

A black and white portrait of a woman, Lee Hoiby, smiling warmly. She has dark, wavy hair styled in a classic 1940s or 1950s fashion. She is wearing a light-colored, possibly fur-trimmed coat over a dark jacket. Her right hand is resting on the neck of a violin, which is positioned diagonally across the frame. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

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LEE HOIBY: THE ITALIAN LESSON
BON APPÉTIT!

LEE HOIBY 1926-2011

THE ITALIAN LESSON
BON APPÉTIT!

JANNA BATY mezzo-soprano

VANESSA SCHUKIS mezzo-soprano

BOSTON MODERN ORCHESTRA PROJECT

Gil Rose, conductor

THE ITALIAN LESSON (1982)

Janna Baty, mezzo-soprano

- [1] I. Signorina 5:16
- [2] II. Mable Norton 3:43
- [3] III. Jane 9:23
- [4] IV. Miss Pounder 4:25
- [5] V. Puppy 3:30
- [6] VI. Count Bluffsky 7:11
- [7] VII. Miss Swift 2:32
- [8] VIII. Camilla 4:17
- [9] IX. Miss Swift, cont'd 3:06
- [10] X. The Lover 4:19

BON APPÉTIT! (1989)

Vanessa Schukis, mezzo-soprano

- [11] "Today we're going to make a choc'late cake." 2:11
- [12] "When you're going to do a cake, you really have to have a battle plan." 2:12
- [13] "...and you put the yolk into the yolk bowl..." 2:31
- [14] "And if it's hot, pour it in gradually." 5:43
- [15] "Now ready to assemble the rest of the batter." 3:56
- [16] "Watch them very carefully at this point. They'll puff up, then they sink down." 3:55

TOTAL 68:08

By Lee Hoiby

I really like writing operas. They work with the audiences, and it's the experience that calls for the best I have as a composer. I'm a very lyrical composer and I like writing for the voice; I also love the orchestra—those two things. I've always been in love with it, but for me I can say that in my view opera is a very lively thing. It can go anywhere. I hope other people feel the way that I do about it. I'm a composer and lots of composers are writing operas. Now there's a wonderful development.

I had a lot of offers [to write] for small orchestras and you have to sharpen your wits. Every minute counts so you can't do what you do with a full symphony orchestra. You expand things as a matter of course, and when you have a limited number of resources you have to strengthen them, and then the whole thing takes on a different aspect. The balance has become more important and you take more care with it.

When I didn't have a commission, I wrote just for the pleasure of writing. I love to write music, and singers would always perform my things. Of course, you don't make any money from songs. The little pittance that the singers could pay you wouldn't amount to much, anyway, and they usually don't even bother. Then those who could really pay you something figured they were doing you a favor by singing your music. But in spite of all that, the core of my musical life centers around the human voice, be it operas, or songs, or choral music.

There's a lot of struggle sometimes [writing for voice], but the great advantage is that you begin with texts, and if you're like me and love words, that's already a great boon to start

with. But if you're writing a piano concerto or a string quartet, or anything without words, there's nothing except your pencil and your page.

That's the job of the composer. He has to make the content fit the vessel properly, and not let it seem overblown; not cheat the form, and not be too repetitious, ahem, ahem, ahem, like some of our minimalists. You can spot it right away when the composer goes off the rails, or if he never does get on the rails. You can't fool anybody, at least in the long run you can't. The audience knows. Two thousand people sitting in a concert hall are not going to get up and cheer for something that doesn't work. At least by the fifth or sixth time they hear it, if they still don't accept it—like they never did accept atonality, and they never will—eventually it'll die, which it's doing, I'm glad to say.

Haydn said such a beautiful thing in a letter, once [about the purpose of music]. It was something like, "To give balm to the soul after a hard day's work." You come home and you need something to lift up your spirits, and I agree with that. I think it's to improve the quality of life, to improve the quality of how you feel. It's very good for the health, which is why I have no patience at all with what I call ugly music, music that really grates and grinds. There is room for it; there is need for it, especially in dramatic works, and works with certain kinds of texts. You have to do that; you have to bear that for a while, but I would only tolerate that as a rare exception. For me, music really ought to be beautiful. It ought to be a song from the heart, always. It ought to be full of feeling, and make you feel the rhythm of it that goes along with the rhythm of life—which begins with the beating of the heart. It's a very physical thing for me, as opposed to an intellectual thing. It's not a thing so much of a mind, and yet there is that contradiction. You have to have the mind very much involved when you're writing music of any sophistication at all, but it's the heart that has to govern it.

*Excerpted from two interviews with Bruce Duffie, in June 1980 and April 1991.
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THE ITALIAN LESSON, scored for mezzo-soprano soloist, solo winds, horn, harp, piano, and string quartet, with text by Ruth Draper and adapted by Mark Shulgasser, received its premiere on January 31, 1985, by Jean Stapleton and the Baltimore Opera Company, conducted by Henry Mollicone, at the Miriam A. Friedberg Concert Hall at the Peabody Conservatory, Baltimore, MD.

BON APPÉTIT! is scored for mezzo-soprano soloist, flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, horn, harp, piano, and string quartet, with a libretto by Mark Shulgasser adapted from two episodes of Julia Child's *The French Chef*. It was premiered on March 8, 1989, by Jean Stapleton, mezzo-soprano, and Lee Hoiby, piano accompaniment, at the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC.

By Colleen Gray

Lee Hoiby (1926–2011) was an American composer who composed in all genres, but he is best known for his vocal music which included operas, more than 100 art songs, and choral works. Although his solo piano works are highly regarded, they are not considered to be as inspired as his works for voice. Hoiby originally was training to be a concert pianist and was in a Master's degree program at Mills College in California. He only composed for fun, considering composition as "playing hooky" from his real work as an aspiring concert pianist. A friend recognized the quality of Hoiby's compositions and sent them to the great opera composer Gian-Carlo Menotti. Although Menotti accepted very few composition students, he immediately sent Hoiby an airline ticket to Philadelphia with an offer of a four-year full scholarship to the Curtis Institute to study with him. Hoiby abruptly changed course and began studying composition with Menotti who drilled him in note-against-note counterpoint

in the style of Palestrina, effective prosody, and creating an "affectionate" orchestration. From Menotti, Hoiby learned how to write for the voice. Hoiby said that he really didn't ever like opera, didn't like the stentorian opera voice of the mainstream grand opera, but Menotti gently introduced him to the art form, and he found he had a talent for opera. After studying with Menotti, Hoiby went to Italy to study at the Accademia di Santa Cecilia in Rome as one of the first Fulbright Fellows. He was denied admission to the academy and told his music was too tonal. To be a popular lyrical, tonal composer in the 1950s was unforgivable in academic and avant-garde circles. By that time Hoiby had already tasted success with the 1950 performance of his first orchestral work, *Nocturne*, by Thomas Schippers and the NBC Orchestra, as well as with the November 1952 Erich Leinsdorf and the Rochester Philharmonic performance of another of his works, a ballet called *Hearts, Meadows and Flags*. He spent his Fulbright year in Rome happily composing independently.

Hoiby considered himself a rather conservative, late romantic, lyrical, tonal composer continuing in the tradition of Richard Strauss, Gustav Mahler, and Samuel Barber. His songs are unique in their sumptuous, gracefully lyric melodies marked by long, arching vocal lines within a tonal framework embellished with chromaticism and modality. The melodies are undergirded by substantial accompaniment with generous splashes of word-painting. Although traditional chordal analysis is not wholly appropriate for his music, Hoiby's works are always tonal with generous use of chromaticism and understated traces of modality. Hoiby stated that, "Without the rudder of tonality under the ship of music, for me, the whole thing sinks. Tonality has never lost its power." His prosody is well-considered, often closely following the true rhythm and inflection of speech, allowing for a very natural delivery of the text. While composing vocal works, Hoiby spoke the text and then began to sing the text while composing at the piano, often making himself hoarse after a day of composing, especially when he was singing all of the roles!

As a tonal composer during the time when most composers were writing atonal, dissonant music, Hoiby suffered from a sense of creative isolation. He had little artistic community or encouragement and he gave up composition during the mid-1970s. He instead returned to studying piano and, in 1978, performed his long-postponed and critically acclaimed New York recital debut at Alice Tully Hall. During this hiatus from composing, Hoiby began to listen to the music of Cat Stevens, Bob Dylan, and Joni Mitchell. He credits their lyrical and harmonically economic song settings with reawakening and stimulating his desire to compose. Hoiby stated that recognizing the merit in their music with "their arching melodic line, combined with wonderfully simple harmonic means, was just what I needed." In 1979, Hoiby met Mark Shulgasser who became his life partner and text finder/librettist. With Shulgasser as text finder and encourager, Hoiby began composing again. His song output increased dramatically. Before his sudden death of metastatic melanoma on March 28, 2011, he had written more than one hundred songs.

A number of well-known singers of the twentieth century programmed Hoiby's songs with regularity. First to program Hoiby's songs in recital was beloved soprano Leontyne Price. Price's recitals included works by the great masters, but Hoiby's songs were often the favorites of the evening. Especially popular was Hoiby's setting of the comic poem "The Serpent" by Theodore Roethke. His songs then began to be programmed by such luminaries as Marilyn Horne, Phyllis Bryn-Julson, Kristine and Katherine Ciesinski, Arlene Auger, William Parker, and Mimi Lerner. Another well-known performer of Hoiby's works was the acclaimed American actress Jean Stapleton, who was best known for the role of Edith Bunker in the long-running television series *All in the Family*, and for whom *The Italian Lesson* and *Bon Appétit!* were written.

* * *

The comic monodrama *The Italian Lesson* (1982) [1-10] was adapted from a famous 1925 monologue by the great comic actress Ruth Draper. Originally referred to as "the busy mother" in reviews of the time, it is Draper's most famous piece and was considered to be her finest work. This twenty-five-minute opera was only Hoiby's second work written after his return to composition. Hoiby's partner, Mark Shulgasser, adapted the monologue slightly to create the libretto. Jean Stapleton premiered the opera with the Baltimore Opera Company in 1985. It also became a signature role for her.

The Italian Lesson begins with the entrance of the Italian teacher, Signorina. The main character is not named so I will refer to her as the mother. The mother expounds to Signorina that she is so very excited to begin reading Dante's *Inferno* in Italian. She begins to read aloud the first few phrases in Italian and then begins to translate—"Mid-way along the pathway of our life, I found myself in a dark forest, Because the direct way was lost." She then reflects that this is so true, "people seem to lose their way, they don't know where they're going, they can't see the way before them." This introspection is abruptly interrupted by the memory that the mother must immediately call her friend, Mabel. During the long, gossipy phone call that is full of comic interjections to her active children, we hear exchanges that are all too familiar to any mother and increasingly humorous as we recognize ourselves.

The mother hangs up as the cook enters and begins to plan a simple dinner for eight that is in reality quite extensive, with multiple courses and replete with repeated asides to correct and admonish her children. Before she can complete the menu plan, her husband calls requesting that she arrange to have someone meet him at the train station with his golf clubs and attire. She eventually gets back to the cook and waxes eloquent about a recipe for pigeon she had once had in France. She picks up the phone as she is waxing on about the pigeon recipe and finds to her surprise that her friend Gladys has called to say her daughter does not have chicken pox after all, so the dance class will be at her house

at three. She and the cook finally complete the menu, she sends the children out, and she tries to return to Signorina and Dante.

The mother barely speaks a line of Dante before the phone rings again. Billy is evidently doing poorly in math. After a long, heated discussion, the phone call ends with the sudden arrival of the manicurist that the mother forgot to cancel and the manicure is added into the whole mess of distractions. The mother again tries to read Dante, rereading the opening lines in Italian, but is quickly interrupted yet again by the children who announce the arrival of a new, eagerly anticipated puppy. The mother abandons the pretense of the lesson and immerses herself in enjoying the puppy.

The lesson has become a litany of interruptions and chaos, and the interruptions continue unabated. The mother never gets past rereading the first few lines of Dante. The lesson ends as the mother realizes she will be late for a funeral. In the final minutes before leaving, she gives extensive instructions to her maid and her secretary and sets up a lunch date with a friend to catch up on a local scandal. Before she leaves, she receives one last phone call. It is her lover. After a brief, loving exchange, she leaves with one last instruction to her secretary to find a copy of the book *Our Inner Life* so she can skim it before book club and to her maid to put out her mauve dress.

The Italian Lesson is scored for flute, oboe, clarinet in B \flat , bassoon, horn, harp, piano, and strings (2 violins, viola and cello) which can be solo or augmented. The role can be sung by either a soprano or a mezzo-soprano as Hoiby included alternate melodic lines at various points to allow for the varying tessitura of soprano and mezzo. Although Hoiby's music is often beautiful, it does not take center stage. Instead, he allows the acting and delivery of the monologue to remain the focus. The melodies are written to serve the text delivery and the accompanying orchestra is a voice supplying a context for the scene, informing us of the emotions and movement, and reacting to the action.

In this work that is full of quickly spoken text, Hoiby is wisely sparing in his accompaniment, allowing much of it to be in the style of *secco recitativo*. This gives the singer the freedom to be fully expressive in their dramatic delivery. Yet, when opportunity arises, he interjects word-painting in the accompaniment, such as in the opening. When the mother declares they will "skim right through it," meaning Dante, the flute and piano join in playing some quick scalar ascending sextuplets that give the sense of skimming along. The reading begins on measured repeated pitches and the accompaniment is modest, with occasional use of the sextuplet rhythmic figure in an arpeggio when the mother comments on the exciting text. As in *Bon Appétit!*, the accompanying orchestra gives the subtext for the monologue. After the piano plays the 9:30 clock strike, the orchestra plays a strong, abrupt rhythmic figure that feels like the entrance of a too boisterous child. Hoiby often uses rhythmic motives for the characters. In the extensive and often interrupted discussion with the cook, Hoiby uses light, quick, triplet arpeggiation at the beginning of each return to the discussion. For the firm discussion with Billy's teacher, the accompaniment includes strongly and pronounced repeated notes that rise as the mother becomes more passionate and undergirds the text with determination. The entrance of the puppy is filled with trills and fast sextuplets that let you know the mother's excitement at welcoming the puppy as well as the frenetic activity of all the children with a wriggling puppy. In the scene with the lover, Hoiby is unabashedly romantic with full, lush accompaniment that builds throughout the scene to a final climax as they say goodbye. The monologue ends with a rather simple, sustained accompaniment as the mother gives final banal instructions to the maid.

* * *

Hoiby composed the short, twenty-minute opera monologue, *Bon Appétit!* [11-16], in the mid-1980s in collaboration with his friend, the famous and ebullient chef and television personality, Julia Child. The libretto was written by Mark Shulgasser and was adapted from

two episodes of Julia Child's well-loved, comedic cooking television show, *The French Chef*. As was the case in the television show, the opera is written for a single singer playing the role of Julia Child. The piece was dedicated to Jean Stapleton, who premiered the role at the Kennedy Center on March 8, 1989, with Lee Hoiby at the piano. *Bon Appétit!* immediately became a signature role for this celebrated actress.

Bon Appétit! is scored for a small orchestra of flute, oboe, B♭ Clarinet, bassoon, horn, harp, piano, 2 violins, viola and cello. As is often typical in Hoiby's music, the vocal line is closely aligned with the text, with declamatory sections that build into angular writing with large expressive leaps as Julia becomes more excited about her recipe and that build further into broad, sweeping, expressive lyrical lines when she begins to rhapsodize about the ingredients in the cake. The accompanying orchestration serves to set the mood, creating subtexts that inform and "comment" on the text. The opera opens with an excited upward, scalar flourish that sets the tone for Julia's pronouncement of the recipe of the day—"This is the rich buttery brown batter for Le Gâteau au Chocolat l'Eminence Brune!"—delivered over trills in the orchestra and ending in an excited upward glissando-like scale. The piano then settles us into the recipe with a steady, rhythmic arpeggiation, a predictable chord progression, and a thinning of the orchestration as Julia begins the recipe in a declamatory style. Gradually the texture thickens again and a lightly stressed syncopation is added that indicates Julia's excitement in making the recipe. The music tells us that Julia loves making this recipe! As Julia enthuses over parts of the recipe that she particularly enjoys, the singing line often elongates with expressive leaps and the orchestra becomes more syncopated as Julia becomes more and more excited. Hoiby often uses the orchestra for word-painting and to orchestrate acting choices. For example, when Julia sings "round and round," the orchestra plays turn motives that paint the action. Hoiby also uses the orchestration to imply what Julia is doing in the spaces between Julia's lines, somewhat like in a Mozart opera.

Although Hoiby typically did not use word-painting in the vocal line, instead leaving that to the accompaniment, he made some exceptions. For example, in the setting of the text "hot water," Hoiby's setting of "hot" is suddenly and comically high and loud. Hoiby included quotes from both the French national anthem "La Marseillaise" as a prelude to the text "When you are going to do a cake, you really need to have a battle plan" and from "America the Beautiful" over the text "United States grade A eggs." As Julia triumphantly presents the finished cake, the lyrical line broadens into slow triplets supported by full, lush chords in the orchestra, building to a passionate and full climax, a compositional technique that is quintessential Hoiby.

Hoiby's settings of both operas show his talent for composing with economy that allows the delivery of the monologue text and the theatrical aspects of the performance to shine. Both the operas are jewels that have delighted audiences for many years and will surely continue to be favorites.

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THE ITALIAN LESSON

Music by Lee Hoiby | Text by Ruth Draper, libretto by Mark Shulgasser

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[1] I. Signorina

Come in... Come in, Signorina. Oh, I'm so glad you've come! I can't tell you how excited I am! To think we've arrived at last at the *Divine Comedy*! I'm really very proud. And I must tell you, Signorina, I read a little last night, just before I went to bed, and I understood quite easily, so I think we're going to skim right through it. You have your book? And shall we read a few lines, and translate, as we always do? Oh, this is thrilling! Dante at last!

"Nel mezzo del camin di nostra vita
Mi ritrovai per una selva oscura..."

What? Oh.

"...selva oscura
Che la diritta via era smarrita."

Oh, what wonderful lines, Signorina! Now let's see. "Nel mezzo" just means "in the middle," doesn't it? "In the middle." And "del camin" means "of the road. In the middle of the road." That's not very poetical, is it, in English. Well, we can take certain liberties, don't translators always, and instead of saying "in the middle," we could say "mid-way." And for "of the road," we could say "along the pathway." Isn't that better?

"Mid-way along the pathway"
"di nostra vita"—"of our life,"
"Mi ritrovai"—"Myself I found,"
"per una selva oscura"—"in a forest dark,"
"Che la diritta via"—"the direct way"
"era"—"was"
"smarrita."

Wait a minute, don't tell me. Such a funny word. I knew it on Monday. "Smarritta" means "lost," doesn't it? Lost. "Midway along the pathway of our life, I found myself in a dark forest, because the direct way was lost." What wonderful lines, Signorina, because they're so true. So often in the middle of life, people seem to lose their way, they don't know where they're going, they can't see the way before them. It's such a wonderful picture of confusion.

Those two men... Dante was with Virgil, wasn't he, and they were just stumbling along together. They didn't know where they were going, they couldn't see the way before them. Marv'lous. Dante was a genius, wasn't he. Dante and Shakespeare. They seemed to know ev'rything, didn't they. They seemed to know the things that always would be true. Wonderful! I imagine this will be full of quotations, and great general truths. Just like that first paragraph. There's something gripping about it, right away. Oh, this is going to be such fun! So exciting.

[2] II. Mable Norton

Heavens, is it half-past nine? Signorina, will you excuse me one moment, while I call up a friend? I promised to catch her before she went out. (*She dials.*) Plaza three-seven-four-seven three.

Hello, my sweet. Gently, darling, don't pull me over. (*Kiss*) Say good morning nicely to the Signorina, and then run along because Mother's having her Italian lesson and doesn't want to be disturbed.

Hello... Is Mrs. Norton there? May I speak to her please? What, dear, the movies, this afternoon? Certainly not. You never go to movies in the middle of the week. And you have your dancing class... Hello Mable, my dear, how are you? I had to call you up to know what happened yesterday afternoon. I saw that there was going to be a row, and of course I was dying to stay, but I had my Bible class and had to fly. Well, what happened? I thought that the woman was going to murder you, I really did. I was very anx— She didn't, but what did she do? What? No! Not real hysterics! (*Gasp*) What did you do? You didn't! A whole glass of water? What nerve! Did it ruin her hat? Well, I've always heard that was the thing to do for hysterics, but I never heard of anybody doing it. Well, did it calm her down? Isn't she dreadful. D'you know who she is, d'you know anything about her? How did we ever get her on the committee? Oh, she's impossible. I know, but she doesn't contribute anything, she's constantly

interfering, holding things up... Oh, outrageous! I've never seen such manners. We can't tolerate this kind of... Exactly. Yes. Well, I think we must just quietly get rid of her. After all... Darling, please don't interrupt. Mother's talking. Run along and close the door. Well, Mable, listen, my dear, I can't discuss it now. I'm in the middle of an Italian lesson. But I'll see you tomorrow, at Gertrude's. Let's sit together and thrash it out... It won't be easy... or pleasant... We've got to devise a plan. Yes. Exactly. Absolutely. Oh, that's so true. Come in... Come in, Jane. No, dear, the cook came in. Well, I'll see you tomorrow. Yes. All right. Well then, goodbye, my dear, goodbye.

Signorina, will you excuse me one moment, while I order the dinner? Children, if you're going to play in here, you must be quiet. Now don't tease him like that, Barb'ra, you know he doesn't like it. Don't tease him. Come in, Jane.

[3] III. Jane

Jane, we shall be eight for dinner tonight, and I want a very simple little dinner. Have you some clear soup? Well, we might have clear soup; put something amusing in it, I don't really mind what. Then we might have that fish soufflé that you make. Oh yes you do, Jane, you do it in that low silver dish, it's white and fluffy—and easy to eat, it's brown with sort of... crumbs on top... isn't that fish? Oh, I always thought it was fish. (*The phone rings. She picks up the receiver.*) Looks like fish, tastes like fish, must be fish. Hello? Oh, hello dear. What do you want? Your bag, packed with your golf clothes and your clubs, sent to meet you at the twelve-ten train. All right. No, it's no trouble. No, Morris will take them, I have the other car. All right, Morris will be standing at the gate of the train at five minutes before... Look out, Billy, get off that chair! Look out, darling, you'll fall. Barb'ra, lift him down. Darling, I don't want you to get down by yourself, let her lift you down. No, he's all right, he didn't fall. No, he never does. What'd you say? I don't know anything about it. Well, I'll ask him. Billy, do you know anything about a driver that came for Daddy from Spaldings? D'you know where it is? Well, go get it darling, and put it with his other clubs in his bag. Now, don't do anything else on the way. Keep your mind on that one thing until you've got it done. Yes, he knows where it is. It's probably broken by this time. Listen, don't miss the train. You can't spend the night, Hubert. We've people for bridge and you must be here. We've got a very nice party. Goodbye. Have a good game. I said have a good game. Then Jane,

we might have a little leg of lamb. Ah, I'm rather tired of lamb... Oh Jane, do you know what I wish we could have? Do you remember that recipe I brought back from France? Of pigeons in a casserole. Don't you remember, the recipe that the old woman gave me? Now Jane, don't tell me you've lost it. Well, I think I remember it. I know you put in: eight little pigeons. And you put almost ev'rything in with them. Well, I mean, there were little glazed, browned onions and little bits of browned apple, and little potatoes, and peas and carrots, and mushrooms. There were lots of lovely mushrooms, and ev'rything was swimming about in a perfectly divine sauce. I don't know how you made the sauce. I suppose that's important. I think there was wine in it, I'm sure there was, red wine. You have to cook it very slowly and keep the cover on, the old lady told me. (*She picks up the phone, absently.*) Let it simmer very slowly, it brings out the flavor. I think you put in a bay leaf and some parsley. Hello? Hahahaha did you hear all that? Hahahaha it's delicious. I'll give you the recipe. Listen, my dear Gladys, I was about to call you, to ask if the children's dancing class is meeting at your house this afternoon. Oh, then Mary has not got the chicken pox. What good news. (*To the left*) She hasn't got the chicken pox, she hasn't got the chicken pox. Well, they thought she had chicken pox. Oh, that's splendid. Thank you for letting me know. Well then, the little girls will be there as usual at three. I'm glad she's better. Goodbye, my dear.

Nancy. Nancy. What did you say then? Turn round and tell Mother exactly what you said. Nancy! My dear child, you should be glad she hasn't got the chicken pox. Well, you undoubtedly would get it yourself, if she had, and I think you deserve to get it, for having such unkind thoughts. And anyway, darling, we don't say such things. Even when we think them, we don't say them. Then Jane, we might have tomato salad. You know, that ring you make... tomato jelly, and you put lovely things in the middle... And I rather feel like a Camembert cheese. Why not? A nice, ripe Camembert. Oh, for dessert, surprise me. Jane. I like to be surprised. Oh, I don't know, why not fruit, just fruit. Fruit and coffee. That ought to be enough for anybody. Yes, at eight o'clock. Well, you know how late they always are. Yes, for eight. Thank you, Jane.

Billy, listen darling, did you get Daddy's driver? Good boy. Did you put it in the bag? Thank you. Come on, children, you're late already. Barb'ra darling, get the baby. She's in the scrap-basket. Well, pull her out. Come on, children. Nancy, I have told you twenty times not to touch the things on that table. Well

darling, just try and remember. Just make up your mind, darling. Make up your mind that you're not going to do it, you see? And then you won't. Well, because that's what minds are for. Now, run along children, get out quickly, and don't come back. Goodbye. Shut the door!

Signorina, I think I'll just run through those beautiful lines again, just to get in the spirit of it.

"Nel mezzo del camin di nostra vita
Mi ritrovai per una selva oscura
Che la diritta—"

[4] IV. Miss Pounder

Oh, excuse me. This telephone is so mad'ning. (*Spoken*) I'm sorry; they wouldn't call me if it weren't important. (*Irritated*) Hello. Who is it, please. (*Sung*) Who? Miss Pounder? Oh, good morning, Miss Pounder. Excuse me for being so fierce, Miss Pounder. Well, you see, I was in the middle of an Italian lesson. Well, it's about my little boy, Miss Pounder, my Billy. I'm sorry to hear he's doing poorly in his mathematics. Well, I've been thinking it over, Miss Pounder, and I have decided we must just give up mathematics. You know, Billy is a sensitive child. He's a peculiarly sensitive child. I'm afraid he's not quite like other children, and he hates mathematics. He doesn't seem to know what he's doing. But he doesn't seem to get anywhere. And what is the use of going on with a thing when one doesn't get anywhere? Well, I know, Miss Pounder, but you see, it's affecting his health, and that's what disturbs me. I find he's not sleeping well. He has a dream, a recurrent dream. Ev'ry night, he falls into a pond in this dream, and the pond is full of fish, and the fish are all numbered, and they swarm about and bite him, and he wakes up screaming. Well, the psychoanalyst says it's a dangerous symptom, and I must try to remove the cause, which is undoubtedly arithmetic. Well, I really can't discuss it with you, Miss Pounder. I've no doubt that you have had more experience than I, but after all, I am his mother, ha ha, and I think I know what's best for my boy, ha ha ha... Yes, we'll give up mathematics until I think he's strong enough to go on. Thank you, Miss Pounder. I'll let you know. (*She hangs up.*)

Come in. Who? (*Gasp*) I entirely forgot. Signorina, would you mind if my little manicurist comes up? I meant to put her off, but I forgot, and she's here, and I don't like to send her away. She's very quiet, I don't think she'll bother us at all. Yes, Nelly, ask Miss Mary to come right up.

[5] V. Puppy

"Nel mezzo del camin di nostra vita
Mi ritrovai..."

Children! I told you not to come back. Now darlings, please... what? Oh! Has he come? Oh, how exciting! Signorina, I'm afraid we'll have to have one more interruption. Well, we've been waiting for days and days for a little dog who has just arrived from the country. He's just come, and the children want me to see him. He's only a puppy, he won't be long, and I rather want to see him myself.

Well, bring him in, darlings, bring him in quickly and let me have a look at the puppy. Come on, quickly (*gasp*) Oh, you darling! Oh, isn't he adorable! Aren't we going to love him! I wouldn't hold him quite so tight, Billy. Put him on the floor, darling, and let the baby pat him. Barb'ra, show the baby how to pat him. I don't want her to be frightened. Pat him on his head, darling, that's his tail, pat him on his head. Don't pull his ears, gently, gently, isn't he soft and lovely? Now, let him go, children. Wait a minute, don't let him get under the bed. Keep him out in the open, children, keep him out in the open! (*gasp*) You darling!

Signorina, isn't he sweet? Good morning, Miss Mary, do look at the latest addition to the family. (*gasp*) Isn't he precious? Billy, take my slippers, darling, don't let him get my slippers. Here, puppy, here, puppy, there's a sweet old puppy, yes you is a pwecious puppy. Oh, you is a darling! What are we going to call him, children? Well, we can't just call him "puppy." No, he must have a name. D'you know what I think would be lovely? I think it would be lovely if we called him "Dante." Well, because he came in the middle of my Dante lesson. Oh, Dante was a very famous man. And we'll call him "Dan" for short. Here, puppy, here, Dante, oh, you is a darling Dante. Yes, you is a pwecious Dante. Ah, you is a darling Dante boy.

Now wait a minute, children, hold him, darling. Can you manage, Miss Mary? Just pull up a chair and I'll give you my hand. Quiet, children, don't make any noise: the telephone.

[6] VI. Count Bluffsky

Hello. Oh, good morning, Count Bluffsky. (Quiet, children! Watch him, watch him! Can you manage?) Good morning, Count Bluffsky, good morning. Yes, Count Bluffsky, I left a message. Well, I was so anxious to speak to you, because I wanted to tell you that the portrait has arrived. (Look out, Miss Mary, you hurt me.) Yes, the portrait has arrived, and it's hanging in the drawing room in the place that you selected near the window, and the light is lovely on it, and we're all crazy about the frame.

Well, it really is a great work of art. Ev'ryone admires it enormously. But I was wond'ring, Count Bluffsky, if you would mind if I made one or two tiny suggestions. Well. My husband and I were looking carefully at the picture last night. And we put the child up on top of the piano so that she should be on a level with the picture. And we both think that you've got her a little bit thin. Do you think you could make her a little fatter? (Sh, watch him, children.)

Yes, exactly. And then, there's something not quite right about the mouth, Count Bluffsky. Well, could you make her...smile a little bit, perhaps? And then I forgot to tell you that in the summertime when she plays and gets very hot, there's the most lovely wave in her hair, and curls about her temples and I wondered if you thought it would be all right to paint her as though she were hot. In that case, her cheeks would be pink, and if her cheeks are pink, you see, I would prefer a blue hair ribbon. (*Spoken:*) I think it would be more becoming.

(*Sung:*) Now, please don't think we don't love the picture. Oh, it's a real work of art. And it will be absolutely perfect, if you make those little changes. And when may I bring her, Count Bluffsky? On Tuesday, at two. We shall be there. Thank you so much. Goodbye.

Now, don't grumble, darling. He's going to make those few little changes in about a half an hour, and you'll be so glad to have that picture someday. Now, children, run along, and take the puppy to the kitchen. Don't give him anything to eat, just some water, and I'll see about his food later. Get out quickly and don't come back.

"Nel mezzo del camin di nostra vita..." Can you manage, Miss Mary?

"Mi ritro vai per una selva oscura
Che la diritta via era smaritta."

Heavens! Is that the clock? (*gasp*) Let me go, Miss Mary, let me go! I can't, I can't let you have me one minute more. Oh, I'd no idea it was so late. I'm so sorry, Miss Mary, I shouldn't have asked you to come, but I thought we'd have plenty of time. They're not too bad, they'll do for a few days, and I'll let you know. I'll call you up. Goodbye, Miss Mary, thank you so much. Goodbye.

Ah, Signorina, I'm dreadfully sorry, but I'm afraid we shall have to stop. I can't tell you how sorry I am. You know, I care more for this than for anything I do, and I thought we'd have plenty of time. Well now, when will you come again? No, not Monday, or Tuesday, or Wednesday, but Thursday I'm free. Yes, come on Thursday, Signorina, and we'll have nice, long quiet lesson. Oh, I can't wait to get on! I think it's so beautiful, and so profound. I love it. Goodbye, Signorina.

Marie! Marie! Marie, I have to be out of this house in fifteen minutes. Will you see that the car is there? And I want my little black cloth dress with the braid and the three-cornered hat. Oh, I think the short fur jacket. Black gloves, ev'rything black. Come in...

[7] VII. Miss Swift

Good morning, Miss Swift. Oh, dear Miss Swift, how I wish that I might stay quietly at home with you and really clear up that desk. (*She consults her schedule.*) Well, I shall be back about half past twelve and can give you half an hour before luncheon. But please, Miss Swift, before you do anything, will you try and get me some men for the op'ra on Monday. I have a box, but I have no men. I have a Russian lady coming, and we ought to try and find somebody who knows something about Russia. Is there anybody? I tell you, there's that Mister Fisher. I don't like him, but he speaks Russian, and he's been there for a week, and he thinks he knows all about it. Anyway, he can talk to her. And then, try for dear little Mister Miller. He's always free, you know, and he likes ev'rybody, and he likes ev'rything, and he always gives me a feeling of hope. (*Spoken:*) So let's get Mister Miller. (*Sung:*) And then, I picked up a charming young Englishman last week and put him on a piece of pink paper and stuck him in the

blotter. I hope he hasn't got torn up. Find him if you can, he was so nice. That's it, that's it, oh, good. What's his name? Basil... Sir Basil Rood. I suppose he's at the Ritz. They generally are, to begin with. Well, will you try those three, and if you can't get any of those, just take my list of possible men and run right through it. Get me anyone you can, as long as it's a man, I don't really care.

[8] VIII. Camilla

Hello... Camilla! Darling! How are you? What a lovely surprise! Oh, I'd no idea you were back. I didn't expect you for two weeks or more. Have a wonderful time? Are you well? Yes, wonderful, thank you. I'm dying to see you. Why don't you lunch with me today? Just quietly with me and the children. We're alone here, they adore you, we'll have a lovely, cozy ti... What?

(Spoken:) Oh, my dear! (Sung:) Do tell me. Did you hear the whole story? (gasp) I can't wait to hear. Well, was it true? Was it what we thought? Much worse? What do you mean? No! Do they know where they went? Has anybody gone after her? Well, what's he going to do now? My dear, what a situation. Well, I can't wait to hear. Well now, listen, that is not for the children's ears, so I'll meet you at the Plaza. One o'clock? Splendid. No, dear, I can't this morning. Well, I'm rushing out. I have to get to a funeral in fifteen minutes.

Oh, I'm up. I've been up for hours. I've already had an Italian lesson. I'm reading *The Inferno*. Oh, it's divine! One realizes how it's come down through the ages. Oh, I'm quite far along. I've always kept up my Italian. Yes, I love it. Whose funeral? Poor old Daisy. Aren't you going? Wasn't it sad? Awfully sad. And yet... I'm not so sure. Well, that's not what I mean. I never thought she was. No, I don't see how she could have been. I never liked him, did you? No, I never liked him, and I never trusted him. Well, that's that.

This afternoon? I can't even remember what day it is this afternoon. Miss Swift, what have I this afternoon? Tell me, was Mexico wonderful? Did you get to Guatemala too? Well, Hubert says he'll take me next year, and I want to know just what you did. Wait a minute... (to Miss Swift) What have I this afternoon? (Into the telephone) Oh no, dear, this afternoon's no good. Well, I have a hospital committee at two, and I'm the chairman, so I must be there. (To Miss Swift) Then what have I? (Into

the telephone) I've a philosophy class at three. Terribly interesting, I wish you'd join. (To Miss Swift) Then what have I? (Into the telephone) I have a contract lesson at four, and then I have to come home. Well, I'll see you at luncheon anyway. Yes, one o'clock at the Plaza. Thanks so much, I'm glad you're back. I've missed you dreadfully. Goodbye, my dear. Goodbye.

[9] IX. Miss Swift (cont'd)

Now, Miss Swift, while I finish dressing, will you please telephone the ladies on a list under the bronze hand to the right of the blotter, and ask if they will serve on a committee to raise twenty thousand dollars by the end of May. I don't care how they do it, I'll help in any way I can, but we must have twenty thousand dollars by the end of May. Then, will you please send ten dollars to the appeals under the silver frog, and five dollars to the appeals under the jade egg. Don't get them mixed, ten under the frog, five under the egg, I sorted them out last night. And then, Miss Swift, what concert tickets have we got this week? The Philharmonic? Oh Lord, it seems to come so often. Now, do you know anybody who likes music? Well, ev'ryone says they do, but I never really believe them. I tell you who does, that's my old piano teacher. You know, Miss Hattie Tush. Oh yes, she loves it. She's eighty-five, and she has a sister, and they stumble in together, and they enjoy it more than anyone I know. (Spoken:) So I'd like the tickets to be sent to her.

(Sung:) I'll answer, it's probably for me. Hello... Oh. One moment, please. Marie, leave ev'rything there, my purse, my fox, my gloves, and those little parcels, and then will you get my gray flannel suit and have James put it in the car? Well, it's all wrong, it has to go back to the tailor. Miss Swift, would you go down to the library, and on the table near the window, I think you'll find the minutes of the hospital committee meeting that I have this afternoon... and... One moment, please. On the drawing room sofa is a very dirty lampshade, and on the mantelpiece, I think you'll find a pile of yellow taffeta samples, one of them has a pin stuck in it. Will you pin that to the lampshade, it has to be recovered. And come back, Miss Swift, I want to speak to you before I go out.

[10] X. The Lover

Hello... Hello. Did you hear all that? Yes, they've gone. I was just rushing out, you only just caught me. Are you all right? No, I wasn't. What made you think so? How are you? No, I can't. Well, it's not going to be possible. I can't explain now, I'll tell you when I see you. No, nothing to worry about. Well, so am I, but what can we do? Oh, did you go? Weren't they beautiful? I wish we might have gone together. Yes, that's the one I liked best. I knew you would! Listen, I must run, I can't talk...what? Don't make me laugh. Because I'm on my way to a funeral. Yes. Goodbye. Don't be late. Yes, I will. Goodbye.

Oh Miss Swift, are you there? Miss Swift, would you telephone Scribner or Brentano or one of the booksellers, and ask if they will send at once by special messenger, a new book that's just been published, called *Our Inner Life*. I don't know who wrote it, but I have to discuss it at the book club on Friday, and I want to run through it before then. I know it's called *Our Inner Life*. And Marie, will you please tell James to have tea by the fire in the library this afternoon? I shall be back about half-past twelve, and I want my mauve dress.

BON APPÉTIT!

Music by Lee Hoiby

Text by Julia Child, adapted by Mark Shulgasser

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[11] (*Spoken:*) This is the rich buttery brown batter for Le Gâteau au Chocolat l'Eminence Brune!

(*Sung:*) Today we're going to make a choc'late cake. And it's a very special, very choc'lately bittersweet lovely cake. And for it you have to have melted choc'late, and melted choc'late you have to do very carefully, or it's going to turn grainy and hard.

Now, we want mocha flav'ring. So start out with two teaspoons of instant espresso and one quarter cup of hot water. And then it's going to have seven ounces of semi-sweet choc'late and two ounces of bitter choc'late. I like the combination. And in they go... and off the heat... and you just stir it around... and then you cover it and go on about your bus'ness. Choc'late is much more complicated than any of us suspect.

[12] When you're going to do a cake, you really have to have a battle plan. First, start the choc'late, then pre-heat the oven to three hundred and fifty degrees and the rack is in the lower middle. Then get out all the ingredients, and all of your equipment so that you can just go right through the cake. You don't want to go out and play croquet in the middle for instance. And then, the next thing to do is to prepare the cake pan, and that means buttering it thoroughly. And the waxed paper too. And then the flour... and then turn the pan... thoroughly... And knock out the flour on the floor—if you have a self-cleaning kitchen like mine—and this is so the cake won't stick. When the cake is done, it would be nice to be able to get it out of the pan.

Now, this is a two-pan cake, and it's a very delicate cake. And like most cakes, it has eggs in it—separated eggs—and that makes it a sponge cake, or what the French call a bee-skwee, or biscuit.

(*Spoken:*) And these are United States grade A large eggs,



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[13] (*Sung:*) and you put the yolk into the yolk bowl, and the white into the white bowl, because if you have any yolk in the white, you'll find the eggs won't mount up.

Now, we have four egg yolks here, and I'm going to gradually beat in two-thirds cup of this instant super-fine sugar... till they are thick and lemon colored and they make the ribbon. See there how it gradually begins to turn thick and lemon colored? Now, let's take a look... There! The thick, dissolving ribbon!

Now, the choc'late should in all conscience be melted and it is! What now is going to be in this choc'late is one stick of the best butter, and I can beat the whole bus'ness in, because it's nice and soft. I've got a little pan for the drippies... Now just look at this lovely silky soft beautiful sheen. And that's just the way melted choc'late should be. And if you're very careful about the melting of it, you're never going to have any trouble because you're never overheating it, and that's what's dangerous to do. And now the choc'late goes into the egg yolks. (*She drops the pan.*) Glub... (*Spoken:*) Well!

[14] (*Sung:*) And if it's hot, pour it in gradually. Mmm... It's good enough to eat just as it is. And stir it all around. Soft and smooth. You don't want the batter to harden up.

Now we're ready to beat our egg whites. So be sure and order an extra set of blades. Otherwise at this point you'd have to wash and dry the beaters. Frankly I find that you can beat the eggs just as efficiently with a hand beater as with anything! So today I'm going to have some fun. I'm going to have a race between the unlined copper bowl and the machine. I've got four egg whites here and four egg whites here, and we're going to see who wins. And I think maybe I'll win... (*spoken:*) because I'm bigger. But I don't know. (*She turns on the machine. Sung:*) You want to start rather slowly at first, until they foam up. Whites take a bit of time. They've started foaming. Now add one quarter teaspoon cream of tartar. Ev'ry good kitchen should have cream of tartar. Because you want them to mount seven times their original volume. Smooth and silky... And set it at a moderate speed.

Now I'm going to start in on the copper bowl, with a pinch of salt... (*She starts beating.*) You want the biggest whip in the smallest bowl. Round and round and round. They'll mount faster at room temp'ature. (*Yawn*) And if you're in good physical trim, it shouldn't take more than a couple of minutes to beat up your egg whites.

Now let's see how our machine is doing. There are the soft peaks... see... so now we'll put in a little bit of sugar and turn it up on high. And back to the copper bowl. Beat them till they make stiff peaks. They're almost ready... Not quite... It's holding in the whip... We're almost there... Cooking's just a series of the same old thing; sometimes there's choc'late and sometimes there's fish in it; but the principles are the same. That's it! See the little peaks that stand up by themselves? Or you can turn it upside down (*she turns the bowl upside down*) and they stay in the bowl. (*She turns off the machine.*) And our machine has probably done exactly the same thing. Yup. See?

I don't know who won, but the egg whites in the copper bowl will keep this lovely velvety texture, but the ones in the glass bowl will soon turn granular and lose that lovely sheen. (*Spoken:*) So if you do them on the machine, you must use them right away.

[15] (*Sung:*) Now ready to assemble the rest of the batter. And rather than flour, this cake is going to have cornstarch in it because choc'late is heavy, and we want a very light, delicate cake, almost like a soufflé. So, three quarters cup of cornstarch, and you sift it right into the cup. And then sift about a quarter of it into the batter. Stir that in. Now, particularly in choc'late cakes, you want to be very sure that your batter is fairly liquid or you might have to beat it up again. And take a third of your egg whites and stir them right in to lighten up the batter. And then a little more cornstarch... then put the rest of the egg whites on top. And we're going to alternate folding egg whites and cornstarch... Not as neat as it could be... Now, here is your spatula, and you go down into the mixtures and up and over, bringing a little choc'late over the egg whites. Very important part... a scooping motion... rather fast... up and over... The whole mixing bus'ness shouldn't take more than a couple of minutes.

Now, ready into the cake pans! Half in each. Do it eyeball to eyeball, or whatever they say. Push it out to the sides so it won't hump up... barely half full... and a little bit left for the cook who would like to lick the pan! And then bang! bang! Drop 'em on the counter just to settle ev'rything. (*She puts a pan in the oven.*) And then right into the oven (*she puts the second pan into the oven*), diagonally for air circulation for fifteen, sixteen, eighteen minutes.

And I want you to see (I hope these are gonna be just right) how they look when done. (*She opens the oven and looks inside.*) This is not quite done. I'm gonna put it back again. Let's look at this one.

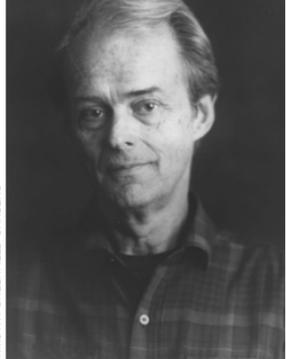
(*She takes it out.*) The French choc'late cake is always fairly moist. It shakes a little in the pan. Take a toothpick or something and it should almost be set at the sides. That's not quite set. So these need another two or three minutes. (*She puts the pan back in the oven.*)

[16] Watch them very carefully at this point. They'll puff up, then they sink down. They're probably done.

She looks in the oven then takes the uniced cake on the cake stand out from under the counter.

Now, this is a very delicate cake, so you'll unmold them right on the cake stand. You may want to chill them a bit before unmolding, and then we'll have a choc'late and butter icing. (*She starts to apply the icing.*) And this is exactly the same choc'late mixture that we had before. Now we have the top layer we hope. Better too much than too little... nicely and evenly... and it goes around carefully. This could really be quite a mess. Smooth off that top. (*She walks with the cake into the dining area.*) And in she goes. We're just having a cake party today, and I'm going to serve you some. Let's see how that looks. (*She slices a piece.*) See that lovely soft texture, almost like a soufflé, and it's nicer than a soufflé, because it doesn't fall. And you can serve it with whipped cream if you want to go the whole way, and it's nice with coffee.

So this is really a wonderf'ly choc'lately and amazingly light soufflé-like cake that doesn't fall... le Gâteau au chocolat l'Eminence Brune, really one of the best choc'late cakes I know. And that's all for today. Bon appétit!



Lee Hoiby, born in Madison, Wisconsin on February 17, 1926, was one of America's most prominent composers of works for the lyric stage. He was introduced to opera by his teacher at the Curtis Institute of Music, Gian Carlo Menotti, who involved him closely in the famed Broadway productions of *The Consul* and *The Saint of Bleeker Street*. Hoiby's first opera, *The Scarf*, a chamber opera in one act, was recognized

by *Time* Magazine and the Italian press as the hit of the first Spoleto (Italy) Festival. His next opera, *Natalia Petrovna* (New York City Opera), now known in its revised version as *A Month in the Country*, was universally praised by the press at its premiere, the closing octet called a work "of overwhelming beauty, a supreme moment in opera comparable to the *Meistersinger* quintet and the *Rosenkavalier* trio." Hoiby's setting of Tennessee Williams's *Summer and Smoke* (with libretto by Lanford Wilson) was declared "the finest American opera to date" following its world premiere. The 40th anniversary of the debut of this landmark American opera was celebrated with a new production at the Manhattan School of Music in December 2010, which Mr. Hoiby attended. The 1985 three-act setting of Shakespeare's play *The Tempest* has had six productions, most recently at USC in 2012. Before his death Hoiby completed what would become his last opera, a setting of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, with a libretto adapted from the Shakespeare play by Mark Shulgasser. *Romeo and Juliet* awaits its world premiere.

Hoiby spoke about his long life of composing: "For me, composing music bears some likeness to archeology. It requires patient digging, searching for the treasure; the ability to distinguish between a treasure and the rock next to it and recognizing when you're digging in the wrong place. The archeologist takes a soft brush and brushes away a half-teaspoon at a time. Musically, that would be a few notes, or a chord. Sometimes the brushing reveals an especially lovely thing, buried there for so long."

Among Mr. Hoiby's operatic works are the one-act opera buffa *Something New for the Zoo* (1979), the musical monologue *The Italian Lesson* (1981, text by Ruth Draper) which was produced off-Broadway in 1989 with Jean Stapleton, and a one-act chamber opera, *This Is the Rill Speaking* (1992, text by Lanford Wilson, adapted by Shulgasser). In 2006, American Opera Project commissioned a setting of Thomas Hardy's poem *The Darkling Thrush* as part of the multi-media opera production *Darkling*.

Hoiby's contribution to the art song repertoire (over 100 songs) is recognized by singers worldwide. The great American soprano Leontyne Price introduced many of his best-known songs and arias to the public. His musical idiom displayed a grateful acceptance of the rich legacy of melodic homophony, embracing references from Monteverdi to American blues without sounding eclectic or piecemeal. Hoiby's choral music is widely performed throughout North America and in England including such works as the Christmas cantata *A Hymn of the Nativity* (text by Richard Crashaw), the oratorio *Galileo Galilei* (libretto by Barrie Stavis), and a substantial group of works for chorus and orchestra on texts of Walt Whitman.

Lee Hoiby passed away on March 28, 2011. Hoiby's music can be heard on virtually every major record label. Among the many distinguished artists and organizations that have commissioned him are New York City Opera, the Spoleto Festival, Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, American Opera Project, The Washington Cathedral, Choral Arts Society of Washington, The Verdehr Trio, the Dorian Wind Quintet, the Ames Piano Quartet, Phyllis Bryn-Julson, the Richard Tucker Foundation, Yale University Institute of Sacred Music, American Guild of Organists, Mercersburg College and Cantus. Lee Hoiby's works have been recognized by awards and grants from the Guggenheim Foundation, the National Institute of Arts and Letters, the Ford Foundation, the Fulbright Commission, and the National Endowment for the Arts.



Janna Baty, mezzo-soprano, praised by the *Boston Globe* for “a rich, viola-like tone and a rapturous, luminous lyricism,” enjoys an exceptionally versatile career as a mezzo-soprano and as an educator. She has sung with Boston Symphony, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Daejeon Philharmonic, Hamburgische Staatsoper, L’Orchestre National du Capitole de Toulouse, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Tallahassee Symphony, Tuscaloosa Symphony, South Florida Symphony, Longwood Symphony, Hartford Symphony, the Orquesta Filarmónica de Bogotá, Opera Theatre of St. Louis, Eugene Opera, Opera North, and Boston Lyric Opera. She has sung

under the batons of James Levine, Seiji Ozawa, Michel Plasson, Carl Davis, Robert Spano, Steuart Bedford, Stephen Lord, Stefan Asbury, Gil Rose, David Hoose, and Shinik Hahm, among numerous others. As a soloist, chamber musician, and recitalist, she has performed at festivals worldwide, including the Aldeburgh and Britten Festivals in England, the Varna Festival in Bulgaria, the Semanas Musicales de Frutillar Festival in Chile, and the Tanglewood, Norfolk, Monadnock, and Coastal Carolina festivals in the United States. A noted specialist in contemporary music, Ms. Baty has worked alongside many celebrated composers, including John Harbison, Bernard Rands, Yehudi Wyner, Sydney Hodkinson, Peter Child, Reza Vali, Paul Salerni, and Paul Moravec, on performances of their music.

Ms. Baty is very proud to have enjoyed a long collaboration with conductor Gil Rose and BMOP, and with them has recorded the critically lauded *Folk Songs* by Reza Vali (sung in Persian); Lukas Foss’s opera *Griffelkin*; the world-premiere recording of Eric Sawyer’s Civil War-era opera *Our American Cousin*; and John Harbison’s *Mirabai Songs*.

An alumna of Oberlin College and the Yale School of Music, she began her career as a teacher at the University of Massachusetts Amherst and joined the faculty of the Yale School of Music in 2008.



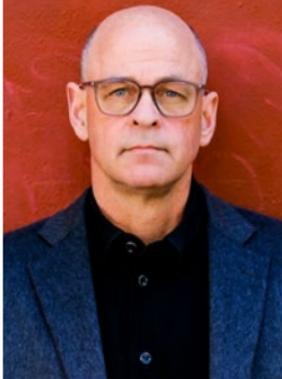
VANESSA SCHUKIS

Vanessa Schukis has had a multi-faceted career as a character mezzo, actress, stage director, choreographer, vocal coach, educator, mosaic artist, and administrator. She has sung a wide variety of operatic, oratorio, and Broadway repertoire to great critical acclaim and has performed roles with the Boston National Company of Nonsense starring Pat Carroll and Alice Ghostley, Boston Lyric Opera, Utah Festival Opera, Opera Providence, New England Light Opera, Intermezzo Chamber Opera, Raylynmoor Opera, Wheelock Family Theater, Lyric Stage Company of Boston, New Opera and Musical Theater Initiative, Opera New England, Longwood

Opera Company, Northeastern Repertory Theater, Boston Publick Theater, Stoneham Theater, Old North Chamber Orchestra, Weymouth Fine Arts Chorale, Rivers Symphony Orchestra, and Newton Symphony. Vanessa is known in New England for her roles as Julia Child in *Bon Appétit!* and her one-woman tribute to Marlene Dietrich, “wie einst Lili Marlene.”

Ms. Schukis has been a soloist/section leader for the historic Old North Church, Boston, Massachusetts, for 35 years and continues to perform in theater, opera, and concert engagements throughout the United States, including: National Anthem and “God Bless America” at a Boston Red Sox Game at Fenway, National Anthem on the U.S.S. Constitution (Old Ironsides) turn around, National Anthem at New England Dragway, Epping, NH, the National Anthem at Lebanon Valley Speedway, MA, and a televised performance with The Mormon Tabernacle Choir, Salt Lake City, UT.

Vanessa is also an award-winning teacher with over forty years’ experience in performing arts education and inclusion. Currently Vanessa teaches music at The Murphy School in Dorchester, MA, and Harvard Kent School in Charlestown, MA, through the community engaged program of The Community Music Center of Boston. Recently, Ms. Schukis has published three children’s books and won 2013 Children’s Book of the Year for her book *Mr. Dimes*. (Available for purchase at <http://www.bookemon.com>)



Gil Rose is one of today's most trailblazing conductors, praised as "amazingly versatile" (*The Boston Globe*) with "a sense of style and sophistication" (*Opera News*). Equally at home performing core repertoire, new music, and lesser-known historic symphonic and operatic works, "Gil Rose is not just a fine conductor, but a peerless curator, sniffing out—and commissioning—off-trend, unheralded, and otherwise underplayed repertoire that nevertheless holds to unfailingly high standards of quality. In doing so, he's built an indefinable, but unmistakable, personal aesthetic" (WXQR).

A global leader in American contemporary music, Rose is the founder of the performing and recording ensemble the Boston Modern Orchestra Project (BMOP), who "bring an endlessly curious and almost archaeological mind to programming... with each concert, each recording, an essential step in a better direction" (*The New York Times*), as well as the founder of Odyssey Opera, praised by *The New York Times* as "bold and intriguing" and "one of the East Coast's most interesting opera companies."

Since its founding in 1996, the "unique and invaluable" (*The New York Times*) BMOP has grown to become the premier orchestra in the world for commissioning, recording, and performing music of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Under Rose's leadership, BMOP has won seventeen ASCAP Awards for Adventurous Programming, been selected as *Musical America's* Ensemble of the Year in 2016, and in 2021 was awarded a *Gramophone* Magazine Special Achievement Award in recognition of its extraordinary service to American music of the modern era. Under Rose's baton, BMOP has been featured at numerous festivals including the Festival of New American Music (Sacramento, CA), Concerts at the Library of Congress (Washington, DC), and the MATA Festival in New York.

In 2013, Gil Rose expanded his musical vision with the founding of Odyssey Opera, a company dedicated to eclectic and underperformed operatic repertoire from all eras. Working with an international roster of singers and directors, Odyssey has presented more than 35 operas in Boston, with innovative, thematically linked seasons. The company has also established

itself as a leader of modern opera in the United States, having given three world premieres and numerous U.S. premieres.

In addition to his role as conductor, Rose is leading the charge for the preservation and advancement of underperformed works through recordings. BMOP/sound, the independent record label Rose founded in 2008, has released over 90 recordings of contemporary music by today's most innovative composers, including world premieres by John Cage, Lukas Foss, Chen Yi, Anthony Davis, Lisa Bielawa, Steven Mackey, Eric Nathan, and many others. With Rose as executive producer, the label has secured eight GRAMMY® nominations and a win in 2020 for Tobias Picker's opera *Fantastic Mr. Fox*. Odyssey Opera's in-house label has released five CDs, most recently a complete version of Camille Saint-Saëns's *Henry VIII*.

Beyond Boston, Gil Rose enjoys a busy schedule as a guest conductor and educator. Equally at home on the podium in both symphonic and operatic repertoire, Rose has led performances by the Tanglewood Opera Orchestra, the Netherlands Radio Symphony, the American Composers Orchestra, the National Symphony of Ukraine, the Matsumoto Festival of Japan, the New York City Opera, and the Juilliard Symphony among others. In addition to being former faculty at Tufts University and Northeastern University, Rose has worked with students across the U.S. at institutions such as Carnegie Mellon University, MIT, New England Conservatory, and the University of California at San Diego. He is a visionary curator of music, inaugurating the Ditson Festival of Music at Boston's Institute of Contemporary Art and programming three seasons for the Fromm Concerts at Harvard series.

In recent seasons, Gil Rose led Odyssey Opera in a concert performance of three one-act operas by Rachmaninoff and brought John Corigliano and Mark Adamo's new opera *The Lord of Cries* to Boston audiences. In addition, he and BMOP will travel to Carnegie Hall for the orchestra's debut performance and culmination of their 25th season, and BMOP and Odyssey will co-produce *Harriet Tubman: When I Crossed That Line to Freedom*, the second opera in *AS TOLD BY: History, Race, and Justice on the Opera Stage*, a five-year initiative highlighting Black composers and vital figures of Black liberation and thought.



TINA TALLOW

The **Boston Modern Orchestra Project** is the premier orchestra in the United States dedicated exclusively to commissioning, performing, and recording music of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Described by *The New York Times* as “one of the most artistically valuable” orchestras in the country, BMOP is a unique institution in today’s musical world, disseminating exceptional orchestral music “new or so woefully neglected that it might as well be” via performances and recordings of the highest caliber.

Founded by Artistic Director Gil Rose in 1996, BMOP has championed composers whose careers span over a century. Each season, Rose brings BMOP’s award-winning orchestra, renowned soloists, and influential composers to the stage of New England Conservatory’s historic Jordan Hall, with programming that is “a safe haven for, and champion of, virtually every *ism*, and every genre- and era-mixing hybrid that composers’ imaginations have wrought” (*Wall Street Journal*). The musicians of BMOP are consistently lauded for the energy, imagination, and passion with which they infuse the music of the present era.

BMOP’s distinguished and adventurous track record includes premieres and recordings of monumental and provocative new works such as John Harbison’s ballet *Ulysses*, Charles Wuorinen’s *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*, and Lei Liang’s *A Thousand Mountains, A Million*

Streams. The composers performed and commissioned by BMOP contain Pulitzer and Rome Prize winners, Grawemeyer Award recipients, and MacArthur grant fellows.

From 1997 to 2013 the orchestra won thirteen ASCAP Awards for Adventurous Programming. BMOP has been featured at festivals including Opera Unlimited, the Ditson Festival of Contemporary Music with the ICA/Boston, Tanglewood, the Boston Cyberarts Festival, Concerts at the Library of Congress (Washington, DC), the Festival of New American Music (Sacramento, CA), Music on the Edge (Pittsburgh, PA), and the MATA Festival in New York. During its 20th anniversary season, BMOP was named Musical America’s 2016 Ensemble of the Year, the first symphony orchestra in the organization’s history to receive this distinction.

BMOP has actively pursued a role in music education through composer residencies, collaborations with colleges, and an ongoing relationship with the New England Conservatory, where it is Affiliate Orchestra for New Music. The musicians of BMOP are equally at home in Symphony Hall, Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall, and in Cambridge’s Club Oberon and Boston’s Club Café, where they pursued a popular, composer-led Club Concert series from 2004 to 2012.

BMOP/sound, BMOP’s independent record label, was created in 2008 to provide a platform for BMOP’s extensive archive of music, as well as to provide widespread, top-quality, permanent access to both classics of the 20th century and the music of today’s most innovative composers. BMOP/sound has released over 90 CDs on the label, bringing BMOP’s discography to over 100 titles. BMOP/sound has garnered praise from the national and international press; it is the recipient of a 2020 GRAMMY® Award for *Tobias Picker: Fantastic Mr. Fox*, eight GRAMMY® Award nominations, and its releases have appeared on the year-end “Best of” lists of *The New York Times*, *The Boston Globe*, National Public Radio, *Time Out New York*, *American Record Guide*, *Downbeat Magazine*, WBUR, NewMusicBox, and others.

BMOP expands the horizon of a typical “night at the symphony.” Admired, praised, and sought after by artists, presenters, critics, and audiophiles, BMOP and BMOP/sound are uniquely positioned to redefine the new music concert and recording experience.

FLUTE

Sarah Brady [1]
Jessica Lizak [2]

OBOE

Jennifer Slowik [1]
Catherine Weinfield [2]

CLARINET

Jan Halloran [1]
Michael Norsworthy [2]

BASSOON

Ronald Haroutunian [1]
Jensen Ling [2]

HORN

Clark Matthews [2]
Kevin Owen [1]

PIANO

Daniel Hobbs [1]
Linda Osborn [2]

HARP

Amanda Romano [2]
Ina Zdorovetchi [1]

VIOLIN I

Gabriela Díaz [1]
Shaw Pong Liu [2]

VIOLIN II

Nivedita Sarnath [2]
Katherine Winterstein [1]

VIOLA

Emily Rome [2]
Peter Sulski [1]

CELLO

Jing Li [1]
Rafael Popper-Keizer [2]

KEY:

[1] *Italian Lesson*

[2] *Bon Appétit!*

Lee Hoiby

The Italian Lesson
Bon Appétit!

Producer Gil Rose
Recording and postproduction engineer Antonio Oliari

Bon Appétit! is published by G. Schirmer, Inc. *The Italian Lesson* is published by Schott Music.

Bon Appétit! was recorded July 20, 2017, and *The Italian Lesson* was recorded September 2, 2021, both in Fraser Hall at WGBH studios, Boston, MA.

This recording was made possible in part by the support of an anonymous donor.



Ruth Draper. As she appears in her character sketch *The Italian Lesson*. Photo by Florence Vandamm for *The Toronto Star*, 1940.

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Design: John Kramer
Editor: Chuck Furlong

