



TOM CIPULLO

After Life

LORI LAITMAN

In Sleep The World Is Yours

Music of Remembrance



Tom Cipullo (b. 1956), Composer
David Mason (b. 1954), Librettist

After Life (2015) 49:40

Catherine Cook, Mezzo-soprano · Robert Orth, Baritone · Ava Pine, Soprano

Music of Remembrance

Zart Dombourian-Eby, Flute · Laura DeLuca, Clarinet
Mikhail Shmidt, Violin · Walter Gray, Cello · Craig Sheppard, Piano
Stilian Kirov, Conductor · Directed by Erich Parce

1 Hey. He. Ah. Oh! Who?	7:38
2 Fernande, have you brought me here?	4:40
3 But Picasso gave birth to himself	10:19
4 I resisted in my art	5:45
5 Miss Stein, I remember	5:46
6 It wasn't the gas	5:37
7 So many died	7:31
8 Did I once have a name?	2:24

Made possible by a generous gift from Sherry and James Raisbeck

Lori Laitman (b. 1955)

In Sleep The World Is Yours (2013) 17:15

Poems by Selma Meerbaum-Eisinger
(b. Czernowitz, Romania, 1924 –
d. Michailowka labor camp, Ukraine, 1942)

9 Lullaby	5:30
10 Yes	5:38
11 Tragedy	6:07

Megan Chenovick, Soprano

Music of Remembrance

Benjamin Hausmann, Oboe · Mina Miller, Piano

Commissioned by Music of Remembrance, Mina Miller, Artistic Director
World Première Recordings

Tom Cipullo (b. 1956) and David Mason (b. 1954)

After Life (2015)

World première: 11th May, 2015, Benaroya Hall, Seattle, WA, at Music of Remembrance's Holocaust Remembrance concert. *After Life* was commissioned by Music of Remembrance and made possible by a generous gift from Sherry and James Raisbeck.

We are accustomed to thinking of great artists – in music, literature, painting and other forms – as those whose works endure because they resonate beyond the time, place and circumstances of their creation. Still, those artists are products of their own times, and their works reflections of how they understood and responded to the world around them.

In many ways, the lives of Pablo Picasso and Gertrude Stein shared a similar arc. Stein, the American, and Picasso, the Spaniard, both gravitated to Paris at the start of the twentieth century. Both were brash modernists who exerted an outsized influence on their contemporaries. Stein was an early champion of Picasso's work. He painted a well-known portrait of her, and she later wrote a poetic depiction of him. The two maintained a complicated friendship for decades, despite strong disagreements over politics. With the spread of Fascism and then Nazism in Europe, Picasso and Stein reacted in very different ways. In one of the most powerful anti-war paintings ever, Picasso's "Guernica" depicted the savagery of that village's bombing by German airplanes in support of Franco's Nationalist forces in the Spanish Civil War. Stein, on the other hand, publicly endorsed Franco, and she was an admirer and translator of Philippe Pétain, the leader of France's collaborationist Vichy government. Stein held many views that today would be considered conservative, even reactionary and perhaps elitist; Picasso joined the Communist Party in 1944 and remained an ardent member.

After Life imagines how Stein and Picasso might have resumed their conversation if they confronted each other in our times. Would either of them look back and reconsider their artistic or political ideas? How would they

react to the ways in which the world had come to see them and their work? Would either of them recognize their own ego and vanity? (And would they contend that arrogance was integral to their genius?) Would they argue that artists are bound to respond directly through their works to the evil they see? Or is the very act of creating a form of resistance in itself? In this opera, composer Tom Cipullo and librettist David Mason have created a masterful musical drama that challenges us to consider these questions through the ghosts of two giants as they reveal both their brilliance and their human flaws.

David Sabritt

A question conjured us. A question hangs in the dark...

So Gertrude Stein remarks in David Mason's libretto, and so the music goes on to insist. *After Life* is an opera more concerned with raising questions than answering them. The topics are weighty and ambitious; the rôle of art in a troubled world, the duty of artists in confronting inhumanity. I confess my own thinking on these issues evolved as I worked on the score. When recent events brought forth the images of black-garbed madmen executing innocents on the desert floor of the Levant, I initially thought that art was useless in such circumstances. Later, I began to reconsider, forming the opinion that the real value of art comes after such horrific moments, helping us, as individuals and as a culture, to make sense of the incomprehensible. Only recently, I realized that it is often art that makes the moments themselves bearable at all. But still, how ironic that the art we revere can be such an ennobling force for so many, and at other times an inspiration to those who have abandoned their own humanity. As Picasso exclaims in one of the most dramatic outbursts of *After Life*, "The Germans were lovers of art!"

The composing of *After Life* presented a number of

challenges. David has called his elegant libretto a *tragicomedy*, and the delicate balance of these two sides was prominent in my mind as I worked. I allowed myself a bit of fun in incorporating quotes from Menotti's *The Medium* when Gertrude Stein attempts to conjure Alice Toklas. In creating music for the fascinating, larger-than-life characters, I tried to capture Stein's outsize ego and Picasso's virility. Surprisingly, the character of the young orphan girl presented the greatest range of emotions. In her barely fifteen minutes on stage, she demonstrates calm, patience, sorrow, rage, resignation, wisdom, and grace.

The composer would like to express his deepest appreciation to Music of Remembrance and Mina Miller for commissioning *After Life*, and to James and Sherry Raisbeck for the generous support that made the work possible. Thanks also to David Mason for crafting a libretto that is both eloquent and inspiring. *After Life* is dedicated to my colleague and dear friend, the brilliant composer Lori Laitman, and also to the memory of Lori's mother, Mrs. Josephine Propp Laitman.

Tom Cipullo

Music of Remembrance is always seeking new ways of remembering, new stories to tell, and when it was suggested to me that the wartime experience of Pablo Picasso and Gertrude Stein might provide good material, I began my research. Almost immediately I realized that these two estranged friends, two major artists of the twentieth century and, arguably, two outsized egomaniacs, would provide me a great opportunity to explore the culpability of artists in Vichy and occupied France. What is the position of art in a time of war? How does art respond to political and military disaster? And what can artists possibly do in the face of such massive evils as Nazism and the Holocaust?

Both Picasso and Stein remain controversial in terms of how they survived the war. Stein was a Jew, though not practicing, and she seems to have been naive about the oncoming invasion, denying its reality and impact until it

was too late for her to do much about it. Critics of Stein have wondered about her decision and her friendships with several collaborationists. How was it that she, as a Jew, was spared? Was she aware of other Jews in her area who were taken away—including children from a nearby orphanage? Though Picasso was not a Jew, he had Jewish friends in Paris, where he spent much of the war. Some have accused him of collaborationist tactics in order to preserve himself; others have claimed he was active with the resistance, or at least in sympathy with it. He certainly felt very strongly that his art was a form of resistance, and endured frequent Gestapo inspections of his studio and his paintings kept in a bank vault. This is a story about artists in relation to history—the darkest history imaginable.

My first brainstorm was in the title, *After Life*. The script would be set in an amorphous afterlife, long after both artists were dead. But artists are always *after life*—they want to seize it, to possess it, and that is at the root of their art. They also come after life in another sense, modeling their work on experience of various kinds. I realized that Stein would be conjuring Picasso, her estranged friend, because he had died more recently than she and might know more about how they were both perceived in posterity. She conjures him because she has something urgent she must ask him—what has become of them, now that they are dead?

The libretto begins with absurdist comedy as these two artists confront each other in this other realm. Stein felt she had in a sense invented Picasso, and Picasso resented her for it. The introduction of a third character, an orphan girl who as a teenager had met Stein and Toklas, turns the libretto toward tragedy. The girl, taken to a concentration camp from her French orphanage, knows her anonymous death is recorded and remembered by no one. She knows the reality of death in a way neither of these artists, bent as they are on immortality, has quite comprehended. It is she who must teach them what death is, so they can finish dying as human beings.

David Mason

Tom Cipullo



Photo: Richard Gargiulo

Composer Tom Cipullo has been hailed by the American Academy of Arts and Letters for music that displays “inexhaustible imagination, wit, expressive range and originality”. Cipullo was the winner of a 2012 Guggenheim Fellowship, the 2013 Sylvia Goldstein Award from Copland House and the 2013 Arts and Letters Award from the American Academy. His works are performed regularly throughout the United States and with increasing frequency internationally. His first opera, *Glory Denied*, is based on the true story of America's longest-held prisoner of war, and has enjoyed numerous productions around the US. The Fort Worth Opera recording on Albany Records was voted by *Opera News* as among the best of 2014. Reviewers have hailed Cipullo's opera as “intriguing and unconventional” (*The New York Times*), citing a “luminous score that offered vivid embodiments of the protagonist's mental states”. (*The Washington Post*.) Cipullo received his Master's degree in composition from Boston University and his B.S. from Hofstra University, Phi Beta Kappa with highest honors in music. He studied composition and orchestration with David Del Tredici, Thea Musgrave, Elie Siegmeister, and Albert Tepper.

David Mason



Photo: Christine Mason

The librettist David Mason is an accomplished writer of poetry and prose. His books of poems include *The Buried Houses* (winner of the Nicholas Roerich Poetry Prize), *The Country I Remember* (winner of the Alice Fay Di Castagnola Award), and *Arrivals*. His verse novel *Ludlow* was published in 2007, and named best poetry book of the year by the *Contemporary Poetry Review* and the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum. It was also featured on the PBS News Hour. He is the author of a collection of essays, *The Poetry of Life and the Life of Poetry*, and his memoir, *News from the Village*, appeared in 2010. A collection of essays, *Two Minds of a Western Poet*, followed in 2011. Mason has also co-edited several textbooks and anthologies, including *Western Wind: An Introduction to Poetry*; *Rebel Angels: 25 Poets of the New Formalism*; *Twentieth Century American Poetry*; and *Twentieth Century American Poetics: Poets on the Art of Poetry*. He has written the libretti for composer Lori Laitman's opera *The Scarlet Letter* and for Laitman's *Vedem*, a Holocaust oratorio commissioned by Music of Remembrance. Mason was the recipient of the Thatcher Hoffman Smith Creativity in Motion Prize for the development of a new libretto, and is the former Poet Laureate of Colorado. A professor at Colorado College, Mason is the co-director of their Creative Writing program.

Lori Laitman (b. 1955): In Sleep The World Is Yours (2013)

Poetry by Selma Meerbaum-Eisinger (b. Czernowitz, Romania, 1924 – d. Michailowka labor camp, Ukraine, 1942)

World première: 12th May, 2014, Benaroya Hall, Seattle, WA, at Music of Remembrance's Holocaust Remembrance concert. *In Sleep The World Is Yours* was commissioned by Music of Remembrance and made possible by MOR's Commissioning and Recording Circle.

Selma Meerbaum-Eisinger, born to a German-speaking Romanian Jewish family in 1924, was the younger cousin of the author Paul Celan. A talented writer in her own right, Selma began creating poetry at age 15. Her works consist of fifty-two poems and five translations. In 1942 at age 18, Selma died of typhus in a labor camp in the Ukraine. Thanks to the dedication and love of her friends, and later her relatives, her poetry survived, and resulted in the 2008 publication *Harvest of Blossoms*.

What I found inspiring about Selma's poetry was that she was able to speak the truth in simple but clear poetic language. Behind the apparent simplicity of her words, however, was a depth of feeling and thought that, for me as a composer, was very exciting — because when setting a poem to music, I look for words that an audience can grasp aurally — but also for an underlying complexity that provides

me with opportunities for creating dramatic music to illuminate the text. In this respect, Selma's poems were perfect.

I chose three poems from Selma's book: *Lullaby*, *Yes* and *Tragedy*, allowing me to create a cycle with a dramatic musical arc. The combination of soprano, oboe and piano perfectly suited the mood of the poems.

Lullaby spotlights Selma's imagination, her capacity for love and hope, as well as her sense of foreboding and the realization that dreams might provide the only comfort in the increasingly dark days.

Yes is a good example of simple surface language combined with a complicated subtext. The song progresses from a turbulent opening to a peaceful close, as Selma understands how memory will always keep loved ones close.

Tragedy ends the work, and Selma's heartbreaking words reveal her reality: "to give all of yourself and realize/you'll fade like smoke and leave no trace." Yet, Selma kept writing. She knew how important the mind and imagination were when facing the unimaginable.

And how lucky for us that she did leave a trace. While one wonders how she would have grown, her beautiful poetry gives us a glimpse of a supremely intelligent, spirited and gifted young girl.

Lori Laitman

Lori Laitman



Photo: Christian Steiner

Lori Laitman has been described by *Fanfare* magazine as "...one of the most talented and intriguing of living composers." Laitman has composed three operas, an oratorio, choral works and over 250 songs, setting texts by classical and contemporary poets — including those who perished in the Holocaust — to resounding critical acclaim: "This is music of depth and richness that connects with the soul." (*American Record Guide*). Her MOR premières include *Holocaust 1944* (November 2000) and four MOR commissions: *Fathers* (April 2003), *The Seed of Dream* (May 2005), *Vedem* (May 2010) and *In Sleep The World Is Yours* (May 2014). A *magna cum laude* Yale graduate with an MM from Yale's School of Music, Laitman was featured on Thomas Hampson's *Song of America* radio series and website. Her songs are widely performed internationally and through the USA, and her recordings have garnered exceptional praise. Her opera *The Scarlet Letter* (with a libretto, based on Hawthorne's novel, by David Mason) will be presented in 2016 by Opera Colorado.

Megan Chenovick

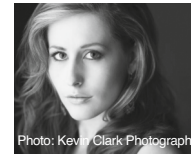


Photo: Kevin Clark Photography

Lyric coloratura soprano Megan Chenovick has appeared frequently with Music of Remembrance. A 2014 Gypsy Rose Lee, BroadwayWorld.com and Gregory Award Nominee, Chenovick is noted for her superb showmanship. Her rôles include Lucia in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Musetta in *La Bohème* and Bubikopf in MOR's production of *Der Kaiser von Atlantis*.

Catherine Cook

Mezzo-soprano Catherine Cook has excelled in a wide range of rôles with leading opera companies, including the Metropolitan Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, LA Opera, Santa Fe Opera and Houston Grand Opera. Cook has performed more than fifty rôles with San Francisco Opera, including the title rôle in Tobias Picker's *Dolores Claiborne*, Jade Boucher in the world première of Jake Heggie's *Dead Man Walking*, *Marcellina* in *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Suzuki* in *Madama Butterfly*, and *La Frugola* in *Il Trittico*. She premiered the rôle of Gertrude Stein in MOR's 2015 production of Tom Cipullo's *After Life*, and will be featured in MOR's world première of Jake Heggie's *Out of Darkness* in the 2015-16 Season. Her discography includes the Beethoven *Ninth Symphony* with the Cincinnati Philharmonia (Centaur label) and the live recording of *Dead Man Walking* (Erato).

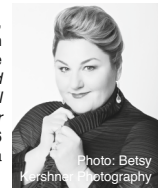


Photo: Betsy Hershner Photography

Robert Orth



Photo: Tyler Core

Baritone Robert Orth captivated MOR audiences in 2015 as Picasso in the world première of Tom Cipullo's *After Life*. Orth has performed 135 rôles in opera and musicals in scores of cities around the world. He has been named "Artist of the Year" by both New York City Opera and Seattle Opera, and *Opera News* has called him, "That fixture of contemporary opera." Orth has also appeared as soloist with major symphony orchestras in repertoire ranging from Brahms' *Requiem* to Broadway pops, to his most repeated performance of a symphonic work, *Carmina Burana*.

Ava Pine

Soprano Ava Pine drew rave reviews for her portrayal of the ethereal Youth in Tom Cipullo's *After Life*. An acclaimed interpreter of both contemporary opera and the baroque style, she brings great vocal and dramatic range to her work with symphonies and opera companies around the country, including the Dallas Symphony, Fort Worth Opera, Opera Colorado, Chicago Opera Theater, Boston Baroque, as well as the BBC Symphony Orchestra. A native of Texas, she was a 2011 GRAMMY® nominee for her work in the world première recording of Hasse's *Marc'Antonio e Cleopatra*.

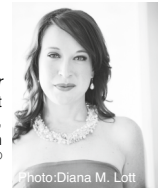


Photo: Diana M. Lott

Laura DeLuca



The clarinetist Laura DeLuca has been a member of the Seattle Symphony since 1986 and the Seattle Chamber Players since 1989. A frequent performer with MOR since its inaugural season, she was the clarinetist in *For a Look or a Touch* (Naxos 8.559379), Paul Schoenfield's *Camp Songs* and *Ghetto Songs* (Naxos 8.559641), Lori Laitman's *Vedem* (Naxos 8.559685) and Jake Heggie's *Out of Darkness* (Naxos 8.559770). She was the solo clarinetist in the Academy Award winning documentaries *The Long Way Home* and *Into the Arms of Strangers: Stories of the Kindertransport*. She received her formal training at Northwestern University.

Zart Dombourian-Eby

The flutist Zart Dombourian-Eby is principal piccolo of the Seattle Symphony. She has given master classes and concerts throughout the world and has performed with many of our nation's orchestras including the Chicago Symphony. She was the flutist in *For a Look or a Touch* (Naxos 8.559379) and Jake Heggie's *Out of Darkness* (Naxos 8.559770). Her solo CD *in shadow, light* is available on Crystal Records, and her edition of the three Vivaldi piccolo concertos is published by Theodore Presser. She is a graduate of Northwestern University.



Walter Gray



The cellist Walter Gray has been a member of the Seattle Symphony for over three decades. A founding member of the Kronos Quartet and the new music ensemble Quake, he produced and performed on *Seven Mirrors*, music of Chinary Ung (New World Records). He can also be heard on MOR's recording of Paul Schoenfield's *Camp Songs* and *Ghetto Songs* (Naxos 8.559641), Lori Laitman's *Vedem* (Naxos 8.559685) and Jake Heggie's *Out of Darkness* (Naxos 8.559770). He is a graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music.

Benjamin Hausmann

Before joining the Seattle Symphony, the oboist Benjamin Hausmann was principal oboist at L'Orchestre Symphonique de Québec, Florida Philharmonic, Savannah Symphony and, since 2003, the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra. He has been a frequent guest of the Metropolitan Opera, Los Angeles Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony and Baltimore Symphony. He is also an active pianist and avid composer whose work aims to uniquely amalgamate disparate favorite styles throughout history.



Stilian Kirov



Conductor Stilian Kirov was a prize winner at the prestigious 2015 Malko Competition, and recently completed a highly successful tenure as Associate Conductor of the Seattle Symphony. Kirov was recently appointed Music Director of the Symphony in C, one of America's premier orchestras for young professionals. Kirov is also Music Director of the Bakersfield Symphony Orchestra in California, the youngest person to hold that position in the orchestra's 83-year history. Previously he served as Associate Conductor of the Memphis Symphony and Music Director of the Memphis Youth Symphony Program.

Craig Sheppard



The pianist Craig Sheppard is Professor of Piano and Donald E. Petersen Endowed Professor of Music at the University of Washington School of Music. He is a graduate of both Curtis and Juilliard, and has taught at the University of Lancaster, the Yehudi Menuhin School, and the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. He has performed in most major European cities, with all the major orchestras of Great Britain, and with those of Philadelphia, Boston, Chicago, San Francisco, Atlanta, Rochester, Dallas and Seattle. His solo repertoire encompasses over forty recital programs and over sixty concerti spanning all the major styles of Western music. His extensive discography includes both books of J.S. Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier*, the *Inventions* and *Sinfonias*, and the *Six Partitas*, the complete Beethoven piano sonatas, the three late Schubert sonatas, Liszt's *Années de Pèlerinage I and II*, Debussy's *24 Préludes* and *12 Études*, and the *24 Preludes and Fugues, Opus 87* of Shostakovich.

Mikhail Shmidt



The violinist Mikhail Shmidt has been a member of the Seattle Symphony since 1990. Born in Moscow, he received his master's degree from the Gnessin Institute of Music. He has performed with the Moscow State Symphony and the Moscow Radio String Quartet, and as concertmaster of the Camerata Boccherini Chamber Orchestra. He has recorded for Melodiya and Erato, and has toured extensively in the USSR, and in Eastern and Central Europe. A central artistic participant with Music of Remembrance since its inception, Shmidt can be heard as violinist in *For a Look or a Touch* (Naxos 8.559379), Paul Schoenfield's *Camp Songs* and *Ghetto Songs* (Naxos: 8.559641), Lori Laitman's *Vedem* (Naxos 8.559685) and Jake Heggie's *Out of Darkness* (Naxos 8.559770).

Mina Miller



Photo:Yuen Lui Studio

Pianist and MOR artistic director Mina Miller studied at the Manhattan School of Music and earned her PhD in Music from New York University. She performed solo recitals at London's Wigmore Hall, the Tivoli International Music Festival (Copenhagen), and the Kuhmo Chamber Music Festival (Finland); concert engagements took her throughout North America, Great Britain, Europe, and Scandinavia. In 1998, her career as a recitalist and concerto soloist metamorphosed when she founded Music of Remembrance and began serving as the organization's president and artistic director. Miller's bold leadership has made Music of Remembrance the home of "some of Seattle's best musicians" (*Seattle Times*), and has drawn national attention by commissioning new works from American composer luminaries such as Paul Schoenfield, Jake Heggie, Tom Cipullo, Lori Laitman, and Thomas Pasatieri, among others. Recognized as an authority on Holocaust-era music and musicians, Miller has lectured in Seattle and internationally on the precious cultural and artistic legacy that escaped Nazi destruction.

Music of Remembrance

Founded in 1998 by pianist Mina Miller, Music of Remembrance (MOR) fills a unique cultural rôle throughout the world by remembering the Holocaust through music with concert performances, educational programs, recordings and commissions of new works. MOR's major concerts at Seattle's Benaroya Hall and other venues have been acclaimed for their innovative programs and superior performance standards.

Along with its large and varied repertoire of Holocaust-era music, MOR commissions and premieres new Holocaust-inspired works by some of today's leading composers, building bridges across generations and sharing stories that underline the Holocaust's urgent moral relevance for us now. The two works on this recording are among the more than 20 that MOR has commissioned in its first 17 years, including chamber music, song, oratorio, opera, ballet and film score. MOR's mission is not religious, nor is its scope limited to Jewish music or experience. Its commissions have also focused on the Holocaust's impact on homosexuals, women, children, Roma, political prisoners and courageous free-thinkers.

www.musicofremembrance.org

AFTER LIFE

Libretto by David Mason

Darkness. A sound of no knowable place. Before lights rise, we hear Gertrude Stein singing, elongating words as if giving birth to them:

GERTRUDE
Hey. He. Ah. Oh. Who?
Oh, conjure me.
Question me, conjure me.

Light illuminates her searching face, almost the mask of Picasso's famous portrait of her.

GERTRUDE
Baby Precious? Is it you?
Baby, long, how long, is it who?

Sound of a sigh... I.
I was the cover of TIME. I.
Everyone loved me. I

want you, Mr. Cuddle-Wuddle.
Oh what a muddle!
How is it I is it who?

She is entirely illuminated now, but suspended in dark.

GERTRUDE
Conjure me. Question me. Conjure me.
I nearly lost myself,
but genius never lies
and genius never dies.

I was the cover of TIME. I.
Genius, the look in the eye.
Genius of no place, I

suppose I repose. Repose
is a rose is a rose is a rose.

Out of the dark, another voice sings. It is Pablo Picasso, not yet illuminated.

PICASSO
Genius? Genius?
(he laughs)
Did somebody say my name?

GERTRUDE
Is it you, Baby Precious?

She turns away, searching the dark. Picasso emerges in light, his face and form instantly familiar to us. He does not yet see Stein.

PICASSO
Some lover has conjured me!

GERTRUDE
Someone is near, but who?
Someone can hear – is it you?
Come, please come. Come here.

PICASSO
This is the body I love,
the bull, so full of life.
My limbs, my torso, my loins.
What sort of night-fishing is this?
What sort of flesh?

Gertrude, still searching and not seeing Picasso, sings:

GERTRUDE
Un-life. Every place no place.
Every face no face.
No Baby Precious. No Alice.

Picasso tries to conjure all the women he has loved:

2 PICASSO

Fernande, have you brought me here?
Marcelle, is it you?
My body is yours. Is it you?

Gaby, Olga, Marie Thérèse? Fernande?
Or Dora, is it you, my love?
Françoise? Genevieve? Jacqueline?

Your bull is back! *El toro. El rey!*
Come out, all my darlings.
Come out and play!

Turning, Stein sees Picasso.

GERTRUDE
Pablo!

PICASSO
(*shocked*)
Trudy?

GERTRUDE
Not Baby Precious!

PICASSO
Not... what I wanted.

GERTRUDE
I see it now. How and who.
I see it had to be, had to be you.

PICASSO
You, my friend, are the last one on earth
I wanted to see. You with your ego,
you with your need.
Telling the world you invented me!

GERTRUDE
I abstracted you,
watched from the cover of TIME.

PICASSO

Why are we here? Isn't this death?

GERTRUDE

Genius never dies.
A question conjured us.
A question hangs in the dark.

I see it now. How and who.
It had to be, had to be, had to be you.

I wanted a genius. Someone like me.
Someone to answer me. Set me free.

PICASSO

I grew to hate you. Didn't you know?
You wanted to own me,
create me, perversely to mother me.

3 But Picasso gave birth to himself.
I took my mother's name for my own.
I made my art. I made Picasso,
the picador. Not you!

*She nods, but her face shows that she does not really
accept what he avers.*

GERTRUDE

It takes some time to be seen.
A question I wanted to ask –
the question that conjured me
conjuring you.

Stay with me now, for old times' sake.
Think of our work, what we did for the world.
You had more time on the earth
and will have seen my afterlife.

What do they make of me now?
What life did I leave to the living?
Do they remember my work?
Have they continued to love me?

PICASSO

The afterlife, you say. I was always
after life, after love. I bathed in the sun!
My friend who killed himself
covered me in blue.
I was sad, so sad, it's true.
The love of a woman
brought rose to my life.
I was leading the horse of my art,
letting it drink. Letting the animal love.
A bull and a woman
can make a new world.
El toro, el rey!
All those dinners with you
on the Rue de Fleurus –
they were nothing compared
to the clown in my heart.
These hands and these eyes,
they made my art.
Life! After life. Art is for life!

Gertrude joins him:

DUET:
These hands, these eyes,
they made my art.
Life! After life. Art is for life!

*They look at each other, acknowledging the years of
friendship. But Stein can't help prodding him.*

GERTRUDE

Alice and I – we cooked for you.
We bought your paintings.
Then you got rich.

The hint of resentment sours them both.

PICASSO

Money? What's money?
An artist is after life.
You wanted to mother me,

or was it father me?
I cut the cord. I was free.

GERTRUDE

Not in the war. No one was free in the war.

PICASSO

Which war?
I was an artist of war.
My art was a war against war.

GERTRUDE

Any war. But of course you know which war I mean.
The one that hurt us the most.
The one that pushed us apart.
I never thought it would come.

We were frightened,
Alice and I. Our friends were far.
Was it safe, was it not?
How could we be sure?

We decided to stay.
We were Jews who decided to stay.
That's what I wanted to say:
what did we leave for the living?
What do they think of us now?
Do they know what a genius I was?
Do they know how we lived?

PICASSO

We lived. Many did not.
Desnos did not. I remember him, Robert.
He was funny, my friend.
I remember his laugh.
I remember
he died at Terezin.

He looks firmly at Gertrude.

PICASSO
And you. You were a Jew.
How did you do it? How did you live?

GERTRUDE
I was famous.

PICASSO
Fame was not enough.

GERTRUDE
The cover of TIME.

PICASSO
Time ran out. The Germans came.

☐ I resisted in my art.
Art makes life out of death.

GERTRUDE
Imagination is resistance.
Why were we any safer than you?
I keep wondering,
have they learned to read me?
Both of us now – what did we leave
for the living?

PICASSO
The world has always known who I am.
Guernica!
Night Fishing at Antibes!
I found my own way to scream.
Even a casserole can scream.

I screamed in *The Charnal House*.
You were in your country house,
translating Pétain – is it true?
His anti-Semitic drive!
Who were you trying to please?
Your friends in high places,
in the Bibliothèque –
is it true they protected you?

GERTRUDE
You, up in the city. What did you know?

PICASSO
I had them storming my studio!
Gestapo inspections. I had to watch
their dead hands on my paintings.

They came to the bank.
They opened my vault.
The Germans were lovers of art.

GERTRUDE
We were frightened, Alice and I.
But Geneva and safety were not far away.
We decided to stay.

PICASSO
You asked me what did we do.
I'm telling you, you did nothing.

GERTRUDE
I wrote. I loved.

PICASSO
I painted my heart out for a dove.
I changed the world of art.

GERTRUDE
You were ungrateful.

PICASSO
(enraged)
So full of yourself!

*A third voice rises in the darkness. A girl in her late teens,
piercing at first, stopping both artists in mid-argument.*

GIRL
Why? Why? Why?
Why did we...?

GERTRUDE
Who is it now?

PICASSO
Why do you care?

GERTRUDE
I don't like being interrupted.
It's impolite.

GIRL
Why did we live
only to...?

PICASSO
(to Stein)
Is this one of your conjurings
as you imagine me?

GERTRUDE
No one I know.

PICASSO
You pretend not to know.

The Girl emerges in light.

PICASSO
(looking from the Girl to Stein)
A friend of yours?

GERTRUDE
(to the Girl)
Have we met?

☑ GIRL
Miss Stein, I remember.
Do you remember me?

GERTRUDE
A rose?
Why do I remember that?

A rose is a rose is a rose.

GIRL
I sold you a rose on the roadside,
near the village of Izieu.
You came by in your car
with the lady, your friend.

GERTRUDE
Alice. My Alice.

GIRL
She said you were famous.
A famous American writer.
You bought her a rose –

GIRL and GERTRUDE
"A rose from a genius,"

GIRL
I remember you said.

GERTRUDE
A rose is a rose...

GIRL and GERTRUDE
is a rose.

GERTRUDE
I'm sorry, I barely remember.
Tell me your name.

GIRL
No one remembers my name.
I don't remember myself.

PICASSO
I had a friend who looked like you,
almost like a girl.
I painted him many times.
My paintings were blue.

GIRL
It wasn't I.
Why did I die?

GERTRUDE
I'm sorry, young lady.
I can't have known why.

GIRL
I was an orphan, just seventeen
the day they came.
They took us in transports
far, far away.
I remember the weather that day.
April, with buds on the trees.
But cold, still cold, a chill in the air.

PICASSO
I was in Paris. So far away.
April in Paris. Somehow familiar...

GERTRUDE
I couldn't have known.

PICASSO AND GERTRUDE
We tried to resist.
We made art. Art is life.
These hands and these eyes,
they made my art.
Life! After life. Art is for life!

GIRL
You were saved.

GIRL
And I died.

Ⓜ It wasn't the gas. It was fever. The camp.
I worked at building a road
until I fell sick.
And then I couldn't eat.
And then there was nothing to eat.

And the Russians came
and they looked at me
and shook their heads.
"I'm afraid she's already dead" –
that's what they said with their eyes.

I remembered the rose.
I remembered the car on the road,
a summer day near Izieu.
Two ladies, and one was a genius, she said.

And I was a rose selling roses.
I had such color in my cheeks,
such laughter in my eyes.
I could have stood selling roses
for the rest of my life.

The orphanage took me in
and winter came, and April.
And the Germans came like bad weather.
And then how cold it was in the camp.
How hungry I was.
How I tried to stand up.
And I died. Just like that.
It wasn't hard.
My breath went out,
a rose of mist,
then I was gone.

*Both Picasso and Stein step back from the Girl as if trying
to keep memory at bay.*

Ⓜ PICASSO
So many died.
There was a house or there was not a house.
There was a friend or there was not a friend.
Like that.
(he snaps his fingers)
A bullet or not a bullet.

GERTRUDE
Some things are important.

I brought the cubist mode
to modern writing.
I gave birth to the new.

PICASSO
(snaps his fingers)
Like that.

GIRL

She turns to Picasso and Stein with a hurt expression.

GIRL
What is after life?

GERTRUDE
The cover of TIME, I suppose.

GIRL
What is a rose?
Who will remember me?

PICASSO
The seed of the bull,
the odor of woman,
the painter's hand.

TRIO:
*(the three begin in a sort of round before singing
together)*

GIRL
I woke in the camp.
I looked at the sky.
I worked with my hands.
Why did I live, why did I die?

GERTRUDE
I was an I,
the cover of TIME,
the genius of letters.
I gave a rose to my Baby and I died.

PICASSO
I made my mark.
I made in my hands
a light for the world.
I loved and I lived and I laughed and I died.

*Now they sing the same words, looking from one to the
other:*

ALL THREE
What we wanted was more life.
I wish I could remember more.
What do the living think of us
as war begets another war?

The light is very slowly fading on the Girl.

GIRL
I'm dying more than you.
See? I'm leaving now.
Can you remember me?

PICASSO
(shaking his head regretfully)
Lo siento.

GERTRUDE
I remember the rose
because I wrote the rose.

PICASSO
I had a rose period too.
I was in love. I was always in love.

GIRL
I wanted life, like you.
You don't know death as I know death.
Now watch me go.

PICASSO
I seem to remember I died at dinner.
The food was delicious,

but I could no longer drink.
What a pity.

GERTRUDE
Cancer. I was happy after the war,
talking to American soldier boys.
But cancer was always there.
My mother was cancer too.
You have to believe me –
I never knew.
I never knew!

GIRL
I never read your books.
I never saw your art,
but I was alive.
I looked at the stars,
I walked on the earth.

GERTRUDE
I couldn't have known.

GIRL
Can you die now as I did?

GERTRUDE
(feeling the light fading from her)
I'm afraid we are really dying now

PICASSO
(also feeling the light fade)
So we are. And I was just getting warm.

GERTRUDE
and I will never know...
My question is dying too.
I'm losing. I'm loosening. Who?

GIRL
The cover of time is gone.

PICASSO
Eye of the bull. Woman. Love.

GIRL
The dark is waiting for us all.
That's what I came to tell you.

Now light fades on all three of them equally.

PICASSO
There was a friend. There was not a friend.
Like that.

GIRL
Did I once have a name?
Who was it fathered me?
Was I a child of love?
Questions remember me.

In the crime of life
I was planted, a rose.
A car came down the road.
The road turned into a wire
that sang a cold song in the wind.
My breath went out in a cloud.
I remember – what do I remember?
That April was cold.

BLACKOUT

IN SLEEP THE WORLD IS YOURS

Poems by Selma Meerbaum-Eisinger

English translation from the German by Jerry Glenn and Florian Birkmayer, with Helene Silverblatt and Irene Silverblatt. *Harvest of Blossoms: Poems from a Life Cut Short*, copyright 2008, Northwest University Press. Used by permission.

9 Lullaby

Sleep, my child, just fall asleep,
please sleep and don't cry anymore.
Just look, in sleep the world is yours,
please sleep and don't cry so hard.

Close your eyes and fall asleep,
listen, the forest is rustling.
In sleep there is no hate and no scorn,
and in sleep you are not cold.

Sleep, my darling, and smile, my child,
listen, the river is singing.
Sleep, then the wind will sing of joy
and sing of the blossoming spring.

Sleep my child and forget your ails,
for you the day is dark.
Bright is the night when a dream cuddles you,
so sleep my child, so sleep.

– January 1941

10 Yes

You are so distant.
As distant as a star I thought I'd grasped.
And yet you are near –
just a little dusty
like time that's past.
Yes.

You are so huge.
As huge as the shadow of that tree.
And still you're just here too –
just pale like a dream
in my bosom.
Yes.

– 6th July, 1941

11 Tragedy

This is the hardest: to give yourself away
and then to see that no one needs you,
to give all of yourself and realize
you'll fade like smoke and leave no trace.

– 23rd December, 1941

**Tom
CIPULLO**
(b. 1956)

1-8 After Life (2015) 49:40

Libretto by David Mason (b. 1954)

**Catherine Cook, Mezzo-soprano
Robert Orth, Baritone • Ava Pine, Soprano**

**Lori
LAITMAN**
(b. 1955)

**9-11 In Sleep The World
Is Yours (2013) 17:15**

Poems by Selma Meerbaum-Eisinger (1924-42)

Megan Chenovick, Soprano

WORLD PREMIÈRE RECORDINGS

Music of Remembrance

Mina Miller, Artistic Director

A full track list and recording details can be found on page 2 of the booklet • Sung texts included

The sung texts can also be accessed at www.naxos.com/libretti/669036.htm

Produced, engineered and edited by Dmitriy Lipay

Publishers: Unpublished (tracks 1-8);

Enchanted Knickers Music, BMI (tracks 9-11)

Booklet notes: David Sabritt, Tom Cipullo,
David Mason and Lori Laitman

Front cover: Robert Orth and Catherine Cook in the world
première performance of *After Life*, directed by Erich Parce.

Photo: Michael Beaton



AMERICAN OPERA CLASSICS

Tom Cipullo's contemporary opera *After Life* explores the rôle of art in a troubled world and poses weighty questions about the artist's duty in confronting inhumanity. David Mason's libretto imagines an encounter between the ghosts of Pablo Picasso and Gertrude Stein, who reveal both their brilliance and their human flaws. Lori Laitman's song cycle *In Sleep The World Is Yours* sets three beautiful poems by Selma Meerbaum-Eisinger, who was to perish in a Nazi labor camp in Ukraine at the age of 18.

These works were commissioned by Music of Remembrance, a Seattle-based organization dedicated to remembering the Holocaust through music with concert performances, educational programs, recordings and commissions of new works.
(www.musicofremembrance.org)

www.naxos.com

Playing
Time:
66:55