

British 1

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Question 1

I notice that all three songs start with a short but substantial introduction with a clear sequence of dominant and tonicized chords, making the tonality and starting pitches for the vocalist very clear. The verses are also separated by very strict introduction patterns and repeating melodic gestures, but commonly also have a small textural change. The piano parts are also quite supportive: all three songs give the piano minimal melodic material, and the harmonic textures are all simple chorale parts or simple arpeggios.

Side note: I did not know Samuel Coleridge-Taylor was British.

Question 2

- (a) Compared to the Mahler and Brahms orchestrations we heard, these seem similarly grand but with less of a vocalist-first composition. I found both pieces beautiful but quite difficult to pick out the vocalist. I would assume the intent is for the full ensemble colour more than the effect of an orchestra accompanying a vocalist.
- (b) I think the information of the painting is fun, but, unless the recital or recital group had more songs with affiliated paintings, I wouldn't include the information in a programme note.

Question 3

My first thought is that Britten's "Salley Gardens" sounds strikingly like the Scottish folk song "Loch Lomond", which is quite dear to me. The song "Pray Goody" is delightful! I can't believe I hadn't heard it before. I can't say I'm especially fond of "When You're Feeling Like Expressing Your Affection", but it's cute and short and would make for a great pre-recital or post-encore piece in a more casual setting. The Sonnet and the "Nurse's Song" are more in line with the style of music I immediately associate with Britten. I'm always intrigued, and Britten is a brilliant composer that I wish enticed me more.

Question 4

Yes, firmly. I think this is probably my favourite song we've heard this semester. There's so much artistry in the voice and piano and the organisation of the two I find it breathtaking. My justification of this piece as art song comes in relation to other pieces I justify as art song and put in conversation with this one. The most interesting of the pieces we've looked at this semester that I think can be put in discourse with "Life Story" is William Bolcom's "Amor". If that song (and the containing set) is firmly in the world of Art Song - though it sidesteps plenty of the expectations of the category - then I cannot find reason why, in a similar vein, this cannot be Art Song.