

THE RAINY FRAGRANCE MUSICAL: WINTTER WATTS' SONG CYCLE

*VIGNETTES OF ITALY* WITH POETRY BY SARA TEASDALE

Hye-Ryung Kwon, B.M., M.M.

Dissertation Prepared for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF MUSICAL ARTS

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS

December 2011

APPROVED:

Jeffrey Snider, Major Professor and Chair of  
the Division of Vocal Studies

Richard Sparks, Committee Member

Stephen Austin, Committee Member

Lynn Eustis, Director of Graduate Studies in  
the College of Music

James Scott, Dean of College of Music

James D. Meernik, Acting Dean of the  
Toulouse Graduate School

Kwon, Hye-Ryung. The Rainy Fragrance Musical: Wintter Watts' Song Cycle *Vignettes of Italy* with Poetry by Sara Teasdale. Doctor of Musical Arts (Performance), December 2011, 49 pp., 1 table, 1 figure, 33 musical examples, bibliography, 35 titles.

Wintter Watts (1884-1962) was one of the most admired composers of American art song in the early twentieth century. The history of great singers who performed his songs at that time attests to the reputation of Watts as a song composer. Unfortunately the songs of Watts have become largely neglected by singers from later generations.

The song cycle *Vignettes of Italy* (1919) for high voice is regarded by many as Watts' best-known composition. *Vignettes of Italy* was frequently performed by many famous singers in America in his day, but is little known in the current repertoire of American art song and rarely performed today. *Vignettes of Italy* is worthy of reintroduction to contemporary audiences and singers.

This study explores the significant contributions Wintter Watts made to the body of American art song in the early twentieth century and presents a thorough investigation of Watts' compositional techniques of Sara Teasdale's texts in his song cycle *Vignettes of Italy*. These techniques include the use of carefully tailored rhythms, modulations, harmonic progressions, and accompaniment figures to give unique treatment to the musical setting of individual words, poetic ideas, and broader moods.

I hope this research provides a foundation of understanding of this cycle, assists singers and pianists in presenting artistically coherent performances, and creates a fuller comprehension and appreciation of Watts' songs.

Copyright 2011

by

Hye-Ryung Kwon

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

		Page
LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES.....		v
LIST OF MUSICAL EXAMPLES.....		vi
Chapters		
I.	INTRODUCTION .....	1
II.	WINTTER WATTS AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN ART SONG.....	3
	Overview of Early 20th Century American Art Song .....	3
	Wintter Watts' Life .....	4
	Watts' Vocal Compositions .....	6
III.	TEASDALE'S <i>VIGNETTES OVERSEAS</i> .....	8
	Sara Teasdale's Life and Works .....	8
	Teasdale's <i>Vignettes Overseas</i> .....	10
IV.	WATTS' <i>VIGNETTES OF ITALY</i> .....	12
	Watts' <i>Vignettes of Italy</i> .....	12
	The Poems of <i>Vignettes of Italy</i> .....	16
	"Addio" .....	16
	"Naples" .....	17
	"Capri" .....	17
	"Night Song at Amalfi" .....	18
	"Ruins of Paestum" .....	19
	"From a Roman Hill" .....	20
	"Ponte Vecchio, Florence" .....	20
	"Villa Serbelloni, Bellaggio" .....	21
	"Stresa" .....	22

V.	MUSICAL ELEMENTS USED TO EMPHASIZE TEXT IN WATTS’ <i>VIGNETTES OF ITALY</i> .....	23
	Melody .....	23
	Rhythm.....	27
	Harmony .....	32
	Piano Accompaniment .....	36
VI.	CONCLUSION.....	40
	APPENDICES .....	41
	BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	47

## LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

Page

### Tables

1. The overall key scheme of *Vignettes of Italy*.....13

### Figures

1. Advertisement in Boston Symphony program book, November 21 and 23, 1919,  
p. 389.....2

## LIST OF MUSICAL EXAMPLES

		Page
1.	“Ponte Vecchio, Florence,” mm. 1-3 .....	14
2.	“Addio,” mm. 26-30 .....	14
3.	“Stresa,” mm. 71-73 .....	15
4.	“Naples,” mm. 1-8 .....	15
5.	“Addio,” mm. 37-40 .....	24
6.	“Addio,” mm. 55-58 .....	24
7.	“Stresa,” mm. 64 -67 .....	25
8.	“Naples,” m. 11 .....	25
9.	“Night Song at Amalfi,” mm. 39-43 .....	26
10.	Capri,” mm. 42-49 .....	26
11.	“Naples,” mm. 50-59 .....	27
12.	“Addio,” m. 41 .....	28
13.	“Night Song at Amalfi,” m. 35 .....	28
14.	“Capri,” mm. 20-23 .....	29
15.	“Ponte Vecchio, Florence,” mm. 1-3 .....	29
16.	“Ponte Vecchio, Florence,” mm. 20-22 .....	30
17.	“Stresa,” mm. 79-81 .....	30
18.	“Addio,” mm. 1-4 .....	31
19.	“Night Song at Amalfi,” mm. 4-6 .....	32
20.	“Villa Serbelloni, Bellaggio,” mm. 16-18 .....	32

21.	“Addio,” mm. 26-36 .....	33
22.	“From a Roman Hill,” mm. 15-18 .....	34
23.	“Ponte Vecchio, Florence,” mm. 19-20 .....	34
24.	“Ponte Vecchio, Florence,” mm. 27-28 .....	35
25.	“Stresa,” mm. 43-48.....	35
26.	“Addio,” mm. 66-76 .....	36
27.	“From a Roman Hill,” mm. 1-4 .....	37
28.	“Naples,” mm. 1-8 .....	37
29.	“Ruins of Paestum,” mm. 1-3 .....	38
30.	“Ruins of Paestum,” mm. 10-11 .....	38
31.	“Ruins of Paestum,” mm. 21-23 .....	38
32.	“Ponte Vecchio, Florence,” mm. 3-6 .....	39
33.	“Ponte Vecchio, Florence,” mm. 11-14 .....	39



## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Wintter Watts was one of the most admired composers of American art song in the early 20th century. The history of great singers who performed his songs in his time attests to the reputation of Watts as a song composer. Many celebrated singers, including John McCormack, Kirsten Flagstad, Ezio Pinza, Rose Bampton, Richard Crooks, Lawrence Tibbett, Rosa Ponselle, Helen Traubel, Dorothy Kirsten, Jan Peerce, and Dorothy Maynor, presented Watts' songs in their recitals throughout the country.

The song cycle *Vignettes of Italy* for high voice is regarded by many as Watts' most successful vocal composition. In 1920 Herbert Peyser described *Vignettes of Italy* as "a contribution of indubitably permanent value to American song literature, it likewise holds rank among the best and most consistently inspired of contemporary cycles."<sup>1</sup> An advertisement following its publication calls it "The most important song cycle yet published in this country" (see fig 1.).

Sadly, his music has been largely disregarded in recent times. Stephen Shutt wrote in his article in the *Baltimore Sun* that "Wintter Watts is one of the most undeservedly neglected of American composers."<sup>2</sup> He adds that Wintter Watts has been overlooked by many people after his death. Indeed, he praises Watts' genius as a song composer as follows: "Wintter Watts is a composer of songs in whose energetic and

---

<sup>1</sup> Herbert F. Peyser, "Wintter Watts's New cycle a Contribution of Permanent Value to American Song Literature," *Musical America* (Mar., 1920).

<sup>2</sup> Stephen Shutt, Unknown title, *The Baltimore Sun.*, September 9, 1976.

wonderful settings of American and English poetry are found one of the highest expressions of the national music in its noblest form.”<sup>3</sup> As Watts’ reputation has faded, the majority of his works also remain dormant.

A CYCLE OF SONGS  
**VIGNETTES OF ITALY**  
HIGH VOICE  
Text of Sara Teasdale      Music by Winter Watts  
*Price \$1.25 postpaid*

It can be asserted with confidence that this is the most important song cycle yet published in this country.

**“I consider CAPRI (No. 3) the most beautiful song yet written by an American.”—John McCormack.**



WINTER WATTS  
(Photo by Marceau)

---

**OLIVER DITSON COMPANY**  
178-179 TREMONT STREET. . . . . BOSTON

Figure 1. Advertisement in Boston Symphony program book, November 21 and 23, 1919, p. 389.

---

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

## CHAPTER II

### WINTTER WATTS AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN ART SONG

#### Overview of Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century American Art Song

In the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, American composers who were trained in Europe, particularly in Germany and France, began to find a distinctive American style of art song. American song of that period was still based on European roots, and American singers preferred European song literature.<sup>4</sup> Despite this, numerous American composers consciously shaped American culture in their song compositions and endeavored to develop the quality of American art song.

Amy Beach, Charles Wakefield Cadman, Richard Hagemann, John Alden Carpenter, George Whitefield Chadwick, Charles Tomlinson Griffes, Charles Martin Loeffler, Sidney Homer, Charles Ives, Walter Kramer, Frank LaForge, Arthur Battelle Whiting, and Harriet Ware were among the composers who attempted to establish an American art song tradition. Such American composers also found encouragement through fellowships, grants, competitions, and prizes not only in America, but internationally as well.

The early 20<sup>th</sup> century was a crucial period for art song in America. During this period both American art song and American lyric poetry came into maturity as composers and poets strove not only to develop American art song but also appropriate

---

<sup>4</sup> Carol Kimball, *Song: A Guide to Art Song Style and Literature* (Milwaukee, WI : Hal Leonard, 2006), 245.

texts for music. Composers used harmonic progressions, chromatic alterations and specific rhythms that emphasize significant words for musical settings in song compositions.<sup>5</sup>

Watts set poetry by American, English, and Scottish poets, including Mary MacMillan, Fiona Macleod (pseudonym of William Sharp), William Alexander Percy, Eugene Lee Hamilton, Louise Imogen Guiney, Lord Byron, Jessie Rittenhouse, and Richard Watson Gilder. Furthermore, Watts himself wrote several poems for his songs, “Another Day,” “The Little Word ‘No,’” “Lay My Heart in Marble,” “In Silhouette,” and “Exile.”

#### Wintter Watts’ Life

Wintter Haynes Watts (1884-1962) was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, to Joseph Watts, a poet and a painter, and Helen Wintter, his mother and first music teacher. Members of his mother’s family were musicians, painters and architects. Watts’ early musical studies included piano, organ, and voice and he was a chorister between the ages of 9 to 14. During this time in addition to music lessons, he studied painting and drawing, and at 14, he worked as an apprentice architect. At 18, he won positions as a baritone and organist in several churches.

His musical interests led him to study composition at the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music with Pier Adolfo Tirindelli<sup>6</sup> and with Dr. Percy Goetschius<sup>7</sup> at the Institute of

---

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 3-18.

<sup>6</sup> Pier Adolfo Tirindelli (1858-1937), an Italian violinist, teacher, composer, and music director of orchestra.

Musical Art in New York, where he graduated in 1914. A performance of an early work, *A Bridal Overture*, a symphonic poem, took place at the College of the Pacific in California where he taught theory from 1915 to 1916.

In 1918 he received the Morris Loeb Prize for his symphonic poem, *Young Blood*; won a residency at the MacDowell Colony (1919-1920); and two movements of his suite *Etchings* were performed in New York by the New York Philharmonic. In 1922 he was awarded the Pulitzer Scholarship and went to Italy to study where he won the Prix de Rome of the American Academy in Rome in 1923. By the time he returned to New York in 1931 he had composed many works, including the operas *Alice in Wonderland* (1920) and *The Pied Piper* (1906), and the songs “Wings of Night” (1921), “Joy” (1922), “With the Tide” (1922), “Another Day” (1909), “Like Music on The Waters,” “Wild Tears” (1923), “Wood Song” (1913), “The Little Shepherd’s Song” (1922), “The Joy of Man” (1908), and “Blue are Her Eyes” (1913).<sup>8</sup>

Little is known of Watts’ personal or professional life following his return from Italy. He died in New York on Nov. 1, 1962 at the age of 82.<sup>9</sup> Since he had no family at the time of his death, the State of New York took possession of his estate and put his belongings up for sale at a public auction. In the process, some of his music, critiques, and memorabilia disappeared.<sup>10</sup> In spite of his recognition, honors, and the success of his songs during his lifetime, most of his music has been forgotten.

---

<sup>7</sup> Percy Goetschius (1853-1943) was on the staff of the Institute of Musical Art (now the Juilliard School of Music) and the New England Conservatory of Music.

<sup>8</sup> Unknown Author, “Wintter Watts, Composer, dead,” *New York Times* (November 2, 1962), 31.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> Gladys H. Mathew, “Winter Watts American Song Composer,” *NATS Bulletin* 38, 23.

## Watts' Vocal Compositions

Watts' works consist of over 200 songs, approximately 80 of which were published. The most critically acclaimed works were composed from 1918 through 1921, including Watts' most successful work, the song cycle *Vignettes of Italy*.<sup>11</sup> His two principal publishers were the Oliver Ditson Company and G. Schirmer.

James Hall classified Wintter Watts among the Later American School along with Charles Tomlinson Griffes, Bainbridge Crist, John Alden Carpenter, Charles Ives, and Samuel Barber. He writes that "They were truly representative of the twentieth century trends of the art song in the United States."<sup>12</sup> Moreover, William Treat Upton described Watts' "American sound" as follows:

Wintter Watts has seemed to embody in his songs many of our outstanding American characteristics. Even his earliest songs, op. 2, 3 and 4, are American to the core in the enthusiasm which so evidently went into their construction...

His Americanism shows itself among other things in a direct, aboveboard mode of expression. *Vignettes of Italy* is quite American in the elemental simplicity of its harmonic background (there is no impressionistic vagueness here), and the effects are gained by the most objective means.<sup>13</sup>

Most of Watts' works are lyrical and distinctive with simple melodic lines and clear harmonic progressions. "The Little Shepherd's Song" and "Blue are Her Eyes" are considered his best-known works, and remain popular among young singers and amateurs. Victoria E. Villamil writes:

Referring again to the best songs, singers can expect to find some awkward

---

<sup>11</sup> Victoria E. Villamil, *A Singer's Guide to the American Art Song, 1870-1980* (Lanham, Md: Scarecrow Press, 2004), 373.

<sup>12</sup> James Hall, *The Art Song* (Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 1969), 280.

<sup>13</sup> William T. Upton, *Art-Song in America: A Study in the Development of American Music* (New York, NY: Oliver Ditson Company, 1969), 182-184.

moments in the vocal writing. However, putting aside these occasional lapses, they can also anticipate lustrous, searing lines, replete with floating pianissimos and full-throated high notes...Reserve extra rehearsal time, however, to settle the detailed expression markings and endless, subtle tempo adjustments.<sup>14</sup>

Although his energy and specialized interest in song writing helped develop the art song in American, many of his most valuable works have not been preserved; and unfortunately most are no longer in print.<sup>15</sup> Fortunately for today's singer, *Vignettes of Italy* is available from Classical Vocal Reprints. Gladys Mathew writes "Musicians in the vocal field who may have copies in their libraries should preserve those copies as treasures."<sup>16</sup> The complete list of Watts' songs is provided in Appendix A.

---

<sup>14</sup> Villamil, 373.

<sup>15</sup> Mathew, 22.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 22-23.

## CHAPTER III

### TEASDALE'S *VIGNETTES OVERSEAS*

#### Sara Teasdale's Life and Works

Sara Trevor Teasdale, American lyrical poet, was born on August 8, 1884 in St. Louis, Missouri. As the youngest child of John Warren Teasdale, a wholesaler, and Mary Elizabeth Willard Teasdale, she had two brothers and one sister. Her sister Mary, fondly known as "Maime," often recited Mother Goose rhymes, which helped provoke Teasdale's interest in poetry.

Teasdale was often ill and bed ridden. She amused herself with stories and poetry as her poor health did not allow her to be educated along with her peers. Finally, when she was ten years old, she was able to attend Miss Ellen Dean Lockwood's School.

Also, at age fourteen, Teasdale was enrolled at Mary Institute, however the following year her parents decided to switch to Hosmer Hall<sup>17</sup>, where she graduated in 1903. There, she began to write verses and translated Heine and other German poetry. The principal offered Teasdale the opportunity to provide words for music by Ernest Kroeger, a local musician, however neither the music nor the words are extant today.

At age of twenty, Teasdale formed a group called The Potters with seven of her close friends in order to develop their talent for music, art, literature, and photography. They published a monthly magazine, *The Potter's Wheel*, for several years. After gaining recognition in the St. Louis area, Teasdale was given the opportunity to present her poem

---

<sup>17</sup> An exclusive private girls' school, founded by Martha Mathew and Clara Shepherd.



“Guenevere” in a literary journal *Reedy’s Mirror*. The success of “Guenevere” leads to the success of Teasdale’s establishment as a poet.

The title of Teasdale’s third collection, *Rivers to the Sea* (1915) was suggested by John Hall Wheelock with whom Teasdale had been emotionally involved before her marriage. The ninety poems of *Rivers to the Sea* gained enormous popularity with the readers. This led Macmillan, Teasdale’s publisher, to persuade her to quickly write another volume.

Teasdale was the first recipient of the Columbia University Poetry Society Prize, for her 1918 poetry collection *Love Songs* (1917). Afterwards her poetry was issued in various periodicals including *Forum*, *Bookman*, *Scribner’s Magazine*, *The Century*, *Harper’s Weekly*, *The New Republic*, and *Lippincott’s Magazine*.<sup>18</sup>

Despite this success, Teasdale’s notebooks from 1917 reveal her conflict with the traditional roles of the wife in a patriarchal society. She continuously noted her inner conflict and dissatisfaction with her marriage. This conflict led to her husband’s frequent time away from home. Teasdale and Ernst Filsinger divorced in 1929, after fifteen years of marriage.

Teasdale’s health deteriorated as her pneumonia and high blood pressure worsened. She was devastated by the suicide of Vachel Lindsay in 1931, and suffered from a fear of death and loneliness. On January 29, 1933 in her New York apartment, Sara Teasdale committed suicide. Her body was interred in the Bellefontaine Cemetery in St. Louis.

---

<sup>18</sup> Jerome Bierschenk, “An analysis of selected choral works by Kirke Mechem: Music-textual relationships in settings of poetry of *Sara Teasdale*,” [D.M.A., University of North Texas, 2003], 8.

John Hall Wheelock considered Sara Teasdale to be “one of the great lyric poets of the English language.”<sup>19</sup> When *Love Songs* was republished by Macmillan in 1975, it sold nearly three thousand copies. Her poems were much loved during her lifetime and she is still regarded as one of America’s great poets. Teasdale’s musical language and song-like verses are well-suited for singing, and have been set to music by numerous composers, including Amy Beach, Charles Tomlinson Griffes, John Duke, Ernst Bacon, and Sergius Kagen as well as Wintter Watts.<sup>20</sup>

#### Teasdale’s *Vignettes Overseas*

In 1912 Teasdale traveled abroad with Jessie Rittenhouse.<sup>21</sup> Rittenhouse was one of the most important relationships in Teasdale’s life and she described their trip to Europe as being, “the most memorable season of my life.”<sup>22</sup> She was also inspired to write many great poems during the trip.

Her time in Italy was a rich source of inspiration for Teasdale’s poetry. According to William Drake, “Switzerland and Germany in August were pleasant enough, but they

---

<sup>19</sup> William Drake, *Dictionary of Literary Biography v. 45: American Poets 1880-1945*, edited by Peter Quartermain (Detroit, MI: Gale Research Co., c1987), 403-404.

<sup>20</sup> Missouri Verses and Voices, “A Catalogue of Choral and Solo Songs for Voice with Texts by Missouri Poets,” No author. <http://www.versesandvoices.org/documents/catalogue-resource.pdf> [accessed March 23, 2011].

<sup>21</sup> Jessie Belle Rittenhouse (1869-1948), a colleague and friend of Sara Teasdale, was a reviewer of newspaper, teacher, lecturer, poet, poetry anthologist, and editor of both the *New York Times* and the *Bookman*.

<sup>22</sup> Carol Schoen, *Sara Teasdale* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, c1986), 56.

did not measure up to the Italian experience, as evidenced by the scant two or three lyrics they inspired.”<sup>23</sup>

The collection *Rivers to the Sea* dates from this trip. According to William Drake, “*Rivers to the Sea* also marked the point at which Teasdale developed her concept of the lyric poem.”<sup>24</sup> *Rivers to the Sea*, both Teasdale’s third poetry collection and the first volume from a European trip, was a best seller, and is full of beautiful love poems. A *New York Times Book Review* contributor, reviewing the 1915 volume, wrote “a little volume of joyous and unstudied song.”<sup>25</sup> The first edition of *Rivers to the Sea* sold out in three months.

*Vignettes Overseas* (1912), a group of eleven poems, comes from the fourth section of *Rivers to the Sea*. All eleven poems are lyrical, fluid, and suited for singing.<sup>26</sup> The title of each poem indicates the locations as a background for Teasdale’s autobiographical state of mind. For example, “Ruins of Paestum” describes the ancient temples, now deserted, near the coast of Naples, offering Teasdale an opportunity to muse on her own morality. In the poem “Florence” she described her desire to stop time due to the fear of her poor health as she heard the bell chiming from the church of Santa Maria del Carmine, an ancient church in Florence.

---

<sup>23</sup> William Drake, *Sara Teasdale: Woman and Poet* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, Inc., 1979), 93.

<sup>24</sup> Drake, *Dictionary of Literary Biography v. 45: American Poets 1880-1945*, 400.

<sup>25</sup> Poetry Foundation, “Sara Teasdale,” No author. <http://www.Poetryfoundation.org/bio/sara-teasdale> [accessed April 5, 2011].

<sup>26</sup> Margaret Carpenter, *Sara Teasdale: A Biography* (Norfolk, VA: Pentelic Press, c1977), 270.

## CHAPTER IV

### WATTS' *VIGNETTES OF ITALY*

#### Watts' *Vignettes of Italy*

*Vignettes of Italy* is considered to be Wintter Watts' most important composition and seems best suited for a high soprano. Herbert Peyser wrote, "The cycle exemplifies Watts' maturest manner, and his most successful essay in point of style, intellectuality of writing and content."<sup>27</sup> As in the original compilation of poetry all nine songs are related to various places in Italy, associated with Teasdale's recollections of her time in that country in 1912.

Taken as a whole, the poems may be seen to recount a separation in a love relationship, comment on the futility of life, eternity, and beauty from a woman's viewpoint. The first song compares the departing of the poet from her beloved to the poet leaving Algiers for Italy; the remaining eight poems set were inspired by different places in Italy.

*Vignettes of Italy* is united not only by a specific narrative but also through a recurring motive in the music. The music and text of the first song return in the climax of the final song as a way of bringing the emotional progression full circle. This practice reflects cyclical writing as seen in *Frauenliebe und -leben* of Schumann, *An die ferne Geliebte* of Beethoven, and *La Bonne Chanson* of Fauré.

The melody of the first song, "Addio," returns in the final song, "Stresa," in the

---

<sup>27</sup> Peyser .

same key of E-flat major and quotes a line from the opening poem “Oh, beloved, think of me.” The cycle is centered around the key of E-flat major with the songs relating to each other by means of either a median relationship (e.g. E-flat to G) or a tonic-dominant relationship (e.g. D major to G). The key of e-flat minor in the middle of cycle, where Teasdale’s fear of death is first mentioned in the text, is the parallel minor of E-flat major. While each song comes to an authentic cadence, there is clearly a key scheme for the entire cycle.

Table 1. The overall key scheme of *Vignettes of Italy*.

Addio	Naples	Capri	Night Song at Amalfi	Ruins of Paestum	From a Roman Hill	Ponte Vecchio, Florence	Villa Serbelloni, Bellaggio	Stresa
E <sup>b</sup> M	G M	G M	B <sup>b</sup> M	e <sup>b</sup> m	G <sup>b</sup> M	D M	G M	E <sup>b</sup> M
I	III	III	V	i	<sup>b</sup> III	VII	III	I

Another unifying characteristic of these songs is their Italianate content and compositional elements. While many American composers of his time studied in Germany and France, Watts studied in Italy.<sup>28</sup> Watts eliminated both the first poem, “Off Gibraltar,” and the last poem, “Hamburg,” for his work. Watts set the other nine poems, most of which are associated with places in Italy and modified the title *Vignettes Overseas* into his own title *Vignettes of Italy*. The cycle reveals ‘Italianate elements,’ including aspects of the vocal writing, the orchestral-style accompaniment, an “operatic” ending (with sustained top b-flats), and text-setting elements.

---

<sup>28</sup> Kimball, 348.

In the Italian opera of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there was an emphasis on the emotional content and mood of the drama. Just as Puccini was inspired by the bells from the churches around the Castel Sant’ Angelo when he traveled to Rome<sup>29</sup> and included them in act 3 of *Tosca*, Watts uses a bell sound in the piano accompaniment to create the atmosphere or mood in “Ponte Vecchio, Florence” (see Ex. 1)

Musical Example 1. “Ponte Vecchio, Florence,” mm. 1-3.

The musical score for "Ponte Vecchio, Florence" (mm. 1-3) is presented in three staves. The top staff is the vocal line, marked "Andante" and "mp", with the lyrics "The bells ring". The middle staff is the piano accompaniment, marked "mf p" and "ben tenuto", featuring a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes that resembles a bell sound. The bottom staff is the bass line, marked "p" and "con Pedale", with a simple harmonic accompaniment. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4.

Operatic elements can be seen in the recitative-like declamation in “Addio” (see Ex. 2.) creating a dramatic effect and high b-flats at the end of the cycle providing an operatic climax in “Stresa” (see Ex. 3.).

Musical Example 2. “Addio,” mm. 26-30.

The musical score for "Addio" (mm. 26-30) is presented in three staves. The top staff is the vocal line, marked "declamatory" and "rit.", with the lyrics "For - get me for a month, a year, \_\_\_\_\_ But". The middle staff is the piano accompaniment, marked "sf" and "colla voce", featuring a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The bottom staff is the bass line, marked "sf" and "accel.", with a simple harmonic accompaniment. The key signature is two flats (Bb, Eb) and the time signature is 3/4.

<sup>29</sup> Philip Gossett, *The New Grove Masters of Italian Opera: Rossini, Donizetti, Bellini, Verdi, Puccini* (London : Macmillan, 1980) 332.

Musical Example 3. "Stresa," mm. 71-73.

Musical score for "Stresa," mm. 71-73. The score is in 3/4 time and features a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line begins with the lyrics "Like sun - - - light" and is marked with a forte (*ff*) dynamic and a crescendo hairpin. The piano accompaniment includes a *cresc.* marking and a forte (*ff*) dynamic. An 8-measure rest is indicated above the piano part in the final measure.

Also in opera woodwinds and horns are often used to create local character.<sup>30</sup> The introduction of "Naples" uses a similar device to establish an altogether different and unique atmosphere for this song.

Musical Example 4. "Naples," mm. 1-8.

Musical score for "Naples," mm. 1-8. The score is in 2/4 time and features a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The tempo is marked "Con brio." The piano accompaniment includes dynamics of *f*, *sf*, *dim.*, and *pp una corda*.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 339.

The Poems of *Vignettes of Italy*

“Addio”

Oh give me neither love nor tears,  
Nor dreams that sear the night with fire,  
Go lightly on your pilgrimage  
Unburdened by desire.

Forget me for a month, a year,  
But, oh, beloved, think of me  
When unexpected beauty burns  
Like sudden sunlight on the sea.<sup>31</sup>

The original title “Off Algiers” was renamed “Addio,” the first song of *Vignettes of Italy*, by Watts.<sup>32</sup> The first stanza speaks of Teasdale’s unmoved composure on parting with a lover, giving permission to leave by saying, “Go lightly on your pilgrimage unburdened by desire.” But Teasdale had previously released her sorrow in “Off Gibraltar” (a poem not set by Watts) where she claims, “For him the happiness of light, for me a delicate despair.” The pain of parting has been lessened by “Addio.” Some love poems of 1911 and early 1912 are based on her relationship with John Myers O’Hara.<sup>33</sup> In 1908 O’Hara helped Teasdale with translations of Sappho’s poetry and managed to keep correspondence for many years thereafter. “Addio” is her declaration of independence from her beloved. She sets her love free, to show that she can be independent.

Yet the female speaker’s tone changes in the second stanza. This change of Teasdale’s emotion, divides the song into contrasting sections. She declaims her

---

<sup>31</sup> Sara Teasdale, *Rivers to the Sea* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1915), 128-129.

<sup>32</sup> Carpenter, 149.

<sup>33</sup> John Myers O’Hara (1870-1944) was a writer of poetry, prose, and literary translations.



ambivalent mind to a distant lover with the words “forget me” and “think of me” creating a conflict. Carol Schoen writes, “One of the difficulties in assessing Teasdale’s poetry is understanding her use of images.”<sup>34</sup> Images of the beauty in her poetry express pain, female power in a male-oriented society, or pure beauty of nature. The word ‘beauty’ in the third line of the second stanza depicts the replacement of her lost love.

*“Naples”*

Nisida and Prosida are laughing in the light,  
Capri is a dewy flower lifting into sight,  
Posilipo kneels and looks in the burnished sea,  
Naples crowds her million roofs close as close can be;  
Round about the mountain's crest a flag of smoke is hung  
Oh when God made Italy he was gay and young!<sup>35</sup>

The city of Naples is one of the oldest cities in the world, and lies between two volcanic regions. The phrases “the burnished sea” and “a flag of smoke is hung” describe one of the characteristics of Naples. Teasdale personified each of the different islands, Nisida, Procida, Capri, and Posillipo, with their individual traits. Teasdale states that God made a wonderful creation in Italy. While she felt all beautiful creations would not vanish with age or death, her life however, would fade.

*“Capri”*

When beauty grows too great to bear  
How shall I ease me of its ache,  
For beauty more than bitterness  
Makes the heart break.

---

<sup>34</sup> Schoen, *Sara Teasdale*, 172.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 129.

Now while I watch the dreaming sea  
With isles like flowers against her breast,  
Only one voice in all the world  
Could give me rest.<sup>36</sup>

In “Capri,” the set begins to reach the height of inward emotion.<sup>37</sup> Pain from intense beauty exists because of love, yet Teasdale’s pain is not fully comforted by the nurturing of the sea. She desires to be comforted by her beloved’s voice (“Only one voice... could give me rest”). Her feelings for O’Hara aroused her desire for romantic love about which she had always dreamed. However, he did not want to be engaged in a serious relationship, merely a sexual one. Teasdale’s behavior conflicted with the traditional behavior of women of her time, especially in love relationships. In the end, she finds true beauty instead of true love.<sup>38</sup>

*“Night song at Amalfi”*

I asked the heaven of stars  
What I should give my love  
It answered me with silence,  
Silence above.

I asked the darkened sea  
Down where the fishers go  
It answered me with silence,  
Silence below.

Oh, I could give him weeping,  
Or I could give him song.  
But how can I give silence  
My whole life long?<sup>39</sup>

---

<sup>36</sup> Teasdale, *Rivers to the Sea*, 129-130.

<sup>37</sup> Peysner.

<sup>38</sup> Schoen, 33-34.

<sup>39</sup> Teasdale, 130.

“Night Song at Amalfi” is one of Teasdale’s best known lyrics. She questions the heaven of stars and the darkened sea, “What I should give my love,” but silence is her only answer. Teasdale struggled between society’s role of women and her career as a poet. She must choose between silence and voice, and she is not able to exercise her right to speak. She reveals her enthusiasm to voice her own emotions on the text “But how can I give silence my whole life long?” This poem shows her self-conquest over the restrictions of reality.

*“Ruins of Paestum”*

On lowlands where the temples lie  
The marsh-grass mingles with the flowers,  
Only the little songs of bird  
Link the unbroken hours.

So in the end, above my heart  
Once like the city wild and gay,  
The slow white stars will pass by night,  
The swift brown birds by day.<sup>40</sup>

Paestum is an ancient Greco-Roman city which flourished during the Roman Imperial Period. The city dramatically declined between the 4th and 7th centuries, leaving only three temples behind. It is a sensitive poem of an obvious comparison between nature and human life. Teasdale became acutely aware of her own mortality by considering the rise and fall of a nation. She knew her heart was desolate, in the end, like the destruction of a prosperous country. The image of birds in both the first and the

---

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 131.

second stanza represents a free spirit for her. She seems to be jealous of the birds. The bird's ability to sing and fly both inspired and refreshed her spirit.<sup>41</sup>

*"From a Roman Hill"*

Oh for the rising moon  
Over the roofs of Rome  
And swallows in the dusk  
Circling a darkened dome.

Oh for the measured dawns  
That pass with folded wings  
How can I let them go  
with unremembered things?<sup>42</sup>

Watts retitled Teasdale's "Rome" as "From a Roman hill." The image of the light, including sun, moon, or stars as the most obvious source, which expresses Teasdale's right as a poet, in her works.<sup>43</sup> She loves everything in the world as the word "the rising moon" and "the measured dawns"; however, she has to meet her death, leaving her precious memory. The words "How can I let them go with unremembered things" means how she remembers beautiful moments while trying to let go of everything else.

*"Ponte Vecchio, Florence"*

The bells ring over the Arno,  
Midnight, the long, long chime;  
Here in the quivering darkness  
I am afraid of time.

Oh, gray bells cease your tolling,  
Time takes too much from me,

---

<sup>41</sup> Schoen, 149.

<sup>42</sup> Teasdale, 131-132.

<sup>43</sup> Schoen, 32.

And yet to rock and river  
He gives eternity.<sup>44</sup>

The title of the poem “Florence” was re-titled “Ponte Vecchio, Florence” by Watts. Teasdale wrote the poem “Florence” at her hotel upon the Arno near the Ponte Trinità (the Holy Trinity Bridge), while looking across the river to the church of the Carmine, an ancient church in Florence. This poem is an indication of the fear that Teasdale experienced as her illness and depression intensified after 1907. She poeticizes her wish to stop the constant flow of time just as she wishes to silence the church bells in the clock tower.

*“Villa Serbelloni, Bellaggio”*

The fountain shivers lightly in the rain,  
The laurels drip, the fading roses fall,  
The marble satyr plays a mournful strain  
That leaves the rainy fragrance musical.

Oh dripping laurel, Phoebus sacred tree,  
Would that swift Daphne's lot might come to me,  
Then would I still my soul and for an hour  
Change to a laurel in the glancing shower.<sup>45</sup>

Teasdale and Rittenhouse spent several weeks at Villa Serbelloni, Bellaggio (now the Grand Hotel *Villa Serbelloni*). Teasdale was attracted by the exquisite scenery of the region. This poem is not simply praising the beauty of nature but the poetic imagination about the characters in the Greek-Roman mythology. She became depressed due to the fear of death, and expressed such feelings, comparing her situation with the nature.

---

<sup>44</sup> Teasdale, 132.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 132-133.

According to the myth, Phoebus (Apollo) was deeply in love with Daphne, who rejected him. Daphne was transformed into a laurel tree, and since then, the leaves of laurel tree have never decayed. Teasdale wished she could have the immortality of the shining green laurels.

*“Stresa”*

The moon grows out of the hills  
A yellow flower,  
The lake is a dreamy bride  
Who waits her hour.

Beauty has filled my heart,  
It can hold no more,  
It is full, as the lake is full,  
From shore to shore.<sup>46</sup>

The poem “Stresa”, was written while Teasdale was in the town of the same name on the shore of the Lago Maggiore in the region of Piedmont, northern Italy. As with every place Teasdale visited in Italy, she was absorbed by the beauty of the location.

Teasdale presents a positive outlook in this poem, unlike many of the other poems. The word ‘moon’ has a similar image with “From a Roman Hill.” The moon in the sky waxes as her inspiration in her art grows. Teasdale’s heart feels dead in “Ruins of Paestum”; but her heart is filled with beauty in this poem, just as the lake reflects the beauty of the surrounding landscape. “Stresa” is an emotional poem on the ecstatic quality of the ideal of beauty.

---

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 133.

## CHAPTER V

### MUSICAL ELEMENTS USED TO EMPHASIZE TEXT IN WATTS' *VIGNETTES OF ITALY*

Watts presented compositional techniques, with unique treatment to his musical setting of individual words, poetic ideas, and broader moods through the use of carefully tailored rhythms, modulations, harmonic progressions, accompaniment figures, and text setting. Victoria E. Villamil writes, “Watts could write songs of such compelling poetic beauty that the best are still recalled with real affection.”<sup>47</sup> A musical investigation of all nine songs from *Vignettes of Italy* will include a discussion of Watts’ musical depictions of scenes from Italy. Selected examples from *Vignettes of Italy* reveal the compositional devices Watts uses to enhance the text through use of melody, rhythm, harmony, and piano accompaniment.

#### Melody

Melodic line and motive are connected to the text, stressing important words or illustrating the meaning of the poem. Melodic line also reflects a character or a mood of a song. Watts uses a motive throughout a song to symbolize characters, emotions, or dramatic situations (see Ex. 5-7.). For example the motive found in mm. 37-38 in “Addio,” “Oh, Beloved, think of me” (see Ex. 5.) is restated as inner emotion in mm. 39-

---

<sup>47</sup> Villamil, 373.

40 in the accompaniment, giving dramatic emphasis to the text. The theme returns in mm.

55-58

(see Ex. 6.) is transposed down a minor third as a gesture of recall. This passage recurs one final time in the last song “Stresa” as an important motive symbolizing the overall dramatic situation of the cycle (see Ex. 7.).

Musical Example 5. “Addio,” mm. 37-40.

*meno mosso f* *dim. rit.* *p*  
oh, be - lov - ed, think of me \_\_\_\_\_ When  
*meno mosso* *mp rit.*  
*mf sf pp dolce*

Musical Example 6. “Addio,” mm. 55-58.

*tardamente p*  
Oh, be - lov - ed, think of me \_\_\_\_\_ When  
*tardamente* *p espress. pp*  
*pp sf pp*



In this way, “Stresa” resembles “Nun hast du mir den ersten Schmerz getan,” the last song from Robert Schumann’s *Frauenliebe und –leben* with the return to B-flat major and the first song of the cycle when the widow sings her reminiscences of her husband. Watts borrows melodic material directly from the first song “Addio” (mm. 37-40) including the same key of E-flat major, and the same poetic line and melody “oh, beloved, think of me when unexpected beauty burns like sunlight on the sea” describing the beauty of Italy at the last moment of the trip.

Musical Example 7. “Stresa,” mm. 64 -67.

The image shows a musical score for the song "Stresa" (mm. 64-67). It consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line is in E-flat major and features a melodic line with dynamics *p*, *fp*, and *pp*. The lyrics are "Oh, be- lov- ed, think of me ————— When". The piano accompaniment includes a right hand with dynamics *p* and *fp*, and a left hand with dynamics *pp* and *fp*. The right hand also has markings for *tardo* and *dolce*. The score is written in a single system with a grand staff.

Certain intervals and rhythm patterns are used within the melody to illustrate the text and catch the sense and sound of the words. In “Naples,” in order to depict the laughter of the personified islands, Watts uses ascending intervallic leap of a ninth in the voice to depict the word “laughing” and staccato notes in the piano left hand (see Ex. 8.).

Musical Example 8. “Naples,” m. 11.

The image shows a musical score for the song "Naples" (m. 11). It consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line is in E major and features a melodic line with an ascending intervallic leap of a ninth. The lyrics are "laugh- ing in the". The piano accompaniment includes a right hand with staccato notes and a left hand with staccato notes. The score is written in a single system with a grand staff.

In addition, Watts uses broad melodic lines for deeply expressive phrases and ideas, and extended intervals for moments of heightened emotion (see Ex. 9-11.). For example, in “Night Song at Amalfi,” the heaven of stars and the darkened sea keep their silence to Teasdale’s question. She, however is not able to relinquish her right to speak. He stressed the word ‘I’ by placing it on the highest pitch in the phrase and giving it a duration of over three beats.

Musical Example 9. “Night Song at Amalfi,” mm. 39-43.

Musical score for "Night Song at Amalfi" (mm. 39-43). The score is in 3/4 time and features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line begins with the lyrics "song, But how can I give". The word "I" is placed on a high note and is held for over three beats. The piano accompaniment consists of chords and moving lines in both hands. Performance markings include *fp*, *caloroso*, *cresc.*, *poco a poco allargando*, and *f*. The piano part includes markings for *fp*, *mp*, *molto cresc.*, and *ff*. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

In the song “Capri” at the point of heightened emotion, “Only one voice in all the world could give me rest,” Watts constructs a broad melody of half notes, and half notes tied to quarter notes (including the tempo marking) placed in the soprano voice’s upper register.

Musical Example 10. “Capri,” mm. 42-49.

Musical score for "Capri" (mm. 42-49). The score is in 3/4 time and features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line begins with the lyrics "On - - ly one voice Could give me rest." The piano accompaniment consists of chords and moving lines in both hands. Performance markings include *pp*, *f*, *fp*, and *pp*. The piano part includes markings for *pp*, *mf*, *ff*, *fp*, and *pp*. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

Also in the song “Naples” Watts highlights the phrase “he was gay with a playful rhythm of two sixteenth notes followed by an eighth note on the off beat, which is immediately repeated and followed by an octave skip to the upper register on the word “young” (see Ex. 11).

Musical Example 11. “Naples,” mm. 50-59.

The musical score for "Naples" (mm. 50-59) is presented in three systems. The first system includes the vocal line and piano accompaniment for measures 50-53. The vocal line begins with the lyrics "He was gay, He was gay" and concludes with "and young!". The piano accompaniment features a rhythmic motif of two sixteenth notes followed by an eighth note on the off-beat. The second system continues the piano accompaniment for measures 54-57. The third system shows the vocal line for measures 58-61, with the piano accompaniment becoming more complex and faster, marked "Presto".

### Rhythm

Watts uses rhythm to describe the character of the protagonist, highlight a particular image in the poem, or create an emotional atmosphere such as despair and delight of love. He uses a shorter note value in the piano to create tension on stressed word “unexpected” with *cresc.* The word “unexpected” is the shortest rhythmic value in the song in order to intensify an emotion.

Musical Example 12. “Addio,” m. 41.

The musical score for 'Addio' m. 41 consists of three staves. The top staff is the vocal line, marked *a tempo*, with the lyrics 'un - ex - pect - ed'. The middle staff is the right-hand piano part, also marked *a tempo*, starting with a piano (*p*) dynamic and a *cresc.* (crescendo) marking, with the instruction 'shimmering delicately'. The bottom staff is the left-hand piano part, marked *p*.

In “Night Song at Amalfi,” the word “weeping” is given effective treatment by Watts. A plaintive grace note begins the syllable “weeping” which is treated in a melismatic descending dotted rhythm (see Ex. 13).

Musical Example 13. “Night Song at Amalfi,” m. 35.

The musical score for 'Night Song at Amalfi' m. 35 consists of three staves. The top staff is the vocal line, marked *p* and *tardamente*, with the lyrics 'weep - - ing,'. The middle staff is the right-hand piano part, marked *p* and *tardamente*, with a *pp* (pianissimo) marking. The bottom staff is the left-hand piano part, marked *p* and *tardamente*, with a *pp* marking.

And Watts uses notes of longer duration to emphasize important words or syllables. He stresses the word ‘break’ in the line “For beauty more than bitterness makes the heart break” to maximize pain from intense beauty, using a longer note value.

Musical Example 14. "Capri," mm. 20-23.

break, Makes the heart break.

Watts also uses an ostinato pattern in the piano accompaniment to create a mood in a song. The syncopated notes a2- b2- d3 in the right hand and the dotted half f#1 in the left hand of the piano, heard throughout the song in some form, illustrate the soft bells of the church clock tower, and create an atmosphere appropriate for the sorrow expressed in the text. The initial entry of the voice in measure three with the same three note bell theme found in the piano, continues to sustain the mood (see Ex. 15.).

Musical Example 15. "Ponte Vecchio, Florence," mm. 1-3.

The bells ring

Watts uses syncopation for emotional expression, tension, and release (see ex.16-17.). For example, in “Ponte Vecchio, Florence,” Teasdale intones “I am afraid of time” because of the fear of death. Her wish for the tolling of the church bells to cease is unheeded as the bells double in intensity, appearing in both the left and right hand of the piano accompaniment.

Musical Example 16. “Ponte Vecchio, Florence,” mm. 20-22.

The musical score for Musical Example 16 consists of three systems. The top system is the vocal line in treble clef, with lyrics "cease your toll - - - ing,". The middle system is the piano accompaniment, with a right hand part in treble clef and a left hand part in bass clef. The right hand part features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes, with a dynamic marking of *cresc.* and a fermata over the final measure. The left hand part features a similar rhythmic pattern, with dynamic markings of *sf* and *ff*. The score is in G major and 2/4 time.

In mm. 79-80 of “Stresa,” the ascending stepwise motion of the right hand of the accompaniment, intensified by syncopation on the off beat, prepares the climax of the song with the text “think of me,” the poet saying farewell to ‘Italy’ just as she had to her lover in the first.

Musical Example 17. “Stresa,” mm. 79-81.

The musical score for Musical Example 17 consists of three systems. The top system is the vocal line in treble clef, with lyrics "- ed, think of". The middle system is the piano accompaniment, with a right hand part in treble clef and a left hand part in bass clef. The right hand part features an ascending stepwise motion, with dynamic markings of *sf*, *stringendo*, *molto cresc.*, *rit.*, *p*, and *dim.*. The left hand part features a similar ascending motion, with dynamic markings of *sf*, *ff*, and *mp*. The score is in G major and 2/4 time.

Watts designates tempo markings, including *Moderato con moto*, *Con brio*, and *Well sustained*, to indicate his own perception of the text and mood at the beginning of each song (see Ex. 18-19.), and specifies the changing moods within each piece, including the uncommon markings *tardo* (slow) and *tardamente* (slowly) (see Ex. 20-21.).

Musical Example 18. "Addio," mm. 1-4.

Musical score for "Addio," mm. 1-4. The score is in 2/4 time with a key signature of two flats. It features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The tempo marking is "Moderato con moto". The piano part includes markings for "bright", "mf", and "mp".

Musical Example 19. "Villa Serbelloni, Bellaggio," mm. 1-3.

Musical score for "Villa Serbelloni, Bellaggio," mm. 1-3. The score is in 6/8 time with a key signature of one sharp. It features a voice line and a piano accompaniment. The tempo marking is "Con moto". The voice line includes the lyrics "The foun - tainshivers light-ly in the rain, The lau-rels". The piano part includes markings for "mf p rippling", "pp cantabile", and "ten.". The piano part also includes the instruction "con Pedale".

Musical Example 20. "Night Song at Amalfi," mm. 4-6.

*mp* *tardamente* *con grazia*  
I ask'd the heav'n of

Musical Example 21. "Villa Serbelloni, Bellaggio," mm. 16-18.

*p* *tardo* *a tempo* *ten.*  
me, Then would I still my soul and for an hour Change to a

### Harmony

According to Carol Kimball, "Harmony in a song is usually tied to the expressive qualities of the poetry, and is a key component in creating imagery."<sup>48</sup> In addition she writes, "How a composer organizes harmonic materials is important in creating a mood,

<sup>48</sup> Kimball, 6.



reinforcing the drama, or illustrating the poetic elements.”<sup>49</sup> In the song “Addio” Watts uses the parallel relationship of E flat major and e flat minor at a specific point as a means of dividing sections with contrasting moods (see Ex. 22.).

Musical Example 22. “Addio,” mm. 26-36.

The musical score for "Addio" (mm. 26-36) is presented in two systems. The first system shows the vocal line with the lyrics "Un - bur - den'd by de - sire." and the piano accompaniment. The piano part includes markings for *cresc.*, *f*, *dim.*, *rit.*, and *a tempo*. The second system shows the vocal line with the lyrics "For - get me for a month, a year, But" and the piano accompaniment. The piano part includes markings for *sf*, *colla voce*, *sf*, and *accel.*, along with *rit.* markings. The score concludes with a double bar line and a repeat sign.

In an example from “From a Roman Hill” a key change from G flat major to A major occurs at the beginning of the second stanza to indicate more passionate and inflamed emotions. At the very last line of the second stanza he then returns to the original key of G flat major, yet sustains the intensity in the poetic line “How can I let

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

them go,” by ascending to a strong climax on a sustained, fortissimo G flat on the word “go” (see Ex. 23.).

Musical Example 23. “From a Roman Hill,” mm. 15-18.

The musical score for Musical Example 23 consists of three staves. The top staff is the vocal line, with lyrics: "How can I let them go With". The word "go" is held for a long duration, marked with a long horizontal line above it. The piano accompaniment is in two parts. The right hand features chords and a melodic line, with a section marked "poco allargando" and a "cresc." (crescendo) section. The left hand has a rhythmic accompaniment. Dynamics include *f*, *ff*, and *dim.*. The number 21 is written in the top right corner of the score.

In an example from “Ponte Vecchio, Florence” the speaker implores the bells to cease with the phrase “Time takes too much from me.” The harmonic pattern  $V_7/B^b \rightarrow V_7/C \rightarrow V_7/B^b \rightarrow V_7/C$  of bars 27-28 follows the same harmonic pattern of bars 19-20 transposed up a third,  $V_7/G \rightarrow V_7/A \rightarrow V_7/G \rightarrow V_7/A$  in the ending of this poem while Teasdale speaks in an excited way, “And yet to rock and river He gives eternity” (see Ex. 24-25.).

Musical Example 24. “Ponte Vecchio, Florence,” mm. 19-20.

The musical score for Musical Example 24 consists of three staves. The top staff is the vocal line, with lyrics: "O gray bells, cease your". The word "bells" is held for a long duration, marked with a long horizontal line above it. The piano accompaniment is in two parts. The right hand features chords and a melodic line, with a "cresc." (crescendo) section. The left hand has a rhythmic accompaniment. Dynamics include *f*, *sf*, and *cresc.*

Musical Example 25. "Ponte Vecchio, Florence," mm. 27-28.

Musical score for "Ponte Vecchio, Florence" (mm. 27-28). The score is in G major and 4/4 time. It features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line has the lyrics "And yet to rock and" under the notes. The piano accompaniment consists of a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes in the right hand and a more complex pattern in the left hand. Dynamics include *mp*, *sf*, and *cresc.* (crescendo).

"Stresa" is the most emotional poem of the group, and concludes Teasdale's travel in Italy. In spite of the fact that there is one more poem later in the collection, Watts chose "Stresa" for the last song of the cycle. The key moment arrives with the phrase "It is full" in mm. 43-48 and the dramatic harmony heightens the moment.

Musical Example 26. "Stresa," mm. 43-48.

Musical score for "Stresa" (mm. 43-48). The score is in G major and 4/4 time. It features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line has the lyrics "more, It is full, it is full," under the notes. The piano accompaniment is highly dramatic, with a strong rhythmic pattern of eighth notes in the right hand and a more complex pattern in the left hand. Dynamics include *p*, *cresc.*, *rit.*, *ff a tempo*, *sf*, *molto cresc.*, *ff*, *sf sf*, and *fff rinforz.* (fortissimo rinforzando).

#### Piano Accompaniment

Often piano accompaniments provide harmonic and rhythmic support to the

voice, or have melodies or motives linked to the voice.<sup>50</sup> In “Addio,” Watts uses figures such as broken or arpeggiated chords at important points in the text (see Ex. 27-28.). The postlude symbolizes ‘sunlight’ on the peaceful sea. Small grace notes before each ascending stepwise half note in the right hand evoke the sunlight reflecting off the sea. Arpeggio patterns in the left hand, also illustrate the buoyant emotion of the word “sudden sunlight” (see Ex. 27).

Musical Example 27. “Addio,” mm. 66-76.

The musical score for "Addio" (mm. 66-76) consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line begins with the lyrics "the sea." and features a melodic line with grace notes. The piano accompaniment is divided into two systems. The first system includes markings for *rit.*, *p*, *dolce*, *calmo*, *pp*, *p*, *espress.*, and *cresc.*. The second system includes markings for *mp*, *p*, *rit.*, *sf*, *dim.*, and *pp*. The score is written in a key signature of two flats and a 4/4 time signature.

In an example from “From a Roman Hill” the rising and falling arpeggio figures could imply either the contour of the Roman hill or “the rise and fall of the Roman Empire” as the composer’s response to the poem (see Ex. 28.).

<sup>50</sup> Deborah Stein and Robert Spillman. *Poetry into Song: Performance and Analysis of Lieder* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 163.

Musical Example 28. "From a Roman Hill," mm. 1-4.

The musical score for Musical Example 28 consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The tempo is marked "Con moto". The piano part begins with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic and includes the instruction "con Pedale". The dynamics shift to piano (*p*) in the second measure. The accompaniment features a steady eighth-note bass line and a more complex upper line with chords and melodic fragments.

Introductions help set the mood and postludes often complete the story of a poem. The piano introduction forecasts the primary atmosphere of the song much like an opera 'overture' introduces the dramatic mood. In Ex. 29 from "Naples", Watts uses the tempo "Con brio" with two measures of alternating sixteenth note fifths, followed by two measures of *pp* triad arpeggios with the third transposed the octave leaving an open fifth in the bass. These evoke the sounds of woodwinds and horns to create the character of the Naples region (see Ex. 29.).

Musical Example 29. "Naples," mm. 1-8.

The musical score for Musical Example 29 consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The tempo is marked "Con brio". The piano part begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic, followed by a sforzando (*sf*) dynamic, and then a diminuendo (*dim.*). The dynamics shift to pianissimo (*pp*) with the instruction "una corda". The accompaniment features a steady sixteenth-note bass line and a more complex upper line with chords and melodic fragments.

In the song “Ruins of Paestum,” Watts uses a short, funereal motive in the accompaniment to illustrating the dismal atmosphere of the ruins there. The motive, found at the introduction (see Ex. 30.), and penultimate two measures of the song (see Ex. 31.), also serves as a connecting passage for the musical form AA' (see Ex. 32.).

Musical Example 30. “Ruins of Paestum,” mm. 1-3.

Musical score for Musical Example 30, measures 1-3 of "Ruins of Paestum". The score is in 4/4 time and features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The key signature has four flats (B-flat major/D-flat minor). The tempo is marked "Andante sostenuto". The vocal line begins with a rest in measure 1, followed by the lyrics "On low-lands where the" in measures 2 and 3. The piano accompaniment consists of a short, funereal motive in the left hand, with dynamics ranging from *mp* to *p*. The right hand accompaniment features chords and moving lines. The piece concludes with the instruction "con Pedale".

Musical Example 31. “Ruins of Paestum,” mm. 10-11.

Musical score for Musical Example 31, measures 10-11 of "Ruins of Paestum". This excerpt shows the piano accompaniment for two measures. The key signature remains four flats. The piano part features a short, funereal motive in the left hand, with dynamics marked *pp* and *mp*. The right hand accompaniment consists of chords and moving lines.

Musical Example 32. “Ruins of Paestum,” mm. 21-23.

Musical score for Musical Example 32, measures 21-23 of "Ruins of Paestum". This excerpt shows the piano accompaniment for three measures. The key signature remains four flats. The piano part features a short, funereal motive in the left hand, with dynamics marked *pp* and *mp*. The right hand accompaniment consists of chords and moving lines.

The piano accompaniment may also double the vocal line as a tool for depicting the text or to strengthen an emotion. In “Ponte Vecchio, Florence” Teasdale describes how she loves everything in the world as she is close to death. Watts enhances these emotions as the piano doubles the voice line.

Musical Example 33. “Ponte Vecchio, Florence,” mm. 3-6.

mp  
O for the ris - - ing moon

Musical Example 34. “Ponte Vecchio, Florence,” mm. 11-14.

*p a tempo*  
O for the meas - - ured dawns That  
*cresc.*

*a tempo*  
*dolce*  
*pp*  
*cresc.*  
*mf*

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSION

Wintter Watts was one of the composers who contributed to the growth of American art song in the early 20th century. He set English language poetry exclusively, and was inspired by the lyric poetry of Sara Teasdale. Watts' song cycle *Vignettes of Italy*, on poems by Teasdale, is considered one of his most famous and successful vocal compositions.

*Vignettes of Italy* was frequently performed by many famous singers in America in his lifetime, but is little known in the current repertoire of American art song and is rarely performed today. Watts' music gradually vanished from the repertoire and he spent his later years in obscurity. *Vignettes of Italy* is worthy of reintroduction to contemporary audiences and singers. As Gladys Mathew writes “ ‘Wintter Watts, composer of songs’ may his songs be preserved for future singers, musicians, and devotees of American music.”<sup>51</sup>

This song cycle demands a clear understanding of the context of the poetry, the compositional techniques of Wintter Watts, and the vital relationship between music and text. It is hoped that this research has provided a foundation of understanding of this cycle, and will assist singers and pianists in presenting artistically coherent performances, and create a fuller comprehension and appreciation of Watts' songs.

---

<sup>51</sup> Mathew, 23.



APPENDIX A  
LIST OF WORKS BY WINTTER WATTS

PUBLISHER	TITLE	POET	DATE
Oliver Ditson	Blue are Her Eyes	Mary MacMillan	1913
	The Boat of My Lover	Dina Maria Craik	1913
	Green Branches	Fiona Macleod	1913
	Hushing Song	Fiona Macleod	1913
	Only Once, Love	Richard Watson Gilder	1913
	Wood Song	Eugene Lee-Hamilton	1913
	When I Wake	Anonymous	1916
	The Poet Sings	Richard LeGallienne	1919
	<i>Vignettes of Italy</i> 1. Addio 2. Naples 3. Capri 4. Night Song at Amalfi 5. Ruins of Paestum 6. From a Roman Hill 7. Ponte Vecchio, Florence 8. Villa Serbelloni, Bellaggio 9. Stresa	Sara Teasdale	1919
	Isle of Beauty	Anonymous	Unknown date
G. Schirmer	<i>Two Poems by A. Symons, Op. 4</i> 1. Dreams 2. During Music	Anonymous	1908
	<i>Four Songs, Op. 3</i> 1. A Hope 2. My World 3. The Stairway 4. The Difficulty	Wintter Watts Richard Watson Gilder Richard Watson Gilder Anonymous	1908
	Dinna Ask Me	John Dunlop	1909
	The Ocean Tramp	Laurence Hope	1909
	<i>Five Songs</i> 1. Alone 2. Home 3. It isn't the Thing You Do, Dear 4. Oh, Call it by some Better Name 5. Surf Song	Anonymous David Greenwell Anonymous Thomas More Laurence Hope	1910 1918
	<i>Two Songs</i> 1. Like Music on the Waters 2. Barcarole	Lord Byron Pai Ta-Shun	
	<i>Five Songs</i> 1. Beloved, it is Morn 2. The Mother's Song	Emily Henrietta Hickey C. R. Robertson	1919

PUBLISHER	TITLE	POET	DATE	
	3. Golden Rose 4. Utopia 5. Magic	Grace Hazard Conkling Frances Turner Palgrave Harriet Morgan		
	Falmouth Town	William Ernest Henley	1921	
	Wings of Night	Sara Teasdale	1921	
	Joy	Sara Teasdale	1922	
	<i>Three Lyrics Poems</i> 1. With the Tide 2. Transformation 3. The Nightingale and the Rose	Edward J. O'Brien Jessie B. Rittenhouse William Ernest Henley	1922	
	Bring Her Again to Me	William Ernest Henley	1923	
	Intreat Me not to Leave Thee	Book of Ruth	1923	
	<i>Two Songs by Sara Teasdale</i> 1. Only a Cry 2. Let it be Forgotten	Sara Teasdale	1923	
	Only and Forever	William Ernest Henley	1923	
	A White Rose	John Boyle O'Reilly	1923	
	Wild Tears	Louise Imogen Guiney	1923	
	<i>Three Songs for Low voice</i> 1. Song is so old 2. Miniver Cheevy 3. Dark Hills	Hermann Hagedorn Edward A. Robinson Edward A. Robinson	1924	
	G. Ricordi	Tryste Noël	Louise Imogen Guiney	1921
		The Little Shepherd's Song	William Alexander Percy	1922
	Galaxy Music	That Little Word "No"	Unknown author	1936
Lay My Heart in Marble		Unknown author	Unknown date	
Exile		Wintter Watts	1938	
John Church Co.	<i>Three Songs</i> 1. Love's Life 2. A Drop of Dew 3. The Joy of Man	R. B. Bulter Hattie Canfield Unknown author	1906	
	<i>Three Songs</i> 1. Clover 2. Admonition 3. The Song of the Wind	Witter Bynner Richard Watson Gilder N. E. Barnhart	1906	
	The Joy of Man, Op. 2, no. 1	Marshall Pancoast	1908	
	Another Day	Unknown author	1909	
	Location	Tom Hall	1909	

PUBLISHER	TITLE	POET	DATE
William Lawrence Frazier	United Nations Flag	Cora May White	Unknown date

APPENDIX B  
WORKS BY SARA TESDALE

TITLE	PUBLISHER	DATE
<i>Sonnets to Duse and Other Poems</i>	Boston, MA: The Poet Lore Company	1907
<i>Helen of Troy and Other Poems</i>	G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York; Revised and reissued by The Macmillan Company, New York, NY	1911 1922
<i>Rivers to the Sea</i>	The Macmillan Company, New York	1915
<i>Love Songs</i>	The Macmillan Company, New York; Reissued in revised format	1917 1975
<i>The Answering Voice; One Hundred Love Lyrics by Women</i>	Houghton, Boston; Enlarged edition by The Macmillan Company, New York; New edition with additional poems by Freeport, NY: Libraries Press	1917 1928 1971
<i>Rainbow Gold; Poems Old and New Selected for Girls and Boys by Sara Teasdale</i>	The Macmillan Company, New York	1922
<i>Flame and Shadow</i>	The Macmillan Company, New York Revised, with London: Jonathan Cape, Ltd	1920 1924
<i>Dark of the Moon</i>	The Macmillan Company, New York	1926
<i>Stars To-Night, Verses Old and New for Boys and Girls</i>	The Macmillan Company, New York	1930
<i>A Country House</i>	Alfred A. Knopf, New York	1932
<i>Strange Victory</i>	The Macmillan Company, New York	1933
<i>The Collected Poems of Sara Teasdale (also known as <i>Collected Poems</i>)</i>	The Macmillan Company, New York Reissued in new format Reissued with Introduction by Marya Zaturenska, Buccaneer Books Inc., Cutchogue, NY	1937 1945 1966
<i>Those Who Love, Love Poems</i>	Hallmark Editions, Kansas, MO	1969
<i>Mirror of the Heart: Poems of Sara Teasdale</i>	The Macmillan Company, New York	1984
<i>Christmas Carol</i>	Holt, New York, NY	1993

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Books and Journal Articles

- American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers. *The ASCAP Biographical Dictionary of Composers, Authors and Publishers*. The Lynn Farnol Group, Inc., 1966
- Broyles, Michael. *The Cambridge History of American Music*. ed. David Nicholls, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- Cain, Natasia S. "Her lyric poetry still inspires lovely music." *Choral Journal*, vol. 50, no. 4 [November 2009]: 8-18.
- Carman, Judith, William Gaeddert, Rita Resch, and Gordon Myers, *Art Song in the United States, 1759-1999: An Annotated Bibliography*. 3rd edition, Lanham, Maryland: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2001.
- Carpenter, Margaret H. *Sara Teasdale: A Biography*. Norfolk, Virginia: Pentelic Press, c1977.
- Drake, William D. *Dictionary of Literary Biography v. 45: American Poets 1880-1945*. ed. Peter Quartermain, Detroit, MI : Gale Research Co., c1987.
- Drake, William. *Sara Teasdale, Woman and Poet*. New York: Harper & Row, 1979.
- Elliott, Martha. *Singing in Style*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006.
- Friedberg, Ruth C. *American Art Song and American Poetry; v. 1*. Lanham, Maryland: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1984.
- Gossett, Philip. *The New Grove Masters of Italian Opera: Rossini, Donizetti, Bellini, Verdi, Puccini*. London : Macmillan, 1980.
- Gould, Jean. *American Women Poets: Pioneers of Modern Poetry*. New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1984.
- Hall, James H. *The Art Song*. Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1969.
- Howard, John T. *Our American Music: Three Hundred Years of It*. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1939.

- Kagen, Sergius. *Music for the Voice: A Descriptive List of Concert and Teaching Material*. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1968.
- Kimball, Carol. *Song: A Guide to Art Song Style and Literature*. Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Hal Leonard Corporation, 2006.
- Mabry, Sharon. *Exploring Twentieth-Century Vocal Music: A Practical Guide to Innovations in Performance and Repertoire*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Mathew, Gladys H. "Winter Watts American Song Composer." *NATS Bulletin* 38 [Jan/Feb1982]: 21-23.
- Peysner, Herbert F. "Wintter Watts's New cycle a Contribution of Permanent Value to American Song Literature." *Musical America* [March 13, 1920].
- Sams, Eric. *The Songs of Robert Schumann*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1995.
- Schoen, Carol. *Sara Teasdale*. Boston: Twayne Publishers, c1986.
- Shirley, Wayne D. "Watts, Wintter," *The New Grove Dictionary of American Music*, 4 vols. ed. H. Wiley Hitchcock and Stanley Sadie, New York: Macmillan, 1986, IV, 492.
- Shutt, Stephen. "Unknown title." *The Baltimore Sun*. [September 9, 1976].
- Stein, Deborah and Robert Spillman. *Poetry into Song: Performance and Analysis of Lieder*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.
- Stevens, Denis. *A History of Song*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1970.
- Upton, William T. *Art-Song in America: A Study in the Development of American Music*. Boston, Massachusetts: Oliver Ditson Company, 1969.
- Villamil, Victoria E. *A Singer's Guide to the American Art Song, 1870-1980*. Lanham, Maryland: Scarecrow Press, 2004.
- Walker, Charyl. *Mask Outrageous and Austere: Culture, Psyche, and Persona in Modern Women Poets*. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1991.
- "Wintter Watts' Obituary," *New York Times*. 2 November 1962, 31.



### Dissertations

- Bierschenk, Jerome M. "An Analysis of Selected Choral Works by Kirke Mechem: Music-textual Relationships in Settings of Poetry of Sara Teasdale." D.M.A. dissertation, University of North Texas, 2003.
- Gregg, Thomas A. "Song Composers and Their Poetry Choices: An Analysis of the Literary Background and Textual Selections of Twelve Composers." D.M.A. dissertation, Ohio State University, 1989.
- Piercey, Courtney A. "Word and Music: The Revolutionary Partnership Between Lili Boulanger and Francis Jammes," D.M.A. dissertation, Arizona State University, 2010.

### Online Sources

- Poetry Foundation, "Sara Teasdale," In Poetry Foundation. Poems and Poets, [http://www. Poetryfoundation.org/bio/sara-teasdale](http://www.Poetryfoundation.org/bio/sara-teasdale) [accessed April 5, 2011].
- Reynolds, Bethany. "A guide to the Jessie B. Rittenhouse collection." In Rollins College Department of Archives and Special Collections. American Poets, <http://asp3.rollins.edu/olin/oldsite/archives/rittenhouse.htm> [accessed April 15, 2011].

### Score

- Watts, Wintter. *Vignettes of Italy: A Cycle of Nine Songs for High Voice*. Oliver Ditson Company, 1919. (Reprint: Classical Vocal Reprints)

### Sound Recording

- Smart, Marilyn. *Voices of Innocence*. Florida: University of North Florida, 2005.