

Handel is one of the most important and prolific composers of the Baroque period. His work influenced many composers after him such as Haydn and Mozart. Born in Halle, Germany Handel started his musical career at the tender age of 7. He was a skillful performer of the harpsichord and organ. In obedience to his father, a barber- surgeon who intended for him to be a lawyer, he briefly studied law, but quickly abandoned it for music. A man of many travels, Handel spent time in Florence, Rome, Venice, and Naples but finally settled in London. Here he worked for the court of King George I. He became a naturalized British citizen. (Sadie, 342) Handel's large musical output includes operas, sacred music, oratorios, and chamber music among other things. Arguably, Handel is most famously known for his opera and oratorios, particularly, *The Messiah*.

O had I Jubal's lyre is from one of his oratorios, *Joshua*. *Joshua* chronicles the biblical story of the Israelites passage over the Jordan river into Canaan through the Battle of Jericho. Within the oratorio is the beautiful love story on the soldier Othneil and Caleb's daughter, Achsah. After the Battle of Jericho, Caleb pledges his daughter's hand in marriage to the soldier who can conquer the city of Debir and Othneil takes on the challenge. Othneil triumphantly returns and Achsah sings "*Oh had I Jubal's lyre* in thanksgiving to God for protecting her beloved whom she now has the permission to marry. The virtuosic vocal line is reminiscent of the joy that Achsah is experiencing in the occasion. This aria is often performed outside of the entire work. (Lamott, 2016)

Vado, ma dove, O Dei, W.A. Mozart (1756-1791)

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart is widely recognized as one of the greatest classical composers in history. A child prodigy born in Salzburg, he began his earliest compositions at the tender age of six. He is considered beyond his time as he knew how to blend traditional musical elements to contemporary styles, creating characteristics unique to him in his pieces. As Carol Kimball puts it in her book, *Song: A Guide to Art Song Through Style and Literature*, Mozart was “Mozart was incapable of writing a poorly crafted work, no matter how small...” (44) Mozart’s catalog of compositions is not dominated by his songs, they still portray his penchant for merging music and drama. He set to music, poetry of many languages and, with the exception of Goethe, refrained from using the works of poets of the time. His compositions are hallmarked by their melodic, dynamic and rhythmic contrasts.

Vado, ma dove? which translates to “I go, but where?” is the second of a pair of replacement arias that Mozart wrote for the revival of an opera, *Il Burbero di buon cuore (The kindhearted grumpy old men)*, written by Vincente Martín y Soler. (Good Music Guide Classical music Forum, 2009) In the storyline, Madame Lucilla has an affinity for fancy clothes and extravagance. Thinking her husband, Giacondo, to be rich, she spends all his money, including the dowry for his sister, Angelica. In this aria, Madame Lucilla finally realizes how her foolish spending could cost Angelica the chance to marry her love, Valerio. She states in disgrace that she will leave but is uncertain about where she will go.

Vado, ma dove? Oh Dei!
Se de' tormenti suoi,
se de' sospiri miei
Heaven feels no pity?
You who speak to my heart,
guide my steps, love;
remove that hesitation that makes me doubt.

I go, but where Ye gods,
if for his torments,
for my sighs,
non sente il ciel pietà!
Tu che mi parli al core,
guida i miei passi, amore;
Tu quel ritegno or toglì che dubitar mi fa.

Der Nussbaum and Du bist wie eine Blume, Robert Schumann (1810-1856)

Robert Schumann (1810-1856) was a German composer who started out in law but left the field to pursue a career as a virtuoso pianist in music. He took piano lessons from Friedrich Wieck, the father of Clara Wieck, whom Schumann fell deeply in love with. (Sadie, 724) Despite Friedrich Wieck's vehement refusal to allow them to be wed, Schumann, finally got married to Clara in 1840. The year following the marriage, Schumann wrote prolifically, which led to that period being coined as "Schumann's year of Song" or "Liederjahr". (Kimball, 77) A hand injury ended this dream of becoming a virtuosic pianist so he focused his energies on composing instead. Schumann had an obsessive need for order. This evident in his compositions through his organization of key relationships, linking of motives, and extra-musical meanings. An example of this is a well-used motive that spells Clara's name (C-B-A-G-sharp-A). (Kimball,

Der Nussbaum and Du bist wie eine Blume are from a collection of 26 songs that Robert wrote to Clara as a wedding gift. *Der Nussbaum*, translated *The Walnut Tree*, is a masterfully crafted song which conveys tenderness and charm, similar to a lullaby. In this lied, the branches of the walnut tree are whispering the story of a maiden who dreams day and night though she does not know why she dreams. Unbeknownst to her, a bridegroom will come to her next year. When the branches whisper this secret to her, she contentedly drifts into sleep and goes back to dreaming. (Kimball, 85) Rich with text painting, the lied begins with the arpeggiated accompaniment depicting the rustling of the leaves. The melodic line of the piano in the first few measures is the motive that binds the song together. The vocal phrases follow the shape of the motive for most of the song, even into the modulation. The rhythms produce a lilting feeling as the melody moves between the piano and voice. The melodic phrases are delicately shaped, and this interweaving leaves the vocal line seeming unfinished until the piano complements it. (Kimball, 86) "*Du bist wie eine Blume*" which translates to "*You are like a Flower*" has a stately air provided by the low-voiced chords in the accompaniment. With this, there is a sense of humility and solemnity as the words speak of praying to God that he might keep beautiful, and pure and lovely the object of his affections. (Classicalconnect.com, 2008)

Der Nussbaum

Es grünet ein Nussbaum, vor dem Haus,
Duftig,
Luftig
Breitet er blättrig die Blätter aus.
Viel liebliche Blüten stehen d'ran,
Linde
Winde
Kommen, sie herzlich zu umfahn.
Es flüstern je zwei zu zwei gepaart,
Neigend,
Beugend
Zierlich zum Kusse die Häuptchen zart.

The Walnut Tree

A nut tree blossoms outside the house,
Fragrantly,
Airily,
It spreads its leafy boughs.
Many lovely blossoms it bears,
Gentle
Winds
Come to caress them tenderly.
Paired together, they whisper,
Inclining,
Bending
Gracefully their delicate heads to kiss.

Sie flüstern von einem Mägdlein, das
Dächte
Die Nächte
Und Tagelang, wüsste ach! selber nicht was.
Sie flüstern—wer mag verstehen so gar
Leise
Weis’?
Flüstern von Bräut’gam und nächstem Jahr.
Das Mägdli horchet, es rauscht im Baum;
Sehnend,
Während
Sinkt es lächelnd in Schlaf und Traum.

They whisper of a maiden who
Dreamed
For nights
And days of, alas, she knew not what.
They whisper—who can understand
So soft
A song?
Whisper of a bridegroom and next year.
The maiden listens, the tree rustles;
Yearning,
Musing
She drifts smiling into sleep and dreams.

Du bist wie eine Blume

Du bist wie eine Blume,
So hold und schön und rein;
Ich schau’ dich an, und Wehmut
Schleicht mir ins Herz hinein.
Mir ist, als ob ich die Hände
Aufs Haupt dir legen sollt’,
Betend, dass Gott dich erhalte
So rein und schön und hold.

You are like a flower

You are like a flower,
So sweet and fair and pure;
I look at you, and sadness
Steals into my heart.
I feel as if I should lay
My hands upon your head,
Praying that God preserve you
So pure and fair and sweet.

Liebst du um Schönheit from Liebesfrühling, Mein Stern, Clara Schumann (1819-1896)

Clara Schumann is one of the most distinguished female composers in the history of Western music. Born in 1819, when women were not thought to be unfit for composing music, Clara went against the ideology. Though she is usually paired with her husband, Robert Schumann, she was a fine composer in her own right. When she met Robert, she was already a distinguished piano virtuoso known throughout Europe and was the first woman to achieve international acclaim as a concert pianist. She received her music education from her father (who disapproved of her marriage to Robert). After a bitter legal battle with her father-teacher-manager, they finally wed in 1840. Like Robert, Clara makes use of preludes and postludes and chromaticism to evoke mood. (Kimball, 91)

Liebst du um Schönheit is a part of a collection of songs, *Liebesfrühling*, that both Clara and Robert composed. Set to poems by Friedrich Rückert, it is among Clara's first published songs, and was composed during their first year of marriage. The melody and rhythm are simple, but they exquisitely capture the beauty of the words. The piano accompaniment provides harmonic and rhythmic contrast under the expressive vocal line. The 4-verse song is strophic with some rhythmic and melodic variations in each verse. The vocal line is broadly extended to capture the words of the final phrase, "Liebe mich immer, dich lieb' ich immerdar," which translates to "Love me always, I shall love you ever more." (Kimball, 92)

Liebst du um Schönheit	If you love for beauty
Liebst du um Schönheit, O nicht mich liebe!	If you love for beauty, O love not me!
Liebe die Sonne, Sie trägt ein goldnes Haar.	Love the sun, She has golden hair.
Liebst du um Jugend, O nicht mich liebe!	If you love for youth, O love not me!
Liebe den Frühling, Der jung ist jedes Jahr.	Love the spring Which is young each year.
Liebst du um Schätze, O nicht mich liebe!	If you love for riches, O love not me!
Liebe die Meerfrau, Sie hat viel Perlen klar.	Love the mermaid Who has many shining pearls.
Liebst du um Liebe, O ja, mich liebe!	If you love for love, Ah yes, love me!
Liebe mich immer, Dich lieb' ich immerdar.	Love me always, I shall love you ever more.

Mein Stern, or Oh thou my Star features a beautiful strophic melodic line with slight variations in each verse. Set to text by Friedericke Serre, the song is addressed to a star of the night that brings hope and light to the dark night, both literally and figuratively. This song was not published during her lifetime but appeared in 1848 in an English translation. (Kimball, *Women Composers*, 180)

Mein Stern

My star

O du mein Stern,
Schau dich so gern,
Wenn still im Meere die Sonne sinket,
Dein gold'nes Auge so tröstend winket
In meiner Nacht!
O du mein Stern,
Aus weiter Fern',
Bist du ein Bote mit Liebesgrüßen,
Laß deine Strahlen mich durstig küssen
In banger Nacht.
O du mein Stern,
Verweile gern,
Und lächelnd führ' auf des Lichts Gefieder
Der Träume Engel dem Freunde wieder
In seine Nacht.

O you my star,
I love to observe you,
When the sun slips quietly into the sea,
And your golden gaze beckons so consolingly
In my night!
O you my star,
From afar
You bring me tidings of love,
Let me passionately kiss your rays
In fearful night.
O you my star,
Linger gladly,
And smilingly on the wings of light
Escort once more the angel of dreams to your
friend
In his night.

Élégie Jules Massenet (1842-1912)

Massenet is a French composer of the Romantic era known for his operas such as *Manon*. He was known for his ability to use the orchestra and vocalists to make the plots and characters of his operas more believable. Most of Massenet's works have fallen into oblivion but in his lifetime, he was one of the most popular and successful composers in the world. His other works include concert suites, ballet music, oratorios, cantatas, and over 200 songs. (Sadie, 505)

Possibly one of Massenet's most popular *Mélodies*. This *mélodie* was originally composed for a piano cycle but then incorporated into a play called "*The Furies*" by Leconte de Lisle. The piece features a sorrowful melody set for the cello. This melody has since been arranged numerous times for instruments and ensembles. (Matanya, 2006)

Elégie

Ô doux printemps d'autrefois, vertes saisons,
vous
avez fui pour toujours! Je ne vois plus le ciel
bleu; je
n'entends plus les chants joyeux des oiseaux!
En emportant mon bonheur, Ô bien-aimé, tu
t'en es allé!
Et c'est en vain que revient le printemps! Oui!
Sans retour, avec toi, le gai soleil, les jours
riants sont partis!
Comme en mon coeur tout est sombre et
glacé, tout est flétri pour toujours!

Elegy

O sweet Spring of yesteryear, green seasons,
you have
fled forever! I no longer see the blue sky, I no
longer
hear the joyous songs of the birds!
You have fled, my love, and with you has fled
my happiness.
And it is in vain that the spring returns!
For along with you, the cheerful sun, the
laughing days have gone!
As my heart is dark and frozen, so all is
withered for evermore!

***Mandoline*, Claude Debussy (1862-1918)**

Claude Debussy (1862-1918) is attributed with the characteristic of impeccably blending poetry and music. He composed a total of 87 *mélodies* in his lifetime, including two unfinished ones and some that only exist in early drafts and are unpublished. He was adeptly responsive to translating poetic subtleties into musical expression and wrote quite skillfully for the voice. It was once said by composer Henri Sauget that Debussy's music "does not travel along its own path, along-side, below or even above the poem: it is entirely moved by the poem itself..."

Owing to this unique ability, his melodies are important in the history of the French song.

Debussy can be thought of as the French counterpart of Hugo Wolf. He had a knack for marking his scores scrupulously, highlighting every dynamic, tempo, and accent on each page. Tone color plays an integral role in Debussy's music; therefore, it is not advised to transpose unless it is one of his earliest melodies. He chose to set the poetry of notably poets such as Verlaine and Mallarmé. (Kimball, 190)

Mandoline, translated as "*mandolin*", was Debussy's first setting of text from Paul Verlaine and was set when he was barely 21 years old. It was separately published, though taken from Verlaine's *Fêtes galantes*. *Mandoline* is a light and elegant *mélodie* with smooth lyricism and a hint of irony. The airy mood is immediately established as the piano does an imitation of the sound of a mandolin tuning up in open fifths, then repeated an octave higher. This imitation of the mandolin is what unifies the entire *mélodie*. Another important element in the song is the manipulation of texture. One can hear the explicit differentiation between legato and staccato in the line, creating a strong contrast with the delicate piano figures. Debussy subtly comments on the characters of Verlaine's troupe through the nuances in curve and articulation of the phrases in which they are introduced. There is also some word painting evident in both the vocal line and accompaniment. (Kimball, 191)

Mandoline

Les donneurs de sérénades
Et les belles écouteuses
Échangent des propos fades
Sous les ramures chanteuses.
C'est Tircis et c'est Aminte,
Et c'est l'éternel Clitandre,
Et c'est Damis qui pour mainte
Cruelle fait maint vers tendre.
Leurs courtes vestes de soie,
Leurs longues robes à queues,
Leur élégance, leur joie
Et leurs molles ombres bleues
Tourbillonnent dans l'extase
D'une lune rose et grise,
Et la mandoline jase
Parmi les frissons de brise.

Mandolin

The gallant serenaders
and their fair listeners
exchange sweet nothings
beneath singing boughs.
Tircis is there, Aminte is there,
and tedious Clitandre too,
and Damis who for many a cruel maid
writes many a tender song.
Their short silken doublets,
their long trailing gowns,
their elegance, their joy,
and their soft blue shadows
Whirl madly in the rapture
of a grey and roseate moon,
and the mandolin jangles on
in the shivering breeze.

***Violon, Fleurs from Fiancailles pour rire*, Francis Poulenc (1899-1963)**

Born in Paris, France, Francis Poulenc was an important composer of the neo-classical movement. He is regarded by critics as the last great proponent of the French art song. His abundant legacy of 150 mélodies are the last great group of songs added to the 20th century repertoire. He chose to set his music to the text of poets who were his contemporaries. He closely matched the music to the poets' particular style to, in his own words, "translate into music not merely the literary meaning but also everything that is written between the lines." (Kimball, 225)

Violon and *Fleurs* are the 5th and 6th songs of Poulenc's cycle of six songs, *Fiancailles pour rire*, meaning *Engagement for Laughter*. The cycle is set to text of Louise de Vilmorin. The mélodies may be sung separately as they are bound together only by the title. *Violon*, set in an elegant Hungarian restaurant, evokes Paris. A refined lady patron watches a couple with foreign accents while the violinist serenades them. The slow waltz tempo reinforces the drama of the scene. As the night continues, the singer becomes tipsier and more enamored with the violin and its player. This is portrayed by the soloist's employment of *portamenti* on words such as "amoureux," "plaisent," "tendus," and "inconnu." (Kimball, 230)

Violon

Couple amoureux aux accents méconnus
 Le violon et son joueur me plaisent.
 Ah! j'aime ces gémisséments tendus
 Sur la corde des malaises.
 Aux accords sur les cordes des pendus
 À l'heure où les Lois se taisent
 Le cœur, en forme de friase,
 S'offre à l'amour comme un fruit inconnu.

Violin

Loving couple of misapprehended sounds
 Violin and player please me.
 Ah! I love these long wailings
 Stretched on the string of disquiet,
 To the sound of strung-up chords
 At the hour when Justice is silent
 The heart, shaped like a strawberry,
 Gives itself to love like an unknown fruit.

An ineffable melancholy permeates *Fleurs*, the 6th song of the cycle. Poulenc uses a calm tempo and accompaniment under the vocal line to create a reflective and sensual mood. In this song, a woman lovingly reminisces on a past relationship while burning souvenirs from the romance. It is bitter-sweet and sad while somehow harkening to the title of the cycle. The song is a moment of memory capsulized with an impression that is a thought from far away. Poulenc requested that the song be preceded by a song in a distant key to safeguard that feeling of distant memory. (Kimball, 230)

Fleurs

Fleurs promises, fleurs tenues dans tes bras,

Flowers

Promised flowers, flowers held in your arms,

Flours sorties des parenthèses d'un pas,
Qui t'apportait ces fleurs l'hiver
Saupoudrées du sable des mers?
Sable de tes baisers, fleurs des amours fanées
Les beaux yeux sont de cendre et dans la
cheminée
Un cœur enrubanné de plaintes
Brûle avec ses images saintes.

Flowers from a step's parentheses,
Who brought you these flowers in winter
Sprinkled with the sea's sand?
Sand of your kisses, flowers of faded loves
Your lovely eyes are ashes and in the
hearth
A moan-beribboned heart
Burns with its sacred images.

All translations are by Richard Stokes.

***Moments in Sonder*, Brittney Elizabeth Boykin (b. 1989)**

A native of Alexandria, Virginia, Boykin began her musical studies by taking piano lessons at the age of seven. Under the tutelage of her high school teacher, she received many awards for various competitions, such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People's (NAACP) Afro-Academic Cultural, Technological, and Scientific Olympics (ACT-SO) competition. She holds a B.A. in Music degree from Spelman College, a M.M. in Sacred Music from Westminster Choir College of Rider University, and a Ph.D. in Music Education from Georgia State University. She has been commissioned and collaborated with several organizations and currently serves as an Assistant Professor at the Georgia Institute of Technology. (beboykin.com, 2022)

Her song cycle, *Moments in Sonder*, consists of 14 lyrical moments. The poetry is by Maya Angelou. I will be performing 5 of these moments. This work is a beautiful and empowering piece of its time that perfectly synthesizes word and music. Each moment chronicles different human experiences and highlights what it means to be human.

1st Moment: Tears

Tears,
 the crystal rags
 viscous tatters
 of a worn-through soul.
 Moans,
 deep swan song
 blue farewell
 of a dying dream.

2nd Moment: A Conceit

Give me your hand

 Make room for me to lead
 and follow you beyond this
 rage of poetry.

 Let others have the privacy
 of touching words and love
 of loss of love.

 For me
 Give me your hand.

5th Moment: In A Time

In a time of secret wooing
 today prepares tomorrow's
 ruin left knows not what
 right is doing my heart is
 torn asunder.

 In a time of furtive sighs
 sweet hellos and sad
 goodbyes half-truths told
 and entire lies my
 conscience echoes thunder.

 In a time when kingdoms
 come joy is brief as
 summer's fun happiness its
 race has run then pain stalks
 in to plunder.

10th Moment: The Lesson

I keep on dying again.
 Veins collapse, opening like the
 Small fists of sleeping Children.
 Memory of old tombs,
 Rotting flesh and worms do
 Not convince me against
 The challenge. The years
 And cold defeat live deep in
 Lines along my face.
 They dull my eyes, yet
 I keep on dying,
 Because I love to live.

14th Moment: On Diverse Deviations

When love is a shimmering curtain
 Before a door of chance
 That leads to a world in question
 Wherein the macabrous dance
 Of bones that rattle in silence
 Of blinded eyes and rolls
 Of thick lips thin, denying
 A thousand powdered moles,
 Where touch to touch is feel
 And life is weary where
 I would be carried off, not gently
 To a shore,
 Where love is the scream of anguish
 And no curtain drapes the door.

Sympathy, Night, Florence B. Price (1887-1953)

Born in 1887 in Little Rock, Arkansas, Florence Price is the first Black female composer to have a symphony performed by a major American orchestra. Though this brought instant recognition, she was at war with bigger forces against her; sexism, racism, and segregation in her time. She moved to Chicago and was deeply associated with the Chicago Renaissance and Harlem Renaissance. She composed more than 300 works including symphonies, organ works, spiritual arrangements, and art songs. Though she received training steeped in European tradition, Price's music mostly consists of American idiom that reveals her Southern roots. This ability to link vernacular and European musical traditions is mirrored in the works of Ives, and later with Copeland's "Old American Songs." Her melodies were a mix between blues-inspired and European romantic techniques. Her weaving of tradition with modernism was reflective of the way of life for African Americans in large cities at the time.

Set to the text of Paul Laurence Dunbar, *Sympathy* resonates with Price's struggle for acceptance as a Black female composer. She employs heavy use of text painting and chromaticism to create a beautiful and expressive melody. *Sympathy* is written in ternary form with the B section moving to the relative minor to paint the turmoil of the text. The piece exhibits compositional variety as it appropriately shifts with the expressive mode of the text.

Night is based on text from Louise C. Wallace. It exemplifies several aspects of the understated beauty and richness of Price's style. The text symbolically equates the rich, dark beauty of the nighttime sky with the beauties and riches of Black culture. The mention of the Madonna is particularly important to highlight as it is a reference to the Black Madonna, an image of the Virgin Mary depicted with black skin. According to Daniela Vasco of the Welcome Collection, A Black Madonna serves as a reminder that "black is not only a mystical colour associated with fertile earth, but also an expression of an ancient cultural memory that connects us back to our early history in Africa." This solidifies the notion that black, like the night is beautiful, boundless, and rich. It also acts as a call to people of black ethnicity to maintain pride their ancestry because of its beauty and richness.

Tis Sunset in the Garden from Troubled Island, William Grant Still (1895-1978)

Hailing from Woodville, Mississippi, William Grant Still was a true pioneer and one of America's foremost composers. Revered as the "The Dean of American Negro Composers," he achieved many milestones such as being the first Afro-American to write a major orchestral work and have it performed by a major American orchestra, conduct and direct a major orchestra, and have an opera produced by a major company, New York City Opera Company. "*Tis Sunset...*" is from this opera, *Troubled Island*.

As the first grand opera composed by an African American, *Troubled Island* achieved resounding success. With libretto from poet, Langston Hughes and Still's 2nd wife, Verna Arvey, this work was a colossal breakthrough and representation of Renaissance for the Black

American. However, because of the political and racial tensions surrounding the events of the opera, it was shut down after the first 3 performances. (williamgrantstill.com, 2022)

The opera is set in 1791 in Haiti and gives a fictitious account of the Haitian Revolution. The leader of the rebellious slaves, Dessalines, leads them to victory and after they win, he begins to make plans for a better future for the freed slaves. However, Dessalines is illiterate and relies on his secretary, Vuval, to write for him. Hearing Dessalines' plans, Vuval disagrees with him and secretly plots to overthrow him with his secret lover, Claire, the woman Dessalines has taken as Empress. It is Claire who sings "'Tis Sunset..." to Vuval in the garden as they make the plans to overthrow Dessalines and flee to Paris together. Despite the dark nature of the opera, this moment that Vuval and Claire share in the garden is lighter and filled with feelings of love. (williamgrantstill, 2022)

Plenty Good Room, Jacqueline B. Hairston (b. 1932)

Jacqueline Hairston is a pianist, vocal coach, composer, and arranger who received her musical training at the Julliard School of Music and Howard University School of Music, and Columbia University in New York. Her works have been recorded by the London Symphony and the Columbia Symphony Orchestras. She has arranged many spirituals, one of which is "Plenty Good Room". Plenty Good room has been arranged for solo voice with piano, but this arrangement is for soprano voice, baritone voice, and piano. (The African American Art Song Alliance. 2022)

On Dat Great Day, Noel Dexter (1938-2019)

Born in Port Antonio, Jamaica, Dexter was one of Jamaica's most prolific composers. He studied ethnomusicology and sacred music at the University of West Indies, the same college that he would go on to become the director of music at for 25 years before retiring in 2012. He is the composer of numerous musical works including hymns, anthems, patriotic songs and songs for children. He has also written and arranged music for over ten theatrical productions. (Music Unites Jamaica Foundation, 2022)

On Dat Great Day is one of his sacred compositions that tells a story of the day that Jesus returns. It uses text from the Bible to give an account of what will happen such as the "weepin', wailin', and knashin' of teeth". These descriptions are spotted throughout the New Testament of the Bible, as a prediction of the second coming of Jesus Christ. (Matthew 8:12, Luke 13:28, Matthew 13:42 King James Version) The piece has a comical effect to it that is brought to life by Dexter's choice of dynamics, tempo changes, and text. However, though there is a comical element, the seriousness of the text still remains as a warning to the audience. The song takes on a verse and chorus form with the verses telling the story and the chorus acting as a harkening to the listener to perhaps get their lives together so that the text in the verse will not be an accurate prediction of what will happen to them on that great day. The song is written in a mix of Standard Jamaican English and Jamaican Patois.

On Dat Great Day

On dat great day, on dat great day
Den a how wi a guh walk wid God
On dat great day?

Satan put on him long white boot
Swear to king im a guh ketch man soul
But a how wi a guh walk wid God
On dat great day?

Wat a weepin, wailin, nashin of teet
An dem dat have no teet,
De gum gwine haffi talk.
Den a how wi a guh walk wid God
On dat great day?

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