

Telemann contributed most significantly to the instrumental repertoire, and was especially interested in writing for instruments without the accompaniment of basso continuo. Originally written for flute, his "Twelve Fantasies"(without bass) are well suited to performance on the oboe as well. Each one is brimming with charm and character. The *Fantasy in a minor*, written in a typical slow-fast-slow-fast format, is no exception.

Three Songs In Memory was written over a four year period during and following the illness and death of the composer's partner, Neal Sean Williams.

The first poem, Edna St. Vincent Millay's sonnet, "I pray you if you love me," expresses her longing for an intimacy that can never develop. The second, Charles Wolfe's "To Mary," is an elegant eulogy articulating his sense of profound loss. The third, "Song of the Nation," is Millay's anthem of hope, a lyric that speaks most poignantly to all of us who are survivors in the age of AIDS.

-notes by the composer

SONNET, Edna St. Vincent Millay (1892-1950)

I pray you if you love me, bear my joy
A little while, or let me weep your tears;
I, too, have seen the quavering Fate destroy
Your destiny's bright spinning—the dull shears
Meeting not neatly, chewing at the thread,—
Nor can you well be less aware how fine,
How staunch as wire, and how unwarranted
Endures the golden fortune that is mine.
I pray you for this day at least, my dear,
Fare by my side, that journey in the sun;
Else must I turn me from the blossoming year
And walk in grief the way that you have gone.
Let us go forth together to the spring;
Love must be this, if it be anything.

TO MARY, Charles Wolfe (1791-1823)

If I had thought thou couldst have died,	I do not think, where'er thou art,
I might not weep for thee;	Thou has forgotten me;
But I forgot, when by thy side,	And I, perhaps, may soothe this heart
That thou couldst mortal be:	In thinking too of thee:
It never through my mind had past	Yet there was round thee such a dawn
The time would e'er be o'er,	Of light ne'er seen before
And I on thee should look my last,	As fancy never could have drawn,
And thou shouldst smile no more!...	And never can restore!

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Out of
 Night and alarm
 Out of
 Darkness and dread,
 Out of old hate,
 Grudge and distrust,
 Sin and remorse,
 Passion and blindness;
 Shall come
 Dawn and the birds,
 Shall come
 Slacking of greed,
 Snapping of fear—
 Love shall fold warm
 like a cloak
 Round the shuddering
 earth
 Till the sound of its
 woe cease.

SONG OF THE NATIONS, Millay

After
 Terrible dreams,
 After
 Crying in sleep,
 Grief beyond thought
 Twisting of hands,
 Tears from shut lids
 Wetting the pillow;
 Shall come
 Sun on the wall,
 Shall come
 Sounds from the street,
 Children at play—
 Bubbles too big blown,
 and dreams
 Filled too heavy with
 horror
 Will burst and in mist
 fall.

Sing then,
 You who were dumb,
 Shout then
 Into the dark;
 Are we not one?
 Are not our hearts
 Hot from one fire,
 And in one mold cast?
 Out of
 Night and alarm,
 Out of
 Terrible dreams
 Reach me your hand,
 This is the meaning of
 all that we
 Suffered in sleep,
 —the white peace
 Of the waking.

Of the many cantatas written by J. S. Bach (over three hundred in all), nearly half have been lost. The bulk of those written, and surviving, are sacred church cantatas. A few are secular, however, among them *BWV 202*. Known as the "Wedding Cantata," its text celebrates the union of two souls in matrimony. Perhaps no composer has captured the elegance and poignancy of the oboe as well as Bach. He uses oboe frequently in his cantatas, for which we oboists are eternally grateful!

ARIA - "Weichet nur":

Vex no more, sad melancholy!
 Frost and Winter, disappear!
 Flora bright, heart's delight,
 brings good fortune, makes us happy,
 with her flowers and good cheer

RECITATIVE - "Und dieses ist das Glücke"

A pleasant sight and happy,
 when two young souls, in
 fortune lucky, are joined in
 one their fates uniting!
 Be love, and joy, and
 blessing on them!

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ARIA - "Sich üben im Lieben"
Love's pleasures entrancing,
its transports enchanting,
than Flora's brief summer
more constant do rest.
Here joy-streams are welling
and laughing and gushing,
and victory smiles in each heart
and each breast.

Like many of Britten's works, the *Temporal Variations* was removed from circulation after the first and only performance during the composer's lifetime. It is not clear why this was done, since the piece was well received and Britten seemed to be pleased with it. He may have wanted to revise the piece, but never did. Fortunately it surfaced again after his death.

There is a profound sense of searching in the piece. The theme on which the variations are based is so sparse that one wonders how Britten will glean even one variation from it. In fact, this barren theme seems to be searching for itself and so begins the variations, like a journey of discovery. The "Oration" is full of youthful bravura and indecision, never settling into a regular meter or pulse. In the "March" and "Exercises," conformity seems to have taken a firm but temporary hold. The "Commination" (Recitation of divine threats against sinners) brings us back to the barren theme, now quite ominous, and is followed by a "Chorale" over which the oboe hovers, repeating the theme - out of key. Having failed to establish itself with the chorale, the theme now launches into a "Waltz," then a "Polka," with increasing hysteria. Finally "Resolution" seems to arrive more out of exhaustion than revelation, as the little theme appears to give in to its simplicity.

Mozart's *Quartet in F* for oboe, violin, viola, and cello, was written as a showcase for the newly developed classical oboe. The technical virtuosity and the lyrical leaps from one register to another in the oboe part would have been all but impossible on a baroque instrument. The piece also reflects Mozart's great love of the opera, with its dramatic use of the solo oboe line which wanders off into mini-cadenzas at every opportunity. So taken is the instrument with its own independence that in the final rondo the oboe line actually moves into another meter while the accompanying strings hold to their dancing 6/8 rhythm. The result is a frolicking piece that is at least as much fun to play as it is to listen to.