

## INTRODUCTION

In the summer of 1997, while performing with the Utah Festival Opera Company, I was unexpectedly involved in a young artist's workshop of a new opera prior to its premiere. The music was intriguing — challenging yet very singable, with driving rhythms, lyric lines, and lush harmonies. It was an exciting musical experience for all of the singers involved. The opera was *Coyote Tales*, and its composer Henry Mollicone was on hand to coach his own music. Thus began my acquaintance with the music of Mollicone.

The following summer Mollicone and I both returned to Utah, and the idea for a project featuring his music began to formulate. At the time he had written only one song collection, and he encouraged me to look to his operas for materials. These past few years, however, have been prolific ones for his song repertoire, providing much fascinating material for this survey.

Although Mollicone's works for voice go back many years, this study will focus on those composed during his professional (as opposed to university) career. Included are operatic arias and ensembles, and songs for voice and piano. Chamber, choral, and orchestral pieces which feature the soprano voice are excluded. A complete list of his works to date can be found in the Appendix.

## PART ONE

### BIOGRAPHY<sup>1</sup>

On 20 March 1946 in Providence, Rhode Island<sup>2</sup>, an only child, Henry Joseph Mollicone, was born to Henry and Mary Mollicone. The son of a telephone company employee and housewife had a vein of music in him that was unprecedented for the Mollicone family. Although neither parent was musical, there was a piano in the house that had belonged to little Henry's grandmother. He tended to gravitate to it, and once he was big enough to reach the keys he started playing. At age seven, when his parents realized he was already familiar with the keyboard, they enrolled him in piano lessons. The piano soon became Henry's passion, and he would often be found improvising his own little pieces. The instrument became a focal point for Henry, and he recalls that around age ten, "I knew I wanted to be a musician, almost from the beginning."

Young Mollicone's primary exposure to music was via the television. The Young People's Concerts were very popular at the time, influencing many musicians of that generation. Liberace was the childhood "hero" for Mollicone, the one to imitate. It was a live concert, however, that opened his eyes to the world of classical music. In his early teens he witnessed Bernstein conducting the Beethoven 7<sup>th</sup> and the Ives 2<sup>nd</sup> Symphonies. He recollects, "It was revelation to me."

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<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, the material for this section comes from my telephone interviews with Mollicone, 18 March 2002, and 29 April 2002.

<sup>2</sup> Jaques Cattell Press, ed., *Who's Who in American Music, Classical*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: R. R. Bowker and Company, 1985), 407.

During his high school years Mollicone became serious about writing music and realized that his ambition was to be a composer and pianist. He did just that, attending the New England Conservatory and receiving his bachelor's degree in piano and composition in 1968. He studied composition with professors Donald Martino, Gunther Schuller, Seymour Shifrin, Daniel Pinkham, and Ron Nelson. At the time of Mollicone's schooling, composers were writing serial or other avant-garde music. He remembers that those students who did not compose in that style "were looked down upon as being really backward, working in a worn-out idiom." At one point in his undergraduate career, a friend and teacher from the conservatory, John Moriarty, invited him to attend Lake George Opera Festival. Singing in the chorus, Mollicone's passion for opera began to ignite. At that time he was also working on his first opera, *Young Goodman Brown*, and was able to have the first scene of this opera read.

Following graduation from the conservatory, Mollicone went for a year of private study at Brandeis University, which had a large, prestigious composition department. The compositional esthetic there was also based upon serial music. This, along with minimal venues for listening or participating in performance, made for an unhappy stay for Mollicone. He eventually went back to the New England Conservatory, completing a master's degree in 1971.

With no desire to study for a doctorate, Mollicone began to search for a job where he could gain more experience. After a summer of study at Tanglewood, he received a call from the New York City Opera. He had auditioned for them previously, but as the operatic repertoire was not familiar to him, he was turned down. Now the company needed another coach, and Mollicone's impressive sight-reading skills landed him the

job, moving him to New York. The next five years were a whirlwind for him as he constantly learned more repertoire. Mollicone also had ample opportunity to delve into the less traditional repertoire. He recounts, “I was always the coach that would run in to the coordinator, Felix Popper, whenever they would do anything unusual. ‘Oh, Mr. Popper, please, I would like to request that you assign me to [this piece].’ . . . Those things were always a big challenge to me; and all the other coaches would say, ‘please don’t assign me to that piece.’ So it was a very happy marriage.”

Mollicone holds fond memories of his days at the New York City Opera. He recalls seeing Menotti directing *The Consul*, and Domingo coming to conduct. He heard Beverly Sills as a seasoned singer and Jose Carreras making his debut, as well as witnessing Julius Rudel’s inspired conducting. He states, “City Opera was really the crowning glory, as far as my addiction to opera [was concerned].” It was a memorable time for him, both professionally and personally; he also got married in 1972.

In 1976 Mollicone was given a job with the Bernstein show, *1600 Pennsylvania Avenue*. The producers needed someone who was a pianist and a composer. Mollicone worked with the choreographer, played for rehearsals, made dance arrangements when necessary, and worked directly with a great mentor, Leonard Bernstein. Of Bernstein he remarks, “His deep passion for music was a great inspiration.” It was a wonderful opportunity for him.

For the composer Mollicone, this was a time of struggle, a time without direction. During this period he wrote a two-act opera, *Dream Child*, that he has since withdrawn. Mollicone recalls, “I had lost track of my style and didn’t know where I was going . . . it became obvious to me that the kind of stuff that was popular [serial music], I wasn’t fit to

write. I decided I needed to get into a place where I could write music in different styles [other than classical], because I enjoy writing music based on tonality.” While in New York, he had composed music for a feature film, *The Premonition*. This seemed like the perfect venue for his interest and talent, so he decided to move to Los Angeles and write film music. Mollicone worked in Los Angeles for nine years trying to get into television and film. He did another feature, *Rebel* (starring Sylvester Stalone), under the pseudonym Joseph Dellacorte, but mostly worked as a ghostwriter, and as an orchestrator for other composers. Yet, in spite of his struggling position in the highly competitive industry, Mollicone loved working in film.

During this time trends in modern composition changed in favor of Mollicone’s style. Composer David Del Tredici, with whom Mollicone had studied orchestration, was one of a number of composers who were revitalizing tonality and making it popular again. Happily, Mollicone was back on track as a tonal composer.

A landmark came for Mollicone with his commission from Central City Opera in Colorado, which was to celebrate the centennial of the opera house in 1978. He was originally commissioned to write a full-length opera, but lack of monies brought a change of plan. The new artistic director, Robert Darling, wanting to save the commission, scaled the piece down to a one-act opera intended for young performing artists. The performance setting would be the Teller House Bar located next to the opera house. Thus evolved *The Face on the Barroom Floor*. Mollicone reports that he “was delighted to use a more vernacular style. I wanted a little jazz, and even a bit [of music] that was cowboyish in feeling, while I unified it to an operatic style.”<sup>3</sup> He was surprised by its

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<sup>3</sup> Henry Mollicone, *The Face on the Barroom Floor*, CRI CD 822 (1981), notes.

success. *The Face on the Barroom Floor* has been immensely popular, being performed all over the country and even in Europe.

Building on the good fortune of *The Face on the Barroom Floor*, a series of one-act operas followed. Next came *Starbird*, commissioned by the Houston Grand Opera in 1980, for the Texas Opera Theater. The following year San Francisco Opera's Brown Bag Company premiered *Emperor Norton. The Mask of Evil*, produced by Minnesota Opera Company in 1984, involves a bigger cast and orchestra, and thus far has had only one production.

The Los Angeles years also kept Mollicone busy as a guest conductor. He conducted productions for opera and theater companies, including Baltimore Opera, Portland Opera, Long Beach Opera, Augusta Opera, American Musical Theater of San Jose, and Chamber Opera of New York, as well as orchestral concerts.

Coincidence brought about the next change in his course. He had been guest conducting at the San Jose Civic Light Opera (1980-91). Newly divorced, his desire was to find a teaching position, and move to San Jose to be the company's regular conductor. It so happened that a friend of his was dating the dean of Santa Clara University, Joe Subbiondo. She was highly persuasive and the two Italian-American boys met for dinner. Although Subbiondo did not have a job opening for Mollicone, the school did have some money with which to create a position for a musician who could work in both the music and theater departments, bridging the gap between the two. Having the ability to conduct, teach, and compose, as well as an interest in musical theater, Mollicone found this an excellent possibility. Eventually a position was created with money given to

Santa Clara University by Frank Sinatra: the Frank Sinatra Chair in the Arts and Sciences. Mollicone was the first recipient in 1985.

Mollicone's assignments while at Santa Clara University were quite varied. He taught everything from music history, to Italian opera, to history of rock music; he conducted musicals and wrote scores for plays. Mollicone enjoyed his time at Santa Clara where he could both teach and create. He became a close friend with Dean Subbiondo; in fact, Subbiondo was the best man at Mollicone's wedding to his wife Kathy in 1989.

Another of Mollicone's duties at Santa Clara University was to build the student orchestra. Realizing that a full orchestra was impossible with so few students, Mollicone instituted a combined student/community orchestra. This turned out to be a successful venture, giving all orchestra members a broader realm of experience than was possible previously. However, administrative and political changes at Santa Clara soon brought a negative climate to the Music Department. The culmination of these unfavorable changes came for Mollicone when the university expelled the community members of the orchestra. Having previously concluded his conducting with San Jose Civic Light Opera, Mollicone then left Santa Clara University in 1998.

Mollicone now resides in San Jose, where his main focus is composition. He continues to conduct for West Bay Opera, and guest conducts for various other companies. He also teaches one class a semester at Notre Dame de Namur University in Belmont, California. Though distractions are many, Mollicone appreciates both the time and the commissions that allow him to compose. In 1998 he collaborated with librettist Sheldon Harnick (famous for *Fiddler on the Roof*), on a two-act opera *Coyote Tales*,

commissioned by the Lyric Opera of Kansas City. This work, recorded on Newport Classic, was a success with audiences and critics alike. Mollicone notes, “Working with Sheldon Harnick was my best collaboration experience to date.” In the past few years he has completed several song cycles for singers such as Erie Mills, Maria Spacagna, and Jerry Hadley. His current project is another commission from Central City Opera. William Luce is the librettist. This full-length opera, *Gabriel’s Daughter*, tells the story of Clara Brown, a freed slave who settled in Central City — a dramatic and emotional topic that has proved to be a fascinating one for the composer, challenging him to find ways to make the characters come to life within his own musical language.

Mollicone’s compositional style has been described as “eclectic, easily accessible,” “expert, assured craftsmanship,” and “tonal, tuneful, and vigorously rhythmic.”<sup>4</sup> He is noted for his “much appealing, songful melody.”<sup>5</sup> The composer himself agrees that his style is eclectic. His influences have been vast and varied. During his school days the main ones were Bernstein, Barber, and Britten. There was a time when Barber played the role of mentor for Mollicone, generously offering feedback on his work. Mollicone fondly relates one such instance when Barber was analyzing a recent composition. Barber pointed out that all the musical movement was in the treble while the bass line functioned as a pedal point, concluding, “Your counterpoint is literally for the birds!” Another significant influence is Stephen Sondheim. Mollicone comments, “I think he is great; such a serious composer, a good craftsman, [who] writes such good

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<sup>4</sup> Joseph McLellan, “Opera: Double Billing for Fate,” *Washington Post*, 22 October 1982, Style section, D6; Stephanie von Buchau, review of *Emperor Norton*, by Henry Mollicone, *Opera News* 45 (August 1981): 32; J. Koopman, review of *Coyote Tales*, by Henry Mollicone, *Opera*, 49 (June 1998): 671-73.

<sup>5</sup> Carl Cunningham, review of *Starbird*, by Henry Mollicone, *The Houston Post*, provided by Mollicone.

music. He just happens to write in Broadway idiom, [and] he does it better than anyone else.” Mollicone’s music has been compared to that of several of these significant composers — Bernstein, Britten,<sup>6</sup> and Sondheim.<sup>7</sup> Other musical influences come from Mollicone’s many musical experiences, such as popular music, operatic vocal writing, and occasionally the textures of the minimalists. He reflects, “There were many influences and I tried to absorb them into my own style.” As with so many modern composers, Mollicone’s style has a wide range. At one extreme is the pop- or Broadway-influenced music, such as “Roz is hot” from *Hotel Eden*; at the other extreme is a more “serious”, or less tonal idiom, which tends to appear more frequently in his orchestral music. Vincent Liotta, director of the premiere of *Coyote Tales*, cogently observes, “My impression of Mollicone’s music is that it is basically motivated as vocal music. That is to say that whether [it is] intended for instruments or voice, the underlining structure is lyrical in its nature.”<sup>8</sup>

Mollicone’s vocal music reflects his ability to incorporate these many influences into his own voice. Individual songs are extremely varied in style and expression, giving the singer a cornucopia of interesting literature. His operatic repertoire is just as diverse, yet each opera is a cohesive and unified work.

When asked about the most important feature of Mollicone’s music, most singers respond with “rhythm.” Undoubtedly it is the complexity of rhythm and meter in his writing that provides challenge and interest for many performers. Often the text is set in

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<sup>6</sup> Review of *Coyote Tales*, by Henry Mollicone, *Opera Canada* 39 (Summer 1998): 27; Scott Cantrell, “Operas in Native Accent: New Works in Tulsa and Kansas City Take Different Paths in Absorbing Indian Themes,” *Kansas City Star*, 22 March 1998, J1.

<sup>7</sup> Wes Blomster, review of *Coyote Tales*, by Henry Mollicone, *American Record Guide* 61 (May-June 1998): 49.

<sup>8</sup> Vincent Liotta, e-mail correspondence with author, 18 March 2002.

precise rhythmic patterns that at first glance seem difficult, but in fact reflect natural declamation. Rhythm is also used to provide a distinct mood or style — whether it is energetic drive, or a jazzy swing, or a floating legato line.

In reference to the melodist in Mollicone, Annalyn Swan of *Newsweek* writes “Mollicone should go far; he can’t seem to write a note that doesn’t sing.”<sup>9</sup> Singers of Mollicone’s works agree that whatever the style of composition, the music fits the voice. Dr. Michael Ballam, creator of the title role in *Coyote Tales*, states, “He understands the human voice and is willing to draw on the vocal traditions of the past as he forges into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.”<sup>10</sup> Ballam, who has had extensive experience in singing world premieres of operas, notes that while Mollicone has high technical expectation for the voice, he “views the singing line in a much more cantabile fashion [than other contemporary composers], understanding the limits of the voice.”<sup>11</sup> Mollicone also appreciates the strengths of various voice types, and successfully writes to complement those qualities.

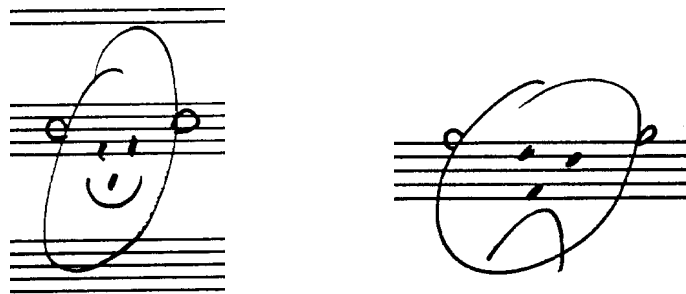
Looking at a Mollicone manuscript, one observes neat and accurate penmanship, clear markings, and easily read lyrics. At the end of each piece, along with the date and place of composition, one also notices a quaint Mollicone signature in the form of a face that indicates the mood of the piece just completed, usually happy or sad. These emotional signatures provide a slight peek into the personality of this composer, and sum up the essence of his music — delightful! (see Example 1)

#### Example 1: Mollicone signatures.

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<sup>9</sup> Annalyn Swan, review of *Starbird*, by Henry Mollicone, *Newsweek*, provided by Mollicone.

<sup>10</sup> Michael Ballam, e-mail correspondence with author, 13 March 2002.



Henry Mollicone, *Five Love Songs*, autograph manuscript, 2001, p. 9.  
Henry Mollicone, "If You Were Coming in the Fall," autograph  
manuscript, 1989, p. 5. Used by permission.

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

## **PART TWO**

### **OPERAS**

Mollicone's passion for opera began early in his adult life, and has now led him to be a premier composer of contemporary opera. While he loves many aspects of writing opera, it is also an extremely frustrating venture for him. Commissions for opera are few and far between, and subsequent productions are even more rare. After so much "blood, sweat, and tears," it is disheartening to have a work shelved after one production. However, Mollicone has been more fortunate than many. Not only has he received several commissions, along with rave reviews of performances, but most of his operas have also had repeat productions. One has only to listen to his music to understand why.

THE FACE ON THE BARROOM FLOOR

a mini opera in three scenes

Librettist, John Bowman

Commissioned in 1978 by the Central City Opera House Association.

CAST:

Isabelle/Madeline (opera singer/bar girl).....Lyric Soprano

Larry/Matt (tourist/artist).....Tenor

Tom/John (bartenders).....Baritone

INSTRUMENTATION:

Flute (also Piccolo), Cello, Piano

DURATION: 25 min

SETTING: the Teller House Bar, Central City, Colorado; the present and 100 years ago<sup>12</sup>

SYNOPSIS:

This opera tells two stories separated by 100 years, yet with parallel characters and theme. Beginning in the present day, an opera chorus member, Isabel, and her Easterner boyfriend Larry enter the Teller House Bar. Tom, the bartender, offers to tell

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<sup>12</sup> Henry Mollicone, *The Face On The Barroom Floor* (Miami, FL: Deshon Music, Inc., 1979), III.

them the tale of the face painted on the barroom floor, transforming into John, the bartender of the same bar in the nineteenth century. John and the bargirl Madeline sing a rousing duet toasting the future of the “Golden West.” Matt enters, a disheveled and disoriented traveling artist, and orders drinks all around. At John’s orders, Madeline entertains with the ballad “He Came to the West.” Unable to pay for the drinks, Matt offers to paint on the barroom floor a portrait of the only woman he has ever loved. A trio ensues, “He Paints the Portrait of his Love,” with each character in personal reflection. John recognizes Madeline as the subject of the painting. A fight between the two men breaks out, during which John pulls a pistol on Matt. Madeline throws herself between them, intercepting the bullet. Matt carries off his dead love, and the scene reverts back to the present day. Larry laughs at this tale, so like an “opera plot.” To prove his story is true, Tom produces the pistol that shot Madeline. Larry drunkenly dances around Madeline’s portrait while Tom declares he still loves Isabelle. The two men begin to fight. Isabelle tries to break them apart and a gunshot rings out, leaving her lying dead across the face on the floor.

*The Face On The Barroom Floor* was commissioned to celebrate the centennial of the Central City Opera House in 1978. The 1872 Teller House Bar, located next door to the Opera House, does have a painting of a face on its floor. Herndon Davis did the painting in 1936, based upon a poem by H. Antoine D’Arcy.<sup>13</sup>

The young artists at Central City Opera perform *The Face On The Barroom Floor* annually. Initially conceived as a local piece, Mollicone’s charming opera has been performed all over the United States, also performed annually by the Utah Festival Opera Company young artists.

The characters Isabel and Madeline are the catalysts for the action in both stories. As indicated in the score the role of Isabel/Madeline is to be a lyric soprano. For the most part, the vocal lines for the soprano are long, flowing, and speech-like. Although there are no long melismatic passages, flexibility is still required for the quick rhythms. The range does ascend to high C6, but is mostly in middle range, or on the treble staff, with D4 as the lowest note.

Madeline's ballade "He came to the West" is actually the only aria in the opera. The simplicity of the melody, the 6/8 meter, and the strophic setting give this ballad a folk-like feeling. It is comprised of two stanzas, each in ABA form. For the singer it requires fluidity of line and, as it is narrative, precise diction.

The musical highlight of the opera is the trio "He Paints the Portrait of his Love." The lyric melody is woven among the three voices. This is also the vocal climax for the soprano, with the high C's soaring above the other vocal lines. (The trio requires very high notes for both the tenor and baritone as well.) Beginning with the trio until the end of the "flashback" would make an excellent excerpt for a program of opera scenes.

As intended, *The Face On The Barroom Floor* is perfect for young voices with solid ranges. The rhythms are not too difficult, yet the piece requires musical skill. Dramatically it requires the performers to each create two different characters. The instrumentation is minimal, allowing young voices to be heard from the stage or from a "barroom" setting. Sets are also minimal, facilitating a small budget or even a touring production. It is easy to see why this opera is so frequently performed — interesting plot, dramatic action, and entertaining music.

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<sup>13</sup> Henry Mollicone, *The Face On The Barroom Floor*, CRI CD 822, notes.

STARBIRD

an opera in one act

Librettist, Kate Pogue

Commissioned by the Houston Grand Opera, for the Texas Opera Theater.

Premiered at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Washington, DC, 19

April 1981.

CAST:

Dog.....Tenor

Cat.....Mezzo Soprano

Donkey.....Baritone

Starbird.....Lyric Soprano

Robot I.....Tenor

Robot II..... Bass

Voice of Arcturion.....Amplified Speaking Voice

INSTRUMENTATION:

Violin, Cello, String-Bass, Piano, Flute, B-flat Clarinet, Horn in F, Percussion (2 Players)

DURATION: 46 min

Shortened version requiring only four singers and piano; duration: 25 min.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Henry Mollicone, *Starbird* (Boston, MA: Ione Press/ ECS Publishing, 1997), 3.

SETTING: Central Park and a spaceship in outer space

SYNOPSIS:

Three animals gather in Central Park. The howling Dog bemoans his lot of being replaced by a mail truck. Unsympathetic, Cat rehearses her tragic tale of being replaced by an exterminating service. The Donkey, draped with political slogans, has been replaced by a mechanical mule. All three bicker about who has the worst circumstance, and pick at each other's annoying characteristics. At nightfall the animals fall asleep.

A glowing light behind the bushes reveals a spaceship. Caged inside is a fantastical bird, Starbird, covered with metallic plumage. She sings hauntingly of the far-away planet Arcturus, where she was taken, put in a cold cage, and made into a partially mechanical bird. She pleads for the others to release her and to run away before they too are caught. Two Robots from the spaceship return, however, and all the animals are trapped on the spaceship as it launches.

The Robots then discover the noisy stowaways. The Robots identify each species, and inform the earth creatures that they will be assimilated. Directed by Starbird, the animals work toward their own escape — Dog distracts the Robots with his friendliness, the strong Donkey moves a large box away from the wall, and Cat disconnects the silver wire that connects the spaceship to Arcturus. The Robots having been disabled, Bird points out how the collective talents of the animals have saved them all, and now they are free.

As captain of the ship, Starbird offers to take them all to the most beautiful of all places, the Earth. The selfish Cat protests. Then caught in the gravity field of Arcturus, they prepare to land and meet their doom. Upon landing they discover a most beautiful place, the exact spot in Central Park they had left! Starbird explains the three lessons she wanted them to learn — that faults can also be virtues, each one needs the other, and the Earth is lovely. Starbird cannot live on Earth in her changed form, and must return to Arcturus. The new friends remember, “Faults and virtues join the head and tail of a single coin.”<sup>15</sup>

According to one reviewer, “Mollicone’s gift for musical characterization is readily apparent . . . these styles are agreeably blended in a score that contains much appealing songful melody, a procession of nicely varied vocal ensembles and an often apt musical setting of the text.”<sup>16</sup> Another reviewer wrote: “Although in no way avant-garde, Henry Mollicone has given us a score that suspends our awareness of opera and heightens our perception of drama.”<sup>17</sup>

The Starbird soprano is a voice-type one might associate with such a character — a light lyric with extensive range and florid coloratura abilities. Though the majority of her singing is interaction with the other characters, Starbird’s entrance and exit display wide leaps, a vibrant high range, and thrilling vocal acrobatics. Mollicone has recently set the entrance aria for concert purposes. Along with flexibility and effervescence, good diction is a must, for this quaint little opera has a message that should not be missed.

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 182.

<sup>16</sup> Carl Cunningham, review of *Starbird*, by Henry Mollicone *The Houston Post*, provided by Mollicone.

<sup>17</sup> Fox, Leland. Review of *Starbird*, by Henry Mollicone. *The Opera Journal* 14 (1981): 41.

EMPEROR NORTON

an opera in one act

Librettist, John S. Bowman

Commissioned by the San Francisco Opera and the Kurt Herbert Adler Award Fund.

Premiered by Brown Bag Opera of San Francisco Opera, at the Civic Center Plaza, 14

May 1981.<sup>18</sup>

CAST:

The Intruder.....Baritone

Marla, a playwright.....Mezzo Soprano

Diana, a young actress..... Soprano

Michael, a young actor.....Tenor

INSTRUMENTATION:

Piano, Violin, Cello

DURATION: 55 min

SETTING: Backstage area of a San Francisco theater.

SYNOPSIS: Diana and Michael enter and wait to audition for a play about Emperor Norton, a mysterious man of San Francisco history. The playwright, Marla, is not holding tryouts as the play is not finished. Though puzzled by their presence, Marla

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<sup>18</sup> "New Operas and Premieres." Review of *Emperor Norton*, by Henry Mollicone. *Central Opera Service Bulletin* 23 (Winter/Spring 1982): 1.

decides to take advantage of the talents of Diana and Michael, and have them walk through a few troubling scenes.

Working backward in time, the first scene to be enacted is the death of Emperor Norton. It was 1880, in the heart of San Francisco. With Diana as Lady Pain and Michael as Guttersnipe, the characters hail the new democracy where all are equal, and they are the new aristocracy. They describe their “emperor” as a man of power and style, who mingled with the elite and ordered his meals in French. A strange man emerges from the wings; his outburst “I cannot permit this travesty!”<sup>19</sup> is the first indication to the others of his presence. The Intruder claims to know the true Norton, and with Marla’s consent, the scene plays again, in the Intruder’s revised form. The changed mood is now wistful, as though a requiem for their emperor. “All hail our Emperor of dreams, whose phantom empire spread so far; he shed no blood and robbed no man, but spread illusion, laughter, love . . .”<sup>20</sup> As the actors become involved, the scripts become unnecessary. With the Intruder playing Emperor Norton he refers to Captain Macondry who once stole his empire. Marla plays the role of Julie, Norton’s beloved, who then approaches “Norton’s body” and tosses her wedding ring on it. Lady Pain and Guttersnipe scatter rice on the body. As the actors recover they realize they were a part of a real, moving scene. Marla, however, is resistant to the magic. She and The Intruder argue over Norton’s characteristics and ability to be an emperor (Emperor duet).

Marla’s next scene involves a woman allegedly involved with Norton, “the glamorous, scandalous, Lola Montez. . .”<sup>21</sup> Diana, as Lola, enacts their first meeting at the Club El Dorado, with Lola doing her infamous Spider Dance. He, intrigued by her dance, and she, drawn to his royal and heroic air, join together. Marla, however, expresses doubts about their actual involvement. As promised, The Intruder remains

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<sup>19</sup> Henry Mollicone, *Emperor Norton*, Miami, FL: Deshon Music, Inc., 1981, 22.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

silent. But then, answering Marla's pleas for help, The Intruder unfolds a more authentic scene.

Norton has just declared himself "Emperor." Inside a church a young bride and groom (Marla and Michael) approach the minister (Diana). Norton rises to object, introducing himself as "Norton, the first, Emperor of America!"<sup>22</sup> He offers his benediction to the bride, Julie, and gently scatters rice over the couple. This time it is The Intruder who breaks his role, too overcome by these memories to continue. Now all of the players are caught up in the unfinished story and beg him to continue.

Once again they are transported back in time, to a foggy night in 1853 on the San Francisco docks. Diana, as a newly arrived young Chinese girl, and Michael, as a very proud sea captain, meet on the docks. The captain assumes his right to pay for the "Chinese produce."<sup>23</sup> Norton and Julie anxiously seek her father, Captain Macondry, in order to get his blessing on their engagement. The young couple is startled to see him with the Chinese girl, and is silenced by his vulgar manner. A stammering Norton explains that he has cornered the market on rice and will soon be rich. Macondry mockingly tosses Norton his investment — a pouch of rice. Macondry has imported rice and will undersell Norton, thus breaking him. A ruined man, Norton disappears into the streets of San Francisco for three years. Later, inspired by the serenity of the Chinese girl, Norton realizes he can create his own "empire" living amongst the people of San Francisco and inspiring many.

Now converted to the magnificence of Norton, the players declare that his vision must not end. As a playwright, Marla can re-create the past and give the Emperor his Empress. Norton and Marla walk back to the foggy docks as a royal couple. "So Norton

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 65.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 75.

proved that one frail mind could spin a dream that would endure.”<sup>24</sup> Recovering from the trance, a gratified Diana and Michael exit.

Based upon one of San Francisco’s most eccentric historical figures, *Emperor Norton* has received enthusiastic reviews.<sup>25</sup> “With *Emperor Norton*, composer Henry Mollicone has succeeded where the likes of Mozart, Wagner, Verdi and Puccini failed; he has produced an opera with just too many tunes.”<sup>26</sup> “Its emotions, ranging from near-slapstick comedy to pathos, are good raw material for his eclectic, easily accessible style.”<sup>27</sup> “From its first notes . . . to its poignant and wonderfully conceived ending, this is a work that sneaks up on you and subtly ensnares you in its magic.”<sup>28</sup>

This one-act opera is truly an ensemble piece. Though each voice has moments of solo singing, there are no arias, but continuous conversational scenes and intertwined ensembles. As typical of Mollicone theater, acting ability is a must; each singer must create several identities throughout the story.

For the soprano, several qualifications beyond a lovely lyric voice would be helpful. In addition to acting and ensemble work, the ability to dance would surely make Lola’s Spider Dance more intriguing. The range for the soprano role is typical for soprano voices, rarely descending below the treble clef, and often soaring above. Diana’s main solo moment is the “Spider Dance.” Although this dance is brief, agility is called for to accurately execute the rhythmic turns and flourishes. On the reverse side, simplicity might be the chief descriptor of the Chinese girl’s song. The final quartet is the musical climax of the piece. Beginning almost as a double duet — Norton and Marla

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 104-5.

<sup>25</sup> Norton was a San Franciscan living at the end of the nineteenth century. He believed he was the Emperor of the United States and Protectorate of Mexico. [http:// www.sfmuseum.org/hist1/norton.html](http://www.sfmuseum.org/hist1/norton.html)

<sup>26</sup> Alan Ulrich, review of *Emperor Norton*, by Henry Mollicone. *San Francisco Examiner*, provided by Mollicone.

<sup>27</sup> Joseph McLellan, “Opera: Double Billing for Fate.” Review of *Emperor Norton*, by Henry Mollicone. *Washington Post*, Style section, 22 October 1982, D6

<sup>28</sup> Norman Lombino, review of *Emperor Norton*, by Henry Mollicone. *Penninsula Times Tribune* (Palo Alto), provided by Mollicone.

are in canon on “Norton’s dream” theme, while Diana and Michael recall the previously sung “Emperor duet” — the melodic lines intertwine into a cohesive quartet. While remaining an ensemble, the lyric lines allow the soprano to soar above the other voices. Here a strong, sustained high C is requisite. While many soprano voices could sing the written notes, fewer are the singers who can bring the mystery and flavor into the music of Mollicone and the unraveling of Norton’s story.

THE MASK OF EVIL

a supernatural opera in one act

Librettist, Kate Pogue

Composed for Minnesota Opera Company.

Supported by a National Endowment for the Arts Composers Fellowship.

Premiered May 1982.

CAST:

Quirun.....Tenor

Brother Lawrence.....Baritone

The Abbott.....Bass

Jan.....Tenor

Livia.....Soprano

Magdalena.....Mezzo-Soprano

Chorus of Nuns, Monks, and Spirits (SATB)

INSTRUMENTATION:

Flute (Piccolo), Oboe (English Horn), Clarinet (Bass Clarinet), Bassoon, Horn, Trumpet,

Trombone, Percussion (2 Players), Keyboards (2 Players – Piano, Synthesizer, Celesta,

Organ), Harp, Strings, Electronic Tape

SETTING: A monastery in nineteenth-century Transylvania.

DURATION: 1 hr. 15 min.

SYNOPSIS:

Scene One

As dawn approaches, old man Quirun stands in the dilapidated courtyard of a monastery, calling incantations to the nocturnal bats. The Abbott rebukes Quirun for his evil charms, and cleanses the monastery as the Monks and Nuns process into services.

A young road-weary couple, Jan and his bride Livia, arrive at the gate. The Abbott informs Jan that his father died in the night. Sure that some destroying evil accelerated his death, the Abbott takes Jan to his father. Upon seeing the statue of the Virgin Mary, Livia offers a sweet prayer on behalf of her Jan, and feels renewed by the dawn. Returning with refreshment, Quirun tells of the magic of the statue. A strange voice is heard as Quirun's daughter Magdalena approaches. Magdalena admires Livia's innocent beauty; Livia is entranced by her sensuality and sorrow. Magdalena departs with the passing nuns, promising to share her story with Livia.

Jan confesses to the Abbott his guilt over his father's death. His father despised him for his folly of seducing and betraying a young girl—a sin he has kept hidden from his dear Livia. He asks for a cleansing penance to make him worthy of her. At midnight the Abbott will call for Jan when a vigil to fight evil will take place.

In the background the chanting nuns call to Jan. He recognizes Magdalena as the girl he betrayed long ago. She lays claim to Jan, as she bore his child whose death changed her forever. He pleads with her to leave them alone, but she does not relent. Jan flees at the Abbott's call, as Magdalena invokes the powers of Satan to aid her revenge.

## Scene Two

A wakeful Livia sings a lamenting song about a lost lover. Magdalena enters with warm wine and comfort for Livia. Magdalena tells the entranced Livia of her encounter with Jan three years previously. She killed the son she bore, and then joined the spirits of the night. Now she herself is dead. Livia bolts upright, as if waking from a nightmare. The women depart and she drifts into a deep sleep.

In the church, the Abbott gives Jan a holy crucifix as protection against the powers of evil. Quirun warns Jan to protect Livia. Quirun once mastered spells to keep his daughter near, but now even he is afraid of her evilness. Jan rushes to Livia. The dark spirits return and Magdalena wants Livia's life. Jan thrusts the crucifix to Livia and rushes out to find a way to destroy Magdalena. On the pretense that Jan needs her, Magdalena leads Livia to a nearby crypt. Many beautiful women are gathered in ritualistic proceedings. Livia is invited to drink the ceremonial cup of blood. Livia brandishes her cross to fend off the demonic women. Alone, Livia turns to the statue of Mary for help. Quirun appears, beholding the tears of the statue. He touches Livia's cross to the Virgin's tears, now she will be protected from all harm.

Jan seeks out Magdalena in the vampire's crypt. Livia comes to help, offering her forgiveness to him for his past deed. Livia gives her blessed cross to Jan. As she does so, Magdalena appears behind her and stabs Livia with her dagger. Quirun curses his daughter and Jan takes up the cross to destroy her. The brethren converge upon Magdalena, forcing her into a circle of light. The lights strikes Magdalena to death, and the other dark spirits are driven away by the monks.

The dying Livia now understands the inscription on the statue of Mary. “ From life thru love to death, From death thru life to love, I will stay with you.”<sup>29</sup> Livia’s sacrifice has delivered them all. His penance fulfilled, Jan kneels at the feet of Mary.

Based on an original story by Kate Pogue, this opera came about in response to Mollicone’s interest in doing a piece about vampires as well as including a church setting.<sup>30</sup>

Purity of voice would best suit the lyric soprano Livia. Along with ensemble singing, she has two lovely arias that reflect the light and agony of her soul. The first begins as her prayer to Mary, then she revels in her new surroundings. Though the tessitura is high, the lyric melodic lines allow the singer to expand on the vibrant high notes.

In the second aria, which opens scene two, Livia sings in her wakeful midnight hours, a song removed from the plot, yet not without significance. In both style and emotion it is reminiscent of “The Trees On the Mountain” from Floyd’s *Susanna*. The folk-like 6/8 tune includes wide leaps and soaring high notes. The soprano can have no shortage of high C’s, for the repeated high melodic passages add a depth of passion to this song. The challenge in this aria is maintaining a purity of tone while simultaneously portraying the intensity of the music.

The opera deserves more productions. The supernatural subject as well as the rich orchestral colors would appeal to many audiences. For the singers there is a wealth of character exploration and vocal challenge. The soprano, as the force of good and light,

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<sup>29</sup> Henry Mollicone, *The Mask of Evil*, autograph manuscript, 151.

<sup>30</sup> Henry Mollicone, telephone interview with the author, 13 August 2002.

has the most exquisite vocal lines and could thoroughly display her voice as well as her emotions.

# HOTEL EDEN

a music theater piece in three acts

Librettist, Judith Fein

Based on a concept by Judith Fein and Michael Isaacson, developed by Robert Darling, Judith Fein, and Henry Mollicone.

Written and produced in a workshop under a grant from Opera America's "Opera in the 80's and Beyond." 1985–1989.

Premiered by Opera San Jose, 25 November 1989.

## CAST:

2 Sopranos, 2 Mezzo-Sopranos, 2 Tenors, 1 Baritone, 1 Bass-Baritone

Suggested distribution over the three acts as follows:<sup>31</sup>

	<u>Act I (Lilith)</u>	<u>Act II (Mrs. Noah)</u>	<u>Act III (Sarah)</u>
Soprano I	Eve	Emcee	Nurse I
Soprano II	Waitress	Mrs. Noah	Hagar
Mezzo-Soprano I	Lilith	---	Nurse II
Mezzo-Soprano II	Cleaning Girl	---	Sarah
Tenor I	Adam	Repairman	(Doctor)
Tenor II	---	Noah	(Doctor)

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<sup>31</sup> Henry Mollicone, *Hotel Eden* (Boston, MA: ECS Publishing, 1985.), preface.

Baritone	Bell Hop	Chef	---
Bass-Baritone	---	---	Abraham

INSTRUMENTATION:

8 Players -- Flute/Piccolo, Clarinet, Horn, Violin, Cello, String Bass/Electric Bass,  
Piano/Synthesizer, Percussion

DURATION: 1 hr. 45 min.

SYNOPSIS: “Hotel Eden is about relationships, or more specifically, about couples.

Each act gives us a glimpse into the joys and problems of marital love at a specific stage in life . . . Most of the people are familiar, their stories are loosely, but not irreverently drawn from Biblical texts: the *Book of Genesis* and the *Kabbalah*. . . “<sup>32</sup>

ACT I – Lilith      Scene: the lobby of the Hotel Eden and Room 56

(As the *Kabbalah* and Biblical legend tell the tale, Adam’s first wife was named Lilith.

Having been created at the same time as Adam she therefore expected more equality, and was consequently banished from the garden and replaced by the more submissive Eve.

This scene is a fictional scenario of what might happen if Lilith reappeared on Adam and Eve’s honeymoon.)

Cleaning Girl, Waitress, and Bell Hop welcome all to the happy Hotel Eden!

Honeymooners Adam and Eve occupy room 56, where all is bliss. Adam exits to kill a

snake in the garden. Enter the homeless Lilith, who exchanges with Eve their very differing experiences of marriage. Upon Adam's return, both women address him as "husband." A hostile exchange between Adam and Lilith ensues, with a perplexed Eve searching for answers. Adam storms out, leaving Lilith to explain the past. Crushed by the deception of her husband, Eve quickly packs a bag and follows after Lilith. A hopeful Adam returns, only to have his hopes dashed by the absence of Eve. The hotel trio embarks on a plan to reunite the couple, using Vaudevillian song and dance as their methodology. Face to face in the hotel lobby, Adam and Eve resolve to work through their conflicts and live life together.

Act II -- Mrs. Noah Scene: the Hotel lobby, Room 56, and the 'Ballroom' on New Year's Eve.

The commentating trio in this scene consists of the Emcee, Repairman, and Chef. A retired Naval officer, Admiral Noah, is coming to the Hotel Eden for vacation; the staff prepares by tripling the liquor supply. The middle-aged Mr. and Mrs. Noah find the hotel in total disrepair. While dressing for dinner in room 56, Mrs. Noah reminds the Admiral of his New Year's resolution, "No more!" Before the evening starts, however, Noah has already been drinking. Mrs. Noah accepts the offer to party the night away with the hotel trio. Alone and longing for the sea, Noah miserably plunges into the Jacuzzi.

Mrs. Noah declares she is tired of being addressed as such—her name is Rosalind! Amid the partying, they notice water dripping from the ceiling, from room 56. Mrs. Noah rushes to rescue her husband. Frightened by hallucinations, Noah is nearly drowning in the tub. A short circuit causes a power outage. In the darkness, Noah

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

expresses to Rosalind his need for her. Enlightened, the Noahs reflect on how they could have let their marriage become such a storm, and resolve to make each other the center of their lives. The hotel staff trio also resolves to restore the Hotel Eden to its former glorious state.

Act III -- Sarah      Scene: Room 56

An elderly couple, Abraham and Sarah, breakfast in beach-style clothing, while Hagar, their personal maid of many years, cleans and unpacks. Sarah grows nostalgic about the couple's early years, and wistful about their late years with no heir. Hagar tells that her son Ishmael blesses them daily. Sarah declares that Ishmael will bear their immortality. Sudden pains inflict Sarah, and immediately a new trio of a doctor and two nurses arrive. Abraham is informed that his wife is "in the family way."<sup>33</sup> Shocked and delighted, they decide to name the baby Isaac. Hagar, once proud to have born the only son of Abraham, becomes anxious.

Time passes and the delivery of the baby is at hand. Hagar desperately tries to stop the birth, and Sarah banishes her from the room as Abraham tries to stop their fighting. At the point of delivery the medical trio leaves, forcing the others to help each other. Hagar gives in to Abraham's pleading and aids Sarah's delivery. Peace settles over the threesome. Abraham and Sarah desire for the sons to be equal brothers, but it is too late: Hagar has willingly left.

This opera, or musical theater piece, has something for everyone's musical taste: from opera to theater to Vaudeville to rock. It requires versatile singers. For the principal soprano in each act, however, a classical lyric approach seems most suitable.

Eve’s music is melodious and lyrical. Though the majority of the singing is in ensemble, her lines rise above it, and especially contrast with those of Lilith. A strong middle and low voice is requisite for the recitative-like sections, in addition to a sweet, controlled upper range.

Mrs. Noah, as a more mature character, requires more depth than the previous soprano, as well as a strong Bb5. Her aria (which Mollicone has now arranged for concert performance) is one of variety and entertainment, a good piece to show off the acting ability of a singer. In the aria she describes with distinct flavor the many ways she is known as “Mrs. Noah.” This requires flexibility for the singer — vocally, stylistically, and emotionally — while drawing all of the musical segments into one cohesive aria.

The final quintet provides the most beautiful music for this act. To the duet of the Noahs is added the Trio on a melodic theme that reappears not only in this opera<sup>34</sup> but also in other Mollicone songs. (“I Never Saw a Moor,” “Song”) (see Example 2)

Example 2: *Hotel Eden*, Act II, p. 141-142

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 189.

<sup>34</sup> The “Reflection Motive” also appears in Act III of *Hotel Eden*, as Abraham’s aria recalling the past, and then when Isaac is born.

REP. REPAIR P DOCE

I WONDER IF HE KNOWS HOW HARD A TASK IT IS TO

BEAR OUR HEADS AND LIVE LIFE THAT'S MODELED AF-TER HIS. I

Henry Mollicone, *Hotel Eden*, p. 141-42. Libretto by Judith Fein. © 1985 by Ione Press, a division of ECS Publishing, Boston, MA. Reprinted by permission.

This motive seems to correspond with text that is reflective in nature. In this case the “Reflection Motive” comes when the Trio wonder about the ability to love one another.<sup>35</sup> It is a beautiful melody, underscoring poignant moments each time Mollicone uses it.

Hagar is the main soprano role in the final act. She frequently sings in ensemble with Abraham and Sarah, and often functions as an obligato to their parts. Strength of voice must be used in order to balance the others. Each character has an aria in this act; for Hagar’s aria a full two octaves is in play, C#4 -- C6. The voice is challenged by passages of small intervals that require accuracy and a high tessitura. This aria, which has since been arranged for piano and voice, has a distinctive flavor and strong depth of emotion.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 141-45.

COYOTE TALES

an opera in two acts

Librettist, Sheldon Harnick

Commissioned by The Lyric Opera of Kansas City.

World premiere at Lyric Opera of Kansas City, 7 March 1998.

CAST:

Coyote.....Tenor

Solo Star/Maiden (one or two performers).....Lyric Soprano

Storyteller/Pavayoykyasi (one or two performers).....Bass-Baritone

Fox.....Mezzo-Soprano

Duck1.....Soprano

Duck 2.....Tenor

Skookum 1.....Soprano

Skookum 2..... Mezzo-Soprano

Skookum 3.....Alto

Chorus of 24 (minimum) including -

Four Suitors/Voice of the Great Spirit.....Tenor, Tenor, Baritone, Bass

(Voice of the Great Spirit sung offstage with amplification)

## INSTRUMENTATION:

2 Flutes (Piccolo), 2 Oboes (English Horn), 2 Clarinets (Bass Clarinet), 2 Bassoons, 3 Horns, 2 Trumpets, 3 Trombones, 3 Percussion (including Timpani),  
Piano/Celesta/Synthesizer (1 player), Harp and Strings

DURATION: 2 hr. 30 min.

## SYNOPSIS:

Act I -- Prologue

The Storyteller introduces Old Man Coyote as “trickster and hero, lover and clown,” and sets the stage, “In the beginning, . . . the world was naught but water.”<sup>36</sup>

Scene 1 -- Old Man Coyote Makes the World (Crow)

Coyote is bored and lonely. With the aid of the Sun he creates Brother and Sister Duck who are delighted by their watery surroundings. The ducks dive to the bottom, retrieving a root and mud from which Coyote is able to create a world. At his desire for a family, Coyote then creates the male animals and humans, followed by the females. All the creatures express gratitude for life.

Scene 2 -- Coyote and the Great Spirit (Okanagon)

The voice of the Great Spirit reminds Coyote that it was His aid that made Coyote’s creations possible. Coyote is told that he will learn through his mistakes, but is promised that when he dies he will come back to life.

Scene 3 -- How Coyote brought Fire to the People (Karak)


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<sup>36</sup> Henry Mollicone, *Coyote Tales* (Boston, MA: Ione Press/ECS Publishing, 1999), 8-9.

The humans are freezing. Led by Sister Fox, Coyote determines they must steal the fire guarded by the Skookums, three ancient sisters. Coyote sneaks upon the sisters and seizes the flame. A chase ensues with the flame being passed amongst the animals and finally to the Ducks who escape by diving into the water. The Skookums mourn the loss of their fire and swear revenge on Coyote. With the humans still freezing and now feeling hopeless, Coyote instructs the animals to bring him the necessary materials to build a fire. Although he revels in his cleverness, Coyote still feels alone.

#### Scene 4 -- Coyote in Love with a Star (Klamath)

Coyote gazes at the stars, becoming enamored with their light and beauty and singing. The Solo Star cannot descend, so Coyote climbs the highest mountain to reach her. Coyote cannot live in the cold air and Star releases him.

The Storyteller describes Coyote's month-long fall. His gigantic strike on the ground caused an earthquake, forming Klamath Crater, and his blood turned to water, filling every crevice. Now when coyotes howl at the sky, they are scolding the stars for letting their father die. Calling on the Great Spirit's promise, Fox performs a ritualistic dance that brings Coyote back to life. Suddenly the Skookums appear and chase the company off stage.

## Act II

### Coyote and Pavayoykyasi (Hopi)

Four journeying suitors approach in hopes of winning the beautiful Maiden of Oraibi. The Maiden refuses each of the chiefs. Seeing her, Coyote has awakened within him an untouched passion that causes him to howl! Pavayoykyasi arrives, singing the praises of

the Maiden. Touched by his gift of moisture that gives life, as well as his handsome face, she accepts his proposal and promises to wait for his return. Coyote plots to disguise himself as Pavayoykyasi and fool the Maiden. Coyote and the Maiden marry at once. Pavayoykyasi then tracks Coyote to the Maiden. She runs from the house screaming at her betrayal. Pavayoykyasi and the people of Oraibi pursue the villain, while the defiled Maiden returns alone to her house.

Coyote, having escaped once again, reflects on his misadventures with love. He determines: “Be what you are, do what you do, and if you’re bruised, as soon as you’ve convalesced, go on the next adventure and hope for the best.”<sup>37</sup> The vengeful Pavayoykyasi appears, calling upon the clouds. A violent storm slays Coyote. Fox and the Great Spirit again bring his body back to life. Coyote hears the voices of the stars, the Skookums, and all the creatures he created, and readies himself to go forward. The Storyteller closes with this final lesson, “As you behave, we shall too. Old Man Coyote, we are you.”<sup>38</sup>

The basis of this opera is from a collection of Native American stories about the coyote. Mollicone writes: “The stories are, in short, about us, with all of our irreconcilable contradictions of good and evil. They deal with humanity, a species capable of the most noble of deeds and lofty aspirations on the one hand, the most evil and destructive on the other.”<sup>39</sup> Set to a combination of Harnick’s gift for words and Mollicone’s musical creativity, the stories, woven into a continuous tale, become an intriguing work of art. Russell Patterson, conductor of the premiere, describes Mollicone’s music as a combination of “the gift of his Italian opera ancestry with

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 295-96.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 321.

American rhythmic drive and jazzy influence.”<sup>40</sup> For the performer, his music is very challenging, yet extremely singable.

There are several soprano roles in *Coyote Tales*, including the jazzy Sister Duck and the screeching Skookum I. The two primary roles are the Solo Star and the Maiden of Oraibi.

The role of Solo Star, though not lengthy, is prominent in the life of Coyote. The singing is all in ensemble, intertwined with Coyote and the chorus of stars. The range is wide, with the high notes requisite of a lofty star, and notes considered at the low end for a soprano. A soprano cast as the Star must be capable of sustained floating tones, as well as a strong extended range.

A much larger role is that of the Maiden. More lyric in nature, her vocal lines consist of lovely melodic motives. The role includes both solo and ensemble numbers. Though actual set arias are rare in this piece, the Maiden’s Corn Song has since been arranged as such. The range for the Maiden is not too extreme on either end, yet a strong high C#6 is required. The Maiden and her surrounding characters tell much of the plot, therefore, crisp diction seems as essential as beauty of tone.

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<sup>39</sup> Henry Mollicone, *Coyote Tales*. Newport Classics CD NPD 85629/2, 1998. Compact disc, 3.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

## PART THREE

### SONGS

Mollicone loves writing songs. Opera is the creation of an entire world that must be cohesive, while each song is a world unto itself. His own analogy is: “Like the difference between dating and marriage – marriage is a bigger commitment, lots of hard work; dating is a shorter commitment, you can do lots of them!”<sup>41</sup>

When selecting text, Mollicone chooses poetry that stands out to him. Sometimes it is the flow of the line, other times he will hear music and begin to write immediately.<sup>42</sup> His poetic instincts have proven true, and his skill at text setting is exceptional. His songs, like his operas, provide a wide variety of styles, and fit the voice well.

As song writing does not provide a living, Mollicone writes songs for pleasure. Each one is intended for a friend, with their particular vocal strengths in mind. The majority are songs for soprano, with a wonderful range of style, poetry, and dramatic flare.

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<sup>41</sup> Henry Mollicone, telephone interview with the author, 18 March 2002.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

## SEVEN SONGS

Mollicone writes, “This group of songs is to me nostalgic — each song was dedicated to a dear and special person. They were composed between 1986 and 1989, and revised in 1999 for publication.”<sup>43</sup>

### To Daffodils

Robert Herrick (1591-1674)

duration: 1 min. 15sec.

Although the title may conjure up images of spring and cheerful thoughts, Herrick’s tribute to the brief life of daffodils, and thus our own lives, is more melancholy. This poem is set in a modified strophic form. The piano, marked *scorrevole* (gliding), in an arpeggiated triplet accompaniment, counters the mostly duple setting of the text. The declamation flows easily, in a speech-like rhythm. The range is not extensive, from Db4 to Gb5. The challenge in singing this song is the succession of intervals — not wide leaping intervals, but the half and whole step scalar passages used in an unconventional way.

### The Snail

James Reeves (1909-1978)

duration: 2 min. 50 sec.

Set at a “moderate snail’s pace”<sup>44</sup> this song is a charming depiction of a snail. Downward stepwise passages give the feeling of a slithering creature. The minimal accompaniment consists mainly of harp-like rolled chords, with a melodic interlude and postlude. The single-strophe poem is loosely ABA, unified by similar melodic passages in various keys

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<sup>43</sup> Henry Mollicone, *Seven Songs for Soprano and Piano* (Boston, MA: Ione Press/ECS Publishing, 2001),.3.

that provide interest as well as homogeneity. Compare measures 12-15 to measures 16-19. (see Example 3)

Example 3: “The Snail,” mm 12-19.

12 *p dolce*

Safe in the dark, no greed - y eye Can - her ten - der bod - y spy,

16

While she her - self, a hun - gry thief, Search - es out the fresh - est leaf. *rit.*

Mollicone, *Seven Songs for Soprano and Piano*. © 2001 by Ione Press, a division of ECS Publishing, Boston, MA. Reprinted by permission.

The range is nearly the same as in *To Daffodils*, from D4 to Gb5. For the soprano this song requires vocal restraint in order to portray the “grey and noiseless snail.”<sup>45</sup>

### The Snowflake

Walter de la Mare (1873-1956)

duration: 1 min. 15 sec.

The delicacy of a snowflake is a prominent feature of this song. Marked *allegretto sognando*, the pace is quick with the dreaminess of a “wilderness of white.”<sup>46</sup> The piano, often in the treble, adds to this effect. A bit more expansive than the previous two songs, the range is D4 to A#5. The vocal writing consists of wide, disjunct leaps, while the dynamics are not marked above *mf*. These two factors may be contradicting forces for

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

the singer. Keeping in mind the nature of snowflakes may help to blend these factors for the desired effect. The meter, which changes nearly every measure, may also prove to be a challenge, until the flow of each phrase is mastered.

If You Were Coming In the Fall

Emily Dickinson (1830-1886)

duration: 3 min. 20 sec.

Emily Dickinson is one of the poets most often set by American composers. It is the structure of her poems — meter, rhyme, length — as well as the deep emotional content that makes her work so desirable for composers. This poem consists of five compact stanzas that keenly express desire and despair. Mollicone sets this poem in a speech-like manner. Although at first glance this setting may seem rhythmically challenging, the text will actually flow if sung accurately. The pulsing chord accompaniment gives a feeling of quiet introspection, exposing the speaker's thoughts. The vocal tessitura lies mainly in the treble clef, from C#4 to G5. However the extreme ends of the range, the high C6 (an optional note is given) and the final low D4, are used effectively for dramatic punctuation. The soprano performing this song should be strong at both ends of her range in order to execute the notes convincingly.

The Frost Pane

David McCord (1897-1997)

duration: 2 min. 05 sec.

This song is a wonderfully jazzy setting of a delightful poem. As seen through the eyes of a child, this poem expresses the fun of breathing on the windowpane in winter. The speaker's age is evident in the text, "You can't write a Nalphabet, You can't draw a

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 10.

Nelephant.”<sup>47</sup> Mollicone’s use of a swing rhythm and bouncy melodic skips and steps give the feeling of the sometimes random quality of children’s speech. The range extends from C#4 to Ab5 but resides mainly in the middle range. This song should be sung with rhythmic punch to emphasize two against three, and to depict the exuberance of youth. Care must also be taken that the pitches, which are sometimes unexpected, are accurately sung, in order to give the fullest effect of the piece.

I Never Saw a Moor

Emily Dickinson (1830-1886)

duration: 1 min. 10 sec.

Another poignant Dickinson poem, this one expresses the peace that comes with sure knowledge. Here the “Refection Motive” (see *Hotel Eden*) is heard in full, in both in the piano and the voice. The vocal line is sustained with occasional large leaps, the range spanning from Eb4 to Gb5. Sung with stability and constancy, the line aptly reflects the surety and calm of the speaker. The sparse piano generally includes the melodic line, although the contour is broken up into different octaves (see Example 4), giving an almost pointillistic effect.

Example 4: “I Never Saw a Moor,” mm. 1-2.

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 15.

**Adagio non troppo ♩ = c. 70**

*poco espr.  
(melody)*

*p dolce*

3

Ped. Ped.

Mollicone, *Seven Songs for Soprano and Piano*, p. 18. © 2001 by Ione Press, a division of ECS Publishing, Boston, MA. Reprinted by permission.

The meter frequently changes from odd to even. There is a consistent working of two against three, yet the rhythms, perhaps due to the slow tempo, seem fairly steady. Taking each of these mentioned elements into account, the singer must maintain an even sound and continuity of phrase in order to reflect the simplicity of the text.

### Waiting

Henry Behn (1898-1973)

duration: 1 min. 10 sec.

The text concerns nature waiting for spring to arrive. Composed in a slightly more popular idiom, this melodic piece is along the lines of a tender lullaby. The three-stanza poem becomes a two-part song — the first two stanzas are set in similar melodic verses, and the last stanza is repeated four times with slight variations, almost as a refrain. The piano acts as an accompaniment, with broken arpeggiated chords and occasional melodic motives. The range C4 to G5, is not a strenuous one, and the lyric melodic lines make this song a pleasure to sing. The challenge comes in maintaining the flowing lyricism while holding back the dynamic to *pp*, as the writing requires. It is also imperative that the

singer be sensitive to the text in order to portray the gentle feeling of this song.

Mollicone suggests that this piece also works well as an encore to a recital, and it was first performed as such.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 3.

## FIVE LOVE SONGS

for soprano and piano

Mollicone wrote this set of songs in 2000 for his long time friend, soprano Maria Spacagna. Spacagna has sung in major opera houses all over the world, including the Metropolitan Opera and La Scala, singing the role of Madame Butterfly over 250 times. Spacagna and Mollicone premiered these songs in California on 15 November 2001, at the San Mateo Performing Arts Center.<sup>49</sup>

This wonderful group of songs is comprised of poems by Elizabeth Browning, Thomas Brown, and Christina Rossetti. Each love song has its own distinct flavor, and together they constitute an interesting and charming set.

The songs are very lyrical, the music requiring depth in the voice and the ability to render soaring vocal lines. The songs are also somewhat short, each less than three minutes, yet are infused with deep emotional content and exquisite musical emphasis.

### First Time He Kissed Me

Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1806-1861)

duration: 2 min. 15 sec.

Recollections of a first, second, and third kiss are the sweet sentiment of this song.

Mollicone has effectively captured the energy, innocence, and devotion of the speaker.

At first a bit conversational, the song grows in lyricism to the final soaring lines of “My love, my own.”<sup>50</sup> The vocal range is simple, D#4 to Ab5. Spacagna’s advice is

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<sup>49</sup> Henry Mollicone, e-mail correspondence with the author, 8 November 2001.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., *Five Love Songs*, autograph manuscript, 2000, 4-5.

to keep the diction crisp in order to execute the lyrics at the preferred tempo.<sup>51</sup> For a lyric voice this song is luscious to sing, and makes it easy for the singer to reflect the warmth of the text in the voice.

The Face of All the World

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

duration: 2 min. 30 sec.

A sense of restraint is pervasive in this somewhat somber song. Dynamics remain at *mp* or less. The piano accompaniment is mainly chords on the beat, with an occasional melodic passage or arpeggiated flourish at a fermata. Even the range is restrained — barely over an octave, E4 to F#5. The speaker is reflective, depicted in the somewhat declamative vocal writing, which is intended to be more free than rhythmically strict.<sup>52</sup>

One challenge of performance may be to reflect each nuance of the text.

I Do Not Love Thee

Thomas Brown (1663-1704)

duration: 1 min. 30 sec.

Although the text is brief, one can imagine a conversation between the agitated pleadings of the piano and the coquettish responses of the voice. The humorous “dialogue” is repeated several times with only slight variation — perhaps Doctor Fell is difficult to convince. The brief snatches for the voice include the pitches D#4 to F#5. Two qualities would be required for this song: accuracy and drama. And just in case the singer is lacking in a sense of humor, Mollicone has written it in! (see Example 5)

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<sup>51</sup> Maria Spacagna, phone interview with the author, 14 June 2002.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

Example 5: "I Do Not Love Thee," final measures.

The image displays two systems of handwritten musical notation. The first system features a vocal line in treble clef and a piano accompaniment in bass clef. The vocal line includes the lyrics "THE REA-SON WHY, I CANNOT" with a fermata over the word "WHY". The piano part is marked with "Poco RUBATO" and "Ped.". The second system continues the piano accompaniment, marked with "(QUIET LAUGH)" and "pp". The vocal line in this system has the word "TELL." with a fermata. The piano part includes a circled "R" with a diagonal slash through it, and a small smiley face drawn on the staff.

Mollicone, *Five Love Songs*, autograph manuscript, 2000, p. 13. Used by permission.

### May's Love

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

duration: 2 min. 30 sec.

One thing quite apparent on hearing this song is Mollicone's experience as a writer of film scores. The compositional style rivals the most popular movie-theme songs. No untrained voice, however, could do full justice to this marvelous song. There is somewhat of a dichotomy between text and music: the text is barbed with pain and

bitterness, while the lyricism of the music indicates a sense of peaceful emotions. The cohesion of these elements gives an altogether new sentiment of acceptance in spite of the aching. This range is fuller than the previous songs, from D4 to the climactic C6. The passion of the voice and the piano make this palatable song a sheer pleasure to sing and play.

Song

Christina Rossetti (1830-1894)

duration: 2 min.

A different kind of love song, this sweet poem is one of farewell. It is not difficult to sing — simple rhythms and graceful melodic lines, with a range from C4 to G5. Yet if the song is not sung with understanding, it will be without impact upon the listener. The speaker reflects that after this life is over “Hap’ly, I may remember, And hap’ly may forget.”<sup>53</sup> He invites his love to do the same. That element of peace accompanied by discernment is reflected in the introduction and final bars, when a fragment of the “Reflection Motive” appears in the piano. The song begins in F major, and cadences on the tonic at the first completion of the poem. When the final couplet is repeated, there is a modulation to Gb major with the voice ending on the mediant (Bb). This change, along with the marking *sognando*, leaves the listener not exactly unresolved, but very aware of an altered state. It is a beautiful song, and a serene completion of this set.

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 22

## IMAGES AND REFLECTIONS

a song cycle for soprano and piano

Texts by William R. Booth (b. 1919), selected from the collections *Sparkles and Other Poems* and *The Mountains are Waiting*.

This set of six songs, so aptly titled, was recently commissioned for soprano Erie Mills by The College of the Atlantic. As Mills is a highly experienced professional singer, these songs are of a difficult caliber. She is a soprano with extensive high notes and a light agile voice. These same qualities are requisite to singing *Images and Reflections*.

Mills has also sung and recorded four of Mollicone's songs from the *Seven Songs* collection. She describes Mollicone's music as singable and lyrical. For her, singing new music is no different from other music, "It's what's on the page that counts!!!!"<sup>54</sup> The perk for singing the music of a living composer is that the composer can respond to questions and give his interpretive input. In reference to Mollicone's songs, she comments: "Some songs are difficult, but they are ALWAYS worth it."<sup>55</sup>

### 1. The Ladyslipper

duration: 4 min.

This poem describes, on the one hand, the interdependence of the ladyslipper flower and the fungus that enables it to grow, and on the other, the bond of two devoted

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<sup>54</sup> Erie Mills, e-mail correspondence with the author, 5 May 2002.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

partners. Mollicone personifies the lady slipper with expressive markings such as “sensuously,” “suggestively,” “sultry,” “coquettishly,” and “elegant.”<sup>56</sup> The musical features include intervals of octaves and seconds in the piano, signifying dual dependence, and short chromatic scales in both piano and voice, possibly depicting growth and sensuality. The vocal range is Eb4 to A5. Secure vocal control is necessary in order to execute the wide leaps and unusual range of expression.

## 2. Strong Cold

duration: 2 min. 45 sec.

As a pianist, Mollicone knows how to use this instrument to its descriptive capacity. Although the piano part is rather simple in this song, the stark, polarized voicings and wandering bass line give the feeling of roving through a frozen wasteland. The range is similar to the previous song, mainly E4 to G5, but a sustained, *pp* high C6 (ironically set to the text “It’s far below zero”<sup>57</sup>) is a feat mastered by few sopranos.

## 3. A Question for Zilpha

duration: 1 min. 30 sec.

The question asked to Zilpha is essentially, “Why can we not welcome into our house the tricky and resourceful ‘supermouse’?”<sup>58</sup> This humorous little ditty is in several sections. A bouncy rhythm is indicated for the scurrying piano, with the voice doing likewise as it describes the actions of the mouse. A more *maestoso* phrase indicates the respect due to the animal. A return to the energetic Tempo I is followed by a playful vocalise-like

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<sup>56</sup> Henry Mollicone, *Images and Reflections*, autograph manuscript, 2001, 1-5.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

finale. This song definitely calls for ease and agility in the uppermost range. Though E4 is only sung once, C6 occurs three times, with Eb6 (optionally C6) for the big finish. Neither a smiling nor frowning face but a rather mischievous one indicates Mollicone's mood for this song (see Example 6).

Example 6: "A Question for Zilpha" signature face.



Mollicone, *Images and Reflections*, autograph manuscript, 2001, p. 16.  
Used by permission.

#### 4. Longing

duration: 1 min. 40 sec.

Though brief, this poem is unexpectedly profound and thought provoking. The final phrase, "Longing remains the elemental assurance that life is good,"<sup>59</sup> provides an unexpected twist in meaning.

The tessitura in this song could prove to be a challenge for a soprano. The range does dip down to F4, yet it tends to remain high, lingering at the top of the treble clef. The highest pitch is only A5, yet is indicated as soft and sweet in character. As in most of Mollicone's music, the changing rhythmic clusters, which allow the text to declaim smoothly, must be accurate.

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 12.

### 5. At Dusk

duration: 2 min.

No set of Mollicone compositions would be complete without some jazz influence. This song is in true blues style, yet needs a classically trained voice to pull it off. Syncopated rhythms and blues ornamentation in the voice, accompanied by enriched spirited jazz harmonics in the piano, make for a lively combination. The range goes down to D4 (optionally D5) and up to B5. The tempo is quick, requiring extra effort for accurate diction. This song is not only enjoyable for the audience, but also remarkably fun for the performers.

### 6. To See a Daffodil

duration: 4 min.

The literary choices of Mollicone are consistently interesting and insightful. The two poetic lines of this song are interpreted in a variety of ways. The structure of the song is like a miniature *bel canto* aria — a legato cavatina, followed by a spirited cabaletta — complete with vocal acrobatics. In the first section (and the postlude as well), the delicate piano has a depiction of the fragile daffodil, while the “dance-like”<sup>60</sup> characteristics of the fast section provide a playful contrast. As with any *bel canto* singing both ability to sustain lyric lines and flexibility in coloratura passages are required. Again this song goes no lower than Eb4, with the tessitura remaining high, and a sustained D6 is required twice. Dynamics are somewhat restrained and controlled. This song is a delightful challenge to sing.

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<sup>59</sup>Ibid., 17-19.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 31.

THREE SIMPLE SONGS

for Soprano and Piano

### Dedicated to John Moriarty

These most recent additions to the Mollicone song repertoire are set to texts by Emily Dickinson (1830-1886). They are the beginnings of an idea to write a collection of songs, all set to Dickinson, which are appropriate for undergraduate voices. “Simple” however, should not be mistaken for “easy.” Though the rhythms may be less complex and ranges not as wide as previously written songs, these songs still provide plenty of challenge for the voice.

John Moriarty is a friend who first invited Mollicone to attend the Lake George Music Festival, which sparked his interest in opera. He also helped to secure the recent commission from Central City Opera to write *Gabriel’s Daughter — the Story of Clara Brown*. In appreciation, Mollicone has dedicated these three songs to Moriarty.<sup>61</sup>

#### There is Another Sky

duration: 4 min. 20 sec.

Because the range is D4 to A#5, this song would suit a more advanced undergraduate student. The form hints at modified strophic, yet the development and modulation take it beyond a simple form. The lovely melodic line often takes unexpected turns, requiring a good ear for the singer, as well as support for the sustained high notes.

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<sup>61</sup> Mollicone, telephone interview, 18 March 2002.

### God Made A Little Gentian

duration: 1 min. 30 sec.

A bit more upbeat, this song, like any Dickinson text, calls for exact enunciation so the listener may appreciate the text. From the D4 to the final sustained A5, an even, free sound would best enhance this inspiring piece. A good sense of phrase conveys the flow of the melody as well as the poetry.

### Poor Little Heart

duration: 2 min.

As in much of Mollicone's music, this sweet little song is melodically rich. The simplest of the three, with a range from D4 to G#5, this song would still provide a challenge for young voices. The straightforward melody necessitates a beauty of line and freedom in the voice. The challenge comes in allowing the voice fully sing the melodic line while maintaining an intimate dynamic. Any level of musician would find this song "simply" enjoyable to sing.

## CONCLUSION

When searching for contemporary literature, any singer would do well to look to Mollicone. His range of experience enables him to compose in many genres, with a wide variety of styles. He knows the strengths of the voice, and sets texts and vocal lines that enhance its beauty. He may stretch even the finest musicians, yet the music rewards their efforts.

For the soprano voice Mollicone has provided a wealth of literature. There are songs to fit most any voice type, and whether serious or comic, each song is a pleasure. One difficulty with contemporary opera is extracting arias from a continuous flow of music. This is also a challenge for some of Mollicone's pieces, although the arias that he has recently arranged for concert performance will soon be widely published.

When approaching Mollicone vocal literature, one must keep several things in mind. Accuracy — of rhythm and pitch — is a must. These elements of his music can be extremely challenging. As in all vocal music, the text is of high importance. Mollicone is especially sensitive to the flow of speech and the nuances of the poetry: therefore, precise diction is required. A sense of drama is inherent to his vocal music, a feature in which good performers should revel.

Though individual aspects of Mollicone may be reminiscent of other composers, collectively he has his own voice. He has found his unique style amidst varying influences and sometimes opposing forces. In an era where many experimental and unusual sounds are labeled “music,” Henry Mollicone offers entertainment, beauty, and art.

## APPENDIX

### MUSICAL COMPOSITIONS BY HENRY MOLLICONE

- 1962**      **THREE IMPRESSIONS** (piano solo); premiere: 5/24/68, Jordan Hall, Boston, MA; H. Mollicone, pianist
- 1964**      **HORS D'OEUVRE** (piano solo); premiere: 2/24/70, University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH; H. Mollicone, pianist
- THREE CHRISTMAS SONGS** (unaccompanied women's voices; E.C. Schirmer); premiere: 12/25/65, King's Chapel, Boston, MA; Daniel Pinkham, conductor
- 1965**      **GEOMETRY** (soprano and piano); premiere: 9/9/66, Music Mansion, Providence, R.I., Carleen Perino, soprano; H. Mollicone, piano
- 'NEATH THE STREAMING MOON** (soprano and piano); premiere: 8/3/68, Berkshire Music Center; Donna Precht, soprano; H. Mollicone, piano
- OUR PRAYER OF THANKS** (mixed voices and piano; Elkan-Vogel); premiere: 5/5/65, Mount Pleasant High School Choir, Providence, R.I.; Robert Revicki, conductor
- THREE PRELUDES** (organ; E.C. Schirmer); premiere: 9/8/72, King's Chapel, Boston, MA; Daniel Pinkham, organ
- TRIO** (flute, clarinet, bassoon); premiere: 3/20/69, Jordan Hall, Boston, MA; R. Stallman, flute; T. MacWilliams, clarinet; E. Ford, bassoon
- BALLADE** (piano solo); premiere: 1/30/68, Gardner Museum, Boston, MA; H. Mollicone, piano
- EURYDICE TO ORPHEUS** (soprano and piano); premiere: 8/3/68, Berkshire Music Center; Donna Precht, soprano; H. Mollicone, piano
- FIVE POEMS OF LOVE** (women's voices and harp; E.C. Schirmer); premiere: 5/4/77, Mount Holyoke Choir, Mount Holyoke College; Timothy Mount, conductor.

- 1967**      **CLEOPATRA'S DREAM** (soprano and piano); premiere: 8/3/68, Harvard University; Susan Stevens, soprano; H. Mollicone, piano
- COME AWAY, COME SWEET LOVE** (soprano and piano); premiere: 8/3/68, Harvard University; Susan Stevens, soprano; H. Mollicone, piano
- FANTASY** (piano and chamber orchestra); premiere: 4/4/70, Simmons College Orchestra, Boston, MA; Jeff Cook, conductor; H. Mollicone, piano
- LOOK DOWN, FAIR MOON** (soprano and piano); premiere: 8/3/68, Berkshire Music Center; Donna Precht, soprano; H. Mollicone, piano
- OUT OF LUCRETIVS** (women's voices and string quartet); premiere: 8/12/69, King's Chapel, Boston, MA; New England Conservatory students, H. Mollicone, conductor
- TE DEUM** (mixed voices and orchestra of winds, brass, percussion, harp, celesta); premiere: 2/15/67, Jordan Hall, Boston, MA; N.E. Conservatory Chorus and Orchestra; Lorna Cooke deVaron, conductor
- 1968**      **STABAT MATER** (soprano and tenor solos, mixed voices, and orchestra of winds, percussion, harp and celesta); premiere; 3/2/68, Providence, RI; Rhode Island Civic Chorale and Orchestra, Louis Pichierri, conductor
- YOUNG GOODMAN BROWN** (opera in one act for soli, chorus, small orchestra); premiere: 8/23/68, Lake George Opera Festival; H. Mollicone, conductor
- 1969**      **IOLAS EPITAPH** (mixed voices unaccompanied; E.C. Schirmer); premiere: unknown
- THE THREE MUSKETEERS** (incidental score for the play); premiere: 12/12/69, Harvard University; ensemble of students from New England Conservatory; H. Mollicone, conductor
- TWO LOVE SONGS** (tenor and viola); premiere: 12/12/72, Jordan Hall, Boston, MA; Frank Hoffmeister, tenor; Barry Lehr, viola
- 1970**      **BAGATELLES** (piano solo); premiere: 5/5/70, New England Conservatory, Boston, MA; Mark Jorden, piano
- MONOLOGUES** (bass); premiere: 9/2/70, New England Conservatory, Boston, MA; Robert Stone, bass

**MUSIC FOR CHERYL** (piano solo); premiere: 3/24/70, Gardner Museum, Boston, MA; H. Mollicone, piano.

**THE WEDDING** (incidental score to the play); premiere 10/3/70, Brown Hall, Boston, MA; ensemble of N.E. Conservatory students conducted by H. Mollicone

**1971**      **CHERIE TWO** (piano solo); premiere: 11/5/72, Jordan Hall, Boston, MA; H. Mollicone, piano

**GOD MAKES DUCKS** (cycle for soprano and piano); premiere: 4/12/71, Jordan Hall, Boston, MA; Barbara Winchester, soprano, H. Mollicone, piano

**YOUNG GOODMAN BROWN: ORCHESTRAL SUITE** (large orchestra); premiere: 8/24/71, Philadelphia Orchestra School of Orchestral Studies, Saratoga Performing Arts Center; William Smith, conductor

**1972**      **CHAUNT** (viola; E.C. Schirmer); premiere: 5/21/72, Tammybrook Hall, Tenafly, NJ; John Richardson, viola

**1973**      **THERE IS A GARDEN** (soprano, viola, piano); premiere: 5/21/72, Tammybrook Hall, Tenafly, NJ; Maria Spacagna, soprano; John Richardson, viola; Herman Weiss, piano

**THE RELAPSE** (incidental music for the play); premiere: 4/28/72, Guthrie Theater, Minneapolis, MN; Guthrie Orchestra, Richard Whitbeck, conductor

**MURALI** (mezzo-soprano, horn, cello, percussion, harp); unperformed.

**1974**      **TARTUFFE** (incidental music for the play); premiere: 5/20/74, Guthrie Theater, Minneapolis, MN; Guthrie Orchestra, Richard Whitbeck, conductor

**1975-78**    **DREAM CHILD** (opera in two acts for soli, chorus, medium orchestra); unperformed

**1976**      **TENDER GRANITE** (cantata for soprano, clarinet, violin, cello, guitar, piano); premiere: 7/2/76, Lenox Art Center, Lenox, MA; H. Toms, conductor

**1977**      **A CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION** (cantata for soprano solo, narrator, mixed voices, flute, percussion, organ); premiere: 12/25/77, First Christian Reformed Church of Los Angeles Choir; H. Mollicone, conductor

- THE PREMONITION** (incidental music for the film); released in 1977; H. Mollicone, conductor
- 1978**      **AN EASTER SERVICE** (mixed voices, trumpet, percussion, organ); premiere: Easter Sunday, 1978, First Christian Reformed Church of Los Angeles Choir, H. Mollicone, conductor
- BLEST BE THAT SACRED COVENANT LOVE** (mixed voices and piano); premiere: 3/20/78, St. Martin of Tours Choir, Los Angeles, CA; H. Mollicone, conductor
- THE FACE ON THE BARROOM FLOOR** (opera in one act for soli, flute, cello, piano; Belwin-Mills); premiere: 6/78, Central City Opera Company Apprentice Singers; Richard Aslanian, conductor-pianist. Miami, FL: Deshon Music, Inc., 1979
- HEAR ME, REDEEMER** (soprano solo, mixed voices, piano; Fred Bock Music); premiere: 9/6/78, St. Martin of Tours Choir, Los Angeles, CA; H. Mollicone, conductor
- 1979**      **WHEN I SURVEY THE WONDROUS CROSS** (soprano solo, unaccompanied mixed voices); premiere: 2/5/79, St. Martin of Tours Choir, Los Angeles, CA; H. Mollicone, conductor
- WHEN THE STARS ARE GONE** (mixed voices and piano; Fred Bock Music Co.); premiere: 2/5/79, St. Martin of Tours Choir, Los Angeles, CA; H. Mollicone, conductor
- 1979-1985**      **VARIOUS EDUCATIONAL FILMS** (incidental scores)
- 1979-1980**      **STARBIRD** (opera in one act for soli, chamber ensemble, electronic tape; Belwin-Mills); premiere: 5/21/80, Terrace Theater, Kennedy Center, Washington, D.C.; members of the Texas Opera Theater conducted by Louis Salemno. Boston, MA: Ione Press/ECS Publishing, 1997.
- 1980**      **PSALM 114** (mixed voices, handbells, organ); premiere: 3/3/80, Cathedral of St. Vibiana, Los Angeles, CA; Paul Salamonovich, conductor
- REBEL** (incidental music for the feature film); released in 1980; ensemble conducted by H. Mollicone
- 1981**      **BEAUTIFUL SAVIOR** (mixed voices and organ; Belwin-Mills); premiere; unknown

**EMPEROR NORTON** (opera in one act for soli, chamber ensemble; Belwin-Mills); premiere: 5/14/81, Civic Center, San Francisco, CA; members of San Francisco Opera's Brown Bag Company, John Miner, conductor

**HIM EVERMORE I BEHOLD** (mixed voices and organ; Belwin-Mills); premiere: 2/2/81, St. Martin of Tours Choir, Los Angeles, CA; H. Mollicone, conductor

**IT IS GOOD TO SING THY PRAISES** (mixed voices and organ; Belwin-Mills); premiere: unknown

**1982**      **THE MASK OF EVIL** (opera in one act); premiere: 5/81, Minnesota Opera Company.

Choral Anthems: **ALL GLORY, LAUD AND HONOR; HEAR ME, REDEEMER; HOW BLEST THE MAN WHO FEARS THE LORD; LORD, O LORD, THY GLORIOUS NAME; MAY THE GRACE OF CHRIST THE SAVIOR; SING TO THE LORD;** (mixed voices and organ)

**1983**      **CLASPING OF HANDS** (mixed voices and chamber ensemble); premiere: 5/22/83, Mount St. Mary's Choir and Ensemble conducted by Frank Brownstead.

**1985-1989**      **HOTEL EDEN** (opera in three acts, written and work-shopped under a grant from Opera America's "Opera in the 80s and Beyond"); premiere: 11/25/89, Opera San Jose. Boston, MA: ECS Publishing, 1985.

**1985**      **THE TRIAL** (incidental music for the play); Mayer Theater, Santa Clara, CA.

**THE KNIGHT OF THE BURNING PESTLE** (incidental music for the play); Mayer Theater, Santa Clara, CA.

**1986**      **SCAPIN** (incidental music for the play by Moliere); Mayer Theater, Santa Clara, CA.

**1987**      **I NEVER SAW A MOOR** (soprano solo and piano); premiere: 2/22/87, Frederica von Stade, John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

**THE DIVINERS** (incidental music for the play by Jim Leonard): Mayer Theater, Santa Clara, CA.

**LOVE'S LABOURS LOST** (incidental music for the play by Shakespeare); Mayer Theater, Santa Clara, CA.

- 1988**            **MEDEA** (incidental music for the play by Euripides); Mayer Theater, Santa Clara, CA.
- 1989**            **THE CRUCIBLE** (incidental music for the play by Miller); Mayer Theater, Santa Clara, CA.
- 1989**            **ALLELUIA**, (soprano solo, harp, violin, cello); premiere 9/9/89, Julia Wade, Soprano; The Dream Inn, Santa Cruz, CA.
- 1990**            **THE TUMBLER OF NOTRE DAME** (a ballet from the Renaissance story for dancers, chorus, vocal soloists, and chamber ensemble); premiere: 3/90, Mayer Theater, Santa Clara, CA.
- THE QUEEN OF THE REBELS** (incidental music for the play by Umberto Betti); premiere: 4/10/90, Mayer Theater, Santa Clara, CA.
- THE MIDNIGHT RIDE OF PAUL REVERE** (children's voices and chamber ensemble); premiere: 5/20/90; Colorado Children's Chorale, Duane Wolf, conductor; Denver, CO.
- 1991**            **THE ADVENTURES OF ALICE** (ballet for chamber orchestra); world premiere, San Jose Dance Theater, 3/12-15/91, San Jose, CA.
- THE ADVENTURES OF ALICE (revised version)**; 2-3/92, San Jose Dance Theater, San Jose, CA.
- HAMLET** (incidental music for the play by Shakespeare); Mayer Theater, Santa Clara, CA.
- FIVE SONGS** (soprano solo with piano); premiere: 4/21/91, Linda Hohenfeld, soprano, Christ Church Cathedral, St. Louis, MO.
- 1992**            **FLIGHT THROUGH THE STARS** (an oratorio for chorus of mixed voices SATB soli, and orchestra); premiere: 10/30/92, San Jose Symphonic Choir, Santa Clara Mission, Santa Clara, CA.
- 1993**            **IN MEMORIAM** (for strings, percussion, 3 trumpets); premiere: 1/22/93, Santa Clara University Orchestra, Santa Clara, CA; H. Mollicone, conductor.
- 1994**            **KATHY'S WHITE KNIGHT** (overture for symphony orchestra); premiere: 1/94, Santa Cruz Symphony, Santa Cruz, CA; H. Mollicone, conductor.

**ADVENTURES OF ALICE: SUITE FOR BAND** (commissioned by the U. S. Air Force Band of Flight).

**BRING US TO YOUR LIGHT** (anthem for SAB and piano).

**1995**      **REJOICE IN THE LIGHT** (anthem for mixed voices and piano); premiere: 5/95, United Methodist Church of Los Altos, Los Altos, CA.

**INNER LIGHT** (triptych for strings and chimes); premiere: 2/95, Eastman School Orchestra; David Efron, conductor.

**CELESTIAL DANCE** (for large orchestra); premiere: 4/95, Long Beach Symphony; JoAnn Falletta, conductor.

**BEHIND ME DIPS ETERNITY** (for strings, harp); premiere: 1/95, San Jose Chamber Orchestra; Barbara Day Turner, conductor.

**1996**      **DANSA TRIMBULA** (for strings, piano, percussion, with saxophone and accordion soli); premiere: 5/96, San Jose Chamber Orchestra, San Jose, CA; Barbara Day Turner, conductor.

**GEORGIA ELEGY** (for solo cello); premiere: 6/96.

**1997**      **A RAT'S TALE** (for narrator, children's chorus, symphony orchestra); premiere: 12/97, El Camino Youth Symphony, Palo Alto, CA; Charles Nelson Reilly, narrator, H. Mollicone, conductor.

**1998**      **COYOTE TALES** (full-length opera with libretto by Sheldon Harnick); premiere: 3/98, Lyric Opera of Kansas City; Russell Patterson, conductor. Boston, MA: Ione Press/ECS Publishing, 1999.

**ALLELUIA** (for baritone and organ); premiere 6/98, Boston, MA, in honor of Daniel Pinkham's 75th Birthday.

**1999**      **SEVEN SONGS FOR SOPRANO AND PIANO.** Compilation of songs composed between 1986 and 1989, revised in 1999 for publication. Boston, MA: Ione Press/ECS Publishing, 2001.

**2000**      **FIVE LOVE SONGS** (soprano solo and piano); composed for soprano Maria Spacagna; premiere: 2001 Community Concert Series; San Jose, CA.

**SONGS OF LOVE AND DEPARTURE** (tenor solo and piano); composed for tenor Jerry Hadley.

**WITH WINGS OF EAGLES** (mixed voices with instrumental ensemble); commissioned by the Bayview Festival, Bayview, MI; premiere: 8/20/00, Bayview, MI; Chorus and Instrumentalists, Gary Glaze, conductor.

**MUSICA ITALIANA** ("an ethnic experience" for solo piano); completed in August.

**THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD** (Psalm for mixed voices and piano; E.C. Schirmer); completed 12/00.

**2001**      **IN MEMORIAM 1865** (for string quartet); premiere: 7/01, Ernest Bloch Music Festival, Newport, OR.

**SONG OF EDEN** (work-in-progress); composed for actress Julie Harris and The Buffalo Philharmonic (JoAnne Falletta, music director), based upon the writings and life of Emily Dickinson, with text by William Luce, premiere to be announced.

**IMAGES AND REFLECTIONS**, (soprano solo and piano); composed for soprano Erie Mills, commissioned by The College of the Atlantic. To be premiered 4/27/03, in Belmont, CA.

**2002**      **THREE SIMPLE SONGS** (soprano solo and piano); dedicated to John Moriarty. Premiere: 2/03, Bloomington, IN, by Diane Thueson Reich.

**GABRIEL'S DAUGHTER – THE STORY OF CLARA BROWN** (full-length opera); commissioned by Central City Opera. To be premiered 7/03.

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