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“MI CORAZÓN Y EL MAR”: MACHADO IN DALLAPICCOLA

In *Quattro liriche di Antonio Machado* (1948) the Italian composer, Luigi Dallapiccola (1904-1975) brings together four pieces scattered across Machado's work:

I.
La primavera ha venido.
¡Aleluyas blancas
de los zarzales floridos!
Spring is here.
White cries of hallelujah
From the flowering brambles!

II.
Ayer soñé que veía
a Dios y que a Dios hablaba;
y soñé que Dios me oía...
Después soñé que soñaba. [¡O!]
Last night I dreamed I saw
God and was talking to God;
and I dreamed that God was listening...
And then I dreamed I was dreaming.

III.
Señor, ya me arrancaste lo que yo más quería.
Oye otra vez, Dios mío, mi corazón clamar.
Tu voluntad se hizo, Señor, contra la mía.
Señor, ya estamos solos mi corazón y el mar. [¡Ay!]
Lord, you tore from me what I most loved.
Once again, my God, hear my heart cry out.
Your will was done, Lord, contrary to mine.
Lord, we are alone now my heart and the sea.

IV.
La primavera ha venido.
Nadie sabe como ha sido.
Spring is here.
But how did it appear?¹

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¹Page references for the Spanish text and music examples 1 and 2 are from the score for piano and soprano voice published by Suvini Zerboni, Milano, 1948. The Spanish text is followed by an Italian translation by Dallapiccola (3).

Stanzas I and IV appear in reverse order as two of fifteen songs in *Nuevas canciones* (CLIX, iii, iv, 662). Stanza II is one of the "Proverbios y cantares" from *Campos de Castilla* (CXXXVI, xxi, 556). Stanza III is the second poem in the cycle inspired by Leonor's death (*Campos de Castilla* CXIX, 494).²

In reassembling and setting these pieces to music Dallapiccola creates a new text of 13 lines, not merely adding an "¡O!" to "soñaba" at the end of line 7, and an "¡Ay!" after "mar" in line 11, but blending Machado's separate expressions of the mystery of creation, the presence of the divine, and the pain of death into a single, coherent whole. The meaning of this new text is consistent with Machado's vision, but the tone is often remarkably different. More importantly, this apparently modest adaptation of Machado's words proved seminal to Dallapiccola's later work in opera.

The opening line, expressing joy at the return of Spring, coupled with lines 12 and 13, recalls Dylan Thomas' "force that through the green fuse drives the flower" (10). But here the creative spark has touched off an explosion: Spring's rekindled energy, heralded in repeated fanfares, bursts forth in a tangled profusion of sound and colour. In the intertwining sprays of the music Dallapiccola's creative power is clearly focused on Machado's central synaesthetic image of the "aleluyas blancas" (literally, "white hallelujahs"), through which Nature praises her creator.

The divinity of this creative force is what links this opening *solear* (an Andalusian folk-poem) to the stanza that follows. Now it is the speaker who dreams of being in communion with God, seeing, talking, and, importantly in light of stanza III, being heard. But the sentiment expressed here (nostalgia for faith, perhaps) is, in Machado's work, unusual. Dallapiccola's chords and arching figures suggest the totality in which the speaker feels embraced, translating the feeling of oneness conveyed in the *enjambement* of lines 4 and 5. This feeling is communicated even more effectively by the chiasmus in these lines ("veía a Dios — a Dios hablaba"). In more complex form, the same mirroring effect is present in the music. In Machado, the ellipsis separating lines 6 and 7 may mark a typically ironic reflection on a self-contained if not complacent state. But Dallapiccola minimizes the pause and adds a lingering "¡O!", wishing perhaps to prolong the experience and emphasize its envelopment within an infinitely expanding series of enclosing

All but lines 8-11 of the English translation given here are by Trueblood (171, 143, 169). My analysis of *Quattro liriche* itself was part of an introduction to a performance of the work by Terri Dunn, accompanied by Professor John Hawkins, Faculty of Music, University of Toronto, Music and Poetry Series, March 13, 1997.

²Page references are to the Macri edition, Milano, 1961.

spheres. As well as being in harmony with the sense and tone of stanza II, the added "¡O!" also prolongs the verbal music of the repeated stressed and unstressed /o/ of "soñé," "soñaba," and "Dios."

God is addressed once more in stanza III but with a dramatic change in tone. Machado's text, four balanced Alexandrine verses with four apostrophes, has struck critics with its apparent serenity and humility, despite the tearing and crying out of "arrancaste" and "clamar."³ But while Dallapiccola retains the poem's symmetry in the permutations of his score, it is violence and pain which inform his music. As if "arrancaste" and "clamar" were insufficient, he adds a heartrending "¡Ay!" to the final line and ends this stanza with a long bass chord which reverberates as much from the solitude of the ocean's depth as from the speaker's heart:

Quattro liriche, III, bars 78-84

³For example, Sánchez Barbudo: "Y es de notar su humildad ... al dirigirse al Señor... Nunca más, que sepamos, vuelve él su mirada hacia Dios de este modo..." (253) (Worthy of note is his humility ... in addressing the Lord.... Never again, as far as we know, does he turn to God in this way...).

Although the added “¡Ay!” may be at odds with the perceived resignation of Machado’s words, it can easily be justified: the first in the cycle of poems inspired by Leonor’s death ends with precisely this heartfelt cry: “¡Ay! ¡ya no puedo caminar con ella!” (CXVIII, 494) (Ay! I can no longer walk beside her!). Furthermore, like the “¡O!” of stanza II the “¡Ay!” not only captures in one syllable the meaning of the lines but encapsulates in the diphthong /ái/ their vocalic music: the pain and solitude conveyed in the /í/ of “quería,” “mío,” “hizo,” and “mía,” and the /á/ of “ya,” “arrancaste,” “más,” “clamar,” “voluntad,” “estamos,” and, most tellingly, “mar.”

Line 12 is a reprise of the opening line, and the musical material returns, slowed down, to close the cycle. The florid ecstasy of stanza I, the ethereal calm of II, the grief and solitude of III, give way to a subdued and contemplative mood. The singer’s voice drops dramatically in the last three words down to plain speech (*quasi parlato* > *parlato*), and the final notes seem almost to stagger or stammer into silence:

Quattro liriche, IV. bars 99-104

The musical score is presented in three systems, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The first system (bars 99-100) begins with a tempo of *(♩ = ♩)* and a dynamic of *dolcissimo; semplice*. The vocal line features a long note for "Na - - die" with a *dolciss.; sost.* marking. The piano accompaniment is marked *espress.*. The second system (bar 100) continues with the vocal line singing "sa - - be" and "cò - mo ha" in a *(quasi parlato) più pp* dynamic. The piano accompaniment is also marked *più pp*. The third system (bars 101-104) is marked *(parlato)* and *ppp*. The vocal line sings "si - do." and "come un soffio" with a *rall. molto* marking. The piano accompaniment is marked *perdendosi*. At the bottom center, there is a small box containing the number "S. 4582". At the bottom right, the date "Venezia, 13 settembre 1948." is printed.

The intensity of feeling in lines 8-11 has left the composer with creative forces spent. But this collapse begins exactly on Machado's "cómo" (how), when the poet is focusing on the *mystery* of the force that drives both Spring's renewal and his own life. Machado's "nadie sabe" (literally, "no one knows") implies a "¡Quién supiera!" (If only I knew!), a desire to find answers to the secrets of existence. Dallapiccola's musical voice suggests the same questioning posture of one not merely drained by the effort, but, in Dylan Thomas' word, rendered "dumb" by life's enigma.⁴

It seems clear that Dallapiccola knew his Machado well. But how might he have become familiar with the thirteen lines he set to music? A review of the composer's works reveals that he set the work of several poets: not only verses from Joyce and Michelangelo, but also Manuel Machado and Juan Ramón Jiménez.⁵ The key to Dallapiccola's familiarity with Antonio Machado, however, lies in a number of references he makes to Spanish poets in *Dallapiccola on Opera* (1987), and in a chapter of this work entitled "Birth of a Libretto" (232-62), in which he documents the genesis of his last opera, *Ulisse*.⁶ Among the references to Spanish poets is a lengthy footnote (20) explaining where Dallapiccola had encountered the poems of Juan Ramón set to music in *Sicut umbra* (1970): in *Lirici spagnoli*, an anthology of Spanish lyrics edited in 1941 by Carlo Bo.

Not surprisingly, Bo's anthology (62, 68) also contains verses by Antonio Machado, including lines 4-11 of the thirteen lines comprising *Quattro liriche*: the opening three and closing two are absent.⁷ Al-

⁴"And I am dumb to tell a weather's wind / How time has ticked a heaven round the stars" ("The Force that through the Green Fuse Drives the Flower" 10).

⁵In *Tre poemi* (1949) Dallapiccola set to music James Joyce's "A Flower Given to My Daughter" (*Poems* 53), in an Italian translation by Eugenio Montale; Michelangelo's "Chiunche nasce a morte arriva" (*Rime* 149); and Manuel Machado's "Morir, dormir..." (*Obras* 179), in Dallapiccola's own Italian version.

Sicut umbra (1970) contains Dallapiccola's setting of three Jiménez poems: "El olvido," "El recuerdo," and "Epitafio ideal de un marinero" (*Tercera antología* 618, 574, 601). The work was triggered by the composer's fascination with the word "firmamiento" [*sic*] (firmament): "Sentii che un testo, come tante altre volte, era venuto alla mia ricerca" (I felt that a text, as on so many other occasions, had come in search of me). He did not discover it was a misprint until the night of the first performance in Italy, when the Spanish mezzo enlightened him (*Parole e musica* 535).

Antonio Machado's "Noche de verano" (Macri 416) serves as preface to the score for orchestra of *Piccola musica notturna* (1954).

⁶"Birth of a Libretto" was originally an address delivered by the composer to help mark the Sesquicentennial of the University of Michigan in 1967.

⁷Bo's translation of Machado's lines (69, 63) differs from Dallapiccola's (see italics), which retains more exactly the quiasmus in lines 4-5:

B: Ieri sognai che vedevo

though many other such anthologies with which Dallapiccola might have been familiar also lack these five lines, it seems likely that Bo's anthology is the source of the composer's knowledge of the core verses of *Quattro liriche*. Dallapiccola's own comments on this work in "Birth of a Libretto" confirm this:

"Señor, ya estamos [sic] solos mi corazón y el mar." This verse was both the germ cell and the culminating point of *Quattro Liriche di Antonio Machado* for soprano and piano, finished in September 1948 (259).

But this single verse resonates beyond the confines of *Quattro liriche*. In the passage from which this quotation comes Dallapiccola recalls the problem of finding an opening line for *Ulisse* and how easily he solved it:

For twenty years I have known the opening verse of *Ulisse*--or known at least from where I could paraphrase it. In the Autumn of 1947, to be precise, while crossing a bridge in Venice, I suddenly conceived and jotted down the musical idea for a verse by Machado: "Señor, ya estamos [sic] solos mi corazón y el mar".... I have known since then that Calypso, looking out to sea, thinking of Ulysses by now far away, would say: "Alone once again, your heart and the ocean" (259).⁸

Ulisse, Prologue, bars 11-15

CALYPSO
KALYPSO

dolciss.
pp

Son so - li, u - n'al - tra
Wie ein - sam und we - der

Cal.

vol - ta, il tuo cuo - re e il ma - re.
ein - sam und Dein Herz und das Meer.

Dio e gli parlavo:
e sognai che Dio m'udiva...
Dopo sognai che sognavo.

D: Ieri sognai che vedevo
Iddio e che a Dio parlavo;
e sognai che Dio m'udiva...
Dipoi sognai che sognavo.

B: *Signore già mi strappasti ciò che più amavo.*
Ascolta un'altra volta, Dio mio, il mio cuore invocare.
La tua volontà s'è fatta, Signore, contro la mia.
Signore, ora siamo soli il mio cuore e il mare.

D: Signor, già mi strappasti quanto mi era più caro.
Ascolta un'altra volta, mio Dio, il mio cuore gridare.
Il tuo volere si fece, Signore, contro il mio.
Signore, ora siamo soli il mio cuore e il mare.

⁸Music examples 3, 4, and 5 from *Ulisse* are from the score for voices and piano, libretto in Italian with German translation, Milano: Suvini Zerboni, 1968.

But *Quattro liriche di Antonio Machado* also anticipates, in the “veía a Dios” (I saw God) of stanza II, the revelation which illuminates Ulisse’s closing words and, more importantly, in stanza IV, his essentially questioning nature, defined in what Dallapiccola calls the governing motif of Ulisse’s life: *guardare, meravigliarsi, e tornar a guardare* (look, wonder, and look again) (“Intorno a ‘Ulisse’” 14). Addressing the starry firmament before his epiphany, Ulisse is tormented by the same failure to understand the mystery of things which Machado’s “nadie sabe cómo ha sido” (but how did it appear?) so deftly implies. Like the “dumb” voice of *Quattro liriche*, “l’uomo Ulisse, il torturato, sente che gli manca la Parola ... atta a spiegargli il perché dell’esistenza” (Odysseus the man, the Tortured One, is aware that he lacks the Word ... that would explain to him the meaning of existence). (“Intorno a ‘Ulisse’” 16):

Trovar potessi il nome, pronunciar la parola
che chiarisca a me stesso così ansioso cercare (398-99)
If I could only find the name, utter the word
that would explain all my anxious searching:¹⁰

e tornar a guardare (look, wonder, and look again), itself a quiasmus, constitute the fourth line from both the beginning and the end of the *Ulisse* libretto. They occupy lines 4, 10, and 15 of the 16 lines of Calypso’s *Prologo*. “Son soli, un altra volta, il tuo cuore e il mare” occupy lines 1 and 16. One obvious example of symmetry in the music, suggestive of the ever-present ocean, is the rippling effect in both Calypso’s and Ulisse’s rendering of “mare.”

Dallapiccola’s translation of Machado’s “germ cell” line for *Quattro liriche*, like Bo’s, renders “estamos” as first-person plural “siam” (“siamo” in Bo), whereas the *Ulisse* text gives third plural “son” and “sono,” certainly necessary from Calypso’s perspective; for Ulisse, perhaps, suggesting his new-found peace of mind.

In view of the profound creative effect which the misprinted “firmamiento” had on him (see note 5), Dallapiccola must have been as sensitive to the sound of the germ cell line as to its sense: not only the repeated /á/ but the /á-ó-á/ pattern of “*ya estamos solos mi corazón y el mar.*” And he would undoubtedly have heard all three key vowels in lines 4-11 of *Quattro liriche* echoing the same symmetrical pattern in “oía”: phonologically, open /o/, closed /í/, open /a/.

¹⁰“Intorno a ‘Ulisse’” is Dallapiccola’s spoken Italian version of “About ‘Ulisse’,” in the Stradivarius CD of *Ulisse*.

Given his characterization of Ulisse as one trying to fathom the mystery of life, perhaps Dallapiccola saw a contrast in stanza II of *Quattro liriche* between a transcendent experience, “veía / a Dios y ... a Dios hablaba,” and (after the ellipsis) a state of disillusionment: “Después soñé que soñaba.”

The *Sprechstimme* or *parlato* of Ulisse’s “il mistero” (also of “sono il mio cuore”), echoing that of Machado’s “cómo ha sido,” supports the reading of the final line of *Quattro liriche*, and may be a further sign of how Dallapiccola’s 1948 work looks forward to the 1968 opera.

Ulisse, Act II, bars 1009-1015

(If only a voice would break through the silence, the mystery...)

Dallapiccola stresses from the very first pages of "Birth of a Libretto" that the Ulysses theme seems to have been one he was predestined to develop. He recalls how "periodical appearances of Ulysses" aroused his curiosity and "a certain sense of wonder. I began to feel that it wasn't simply a question of coincidence." He adds that "during my years as a teacher, I have often pointed out that it is not always we who choose our texts; but at times it is the texts themselves which, coming to meet us, choose us."¹¹

Giving voice, as they do, to the vision that twenty years later would inform Dallapiccola's last opera, perhaps Machado's thirteen lines, like the beckoning figure of Odysseus, were also such a text.

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¹¹In "Birth of a Libretto" Dallapiccola recounts how in May of 1938 it was suggested to him that he compose a ballet based on *The Odyssey* (which did not materialize). In the Spring of 1941 he was commissioned to edit Monteverdi's *Il ritorno di Ulisse in patria*. Ulysses' first and "fundamental" appearance dates from the composer's childhood. In August of 1912, his father astonished him and his brother by taking them to see a film: "The title ... appeared in bold white letters against the scarcely darker background of the screen... : HOMER'S ODYSSEY" (233-34).

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