



Victorian
Opera



BANQUET OF SECRETS

Education Resource

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BANQUET OF SECRETS EDUCATION RESOURCE

Introduction

This resource enables students and teachers of music or drama to better understand the process of creating a new work, in particular how the creative team and the performers worked to create this work. It is written in the context of senior school music and drama curriculums.

This resource has been compiled with significant input and time from the creative team and the singers involved. Their input has been exceptionally valuable.

Overview

Banquet of Secrets is a 'chamber music theatre' work written by two of Australia's leading creatives – Steve Vizard and Paul Grabowsky.



A dish from *Banquet of Secrets* © Bri Hammond

Steve and Paul are old friends who met at University in the 1970's, and have collaborated on many projects since. In 2014, Steve shared a story with Paul about a lunch he had attended some ten years earlier that had profoundly affected him. Two of Steve's friends hosted a long, delicious lunch, with many elaborate dishes, and it inspired a great sharing of memories by the host and his guests. Unfortunately, the host died during the night following the lunch. It had been his last meal. Paul decided that this was a story that needed telling.

The work was commissioned by Victorian Opera in late 2014. With the support of Artistic Director Richard Mills, Steve and Paul embarked on creating a work for the 2016 season. Steve came up with the original storyline, based on the memory of that meal. The words were then sent through to Paul and by early 2015 the first workshop was held at VO.

A second workshop was held at Horti Hall with the singers, who by then had been cast, and the Director, Roger Hodgman. By this stage, much of the work had been written, and after the private showing at the end of the week it was clear that the work was progressing well. During the rehearsal process, further refinement of the score and script was undertaken.

Banquet of Secrets is being presented in partnership with Arts Centre Melbourne as part of the Melbourne Food and Wine festival. It is also being performed in Brisbane at the Powerhouse in April.

Creative Team

Composer - Paul Grabowsky

Book and Lyrics - Steve Vizard

Direction - Roger Hodgman

Set & Costume Design – Christina Smith

Lighting Design – Matt Scott

Characters

Jean Pierre – Kanen Breen

Mia (Amelia) - Antoinette Halloran

Drew - David Rogers-Smith

Rose - Dimity Shepherd

Guido, the waiter – Michael Carman

Synopsis

Four friends meet for dinner, they are long-time friends who have caught up every year since university. Jean Pierre has instigated this particular dinner. They arrive at the restaurant during a storm. After they each share the latest drama of their current lives and reminisce about their friendship and this particular restaurant's role in it. Jean Pierre proposes that during the dinner they each share a secret – one that has not previously been shared with everyone. They share during an elaborately crafted meal, each revealing a genuinely significant secret, at some cost to them individually and as a group.

Writing the Score – In conversation with Paul Grabowsky



Steve Vizard & Paul Grabowsky

Banquet of Secrets composed by Paul Grabowsky, incorporates many styles of music. The hybrid of jazz, Latin, classical and music theatre creates a complex and detailed musical journey. For the singers the work requires them to shift seamlessly between music theatre and opera, from being led by the lyrics to being led by the melodic line. The music is sophisticated and challenging, full of beautiful tunes. Much of it has a melancholic feel to it. Theatrically, the work is all set during the course of one evening, and is almost like a song cycle full of memories.

The clear influence of Paul's jazz background is apparent throughout the work. Paul described his music, 'If there is a Grabowsky style...I have a harmonic language which I've crafted over many years playing jazz music. And contemporary jazz, a lot of it is informed by an advanced harmonic concept of what we call poly chords where you have elements of different keys happening at the same time. There's still

traditional voice leading as in conventional harmony but the base line of what you might call consonant and dissonant are considerably broader. Whereas in classical harmony people talk about triads and common chords, they step outside of that with great reluctance in a way. The jazz language is a very rich language, you know it is coming out of the vocabulary of the American popular song but along the way it has picked up a lot of information from 20th century European music, which is a huge influence. When I think of the French composers, starting with Ravel moving onto Messiaen with the extended harmony there and then a great interest of mine is German harmony of the expressionists of the Vienna school, Schoenberg and Weber. I love that music, I know it's not everybody's cup of tea but I really, really love it. I particularly love Schoenberg's harmonic language.

'Camino De Santiago references another great love of mine which is medieval music but also in Camino there's a real tribute to the music of Gil Evans. Gil Evans was one of the great collaborators of Miles Davis, together they created a classic album called Sketches of Spain and that's the way that I move some of those chords, the close harmony. It's a habanera'.

So my style is, I love tunes, so I try to write beautiful melodies, but my melodies are always sitting on top of harmonic language which is tending towards irresolution and melancholy, and ambiguity. I love ambiguity, which suggest all sorts of possibilities but never quite arriving at them.

'I was driven in most of the work by the words. The words in most cases came first. Steve's words have great depth, they are not clichéd.

'We would do a draft of the song and then we would send it backwards and forwards and then I'd make suggestions or Steve would say I think we need another C section here. We'd talk a lot in A, B and C sections for a lot of the songs. Because having been raised on the American song book I know the value of a great bridge. You know you've got an A section to a song, but the real meat and potatoes is the bridge, because the bridge takes you to another place. So that when you return you have a sense of having come home. That's a very powerful thing in music, the sense of return. I know I said about irresolution, but even in that structure, even if that A section is in itself ambiguous it is a world that you need to return to. And maybe that world has been sparked by a sense of anxiety or asking questions... There's a lot of asking of questions in this show. In fact it's pretty much all about that.

'The only resolution is really our final resolution, in the beautiful key of Db major, of friendship. And what I've asked the singers to try and achieve in that is going to be challenging for them because it seems to be growing big but I actually want them to grow but recede at the same time. So that it's growing in tessitura but it's actually receding in dynamic.' The musical techniques used by Paul are strongly influenced by his jazz roots. 'One of the great tools that I use is, I'm a great user, almost abuser, of the enharmonic modulation. So the idea that you take a note which is common to keys which otherwise have very little to do with each other, they may only be joined by this one tone. It might be a major seventh in one chord, say take the note B in the key of C major, B is the major seventh but I can pivot around that note and go from C to B minor, or it becomes a Cb and it becomes a flat 6 in the key of Eb minor. You can make these wild modulations completely unprepared modulations and it breaks every rule of conventional harmony, I'd fail every harmony exam but it's what modern music is about. I don't even think of it as jazz anymore I learnt my craft through jazz but it has taught me most of all to think quickly on my feet, but to be a good jazz improviser you have to think on the go, you've got to listen like a thief and make important musical decisions like that. So I like to work quickly and I think if you work quickly you get a flow. If you agonise over something too much there's probably something wrong with it, probably because it's just not quite there. It's better to turf it out and have another crack.'

As a composer Paul was very forthcoming about his creative process. 'I'm at point in my own creative trajectory where I am comfortable with what I do. Owning your own creative process is a really big deal as an artist, and a lot of artists suffer from tremendous anxiety and a terrible lack of confidence because every new work is a blank page that is screaming at them. It's a kind of ordeal and over the years I have become very relaxed about that thing that I do, it comes from a lifetime of thinking about music. I love collaborating and jazz is a very collaborative kind of music making and very democratic form of music making in very powerful ways. I tell you what it's been a really great process writing this work, it's been remarkably free of stress, I think the flow's been very natural, we've agreed on just about everything, even where we've disagreed we've come to a resolution.'

Steve agreed that the process has been positive. 'A large part of it is about trust, I trust Paul's judgement. Paul's as good as anyone at modifying stuff and responding. And I think it's a big deal for a company like Victorian Opera to give people the space.'

Paul talked about the way that he worked in writing the song "Remember Summer". 'I've tried to allow the rhythm and the texture of the music to be apposite to the kind of emotional state of the music.' And in general his writing for this work he described that 'for the big sort of lyrical soliloquies I've gone into a kind of Grabowskian Bel Canto mode but leading into those it's more of a discursive formic kind of slightly deconstructed kind of musical way.'

Creating the Libretto – In conversation with Steve Vizard



A dish from Banquet of Secrets
© Bri Hammond

This work has been loosely written as a three act structure. It begins with a series of soliloquies, followed by the song "If Walls Could Talk", which introduces their combined story, the meaning of the venue and the idea of each friend sharing a secret. Act Two sees them entering the world of sharing their secrets and the parts of the meal. Three of the secrets are shared and the consequences of these secrets are exposed. At the end of this section they are met with the reality of their own failings. Act three commences with the song "Friendship" which has the four friends explore the state of their relationships. Finally, Jean Pierre reveals his secret, which has shattering consequences.

Steve Vizard, he explains - 'One of the purposes of this thing, if there is a purpose, is to create a series of intense emotional experiences that ask the fundamental question of how do I find meaning in my life? The themes are loss and love, which are not separate things.

One of the losses and one of the loves is actually yourself.' Each of the character's secrets involves a loss and the grief of that loss. Overlaid is the loss of self, the re-examining of your life, of what you wanted to be and what you actually did. In this annual dinner '...it's almost an earnest attempt to anchor themselves, to make their dreams somehow come true.'

'How do I define who I am? What are the rituals and what are the things by which I try to create me? We do it with our dress and how we talk to our friends, but some people do it by keeping diaries or by taking photos or by sending instagrams. We are constantly preserving, particularly in social media'.

And then there's the theme of death. 'How we depart, I don't think there wouldn't be a person who doesn't at some time think about it. If I was told that I only had x amount of time to live how would it affect me, would it change what I do, would I live differently? Would I go anywhere different? For some the only way they can find that or consider that seriously, is when facing death.'

This production centres on sharing a meal, about which Steve elaborated. 'The food is important because it's a ritual. There's no accident that some of the seminal things in literature and in history and in our own lives revolve around eating. And eating's not just a physical necessity it's a metaphorical business as well. It brings people together, it's about the breaking of bread, drinking of wine, and it has a religious significance. It's got all the elements. It goes to the heart of being human, both in terms of sustenance and in terms of our social interaction and who we are as collective beasts.

So the idea of the meal is not just a setting, it's central to the proposition that these people find purpose through unity and collectivity in a way. So that's at the heart of the piece. Sure there's a whole lot of issues of how that meal is served, the practicality, what is the meal and all of that, but the joy of the meal and the coming together is at the heart of it.'

'It's about 85% sung and 15% dialogue. I think the danger for something completely sung through is that no matter how strong musically the whole thing is, you can be lulled, so I think sometimes you just need to arrest. So occasionally in the middle of something that is entirely sung, speech can be arresting. One style of dialogue is the setting up of the revelation of the secret which is spoken, and likewise, funnily enough, for exactly the same reason we decided not to have a song for Jean Pierre's secret. Most of the other secrets are revealed in song, he reveals his secret in spoken word then sings his reaction to that in song.

'Some are descriptive of the things that are going on, some have the form of a soliloquy like the four opening songs. "If Walls Could Talk" is a choral song, virtually every secret is an aria that becomes a duet. In the middle is a new song called "Like Me". It's a light song, I saw in the workshop that it [the work] is emotionally really draining and we needed a relief point, so after the first two secrets, we put in a sort of a landing pad just for them [the singers] to regroup. So we invented a lighter moment, it's about Rose's dating, it's a cabaret song essentially and harks back to their university days when they did a uni review or something like that. One is playing the piano and the two girls are singing. Another reason I put it in was because I saw that the two girls actually are really strong musical theatre performers and they perform really well together and I thought why wouldn't you write a duet for that? All the other songs are performed in character and here's almost a show piece, where they're actually performing, so they're doing like a Cabaret show piece together. I wrote that specifically for them, and a duet because I heard how they sing together.'

JEAN PIERRE

So...What have you been up to?

(A beat ...Then an eruption of parallel simultaneous dialogue, a heightened compressed gush of both listening and outpouring. These parallel conversations will occur intermittently throughout)

DREW

"Sunny, late showers"! If that's a bloody shower!!

It's my old haircut ..with three litres of water poured on it..and two years of no exercise

Bought a racing bike ... used it once. Should have seen me in the lycra.

Issie's at Schoolies -I'm worried sick...waiting for that phone call Kill for a beer!

Never thought Id get here

MIA

I absolutely love your new haircut!

We were in Paris...I'm sooo sorry I missed it..

Taken up French...again.. Third time lucky

Which reminds me, I've got my Godsons birthday gift... No idea whether "boys" like this sort of thing!

Love a champagne!

So good to be here

JEAN PIERRE

A beautiful man, your Father!

Never forget the look on his face when he bailed you out. Kensington Police Station?... After that rally?

Remember when we skinny dipped? Gallery moat?

What was the little car you had..a Fiat?

A delightful Chablis..!

Now that we're all here...

ROSE

Haven't seen you since your Dads funeral..

You're looking more like your Dad..

Are we still doing presents?

Got the first open for inspection tomorrow!

That was your "I'm going to change the world phase!"

Seriously, Im not drinking this year!

Can you believe we're all here

An example of overlapping dialogue used in the libretto.

Steve found the workshop process very useful, although it didn't help him with the plot. The workshop process was essentially about the music. 'I found this interesting. The focus of an opera company is entirely about the music. And that's largely because they're taking existing works which are already well developed, and then it's just honing the music, how we present the music. I'm a little bit old fashioned – I need to hear someone read it. That way we can get a sense of the dramatic arc of it.'

'The part that I've enjoyed most has been working with Paul and the singers. It's been fantastic. I think Paul and I are both emotionally invested in it because it is about things that we know about and people we tangentially know about. We're both busy and it's great with a project like this it forces you to stop. The thing about actually creating stuff, writing, is that you actually have to stop and do it. And it takes time.'

The direction and design

The direction and design of *Banquet of Secrets* was also influenced by the workshop process. Director Roger Hodgman, was involved from the beginning, participating in both the workshops. 'He felt from an early stage that we needed to keep things simple, focussing on the four strong central characters... it needed bold, emotionally connected performances and simple staging.'



Roger explained, 'because the bulk of the evening is set around the dinner table we tried to make the space as immediate as possible – allowing the audience to focus on the characters. A simple space. We felt too much naturalism, other than in the props, would hinder the story telling rather than enhance it, it would be different on film'.

The centre piece of the design is a large, elaborately-crafted table and huge overhead mirror, enabling the feast to be shared with the audience.

The musicians are on stage, allowing Paul Grabowsky to conduct from the stage. While the two groups don't interact theatrically, a musical dialogue is created between the singers and the musicians which enhances the chamber theatre feel of the work.

A dish from *Banquet of Secrets*
© Bri Hammond

This production is inherently theatrical. There are; soliloquies (arias), strong, authentically-expressed emotions, representational/non naturalistic staging and scenes based in realism, props, costumes and food – real and fabricated.

Although the story is set at a dinner, all the creatives were aware that four characters at a table doesn't necessarily make for an interesting theatre piece. 'We take every opportunity we can to get them away from the table. The dialogue is dealt with more or less naturalistically but their 'secrets', in particular, are staged with a theatrical use of the space rather than remaining within the naturalistic boundaries of the dinner table'.

The food is a significant element of this production, adding all manner of complications for the cast, designers and crew. The menu was designed by a chef, Philippe Mouchel. The job of the designers to reproduce the menu so that it appears real, while also allowing the singers to eat certain elements of it, has been a great challenge.

The performances – With Dimity Shepherd, Antoinette Halloran and David Rogers-Smith



David Rogers-Smith, Dimity Shepherd, Antoinette Halloran and Kanen Breen © Charlie Kinross

The singers for *Banquet of Secrets* were cast early in the process, and the creative team were able to craft the show with the strengths of these performers in mind. This included fine tuning the music, re-allocating material to work with their particular abilities, and their willingness and determination to tap into their emotions.

Dimity Shepherd describes what it is like to be involved with a new work. 'It's very exciting. Very different from working on a traditional role where there are already traditions surrounding how to frame your performance, and other examples to look at and listen to, to inform the choices you make.' Antoinette Halloran agreed 'When we start from scratch like this the guidelines are not as strict. We are free to create and play with the piece to help mould it into what it will eventually

become.' David Rogers-Smith added 'There is a large amount of learning to do – you can't put on an existing recording to familiarise yourself with the music. It is hard slog, at the piano with your face in the score.'

All three of the singers work across different musical forms. The music of this work however has been challenging for all of them. Each of them commented on the intricacies of the complex jazz harmonies. Dimity described the music in *Banquet of Secrets* is quite unusual. 'It's sophisticated, and has many classical and jazz elements to it. Singing it requires a classical technique, but you have to use other sounds too, more jazz and pop sounds.'

We discussed the requirements of their characters in *Banquet of Secrets*. Dimity shared, 'all opera requires acting, and any performer of worth invests as much in the development of that side of things as on the music side, in my opinion. I don't think in the performance of any kind of music theatre that it can be any other way.' David elaborated, 'we are working at finding the character's singing voice. In the same way his speaking voice and demeanour haven't come as easily as I had expected. I trust our director Roger and we are getting there with the character.' When asked about the acting requirements of the role Antoinette joked with 'In the words of Marvin Hamlisch... "I am an actress – that's what I am... what I do."'

All of the cast have a formidable skill connecting to the emotions of their characters. Antoinette gave some significant insight. 'In a piece like this – that is so dramatic, the most important thing for me is to get across the text in a way that will make the audience understand it and hopefully be moved by it. It is a given by now, that all the performers in the piece can sing. It is not about showing that anymore – the piece comes first, the text and the journey of the protagonists. I don't care if the audience doesn't get to hear my top notes or my dynamic range or my portamenti. It's not about the artist – it's about the characters and their journeys.'

The friendship and connection between the performers will make this work particularly strong for the audience. All the singers are relishing this opportunity to work together again. Dimity - 'We have all worked together before, most recently on *Sweeney Todd*. Kanen and I first worked together back in 1996. We have shared houses together and travelled overseas together and he was one of my bridesmaids. Ant and I are also extremely close. As well as being my closest girlfriend, we also run a business together. We are pretty much like sisters. It's amazing how many ways our lives cross and intertwine. David and I have performed together a lot in the last few years too. He pashed off all my makeup in *Carmen*!!!! I am relishing working with such a close knit group of friends. Our real life shared history echoes the themes of the piece and adds more pathos for us as performers, and we hope also for the audience!' Antoinette described some of the challenges involved in working with close

friends: 'It is lovely to work with my friends on this. Not that it doesn't throw up some curve balls at times. When you know people so well it is like a love affair with the inevitable love/hate antics at times, or the different ways we understand the show – our different styles of performing – different energies – but that is what the piece is about after all. The closeness and the inevitable friction that being so close can create. And the wonderful cohesion or clashes that ensue.

Each of the singers has been challenged by the music, the lyric content and the physicality of the production's requirements. For example, they each have to time the intricacies of eating food, drinking and singing throughout. All the sections where the four sing together have exquisite yet challenging harmonies. At times the pace or rhythms of the music, and the frequent "list like" lyrics have both required significant use of their vocal skills and memories. The song "Like Me" requires the women to sing from atop the dining table.

This work also includes an actor as the waiter, who will interact with the four friends. He is part functionary, delivering the food which unlocks the secrets, part a reminder of their youthful dinner parties. He is an institution at this restaurant and hasn't really changed. Much of his performance requires use of Michael's acting strengths as a physical performer. His use of facial expression and body language in the role is a delight.

The songs

#	The song	The singers	Time Signature
1	Prologue – The Calm Before The Storm	All	7/4, 4/4, 6/8, 3/4, Vivo
2.	Perfect	Jean Pierre	4/4, 2/4, 5/4
3.	Lost for Words	Rose	4/4, Vivo
4.	No Time	Mia	6/8, Vivo
5.	Look What the Cat Dragged In	Drew	4/4, 2/4, 7/4, 3/2, 3/4 (160), Con Moto
6.	If Walls Could Talk	All	4/4, 2/4, 6/8, 3/4 (88) (44)
7.	Bring Me A Feast	All	6/8, 3/4
8.	At Ernest Hillier's	Rose	4/4, 3/4,
9.	Remember Summer/ My Baby	Mia (all)	4/4, 3/4, 7/4, 6/4, 5/4
10.	Her Lips/ Camino De Santiago	Drew (all)	6/8, 5/4, 4/4, 2/4, 6/4, 3/4
11.	Like Me	Mia, Rose (Jean Pierre, Drew)	4/4, 2/4
12.	See, Thing About It Is	Rose (Mia)	6/8, 4/4, 2/4
13.	About That Summer	Mia and Drew (Jean Pierre, Rose)	4/4, 5/4, 3/4, 7/4, 6/4
14.	Letter from a child you never knew	Mia	4/4, 5/4
15.	Friendship	All	4/4, 3/4
16.	What do you say (When there's no tomorrow)	Jean Pierre	6/4, 3/4, 6/4
17.	What do you say (reprise)	All	6/4, 3/4

EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

Pre-visit Exploration

1. Research

- Go onto the Victorian Opera website to the Education drop down tab, resources page. Engage with the other documentation/resources linked to Banquet of Secrets. Listen to the podcast, read the blog, look at the videos on YouTube, read the Education resource.
- Paul describes one of the songs as a habanera. What is a habanera? What distinguishes it from other rhythmic structures?

2. Listen

Listen to some other examples of music written by Paul Grabowsky. Can you hear the jazz influence in his work? Describe those elements for each of the following examples.

[Adelaide Cabaret Festival - Paul Grabowsky and Megan Washington](#)

[Paul Grabowsky - Words and Pictures Soundtrack - Official Preview](#)

3. Analyse

Look at the following six examples and see if you can find evidence of the devices used that are mentioned below. Grabowsky uses many different compositional styles and techniques in the music to create the effects he's after. There are clear influences of Jazz, Music Theatre and Latin in the different songs.

Reprising Melodies

One of the devices that is used in these work is reprising melodies:

- The material is reused but sung by different characters and treated in a different way
- The material is harmonised differently

Jazz influence

- Close harmonies and vocals
- Extended chords
- Altered bass notes
- Constant modulation
- Changes of time signature throughout the work

Latin influence

- Specific Latin rhythms
- Syncopations

Music theatre influence

- A 'Stripper' Ending – big, showy and slower

Example 1 - from "Camino de Santiago"

72
rise with the sun of Cam-in - o de Sant - i - ag - o I will

76
rise to the dawn of the sage and the sweet - ly broom Through the

80
bal - sam of hay and the haze of the fresh wild hon - ey The

84
The
The
The
frag - rance I'll ev - er re - call is your sweet per - fume

The musical score consists of four systems. Each system includes a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The piano part features complex textures with triplets and arpeggiated figures. The lyrics are written below the vocal line. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4.

88

scall - op shell will guide me my com - pass and my map as

scall - op shell will guide me my com - pass and my map as

scall - op shell will guide me my com - pass and my map as

92

clear as crys - tal riv - ers as true as trod - den path - ways as

clear as crys - tal riv - ers as true as trod - den path - ways as

clear as crys - tal riv - ers as true as trod - den path - ways as

96

sure as gran - ite moun - tains The scall - op shell, my com - pass

sure as gran - ite moun - tains The scall - op shell, my com - pass

sure as gran - ite moun - tains The scall - op shell, my com - pass

Ah

Example 2 – from “My Baby”

Agitato $\text{♩} = 120$

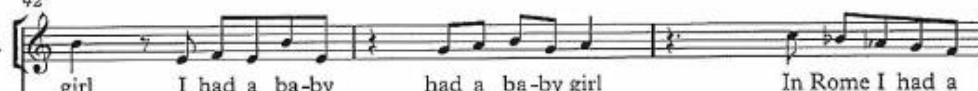
39

S. 
In Rome there was a girl a ba-by girl My ba - by

Pno. 

Ped. 

42

S. 
girl I had a ba-by had a ba-by girl In Rome I had a

Pno. 

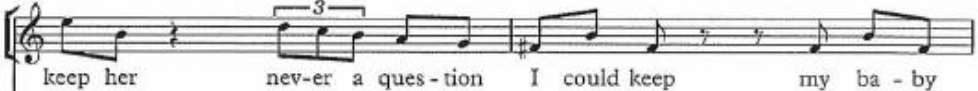


45

S. 
ba - by girl my ba - by girl of course I could - n't

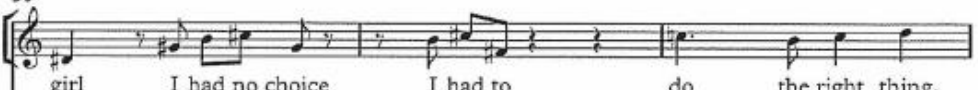
Pno. 


48

S. 
keep her nev - er a ques - tion I could keep my ba - by

Pno. 

50

S. 
girl I had no choice I had to do the right thing,

Pno. 

53

S. 
think of her my ba - by girl So young

Pno. 

Example 3 – from “The Calm before the Storm”

42 *molto rit.* *p* (9) |

S. storm of what's in store In the vor-tex of be - fore In the calm be-fore the storm

A. storm of what's in store In the vor-tex of be - fore In the calm be-fore the storm

T. storm of what's in store In the vor-tex of be - fore In the calm be-fore the storm

T. storm of what's in store In the vor-tex of be - fore In the calm be-fore the storm

Pno. *molto rit.* *p*

48 *Vivo ♩=240* *ff*

S. *Crap!* It's real-ly going to pour

A. *Wow!* It's real-ly going to pour

T. *Damn!* It's real-ly going to pour

T. *Bugg-er!* It's real-ly going to pour

Pno. *Vivo ♩=240* *ff*

(10)14

51

S. It's real - ly gon - na buck - et

A. It's real - ly gon - na buck - et

T. It's real - ly gon - na buck - et

T. It's real - ly gon - na buck - et

Pno.

This musical score is for the song 'It's really gonna buck-et'. It features five staves: Soprano (S.), Alto (A.), Tenor 1 (T.), Tenor 2 (T.), and Piano (Pno.). The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 2/4. The lyrics are 'It's real - ly gon - na buck - et'. The piano accompaniment consists of chords in the right hand and a simple bass line in the left hand.

Example 4 from "If these walls could talk"

GRABOWSKY/VIZARD

♩ = 88

MIA Hours whiled

ROSE schemes hatched

Piano

This musical score is for the song 'If these walls could talk'. It features three staves: Mia, Rose, and Piano. The key signature has two flats (Bb, Eb) and the time signature is 4/4. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 88. The lyrics are 'Hours whiled' for Mia and 'schemes hatched' for Rose. The piano accompaniment features a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes in both hands.

Example 5 – from “Carmino de Santiago”

(5) 11

52 Moderato ♩=100
DREW

I will

56 walk the trail of Cam - in - o de Sant - i - ag - o. I will

60 walk to the home of the saint with the boat of stone Ev - 'ry

64 step that I walk on Cam - in - o de Sant - i - ag - o. I will

The image shows a musical score for a vocal and piano piece. It consists of four systems of music. Each system has a vocal line on a single staff and a piano accompaniment on a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The tempo is marked 'Moderato' with a metronome marking of ♩=100. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The first system starts at measure 52 with the vocal line containing the lyrics 'I will'. The second system starts at measure 56 with the lyrics 'walk the trail of Cam - in - o de Sant - i - ag - o. I will'. The third system starts at measure 60 with the lyrics 'walk to the home of the saint with the boat of stone Ev - 'ry'. The fourth system starts at measure 64 with the lyrics 'step that I walk on Cam - in - o de Sant - i - ag - o. I will'. The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note bass line and chords in the right hand. There are some triplets in the vocal line at measures 60 and 64.

Example 6 – from “Like Me”

100

MIA

See me stretch, see me run, check me out, I'm so much fun, you wan-na

ROSE

♩ = 160

6

like me? Me by my

10

self, Me look-ing hot, Me in an - oth - er awe-some shot you wan-na like me?

186

world out there just like me

world out there just like me

Smile

189

Got it!

During your visit

1. The Music

- The work reprises many of the melodies throughout the work. See if you can identify them as you hear them.
- Compare the music of *Banquet of Secrets* Grabowsky's other work – are there similarities?

2. The Performances

- Can you distinguish between the music theatre and operatic styles of performance used by the singers throughout the piece?
- See if you can identify how the performers manage the many properties used throughout the show.
- Allow yourself to be impacted by the emotions of the story. Be aware of these reactions.

Post show reflection

1. The Libretto

- Did the character's stories affect you? Why?
- Describe the shape of the language and how it was constructed.
- What was the impact of the language and the music combined?

2. The Music

- Discuss the similarities you heard in Grabowsky's other music and *Banquet of Secrets*.
- Discuss the different music styles that you heard represented in the work. What features of these styles did you identify?

3. The Design

- How did the staging influence your enjoyment of the production? I.e. The musicians on stage, the dining table, the giant mirror etc. What worked the most for you in enhancing the production, and why?
- What effect did the lighting, costume and props have on your appreciation of the story and the production as a whole?

References

Discussions with the creatives - Steve Vizard, Paul Grabowsky and Roger Hodgman, singers - Dimity Shepherd, David Rogers-Smith and Antoinette Halloran, and répétiteurs Simon Bruckard and Phillipa Safey.

The Banquet of Secrets full score, by Paul Grabowsky and Steve Vizard

Observation of rehearsals and workshops.



A dish from Banquet of Secrets
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