

# Summarization of the opening lectures for the module / course “Voicing The Unvoiced - Liederzyklen des 19. Jahrhunderts ins 21. Jahrhundert transportiert,”

Taught by Chanda VanderHart & Stephen Delaney,  
with special guests Eric Stokloßa and Rebecca  
Babb-Nelsen

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## **Why a new translation?**

“I don’t know if you have ever been to an art song concert with an audience full of people who do not understand a word of what is being sung. There is a general sense of enjoying the music, but not a deep emotional connection to the true meaning of the poetry selected by the composer.” RN

“It works differently with opera, at least it works better than with art song. You can go to *La Traviata* or *La Boheme* and not speak Italian and still get a good sense of the story from the music, sound effects from the orchestra, the acting and the stage elements of the medium: the costumes, sets, props, lighting. You can understand that there is a tragic love story in which the lovers separate and the heroine is going to die... you will get that context even if you don’t

understand a word of the language in which the opera is being sung. In an art song concert, that context is mostly stripped away leaving only the pianist, the singer, the music and the text, and if the text is incomprehensible to the audience, it is as if a leg has been sawed off the table.” RN

We decided we would like to create a new, truly singable translation of *Dichterliebe* while trying to stay as close to the actual meaning of the poetry as possible.” RN

“When approaching a project like this you don’t want to be so arrogant as to think ‘My poetry can compare with the works of Heinrich Heine’ but at the end of the day, he was a person with something to say and he was doing his best to tell his story to his audience. The audience we intend to reach in this project, namely one that does not speak or understand the German language, will not intrinsically understand the brilliance of Heinrich Heine’s original poetry without some intervention.” RN

“If you look at right brain vs. left brain activity when somebody goes to a concert and they are enjoying the concert and experiencing it, they are fully in the creative side of their mind. If you hand them a piece of paper and tell them they have to read it to understand the art, the analytical part of the brain turns on, arguably pulling the listener out of the moment. What we want to do with this endeavor is to make it possible for a non-German speaker to enjoy *Dichterliebe* without having to go into the analytical part of their mind - to be able to fully enjoy it in a way that is more organic. So this was our idea and attempt.” RN

### **The translation process**

“Regarding the translation of texts, there are multiple layers of difficulty that increase depending on the type of text being translated.

When translating purely technical writing - an operations manual for an electrical appliance, for example - all one needs to focus on is basic information, meaning and clarity. The writing does not need any particular form or style, the translation must simply take a text in a language the reader does not speak and substitute the simplest, most clear version of the same information in the target language.

When translating prose, for example a fictional novel by a famous Author like Paulo Coelho, suddenly there are artistic layers of complexity to consider - on top of the literal meaning of the text, one must consider figurative meaning, cultural nuance, implication, connotation, and most importantly the individual

author's style. The style element is arguably the most difficult for the translator, who must attempt to shape their literary fingerprint into the closest possible approximation of that of the author, but in a different language.

Translating poetry becomes even more challenging with more constraints and layers of complexity added, including; rhyme scheme, rhythm, meter, stressed syllables, onomatopoeia and word painting.

Translating poetry for use in an Art Song presents yet more hurdles. As a translator of poetry for Art Song, you are working with a text that has already been interpreted musically by the composer, and it is your task as the translator to fit your interpretation of the poem in to a filigrane corset of melody, musical stresses of specific words, vowel placement, singability, intertextuality, a textual connection to the period of time in which the music was composed, and understandability vis-a-vis a listening audience." RN

### **Her Side**

"I find that I'm the most honest when I'm writing poems. Sometimes things come out of you when you are writing poetry that are truer than you could say in prose." - RN

"As I dug into the pure translation work of the cycle, because Chanda and I have talked a lot about gender studies as well, it just started to rankle me the way the young woman in the story is portrayed. There is a one-sided portrait of this woman in the cycle." RN

"Rebecca almost felt like she was maligned. Here was this woman, you don't know her story, and you have this idea that she just left him, made him miserable and that he possibly murdered himself because she is just a heartless bitch." CV

"One actually knows very little about her story and her feelings and I felt a driving need to find a voice for this unvoiced character. I decided that if I was going to do this project, I needed to also write about the unnamed Poet's Lover. So along with the translation of the sixteen poems in *Dichterliebe*, I wrote sixteen original poems from the perspective of the woman in the song cycle." RN

"And when she told me she was going to do this, at the time, I will be honest, I did ask: 'Does this need to happen?' 'Is this a good idea?' I was not immediately like 'Oh ,yes let's do it!' I was like: 'Well, I'm open to it, but this could be real shit too.' but I'm now firmly on the other side of the barrier." CV  
"I wanted to give her room to make the transition from object to subject. You can't sympathize or empathize with a figment of someone's imagination. So

along with the translation of *Dichterliebe*, I wrote original poems from the perspective of the woman.

This idea was rightfully met with some caution from other members of the team, which made it an even more gratifying process when they were won over by the artistic value of the project.

The Lover's poems have a different voice - she is more down to earth, she is not a highly figurative poet. Her poems are more about what she is experiencing and live less in the realm of metaphor whilst expressing a frank honesty about the precarious nature of her situation."

"I found a lot of her stories in the music and in the piano. There's a softness in so much of the music, and Chanda plays it so beautifully. When he sings about how much he loves her it's so touching and it's so true that if he was in love with some soulless harpy, it wouldn't sound like that. Honestly, I find it makes a much more beautiful story if it is this real love. If it is the unfortunate circumstance of the time and not the people themselves that were keeping them apart, and there were so many stories like this one. I think it lends more credibility to his story as well, because what he felt was real. He wasn't a stalker who had one date with a woman and decided they were getting married. I think that this was a real, true connection. These two people fell deeply in love with each other, but because of the time and societal constraints and the fact that he was this penniless poet meant it couldn't work."

"I think it's a nice way to get new audiences interested. Because that is a practical question that we face in the arts all the time: How do we get butts in seats? We don't do this for just ourselves, although we love it so much. The audience is an active participant in this equation and how do you engage and get an audience to get out of their house, and take the subway and get to a concert hall and sit down and listen, let alone buy a ticket when they have everything at their fingertips."

### **Student comments:**

35:14

"Oh my gosh, this!... I just want to lock them up in a room and say 'Ok, you guys!'"

36:46

"I love this perspective so much!"

39:21

"I want to be your friend!"

43:02

"I'm gonna need alcohol for this."

45:46

"That's what kills me."

48:25

"That imagery! That's just amazing! Oh my God!"

52:57

"It's Netflix now."

54:27

"You know, with this part, I'm more sympathetic and empathetic towards both of them. I just feel like I want to go to both of them and tell them 'It's going to be ok.'"

57:06

"I also love the fact that you wrote her mother, in the picture, because that's obviously how she grew up, watching her mother interact with her father."

59:03

"I guess the only element of hope is this new child."

59:45

"What I also believe, because I've been thinking about this a lot. What I really appreciated and what I found very touching and honest is: that it's not like you're trying to justify yourself, it's not like you're defending this girl, there's nothing to defend, and that makes a greater impact." (Stephen DeLaney)

1:11:24 "I really need a drink."

## SECOND LECTURE

"What we were doing, what our project was about. So just to give you some background about the project, how it came about, I started my professorship in Texas four years ago, and part of my academic work at the University is research. And so I was thinking about, we were all, because we were friends and we constantly talking to each other, just thinking about what can we do, what would be a good research project. So we were thinking about doing translations. And I was like, actually, I've sung all the big German cycles so many times, and I actually think there's no good poetic, singable translation to any of those. So we're talking about *Dichterliebe*, we're talking about *Die Schöne Müllerin*, and we're talking about *Winterreise*. So, and we were like, okay, you know, Rebecca, my wife, has a master's in German literature, and she's a singer, and she was like, I think, you know, we can try and pull this off, starting with *Dichterliebe*, which is the shortest of those three cycles, might not be the easiest in terms of translations, because, you know, Heine is one of the..."ES

"Terrifying" CV

"In a way, he's terrifying, he's so melancholic and his words are so deep, but we were just saying, you know, let's give it a try. So I presented my idea to my

university and they were like, great, you're German, you're working here, your teaching language is English, so that would make a lot of sense. So, and then Rebecca started with the translations and we were constantly just trying to give feedback to each other, if this makes sense, if this is doable, how it feels in the voice, which was kind of one of our main goals to not just do this as a one-time research project, but maybe bring out a new edition of the *Dichterliebe* with an actual translation you can sing. That was the one part. The other part of course is a lot of people who are acquainted with classical music, classical singing, German Lied, are familiar with *Dichterliebe*. So I was thinking, okay, so do we need a translation? Would this go kind of against the idea of interpreting pure music or being pure as a musician? And then we were like, I think absolutely, we should absolutely do it, because the majority of people who listen to that music are non-German." ES

"We're talking about American audiences, obviously." RN

"You know, so they would just find a translation, maybe just a literal translation, not a poetic translation, and then they would have some idea about what every single song is about and what it means and how it should be interpreted. But they don't really connect very specific words to very specific notes in the score, which as a performer, for me, this opens a completely new world. If we are able to do that, if we have the same or similar words with the same or similar meanings on the same notes, then all of a sudden this becomes a world-opening translation where people can just really understand why did Schumann write this particular note on this particular word. So that was kind of the second main pillar of that. So we started to do that. Rebecca made incredibly fast progress. And there were just very minor little things we ever had to change." ES

"Which is interesting. I'm a soprano, he's a tenor, obviously. And things that worked for me in my voice, because obviously I tried them out, didn't work for him in his voice as a tenor. So there were things that we had to have a give and take on to see what works actually the best for his voice." RN

"Right, but again it was, I would say it's maybe, it was overall it was maybe five places where we had to make a change. So it was really, and I think even in the, during the recording, there was one place where we were recording it and it felt okay, but then we were listening to it and we were like," ES

"it's not clear." CV

"It's not clear. So I think we changed it back to something we had before or something like that." ES

"No, I wrote something else." RN

"It was the very first song actually in *Im Wunderschönen Monat Mai* So while we were just trying to figure another song out, Rebecca was just re-translating it. And then we came back and we were like, yeah, that's better. That sounds great.

So that is how this whole idea of translating came about. And we were like, great, we have an idea, we have the translations, we will do the recording. Chanda and I were like, yeah, that would be great. And then at some point, I don't remember when that was, Rebecca was like, 'so how about we add another layer to the project, to *Dichterliebe*?' And she was like, 'because after translating everything, it's extremely one-sided.'"ES

"What? We haven't figured that out today. What do you mean by that, Eric?" CV

"I know, I'm sorry." ES

"No, no, no, no, it's perfect." CV

"I have to break it to you. It's very one-sided." ES

"What do you mean it's one-sided, this story? That it's only from the male perspective? That we know nothing about the female?" CV

"And honestly, this is also something as a, you know, evolved, modern, male person. Now, it feels kind of weird. It feels weird singing the *Dichterliebe* in German because I'm like, 'why am I whining so much? Okay, why is this so, why,' you know, just the question marks, the why is, you know, is there. So Rebecca was, 'why do I not just come up with new original poems which would counterbalance...'" ES

"It actually came out of a real need to set the story straight for me. After doing so much intense work with the poetry, and you spend so much time with each individual song when you're translating. And I also, I was just like, this is so one-sided. And you almost feel like the female character in the cycle is almost maligned from this perspective, that she's this heartless person that loves him and leaves him, and he's suffering and she doesn't care. That's kind of the feeling that you get. And so I almost felt like a need to tell her side of the story. It was really fun when I told Chanda about that. She was also not super thrilled about the idea." RN

"I was like, 'I'm interested, but do we really want to try to do that? Because it could have been very kitschy. Because it could go either way, yeah? Again, it could be shit.'" CV

"And then they're my friends and I have to be like, no, this is shit." CV

"Exactly." RN

"Which you would do." ES

"I would 100%." CV

"The other thing Eric didn't mention, I am a poet, this is not my first rodeo, so it wasn't something I was just dabbling in, but I decided that I wanted to try and give a side of the story from the female perspective. Also to make it more equitable. In this time, there's a lot of discussion now about gender equity, which I think is great. We're going to see an example later, sometimes that gets missed in translation as well. Really quickly, I think Eric covered most of this. Why the new poems again, trying to give a little more balance to the story. And one thing that we focus on, what is the value added? What can you bring to

this? And it was really interesting. We did this lecture last week as well, and one of the nicest things that came out of it was a comment that with her side as well, you actually gain more respect for both people in the story, not just for her. Which kind of comes back to Eric's observation that he feels like he's whining a lot when he does the *Dichterliebe*. So I think it's very interesting to get a more balanced story because you can actually be more fair to both characters in that way." RN

"So and then adding to that, I would say I'm fairly proficient in the English language and I've read a lot of English poetry as well. I think I have a somewhat deep understanding of the language, but of course I didn't really know how I would feel, how it would make me feel singing a song cycle, a German song cycle in English, which I had performed so many times in German before, and it felt good. It was never that I was feeling there's something missing, other than I always felt like, well, you know, I'm very sad. And then something really interesting happened. When I started, when we started to really work on the English versions. I started, even before I knew about the original poems from the woman's perspective, I started to feel differently about the whole cycle. I started to feel, in a way, even though German is my native language, and even though German is in my opinion the most poetic language in the world, I understood Heine better singing in English. And I can't explain to you why, because ultimately it's a translation, so it's an interpretation, but it made me feel differently singing it in English, and I felt even better singing it in English. So in a way adding to what we've heard before about what translations are for and why we do this is I think a translation is also always a chance to rethink, it's always a chance to reimagine poetry. Because in a way, sometimes if you are introduced to one piece of poetry in your own language, it also really depends on how was it presented to you when you heard about it at first. Did you just read it? Was it sung to you? Did you hear it on the radio or in a concert? There are so many different ways. How did you feel in that moment? And that kind of sets the basis for your understanding of specific pieces. And in this case, I had all of this knowledge from the German language before and then did it in English. And to me, it set the story straight. It kind of made much more sense when I started singing *Dichterliebe* in German. I was 14 or 15. I grew up in Dresden in a boys choir. And part of our job was, of course, having voice lessons. And my teacher introduced me to that. Because now I'm a voice teacher. You know, *Dichterliebe* in a way, it's not super hard to sing. It's not like technically the most advanced piece you can think of and there's actually pieces in there which are super short and mostly in the mid-range of the voice so you can give this to a beginner. Should you do that? I don't know. You know, you can discuss about this a lot. Is this something like the high art of Schumann Lieders, is this something you should give to a beginner or not? I do, also to my American students, because I think no matter how much you understand, no matter how



advanced you are, you can always learn something. And if you understand that this is only part of your education and not the final product, then I think it has absolute value to also do this as a beginner. But coming back to our project, so for me, it opened a completely new world and then adding the new original poems on top of that, it just was like an epiphany of emotions, of deep feelings, which also during the recording, there were points where I just couldn't feasibly continue singing, because it was too emotional. So, that was very interesting. I never had that in German, and even though I know all the recordings, of course I know Peter Schreier's recordings. He was one of my mentors when I studied, when I grew up. Of course I know all of Fritz Wunderlich's recordings because he was arguably the greatest German tenor of all time. So yeah, to me it was a new world opened up and I really enjoyed this whole project and we plan to do the other cycles as well, which will be a much bigger project. So we will see how we will be doing this." ES

"But okay, long story short, I apologize, I always talk a lot, my students are always like, 'mm-hmm...' (laughter) Before we even look at the translations, before we look into the new poetry, I know you've already talked about Schumann a little bit. I would like to give you to just paraphrase a little more about him, his life." ES

"I didn't talk about Robert Schumann, did I? I avoided it. I talked about Clara, and I talked about Friedrich Witt. And that's pretty much it." CV

"So Robert Schumann, I think if you understand or if you know about his life more in detail, you also understand *Dichterliebe*, or could possibly understand *Dichterliebe* better. So I will talk about his life, compositions, legacy, and then I have a fun fact at the end." ES

"He's a zombie!" CV (laughter)

"Almost." ES

"As many other famous composers of the time and earlier, his life was kind of tragic. So he was born in 1810 in Zwickau. So he was German, he was a composer, pianist and a music critic. That is also something very interesting, if you look at the lifespan of famous composers like Handel, Vivaldi, Beethoven in more detail - they were not just composers, they did a lot of other things to support themselves. As opposed to many many other composers, Schumann's father actually supported his music ambitions and that was rare. Usually it was the mother who supported it and the father wanted them to do something else. Not in this case, but his father died when Schumann was 16. And then his mother and his new guardian, they did not support his musical ambitions. So they wanted him to study law. They wanted him to become a lawyer, which was also very common back then. It was either a lawyer or a doctor." ES

"Or a cleric." CV

"Yes, absolutely. In 1828, he met Heinrich Heine for the first time. So Schumann was 18. But there was not much of a collaboration back then, but

they met on one of Schumann's journeys. Schumann then went back to Leipzig and started studying law, but he left. Surprise, it wasn't really his thing. So he left because he wanted to become a pianist and he started studying with Friedrich Wieck. He then very quickly developed a hand injury. So after reading a lot about this, Wieck kind of accused Schumann of injuring himself by using a self-made exercising machine where he would train his fingers individually and strengthen and stretch the fingers." ES

"In particular the fourth finger, because we know the fourth finger is always the problem, right? Right." CV

"But Schumann actually said that it was not because of the device. He always said, no, it's not really my fingers hurting, it is my whole hand. So now there was actually a study by a German rheumatologist entity about this. So it could have actually been early stages of arthritis and not the finger contraption." ES  
"It might have been rheumatoid arthritis." CV

"Exactly. And that doesn't feel good. I had a little bit of that. It's really not great. And if I imagine I would be a pianist, that would be devastating.

So therefore, he started to focus more on composing and he started doing that with Heinrich Dorn, a German composer, and the interesting part, and I think this might be the reason for a lot of discussions we have about his vocal music, is for the first 10 years or so, he only wrote music for the piano. So for almost half of his composing career, he only wrote for the piano, which makes so much sense if you look at any of his song cycles, of any of his songs, vocal works, as Chanda said before, you could just take away the voice and you could just play the pieces and it would be an art song in itself. That was because he mainly focused on writing for the piano. Then something else which is super important, especially in relationship with *Dichterliebe*, in around 1833, he started to develop a mental disorder. After reading about what he wrote in his diaries, what's known today about his life, most likely he had a bipolar disorder, so he had manic and depressive periods in his life, sometimes in really, really quick succession. If you look at his music, it's so apparent. It is so apparent. The switch between the song, we were just talking about number five, "Ich will meine Seele tauchen in den Kelch der Lilien hinein", that's something so intimate, something so loving, and then all of a sudden number six, "Im Rhein heiligen Strome", it starts to really get dark, and as a preparation, number six is just a preparation for number seven, which is the climax of his anger, "Ich grolle nicht" which makes so much sense if you think about he's going from 'Himmel hoch jauchzen' to 'Tode betrüben' in a matter of hours. So I find and found that super super interesting.

In 1835 he met Felix Mendelssohn for the first time. Felix Mendelssohn, I don't know if you all know that, was a big champion of supporting other composers and also supporting just the canon of classical music in general. If it hadn't been for Mendelssohn, for instance, we probably don't even know about Johann Sebastian Bach. He was the one who found the manuscripts of his

Matthew Passion, Matthäus Passion, in Leipzig and he was the one who conducted the first Wiederaufnahme of that piece. And so I think, in a way, we have to be so grateful to people like Felix Mendelssohn, because they have done so much for just the whole repertoire of classical music. So he was a supporter of Schumann. Schumann, on the other hand, tried to do similar things. Schumann was a big fan of Johannes Brahms. Brahms kind of became Schumann's prodigy. And Schumann actually publicly pronounced Brahms a genius." ES

"When he was quite young, it was something Brahms had to get over. He wasn't convinced of it himself yet, I don't think." CV

"In 1840, Schumann married Clara Wieck, so Wieck's daughter. You already talked about her. I don't know, did you talk about the legal battle?

Which is, I think, it's so Schumann. They got married one day before it would have been legal for them to get married." ES

"The judge's pronouncement came only two months before her 18th birthday." CV

"So they had 8 children together, so she was probably constantly pregnant from him." ES

"We assume." CV

"Yes, allegedly. So, now, the years from 1840 to 1849 were Schumann's most productive years, though his mental disorder grew much worse during that. In 1854, he actually attempted suicide. He was on his own accord. He requested to go into a... get committed to a medical asylum near Bonn. And in 1856 he died of pneumonia. So, as, you know, many other composers, the end of his life is quite sad. You can look at Vivaldi for instance, also highly talented and then kind of died in vain and in poverty here in Vienna. So, okay, that was about Schumann's life, which I just think, and I can encourage all of you, no matter what kind of studies you do, get background information, read up about the people, the composers, you know, the tradition and what was happening during that time, it can and most likely will open up a lot of ideas and worlds for you to discover for your interpretations of classical music or just your understanding of classical music." ES

Etc... (Info about Schumann's other works - interesting but not relevant to the topic of this project)

"We're going to come back to translations. You guys have touched on this a little bit, but I want to just kind of make it more aware for you. When you think about translating text, there are varying levels of difficulty depending on what you are translating." RN

"In technical writing, what do you have to convey to the audience if you are translating a piece of technical writing, let's say a manual on how to operate your cell phone. What information do you have to get across for that kind of translation to be effective?" RN

"Functional." (Stephen DeLaney)

"Functional, exactly. You don't have to focus on anything but information to information. This is like a one-to-one exchange." (RN)

"It could be order, but like, yeah. Direct translation in proper order. Yeah, clarity." CV

"We'll go up a step in a level of difficulty. If you're translating prose, what do you think you have to take under consideration when you're translating prose into a new language? So besides the literal meaning and the general information conveyed in the text, what else comes along with it if it is now something that we would call a novel or a piece of prose writing from an author?" RN

"Metaphor?" (Male Student)

"Yeah, so figurative language, poetic language. We're going to talk about that. What else? If you read a book that's written by your favorite author and somebody just puts a piece of their writing in front of you, can you tell it's by them? Do you feel like they have a voice?" RN

"I think there are some specific habits of each author that they use if you are translating that's so tricky also to somehow translate these habits into your words." (Female Student)

"Exactly. Yeah, that is a difficulty that you want to rise to meet when you're translating prose. You're trying to capture in some way the author's voice and translate it into the new language, which is not easy. This is also something Umberto Eco touched upon. There is no such thing as a perfect translation. The struggle is real, but you do the best that you can." RN

Let's go up another level of difficulty. Let's say that you're translating a poem. Now what are the constraints that you're having to work with them? So you have the general information, What else? In poetry, what is the extra level of difficulty that's added?

"Poetry has a rhythm." (Female Student 2)

Absolutely, you have to start thinking about rhythm, rhyme scheme, yes, on top of the style, on top of the poetic or figurative language." RN

"On top of the voice." CV

"On top of information. So we're getting more layers on this onion. So now we add another layer of difficulty." RN

"Music!" (Male Student 2)

"Yes! Translating art song. What are the levels that come to that when you translate?" RN

"The timing, which word? which note?" (Male Student 3)

"Absolutely. So you have two sets of rhythm that you're working with all of a sudden. You have the poetic rhythm and the actual musical rhythm. You also have the...

"Phrasing and the melody." (Female Student 3)

"Yes, the phrasing and the melody. So I've experienced this. I worked at the Volksoper. Chanda mentioned this. We sing a lot of things that are translated from an original language into German. We're coming away from that, thank

God. But I have experienced this in professional translation where all of a sudden you're in the middle of an aria and you're like: "AAAAAAAAnd!" Because they just, they couldn't make it work.

And all of a sudden, a word that was supposed to be 'love' or 'heart' or 'soul' or something really important to us as human beings that feel becomes a conjunction.

"Or! Or!" CV

"I have experienced it more times than I can count. So you were kind of put into almost like a straight jacket when you were translating an art song from one language into another, because also you have words like, 'Wänglein', or you have multi-syllabic words for which the coordinating word in English is one syllable. And you get put into this interesting little pickle of how am I going to get this meaning across? I want to keep this word in the same place, but in German, this word takes four syllables and in English, this word takes one or two. So you have a lot of different elements that you have to work around which make it more difficult to get a translation that works." RN

"What else, if you're translating an art song for a singer, do you need to keep in mind if you're translating?" RN

"The vowels." (Female Student 4)

Thank you, yes, absolutely. You have to think about vowels, singability, and of course you have to think about the audience. What do they need to do?"

"Consonants" (Male student 3)

"Understand the text." (Female Student 5)

"They need to be able to understand what you're singing." RN

"And the breaths." (Female Student 3)

"Exactly. Also, you need to think about, you know, can I put a phrase where I have to think about, there's places, where the singer actually has to get some air back into their bodies to keep putting the text out. And these are all things that you have to take under consideration when you are doing a translation. So this is a little bit of my process that I go through." RN

"I brought my little handy dandy translation book. I am a very analog human being, so I do all of mine on paper. So these were the translations that I did for this song cycle. And you can see here a little bit of my process that I go through. And again, this is my process. I'm not saying this is the process or the way that everybody needs to do this, but these are the steps that I follow when I'm translating an art song." RN

"So first of all, you need to take a look at the poem, get an idea of the basic translation. You need to know the story. You need to understand what's going on. At that point, once you feel like you've really got a handle on the poem, you understand all the different figurative language that's being used, all the metaphors, then you go to the next step where you start to study the musical score. So you get the bones of the poem, then you get the bones of music. When you do that, you're going to want to identify key words both in the poem,

but also in the music. So you need to know if Schumann put a beautiful, in this song, "Ich will meine Seele", you have this beautiful 'Seele' melody that he's composed. You want to use the proper word there and not have 'and' or 'or' on this beautiful melody that he's given this beautiful emphasis to. So we go ahead and identify the keywords. You see that I did some underlining there. The next thing you're going to want to do is identify melodic stresses. Very often the keywords in the melodic stresses line up. They don't always, but they often do. After that, you're going to analyze the rhyme scheme of the original poem. I try very hard to stay within the rhyme scheme to stay true to the rhyme scheme. I noticed that Brian Benner did this as well, and I appreciate that very much. I think that a lot of music, especially in this song cycle, the phrases rhyme with each other. And if you take that rhyme away, you're robbing the audience of that extra level of art." RN

"We never talked about that translations I gave you. I gave you Richard Stokes' translations, which are some of my favorite, but they're not singable translations, and he doesn't have to do anything with the rhyme scheme. They're poetic translations, and I think they're very, very good for understanding the crux of the poetry, but they are very different types of translation. So it's just something we need to be aware of when we're thinking of them. They have different purposes" CV

"Another thing I do is I analyze the poetic rhythm. This is the meter. I'm sure that you guys are familiar with how that is built in poetry." RN

"Da-dum, da-dum, da-dum." (Female student 4)

"Exactly. We have anapest, iambic, trochaic, dactylic, spondaic...etcetera...

Then you're going to start to build your version of this piece. So you're going to start to build a framework. You're going to start to get an idea. Where am I going to put these important words? Where am I going to put these important stresses? What do I need to build to get there? And what babies am I willing to sacrifice? Because you have to do that. There's a saying that one of the elements of good writing is the ability to strangle your own babies because you're gonna have to. And it's not just in poetry writing." RN

"That's very dark..." CV

"I know it's very dark. But you fall in love with things that you write. It is, it's true. You fall in love with things that you write and you realize sometimes, okay, in order to get this, I have to sacrifice that. And so making these choices is part of the translation process. So then you start to explore your poetic options and decide what choices you're going to make to fill this framework and to be as true as possible to the poem. Because again, as somebody who writes poetry that is original versus translations, it is a completely different animal. Because this isn't about your poem, it's about someone else's poem and you are trying to serve their poem through your words. The next thing you're going to do is refine. And after that, you test the translation in practice. And actually, this is something that we came to when we were recording, where we actually had to

on the fly make adjustments because I was thinking of it as a soprano, and of course he's a tenor. So there were changes." RN

"I would say there's a total of maybe half dozen tweaks that we made. These are, they're amazing." CV

"May I ask you? Do you think you would be able to do this if you were not a singer yourself?" (Female Student 5)

"I don't think I would be able to do it in the way that I'm able to do it as a singer. I have an interesting certain set of skills." RN

"A very specific set of skills." CV

"Because I did study German poetry specifically and that was a huge part of my degree in German literature. I am a professional singer myself and I'm also a poet. So these three things come together and serve the music." RN

"This might be why has that not been done before too? I mean everyone knows it's a good idea, right? But how many germanistik, world-class sopranos do we have at our disposal, who also write poetry?" CV

"It seems so easy at first, it's just translating." (Female Student 4)

"Exactly! But actually the more you get into it, you're like, 'oh no, and I've written myself into a corner!' which leads me to our next slide. This is a tale of two translations. This is one that you're very familiar with. You've done number five quite a bit. The translation on the right is not by me, it is by a certain person named Hal Draper. This is, however, from the Oxford Lieder page. This is absolutely published, and I would like someone to volunteer to read Hal Draper's translation. Don't be shy." RN

"Anybody, go crazy." CV

"All right.

'Oh, let me plunge my heart  
deep, deep in the lily's cup  
and hear from its inmost part  
a song for my love breathe up.  
That song will tremble and quiver  
like the kiss on her redmouth-flower.

That once she let me give her  
one wonderfully sweet hour.'" (Female Student 3)

"So there's a few problems with this translation. Oh, dear God. Um, the glaring one is obviously mouth-flower. I've never heard anyone say that. I hope none of you have ever heard anyone say that. It's awkward." RN

"If someone asks to approach your mouth flower. Just run." CV

"Back away. But the thing that happened here is good old Mr. Draper got very hung up on his hour. He got hung up on "in wunderbar süßen Stund" and he was like 'Stund means hour, it must end with hour, I will make it rhyme!' And so he sacrificed..." RN

"Common sense." CV

“...What could have been a much nicer translation because he wanted that word ‘hour’ there so badly that he ended up committing the abomination that is mouth-flower.” RN

“With hyphens.” (Female Student 2, laughing)

“Yes, it’s truly dreadful. It’s also not singable. If you go note for note, this doesn’t actually line up. You can’t sing it. So it also kind of goes da-da on that. But there’s something else that’s more subtle, and I wonder if any of you notice it. This is not a true translation in a very important way.” RN

“‘Den sie mir einst gegeben,’ the other one is, she let me give her.” (Male Student 2)

“Exactly! Yes, good old Hal Draper, in his translation, has robbed the female character in the poem of her agency.” RN

“Just like that. CV

“I mean also ‘that she let me give her’ is so passive. She was just like on her mouth-flower.” RN (laughter)

“He was like: ‘I like to give you a kiss on your mouth-flower.’ CV (in a funny male voice, followed by laughter)

“It’s also not singable. I just tried it with the melody.” (Female student 4)

“Exactly, it doesn’t work. Yeah, it’s pretty awful.” RN

“And so this way leads to madness.” CV

“Now we’re going to go to my translation. Again, I’m not saying that my translation is the best translation.” RN

“It’s a very good translation.” CV

Something that also, you know, Brian Benner brought up the arrogance thing. I try not to approach it in that way, but you do have to have a certain amount of ‘I’m going to make decisions to convey meaning and I’m going to choose my battles. I’m going to choose the hills I want to die on. ‘Hour’ is not one of them.’” RN

“We’re all doing the best we can.” CV

“So this is my version and Eric can play the...” RN

“What you’re hearing now, those are edited, but not mastered yet. So this is not the final sound of it, but it gives you an idea about it.” ES

“And if you notice, you have the alignment of the really important words. So we have ‘Seele’ and ‘soul’, you have ‘Lilie’ and ‘lily’, you ‘Lied’ and ‘song’, and here we have ‘Kuss’ and ‘kiss,’ and I chose the word ‘lips’ because ‘mouth’ isn’t going to be something that I want to use in this particular translation. And then again, in this version, we gave her her agency back. So, she gave the kiss to him.” RN

“Going to be where I something that I want to use in this particular translation. And then again in this version we gave her her agency back, so she gave the kiss to him. The the the question of who kissed who I think is very important in this poem and then “in wunderbar süßer Stund” I translated to ‘time wonderf’ly



sweet eclipsed', which I think gets the sense of what is trying to be said without sacrificing meaning. However, it fits into the poetic framework.

And lets you avoid things like 'mouth-flower', which is lovely." RN

(The students listen to a recording of Eric Stokloßa and Chanda VanderHart performing the English version of *Ich will meine Seele tauchen - I'll pour my dear soul like a river*,)

"So that's the singable translation that we came up with." RN

(A student raises their hand)

"Yes, go right ahead." RN

"Sorry, I just maybe I'm maybe I'm terribly wrong, but it just rings... Is there something inside 'the song should shiver and glisten'? Why not 'the song shall, shiver and glisten.'" (Female Student 2)

"That is a choice you could make." RN

"Should' sounds nicer." CV

(The students all try singing the verse both ways)

"Should is more singable." (Male Student 4)

"Yeah, it's it's more singable really." (Female Student 3)

"Yeah, because it's round. You know it changes the the vowel sound but keeping it in the in the round vowel area, it just gives it a better overall sound."

ES

"It is interesting that there are no absolutes in translation. And that's actually one of the wonderful things. And also one of the frustrating things about translation is that there are so many choices. It's not mathematical." RN

"I was just wondering as a pianist." (Female Student 2)

"No, I totally understand. No, I appreciate it." RN

"It's a great question." CV

"Yeah, I appreciate the question. It actually highlights some of the difficulty in translation because you are presented with so many choices in many places and in other places, very few choices." CV

"So now going a little bit transitioning into the poems from the perspective of the female in the cycle, we want to talk about her side, her story of the poet's lover. What do we know about her?" RN

"We did this today. What do we know about her?" CV

"She didn't love him because she left him." (Female Student 2)

"She married another man." (Female Student 1)

"Maybe, we don't know. Maybe he dreams it. We don't know." CV

"I mean, we only know his side." (Female Student 3)

"Exactly. And that touches on something that I think is important. You have all, I'm sure, experienced this, where you have had a communal experience with another person, something very intense. But the way that the two of you would explain it is a completely different story." RN

"Or different focus, which makes it a different story, Right? Yeah." CV

"And so this is something that I tried to think about when I was writing Her Side of the story. I also think that there's a lot of inspiration in Schumann's music. If you listen to the love story that is portrayed in the music, do you think it's real? Do you think it's fake? What do you think? Does it sound artificial?" RN

"We talked about this. It's interesting. Can we just reiterate, since they weren't here yet, what we some of the ideas kicked around." CV

"What are the connotations of that, if it is real versus if it's all imagined?" RN

"I think that if it's real, there's a lot more body that you have for this woman and a lot deeper emotions that he attaches to her, where if it's imagined, it's just whatever he possibly could fantasize about her. And so there's significantly less depth to explore in that character." (Female Student 5)

"And does the music sound superficial to you when you listen to the Schumann *Dichterliebe*? Does it feel superficial? It's a it's a subjective question." RN

"I don't think so." (Male Student 4)

"You can say yes or no. I don't think so. It certainly doesn't feel superficial to me. And that was one of the things that I kept in consideration when I was writing her side of the story. But what do you think about this next point?

Women as object versus woman as subject in the *Dichterliebe*, How is she handled? Is she an object or is she a subject? What do you think?

Predominantly?" RN

"More of an object, I think." (Male Student 3)

"It's viewing her from the outside more than anything else. Right? Okay. And how is she portrayed? What do we know about her?" RN

"Again that way she left him and she's terrible. She made him very sad, very sad." CV

"Apparently she has a very nice looking face, we know that." (RN)

"Die Kleine, die Feine, Die Reine, Die Eine." (Male Student 1 quote the original poem - (the small one, the fine one, the pure one, the only one)

"But on the other hand she isn't guilty because he writes about "Die Schlange die dir am Herzen frisst." (The snake the eats at your heart) We talked about that before. So the other man is obviously guilty because he stole her away from him. So she's like innocent." (Female Student 4)

"Somehow innocent. But also he's upset with her, right? Yeah, because the

"Die Schlange die dir am Herzen frisst." (The snake the eats at your heart) Could also be like you're allowing the snake to feed on you, or whatever the snake represents." CV

"Yeah, that is also the the bad, the worst side of his disorder, because he has all of those bad, really bad dark feelings right after. Right after he has a manic episode." ES

"So Eric reads us as a very manic story and I was glad this group noticed that. You weren't here when we did the text, but they really said it seems like there's a big shift after the first of these sections." CV

"That makes it so interesting and challenging for the performer to do, because you're so intimate in one second and the next second you have to be almost violent. So it's a very good point." ES

"Yeah, and that happens in more cycles when you think about it, right? Where it's like love, love, love, death, sadness, and death." CV

"So now this leads me to the question that I actually was asking myself when I was writing her side of the story. But I want you to think about it for a second. How do you think this feels for her?" RN

"Well, I think, for a woman in the 19th century, there are a lot of social conventions that she actually has to fulfill. If she does not marry him, it doesn't mean automatically she doesn't love him. Maybe she just has no other choice." (Female Student 2)

"Absolutely. And honestly I was just as we were sitting here and listening, I was thinking about this when we look at song number six, "Im Rhine."

You actually have this juxtaposition in a way, because you have this very architectural, very heavy, very ordered structure. You've seen a Gothic cathedral, lots of lots of edges, very heavy feeling. It's almost like a really, really beautifully decorated prison. And what's inside?" RN

"God." Stephen DeLaney

"Specifically in this song. He's not singing about God -nspecifically in this song. What's kept inside of this structure?" RN

"The Virgin Mary." (Male Student 3)

"Which he equates with her. Yeah. I think it's a beautiful metaphor. But it's a very stylized picture, and I think it's very interesting. You have this painting of woman, this representative of the woman that he loves, encapsulated in this very strong institutional framework. And, you know, you hit the nail very much on the head when you were talking about the constraints that a woman in this time, specifically of her social standing, would be put under." RN

"We didn't talk about social standing, right. That never came up. What do we know about him in terms of his social class? Not so hot. Yeah. Poet. Not, not upper class." CV

"Like Rodolfo, in *La Boheme*." (Male Student 4)

"So what do we know about hers? She gets married." CV

She gets married, and she has a very opulent wedding, which would lead one to believe that she belongs to a certain social strata." RN

"That, by the way, is much easier in a cycle. Like, you sure the mood of them? Yeah. There, you know exactly where she where she came from. There, you know exactly you know you have a much higher, bigger, stronger builds up to death,

to despair, you know, because it's explained so much, but that's why the *Schöne Müllerin* is like twice as long as *Dichterliebe*." ES

"So something that I wanted to touch on specifically, we talk about her wedding.

How do you think it feels for her when this poet, that she had some kind of relationship with, just suddenly shows up at her wedding?" RN

"If we assume that the wedding is true? If we assume that it's real?" CV

"Yeah, someone said the word..." (Female Student 4)

"I described it as voyeuristic almost, yeah." CV

"Yeah, and that that he's showing up for his own desires and. Very much not caring about, her. He's only there for himself." (Female Student 1)

"Definitely on the outside looking, and actually that's a lot of what this is when you examine the way that he talks about her, it's a lot of outside perspective. So I wanted to give an inside perspective to her side of the story so we have some, 'he said, she said.'" RN

"I tried to write complementary poems from her perspective to each one of his songs, there were some that diverged." RN

"And I don't know if it is this super clear that. So we have the song cycle as it is, but in English. And then between the songs there are texts that are not sung and these are original poetry that Rebecca has written. So they fill in the blanks between the songs. So that we hear it from her perspective too. Does that make sense?" CV

"And prepare the the next song." ES

"So we'll start with the first song. This is the beginning of their story, so they're going to have a more similar experience at the beginning. And this is his side of it:

"The wondrous lovely month of May" "Im wunderschönen Monat Mai." RN  
(The students listen to "The wondrous lovely month of May")

"This was actually one of the translations that we had to rework in the recording process because we had a word that wasn't working for Eric on a specific note.

Because it was just a place in the passage of that was not possible to sing that specific vowel on. And so we rerecorded it. So the original translation that I had written "all the tender buds were blooming. That's when in my young heart first love came all-consuming." And for me that worked as a soprano. it sounded actually really nice, but when he sang it and as tenor, he was like, 'Nope, can't do it, sorry, please find another vowel.'" RN

"I mean, we actually, we recorded it and it was fine, but we listened to it and we were just that. That does not bring out the actual feeling of how it should sound." ES

"And it's the first song in the cycle."

"And so I sat down and worked on that and they recorded something else. And then this is the translation that we came up with. And now her complimentary poem to him.

I met him on a summer's day  
New life bloomed all around us  
What started out as childrens' play

Matured, young love had found us  
My smile had caught a poet's eye  
And he a love poem proffered  
My maiden's blush in my reply  
Accepted what he offered

So you see a difference in their voices as well. She's much more down to earth, less figurative language, less poetic." RN

"She's got other problems." CV

"Yes, this is true. You'll see that later. But it stays throughout the cycle that way that she's more down to earth. Her poetry is more about what's actually happening for her, much less metaphoric language." RN

"So actually I have a question about that. It's actually for the whole cycle. So in the recording, is it going to be released as individual tracks that are songs and then your poetry as a separate tracks or it will be one?" (Female Student 5)

"That's our hope. We have to wait to see what the label says." ES

"But in performance, we would like to alternate." RN

"When we do this as a recital, we of course do it alternating song and poetry." ES

"And we think that that can actually add a very nice element for the audience as well. Because then it's also because this can happen when you're in an art song recital, that it sort of sinks into the monotone. You keep hearing the same voice with piano through the entire evening. And as wonderful as the music is..." RN

"Maybe variety is nice too." CV

"You need to process it too. The audience needs to process what they're listening to." ES

"You know, so the poetry doesn't only counterbalance the the singing and the music, it also counterbalances thought." ES

"Did you have a question?" CV

"Yeah. I was just asking. So you will read your own poetry?" (Female Student 3) "Yes. So she did on the recordings." CV

"Why not sing it?" (Female Student 3)

"We thought about that. Actually. There are things to take into consideration if we did employ a composer to write music, to go with this. What style would it be? It could work. Actually, we have a composer who's interested in writing songs for these poems. It's also logistical consideration." RN

"There's also honestly, like if we think of this is a song cycle. If you bring in another totally different musical voice, that's also an interjection. I just don't know if I want that. It could completely work and be wonderful. It also, I think, really works the way we did it. Honestly, like I I kind of also feel like this is fine, this is nice." CV

"It would add another layer, which we already did two times with our work. You

know, we did a translation and we added original poems, so that would add a third layer.”

“I’m not against it, though.” RN

“No, none of us are against it.” CV

“There’s a very fine line where you start to overwhelm the audience or you could potentially overwhelm the audience and this might be a great project for the future, you know. But you know, it’s it’s already edgy what we’re doing.” ES

“But also, I have to say, as a historical musicologist, declamation was such a part of art song culture in the salon. The feeling between spoken text that you would read together and engage with like these new books, like in the reading circle and then singing poetry that happened really freely. And then the borders between it were not so strong. And I kind of like that. I kind of like the mixed media sort of feeling of it and that there’s this historical precedent for it. And I don’t think we do a lot of reading poetry out loud, especially not in English. And so I just kind of, I don’t know. I like that. I actually like how it works as it is. But there’d be nothing wrong with having someone set it if you found the right person.” CV

“What if you’re trying to keep the original piano compliment and just lay the text over the top without any tune?” (Female Student 1)

“You’ll see. You’ll see there’s a reason based on how she’s written it to not do it.” CV

“This one, it nearly works, ( Female Student 1) referring to the Lover’s first poem and the song “The wondrous lovely month of May”)

“I mean, then you’re giving her voice... it’s his again... or it’s Schumann’s again.” CV

“But I think it’s such a new side to the story and it’s such a strong poem and strong text. I think it makes perfect sense to me, but it does.” (Female Student 1)

“Let’s continue on. You can always do more, and it would be very interesting too. And that could be a next step, actually.” CV

“After the piano was like, gone. I was actually kind Of expecting there will be something which takes from the theme to the accompaniment and then that somehow modulates to the soprano.” (Female Student 2)

“This is also a very good idea. We are also thinking about this for some other parts of this project. Yeah, it is definitely, and that is the advantage and the fantastic part of doing projects like this, of working in academics, of doing research, coming up with these ideas, coming up with these new ways of expressing music and poems and style.” ES

“And you can always lay more things on something, right? I mean, we put this out there and then it’s it’s out there, and then it’s free for anybody to pick up and do with what they want. I mean, that’s the wonderful thing about the death

of the author, is that not that you're actually dead, but that once the text is out there, it's no longer yours, it's available." CV

"And you know you have to keep in mind you are in a way you have a rare opinion and you're in a rare position that you are actually you are you're craving for those things you know you want to to experience new ideas and new ways of interpreting music, but I promise you, there is a huge part of the classical music audience who will already think that this is..." ES

"Sacrilege" CV

"It's like blasphemy, which is also really important to think about. But since this came as a research project, you know, we see it as such very strongly - that this is a new approach. This is a new idea. We are not doing this to, you know, to create a new art form and make money." ES

"No, we're doing it because we love the music. We love the piece." RN

"Yeah, and what I do have to say, But what I think comes so strongly through Rebecca's poetic commentary on this piece and how she translates the poetry too is her love and respect for these two characters. And that's just another example of how you personally read something, affects how you then interpret it." CV

"Oh 100 percent." RN

"In a really, really specific way. And I think that's one thing that I like so much about this, is that your love for these characters comes through so clearly. On we go to the next example." CV

"We've run into this one a few times, so we know this text and we've listened to it once. "Ich will meine Seele tauchen" number five, This is her answer to this. And we've already talked a little bit about the constraints that were on a young woman during this period of time, so you'll understand that what she describes in this poem is actually very radical.

*We meet in secret one last time,  
I carry out my plan.  
I give my heart, my soul, my all  
To my beloved man.*

*There's pleasure, but there's also pain,  
In this, our final tryst,  
I feel his heart beat in my chest,  
He feels my heart in his.*

*And I profess my deepest love  
But cannot hide my sorrow,  
Because I know that this pure bliss,  
Will die upon the 'morrow.*

*He holds me tight as we embrace,*

*I fight the pain inside,  
If only he had means to wed,  
I would become his bride.*

"So you see from the context of what she's saying, she loves him, she wants to be with him. It's not possible. I actually have a poem that I didn't put in the project in the slides that goes before this, that kind of explains why." RN

"You always have to keep in mind the context of the time in which the story is being told. And interestingly for the poet, the constraints of his life weren't that different than they would be today. I mean, if you want to be a poor, starving artist now versus then, it's not that different." RN

"The reality of your life is different, but your social class is not that different." CV  
"But for her, there's a big difference. So this is a poem that goes right before this one for her, before she makes the choice to meet him one last time.

There's two, actually. I'm going to read you both, and they're about her parents. So this first one is about her father:

*My father says he has a plan.  
A contract has been signed.  
I must belong to some strange man  
Until the end of time.*

*I cry, I protest bitterly  
This choice that would be mine.  
Yet father sneers dismissively  
And drinks his glass of wine.*

*My maiden head, so highly prized,  
Should now go to this stranger.  
I make a quick, rebellious plan,  
Near swooning from the danger.*

*My hand may be my father's ware  
To sell as he sees fit,  
My heart, however, is not his.  
I hold control of it.*

This next one is about her mother.

*My mother is an empty shell  
She does what father orders  
She gives no respite from my hell  
But firmly draws the borders*

*Of what's acceptable for me  
how I each day should live  
I see her watching warily*



*No missteps she'll forgive.*

*My mother is an empty shell  
Wrapped up in silk and lace  
The worries that she does not tell  
Lie etched upon her face.*

*She echoes for the hundredth time  
The tale of her poor sister,  
Who lost her virtue, and her mind,  
To one beguiling trickster.*

*He promised her the stars, the moon,  
If she would give her passion,  
But his false love was gone too soon,  
Then her sweet face lay ashen,*

*Upon a pillow in a tomb,  
Dressed up as if a bride  
A secret child still in her womb  
By her own hand she died.*

*My mother is an empty shell  
That's what she wants for me,  
To languish chaste, to marry well  
Devoid of liberty.*

And so she makes a plan, and she carries it out. She meets with him.” RN  
“Did you guys understand the poem, though? What have we learned then about her perspective and through those two very brief poems?” CV

“That she has no choice.” (Female Student 3)

“That she's got no choice, and that there's a whole family history that feeds into this as well as all the social constrictions and constraints of the time. And this is a completely realistic thing that happened all the time. Women were first of all, committing suicide very, very, very often in both the 18th and the 19th century. We'll talk about that a little bit later, but illegitimate children were a huge, a massive issue and it was incredibly scandalous, and would ruin your social chances.” CV

“Absolutely. So they've had this tryst. He explains it more poetically, but it's very clear.” RN

“He poured it, remember about the flower. So yeah, that's what's happening here. So she says it more explicitly. She said we had an affair one last time.” CV

“And that brings us to her wedding. Her wedding to someone else.”

(The students listen to *A choir of flutes and of fiddles* - #9)

"So when I was writing her response to this, I actually listened to this music over and over again, and to me, the music specifically in the piano, it's almost like this crazy-making intoxicated, very oppressive atmosphere of almost like forced celebration is what it feels like." RN

"There is. If you look at the music at the end when he's singing, "dazwischen schluchzen und stöhnen die lieblichen Engelein." There you see that he explicitly writes the voice in like mezzo forte, piano even but the piano is going fall out in in the high range. So he actually wants exactly what Rebecca just said to happen. He wants to drown the voice, he wants to drown the singer. He does not want this to be really audible. So and this is sometimes the mistake. I mean, there's different interpretations. This is sometimes the mistake that the singers or the collaborators decide to take the piano really really quietly because it's it's written so unfortunately for for the singer, but I think that's a mistake. You really have to play it so that the singer is almost like 'what, what? What's he saying? Why what's happening?' that the singer is drowning in that moment." ES

And then the end, the (postlude) da da, da, da, da, it's like for me the swoon, it's like losing consciousness." CV

"And then afterwards, the next number is the most beautiful, spheric song coming up." ES

"After. And so in writing her response to this, I wanted to take that oppressive - I don't know if any of you have ever had the experience of being at a celebratory event when you didn't feel like celebrating. It is one of the worst feelings. Where everyone is happy and you know, you're trying to just get through the evening, you know? And I was imagining that this is what she's going through. And now imagine you're being forced to marry someone you don't love. This wasn't your choice. You look across the room, and there he is. How is this for her? So I tried to put that into words. This is her response." RN

*The man I wed I do not love  
Despite this gaudy show,  
I hide my grief behind a smile  
And no one seems to know.*

*I look across the crowded hall  
And lo, who do I see?  
The poet I loved over all  
Stands glaring hate at me.*

*His countenance a mad man's mask  
His eyes are wide - a ghost.  
My husband raises up his glass*

*To bid the wedding toast.*

*I smile and raise my glass to his  
This hollow gesture done,  
I turn my eyes and search the room  
To seek my only one.*

*But he has fled far from this place  
I never had the chance  
To tell him why I made my choice  
They start the bridal dance.*

*The trumpets and the violins,  
They scream their happy tune,  
The wedding guests, like harpies,  
Spin 'round this fetid room.*

*And I am swept away, away,  
With friendly, smiling eyes,  
I've traded my true love today  
To live a farce of lies.*

“So you feel that their lives are diverging in their paths now, but I wanted to show a different perspective of what could be going on, because in the song you just have this outside perspective.” RN

There's a lot more poems in between. But we don't have time. So this is the the old and angry music: “Die alte Böse Lieder” the final piece.” RB

“We're already at the end. Isn't that great?” CV

“A lot of things happen in between.” CV

“So, it's it's as we as we said before it's flip-flopping. It's emotional flip flopping around the the whole time in this whole cycle and the last song is special in many different ways. First of all, he sums up his feelings which are ultimately leading to his death and then because it's Schumann. He ends the whole cycle with one of the most amazing postludes in in all of song.” ES

“Which they've actually not heard.” CV

“So you know, I think it's a very, very impressive song. It's a very deep song. The final line of the song, when he's so in German he's saying “Wißt ihr, warm Der Sarg wohl so groß und schwer mag sein? Ich senkt' auch meine Liebe und meine Schmerz hinein.” and in English we say, “Do you know why the coffin so great and vast must be? I drowned all of my love and all my pain with me.” And this is just when you sing that after having sung that whole cycle and you sing that it just.

It just hits you so hard and then you have to listen to this beautiful postlude afterwards, which is probably for the singer the hardest part of the whole evening is having to stand there with your own thoughts for about 3 minutes listening to the postlude." ES

"Just a second, you guys made a very good point. It's an interpretative license to say "with me," CV

"That was a choice." RN

"It's a choice."

"Correct." ES

"Yeah. And it's deciding. It's, it's definitely saying this is the interpretation that that we see." CV

"And we had a big conversation about that." RN

"Sure. And and honestly, we talked, we were like, 'does he die?' Is it like, you know.

We actually don't know what else. That's what's kind of beautiful about Heine's poem. The way it works in English? Yes. Yeah. 'Love with me'. I'm buried. So there's yeah, it's it's a it's a it's a choice." CV

"We just imagined..." ES

"It's a beautiful ending and it works for me. It's got to work at the end of the day." CV

"Just imagine at the end Schumann being in the mental asylum, just by himself, just with his thoughts." ES

just with his thoughts, being sick. You know, you don't have to die to be dead." ES

"The death is can be metaphorical. It can be the death of your hope." CV

"Could just be your thoughts your, resignation." ES

"Emotional death." CV

"Yes. Shall we?" ES

(The students listen to *The old and angry music* - #16)

"So the postlude actually inspired me to write her response to him and it is this." RN

*I heard the chilling news today,  
That my love took his life.  
They found him in the river,  
With a note marked "For my wife."*

*And in some secret kindness,  
His note came here to me,  
Inside it were his final poems,  
His love for all to see.*

*Before I can dissolve in tears,  
I hear our daughter's cries,*

*I lift her and take solace  
In her father's dulcet eyes.*

"Because to me," RN

"Netflix!" (Female Student 4) (positive laughter)

"Because to me, this music at the end is so beautiful and so healing, healing and positive. There's got to be something that comes out of it that makes it beautiful." RN

"... the next season." (Female Student 4) (positive laughter)

"And to me it's her. It's this..." RN

"female child, as you can tell, that Rebecca's already decided that the baby is a girl." CV

"Yes, it is. Yes, it's a choice. I made a choice, but to me it adds A dimension to the story. It doesn't take anything away from the original cycle, in my opinion, but I feel like you feel more of a human connection, both of them this way. You feel in the connection to this woman who was put in this impossible situation. She can't be with the poet."

"In one of the poems that I've read to you, she says a child and mother cannot live from pretty words alone, you know, she can't be like, well, Mom, Dad, I can't have a career because it's, you know, this period of time and I've been born into this social class, so I can't even have a normal job. But you know, guess what? I'm pregnant. Ha ha... And the father is this poet who lives in the woods and talks to trees." RN

"Mostly flowers." CV

"So I find that it's a way to make something that we love and respect, make contact and touch an audience that may otherwise not be able to make a connection to it. And the main audience that we did this for is a predominantly English speaking audience, But as Chanda mentioned, I do believe that there is value also for a German speaking audience in this experience." RN

"Honestly, I hope that you know we're, if you have any questions, we will take them. That can be my point with the second-half of what we did today is not to convince you that any of these projects are the way to go, or that you people have to do things like this at all. It's simply to encourage you to to make whatever you engage in musically your own and find ways to connect with it in ways that really resonate with you. And again, from my perspective as a historical musicologist, Lied was always a very vibrant and very socially engaged form. It wasn't something that people just did in this one format. And we've narrowed the way we experience art song to this one very, very specific, very narrow thing that doesn't reflect the rainbow of what used to be art song. That really engaged with people and with social concerns and with politics and with life and was performed in churches and bars and people's houses and salons and all sorts of different functions. Yeah. So I hope what all my study of Lied has given me, and what I hope to convey where the most urgently to all of you is that just that there's - you can feel really free. There's no thing that you

can't do with song. it's song. Yeah? so and and every experience I've had playing with it has never taken anything away from me from the from the original. It's only added to my understanding of of how it's like traditionally done, but it's allowed me to engage much more deeply with a text and feel much more personally connected with it and I hope that you find - I look forward to seeing what you experiment with over the course of this semester.” CV

“Yeah, it was a beautiful experience getting to work with these two and watch them record these new translations.” RN

“We recorded this at my university in Texas.” ES

“Could you, if you were to bring it to a German speaking audience, would you consider translating your poems into German?” (Female Student 3)

“We talked about that. I do think it would be possible.” RN

“Yeah. But it's interesting you were here for that. We were talking about a different project, the project of the Erlkings, which is kind of a Schubert rock ensemble, and they perform exclusively, almost, in Germany and Austria in English, and German language audiences will say that they found more connection to these songs in the English translation, just because you're used to hearing song in English, at least in the genre that they do it in. Now with this, it's a question, right? It's probably very weird.” CV

“But it's very interesting, and we talked about this before that even for me and I am a German speaker, it opened up a completely new world doing this in English. It gave me, and I performed this so many times in German and I'm doing it in English.” ES

“Yeah, originally we were planning to do parallel English and German versions and then we did the English and we were like, ‘No, it's good. We don't need to make another German language recording.’” CV

“So on the same CD, German and English just as a sort of translation project, but then it evolved into into this, where we would add the original poetry, and for me as a German it gave me a completely new perspective of the whole subject of Schumann's songs in general, where I, because I didn't do it in my own native language, got deeper understanding of what it actually means. That it sounds so weird, but it is.” ES

“You really need to go to the essence of it. Expressing it's different and so you express like a different facet of the story.” (Female Student 4)

“Correct.” ES

“How is it for you, Benedict?” CV

“Same, the translation is so deep.” (Male Student 3)

“Yeah.” CV

“Exactly.” ES

“And if you take the translation and the original, the German, and you have to think about it's a new life and a new perspective to you.” (Male Student 3)

“Yeah, isn't it wild?” CV

"And that is something you cannot expect or foresee if you do a project like this. That's why we were planning on doing it completely differently, and then after having starting to sing the translated versions, we were like, 'there's no way that we can kind of juxtapose this with the original German' because it just doesn't..." ES

"It's a totally different thing." CV

"It doesn't make any sense. You know, even though this is like probably the most poetic true to to Heine translation there is out there, you know. But it makes so much more sense to do this just in English. And then on top of that, those original poems which and I hope it comes across it just it just gives you a both modern and very, very deep, like historical, almost conservative understanding of Heine's poems, you know and I think this is the greatest outcome you can wish for when you do a project like this - that it actually goes in a completely different direction from what you've thought and you actually feel much better about your whole research after having gone in a different direction, and that's the beauty of doing academics, of doing research, It's opening up new worlds to our beloved art form." ES

"And maybe a final thought because I know we are over time. Now you do have to go, but this isn't the solution that I would recommend other people to do. I would never have just anyone do it. I mean again, she has a very specific set of skills you know and like other, like the modern music project they have a very specific set of skills. I got to find. And then the Erlkings like the Earl kings could be a disaster but they also have a very specific set of personality and skill set. So we're all multifaceted people we all have multiple interests find your own voice and in in music if that's something that you feel like doing and as long as it's authentic and good, it's fine." CV

"Embrace failing." ES

"Yeah, but also being amazing embrace being amazing as well." CV

"Yeah, but we all do that anyways, you know. But I can only encourage you to to think outside of the box to try out new things to really go over then the borders of what is the norm." ES

"Think outside the flower." CV

"Get get drowned. Get drowned, get drowned by the music." ES

"Ruining flowers for everybody. Go, go buy some lilies for your mother and think about that." CV

"No mouth-flowers" ES

"no mouth-flowers." CV

"Yeah. Good bye. Thank you all very much. Yeah, thank you. Thank you.

And see some of you in my in my class on Monday. We'll start on Monday." CV  
(Applause)

{Post Class Discussion}

"I loved the poems! Honestly it's so good, they have so much depth." Female Student

"Well you know I didn't live in the time period that she lives in, but I did live in the South, in Texas, which is very religiously conservative, and so like this this element of pressure from society and the religious world that they are weighing down upon a person, I am very intimately aware of, and so I was able to bring that color, I think, to this." RN

"It was funny because sorry, this is I was, yeah, I was just talking to someone about Lied because I was studying in England, especially in England, and he, well he works in Berlin, and he was saying, 'yeah, in England, I always find that they approach it even more conservatively because they don't have the language. So they really approach it conservatively and for him, it doesn't express anything, because it's not the native language and you're singing these song cycles to people who don't understand it. So this is like such a great way to make it accessible to the English speaking world, and like bringing it to England. That's so cool." (Female student 3)

### Babb-Nelsen's translation process

Babb- Nelsen describes her own process, applied to each of Heine's 16 poems used in Schumann's *Dichterliebe*, as following a step-by-step pattern:

1. Get a feel for the poem, do the "word archeology" - meaning delving into the full meanings of antiquated words and obscure cultural references as well as contemporary context - required to fully comprehend the literal and figurative meaning of the poem.
2. Study the musical score and identify the stressed words vis-a-vis the composed melody.
3. Identify the key words in the poem that are the top priority for direct translation.
4. Analyze the rhyme scheme and attempt to fit the translated poem into that rhyme scheme.
5. Analyze the poetic rhythm of the piece and identify any potential pitfalls
6. Begin to build a poetic framework based on keywords, rhyme scheme, keywords and rhythm making concessions where necessary to preserve the most important elements and intentions of the poem.
7. Refine.



8. Test the translation in practice with the singer and tweak the text where necessary, this can be very individual.