

May 2017

For the past 18 years, the non-profit organization Music of Remembrance has worked to remember the Holocaust through concerts, education events, and by recording and commissioning new works. One such work, entitled Farewell, Auschwitz, premiered in May of 2013.

Farewell, Auschwitz is a unique composition for several reasons. One reason is that the poetry for the songs was adapted from lyrics written by Krystyna Żywulska, a Polish Jew, imprisoned at the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp. In the camp, she began creating poetry and songs in reaction to the horror that surrounded her. Her poetry is a commentary on the daily life, observations of the camp, and historical documentation.

Mina Miller, founder and current Artistic Director of Music of Remembrance, introduced Jake Heggie and his librettist Gene Scheer to the writings of Krystyna Żywulska. Their first work together was a dramatic song cycle for soprano entitled Another Sunrise. This song cycle told of the day-to-day fight of Krystyna Żywulska to stay alive amidst the horrors of the concentration camp. For their next composition, Miller suggested that Heggie and Scheer take the song lyrics Żywulska had written for another prisoner and create new musical settings. Scheer adapted the poetry and Heggie composed the music for this gripping work for soprano, mezzo-soprano, baritone, and
chamber ensemble. Żywulska’s lyrics were originally set by fellow prisoners to pop, folk, or classical songs of the day. However, the original songs have since been lost. In order to preserve the general effect of the original songs, Heggie emulates folk and popular sounds of Poland in the 1940s into his composition.

Note:  *Farewell, Auschwitz* excerpts: Copyright © 2013 by Jake Heggie and Gene Scheer. All Rights Reserved. Publisher: Bent Pen Music, Sole Agent: Bill Holab Music. Used by Permission
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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the three most important men in my life:

Granddad, Colonel Dr. Ivan J. Birrer, Dad, Ivan J. Birrer II, and my husband, Stephen Reid Guy. Granddad, thank you for consistently encouraging my academic goals. Your support and love has been instrumental in me achieving my dreams. Dad, I hate you didn’t get to read the final document, but I’m thankful you knew it was in sight! Thank you for teaching me to run the race with endurance. Reid Guy, you are my best friend, my partner, my encourager, my favorite. I love you.
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“Singing is central to every public Jewish ceremonial commemoration of the Holocaust. Often the intrinsic pathos of the music is further strengthened as songs chosen are introduced by the context of their performance in the ghettos or camps.”

Singing was critically important to the Jews interned in concentration camps. The majority of songs heard during the Holocaust were either popular songs that existed prior to the advent of World War II, or were of a similar style to those prewar tunes, often quoting them. Research regarding these songs typically divides the materials into two groups: songs sung by the prisoners as a form of resistance, and songs used by the Schutzstaffel (SS) to emotionally torture the prisoners. In response to the oppression they were forced to endure, the prisoners turned to singing as their own form of resistance. Their songs fell into two categories: recycled songs, and pre-existing tunes that were either rewritten or set with new lyrics.

Recycled songs were ones known in a previous life that brought comfort, strength, and renewed hope to the prisoners who sang them. Contrafacta – a pre-existing tune with

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new text—provided a way for the prisoners to comment on their circumstances and to make the music they knew fit into their current conditions.

This is where Krystyna Żywulska’s story begins. A writer and composer, Żywulska produced poetry that the prisoners subsequently set to folk, classical, and popular music of the day. Her songs were taken up and embraced as anthems of resistance by the prisoners interned in Auschwitz-Birkenau. Thirty-two of her completed texts survived the war, and many additional fragments remain. They provide a powerful insight into the daily life at the concentration camp: the struggle for survival, the hope, the daily gossip. They were important words, ready to be heard by a newer, wider audience.

The opportunity to be heard by a new audience arrived when Żywulska’s poetry became known to Jake Heggie. Jake Heggie is one of the most successful American composers of the 21st century; he is known for his wide array of compositions, as well as for his idiomatic command of various styles of writing, including jazz, Broadway, classical, etc. In setting Żywulska’s poetry, his goal was to maintain the idea of contrafacta and thus the flavor of the music of the 1940s. Although some song references were indicated in her poetry, it would have been a near impossible task to determine the identity of the original songs. Instead, Heggie took the ideas and musical language of the

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4. Ibid.

time and composed a new work that harkened back to what Żywulska would have heard when she and her fellow prisoners turned her poetry into songs.

Żywulska’s texts are an important topic for new audiences because they provide a different lens through which to view the prisoners of Auschwitz. They were certainly victims, but they were also survivors, and this is an account of their fight for another day. The music is written in the 21st century, and yet it embraces the spirit of the concentration camp and “speaks to the power of music and the imagination to liberate one from even the darkest despair.”

Krystyna Żywulska, originally named Sonia Landau, was born to a Jewish family on September 1, 1914 in Łodz, Poland. In 1938, the twenty-four year old Żywulska moved to Warsaw to study law; however, she moved back to Łodz to care for her father, mother, and younger sister when the Nazis entered Poland in September 1939. The Nazis soon controlled Łodz, and the danger and violence towards the Jews quickly escalated. As a result, the Landau family escaped to Warsaw, but in 1941 they were forced to move into the Nazi-controlled Warsaw ghetto.

In the ghetto, Żywulska realized that chances of survival were slim; her options boiled down to starvation or deportation to a concentration camp. She documented her struggle in the book *Pusta Woda* (“Empty Water”). The Warsaw Ghetto housed over 400,000 Jews in 1.3 square miles. The walls of the camp were lined with barbed wire and were heavily guarded by the SS, making escape virtually impossible. The crowded and miserable conditions led to sickness, disease, and starvation.

Leaving her father and sister behind, Żywulska and her mother bravely and successfully walked out of the Warsaw ghetto on August 26, 1942. She was not


expecting to leave successfully; she wrote in *Pusta Woda*, “You can die rebelling or meekly. You can also speed up your death…apparently I still have a little hope left in me. If I were certain that I would perish, I would have never left my father.”

In order to hide on the “Aryan” side, Żywulska took the new name of Zofia Wiśniewska and quickly began working with the Polish resistance to help the Jews that were in hiding. *Pusta Woda* details her work in creating and providing false documentation for other refugees.

She was captured in June 1943; however, though she was interrogated, she managed to conceal her Jewish identity by assuming the name of Krystyna Żywulska. Under that name, she was registered as an Aryan political prisoner and transported first to Pawiak prison and then to Auschwitz-Birkenau extermination camp.

Auschwitz-Birkenau, the largest of the Nazi concentration camps, was composed of three main camps: Auschwitz I, Auschwitz II, and Auschwitz III. Auschwitz II, more commonly referred to as Birkenau, was intended to be a death camp and contained four functioning gas chambers by the end of 1943.

Birkenau also was a women’s camp, a gypsy camp, and home to an Effektenkammer. The Effektenkammer was the storage facility for the belongings of arriving prisoners; those belongings were collected, sorted, and sent to Germany. In Birkenau, this building was called “Kanada,” the Germany spelling for Canada, and those who were fortunate enough to work in the

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13. Ibid., 1191


Effektenkammer were spared the long harsh hours working outdoors. They also had access to forbidden supplies like sweaters and coats. Working in Kanada meant survival was a possibility, and such was the case for Krystyna Żywulska.¹⁶

On August 23, Żywulska entered Auschwitz-Birkenau as a Polish political prisoner; she was quickly stripped of her name and humanity. Her hair was shaved, and her clothing exchanged for a shirt, striped dress, and wooden clogs before she was lined up for tattooing.¹⁷ Krystyna wrote in her autobiography “I became Prisoner No. 55908. In this one minute, with every prick of the needle, one phase of my life vanished.”¹⁸

Each new batch of prisoners was assigned to work squads once they completed their quarantine. Żywulska found herself on a squad assigned to work outside in the fields. For weeks, she worked outside regardless of the weather: rain, snow, mud that came up past her knees, etc.¹⁹ During this period, she began writing poetry. She stated in her book “I Survived Auschwitz” that she had never written poetry before. However, to survive the endless roll calls she began composing it in her mind.²⁰ She wrote the verse “Apel”, translated “Roll Call”: “Over Auschwitz the sun rises, pink and bright the light it sheds. Young and old we stand in rows; stars die above our heads.” ²¹


¹⁷ Milewski, “The Making of a Satirist.”


¹⁹ Ibid., 62.


²¹ Ibid., 56.
friends picked up on this verse and began reciting it, and it eventually made its way to Wala Konopska. Wala Konopska was an “older”, meaning she had been in Auschwitz for a long time, and was an influential prisoner who had a job under a roof. She loved the poetry and decided to become Żywulska’s protector.  

From December to January 1943, there was a typhoid epidemic in Auschwitz and Żywulska became gravely ill. Wala sent men to take her to the hospital and watched over her, even administering medicine to her that saved her life. After she recovered, Wala recognized that Żywulska would not survive in the outdoors in her still weakened state. She arranged for her to work in Auschwitz-Birkenau at the Effektenkammer Commando, Kanada. Żywulska also worked to register the prisoners who were entering or departing from the camp. The new job came with new benefits, including the ability to avoid the harsh elements and physical labor. Also, because she was processing the effects of arriving prisoners, there was more opportunity to pilfer extra clothes like nightgowns, sweaters and scarves. The women of the Effektenkammer slept in a smaller barrack, and, for the first time since entering the camp, Żywulska had her own mattress and blanket. The strict rules were softened: the women could grow their hair, they no longer had to attend roll calls, and they would never again stand for selection.

23. Żywulska, I Survived Auschwitz, 75-77.
25. Żywulska, I Survived Auschwitz, 106.
26. Ibid., 112-115.
Although this was a privileged job, the workers of the Effektenkammer worked next to crematorium IV, and witnessed the mass killings that were taking place on a daily basis.\textsuperscript{27} Birkenau became the center for gassing operations in 1942. By summer of 1944, just after Żywulska was transferred to Birkenau, the camp was operating at its full capacity and was capable of murdering 20,000 people a day.\textsuperscript{28} The worry for the prisoners was no longer physical but mental. In her book “I survived Auschwitz,” Krystyna wrote: “I was oppressed by fear. I kept repeating as we marched: ‘I won’t give up now. I have suffered so much. If the typhus did not kill me, I won’t die because of a nervous breakdown.’”\textsuperscript{29}

Amidst these horrific circumstances, Krystyna became a prolific poet. Her poetry traveled orally amongst the prisoners and became quite popular throughout all of the camps of Auschwitz.\textsuperscript{30} Her verses were often cheerful and lighthearted, a sharp contrast to the environment. In her poems, she focused on happiness and the future freedom that she hoped was imminent for the prisoners. Underneath these optimistic statements ran a current of irony and sarcasm. It was this combination that her fellow prisoners loved.\textsuperscript{31} The poem “Wyzieczka w nieznane”, or “Excursion to the unknown”, is an example of her compositional style and her characterization contrasting nature and

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{27} Ibid., 104
  \item \textsuperscript{28} Yisrael Gutman and Michael Berenbaum, eds., \textit{Anatomy of the Auschwitz Death Camp} (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 2-10.
  \item \textsuperscript{29} Żywulska, \textit{I Survived Auschwitz}, 105.
  \item \textsuperscript{30} Auschwitz.
  \item \textsuperscript{31} Milewski, “The Making of a Satirist.”
\end{itemize}
calmness with the atrocities that were taking place right in front of them. It is impossible to escape the biting tongue of her sarcasm and the irony of the world around her.\textsuperscript{32} The following is an excerpt from the poem:

Wycieczka w nieznane
Kyrstyna Żywulska
August, 1944

Słonczko świeci
I ptaszewk śpiewa-
bawią się dzieci
I szumią drzewa.

Życie jest barwne,
śliczne, bogate-
nikt by się nie chciał
rozstać z tym światem.

Młodszych już wzięli
podczas selekcji,
a starsi idą
do “dezynfekcji.”

(...) 
I trzeba tylko
pilnie uważać,
jak tłuszcz się topi,
mięso wysmaża.
W ruch łopaty,
treszącą gnaty,
ciała skwierczą,
kości sterczą:
dziecinne kości
niewinne kości!

(...) 
One only has to
watch very closely,
how the fat melts,
and the meat cooks,
The shovel’s movements
make the bones crack,
Bodies sizzle
Bone stick out:
Children’s bones
Innocent bones!\textsuperscript{33}

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\textsuperscript{32} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{33} Barbara Milewski, “Camp Momentos from Krystyna Żywulska: The Making of a Satirist and Songwriter in Auschwitz- Birkenau” (lecture, Swarthmore College, 2016) 2.
This poem and “the urgent need to psychologically process mass murder” resonated with the prisoners and spread quickly throughout the camp.\textsuperscript{34} When the verses arrived in Auschwitz I, prisoner Kryzysztof Jażdżyński adjusted the poetry to fit to the song “Gloomy Sunday”, which was originally written by Hungarian composer Rezső Seress but made internationally popular in 1941 when it was recorded by Billie Holiday.\textsuperscript{35} Like “Excursions into the Unknown,” some of Żywulska’s poetry was adjusted and set to music by prisoners of the camp, while other poetry was composed by Żywulska herself to fit pre-existing songs. Taking new texts and putting them with preexisting popular, classical, or folk tunes created contrafacta, and her most famous work \textit{Wiązanka z Effektenkammer} (Medley from the Effektenkammer) exemplified this wonderfully.

\textit{Wiązanka z Effektenkammer} was one of the longest compositions to survive the concentration camps. It included 54 short songs set to a variety of popular melodies, Polish folk tunes, and classical melodies.\textsuperscript{36} The work was created for and given to Maria Grzesiewska, the Kapo, or block supervisor of the Effektenkammer, on her name day of September 8, 1944. The work was typed on seven pages and fellow prisoner Zofia Bratro colorfully decorated the pages.\textsuperscript{37} The entire medley was performed by four inmates, including Żywulska, and some of the poems correspond to the popular songs they sang.\textsuperscript{38}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{34} Milewski, “The Making of a Satirist.”
\item \textsuperscript{35} Milewski, “Krystyna Żywulska.”
\item \textsuperscript{36} Auschwitz.
\item \textsuperscript{37} Milewski, “The Making of a Satirist.”
\item \textsuperscript{38} Milewski, “Krystyna Żywulska.”
\end{itemize}
The tone of these songs is much more optimistic than the words in the poem “Excursions to the Unknown.” Many of Żywulska’s poems are lighthearted depictions of fellow workers in the Effektenkammer. The poems also describe their strength, their hope, and the future awaiting all of them once they were free.\textsuperscript{39}

The hope and the lighthearted banter included in these poems were a concern for Żywulska years later, after the war. She feared that when people read the poetry outside of the concentration camp, they would come to the wrong conclusion regarding the conditions of the prisoners and the reality of the death camp.\textsuperscript{40} However, rather than painting a different picture of the concentration camp, the texts from the Effektenkammer display a vivid picture of the everyday world of the survivors of Birkenau.

As 1944 continued, signs indicated that Germany was losing the battle on both fronts. In November 1944, SS Chief Heinrich Himmler ordered that the gas chambers and crematoriums of Auschwitz be destroyed.\textsuperscript{41} In late 1944, Żywulska composed a parody song entitled “Marsz o Wolności” (March of Freedom). The music for the song came from a Soviet mass song entitled “Moscow in May.” The lyrics were powerful, inspiring, and focused on freedom. The refrain went as follows:

\begin{tabular}{l}
\text{Więc pasiak zdejm i trepy zrzuć} & So take off your striped clothes and kick off your clogs, \\
\text{Zgolaną głowę w gore wynieś!} & Your shaven head raise high! \\
\text{Wesoła tak do domu wróc,} & Merrily return home this way, \\
\text{Na ustach miej radości śpiew!} & with a joyful song on your lips! \\
\end{tabular}

\textsuperscript{39} Milewski, “The Making of a Satirist.”

\textsuperscript{40} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{41} Gutman, 174.
Żywulska and many others sang this refrain during the forced evacuation of Auschwitz in January 1945, in which Nazis evacuated thousands of prisoners from the camp on foot.\textsuperscript{42} Determined to not end up dead or in another camp, Żywulska successfully managed to escape the march on January 18, 1945.\textsuperscript{43}

After the war, Żywulska lived in Poland and married Loen Andrzejewski, who was a member of the communist secret police. She continued writing both satire and songs until her death in 1992. The exact number of her writings in Auschwitz-Birkenau is unknown; thirty-two full texts survive. Żywulska scholar Barbara Milewski described her verses as follows: “All are invariably marked by vivid realism, some also by a quality of direct and sober reportage. And while sarcasm and irony prevail, Żywulska’s compositions seldom lapse into despair. Rather, they exude life – specifically Żywulska’s own will to live – and deliver a powerful message of resistance.” \textsuperscript{44}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{42} Gutman, 517.
\item \textsuperscript{43} Żywulska, \textit{I Survived Auschwitz}, 229.
\item \textsuperscript{44} Milewski, “The Making of a Satirist.”
\end{itemize}
CHAPTER III – JAKE HEGGIE

Composer and pianist Jake Heggie was born John Stephen Heggie on March 31st, 1961 in West Palm Beach, Florida.\(^{45}\) He grew up in a household surrounded by music. His father, a physician, was a jazz saxophone player, and his mother loved music as well. His parents’ combined appreciation for the art meant that jazz, big band, musicals, and popular tunes filled the home on a daily basis.\(^ {46}\) From a young age he was exposed to great singers like Barbara Streisand, Julie Andrews, Carly Simon, and James Taylor, as well as jazz musicians such as Tommy Dorsey, Ella Fitzgerald, and Artie Shaw.\(^ {47}\)

When Heggie was very young, his parents moved to Torrence, California, then relocated to Bexley, Ohio, in 1966. It was in Ohio that seven-year-old Jake began taking piano lessons.\(^ {48}\) Music was Jake’s passion, and he said of piano lessons: “I loved lessons right from the start. On the first day we learned to play *Hot Cross Buns*. I remember it so clearly. I ran home and said, ‘Mom, listen to this, I learned to play a song!’ From that time on, I would practice the piano for hours, rather than play outside.”\(^ {49}\)

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48. Sigman.

Heggie’s father struggled his whole life with severe depression and finally committed suicide when Jake was ten years old. After this traumatic experience, Jake began composing his own music at age eleven as a way to move forward and cope with this loss. He stated, “That [music] is where I felt safe and secure, where I could express emotion.” When he was fourteen, he began composing songs to lyrics he had written himself. He also began to study composition with Ernst Bacon, who had been Carlisle Floyd’s teacher thirty-four years earlier. It was Ernst who introduced Heggie to the poetry of Emily Dickinson and Walt Whitman. This poetry resonated with Heggie and provided a new challenge, since the poets were dead and all he had were their words. He credits this study for sparking an interest in songwriting and for shaping his characteristic synthesis of text and music within his songs.

Heggie spent two years after college at the American College in Paris. He stated in an interview: “I wanted to walk in the footsteps of Chopin, Liszt, Verdi and Rossini, so I went to Paris.” Heggie did not go there to study with a specific teacher; rather, he completed his AA degree and studied piano privately on the side. Realizing he needed a more structured plan of study, Heggie went back to the United States and enrolled in

50. Sigman.


UCLA to major in piano performance and composition. His main composition professor was Johana Harris, a prominent and distinguished composer.\textsuperscript{55}

Johana Harris was influential in Heggie’s personal and professional life. When it came to composing, Heggie stated: “She had an amazing personality and was one of the most phenomenal musicians you could imagine. Music was her language and she brought an essential meaning to music that had been missing for me.”\textsuperscript{56} The pair ended up married: she was sixty-nine years of age and he was twenty-one. Though the relationship was unconventional and came as a shock to friends and family, they eventually gained acceptance.\textsuperscript{57} He completed his undergraduate degree and began his master’s, while simultaneously performing and traveling with Harris. In 1988, he began experiencing focal dystonia in his right hand, which is characterized by the muscular tissues building up and clumping into a ball. Because of this injury, Heggie temporarily dropped out of his graduate degree, although he would go on to finish in 2005. He also gave up performing and composing.\textsuperscript{58}

During this time, Johana accepted Heggie’s homosexuality, and although they remained legally married and close friends until her death in 1995, he made the move from Los Angeles to San Francisco in November 1993. He initially began working in a job as a PR/Marketing writer for UC Berkeley. In April 1994, Heggie began working in

\textsuperscript{55} Beasley, 8.

\textsuperscript{56} Redman, 3.

\textsuperscript{57} “On Composing.”

\textsuperscript{58} Ibid.
the PR department for San Francisco Opera. His job was to get to know the young artists, the performers, the costumers, and everyone else involved in the company, and to write press releases to generate excitement and interest in the company’s productions. Through this job, he had the opportunity to meet many singers, notably, Frederica von Stade. Von Stade and Jake Heggie grew to be friends through interactions at the opera company, although she had no idea Heggie was a composer. Heggie wrote folk song arrangements and presented them to von Stade as a thank you on the opening night of the opera *The Dangerous Liaisons*.\(^{59}\) Enamored with the song settings, von Stade asked Heggie to do a concert with her. Word spread quickly and soon many famous stars were looking for compositions by him.\(^{60}\)

In 1998, Jake was given the job of CHASE Composer in Residence for San Francisco Opera. This turned into a big break for him, as Lofti Mansouri, general director for San Francisco Opera, offered him the opportunity to write an opera with the famed Broadway playwright Terrance McNally. Heggie flew to New York to meet McNally. However, McNally seemed uninterested in the project at the time. Unexpectedly, however, Renée Fleming soon told McNally that he needed to write a libretto, and the only suitable composer to work with was Jake Heggie. McNally called Heggie, and the collaboration began: the result was the opera *Dead Man Walking*.\(^{61}\)

*Dead Man Walking* premiered in October 2000 at San Francisco Opera, featuring director Joe Mantello, conductor Patrick Summers, mezzos Susan Graham and Fredericka

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59. Beasley, 111.

60. “On Composing.”

61. Daily.
von Stade, and baritone John Packard. The work was enormously successful, with over fifty productions across five continents and two live recordings taking place since its release.\textsuperscript{62} The work was so popular that it led Opera News to hail Jake Heggie as “US Opera’s most successful composer.”\textsuperscript{63}

The critical success of \textit{Dead Man Walking} opened the door for more commissions and work. A prestigious Guggenheim fellowship allowed Heggie to work for three years as a mentor in Washington National Opera’s American Opera Initiative. He has since composed eight operas: \textit{Moby Dick}, \textit{Great Scott}, \textit{3 Decembers}, \textit{To Hell and Back}, \textit{Out of Darkness}, \textit{At the Statue of Venus}, \textit{The Radio Hour: A Choral Opera}, and \textit{It’s a Wonderful Life}, a new work that premiered in December 2016.\textsuperscript{64} Heggie’s compositional output has not been limited to opera, however. He has enjoyed commercial success with over two hundred and fifty art songs, concerti, chamber, choral, and orchestral works, and his dynamic career continues to gain both popular and critical appeal.\textsuperscript{65}

Jake Heggie’s compositional influences are as diverse as his teachers. Besides Johana Harris and Ernst Bacon, Heggie studied with Jim Low, Roger Bourland, Paul DesMarais, Paul Reale, and David Raksin. With Jim Low, he studied art song, specifically the synthesis of text and music. He described in an interview that he spent a summer studying the song cycles of Schubert and Schumann, and Low would stop him


\textsuperscript{63} Daily.

\textsuperscript{64} jakeheggie.com.

\textsuperscript{65} Ibid.
continuously to point out the text painting, the melodic lines, and the new compositional aspects that these prolific composers brought to the songs. 66 He studied composition with Bourland, who taught him to look at the composition as a whole and to not get lost in the small details. DesMarais forced Heggie to look at a variety of musical styles, everything from Chopin to Sondheim. 67 Paul Reale taught Heggie to pay attention to the color and harmonies produced in the orchestra and how to hear those colors underneath a melodic line. Finally, David Ratskin helped Heggie think more motivically and theatrically. 68 Heggie’s work is intensely dramatic and it is clear that he is “a theatre composer.” 69

Melody is of primary importance for Heggie. While composing a melodic line, he considers the color and depth that the underlying orchestra can add. His works are heavily influenced by Ernst Bacon, whose songs were characterized by a clear melody rooted in fundamentally tonal harmony. Bacon also employed the use of jazz rhythms, Appalachian folk melodies, dance music, and hymns in his compositions, and Heggie’s compositions reference all of these different genres. Bacon composed everything from opera to Broadway, and he moved between genres seamlessly, an eclectic approach that carried over into Heggie’s writing. 70

66. Beasley, 128-129.
67. Ibid., 128.
68. Ibid., 129.
69. Ibid., 27.
Heggie is classified as a neo-tonalist. Although he has not always been popular with music critics, his work has helped to “reinforce neo-tonicism as a legitimate genre of the twenty-first century.” 71 His melodies focus on coloring the words and syncopations that imitate natural speech. 72 The long lyrical lines of his melodies are based in traditional harmony, and even his highly atmospheric orchestrations will retain a tonal center. 73 A famous mezzo soprano and frequent interpreter of Heggie’s works, Joyce DiDonato described his melodic composition by saying, “Not shying away from a melodic line is quite brave for a composer of the 21st century.” 74 Heggie states that his goals for the melodic line are to serve the drama, to allow the character to be explored, and to fuse the melody with the words. 75

The synthesis of text and music is extremely important in Heggie’s work. He described his music as being “a fusion of words and music.” 76 He stated, “I can’t set a poem if I don’t love it.” The words determine the shape of his music, and clear, understandable text is critical. 77 He frequently composes for the mezzo-soprano and baritone voices for this very reason. Heggie stated that he enjoys those voices because

71. Stearns.
72. Miller.
74. Sigman.
75. “On Composing.”
76. Sigman.
77. “On Composing.”
the text is nearly always intelligible due to the lower singing range.\textsuperscript{78} He emphasizes the importance of the text in his instructions for preparation.\textsuperscript{79} “First read the text as a monologue to fully understand meaning and emphasize the natural flow of text...when you don’t know what you are singing about it’s like signing a contract without further reading it. Uninformed performances where the singer has not fully explored the text bother me a lot.”\textsuperscript{80} Much as in the 19\textsuperscript{th} century Lieder of composers Schubert, Schumann, and Wolf, melody may be a prime ingredient in Heggie’s songs, but it is not formed without the text and the story firmly in mind.

Heggie has collaborated with many librettists, most famously Broadway playwright Terrance McNally and librettist and composer Gene Scheer. Gene Scheer and Jake Heggie began working together in 2004; Heggie describes their collaboration as “a natural ease and free-flowing exchange of ideas.”\textsuperscript{81} Their first collaboration was on an opera commissioned by Dallas Opera called \textit{Moby Dick}. In his librettos and poetry, Scheer focuses first on the scene that is taking place and what is at stake in that scene. He lays a framework with his text that the composer may then fill. He describes the addition of the music as going “beyond what words can say. It’s pure emotion in one of the rawest forms.” \textsuperscript{82}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{78} Beasley, 29.
  \item \textsuperscript{79} Ibid., 81.
  \item \textsuperscript{80} Ibid., 85.
  \item \textsuperscript{81} Feilotter.
  \item \textsuperscript{82} Mark Slade, “Gene Scheer in His Own Words” \textit{Opera News}, July 2014, 29.
\end{itemize}
CHAPTER IV – DEVELOPMENT OF FAREWELL, AUSCHWITZ

For the past eighteen years, the non-profit organization Music of Remembrance has worked to keep the memories of the Holocaust alive through the presentation of concerts and educational events, as well as the commissioning and recording of new works. The organization’s first collaboration with Heggie and Scheer occurred when its founder, Mina Miller, commissioned Heggie to write a work addressing the topic of homosexuality during the Holocaust. The result was the song cycle For a Look or a Touch. This cycle was based on the diary of Manfred Lewin, which was discovered by Gene Scheer. Manfred was a gay Jew who died in Auschwitz along with his entire family. Manfred discusses Gad Beck, who was his lover in Berlin and who survived the Holocaust. The song cycle has Gad being played by an actor and Manfred being sung by a baritone; Manfred appears only as a ghost throughout the work. The music is strongly influenced by jazz and musical theater idioms of the early twentieth century. The work was finished in March 2007 and premiered on May 7, 2007. It was also rewritten and performed as a choral/stage work in 2012.

The second collaboration between Music of Remembrance, Heggie, and Scheer revolved around the life and work of Krystyna Żywulska. While attending the 2007 International Holocaust Conference in Krakow Poland, Mina Miller heard a lecture by a Krystyna Żywulska scholar Barbara Milewski. Struck by Żywulska’s incredible story


and poetry, Miller commissioned a cycle about Żywulska’s extraordinary life. The dramatic cycle for soprano, Another Sunrise, premiered in Seattle, Washington on May 14, 2012, and was sung by Caitlin Lynch. The work is based on Żywulska’s fight to survive in Auschwitz, as described in her 1946 autobiography, I Survived Auschwitz.

Farewell Auschwitz was the third commission by Music of Remembrance, and it was written as a companion piece to Another Sunrise. This time, Heggie and Scheer explored the poetry written by Żywulska herself. Most of the poetry for the cycle came from the Wiazanka z Effektenkammer (Medley from the Effektenkammer). The original poetry was first given a literal translation by Gene Scheer’s in-laws, Zbigniew and Anna Lechowski; then, Scheer gave the words his own poetic translations. In adapting the text for the song cycle, Scheer “used poetic license so that he and I [Heggie] could explore the emotional truth and explore a transformative, operatic journey and not be bound to making a documentary or biography.”

As stated earlier, this poetry was originally performed by four prisoners, including Żywulska. In the initial writing of Farewell, Auschwitz, Heggie and Scheer just wrote for soprano, mezzo, and baritone. Later, they named those three characters: Krystyna


86. Heggie, Program Notes.

87. Ibid.

88. Ibid.

89. Jake Heggie, e-mail interview, December 10, 2016.
Żywulska, Zosha, and Manfred.\textsuperscript{90} Zosha was a character in Zywulska’s book and was described as “a robust, blue-eyed peasant girl from Lodz.”\textsuperscript{91} The baritone is named Manfred, referring to Manfred Lewin, the subject of \textit{For a Look or a Touch}. Although there are no references to suggest that Krystyna and Manfred knew one another, her poetry was well known throughout Auschwitz-Birkenau, and his inclusion is a logical choice for Heggie and Scheer.

\textit{Farewell Auschwitz} is a song cycle for soprano, mezzo-soprano, baritone, and either piano or chamber ensemble comprised of clarinet, violin, cello, contrabass, and piano. It includes a one-page prologue, followed by seven songs. There are three trios, a solo song for each of the three singers, and a duet between the soprano and mezzo.

The work is cyclical, with several overarching themes tying the songs together. The first cyclical aspect is the text. The poetic excerpts Heggie and Scheer chose vividly capture Żywulska’s keen wit and the humanity of the prisoners despite their circumstances. Heggie stated that they chose to focus on the “difficulty of being a survivor - the choices one has to make - which memories one will choose to embrace, which to reinvent, and which to bury.”\textsuperscript{92} Songs 2-5 are written either from the perspective of one of the prisoners (in first person) or as a commentary about a specific prisoner. As seen later in the analysis, Żywulska’s wit, sarcasm, and irony were not lost in translation, and Heggie’s music further elevates her narrative.

\textsuperscript{90} Jake Heggie e-mail Interview.

\textsuperscript{91} Zywulska, \textit{I Survived Auschwitz}, 113.

\textsuperscript{92} Jake Heggie e-mail Interview.
Another cyclical element is the use of borrowed material throughout the movements. Though each piece is a new work, many of them are based on previously written melodies or rhythms. The borrowed material comes from many different genres and reflects the styles of music that were popular in the 1940s and during the Holocaust. Song 2 features a beguine rhythm characteristic of 1940s musical theater. In song 4, Heggie uses a cadential extension in the style of Haydn or Mozart. For additional art music influences, Heggie pulls directly from Liszt’s *La Campanella* and Chopin’s Op. 64 no. 2, seamlessly incorporating their melodies into a new song.\(^3\)

Folk and klezmer influences also permeate the work. Many of the original tunes used in the work when it was performed in Auschwitz were folk tunes, and Heggie decided to replicate some of the scales and ideas. Some of the folk melodies are pulled from his previous work, *Another Sunrise*. Others are newly composed melodies but their narrow range and step-wise motion are characteristics of folk melodies.\(^4\) In the orchestrated version, clarinet solos throughout serve to accentuate the Klezmer feel.

Heggie further unifies the cycle through the use of the note G as the tonal center. He also moves between the G Major and G Minor modes in many of the songs, never settling in one area for any extended amount of time. Heggie states that “The struggle and clash between major and minor is endlessly fascinating to me…and it all hinges on the half-step at the third. It’s pervasive throughout my work and something I explore a

\(^3\) Heggie, Program Notes.

\(^4\) Jake Heggie e-mail Interview.
great deal.”\textsuperscript{95} The mixing of modes as a structural harmonic device is used in almost all of the songs in the cycle.

The final cyclical element of the work is the restatement of material from the beginning two songs into the final song. The prologue is \textit{a cappella}, and the final song begins in the same manner. The motives heard in the second song return verbatim and in the same key in the final song. The key areas throughout the work shift occasionally, however, Heggie brings them back to G Major and G Minor for the end of the cycle. Even the songs that move away from G as the tonic include some movement, a small section, or a preparation for the next song in G Major.

\textit{Farewell, Auschwitz} premiered on May 14, 2013, at the Benaroya Hall in Seattle, Washington. The singers hired for the premier were Caitlin Lynch, Sarah Larson, and Morgan Smith; the accompanying orchestra was comprised of Laura DeLuca, Mikhail Schmidt, Walter Gray, Jonathan Green, and Craig Sheppard.\textsuperscript{96} After its premier, Heggie and Scheer worked to combine their three cycles (\textit{Another Sunrise}, \textit{Farewell, Auschwitz}, and \textit{For a Look or a Touch}) into an opera entitled \textit{Out of Darkness}. The original concept simply was to have back-to-back song cycles, however, they ultimately decided to include additional music as well as a libretto. The work premiered in May 2016.\textsuperscript{97}

\textsuperscript{95} Jake Heggie, e-mail Interview.


\textsuperscript{97} Ibid.
CHAPTER V – FAREWELL, AUSCHWITZ

Prologue

Farewell, Auschwitz begins with a prologue – a one-page introductory trio for the soprano, mezzo-soprano, and baritone. It is a cappella, and the only instructions are a tempo marking ($\textit{j}=88$) and the word “Simply.” The soprano enters in measure two with the text, while the baritone hums a drone on G and the mezzo joins in with a simple descending tetrachord hum. The melody for the soprano line, which passes to the baritone on the second line, sounds very folk-like, with step-wise motion and a narrow range. This melody keeps the prologue very simple and allows the focus to remain on the text.

There is a substantial amount of Jewish influence in this work as a whole and it is first seen in the prologue. One characteristic of Jewish music is a prayer mode called “Magon Avot.”98 “Magen Avot,” one of the Jewish prayer modes, has the characteristics of the western natural minor scale. The prologue is written in G Major and reaffirms the key signature multiple times with a pedal G, however, an Eb appears frequently. The use of the flat 6 within the opening major prologue seems to be a borrowed tone from the minor version of the g scale. Also, in measure two, the mezzo introduces the F natural or the lowered 7th. Resolving the seventh scale degree down instead of allowing it to lead to the tonic was typical of Jewish folk songs of Eastern Europe.99


Music Example 1 Descending Tetrachord

The text for the prologue comes from the title page of the work *Wiazanka z Effektenkammer*. Gene Scheer was able to use an almost direct translation from the cover for the opening lines of the song. There is a close relationship between what Zywulska wrote and the Scheer’s poetic translation, which adds another level of authenticity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original Text</th>
<th>Poetic Translation used in <em>Farewell Auschwitz</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For our dear Maria on her name day</td>
<td>For our dear Maria on her name day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From all of those with whom</td>
<td>From all of those with whom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>she shared the good and the bad</td>
<td>she shared the good and the bad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And whom she helped to endure</td>
<td>And whom she helped to endure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Memento.¹⁰⁰</td>
<td>We dedicate this song.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As discussed in chapter two, the Maria referred to in this passage was *kapo* (or block supervisor) Maria Grzesiewska. The name day discussed in the text refers to the day of the saint Maria was named after. This day was celebrated much like a birthday, even inside Auschwitz-Birkenau.

¹⁰⁰ Milewski, “The Making of a Satirist.”
The cycle continues with song 1, entitled “Soldiers.” This longest song in the cycle introduces a majority of the material and ideas heard throughout the work. The opening two measures are the first part of Theme 1, which will return frequently throughout the piece.

Musical Example 2 Theme 1

This theme is one of the unifying elements of the work, and it will reappear in the seventh song of the cycle. The initial bombastic G Major chord helps to solidify the key center for the piece before it moves to settle on an augmented 6th chord. This outlining of the augmented 6th chord quickly becomes a bass line ostinato, above which a folk melody is being played in the treble.

The use of the augmented chord helps to reinforce a transition to the dominant before Heggie once again moves to the tonic key of G Minor. The melody sounds like a combination of Jewish and nationalistic motives, featuring stepwise motion, lowering of the sixth scale degrees, and accented passing tones.

The soprano and mezzo voices enter at mm. 26 on the words “wah oo”, and they are given the instructions “like a muted trumpet.” There was an orchestra in Auschwitz, but the instruments were normally not in good condition and were of a rather random
assortment, based on who brought which ones with them. The use of the voices as instruments is a creative and practical choice for filling in the sound gaps. Both the character of the muted trumpets and the accompaniment change at measure 33. The key has moved to G Minor, the folk melody is gone, and the accompaniment is in block chords in quarter notes with a G pedal reinforcing the tonic. The piano plays a cutting, Kurt Weill-esque march while the voices, all three now acting as muted trumpets, alternate “trumpet solos.”

In measure 52, we see a return (marked “Tempo 1”) of one measure of the opening before moving into two bars of the “beguine” rhythm. This beguine rhythm will also be a unifying motive for this song, and it returns throughout the piece to transition between different sections. The beguine was a dance form from Latin America. It rose to prominence throughout the world in the late 1930s after Cole Porter composed the famous song “Begin the Beguine,” from his 1935 musical Jubilee. This popular cabaret rhythm and sound provides a stark contrast to the march that was playing previously. It implies a change of character and this short four-bar transition section leads into a mezzo solo in measure 56.

Musical Example 3 Beguine the Beguine by Cole Porter¹⁰¹

Musical Example 4 Beguine Rhythm used in “Soldiers”

The first twenty-one bars of the solo are sparsely accompanied. The text is the most important part of this section; a slower tempo ($\textit{L}=56$) with one or two chords per measure helps to preserve its clarity. The addition of an F# helps to transition into a second solo section for the mezzo in G Major. This prayer-like section is accompanied by stepwise motion and resulting augmented and diminished triads; however, Heggie keeps returning to G Major triads. Once again, the back and forth transition between major and minor harmonization is at play.

In measure 88, two measures of the beguine material transition us back into a G Minor section. This section is a simultaneous combination of previously introduced material. The piano’s line is the march accompaniment heard earlier, and the voices imitating muted trumpets make a short return before the poetry previously sung by the mezzo shifts to all of the voices. Beginning in measure 105, there is a gradual acceleration in all parts, which continues until we have once again reached a return of Tempo 1 and the two measures of the beguine material.

After this short return, all three voices enter in measure 117 with the melody and text from the mezzo solo. The first seven measures are in unison; this evokes the feeling of power, giving the impression that the soldiers are not the Nazis, but rather prisoners.
with paper and pencil, who will always remember. Following the framework that was introduced earlier when the mezzo sang the music, there is a *ritardando* and the addition of the F# to help transition into the prayer-like section in G Major. Once again, the stepwise motion of the harmonies leads to diminished and augmented chords, however, the G pedal in the bass helps to solidify the tonal center of this section.

The final section is a break in the cycle, in that Theme 1 does not reappear, nor does the beguine theme aid the transition. Rather, the original folk melody over the bass’s broken augmented chord ostinato from the beginning of the song reappears in its entirety from the beginning of the song. The last line, in G Major, is an almost exact quote of measures 33-37, when the piano was marching and the voices were imitating trumpet solos. It almost seems as if the freedom they felt a few bars prior when they were all singing together has been taken away. Now they must revert back to marching in line, finding ways to fill in the gaps.

**Diamonds**

The second song in this cycle is a baritone solo. It is through-composed, although it does have reoccurring melodic and harmonic ideas throughout. The style of the work is very reminiscent of the Bach/Gounod *Ave Maria*. The bass line for the piece is a walking bass, which provides consistent dotted quarter note motion in each measure. The right hand of the piano has flowing arpeggios over the walking bass. There is a separate and simpler sung melody line that moves above the motion in the instrumental section.
Opening of “Diamonds”

The poetry for this piece embraces Żywulska’s ideals: the importance of hope and the deep need of the prisoners to look forward to freedom in order to survive the atrocities taking place. The line “Soon, soon I will take you away” is repeated three times in this short song as the prisoner sees the end of suffering in sight. The prisoner also refers to fate giving him diamonds and “hundreds of gold lockets.” Within the Effektenkammer, all valuables brought by any prisoner who entered Auschwitz were sorted, including jewelry of any kind. Being surrounded by it was normal for the workers.

Harmonically, this piece explores the alternation between major and minor; however, this song does not move from G Minor to G Major but rather explores the idea of modal borrowing. The piece begins in E Major, yet in the second measure, there is a bVI chord borrowed from E Minor. The idea of modal borrowing is prevalent throughout the harmonic movement of this work.
The chromaticism and modal borrowing lead this piece slowly through different and interesting chord progressions. In the eighth measure, Heggie writes an abbreviated circle of fifths. The progression goes from E Major – A Minor – D Major – G Major and ends on C Major before the circle is broken. Another important harmonic moment happens midway through the piece in measure 36. At first, there is the normal movement to a cadence on the dominant of B Major. Immediately following this cadence is a G Major chord with a G pedal in the bass for four measures. It seems like an odd, brief tonal movement, but in looking at the work as a whole, the key of G (either major or minor) is central to almost every movement. This idea is further perpetuated in the final cadence of the piece, which is a chord on D. Within the isolated context of this piece, this is once again rather odd, but considering that the subsequent song begins in G Minor, it becomes clear that the movement to D Major at the end of this piece is merely a dominant preparation for the next song.

In The Cards

Song 3 is a modified strophic piece entitled “In the Cards,” and it is a solo for the mezzo-soprano. Written in two sections, this piece clearly depicts a scene that took place involving Krystyna Żywulska in the concentration camp. The piece is filled with multiple, clearly indicated tempo changes. The beginning is marked “Agitated” and it is full of scurrying, skirting music that seems to go back to tempo, accelerate, or slow every single measure. This opening music sets the scene for clandestine activity and paints the mental image of prisoners scurrying or sneaking around the camp. The beginning scurrying motive will become a unifying device throughout the piece.
A fragment of this opening motive is played four different times in the bass. It is used as a transitional figure between lines of sung text and has the feeling of agitation, motion, and subterfuge. This little figure tells us that Żywulska is either about to get caught, is in the process of getting caught, or is remembering the feelings of being discovered amidst furtive activity.

When the singer enters, it is obvious that Heggie has chosen to allow the text to dictate the musical form and the melody. This piece is where we see the influences of later French Romantic composers such as Poulenc. As in Poulenc’s compositions, the melody is the primary ingredient in the piece. The phrases are short and follow the line of the text. The melody is simple and direct, with sections that almost resemble recitative. The rhythm conforms to the text, and Heggie frequently writes a ritardando at the beginning of the phrases to further emphasize the text.102

The story captured in this piece is of Krystyna playing cards, which was illegal, and getting caught by Janda, a real person described in Żywulska’s autobiography, was a Nazi and an overseer in Auschwitz-Birkenau. She was different than many of the other overseers in that she was not cruel, and she sought to maintain order through discipline.

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and psychological methods. Żywulska described her as someone who “worshiped Hitler and his ideology,” yet she was also humane.\textsuperscript{103} This dichotomy was puzzling for the prisoners because they could not understand how someone could profess to be humane, yet still, follow Hitler and enforce the death camp orders.\textsuperscript{104}

Janda begins speaking at measure 38. The tempo marking is “Rudely $\text{♩} = 38$”. As Janda “speaks,” the piano is pounding eighth notes that sound like a military march, similar to the march heard in “Soldiers.” Yet, at the end of her line, there is a complete change in character as the piece moves from g minor to cadence on Eb Major. A cadential extension further prolongs and reinforces the cadence of Eb Major, which is very reminiscent of cadential extensions heard in compositions by Mozart and Haydn.

Musical Example 7 Cadential Extension

This rather strange section and unexpected harmonic movement helps to describe how the prisoners felt about Janda: they liked her but it was odd to like someone who could be a part of something so inhumane.

This piece is the first time we see Heggie’s use of borrowed material. The borrowed material is from Franz Liszt’s \textit{Grandes études de Paganini, movement 6: La Campenella}. This is material that was itself borrowed originally by Liszt from the great

\textsuperscript{103} Żywulska, \textit{I Survived Auschwitz}, 129.

\textsuperscript{104} Ibid.
violinist Paganini. The borrowed material starts in the piano in measure 15, which is one measure before the voice enters. The original version is a step higher, however, Heggie alters the key to fit the scheme of *Farewell Auschwitz*.

Musical Example 8 Liszt, *Grandes etudes de Paganini, mvmt. 3: La Campenella*

When the voice enters in measure 17, its melody is also based off of the borrowed material from “La Campenella.”

Musical Example 9 Use of *La Campenella* in “In the Cards”

The borrowed material lasts almost all the way through the strophe until Janda enters and we have a transition to the march and a harmonic modulation to Eb Major, as discussed above. Heggie uses octaves moving in stepwise motion to reintroduce an F# and lead us back into G Minor for the second strophe of the song.

Musical Example 10 Retransition
The second strophe, which begins in measure 52, and is very similar to the first strophe in the piano but with a slightly different melody in the voice. The use of the borrowed “La Campanella” melody returns, unifying the two strophes. Instead of a transition to Eb Major, this time the cadential extension returns in the dominant D Major. The piece ends with the scurrying motive it started with, before gradually moving to its final cadence.

Irenka

“Irenka,” a slow waltz for soprano and piano, is in ternary form (ABA\(^1\)). Like “In the Cards,” this piece is talking about another of Żywulska’s friends, Irenka, who worked with her in the Effektenkammer. The poetry gives a glimpse of the subtle wit, sarcasm, and irony that Żywulska liked to use. Throughout the piece, Heggie uses the contrast of C Minor and C Major to further enhance the irony within the text.

The piece begins with a solo section for the piano (or clarinet, if orchestrated). This haunting folk melody is borrowed material from Another Sunrise, Heggie’s previous cycle about Krystyna Żywulska.\(^{105}\) This solo introduction is also very reminiscent of klezmer music, specifically of the doyne. The doyne was a semi-improvisational lament, usually performed as a solo by the clarinet or violin. Though the notes are not improvised, there is rhythmic flexibility in this solo, which leads to the feeling of freedom.\(^{106}\) The rubato and modal quality of the solo line lend a touch of melancholy to

105. Jake Heggie, email interview.

this movement, clearly transitioning from the upbeat “In the Cards” into a piece that emotionally feels completely different.

The waltz begins in measure 17, residing clearly in C Minor. Immediately, the interactions between the solo line and the accompaniment commence. The piano and voice convey the drama equally, with the melody constantly shifting between them. The opening vocal line sings the question “Why are you crying?”, then the piano imitates the vocal line one bar later. For the repeat of the question, the piano introduces the question before it is asked by the singer. This passing of melodic ideas back and forth between the soprano and the piano continues throughout the song.

Musical Example 11 Passing of Melodic Ideas

This piece is another example of the use of contrafacta. This time the preexisting material comes from Chopin’s Waltz Op. 64, No. 2. Heggie chose a waltz from Chopin because it would have been a popular tune during this time, and also to highlight the Polish connection between Żywulska and Chopin.¹⁰⁷ This entire piece is one long melody using the Waltz Op. 64, No. 2 as a structural device upon which the new melody is written. Although Heggie transposes Chopin’s melody down a half step, the melodic

¹⁰⁷. Jake Heggie, email interview.

38
and harmonic movements match perfectly. He borrowed two different sections from *Op. 64, No. 2*. One is the chromatic descending scale that sounds like it is crying.

Musical Example 12 Chromatic Descending Borrowed Material

The second section of material borrowed from *Opus 64, No. 2* appears at the end of both the A section and the B sections, right before the final cadence. The section is a melodic descending sequence, and the melody in the soprano is based on Chopin’s line.

Musical Example 13 Melody from Chopin’s Waltz Op. 64, no. 2

Throughout this first section, the ideas of the lament and text painting help to form the melody that is sung by soprano. On the word “crying,” Heggie has the voice slide down a step both times it is sung. When Chopin’s waltz comes in, the chromatic descent is yet another lament while the singer is singing “Why.” This text painting once again shows how Heggie allows the text to shape the melody.

As discussed earlier, this first section is in C Minor and is reinforced repeatedly with dominant to tonic motion. The text of this section is full of irony and sarcasm.
Irenka, why are you crying?
Irenka, why are you crying?
Irenka. Why?
Is it because somebody took your chair?
Irenka. Are you crying because it isn’t fair?  

The key of G Minor combined with the word painting make this lament seem incredibly heartbreaking. The “Ah’s” that follow this section in the soprano pair with the borrowed descending sequence from *Op 64, No. 2.* When one thinks of the circumstances, she has every right to cry. She is sitting sorting the belongings of people who are burning mere meters away from her. And yet, Żywulska is asking if she is crying because someone took her chair? We understand Heggie’s musical reasoning when we study the next section of text and compare the key. At the end of the A section, there is an abrupt transition in the B section to C Major. Suddenly it is a far lighter and happier waltz. yet the text reads as follows:

Are you crying because all your dreams lie in taters?
Or is it because wanting just a chair
Is all that matters?  

Heggie appears to be juxtaposing major and minor keys to respond to the text. The synthesis of text and music in this piece help reinforce the irony and sarcasm of Żywulska’s poetry. It also provides a glimpse into what the prisoners had to focus on and how important sarcasm was as they lived through such horror.

The final A¹ section starts almost like the return in a *da capo* aria. The soprano’s melodic line is embellished, and the accompaniment is back in C Minor, nearly the same

108. *Farewell, Auschwitz.*
as it was in the initial A section. The major harmonic difference in this section is the consistent raising of the 6th and 7th scale degrees throughout, thus emphasizing G Melodic Minor. Interestingly, this final section does not talk about chairs at all, but rather makes the serious statement, “this isn’t fair.”

Miss Ziutka

Song number five of the cycle is a tightly harmonized trio in the style of the Andrews Sisters.\(^{110}\) There are two distinct styles that alternate throughout the song. The first is the movement of a typewriter that Heggie imitates in the piano part. The sound of a typewriter fits within the prisoner’s everyday activities in the Effektenkammer. The Germans were meticulous in their record keeping. A large job of Żywulska’s group was to type and document not only every person that went in and out of the camp, but every single item from gold teeth to suitcases. The sound of a typewriter would have been the background “music” to their work. The opening 17 measures of the piece set up the typewriter idea which then recurs throughout the piece. Metronomic eighth notes depict the typing of a word across a page. At the end of a “page,” Heggie halts running eighth notes and writes what initially appears to be 3 unrelated notes, a high C7, a D3, and an F#5. The notes themselves are not the critical part. When played quickly, the C7 sounds like the bell a typewriter makes when it has hit the end of a page. The D1 and F#5 sound like what happens when you hit the carriage return lever and send the carriage back for another line of text.

\(^{110}\) Jake Heggie Email Interview.
Musical Example 14 Typewriter

The other distinct style found within this piece is in a swing jazz rhythm reminiscent of the popular dances of the 1930s and 1940s: Lindy Hop, Charleston and the music of the Andrews sisters. It also once again reflects the influence of Kurt Weill. Weill was influential in taking popular cabaret and popular rhythms to the musical theater and opera compositions of the time. The swing rhythm was used frequently in his compositions.¹¹¹ This figure is seen for the first time in measure 21, and also returns throughout the piece. Heggie articulates what he wants by writing “swing the rhythm” above the music. The bass line ostinato is accented by chords on the off beat in the right hand.

Musical Example 15 Swing Section

The trio is different than everything else in the cycle. It is highly chromatic throughout, both in the harmonies between voices and in the accompaniment. Heggie highlights this chromatic feel by having a chromatic scale on the first page of music constitute the transition between the typewriter music and the swing section.

Once again we see the music working to add depth and articulation to the text. This piece gives the feeling that Krystyna is watching Miss Ziutka type and composing a new line of text every time Miss Ziutka starts a new line of type. This idea is further supported when you see that the “carriage return” motive is played at the end of every line of text. The only time the accompaniment changes is on specific words like “perfectly,” “control,” and “soul.” At this moment, the bass drops out and strict eighth notes that always include F# (the leading tone to the center of this work, “g”). These moments sound almost stark compared to the rest of the piece and the movement as a whole.

Musical Example 16 Stark moment of “Perfectly”
As in “Irenka,” the poetry of this piece captures the essence of Żywulska’s *Wiazanka z Effektenkammer*. As we’ve seen, irony, sarcasm, and hope for freedom are the major themes in her poetry. There is irony in the line “She holds her child who only cries from joy.” The rest of the poetry focuses on the strength control and freedom Miss Ziutka feels while typing. It ends with the line “in the striking of every key, Miss Ziutka thinks she almost free.”

**The Sun and The Skylark**

“The Sun and the Skylark” is a duet for the soprano and mezzo and is also a duet between the two lines of accompaniment. In the orchestrated version, the instrumental part is played by a violin and clarinet. The structure of this piece is very interesting. The opening eight measures of duet in the piano has the range of a little over two octaves between the voices. The upper voice spends most of its time above high C, as if it is imitating the bird, a skylark’s, sound. Skylark’s tunes are very high-pitched and rather intense. The voices are moving in constant parallel motion. The interval between them is either a third or fifth consistently with the exception of five measures in the middle of the piece when the soprano introduces her melody line. The resulting effect is a haunting and stark melody. The melody introduced in the first eight bars also appears to be what the vocal lines will be based on later. When listening only to the accompaniment of the piece, it appears to be playing almost the same melody over and over again.

The mezzo begins her line in measure 9 and her text is about the sun. The line sits in the mid-range and appears to reflecting the warmth of the sun. There are long held notes at the end of each line of text as though the singer has stopped and is feeling the warmth of the sun. The line sung by the mezzo gets previewed in the instrumental part
right before she sings. The mezzo’s solo line ends in measure 21 and in measure 22 the soprano enters singing about the skylark. The character of the piece changes in measure 22, the two lines have a similar melody but are more tonal and the two lines in the instrumental part are no longer moving in constant parallel motion. The piano in measure 22 changes character again, moving from steady quarter or eighth notes to sixteenth notes. This is right after the soprano says “Last night, I heard a skylark sing.” The piano here seems to be imitating a skylark’s song in the right hand, or as if orchestrated in the violin much the same way Vivaldi used the violin to imitate birds in *Four Seasons*, “Spring.”

Musical Example 17 The Birds

The mezzo re-enters under the soprano’s continuing line in measure 33, with the exact same melody and words she sang in the beginning. Although the two voices are singing at the same time, there seems to be very little interaction between them for 19 measures. Measure 51, the voices are suddenly parallel to one another, maintaining the distance of a major third between them. It is as if they have been so influenced by the musical representation of the skylark and sun that they are now imitating the instrumental melody together.
“Farewell, Auschwitz”

The final piece of the cycle is aptly entitled “Farewell Auschwitz.” Not only is this the final piece of the cycle, but poetry was the final composition of Żywulska’s from Auschwitz. It truly embraces the “Hebraic” flavor with its play between major and minor, folk-like melodies, and harmonization. The text is not completely from Wiązanka z Effektenkammer. Instead, Heggie and Scheer utilized text from Marsz o Wolnosci (March of Freedom). As stated earlier, this march, composed in 1944, was sung by the prisoners during the death march at the beginning of 1945, that is, near the end of the war when the Nazis began evacuating the concentration camps. The poetry from Marsz o Wonosci is used as a refrain throughout the final song. The original poetry is only slightly altered by Gene Scheer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Literal Translation</th>
<th>Poetic Singing Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barbara Milewski</td>
<td>Gene Scheer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

So take off your stripe clothes and kick off your clogs, Your shaven head raise high! Merrily return home this way, with a joyful song on your lips!

Take off your striped clothes, kick off your clogs, Stand with me, hold your shaved head high. The song of freedom upon our lips will never, never die!112

This piece grasps the hope and the recurring theme of freedom that pervaded Żywulska’s poetry. References to the clothing refer to the exact articles prisoners were given when they first entered Auschwitz, lost their belongings, hair, and essentially their complete identity.

This piece incorporates many of the ideas presented early in the song cycle. These cyclical elements—most from the first piece “Soldiers” and the prologue—help to tie

112. Farewell, Auschwitz
the entire group of songs together into one cycle. The song starts a cappella with a ten bar solo for the baritone that is reminiscent of the prologue. This solo helps to transition the melody back into the key of G Minor. The text is the refrain from Marsz o Wonosci, will return throughout the final song.

In measure 19, two bars of theme 1 from “Soldiers” returns in G Major followed by the two measures of beguine rhythm. This transition helps us go into G Major, while also drawing the ear back to the ideas of a march and soldiers.

Musical Example 18 Return of Theme 1

The next section is reminiscent of the march heard within the second section of “Soldiers.” The chords are revoiced, and instead of marching quarter notes, the rhythms now drive eighth notes even though the intervals are the same. This time, though, the melody sung by the singers is not just imitating jazz trumpets, but rather presents a new melody with text describing the horrors that they lived through and witnessed. This first section is highly chromatic and seems to accelerate until the last cadence.

Like “Soldiers,” this driving march gives way into a slower prayer-like section in G Major. Again, the chords are the same as those used in “Soldiers,” except that this time, there is are two G pedals in the bass providing some stability and a tonal center for this section. The singers sing this material twice. The first time through, the harmonies
are closer together. As the emotions and dynamics increase, the second section is written with the parts farther apart which automatically increases the intensity.

At the end of the prayer, the melody once again moves from G Major to G Minor. It is here that Heggie combines the melody of the prayer with the earlier refrain. The soprano sings the prayer melody in what appears to be a descant above the mezzo and baritone’s unison refrain. The accompaniment consists of steady quarter notes that sound like a march. Beginning in measure 81, the refrain is sung by all the voices in unison. The rhythm gets slower and slower, yielding a feeling of finality. There is another stark contrast in this piece between the feeling of finality as the march gets gradually slower and the text “the song of freedom upon our lips will never die” that the voices are singing. And yet there is hope in this final march and poetry; Heggie suggests that hope by having the final movement be strongly in G Major.
CHAPTER VI - CONCLUSIONS

It is impossible to forget the horrors that took place within the walls of Auschwitz-Birkenau. It seems unfathomable for us to see anything beyond the extreme disregard for human life that prevailed between the beginnings of the camp in 1940 through the liberation in 1945.\footnote{Gutman, 10.} Nevertheless, Żywulska’s poetry breathes life into the individuals that were there. Żywulska’s story is one of survival.

Her story also reveals a different Auschwitz to the reader. One where the horrors still exist, but also one where human interaction took place, where the prisoners snuck around behind the backs of the SS to smuggle in food, clothing, and entertainment. It is a story that at moments is entertaining and almost peaceful, and can lull the reader into forgetting the environment within which it was written. Musically, Heggie achieves the same effect, with a fun Andrews Sister’s harmonized piece accompanied by the sound of a typewriter. You can almost picture what was taking place within the Effektenkammer and forget what was taking place mere yards away. Similarly in “In the Cards,” the story of Żywulska sneaking around and her resulting punishment come across as humorous, not an emotion frequently used in referencing concentration camp life.

The song cycle evokes rhythms and sounds of dance halls, Broadway, and classical stage. The music is as eclectic as the backgrounds and personalities of the prisoners. What Jake Heggie did was set Żywulska’s words to music that uniquely fit the humanity and resistance expressed in her poetry. The resulting work is both dramatic and moving. *Farewell, Auschwitz* shows how music can elevate the emotions of the text,
prompting a reaction in an audience even years after the events of the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp.

How does one react to the seeming dichotomy between the horrors of the concentration camp and the humor pervading the poetry? Żywulska was worried that people would read her satire and her irony, and walk away feeling as though the concentration camps were not all that bad. If you look and you listen, however, you hear the complete opposite. You hear and see someone who chose to focus on hope, on the dream of being rescued, on the everyday gossip within the barracks, as opposed to giving in to the terror around her. It is human nature to gossip, to laugh at friends, to encourage one another. Within the concentration camp, the poetry and songs helped Żywulska maintain her humanity and provided her with a form of resistance. She couldn’t fight back with weapons, but she had words, or as she states in “Soldiers,” “an alphabet of soldiers.” For those of us listening to her story, this cycle succeeds in conveying this same humanity, indeed the triumph of Żywulska and her fellow prisoners in Auschwitz-Birkenau’s Effektenkammer.
APPENDIX A - Jake Heggie Consent

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
LONG FORM CONSENT

LONG FORM CONSENT PROCEDURES
This completed document must be signed by each consenting research participant:
- The Project Information and Research Description sections of this form should be completed by the Principal Investigator before submitting this form for IRB approval.
- Signed copies of the long form consent should be provided to all participants.

Today’s date: October 20, 2016

PROJECT INFORMATION
Project Title: “An Alphabet of Soldiers”: Jake Heggie’s Farewell, Auschwitz
Principal Investigator: Lori Guy
Phone: 601-466-1885
Email: lori.birrer@usm.edu
College: Arts and Letters
Department: Music

RESEARCH DESCRIPTION

1. Purpose:
The purpose of this study is to research “Farewell Auschwitz”: its history, Jake Heggie’s compositional techniques, and the style and structure of the work.

2. Description of Study:
Interviews will be conducted with Jake Heggie and Gene Scheer, the composer and librettist of the work in order to learn their process for creating the work. The purpose is to discover how they learned of Krystyna Zywulska’s poetry, how did they figure out which poetry they would use, what were the sound or compositional goals. These interviews will be conducted over email and they may involve a couple of exchanges so that initial answers to the questions can be developed or verified.

3. Benefits:
The only possible benefit for the composer or librettist is that their work will be introduced to a whole new group of people in South Mississippi.

4. Risks:
There are not any known risks from the questions presented, however, in an effort to make the process easier, they do not have to answer any question they do not want to answer.

5. Confidentiality:
The answers they provide are public/ non-confidential

6. Alternative Procedures:
If they would rather not digitally respond over email, I will mail them a copy of the questions.
7. Participant's Assurance:

This project has been reviewed by the Institutional Review Board, which ensures that research projects involving human subjects follow federal regulations.

Any questions or concerns about rights as a research participant should be directed to the Chair of the IRB at 601-266-5597. Participation in this project is completely voluntary, and participants may withdraw from this study at any time without penalty, prejudice, or loss of benefits.

Any questions about the research should be directed to the Principal Investigator using the contact information provided in Project Information Section above.

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Participant’s Name: Jake Hege

Consent is hereby given to participate in this research project. All procedures and/or investigations to be followed and their purpose, including any experimental procedures, were explained to me. Information was given about all benefits, risks, inconveniences, or discomforts that might be expected.

The opportunity to ask questions regarding the research and procedures was given. Participation in the project is completely voluntary, and participants may withdraw at any time without penalty, prejudice, or loss of benefits. All personal information is strictly confidential, and no names will be disclosed. Any new information that develops during the project will be provided if that information may affect the willingness to continue participation in the project.

Questions concerning the research, at any time during or after the project, should be directed to the Principal Investigator with the contact information provided above. This project and this consent form have been reviewed by the Institutional Review Board, which ensures that research projects involving human subjects follow federal regulations. Any questions or concerns about rights as a research participant should be directed to the Chair of the Institutional Review Board, The University of Southern Mississippi, 118 College Drive #5147, Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001, (601) 266-5597.

Lori Guy

Research Participant

Date: 12-10-16

Person Explaining the Study

Date: October 20, 2016
1. What inspired you to use the quotations from *La Campanella* and Chopin’s Op. 64, no. 2?

We don’t know what tunes Żywulska used for her lyrics – but we know she used tunes that everyone knew. I just decided these were two beloved tunes that might have been known – and certainly, would be recognized by audiences today. I also chose Chopin because he was Polish and that was a nice connection to Żywulska.

2. Did you work to relate *Another Sunrise* motivically to *Farewell, Auschwitz*.

Yes. From the start, the soprano part was to be sung by the same singer who had premiered *Another Sunrise*. I wrote it with her and the Żywulska of that piece in mind … so there are themes from *Another Sunrise* that make their way into the texture, most notably at the beginning of “Irenka.”

3. In the program notes, you mention the influence of Kurt Weill and film music of the period. Were there any specific pieces by Weill or films that directly influenced the work?

No, just the sense of them. I love that period and wanted to invoke the feeling of that music. “Miss Ziutka” is a parody of the Andrews Sisters style. So that’s in there, too.

4. In Auschwitz, four inmates including Żywulska performed the piece. How did you come to the decision to have 3 characters, specifically Manfred, Zosha, and Krysytna?

Not four inmates. In the song cycle *Farewell, Auschwitz* there are three singers only: soprano, mezzo & baritone. I don’t name them in the song cycle because initially, it was to be a stand-alone cycle not necessarily connected to *Another Sunrise* in performance. LATER, Gene and I decided to try to mash up *Another Sunrise* with *Farewell, Auschwitz* – and I wanted to use the same characters for consistency.

Out of Darkness has a very complicated path, alas. It started as three separate pieces: *Another Sunrise; Farewell, Auschwitz; For a Look or a Touch*. Then we tried to craft an opera of the three to create a genuine, full-length opera. We did that in May of this year – but we have more work to do on Act One. So we will rewrite that act in the spring.

5. Throughout the work, there is an alternation between major and minor. Is that a compositional technique you chose, or does it also represent something bigger within the work?

The struggle and clash between major and minor is endlessly fascinating to me … and it all hinges on a half-step at the third. It’s pervasive throughout my work and something I
explore a great deal.

6. Żywulska talked after Auschwitz about how cautious she was in showing the lyrics from *Medley from the Effektenkammer* because they didn’t all deal with the horrors going on to and around the prisoners. The lyrics were also filled with sarcasm, irony, and observations of each other. How did you go about capturing the horrors with the sarcasm, wit, and irony of her poetry.

It was very important to me and Gene that we explore the full range of what was happening in the camp. And OF COURSE there was dark humor, sarcasm and irony … how else could one manage it? Horror is a given. All of the pieces we wrote for Music of Remembrance are about the difficulty of being a survivor – the choices one has to make – which memories one will choose to embrace, which to reinvent and which to bury. It’s all in the nature of the story one chooses to leave to the world. That’s what we explore throughout these pieces. “A survivor is not a hero. A survivor is – a survivor.”

7. For someone hearing this piece for the first time, what do you want them to know?

I want them to know that we based our work on true stories – but Gene used poetic license in making the translations so that he and I could explore *emotional* truth and explore a transformative, operatic journey and not be bound to making a documentary or a biography. Also, Gene doesn’t speak Polish, but his in-laws do. They made literal translations and then Gene turned those into poetic translations.

8. What else should I be asking about this work, and what might be the answer?

That’s for you to discover! I’ll do my best to answer. All the best!
APPENDIX C - Permission to Use Music

William Holab
To: Lori Guy 4 Jan 2017 14:05
RE: Website Inquiry from Bill Holab Music e-store

Dear Lori,

Thanks for checking with us about this. We can grant permission for the use, and there won't be any fee. We would just ask that you include a copyright notice, either in the front matter or on the page with the examples.

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I hope your work goes well.

With kind regards,

Bill
APPENDIX D - IRB Approval Letter

NOTICE OF COMMITTEE ACTION

The project has been reviewed by The University of Southern Mississippi Institutional Review Board in accordance with Federal Drug Administration regulations (21 CFR 21, 111), Department of Health and Human Services (45 CFR Part 46), and university guidelines to ensure adherence to the following criteria:

- The risks to subjects are minimized.
- The risks to subjects are reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits.
- The selection of subjects is equitable.
- Informed consent is adequate and appropriately documented.
- Where appropriate, the research plan makes adequate provisions for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of the subjects.
- Where appropriate, there are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain the confidentiality of all data.
- Appropriate additional safeguards have been included to protect vulnerable subjects.
- Any unanticipated, serious, or continuing problems encountered regarding risks to subjects must be reported immediately, but not later than 10 days following the event. This should be reported to the IRB Office via the “Adverse Effect Report Form”.

- If approved, the maximum period of approval is limited to twelve months. Projects that exceed this period must submit an application for renewal or continuation.

PROTOCOL NUMBER: CH16110201
PROJECT TITLE: “An Alphabet of Soldiers”: Jake Heggie’s Farewell Aushofitz
PROJECT TYPE: Change to a Previously Approved Project
RESEARCHER(S): Lori Guy
COLLEGE/DIVISION: College of Arts and Letters
DEPARTMENT: Music
FUNDING AGENCY/SPONSOR: N/A
IRB COMMITTEE ACTION: Exempt Review Approval
PERIOD OF APPROVAL: 11/07/2016 to 11/06/2017
Lawrence A. Hosman, Ph.D.
Institutional Review Board
REFERENCES


Heggie, Jake. E-mail interview. December 10, 2016.


