

**Alan Briones Graduate Recital**  
**“Chiaroscuro”**  
**Saturday, March 28th, 4pm**  
**Live Stream from St. Barnabas Episcopal Church**  
**Ardsley, NY**  
**Alan Briones, Baritone**  
**Kessa Mefford, Pianist**  
**Julian Briones, Guitarist**

This recital is the culmination of my two year journey here at Brooklyn College. I came here in the midst of an artistic transitional period and am coming out now with a new sense of confidence and security. The title “Chiaroscuro” literally translates to “Clear-dark”. Clarity in Darkness. It is a term used in many artistic spheres, but in singing refers to the ideal balance of resonance in tone, which is neither dark nor bright but a combination of those qualities. Here at Brooklyn College I settled in the voice type change I began right before coming here, where after years of singing Tenor, I decided with my distinguished teacher, Maestro Jack LiVigni, that what I really am is a Baritone (derived from a Greek word meaning “Deep-tone”). That decision felt like finding home, and led to an identity change that rippled beyond the vocal into the artistic and even personal spheres. In participating in the musical community here at Brooklyn College, the first without knowledge of my history to accept me in my new identity, I was able to find the light in the darkness. This program is an expression of that journey.

Ruggero Leoncavallo (1857-1919)  
*Prologo* from ***Pagliacci***

*Pagliacci* is an opera in a prologue and two acts, with music and libretto by Ruggero Leoncavallo. In the prologue, Tonio, one of the members of the band of Clowns that the opera is about comes in front of the unopened curtain to explain to the audience the performers’ manifesto. A statement that anyone who lives a life on the stage could identify with. This aria is both a staple of the baritone repertory and a typical example of the kind of late-Romantic Italian operatic style that is the most natural outlet for the kind of vocalism I try to cultivate in myself. It serves both as an opening and a symbolic arrival for me in a repertory I have long been aspiring towards.

**PROLOGO**

Si può?  
Signore! Signori!  
Scusatemi se da sol mi presento.  
Io sono il Prologo:  
Poiché in iscena ancor  
le antiche maschere mette l'autore;  
in parte ei vuol riprendere  
le vecchie usanze,  
e a voi di nuovo inviami.  
Ma non per dirvi come pria:  
«Le lagrime che noi versiam son false!  
Degli spasimi e de' nostri martir  
Non allarmatevi!»  
No! No.  
L'autore ha cercato invece  
Pingervi uno squarcio di vita.  
Egli ha per massima sol  
Che l'artista è un uomo  
E che per gli uomini scrivere ei deve.  
Ed al vero ispiravasi.  
Un nido di memorie  
In fondo a l'anima cantava un giorno,  
Ed ei con vere lagrime scrisse,  
E i singhiozzi il tempo gli battevano!  
Dunque, vedrete amar  
Sì come s'amano gli esseri umani;  
Vedrete de l'odio i tristi frutti.  
Del dolor gli spasimi,  
Urli di rabbia, udrete,  
E risa ciniche!  
E voi, piuttosto che le nostre  
Povere gabbane d'istrioni,  
Le nostr'anime considerate,  
Poiché noi siam uomini di carne e d'ossa,  
E che di quest'orfano mondo  
Al pari di voi spiriamo l'aere!  
Il concetto vi dissi...  
Or ascoltate com'egli è svolto.  
Andiam. Incominciate!

**PROLOGUE**

May I?  
Ladies! Gentlemen!  
Excuse me if I alone introduce myself  
I am the Prologue:  
Since yet in the scene  
The author uses ancient masks;  
In part he wants to bring back  
the old customs,  
And again send me back to you.  
But not to tell you as before:  
"The tears we shed aren't real!  
About the spasms and our martyrs  
Do not be alarmed!"  
No! No.  
The author has sought instead  
To depict a glimpse of life.  
He believes utmost  
that the artist is a man  
And that he must write for men,  
And be inspired by the truth.  
A nest of memories was singing  
In the depths of his soul one day,  
And he wrote with genuine tears,  
And his sobs beat the tempo!  
And so, you will see love  
As human beings love each other;  
You will see the sad fruits of hate.  
The spasms of pain,  
Shouts of rage, you will hear,  
And also laughter!  
And you, rather than  
Our poor actors' costumes,  
Consider our soul,  
Since we are men of flesh and bone,  
And from this orphan world  
We breathe the same air as you!  
I've told you the concept...  
Now listen as it is carried out.  
Let's go. Begin!

Gustav Mahler (1860-1911)

**Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen**

*Wenn mein Schatz Hochzeit macht*

*Ging heut' Morgen über's Feld*

*Ich hab' ein glühend Messer*

*Die zwei blauen Augen von meinem Schatz*

*Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* (Songs of a Wayfarer) is a song cycle by Gustav Mahler with texts he wrote himself. It was written around 1884–85 inspired by Mahler's unrequited love for soprano Johanna Richter, whom he met while conductor of the opera house in Kassel, Germany. It portrays the archetype of the Wanderer as symbol of the rejected lover. The narrator begins in “*Wenn mein Schatz Hochzeit macht*” sitting in his little room thinking and mourning about how it is his former lover’s wedding day. He then goes outside in “*Ging heut' Morgen über's Feld*” into nature to try to cheer himself up. He distracts himself with all the natural beauty but eventually realizes that the happiness he is seeking will never be his. In the third song, “*Ich hab' ein glühend Messer*” he compares his pain to a red-hot knife plunged in his breast. He speaks of seeing visions of the lover who wounded him and longs for relief from the suffering they cause him. Those thoughts culminate in “*Die zwei blauen Augen von meinem Schatz*”, where he attempts to escape the imagined lingering gaze of that lost lover’s blue eyes in sleep under a Lindentree. That image is a familiar symbol for the peace and relief in death and connects this cycle with others that share similar themes like Schubert’s *Winterreise*. It’s also one of the standards of the baritone repertoire and was the first piece I selected for this program.

<b>I – Wenn mein Schatz Hochzeit macht</b>	<b>When My Darling is Married</b>
Wenn mein Schatz Hochzeit macht, Fröhliche Hochzeit macht, Hab' ich meinen traurigen Tag! Geh' ich in mein Kämmerlein, Dunkles Kämmerlein, Weine, wein' um meinen Schatz, Um meinen lieben Schatz!	When my darling is married, her joyously married, I will have my day of mourning! I will go into my little room, my dark little room, and weep, weep for my darling, for my dear darling!
Blümlein blau! Verdorre nicht! Vöglein süß! Du singst auf grüner Heide. Ach, wie ist die Welt so schön! Ziküth! Ziküth! Singet nicht! Blühet nicht! Lenz ist ja vorbei! Alles Singen ist nun aus! Des Abends, wenn ich schlafen geh', Denk' ich an mein Leide! An mein Leide!	Blue flower! Do not wither! Sweet little bird! you sing on the green heath! Ah, how beautiful the world is! Chirp! Chirp! Do not sing; do not bloom! Spring is over now. All singing is done. In the evening, when I go to sleep, I think of my sorrow, of my sorrow!

## **II – Ging heut' Morgen über's Feld**

Ging heut' Morgen über's Feld,  
Tau noch auf den Gräsern hing;  
Sprach zu mir der lust'ge Fink:  
"Ei du! Gelt?  
Guten Morgen! Ei gelt? Du!  
Wird's nicht eine schöne Welt?  
Zink! Zink! Schön und flink!  
Wie mir doch die Welt gefällt!"

Auch die Glockenblum' am Feld  
Hat mir lustig, guter Ding',  
Mit den Glöckchen, klinge, kling,  
Ihren Morgengruß geschellt:  
"Wird's nicht eine schöne Welt?  
Kling, kling! Schönes Ding!  
Wie mir doch die Welt gefällt! Heia!"

Und da fing im Sonnenschein  
Gleich die Welt zu funkeln an;  
Alles Ton und Farbe gewann  
Im Sonnenschein!  
Blum' und Vogel, groß und Klein!  
"Guten Tag, ist's nicht eine schöne Welt?  
Ei du, gelt? Schöne Welt!"  
Nun fängt auch mein Glück wohl an?  
Nein, nein, das ich mein',  
Mir nimmer blühen kann!

## **III – Ich hab' ein glühend Messer**

Ich hab' ein glühend Messer,  
Ein Messer in meiner Brust,  
O weh! Das schneid't so tief  
in jede Freud' und jede Lust.  
So tief! Es schneid't so weh und tief!  
Ach, was ist das für ein böser Gast!  
Nimmer hält er Ruh',  
nimmer hält er Rast,  
Nicht bei Tag, nicht bei Nacht,  
wenn ich schlief!  
O weh!  
Wenn ich den Himmel seh',  
Seh' ich zwei blaue Augen stehn!  
O weh!  
Wenn ich im gelben Felde geh',

## **I Walked Across the Fields this Morning**

I walked across the fields this morning,  
Dew still hung on the grass,  
The merry finch said to me:  
'You there! Hey!  
Good morning! Hey! You!  
Isn't it a beautiful world?  
Tweet! Tweet! Beautiful and bright!  
O how I love the world!'

Also the bellflower on the field ,  
Merrily and in good spirits,  
Ding-ding with its tiny bell  
Rang out its morning greeting:  
'Isn't it a beautiful world?  
Ding-ding! Beautiful thing!  
O how I love the world!'

And then in the sunshine  
The world at once began to sparkle;  
All things gained in tone and color!  
In the sunshine!  
Flower and bird, big and small!  
'Good day! Isn't it a beautiful world?  
Hey, you there! A beautiful world!  
Will my happiness begin now?  
No! No! The happiness I mean  
Can never bloom for me!

## **I have a red-hot knife**

I have a red-hot knife,  
A knife in my breast,  
O woe! It cuts so deep  
Into every joy and every desire,  
So deep! It cuts so sharp and deep!  
Ah, what a cruel guest it is!  
Never at peace,  
Never at rest!  
Not by day,  
not by night, when I sleep!  
O woe!  
When I look into the sky,  
I see two blue eyes!  
O woe  
When I walk in the yellow field,

Seh' ich von fern das blonde Haar  
 Im Winde weh'n! O weh!  
 Wenn ich aus dem Traum auffahr'  
 Und höre klingen ihr silbern Lachen,  
 O weh!  
 Ich wollt', ich läg' auf der Schwarzen Bahr',  
 Könnt' nimmer die Augen aufmachen!

**IV – Die zwei blauen Augen von meinem Schatz**

Die zwei blauen Augen von meinem Schatz,  
 Die haben mich in die weite Welt geschickt.  
 Da muß ich Abschied nehmen vom allerliebsten  
 Platz!  
 O Augen blau,  
 warum habt ihr mich angeblickt?  
 Nun hab' ich ewig Leid und Grämen!

Ich bin ausgegangen in stiller Nacht  
 wohl über die dunkle Heide.  
 Hat mir niemand Ade gesagt  
 Ade!  
 Mein Gesell' war Lieb und Leide!

Auf der Straße steht ein Lindenbaum,  
 Da hab' ich zum ersten Mal im Schlaf geruht!  
 Unter dem Lindenbaum,  
 Der hat seine Blüten über mich geschneit,  
 Da wußt' ich nicht, wie das Leben tut,  
 War alles, alles wieder gut!  
 Alles! Alles, Lieb und Leid  
 Und Welt und Traum!

I see from afar her golden hair  
 Blowing in the wind! O woe!  
 When I wake with a jolt from my dream  
 And hear her silvery laugh ring,  
 O woe!  
 I wish I could lay on the black bier,  
 And never open my eyes again!

**The two blue eyes of my darling**

The two blue eyes of my darling -  
 they have sent me into the wide world.  
 I had to bid farewell  
 to this well-loved place!  
 O blue eyes,  
 why did you gaze at me?  
 Now I will have sorrow and grief forever!

I went out into the quiet night  
 well across the dark heath.  
 To me no one said goodbye.  
 Goodbye!  
 My companions are love and sorrow!

On the road there stands a linden tree,  
 There for the first time I found rest in sleep!  
 Under the linden tree  
 that snowed its blossoms onto me -  
 I did not know how life went on,  
 and all was well again!  
 All! All, love and sorrow  
 and world and dream!

Ben Moore (1960-present)

*Requiem*

*Where has summer gone*

*When you are old*

*I'm glad I'm not a tenor*

In November of last year, I participated in a recital here at Brooklyn College dedicated to the music of Ben Moore. We had the chance to present a wide range of the contemporary composer's music and were proud to be able to share the full range of his talent. The first two songs were written relatively recently and so I am glad to have had chance to be among the first of their interpreters. They are from a collection of settings of various poems by famous English language poets, with diverse style

and content. The first, "*Requiem*", is a setting of a Robert Louis Stevenson poem that he wrote as his own epitaph. The poem has great significance for the composer, as it was a favorite of his grandfather, and was read at his funeral in 1985. The second song, "*When you are old*" sets a William Butler Yeats poem. The poem was written when Yeats was in his twenties, despite how it seems to be from the perspective of a narrator looking back on his youth. On closer inspection one realizes that it's actually a young man begging his beloved to stay with him by suggesting that she'll regret not choosing him when she grows older and looks back. The music for both songs is expansively expressive of the feelings Moore found in the words. In the last two songs, Moore wrote both music and lyrics. "*Where has Summer Gone?*" is more akin to the first two in the set, being a relatively straight forward and lyrical piece about love lost, nostalgia for a summer day long past, and the disorientation one feels when life changes everything. I end my first half with something completely different, one of a set of "Opera Parodies" entitled "*I'm Glad I'm Not a Tenor*". The title speaks for itself. The story of the song largely mirrors mine and will give you a glimpse into what my last few years have been like.

## Intermission

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)

### ***Don Quichotte a Dulcinée***

*Chanson romanesque*

*Chanson épique*

*Chanson à boire*

*Don Quichotte à Dulcinée* is a song cycle by Maurice Ravel based on the story of Don Quixote from the classic novel by Miguel de Cervantes with texts by librettist Paul Morand. The cycle is made up of three independent pieces: *Chanson Romanesque* (Romantic Song), *Chanson épique* (Epic Song) and *Chanson à boire* (Drinking Song). Ravel originally wrote it for G. W. Pabst's Don Quixote movie, not realizing at the time that the director had commissioned several different composers to write songs at the same time so he could then choose the one's he liked best. An unofficial contest of sorts. Ravel was quite sick at the time which delayed his composition and so was "fired" and songs by Ibert were the ones eventually chosen for the film. Ravel finished the songs regardless and dedicated the cycle to the famous baritone Martial Singher, who premiered it in 1934. Each of the songs is based on a Spanish dance. "*Chanson Romanesque*", is based on the *quajira* which is characterized by an alternating pattern of 3/4 and 6/8. Those rhythms punctuate the flavorful harmonies which gives the whole song a sensual feel that is very Spanish. "*Chanson épique*" seeks to evoke a quasi-religious atmosphere with medieval inspired harmonies and a chant like line. The asymmetrical dance-rhythm of the *zortzico* is heard under all of that which gives the song a sense of movement that counteracts the static feel that such a trance-like atmosphere might easily fall into. The jota is what underlies the "*Chanson à boire*", which is filled with flamenco inspired runs and a general vocal abandon that expresses how Don Quichotte let's go of his self control while under the influence.

### **Chanson Romanesque**

Si vous me disiez que la Terre  
A tant tourner vous offensa,  
Je lui dépêcherais Pança:  
Vous la verriez fixe et se taire.

Si vous me disiez que l'ennui  
Vous vient du ciel trop fleuri d'astres,  
Déchirant les divins cadastres,  
Je faucherais d'un coup la nuit.

Si vous me disiez que l'espace  
Ainsi vidé ne vous plaît point,  
Chevalier Dieu, la lance au poing,  
J'étoilerais le vent qui passe.

Mais si vous disiez que mon sang  
Est plus à moi qu'à vous ma Dame,  
Je blêmirais dessous le blâme  
Et je mourrais vous bénissant.

Ô Dulcinée...

### **Chanson épique**

Bon Saint Michel qui me donnez loisir  
De voir ma Dame et de l'entendre,  
Bon Saint Michel qui me daignez choisir  
Pour lui complaire et la défendre,  
Bon Saint Michel veuillez descendre  
Avec Saint Georges sur l'autel  
De la Madone au bleu mantel.

D'un rayon du ciel bénissez ma lame  
Et son égale en pureté  
Et son égale en piété  
Comme en pudeur et chasteté:  
Ma Dame!

Ô grands Saint Georges et Saint Michel,  
L'ange qui veille sur ma veille,  
Ma douce Dame si pareille  
A Vous, Madone au bleu mantel !

### **Romantic Song**

If you were to tell me that the earth  
with all its turning, offended you,  
I would dispatch Panza there;  
you would see it fixed and silent.

If you were to tell me that you were annoyed  
by a sky too flowery with stars,  
destroying the divine order,  
I would sweep the night away with one blow.

If you were to tell me that space  
thus emptied, did not please you,  
knight of God, lance in hand,  
I'd sow the wind with stars as it passes.

But if you said that my blood  
Is more mine than yours, my Lady,  
I would pale at the reproach,  
and I would die, blessing you.

O Dulcinea...

### **Epic Song**

Good St. Michael, who gives me the liberty  
to see my Lady and to hear her,  
Good St. Michael, who deigns to choose me  
to please her and to defend her,  
Good St. Michael, I pray you to descend  
with St. George upon the altar  
of the Madonna of the blue mantel.

With a beam from heaven, bless my sword  
and its equal in purity  
and its equal in piety  
as in modesty and chastity:  
my Lady!

O great St. George and St. Michael,  
The angel who watches over my watch,  
My sweet Lady who is like  
You, Madonna of the blue mantle!

<p>Amen.</p> <p><b>Chanson à boire</b></p> <p>Foin du bâtard, illustre Dame,  Qui pour me perdre à vos doux yeux  Dit que l'amour et le vin vieux  Mettent en deuil mon cœur, mon âme !</p> <p>Je bois à la joie !  La joie est le seul but  Où je vais droit...  Lorsque j'ai bu !  A la joie!  Je bois à la joie !</p> <p>Foin du jaloux, brune maîtresse,  Qui geint, qui pleure et fait serment  D'être toujours ce pâle amant  Qui met de l'eau dans son ivresse!</p>	<p>Amen.</p> <p><b>Drinking Song</b></p> <p>To hell with the bastard, illustrious Lady,  who, to put me down in your sweet eyes  says that love and old wine  will bring to grief my heart and my soul!</p> <p>I drink to joy!  Joy is the sole aim  that I pursue ...  when I've drunk!  To Joy!  I drink to Joy!</p> <p>To hell with the jealous fool, dark mistress,  who moans, and groans, makes promises  to always be the pale lover  who puts water into his intoxication!</p>
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Carlos Guastavino (1912-2000)

**4 Cancionces Coloniales**

*Cuando acaba de llover*

*Prestame tu pañuelito*

*Ya me voy a retirar*

*Las Puertas de la Mañana*

Carlos Guastavino was one of Argentina's most important and loved composers. Though not quite achieving the International recognition of Astor Piazzolla or Alberto Ginastera, in Argentina especially he is considered every bit as important. His style is considered old-fashioned because it is unabashedly tonal, melodic, and lyrical and he preferred small forms like piano miniatures and art songs to flashy ones like symphonies and operas. This didn't keep him from becoming a household name in Argentina, with some of his songs like *"Se Equivocó la Paloma"* and *"Pueblito, Mi Pueblo"* reaching almost folk song level popularity. I am presenting *"Cuatro Canciones Coloniales"* a relatively obscure set with texts by León Benarós from 1965, the later part of Guastavino's career (he mostly retired after 1975). If thought of as a cycle, it follows a narrator in a similar emotional state to the Wanderer of the *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* from earlier in the program. *"Cuando acaba de llover"* expresses the feeling of calm serenity that comes right after a rainfall. I see this as working on both the literal level and the symbolic one where the common symbolic idea of a rainstorm representing emotional turbulence adds another layer to the meaning of the song. *"Prestame tu Pañuelito"* makes the idea of unrequited love more explicit. The three verses are three requests for a handkerchief, first to wipe the narrator's



tears, then to wash the handkerchief with his tears, and finally, with operatic melodrama, to water the flowers embroidered on the handkerchief with those same tears. In *“Ya me voy a retirar”* the unrequited love theme is continued. The narrator tells of his intention to move away to the countryside where he can escape the eyes that caused his suffering, with an imagery that again connects this cycle with the earlier mentioned Mahler set. In contrast to that set, however, *“Las puertas de la mañana”* ends the set on a positive note. The doors of the morning have opened, indicating a new day of hope, and even when evening comes, a golden star shines and continues the light even through all the suffering. This simple, lyrical expression of these oft repeated art song themes is a wonderful example of the Argentinean sensibility as represented by Guastavino.

<p><b>4 Canciones Coloniales</b>  <b>Cuando acaba de llover</b>          Cuando acaba de llover          se alegran los arbolitos.          Verdes se ven y tan frescos los trebolitos.          Todos de buen parecer          cuando acaba de llover.          Cuando acaba de llover          se mecen las campanillas.          Lindas se ven las retamas, tan amarillas.          Cuando acaba de llover          el alma se me serena          y siento que me amanece la dicha plena.          Todo es de buen parecer          cuando acaba de llover.</p> <p><b>Prestame tu Pañuelito</b>          Prestame tu pañuelito          para secarme los ojos,          porque llorando me vi          por tus desdenes y antojos.          Ay de mi llorando por ti.</p> <p>Prestame tu pañuelo          que yo te lo lavaré          con lágrimas de mis ojos          de nieve lo dejaré          Ay de mi, pensando por ti.</p> <p>Prestame tu pañuelito          que tiene flores bordadas          que yo te las regaré          con mis lágrimas lloradas.          Ay de mi. Ausente y sin ti.</p>	<p><b>4 Colonial Songs</b>  <b>When it has just rained</b>          When it just rained          The little trees are thrilled.          The clovers look green and so fresh.          All is well,          When it has just rained.          When it has just rained          The bells swing.          The shrub looks well, so yellow.          When it has just rained          My soul becomes serene          And I feel a total joy awaken.          All is well,          When it has just rained.</p> <p><b>Lend me your little handkerchief</b>          Lend me your little handkerchief          So that I can dry my eyes          Because I noticed I’m crying          About your rejections and whims.          Woe is me, Crying over you.</p> <p>Lend me your little handkerchief          So that I can wash it for you          With tears of snow from my eyes          I’ll leave it washed          Woe is me, agonizing over you.</p> <p>Lend me your little handkerchief          That is embroidered with flowers          So that I can water them,          With the tears that I have shed.          Woe is me, Absent and without you.</p>
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**Ya me voy a retirar**

Ya me voy a retirar  
a los campos soledosos  
por ver si puedo olvidar  
aquellos ojos preciosos.  
Aquellos ojos preciosos  
que me miraron  
y que el sueño me quitaron.

Ya me voy a retirar  
donde está la tortolita,  
a ver si puedo encontrar  
lo que mi alma necesita.  
Lo que mi alma necesita  
porque me hirieron,  
los ojos que me perdieron.

Ya me voy a retirar  
donde moran los zorzales  
a ver si puedo encontrar  
Remedio para mis males.  
Remedio para mis males  
pues me dañaron  
los ojos que me miraron.

**Las Puertas de la Mañana**

Las puertas de la mañana  
Abierto se han, vida mía.  
El nácar con el rosado  
alegan trayendo el día.  
El día nuevo va comenzando,  
Yo suspirando.

Las puertas de la mañana  
de par en par, vida mía.  
El alto sol en el cielo  
con plena soberanía.  
El día nuevo resplandeciendo,  
Yo, padeciendo.

Las puertas de la mañana  
cerrado se han ya mi amada,  
La tarde invade los cielos  
la sombra viene callada.  
La estrella de oro ya está alumbrando,  
Yo, suspirando.

**I am going to move away**

I am going to move away  
To the lonely countryside  
To see if I can forget  
Those precious eyes.  
Those precious eyes  
That gazed on me,  
And that took away my dreams.

I am going to move away  
To where the turtledove is  
To see if I can find  
What my heart needs.  
What my heart needs  
Because they wounded me,  
Those eyes that lost me.

I am going to move away  
To where the thrush lives  
To see if I can find  
A cure for my ills.  
A cure for my ills,  
Since they damaged me,  
Those eyes that gazed on me.

**The doors of the morning**

The doors of the morning  
Have opened, dear.  
The mother-of-pearl with it's pink  
Argues, bringing the day.  
The new day is commencing,  
I, sighing.

The doors of the morning  
Wide open, dear.  
The sun high in the sky  
Full of sovereignty.  
The new day is shining,  
I, suffering.

The doors of the morning  
Have now closed, darling,  
The evening invades the skies  
The shadow comes silently.  
The star of gold is lighting up  
I, sighing.

Ariel Ramirez (1921-2010) (w. Guitar Julian Briones)  
*Alfonsina y el Mar*

Ariel Ramirez was one of most widely known composers of Argentinean folk music. His songs were sung by a wide variety of artists, most famously by the legendary Mercedes Sosa, and that led to him having recognition even beyond Argentina. *Alfonsina y el Mar* is possibly his best known song. It has recorded versions by all kinds of singers, ranging from Placido Domingo to Shakira, and of course the most iconic one by Mercedes Sosa. The song is based on the story of Argentinean poet Alfonsina Storni and her last poem, which she wrote as a suicide note before throwing herself into the sea. It creates a whole world of suffering in just a few minutes and is in my view a masterpiece of economy of expression.

<b>Alfonsina y el Mar</b>	<b>Alfonsina and the Sea</b>
Por la blanda arena que lame el mar Su pequeña huella no vuelve más Un sendero solo de pena y silencio llegó Hasta el agua profunda Un sendero solo de penas mudas llegó Hasta la espuma	Across the soft sand, licked by the sea Her small footprints will never return Only one path of sorrow and silence Reached the deep water Only one path made of untold sorrows Reached the foam
Sabe Dios que angustia te acompañó Que dolores viejos calló tu voz Para recostarte arrullada en el canto de las Caracolas marinas La canción que canta en el fondo oscuro del mar la caracola	God knows what anguish accompanied you And about the old pains your voice never told That caused you to go to sleep, Lulled by the Song of the Seashells The song sung in the dark depths of the sea by the Seashell
Te vas Alfonsina Con tu soledad ¿Qué poemas nuevos fuiste a buscar? Una voz antigua de viento y de sal Te requiebra el alma y la está llevando Y te vas hacia allá, como en sueños Dormida, Alfonsina, vestida de mar	You're going away, Alfonsina Along with your loneliness What new poems did you go looking for? An ancient voice of wind and salt Is flattering your soul and taking you away And you go there, like in dreams Asleep, Alfonsina, dressed in the sea
Cinco sirenitas te llevarán Por caminos de algas y de coral Y fosforescentes caballos marinos harán Una ronda a tu lado Y los habitantes del agua van a jugar Pronto a tu lado	Five little mermaids will escort you Through paths of seaweed and corals And phosphorescent sea horses will sing A round, by your side And the aquatic dwellers Will soon play by your side
Bájame la lámpara un poco más Déjame que duerma Nodriza en paz Y si llama él no le digas que estoy Dile que Alfonsina no vuelve Y si llama él no le digas nunca que estoy	Dim the light of the lamp a bit for me Let me sleep in peace, nurse And if he calls don't tell him I'm here Tell him that Alfonsina is not coming back And if he calls never tell him I'm here

Di que me he ido	Tell him that I have left
Te vas Alfonsina	You're going away, Alfonsina
Con tu soledad	Along with your loneliness
¿Qué poemas nuevos fuiste a buscar?	What new poems did you go looking for?
Una voz antigua de viento y de sal	An ancient voice of wind and salt
Te requiebra el alma y la está llevando	Is flattering your soul and taking you away
Y te vas hacia allá, como en sueños	And you go there, like in dreams
Dormida, Alfonsina, vestida de mar	Asleep, Alfonsina, dressed in the sea

Carlos Gardel (1890-1935) (w. Guitar Julian Briones)

*Volver*

*Sus ojos se cerraron*

*El día que me quieras*

It is hard to overstate the status of Carlos Gardel in Argentinean culture. He was a celebrity beyond what is typical for a musician and probably the single most important figure in the entire history of tango. One of the special things about Gardel from my perspective as a composer is that he was a singer himself and we can hear how he sang his own music. It's reported that as exalted an authority as Enrico Caruso heard and admired his singing. I perceive a singer's sensibility in the music and the mix of the vocal friendly writing, the energy of tango dance music, and the poetry of tango lyrics written in the vernacular of Argentinean Spanish, makes the material some of the most personal I could possibly present. "*Volver*" is probably the single song I have performed most of any in my life. It is about returning home after a long time living life and wandering the world. "*Sus ojos se cerraron*" is a lament for a dead lover, sung immediately after her death in a movie Gardel starred in entitled "*El día que me quieras*". I close my recital with the title song from that movie, sung early in the film during the lovers' courtship. It is an expression of hope, for a happy future on the "day when you love me". It is a song that every Argentinean knows and there are is no better way I can think of to give a glimpse into the Argentinean soul than to sing it.

**VOLVER**

Yo adivino el parpadeo  
de las luces que a lo lejos,  
van marcando mi retorno...  
Son las mismas que alumbraron,  
con sus palidos reflejos,  
hondas horas de dolor.  
Y aunque no quise el regreso,  
siempre se vuelve al primer amor.  
La quieta calle donde el eco dijo:  
Tuya es su vida, tuyo es su querer,  
bajo el burlon mirar de las estrellas  
que con indiferencia hoy me ven volver...

Volver,  
con la frente marchita,  
las nieves del tiempo  
platearon mi sien...  
Sentir... que es un soplo la vida,  
que veinte anos no es nada,  
que febril la mirada  
errante en la sombras  
te busca y te nombra.  
Vivir,  
con el alma aferrada  
a un dulce recuerdo,  
que lloro otra vez...

Tengo miedo del encuentro  
con el pasado que vuelve  
a enfrentarse con mi vida...  
Tengo miedo de las noches  
que, pobladas de recuerdos,  
encadenan mi sonar...  
Pero el viajero que huye  
tarde o temprano detiene su andar...  
Y aunque el olvido,  
que todo destruye,  
haya matado mi vieja ilusion,  
guardo escondida una esperanza humilde  
que es toda la fortuna de mi corazon.

**To Return**

I glimpse the flickering  
of the lights that in the distance  
are marking my return.  
They're the same that lit,  
with their pale reflections,  
deep hours of pain  
And even though I didn't want to come back,  
you always return to your first love  
The tranquil street where the echo said  
yours is her life, yours is her love,  
under the mocking gaze of the stars  
that, with indifference, today see me return.

To return  
with withered face,  
the snows of time  
have whitened my temples.  
To feel... that life is a puff of wind,  
that twenty years is nothing,  
that the feverish look,  
wandering in the shadow,  
looks for you and names you.  
To live...  
with the soul clutched  
to a sweet memory  
that I cry over once again

I am afraid of the encounter  
with the past that returns  
to confront my life  
I am afraid of the nights  
that, filled with memories,  
chain up my dreams.  
But the traveler that flees  
sooner or later stops his wandering  
And although forgetfulness,  
which destroys everything,  
has killed my old dream,  
I keep concealed a humble hope  
that is my heart's whole fortune.

## SUS OJOS SE CERRARON

Sus ojos se cerraron  
y el mundo sigue andando,  
su boca que era mía  
ya no me besa más.  
Se apagaron los ecos  
de su reír sonoro  
y es cruel este silencio  
que me hace tanto mal...

Fue mía la piadosa  
dulzura de sus manos,  
que dieron a mis penas  
caricias de bondad,  
y ahora que la evoco  
hundido en mi quebranto,  
las lágrimas trezadas  
se niegan a brotar,  
y no tengo el consuelo  
de poder llorar...

Por que sus alas tan cruel quemó la vida!  
por que esa mueca siniestra de la suerte...  
Quise abrirla  
y más pudo la muerte,  
como me duele  
y se ahonda mi herida.  
Yo se que ahora vendrán caras extrañas  
con su limosna de alivio a mi tormento  
todo es mentira, mentira es el lamento...  
Hoy está solo mi corazón!

Como perros de presa  
las penas traicioneras  
celando su cariño  
galopaban detrás,  
y escondida en las aguas  
de su mirada buena  
la muerte agazapada  
marcaba su compás.

En vano yo alentaba  
febril una esperanza  
clavo en mi carne viva  
sus garras el dolor,  
y mientras en las calles

## Her Eyes Closed

She closed her eyes  
and the world kept going  
Her lips that were mine  
no longer kiss me  
The echoes of her rich  
laughter have faded  
And this cruel silence  
hurts me so

Mine was the merciful  
sweetness of her hands  
That soothed my sorrows  
with kind caresses  
And now when I remember her,  
buried in my grief  
The entwined tears  
refuse to flow  
And I don't have the consolation  
of being able to cry

Why did its cruel wings snuff out her life  
Why this sinister grimace of fate?  
I wanted to protect her  
but death was stronger  
How much I hurt  
and how deep is my wound  
I know that now strange faces will come  
With their charity of comfort for my torment  
Everything is a lie, a lie their lament  
Today my heart is alone

Like dogs of prey  
the traitorous troubles  
Hanging over her  
galloped at her heels  
And hidden in the waters  
of her sweet glance  
Crouching death  
marked her life's end

In vain I nourished  
a feverish hope  
Suffering dug its claws  
into my living flesh  
While in the streets,

en loca algarabía  
el carnaval del mundo  
gozaba y se reía  
burlándose el destino  
me robo su amor...

### **EL DÍA QUE ME QUIERAS**

Acaricia mi ensueño  
el suave murmullo de tu suspirar.  
Como ríe la vida  
si tus ojos negros me quieren mirar.  
Y si es mío el amparo  
de tu risa leve  
que es como un cantar,  
ella aquietará mi herida,  
todo todo se olvida.  
El día que me quieras  
la rosa que engalana,  
se vestirá de fiesta  
con su mejor color.  
Y al viento las campanas  
dirán que ya eres mía,  
y locas las fontanas  
se contarán su amor.

La noche que me quieras  
desde el azul del cielo,  
las estrellas celosas  
nos mirarán pasar.  
Y un rayo misterioso  
hará nido en tu pelo,  
luciernaga curiosa que veras  
que eres mi consuelo.

El día que me quieras  
no habrá más que armonía.  
Será clara la aurora  
y alegre el manantial.  
Traerá quieta la brisa  
rumor de melodía.  
Y nos darán las fuentes  
su canto de cristal.  
El día que me quieras  
endulzará sus cuerdas  
el pájaro cantor.  
Florecerá la vida

in crazy riot,  
the carnival of life  
Flourished and laughed  
Mocking the fate  
that stole her love from me

### **The day you love me**

It caresses my dream  
the smooth murmur of your sighing.  
How life laughs  
if your black eyes want to look at me.  
And if I find shelter,  
in your light laughter  
that is like singing,  
it calms my wound,  
everything is forgotten.  
The day that you love me  
The rose that decorates,  
will dress in celebration  
in its best color  
And to the wind the church bells  
will say that you are mine already,  
and the crazy fountains  
will tell of their love.

The night that you love me  
from the blue of the sky  
the jealous stars  
will watch us go by.  
And a mysterious ray  
will nest in your hair,  
curious firefly that will see  
that you are my consolation.

The day that you love me  
there'll be nothing but harmony.  
The dawn will be clear  
and the water spring will be happy.  
The breeze will quietly bring  
The sound of a melody.  
And the fountains will give us  
their crystal song.  
The day that you love me  
the singing bird  
will sweeten its cords.  
Life will bloom

no existira el dolor

pain will not exist.