Ambiguity in Leonard Bernstein's song cycle *La Bonne Cuisine*

Ailyn Nienaber

14303095

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Supervisor: Dr Hanli Stapela

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Jennie Tourel and Leonard Bernstein at a recording session of *La Bonne Cuisine* and *I Hate Music!* (1960). CBS Records. Don Hunstein, photographer [1]

[1] Image sourced from the Leonard Bernstein Song Album (Bernstein, 1947/1988).

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DECLARATION

Full name:	Ailyn Nienaber
Student number:	14303095
Degree:	MMus (Performing Arts)
Title of the research project:	Ambiguity in Leonard Bernstein's song cycle *La Bonne Cuisine*

I declare that this research project is my own original work. Where secondary material is used, it has been carefully acknowledged and referenced in accordance with the requirements of the University of Pretoria. I understand what plagiarism is and I am aware of university policy and implications in this regard. This project has not been submitted for examination at any other university.

ETHICS STATEMENT

The author, whose name appears on the title page of this dissertation, has obtained, for the research described in this work, the applicable research ethics approval.

The author declares that she has observed the ethical standards required in terms of the University of Pretoria's Code of Ethics for researchers and the policy guidelines for responsible research.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to explore how the experience of ambiguity in Leonard Bernstein's song cycle *La Bonne Cuisine* challenges the interpretation and performance thereof. I argue that the ambiguity in *La Bonne Cuisine* can be traced to the following elements that challenge interpretation and performance: Firstly, Bernstein's eccentric decision to compose this song cycle based on a set of recipes leaves the performer without those traditional poetic markers that she would typically use to interpret and perform Art songs. Secondly, the high level of technicality of the music juxtaposed with the whimsical nature of the words (recipes) results in an incongruity between the music and words. Thirdly, the musico-historical context in which Bernstein is situated lends itself to possible ambiguity due to the atypical and radical manner of composition in the early 20th century, and this challenges conventional interpretation and performance. Bernstein, the man and his music, is discussed while contrasting his idiosyncratic approach to Art songs with that of traditional Art song composition and interpretation. This led to the identification of two concepts that are at the heart of Bernstein's compositional language, namely, accessibility and eclecticism. A combined practice-led and hermeneutic approach, within an interpretivist paradigm, enabled me to conduct a close reading of the text (words and music) of *La Bonne Cuisine.* By means of observations gained from my performance practice and insights gleaned from hermeneutical investigation, the close reading highlighted patterns within the music that are incongruous with the words. It is these technical aspects and incongruous elements that give rise to the experience of ambiguity in *La Bonne Cuisine.* Finally, these elements are contextualised in terms of Bernstein's eclecticism and accessibility, with reference to his musico-historical context, in order to ameliorate the sense of ambiguity that arises in interpreting and performing this work.

KEYWORDS

Leonard Bernstein, *La Bonne Cuisine*, Art song, ambiguity, interpretation, hermeneutics, practice-led, close reading.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

My introduction to Leonard Bernstein's song cycle *La Bonne Cuisine* was in 2019 in preparation for my Master's recital in classical voice performance. While the music – idiosyncratic, fast-paced, and technically challenging – enchanted me from the first listening, Bernstein's selection of text is what truly left me with much food for thought. In the place of poetry, Bernstein selected four recipes from Emile Dumont's *La Bonne Cuisine Française, Manuel guide de la cuisinière et de la maîtresse de maison*[2], a 19th century cookbook that Bernstein kept on his kitchen shelf. Bernstein loosely translated each recipe into English so that the song cycle could be performed in either the original French or the English adaptation. The four recipes he selected are: I. *Plum Pudding*, II. *Queues de Boeuf* (Ox-tails), III. *Tavouk Gueunksis* (shredded chicken in rice porridge with bread and milk), and IV. *Civet à Toute Vitesse* (Rabbit at Top Speed) (Leonard Bernstein Office, n.d.). Studying these songs challenged the way in which I, as a performer, usually learn and interpret Art songs.

In my previous experience, the common approach to the interpretation of Art songs requires the singer to first study the words and then the music score, while always remaining mindful of the historical context of that song (Ali, 2010). This process illuminates the potential meanings of Art songs and provides the performer with insight into how they could and should be performed. It is important to practise the words first because the words of an Art song, usually a poem, are virtually always the composer's creative point of departure (Suurpää, 2014). According to Hoch and Lister (2016), textual practise involves speaking "in an expressive declamatory fashion that identifies with the character of the language and the metre of the poetry" (p. 33). This allows the singer to become familiar with the intricacies of the poem and enables her to identify elements of the text that can be used to enhance expression, convincingly tell a story, or relay a message to the audience (Sell, 2005). However, a recipe is unconventional lyrical content and is largely lacking in those typical emotional markers that allow both the performer and audience to make sense of the work easily and readily.

After familiarising oneself with the text of an Art song the next step is to study the music score (both vocal line and piano part). However, during my initial score study, my first impression was that the music appeared more like a complex technical study than an Art song. This was confirmed during the first few collaborative sessions with my collaborative pianist – we experienced that the sheer technicality of the

[2] Good French cuisine: Manual guide for the cook and hostess (transl.).

song cycle, in conjunction with its unusual lyrical content, challenged effective ensemble work because it undermined the standard approach of looking to the words to make sense of complex musical content.

After an in-depth study of the score of *La Bonne Cuisine,* it became clear to me that this song cycle does not readily lend itself to such a traditional approach to interpretation. This is because Bernstein's idiosyncratic marriage of words and music leaves the singer with a strong sense of ambiguity. I argue that this ambiguity stems from two central concepts in Bernstein's compositional language in *La Bonne Cuisine*, namely accessibility and eclecticism. Firstly, he asks the performer to somehow interpret non-traditional words (recipes), set to highly technical music, in a manner which is readily accessible to a lay audience, but which is not initially as readily accessible to the performer. Secondly, ambiguity arises from his deep-rooted eclecticism, which draws from multiple and varied styles of music and combines them in unique ways. In addition to these two concepts, a third factor to consider is Bernstein's musico-historical context, the early 20th century, a period characterised by notably atypical responses to composition in the Western classical canon. Such atypical responses resulted in a lack of stylistic uniformity in compositions of this time, and this can be challenging to the performer when trying to offer a meaningful interpretation. Studying Bernstein's context, therefore, does not sufficiently assist the performer in clarifying the ambiguity in *La Bonne Cuisine*, but rather further entrenches it.

Yet, despite the idiosyncrasies reflected in the song cycle, *La Bonne Cuisine* resonates with audiences and performers alike. The immediate success of Bernstein's song cycle is confirmed in a review by Hume (1949), who speaks of Jennie Tourel's rendition of this work as a "fascinating experience" (p. 640) and further exclaims that the reason this song cycle is such a wonderful and exciting work to hear is that it requires "top-grade singing" (p. 640). Hume (1949) does, however, disapprovingly comment on the fact that there is little correlation between the French-English translations, and that Bernstein overstepped a line when he began to use everyday content, such as a list of ingredients, as motivation for musical content. The continued popularity of *La Bonne Cuisine* is confirmed in a review by Buja (2020), who describes this work as pleasantly amusing and exciting to hear. According to Buja, "Rossini famously declared that he [Rossini] could set something as banal as a laundry list to music – can Bernstein succeed with recipes?" (para. 3). My interest was piqued and I decided to investigate the ambiguity in Bernstein's song cycle, *La Bonne Cuisine.*

1.2 Aims

The primary aim of this study is to investigate how the experience of ambiguity in Bernstein's *La Bonne Cuisine* challenges conventional interpretation and performance. I firstly aim to identify Bernstein as a

musico-historical subject so as to understand his sources of influence and his compositional language, specifically his treatment of melody, rhythm, and harmony. By means of a combined hermeneutic and practice-led approach, I aim to conduct a close reading and close listening of the text (music and words) of *La Bonne* that highlights incongruities that arise in the interplay of words music. These incongruities are what give rise to a sense of ambiguity in the performing artist. I then aim to contextualise these ambiguous elements in relation to Bernstein's deep-rooted eclecticism and his desire to remain accessible, so as to demonstrate how the performer can navigate her way through the experience of ambiguity when interpreting and performing this work.

1.3 Research questions

Main research question:

How does the experience of ambiguity in Leonard Bernstein's song cycle *La Bonne Cuisine* challenge the interpretation of this work?

Secondary research questions:

- How do the concepts of eclecticism and accessibility in Bernstein's compositional language contribute to the experience of ambiguity in *La Bonne Cuisine*?
- How can a combined practice-led and hermeneutic approach, entailing a close reading of *La Bonne Cuisine,* assist the performer in navigating through the experience of ambiguity in this song cycle?
- How is a sense of ambiguity brought about by the interplay of words and music in *La Bonne Cuisine*?

1.4 Central theoretical argument

It is my assumption that there is ambiguity present in Leonard Bernstein's song cycle *La Bonne Cuisine.* This ambiguity arises as a result of Bernstein's idiosyncratic marriage of words (recipes) and music (both voice and piano), as well as his unique musico-historical context (the early 20th century). I will argue that by contextualising this work via two concepts that are at the heart of Bernstein's compositional language – accessibility and eclecticism – a performing artist can navigate her way through the ambiguity of *La Bonne Cuisine* in order to offer a meaningful interpretation of this work.

1.5 Research methodology

A detailed account of the research methodology – research approach, research design, data collection, and analysis techniques – is provided in Chapter 3. This is a qualitative study conducted within an

interpretivist paradigm, as the findings of the study cannot be measured or generalised (Maree, 2016) but rather revolve around subjective experiences and phenomena (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The study combines a practice-led and hermeneutic research design. My artistic practice, that of a classical singer and performer, has been an invaluable component of my research process, and it is from my artistic practice that the premise and research questions for this study arose (Crispin, 2015). This will be combined with a hermeneutic research component, which Schleiermacher (as cited in Rutt, 2006) describes as the interpretation of a text or any other form of symbolic communication. It is through this combined approach that I navigate my way through the ambiguity in Bernstein's *La Bonne Cuisine*.

The data for this study was collected via practice-led observations in combination with a narrative literature review. Primary sources evaluated for the purpose of this research include the music score of *La Bonne Cuisine* (Bernstein, 1947/1988), the selected recipes from Emile Dumont's *La Bonne Cuisine Française*, and Bernstein's personal translations of these recipes that are set to music. Secondary sources include practice-led observation, reputable recordings, published books, and peer-reviewed academic articles.

The collected data has been analysed by way of a close reading that enabled me to describe incongruous patterns within the text that give rise to ambiguity. I then contextualised these elements in terms of Bernstein's eclecticism, accessibility, and his musico-historical context in order to navigate through the ambiguity within the text.

1.6 Significance of the study

This study is significant as it offers researchers detailed descriptions of Leonard Bernstein's compositional language. This will be valuable to any musician or researcher interested in performing or better understanding the works of Leonard Bernstein. Moreover, this study offers a reflection of my personal interpretation of the text (words and music) of *La Bonne Cuisine*, which would assist classical singers in dealing with the ambiguous elements of this song cycle. Finally, while numerous formal theoretical analyses of Bernstein's works can be found in the existing academic literature, this study contributes to the broader field of research on Bernstein by being the first study to specifically discuss the problem of ambiguity in Bernstein's La Bonne Cuisine and how it challenges interpretation.

1.7 Ethical considerations

I hereby declare that this study and all its contents are reflective of my own work. Further, I undertake to openly acknowledge all sources that aided in the research of this topic. This study did not require human participants but rather relied on the researcher's personal experience of artistic practice

together with information gathered within a broader field of literature. Throughout this project I have strived to contribute meaningfully to the existing body of knowledge in the fields of musical hermeneutics and practice-led research.

1.8 Definitions of key terms

Ambiguity: The concept of ambiguity could be described as something which is unclear or indistinct and possesses the quality of being open to numerous interpretations (Oxford University Press, 2013; Allen, 1990).

Musico-historical context: For the purposes of this study the term musico-historical will be used to refer to the study of music and/or musicians from both a cultural and historical point of view.

Eclecticism: The term eclecticism is characterised by the process of selecting or freely borrowing "ideas, style, or taste from a broad and diverse range of sources" (Allen, 1990, p. 371). This often involves an individual that makes creative decisions, not restricted by a single style or doctrine, but rather on the basis of what seems best to them (Oxford University Press, 2013).

Accessibility: Accessibility is defined as an attribute of being readily comprehensible and easily appreciated (Oxford University Press, 2013).

1.9 Limitations and delimitations of the study

For the purposes of this study, I focused my attention on a particular song cycle composed by Leonard Bernstein – *La Bonne Cuisine*. This song cycle does not exceed five minutes and is thus a manageable length to analyse in detail. This is not a biographical study, but limited biographical information will serve to contextualise and substantiate my assertions. I have focused specifically on the interpretation and understanding of *La Bonne Cuisine* rather than providing extensive pedagogical information on the classical phonation required to perform this song cycle.

1.10 Chapter outline

Chapter 1 is introductory and provides a background to the study and the research problem at hand. Moreover, the aims, research questions, central theoretical argument, research approach and methods, definitions of key terms, and ethical considerations are stated and the delimitations of the study are set.

Chapter 2 comprises a literature review offering information on Bernstein, the man and his music. I also provide information relating to traditional Art song composition and interpretation. The chapter concludes with a brief description of Bernstein's contribution to Art song up until he composed *La Bonne Cuisine*.

Chapter 3 consists of an in-depth discussion of the methodology of this study by elaborating on the research approach, research design, data collection, and data analysis techniques.

Chapter 4 focuses on a close reading of *La Bonne Cuisine* so as to highlight its ambiguous elements and offer fruitful interpretations that allow a performer to navigate through the ambiguity of this work.

Chapter 5 comprises a summary of the study, concluding thoughts on the research findings, and recommendations for further study.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Leonard Bernstein (1918–1990): The man and his music

> "Life without music is unthinkable. Music without life is academic. That is why my contact with music is a total embrace." – Leonard Bernstein[3]

Leonard Bernstein is known to be one of the most prominent figures in American classical music of the 20th century (Latham, 2002). However, Hubbs (2009) highlights the difficulty of discussing Bernstein according to the categories whereby musicological discourse proceeds. He explains that this difficulty arises out of Bernstein's apparent contradictions. These contradictions are a result of the fact that he had "too many fingers in too many pies" (Gow, 1960, p. 427) throughout his career. He actively composed, but also regularly conducted, performed, and gave televised lectures on Western classical music. Bernstein was proudly eclectic and innovative in his composition while simultaneously holding fast to the Western classical, Romantic aesthetic, and furthermore he "was a crusader for high art who was also a guru of popular music" (Mugmon, 2016, p. 246). The way in which these apparent contradictions idiosyncratically come together in Bernstein's music could give rise to a sense of ambiguity in the performing artist who wants to offer meaningful interpretive decisions. By closely investigating elements of Bernstein's musical language, the performer can gain insights into the ambiguity of Bernstein's oeuvre generally, and *La Bonne Cuisine* specifically.

2.1.1 Eclecticism and Bernstein's musico-historical context

Sessions (2015) writes that the act of composition is always, at least partly, the product of composers responding to their world and experiences, and this certainly rings true for a composer such as Bernstein. In an interview between Bernstein and Laird (Laird & Lin, 2015), Bernstein himself proclaimed: "Who are you if not the sum of everything that has happened before. Everything … that has been significant in your experience" (p. 21). Bernstein's unique response to the world and his experiences is evidenced in his compositional credo, which was that of a proud eclectic (Laird & Lin, 2015). While some adored Bernstein for his diverse palette of influences, others critiqued him for it. For example, Smith (2006) has warmly referred to Bernstein as the "American eclectic" (p. 22), whereas Stravinsky (as cited in Burton, 1995)

[3] Bernstein offered this quote during the New York Philharmonic's 1967 Midwestern U.S. and Canada Tour. The quote was to accompany a photograph of Mr. Bernstein taken by a Canadian photographer. The photographer was in process of putting together a book of photographs of important people during that time. (New York Philharmonic, Leon Levy Digital Archives).

farcically called Bernstein a “musical department store” (p. xii). Furthermore, Lin (2013) states that Bernstein’s eclecticism and his ability to embrace a multiplicity of styles is a trademark of his sound.

Bernstein’s eclecticism can be understood as a reaction to a common theme in Western classical music at the beginning of the 20th century, namely, the composer’s need to balance the weight of tradition, the established and validated repertory of the past, with novel ideas in the present (Burkholder et al., 2010). One could argue that the single unifying characteristic of Western classical music composers during this time was a “heightened self-consciousness concerning their relationship to the past and, ultimately, their place in history” (Latham 2002, p. 1305). Bernstein believed that he was part of this collective of Western classical composers who took it upon themselves to react to the traditions of the past (Laird & Lin, 2015). His response to tradition was an attempt to perpetuate the music he held so dear while simultaneously seeking to transform and breathe new life into it, so as to better suit the desires of his contemporary American audiences (Peyser, 1987).

The established canon of Western classical music was still dominant at the turn of the 20th century. Western classical concert halls of both Europe and America were viewed as museums for displaying the musical artworks of the past, while contemporary Western classical compositions were increasingly less well-received (Bernstein, 1974; Burkholder et al., 2010). How then could composers offer a new sound that reflects their unique musico-historical context, excites their audiences, and honours the traditions from which their music arose? For Bernstein (1974), an eclectic approach seemed the only viable way forward, not only in composition but through his conducting too. He is thus remembered for reimagining traditional Western classical compositions from a modern interpretive standpoint (Peyser, 1987).

The various choices of what to preserve from tradition were diverse and reflected what the composer valued most from that tradition. This resulted in a complex variety of compositional styles by Western classical music composers in the early 20th century. Adhering to standard tonal and harmonic principles could result in compositions that sounded too much like the works of the past, whereas diverting too far from standard tonality could cause audiences to lose interest (Burkholder et al., 2010). As a result, composers at the beginning of the 20th century were, unlike those that came before them, faced with the question of whether their music should be largely tonal or atonal in its composition (Latham, 2002).

The compositional ambiguity that arose from this question of tonality can be seen more clearly through a closer look at the musical content of that time. Latham (2002) argues that, on the one hand, Arnold Schoenberg’s (1874–1951) emancipation of dissonance[4] in the Austro-German tradition inspired a

[4] The emancipation of dissonance is a concept or goal put forward by the composer, Arnold Schoenberg, and his student, Anton Webern. The phrase, coined by Schoenberg, first appears in his essay *Opinion or Insight?* (1926).

collective turn towards atonality, but on the other hand, the rise of neo-classicism, inspired by the work of Igor Stravinsky (1882–1971), resulted in a greater proportion of music remaining recognisably tonal. Despite the development of new technologies and the desire of composers to explore beyond the confines of the standardised system of equal temperament, many Western classical music composers continued to write music for standard orchestral instruments with equal-tempered chromaticism. Furthermore, despite the surge in popularity of new combinations of instruments and voice in musical theatre and jazz during this time, the standard opera and symphonic forms remained a favourite of Western classical composers and underwent little transformation (Burkholder et al*.,* 2010; Latham, 2002). This is what Dahlhaus refers to as the "non-contemporaneity of the contemporaneous" (Latham, 2002, p. 1304) – the ambiguity that results from the co-existing, yet conflicting nature of musical styles present during the same time in history. This period of history is thus noted for its musical diversity and eclecticism (Burkholder et al*.,* 2010; Latham, 2002). One could argue that the only unifying characteristic of the music of this time is that it was typically atypical.

Through a close look at Bernstein's eclectic musical language, with specific reference to his treatment of melody, rhythm, and harmony, I aim to highlight the way in which Bernstein's music, in this case *La Bonne Cuisine*, simultaneously draws inspiration from traditional Western classical influences, his early 20th century contemporaries, as well as the vernacular traditions of jazz and Broadway theatre. Such an interpretation of Bernstein's unique combination of eclectic influences (of which he had many) will assist the reader in understanding the ambiguity within his oeuvre and that "magic factor which is the individuated thing called Bernstein" (Laird & Lin, 2015, p. 21).

2.1.2 Accessibility and humour

Despite the ambiguity I experienced while attempting to interpret *La Bonne Cuisine,* this ambiguity might in fact be inadvertent on Bernstein's part. This is because the desire for accessibility lies at the heart of Bernstein's compositional process (Laird & Lin, 2015), yet the presence of ambiguity could make the work more inaccessible and thus more challenging to interpret. Bernstein's desire for accessibility is evident in the opening of Hohlfeld's (2007) documentary film *Leonard Bernstein: The gift of music,* in which Bernstein states:

> I love two things: music and people. I don't know which I like better, but I make music because I love people, and I love to work with them, and I love to play for them, and communicate with them on this deepest level which is the musical level.

Bernstein therefore wrote music inspired by, and with the intention of being immediately accessible to, the public. Much of the music of the early 20th century required multiple listenings for audiences to

comprehend and appreciate their meanings (Burkholder et al., 2010). Bernstein wanted to avoid this; he strove to compose music that his audiences would be able to appreciate from the very first listening (Laird & Lin, 2015). He achieved this by loading his music with ideas that nurtured accessibility, such as lyrical melodies, rich vernacular references, and mostly tonal harmonies (Laird & Lin, 2015). In so doing, he chose to embrace the desires of his audience, instead of attempting to please his critics (Lin, 2013).

Laird and Lin (2015) believe that Bernstein's desire for accessibility in his music could be understood as an extension of his extroverted personality, inasmuch as he loved to "talk very deeply and intimately to a vast number of people, which is otherwise impossible to do" (Laird & Lin, 2015, p. 22). Moreover, Laird and Lin (2015) state that Bernstein's desire to be accessible often dictated his eclectic combination of different music genres, ranging from more commercial and vernacular works (Broadway and jazz) to serious art forms (opera, symphonic, instrumental, and ballet works). The rising popularity of variety shows in New York during this time may also have influenced Bernstein to compose in this way (Bernstein, 1974). A supreme example of his ability to merge genres is the Broadway musical *West Side Story* (1961), arguably one of Bernstein's most memorable works (Hicky, 2007).

A significant contributing factor to the accessibility of Bernstein's music in general, and of *La Bonne Cuisine* especially, is his incorporation of humour (Peyser, 1987). This is confirmed by Secrest (1994) who explains that, for Bernstein, music could and ought to be fun, and that the United States was exactly the place to be "young, versatile, breathless with possibility, suddenly the measure of all things musical" (p. 478). In order to discuss how Bernstein creates humour in music it is important to first ask a foundational question: What makes something funny? Almost all humour contains an element of the unexpected, surprising, shocking, or absurd (Willmann, 1940). The element of surprise is achieved by putting any number of incongruous things together, creating what Bernstein describes as "comic pairs" (Bernstein & Seltzer, 1970, p. 120). He further explains that "incongruous things don't make sense, so we get non-sense – and nonsense is the loveliest thing there is. It makes us laugh." (Bernstein & Seltzer, 1970, p.120). Humour in music is thus funny in the same way that jokes are, by placing incongruous things together (Willmann, 1940; Hicky, 2007).

There are a number of ways to create humour in music, just as there are many different forms of humour in everyday life. Paterson (n.d.) describes how some composers create humour in music by adding non-musical sounds (noises) to their compositions. He proffers an example of this in George Gershwin's (1898–1937) *An American in Paris* (1928), in which Gershwin incorporates taxi horns into an orchestral piece. Another way to create humour in music, and perhaps one of the oldest, is through imitation, using musical notes to imitate nature, people, places, or things (Bernstein & Seltzer, 1970). For example, in Zoltán Kodaly's (1882–1967) *Háry János* (1926), the composer makes use of musical

notes to compose a giant sneeze. Bernstein and Seltzer (1970) describe how Kodaly does this via a progression of notes, moving slowly like heavy breathing, followed by an explosion of notes in all directions. Imitation is arguably one of the oldest means of creating humour in music and can be traced all the way back to the French Baroque composer Jean-Phillip Rameau (1683–1784) (Bernstein & Seltzer, 1970; Burkholder et al*.,* 2010).

A central component of humour, both in life and music, is wit. Speed is central to wit: "fast and funny – that's the rule for jokes" (Bernstein & Seltzer, 1970, p.123). Composers make use of wit through sudden changes in the music, via extreme jumps in dynamics or pitches, as can be heard in Joseph Haydn's (1732–1809) *Symphony No. 94 in G Major (Surprise Symphony)* (Paterson, n.d.). In vocal music, and in *La Bonne Cuisine* specifically, the use of tongue twisters can create humour. The sheer speed at which tongue twisters are set to music can create a kind of humour and breathless excitement, like "a bag full of magic tricks coming at you so fast you can almost not follow them" (Bernstein & Seltzer, 1970, p. 124).

One can also achieve humour in music through forms of parody, caricature, or burlesque humour (Bernstein & Seltzer, 1970; Paterson, n.d.). Bernstein and Seltzer (1970) explain that this kind of humour involves misrepresenting somebody or something to achieve exaggeration for comic effect. Paterson (n.d.) offers an example of this in the operas of Gilbert and Sullivan. Their operas caricature the style of *opera seria*; the content and characters of their operas are not serious but are instead exceptionally silly, and therefore the incongruity between the music and thematic content results in humour (Paterson, n.d.; Bernstein & Seltzer, 1970).

With this understanding of humour in place, one can begin to isolate elements of humour written into the score of *La Bonne Cuisine.* However, it is important to note a central fact about humour: while jokes, musical or otherwise, are humorous for those who receive them, the explanation of a joke is oftentimes unfunny (Bernstein & Seltzer, 1970). This is where ambiguity arises for a performer interpreting the musical jokes of great composers. The performer needs to attempt to understand Bernstein's perception or use of humour, make sense of it for herself, and then challenge herself to recreate that humour in a manner in which the audience can easily and readily understand and enjoy. This struggle is confirmed in a quote by Bernstein himself: "All jokes have to be at the expense of someone or something; something has to be hurt or destroyed to make you laugh – a man's dignity, or an idea, or a word, or logic itself" (Bernstein & Seltzer, 1970, p. 128). From this one could argue that ambiguity arises in *La Bonne Cuisine* as a result of Bernstein's musical humour playing out at the expense of the performer.

In light of Bernstein's desire to create music that is immediately accessible and humorous to his audiences, his selection of everyday content such as recipes in *La Bonne Cuisine* starts to make more

sense. However, in order to offer a meaningful interpretation of the text (words and music) of *La Bonne Cuisine,* further information on Bernstein's compositional language is required.

2.1.3 Melody

Bernstein could be described as a real genius of melodic expression, famed for his ability to construct memorable melodies in all his compositions, but especially within the genre of musical theatre and Broadway (Lin, 2013; Laird & Lin, 2015). The composer Ned Rorem (1990) was of the opinion that Bernstein's melody is "infectious, because once heard it is never forgotten" (p. 6). According to Laird and Lin (2015), this could be a result of the fact that Bernstein frequently balances the use of wide or disjunct intervals with stepwise, scale-like passages in his melodic construction, and contextualises his melodies with rich, colourful harmonies. These unanticipated wide intervals demand the audience's attention and further lends a "distinctive angularity to his themes" (Laird & Lin, 2015, p. 25). However, his sheer musicality and innate lyricism often disguises his peculiar melodic construction. Bernstein's use of wide intervals could be seen as an influence from Stravinsky who makes use of similar compositional devices in his works (Smith, 2011).

Another element that Bernstein draws from Stravinsky is the tradition of neo-classicism (Laird & Schiff, 2012). Neo-classicism rose in popularity during the interwar years (1919–1939) and provided features of diatonicism in something other than a functional tonal context, which resulted in a flexible medium for the creation of new nationalistic idioms (Latham, 2002). According to Latham (2002), the development of nationalistic idioms in the interwar period was commonplace.

With much encouragement from Aaron Copland (1900–1990), one of Bernstein's greatest influences and friends, Bernstein hoped to create a unique American idiom in his melodic construction. While there are many different ways a composer could develop a nationalistic idiom, I argue that there are three main elements that contributed to Bernstein's development of his American idiom. Firstly, his incorporation of vernacular elements in the form of borrowed melodies and lyrical content from popular works of the Broadway theatre, which were oftentimes more light-hearted, irreverent, and humorous as opposed to the serious poetic content of Western classical composition (Laird & Schiff, 2012). Secondly, Bernstein is noted for setting his melodies to the dictates of American speech inflections, which in turn makes his melodies more relatable to American audiences. And thirdly, Bernstein's incorporation of jazz, which utterly fascinated him: "It's the stuff I've soaked up ever since I heard music" (Peyser, 1987, p. 225). One could arguably find traces of jazz in all of his compositions. Bernstein had a unique ability to lift jazz from its original context and incorporate it into his modern, classical art compositions. He firmly believed that the element of jazz in his compositions is what deemed them

uniquely American (Briggs, 1961). His compositional style has oftentimes been likened to that of Gershwin, another noteworthy American songwriter who, like Bernstein, is often perceived to be a master of the idiomatic American melody (Bernstein, 1974).

Bernstein wanted to become an American musician to be reckoned with in Western classical music circles, and he further deeply desired to be remembered as a composer of serious music (Berger, 1996). For this reason, compositional logic manifests in all of his Art song compositions (Giger, 2009). Bernstein had the ability to base entire compositions on the development of small melodic motifs (Laird & Lin, 2015). Giger (2009) explains that Bernstein's melodies therefore reflect an extensive development of motifs or themes with subtle contrasts. He further explains that for Bernstein this process is a necessity "because it is intellectually stimulating and thus a sign of high art" (p. 315), yet it is simultaneously a problem because the general public may find it repetitive and boring (Giger, 2009). In conjunction with Bernstein's idiosyncratic manipulation of melody one must further consider his distinctive use of rhythm.

2.1.4 Rhythm

La Bonne Cuisine, like much of Bernstein's oeuvre, is rhythmically complex. According to Laird and Lin (2015), rhythm is a major contributor to the appeal of Bernstein's music. Laird and Lin further attribute this rhythmic vitality to Bernstein's free incorporation of vernacular musical elements, especially jazz and Broadway, in combination with music influences from his early 20th century contemporaries. Laird and Schiff (2012) argue that Bernstein assimilated the habitual shift of odd metres within a pattern from his contemporaries. For the purpose of this study, odd metres will have two meanings. Firstly, it refers to odd groupings of five and seven beats per measure, and secondly, the use of simple metre with odd subdivisions of beats, e.g. irregular groupings of two or three quavers (Laird & Lin, 2015). Laird and Lin (2015) suggest that Bernstein's use of metre was inspired by Stravinsky, and further note that he did so in order "to keep the listener off balance or delighted by the music's sheer spirit" (p. 28).

Bernstein's use of rhythm could also be likened to that of Copland (Secrest, 1994). According to Laird and Lin (2015), both Copland and Bernstein frequently made use of complex Latin American rhythms as well as rhythmic ideas borrowed from jazz, including the use of syncopation and swing. Giger (2009) states that the rhythms of 20th century music arose from a fascination with jazz, because jazz offered composers new kinds of rhythms and also taught composers how to manage cross-rhythms, which is exactly what Bernstein and Copland achieved in their compositions. Furthermore, Copland's use of strong accents or *tenuti* over irregular or shifting quaver patterns is often mirrored directly in Bernstein's works – *La Bonne Cuisine* being one of them. Bernstein and Krupa (as cited in Lin, 2013) explain that

the word syncopation is always associated with jazz, and by Bernstein's definition, syncopation always includes irregular accents.

It is further noteworthy that Bernstein himself speaks of speech inflection in conjunction with the choice of words as an immediate influence on his compositional process (Bernstein & Seltzer, 1970). This is an aspect of composition inspired by Copland and Marc Blitzstein (1905–1964) (Laird & Lin, 2015). Bernstein, Blitzstein, and Copland strove to compose music in an idiom that was accessible to American audiences (Latham, 2002). This often resulted in composing popular works based on speech inflections of American English. Laird and Lin (2015) write that "one finds Bernstein following the dictates of text accent and rhythm in almost any text that he sets in English, Spanish, French, Latin, or Hebrew" (p. 31). Rhythmic, *recitativo*-like passages are common throughout Bernstein's vocal works (Laird & Lin, 2015). It is of interest to note, however, that throughout *La Bonne Cuisine*, little attention is given to natural syllabification and word emphasis in either language (French or English). Bernstein repeatedly places strong accents or *tenuti* on syllables that are usually unaccented in idiomatic speech. Moreover, the manner in which he elects to translate the recipes from the original French to English does not entail a direct translation of the words, but rather his own distinctive interpretation thereof. With this in mind, I next explore Bernstein's use of harmony.

2.1.5 Harmony

Laird and Lin (2015) explain that Bernstein's compositions generally revolve around strong pitch centres. His use of harmony could therefore be seen as a continuation of the neo-classical tradition, inspired by the work of Stravinsky (Latham, 2002). Bernstein's early 20th century contemporaries Aaron Copland, Roy Harris (1898–1979), and William Schuman (1910–1992), are noted for similar trends in their compositional output (Laird & Lin, 2015). Bernstein (as cited in Giger, 2009) opted for a more tonal approach to harmony and rejected the atonal approach for being "contrary to nature" (Giger, 2009, p. 314). This is so because it does not align with the manner in which the human ear naturally perceives organised sound within the standardised system of equal temperament and the overtone series (Giger, 2009). Bernstein's decision to opt for a more tonal approach stems from his desire for his music to remain accessible and immediately communicable to American audiences (Laird & Lin, 2015). Giger (2009) explains that neo-classical composers strove to create fresh, original sounds and tone colours through novel instrument combinations, innovative textures, and imaginative use of dissonance. Through this creative approach, modern composers of the early 20th century were able to make use of the same notes used within the tradition of tonality but in a completely new way.

While Bernstein held fast to the structures of tonality, he also included the creative use of gritty dissonances. He would compose using twelve-tone rows, bitonality, or triadic harmonies with added tones, usually for programmatic or parodical purposes and/or contrastingly to express a sense of angst, nightmare, confrontation, or alienation (Laird & Lin, 2015; Giger, 2009). This is an influence that can be traced back to Schoenberg and his contemporaries, Alban Berg (1885–1935) and Anton Webern (1883–1945) (Laird & Schiff, 2012). Bernstein strove to honour his modern contemporaries, but in a manner that his audiences could more easily understand. It is for this reason that he combined tonal and atonal practices in his compositions, writing works that Giger (2009) describes as a "unified variety" (p. 325) of sound.

Bernstein believed that almost all of his work is theatrical, which is to say, more accessible to interpretation than purely instrumental music (Bernstein, 1974; Laird & Schiff, 2012). Laird and Lin (2015) posit that Bernstein's incorporation of vernacular elements in his harmonic settings – jazz scales, blues notes, and Broadway-inspired harmonies – together with the Western approach to neo-classical harmony, is what makes his music more accessible to audiences. As will be shown in my close reading (Chapter 4), these considerations all contribute to coming to terms with the ambiguity in Bernstein's oeuvre generally and in *La Bonne Cuisine* specifically.

2.2 Art song

In order to better understand the ambiguity of Bernstein's song cycle *La Bonne Cuisine*, it would be of value to understand how Art songs and song cycles are typically composed and interpreted by performers. I will then briefly look at the only other serious song cycle that Bernstein composed before *La Bonne Cuisine*, namely *I Hate Music!* By highlighting how Bernstein veered from the norm of Art song composition we can better understand how to navigate through the ambiguity of *La Bonne Cuisine.*

2.2.1 Art song composition

The focus of this section is Art song composition in the 19th century, with specific reference to the close relationship between words and music as well as the close relationship between the vocal line and piano part in Art songs. According to Sams and Johnson (2001), the Art song grew to the height of its popularity in the 19th century with the development of the German *Lied* and the French *mélodie.*

An Art song can typically be defined as a work of serious artistic content, written for solo voice and piano (Chew, 2001). From the 19th century onwards, the words of Art songs were largely secular (Dickinson et al., 2013). As aptly described by celebrated French writer Victor Hugo (1802–1885) (as cited in Kramer, 2017), "music absorbs and thrives on the essence of poetry like a child on milk or a vampire on blood" (p. 147). Thus, the development of the Art song genre was a result of the close involvement of Western

classical composers with the poets of their day. Furthermore, it developed from a consensus that music could and should be inspired and embodied out of poetic content (Sams & Johnson, 2001).

Youens (2001) explains that many Art songs are composed as independent songs not belonging to a group. However, they are also sometimes organised into a coherent, unified collection of songs, known as a song cycle. Youens further argues that coherence in song cycles varies according to text, musical procedures, or a combination thereof. Textual coherence can include the use of poems by a single poet with a storyline or theme, or alternatively a unifying mood, atmosphere or text genre, as is the case in *La Bonne Cuisine*, where textual coherence is achieved by Bernstein selecting recipes from the same cookbook. Furthermore, musical coherence within a song cycle is typically achieved through tonal schemes, recurring motifs, musical passages, and/or recurring formal structures (Youens, 2001).

Sams and Johnson (2001) explain that, in Germany in the 19th century, the development from vernacular songs to more serious Art songs arose during the renaissance of German lyric verse, led by the poet Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832). This poetic renaissance is noted for its central theme: one's emotions confronted with and affected by the powerful forces of nature, history, and society (Burkholder et al*.,* 2010). Burkholder et al*.* (2010) explain that this new poetry abounded with contrasts – the heroic versus the vulnerable, the grandiose against the intimate, and the human subject as both isolated and yet significant. Sams and Johnson (2001) are of the opinion that the tension at the core of this Romantic poetry could be amplified through the increasingly sophisticated musical language available to German composers of the 19th century. This includes word-painting in the form of metaphors of human motion and gesture, such as walking, marching, or running motifs; tonic and dominant inflections for question-answer relations; and major-minor contrasts for sunshine and shade, joy and melancholy, love and loneliness, to name but a few (Sams & Johnson, 2001). In *La Bonne Cuisine*, Bernstein drew on his understanding of the sophisticated musical language of the German *Lied* but did not remain loyal to the tradition in his selection of words to reflect that musical content.

Around the same time as the development of the German *Lied*, the French Art song, or *mélodie*, developed out of the relationship between Western classical composers and the Romantic and Symbolist poets in France, perhaps the most noteworthy of these poets being Paul Verlaine (1844–1896) (Tunley & Noske, 2001). Composers strove to compose works that exemplified not only the atmosphere of the poem, but also the fluidity of the French language through supple melodic lines and Impressionistic harmonies (Tunley & Noske, 2001). We hear this in *La Bonne Cuisine,* where Bernstein writes music to exemplify the atmosphere of the words – the hustle and bustle of cooking in a kitchen – and he also incorporates supple melodic lines in the music score. However, he pays little attention to the idiomatic pronunciation of the French words he uses.

As explained by Sams and Johnson (2001), an important aspect of Art song composition across the German and French traditions is the relationship between the piano and voice. Thanks to the modern piano, composers no longer required orchestral ensembles to attain varied tone colours, as the pianists themselves could achieve a wide variety of tone colour (Sams & Johnson, 2001). Both the vocal lines and piano parts of Art songs are composed to carry equal importance (Garret, 2007), as the piano can be a voice or character of its own. Alternatively, it can be in support of the vocal line, but its contribution to the music is always equally important to that of the voice (Sams & Johnson, 2001; Hoch & Lister, 2016). The piano part thus assists in painting a poetic narrative, often painting for the singer "the world of the moment, [their] surrounding atmospheres; often they are you, your feelings, the subtext behind the words you sing" (Glass, 2004, p. 15). This notion is further reinforced in a quote by renowned accompanist Gerald Moore (1984):

> The accompaniment to every good song paints a picture or evokes a mood which is inspired by the words. [...]. Therefore, the accompanist and the singer, the one no less than the other, owe all to the words and depend on the words to guide them (p. 32).

After studying the words of an Art song, it is important for a classical singer to study the vocal line in conjunction with the piano part, as it allows the singer to glean significant information from the score, which acts as a blueprint, a means of communication between composer and performer (Hoch & Lister, 2016).

2.2.2 Bernstein's contribution to Art song before *La Bonne Cuisine*

Throughout his career Leonard Bernstein composed five song cycles that could be considered serious Art song compositions. This sub-section will briefly discuss Bernstein's first distinctive contribution to the Art song genre - *I Hate Music!* A brief look at this song cycle could prove beneficial in navigating through the ambiguity of *La Bonne Cuisine* as it contains similar compositional techniques.

I Hate Music! A Cycle of Five Kid Songs for Soprano and Piano (1943)

1. *My Name is Barbara*
2. *Jupiter has Seven Moons*
3. *I Hate Music!*
4. *A Big Indian and a Little Indian* (Riddle Song)
5. *I'm a Person Too*

I Hate Music! was his first composition that could be considered as a serious Art song cycle (Laird & Lin, 2015). He wrote the full text of the work and dedicated it to his housemate at the time, Edys Merrill. Bernstein would coach singers and entertain in his apartment day and night (Peyser, 1987). In moments

of frustration Edys would stomp through the apartment shouting: “I hate music!” Bernstein composed the song cycle based on her shouting (Laird & Lin, 2015). Laird and Lin (2015) explain that Bernstein’s setting of the words is written from the perspective of a 10-year-old girl. They continue to describe the cycle as light, satirical, and no longer than seven minutes in length. The work contains “chromatically conceived melodies, multicolour rhythms, and rich harmonies with interwoven jazz elements” (Hicky, 2007, p. 123).

It is of value to note that around this time Bernstein met Jennie Tourel (1900–1973) and was “immediately taken with her voice and performance abilities” (Hicky, 2007, p. 122). They premiered this work together in the encore of Tourel’s debut recital with the Boston Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Serge Koussevitzky (1874–1951) (Hicky, 2007). Koussevitzky did not approve of the song cycle as it contained “too much bleed with popular music to be considered serious art” (Peyser, 1987, p. 81). According to Bernstein, the work was well received by the audience: “people yelled and stomped and cheered and I had to take a bow” (Peyser, 1987, p. 91). However, critics’ reactions to the work were mixed. A publicist commented: “I hated them when I heard them at town hall. They are not art songs but cute little jazzy songs that should be sung at a house party. They did not rise to Jennie’s style or stature” (Peyser, 1987, p. 100). According to Briggs (1961), Noel Strauss of the New York Times praised Bernstein’s songs, noting them as amusing and reminiscent of Modest Petrovich Mussorgsky’s (1839–1881) Nursery Cycle (1872). The central debate that revolved around I Hate Music! and La Bonne Cuisine is whether or not they could be considered serious Art song cycles, owing to their inclusion of jazz and popular elements (Hicky, 2007). This debate plays a part in contributing to the ambiguity of *La Bonne Cuisine* as an Art song cycle and will be addressed in more detail in the close reading of Chapter 4.

2.3 Conclusion

With the understanding of the direct link between words and music in the compositional process of 19th century Art songs in place, in combination with a close listening and close reading of the text of *La Bonne Cuisine,* I will draw a comparison between Bernstein’s different influences, viz. the tradition of Art song composition and the contemporary innovation and eclecticism that drew him further from this tradition of composing. Such an understanding may, in turn, help to eliminate questions of interpretation and performance stemming from the ambiguity brought about in the interplay of words and music in the song cycle.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research approach

This study is based on the premise that the problem of ambiguity in *La Bonne Cuisine* affects the performer's interpretation thereof. In order to address this problem, I adopted a qualitative research approach within an interpretivist paradigm. According to Creswell and Poth (2018) "qualitative research begins with assumptions and the use of interpretive frameworks" (p. 81). They continue explaining that qualitative research collects data in a manner that is conscious of the people and places under study, is both subjective and objective, and organises its data into distinctive themes. It is the responsibility of a performer to make informed decisions about the interpretation of music. However, no two people will interpret any one piece of music in the same way. Thus, a qualitative approach applies here. The data used in this study – text, recordings, literature, and data obtained from practice-led observation – were interpreted by means of subjective knowledge generated by my own artistic practice in combination with a narrative literature review through which I that investigated how Bernstein's oeuvre is situated in history. This assisted me in understanding the impact that Bernstein's cultural and historical context had on his musical output. I have conducted a close reading of the text of *La Bonne Cuisine* that revolves around distinctive themes. The accounts offered cannot be measured or generalised and are descriptive in nature (Nieuwenhuis, as cited in Maree, 2016). This is reinforced by the writing of Hammond and Wellington (2013), who state that the data analysed in qualitative research cannot be represented in numerical form. Rather, qualitative research seeks to offer rich and descriptive insights into the research problem at hand (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

3.2 Research design

A research design is a detailed plan of how one can effectively address the research questions. Durrheim (2006) defines a research design as "a strategic framework, a plan that guides research activity to ensure that sound conclusions are reached" (p. 36). The research design acts as an intermediary between the author's research question and the inferences that arise from systematic or iterative observations inspired by that research question (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Durrheim, 2006). In this study, the research design entails a combination of hermeneutics and practice-led research.

Candy (2006) defines practice-led research as a form of research that concerns itself with the nature of practice, and which must arrive at new insights that provide operational significance for that practice. A practice-led research design is suited to this study as I drew on the insights gained from my personal artistic practice in order to describe patterns within the music that give rise to ambiguity. I further offered

my personal response to the dramatic nature of the musical experience, which, in turn, could help alleviate the ambiguity that challenges interpretation and performance. Candy (2006) explains that the results of practice-led research are fully described in text form. This aligns with the output of my own research study as I offer a discursive reading of the song cycle in the form of a written study. Crispin (2015) offers additional insight in stating that "artistic research is distinguished by the fact that the researchers are not only themselves artists, but also use artistic practice as an integral part of the research that they conduct" (p. 60). This process described by Crispin has been integral to my process of engendering knowledge as a classical singer, performer, and researcher.

Bacon (2014) explains that practice-led research offers qualitative and experiential understandings that are unquantifiable. He goes on to say that a practice-led research approach should be identifiable within the research questions of a study, and accordingly, the premise and research questions for this study arose from my own artistic practice. Noske (as cited in Bacon, 2014) describes the methodology of practice-led research using Boyd's metaphor of the "strange loop" (p. 10). As explained by Noske, this "strange loop" (p. 10) is a discursive and repetitive process involving a kind of creation on the part of the artist that arises from inner reflection. According to Noske, "this kind of inner reflection is familiar to the practice-led researcher, for whom the exegesis is both product and process" (p. 10). The metaphor of the strange loop in practice-led research could be likened to the idea of a hermeneutic circle within the field of hermeneutics, which is discussed in further detail in the next section. Practice-led research and hermeneutics are complementary and can be combined insofar as "hybridised approaches" (Stock, as cited in Bacon, 2014, p. 7) are commonplace within the field of practice-led research. With this in mind, an interpretivist paradigm assisted me in exploring the proposed research questions of this study. Nieuwenhuis (as cited in Maree, 2016) argues that interpretivism is "intrinsically related to hermeneutics" (p. 58), an idea which features in the research design of this study.

Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher[5] (1768–1834) defines hermeneutics as the study of the interpretation of texts or any form of symbolic communication (Rutt, 2006). He transformed traditional biblical hermeneutics into a more general application of hermeneutics that comprises many different kinds of text, where "text" could refer to anything from written words to ordinary conversation (Rutt, 2006). Eggebrecht and Jung (as cited in Sadie, 2001) continue Schleiermacher's line of thought insofar as their definition of the term text encompasses the use of words (poetry, *libretto*, or in the case of the research at hand, recipes) and music. Hermeneutics is thus an apt choice for this study, as I interpret the text (words and music) of Bernstein's *La Bonne Cuisine*. Kramer (2011) describes hermeneutics as "the art of interpretation" and states that "music is interpreted by being performed" (p. 1). He implies a natural link

[5] Schleiermacher is widely recognised as the "father of modern hermeneutics" (Rutt, 2006, p. 2).

between hermeneutics and music, which further implies a link between hermeneutics and practice-led research. The performer's interpretation is the result of reflection and an in-depth understanding of the selected work. Hermeneutical interpretation, which Kramer (2011) also refers to as "open interpretation" (p. 2), is an informed act of creativity and "is a regular activity done by any performing artist who is serious about communicating a message to the audience" (Stapela, 2015, p 10). Open interpretation is particularly helpful for the research at hand as it requires one not to simply reproduce what is given but rather to produce something new in the process of interpretation (Kramer, 2011), just as I will use ambiguity as a starting point, in the belief that a close reading will lead to new insights into the work. By way of a close reading, a performing artist can use hermeneutics as a vehicle to find meaning within the piece that she is studying. A discussion of a close reading will follow later in this chapter.

According to McCaffrey et al. (2012), an important element of a hermeneutical approach is "a sensitivity to history" (p. 215). In keeping with this line of thinking, the literature review and close textual reading consider the unique musico-historical context of Bernstein. The context is the background and circumstances surrounding the text that create the setting against which the text could or should be understood. Kramer (2004) argues that interpretation requires a combined approach between historical and formal theoretical analysis. He accuses purely theoretical analyses of being "unworldly" (p. 119) despite the fact that they focus on extremely worldly content – music. Kramer (2004) further explains that such analyses offer wordy descriptions with reference to concepts such as "pitch-class sets, neo-Riemannian spaces, middle ground motives, voice-leading transformations" (Kramer, 2004, p. 120), to name but a few. Bernstein (1981) argues that these wordy, analytic descriptions bespeak very little of the meanings of the music and offer less than what one could glean merely from an intentional listening. Kramer (2004) therefore encourages us to combine our theoretical analysis with "politics, ideology, society, and history" (p. 120). This is to say that only through a combined approach informed by both text (words and music) and context can we meaningfully interpret Bernstein's works.

3.3 Data collection

Practice-led research can be directly linked with hermeneutics. For any serious performing artist, the process of score study can be likened to a hermeneutic activity, carried out by way of a close reading. The performer reads and re-reads the text (music and words) repeatedly in order to achieve a detailed and nuanced understanding of that piece. My first study, or close reading, of *La Bonne Cuisine* was in preparation for my Master's recital in classical voice performance. From this experience I was able to collect data based on my practice-led observations. This included notes that I made in my score during

the process of studying *La Bonne Cuisine*, recordings (sound and video) of my performance of this work, and observations on the ambiguity expressed between the words and music.

Nimkulrat (2007) comments on the dual role of practitioner-researcher within practice-led research and stresses their equal importance. Performance practice put into action can assist in providing answers to research questions, just as my own practice informed the research questions and initial observations for the study at hand. Candy and Edmonds (2011) agree that "if the research leads primarily to new understandings about practice, it is practice-led" (p. 35). If this practice-led process is noted down, then the notes, such as those that I made in my score during the process of studying *La Bonne Cuisine*, become data that can be used as research material (Nimkulrat, 2007). According to Candy and Edmonds (2011), "within creative practice, the role of research is first to enhance personal effectiveness through conscious individual reflection; and second, to provide a more systematic understanding of how people interact with artworks" (p. 33). In this study I aim for a more nuanced interpretation of *La Bonne Cuisine*, and through this process I provide a systematic approach to coming to terms with the ambiguity of this work. Candy and Edmonds (2011) further explain that practice-led research "does not depend upon the creation of an artefact by practitioner researchers but is, nevertheless, founded in their practice" (p. 37). The observations I arrived at after my first study of this work informed the themes in my close reading, by means of which I revisited the ambiguity of Bernstein's *La Bonne Cuisine.*

Further data was collected via a narrative literature review. The purpose of a literature review is to critically engage the literature relating to your topic in order to situate the proposed study within the broader field of literature (Danson & Arshad, as cited in O'Gorman & MacIntosh, 2015). Jesson et al. (2011) further state that a literature review ensures there is sufficient content to draw on to answer the study's research questions, and to point out any gaps in the literature related to the research topic. There are commonly three types of literature review: narrative, systematic, and interrogative. I selected a narrative literature review as it requires the author to choose material that offers original, valuable information and opinions that relate to the research themes, and ultimately assist the author in offering answers to the research questions (Jesson et al., 2011).

Primary sources that I evaluated for the purpose of this research include the music score of *La Bonne Cuisine* (Bernstein, 1947/1988), the selected recipes from Emile Dumont's *La Bonne Cuisine Française*, and Bernstein's personal translations of these recipes that are set to music. Secondary sources include published books, peer-reviewed academic articles, and articles sourced from digital platforms.

Triangulation in qualitative research, as explained by Nieuwenhuis (cited in Maree, 2016), involves multiple methods of data collection. To supplement the data collected via the primary and secondary sources explored in the literature review, together with my own artistic practice, I analysed the interpretations of three reputable recordings of *La Bonne Cuisine*. First, a rendition by Jennie Tourel, *mezzo* soprano, and Bernstein himself on the piano (Bernstein, 1998). I selected this version as Bernstein (1947/1988) annotates the score of *La Bonne Cuisine* with the words "For Jennie Tourel. The only begetter of these songs" (p. 23). This piqued my interest and I decided to explore their combined interpretation of this piece. The second recording is by soprano Patricia Petitbon and pianist Susan Manoff (Petitbon, 2004). I believe selecting this rendition is of value to the study because Petitbon is a specialised singer of Baroque and modern works, as well as a home language French speaker, and therefore her interpretation could offer valuable insight into the work. The third recording offers a more recent performance presented by Fiona McGown, *mezzo* soprano, and Célia Onéto-Bensaïd, piano (France Musique, 2019). This recording assisted me in my close reading as it is a video and sound recording of a live performance of the song cycle, thus allowing me to analyse the performers' respective stage presences and the audience's reactions.

3.4 Close reading

To provide answers to the research questions, the data was analysed by conducting a close reading of the selected text in conjunction with a close listening of the selected recordings of that text. A close reading, according to Beehler (1988), involves "reading a text closely so as to squeeze every ounce of significance from it" (p. 39). This is reinforced by Vieira and de Queiroz (2017), who describe the process whereby the reader re-reads the selected text in order to arrive at a multiplicity of interpretations and a nuanced understanding of that text. Vieira and de Queiroz (2017) further describe this process of re-reading and re-listening as a hermeneutic circle. It is a circular, repetitive process by which one reads a text from multiple perspectives in order to "systematically describe meaning" (Vieira & de Queiroz, 2017, p. 8). Blum (1993) asserts that this involves the active and creative participation of the reader. The reader re-writes the text as they read and interpret it. Agawu (1997) encourages the interpreter to make use of vivid language when describing these nuanced understandings to avoid colourless descriptions of musical meanings. A close reading thus involves the author, or interpreter, conveying not only the literal meaning of the text, but also the meaning of the text as a more personal interpretation (Kramer, 2011). Kramer (2011) encourages performers not only to describe the patterns within music, but also to describe their personal response to the drama and vigour of the musical experience. He further recommends that interpreters make use of formal theoretical analysis in conjunction with hermeneutical analysis in order to make their descriptions of music true to their worldly, historical origins.

The observations I made through my own artistic practice informed the themes which guide my close reading of *La Bonne Cuisine.* With each reading I closely observe and describe an element of Bernstein's compositional language (melody, rhythm, and harmony) as it plays out in *La Bonne Cuisine.* I examine musical elements such as his:

- Melodic construction set within a wide range (B3–A5);
- Use of wide or disjoint interval jumps contrasted with scale-like passages;
- Treatment of *tempi* – extremely fast *tempi* (with peak tempo of 208 beats per minute) with rapid fluctuations towards slower *tempi*;
- Incorporation of shifting time signatures and syncopation;
- Complex rhythmic motifs;
- Incorporation of exotic elements;
- Use of vernacular references within his serious Art songs;
- Incorporation of dissonance or use of non-harmonic notes;
- Treatment of English and French in setting recipes to music.

With this theoretical map in place, I isolated these musical elements in each Art song and placed them in comparison with the traditional approach of Art song composition. In doing so, I highlighted the incongruities that appear in the text and which contribute to the ambiguity of *La Bonne Cuisine.* I then contextualised these elements in terms of Bernstein's eclecticism, accessibility, and musico-historical context in order to navigate through the ambiguity of the text.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter provided an in-depth explanation of the methodological procedures used in this qualitative study, with the intention of systematically understanding the ambiguity in Leonard Bernstein's *La Bonne Cuisine*. The study is situated within an interpretivist paradigm and makes use of a research design that combines practice-led and hermeneutic methodologies. Data was collected via practice-led observations, close listening to reputable recordings, and a literature review that situates the study within a broader field of literature. Finally, I described the process of close reading, which provides the foundation for my inquiry in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4: CLOSE READING

This chapter presents the close reading of Leonard Bernstein's song cycle *La Bonne Cuisine*, focusing specifically on how ambiguity is experienced in the interplay of the words and music. Throughout the reading I contextualise this ambiguity via two concepts that are at the heart of Bernstein's compositional language, namely accessibility and eclecticism, in order to offer a meaningful interpretation of this idiosyncratic composition.

Bernstein (1981) believed that purely theoretical analysis tells you little more about music than what you could already glean from intently listening to it. In accordance with Bernstein's view, I not only look closely at the structure and patterns within the music, but, as Kramer (2004) suggests, I also describe my personal response to the spectacle and vitality of the musical experience. This kind of imagery – telling a story, bringing in everyday elements in relation to organised sounds – is what makes music accessible and is the kind of thing that brings music to life for performers and audiences alike.

Throughout the reading I describe the structure and patterns within the music score. These descriptions will be marked in sections or with bar numbers for easy reference. The full music score is provided in Appendix A. Moreover, all music terms or indications that are given in Italian, and directly relate to expression or interpretation, will be translated in footnotes throughout the close reading. All other Italian music terms will be translated and provided in the glossary, Appendix E.

4.1 *La Bonne Cuisine*

4.1.1 *Plum Pudding*

In Bernstein's *La Bonne Cuisine* dessert is served first, in the form of plum pudding. This decision points to Bernstein's ability to twist and transform the typical, whether it be music or otherwise, into something as delightful and unexpected as serving dessert before your main course. This approach to creativity, that of the typically atypical, was commonplace during this time in history (Burkholder et al., 2010; Latham, 2002). The French text of *Plum Pudding* is adapted from the original, larger recipe by Émile Dumont. The recipe was published under the heading *Met Anglais* (English dishes) and is the only dessert dish in the song cycle. *Plum Pudding* can be divided in three sections (ABA' form) with a tonal structure as follows:

Table 1

Form and tonal structure of Plum Pudding

Section		Bar number	Key signature
A	a	1-5	E Minor
	b	6-9	
	a'	10-14	
	b'	15-19	
B		20-27	D♭ Major
A'		27-32	E Major

Plum Pudding, section Aa (bars 1–5) commences in common time with a simple, static accompaniment consisting of rapid tonic octaves played *staccato* and *piano* in the left hand of the piano. These octaves serve to emphasize the beat and solidify the key of E minor. Bernstein never provides the method for preparing *Plum Pudding*, but rather a mere list of ingredients. However, the sound created by the steady, rhythmic pulse heard in the piano reminds one of the steady beating actions required for making batter. In this way Bernstein conjures up the sound of food preparation into the music without ever offering the steps to do it yourself**.** Bernstein provides the indication "*allegro molto, matematico*[6]*"* and sets this Art song to the speed of a crotchet at 192 beats per minute (bpm). If performed *a tempo*, the work lasts approximately 45 seconds in length. Above this metronomic pulse, the right hand enters with a *sforzando,* sustained tonic chord, in second inversion (bar 2). Bernstein elects to add a fourth to the standard tonic chord creating a subtle dissonance and fuller tone colour. I argue that Bernstein's incorporation of dissonance here could be construed as programmatic, depicting the performer's inner feelings. This interpretation arose from imagining myself as a chef, someone usually behind the scenes, feeling somewhat awkward or uncomfortable relaying her recipes to actual people (Maxwell, 1955). One could further infer that the dissonance here is utilised to create an intriguing harmonic colour, in the spirit of the Neo-classical traditions of Bernstein's early 20th century contemporaries (Latham, 2002; Laird & Schiff, 2012).

The steady, mathematical pulse in the left hand of the piano is then antagonised by the entrance of the nervously excited vocal line of section Aa. The vocal line here is indicated to be sung *preciso e senza*

[6] Very fast, mathematically (transl.).

espressione[7] (rather grimly) and consists primarily of leaps resulting in a certain angularity to its melodic construction. This vocal line consists mainly of five pitches (E4, G4, A4, B4, F♯4) that almost, but do not quite align with the notes of the E minor pentatonic scale. In my experience studying and performing this work, the opening motif challenges free phonation because it moves across the *primo passaggio*[8] of the soprano voice. Miller (2000) asserts that this is a problematic area in many, if not most female voices. He goes on to explain that it is essential for a singer to understand the effects of register events or *passaggi* on tone production; if the appropriate adjustments in breath energy and laryngeal function are not made when approaching the *passaggio*, it can result in a "weak or unstable" tone (Miller, 2000, p. 116). Further difficulty arises for the singer because this section needs to be sung at an extreme pace, thus requiring the singer to maintain forward, bright, and light articulation and tone. Singing in this way creates a speech-like effect.

The rhythm of the vocal line in section Aa (bars 1–5) consists of a series of quaver notes. Bernstein is known for composing groups of two or three quavers in irregular patterns, an influence traceable to Copland (Laird & Lin, 2015). The vocal line here perfectly exemplifies this technique, as the first note of each three-note motif falls on a different sub-division of the beat, thus displaying Bernstein's innovative incorporation of syncopation. This challenges effective ensemble work because only when the vocal line and piano part move together can Bernstein's syncopation truly be heard. When the respective parts are heard in isolation the rhythms appear deceptively simple. The vocal line in bars 1–5 is further complicated by the *tenuto* accents. The shifting *tenuti* result in the vocal line transforming from common time into quasi-compound metre, while the piano remains in 4/4. This completely erases bar lines for the voice and creates a driving, relentless line whenever the steps of the recipe are sung. It results in an unsettling feeling for the singer, which I interpreted as the nervous, uncomfortable feelings of the chef who rapidly reads out the list of required ingredients for her recipe as she attempts to talk about it instead of cooking it. The pattern of the opening motif is broken in bar 5 where Bernstein introduces a single bar in 2/4 time. The use of alternating metre was commonplace in the early 20th century and can be traced to the works of Stravinsky (Laird & Schiff, 2012). It is another element that further challenges effective ensemble work between voice and piano. Bernstein writes this sudden change five times within this short work. Laird and Lin (2015) would describe this as an attempt "to keep the listener off balance or delighted by the music's sheer spirit" (p. 28).

[7] Precisely and without expression (transl.) Bernstein himself provided the annotation "rather grimly" (Bernstein, 1947/1988, p. 23).

[8] The *primo passaggio* of the soprano voice lies around E♭4. The *primo passaggio* occurs around the transition between the low, chest register (G3 to E♭4) and the middle-low, mixed register (E♭4 to C♯5) (Miller 2000).

Section Ab (bars 6–9) demonstrates Bernstein's ability to develop entire works from small melodic motifs. The piano now adopts the relentless vocal line, maintaining the same pitches and rhythm, but played *legatissimo*, leaving out the *tenuti*. The vocal line in this section is now calmer, in accordance with Bernstein's annotation "with sudden colour", and offers either an exact repetition of the French words or alternates with quips added by Bernstein in the English translation, such as "Be sure they are juicy" (bars 6–9) and "Use Spry or Crisco" (bars 15–18). In this moment, Bernstein suggests foods known to Americans, which makes the recipe more relatable and accessible to them, as opposed to the French recipe, which only offers a repetition of the original French ingredients. The fact that the cook's own internal thoughts are sung far more lyrically, *legato*, and deliberately written to sound calmer, quieter, and slower, cannot be ignored. It is almost as if the chef loses herself for a moment, thinking only of the ingredients, remembering her passion for food and temporarily forgetting she is speaking to an audience. The development of such small motifs in the melodic construction of a composition can be traced all the way back to the Baroque period and is a revered compositional tool of the Western European classical cannon (Burkholder et al., 2010). Composing in this manner highlights Bernstein's desire to be remembered as a serious music composer (Berger, 1996).

Section B (bars 20–27) of *Plum Pudding* begins in the key of D♭ major, but with the tonic omitted in both the piano and vocal parts as they perform their motif in unison, this time without *tenuti*. This somewhat liquifies the music just as the recipe transitions from solid foods to liquids. In this middle section Bernstein again makes use of shifting metre. However, in this case, instead of returning to common time after the 2/4 bar, he introduces 3/2 time. Within this section Bernstein employs a wide vocal range, with the voice constantly moving up and down across the *secondo passaggio*[9] without a great amount of rhythmic freedom. The transition from section B to section A' in bar 26 constitutes the climax of the work, marked with a *crescendo* into the highest pitch of the entire song cycle, B5. This is immediately followed by two transient rests that allow the singer to prepare the vocal mechanism for a *pianissimo* entrance on E4. This downward transition, B5 to E4, is the widest interval in the song cycle. Section A', extended by one bar, offers the same treatment of text, melody, and rhythm of section A, now sung *pianissimo*. One could infer that Bernstein wrote this dramatic interval and dynamic shift to reflect that the ingredients sung in section A' serve as the figurative cherry on top of the cake, those secret ingredients that make *Plum Pudding* so delightful – spices.

[9] The *secondo passaggio* lies around F♯5. It occurs around the transition between the upper-middle, mixed voice (C♯5 to F♯ 5) and the head voice (G5 to C♯6) (Miller 2000).

The opening and concluding sections of *Plum Pudding*, as described above, present a number of unusual elements for an Art song, and this gives rise to a sense of ambiguity in the performer who strives to make informed interpretive decisions. The first uncharacteristic element is Bernstein's treatment of the French and English texts in the vocal line. I interpreted this as a form of *recitativo* writing because, like *recitativo*, the vocal lines of sections Aa, Aa' and A' of *Plum Pudding* are set within the narrow speaking range of the voice. Further, neither the French text nor English text offers the performer or audience any emotion-filled words, but instead offers simple instructions (English text) or a mere list of ingredients (French text). I argue that it makes sense for Bernstein to have written theses sections in this manner because *recitativo*, most commonly found within the operatic genre, is used as a means of narration or propelling the action of the story forward, in between emotion-filled *arias* (Burkholder et al., 2010). It is of interest to note that this *recitativo*-like material appears three times within this Art song, always when a new action is offered in the English text, namely: "Now first" (bar 1), "And then" (bar 10), "Now" (bar 27). However, ambiguity arises because Bernstein is not being steadfast to the tradition of *recitativo* writing. An important element of *recitativo* is the setting of words to rhythms that enhance expression and reflect the idiomatic speech inflection of that language (Burkholder et al., 2010). In the abovementioned sections of *Plum Pudding,* Bernstein elected to punctuate both the English and French texts with shifting *tenuto* accents to create a quasi-compound time that gives rise to syncopation within the line. As a result of this, neither language is enunciated with the correct word emphasis. This highlights a significant difference between Bernstein's Art song composition and the tradition of 19th century *Lied* and *mélodie,* namely that Art song composition was inspired by, and embodied poetic content (Sams & Johnson, 2001), and strove to be sensitive to the idiomatic pronunciation of that poetry (Tunley & Noske, 2001). Contrariwise, *La Bonne Cuisine* was inspired by a set of recipes and is not composed in a manner that is sensitive to the idiomatic pronunciation of either language.

Another unusual element of *Plum Pudding* is the sheer speed at which the text needs to be sung. The words, usually poetry, of Art songs are significant in themselves in order to transport meaning to both performers and audiences; while the music enhances the emotional content of the words (Sams & Johnson, 2001). *Plum Pudding* is set at such a speed and with such unusual word emphasis as a result of the rhythms that the audience, whether English or French, would struggle to make heads or tails of what is being sung. Further, Bernstein encourages the performer to sing precisely and without expression, or "rather grimly", whereas Art songs are typically sung with significant expression and emotional integrity (Moore, 1984). This led me, as a performer, to believe that this work is more akin to a technical study than an Art song. These unusual or incongruous elements in *Plum Pudding* give rise to the ambiguity I experienced in my interpretation and performance thereof. An informed performer,

however, can make sense of this ambiguity through an understanding of Bernstein's desire to make his music accessible.

At the heart of all of Bernstein's compositions is his desire to communicate with the audience (Laird & Lin, 2015). He does this by loading his music with ideas that nurture accessibility. In *Plum Pudding*, Bernstein achieves this through the use of humour and wit – a compositional device he more commonly reserved for his Broadway compositions. Central to the idea of wit is the notion of speed (Bernstein & Seltzer, 1970), which is especially at play in the opening of *Plum Pudding*. As a result of the sheer speed of the piece, in conjunction with Bernstein's use of odd, shifting accents, the French and English texts transform into tongue twisters akin to those in the works of Gilbert and Sullivan. Tongue twisters are defined as phrases that are intended to be difficult to say at speed (Oxford University Press, 2013). Furthermore, these phrases tend to lend themselves towards mispronunciation, confusion, and non-sense, "and non-sense is the loveliest thing there is. It makes us laugh" (Bernstein & Seltzer, 1970, p. 120). This creates a humorous effect and an air of excitement in the audience in their anticipation of potential mispronunciation. Humour is also achieved in this opening section because the technical difficulty of the music is incongruous with the whimsical nature of tongue twisters. With these considerations in mind, the performer can focus her attention on cultivating humour in lieu of the serious emotional performance that would traditionally be required of Art songs. Through my experience, I realised that a composition as unusual as *Plum Pudding* requires a certain measure of acting skills, such as the use of exaggerated facial expressions and gestures to further promote humour in the performance of this work. This, in turn, makes the music more readily accessible to the audience. Furthermore, I noted that while the humour of this Art song makes it accessible to an audience, it gives rise to a feeling of ambiguity in me as a performer, who acts as the butt of this musical joke, and needs to juggle the humorous elements of this work while simultaneously negotiating the serious technicality of the music.

4.1.2 *Queues de Boeuf* (Ox-tails)

The first of the main courses presented in *La Bonne Cuisine* is the dish *Queues de Boeuf* (Ox-tails) which can be found under the beef section of Émile Dumont's cookbook. *Queues de Boeuf* can be divided into three sections (ABA' form) with a form and tonal structure as follows:

Table 2

Form and tonal structure of Queues de Boeuf (Ox-tails)

Section		Bars	Key Signature	Shifts in Metre
A	a	1–7	C Major	6/8
	b	8–16		6/8 – 3/8 – 6/8
B	a	17–20		6/8 – 9/8
	b	20–28		9/8 – 6/8(3/4) – 9/8 – 6/8(3/4)
A'		29–36		6/8

Section Aa (bars 1–7) begins with a two-bar piano introduction in 6/8 time. In the right hand, a series of chromatic pitches (C–A–A♭–E♭–D–D♭) descend across six semiquavers in beat one, which slur and resolve to the tonic (C) on a quaver note in beat two. These notes are followed by two quaver rests that complete the bar. However, the final tonic quaver (on C) is tied to the quaver rests that follow. This grants the pianist the freedom to sustain the final quaver fractionally longer than is notated, creating a subtle pianistic effect, as if the piano is waiting for a response before playing on. This opening motif repeats six times before a variation is presented, again pointing to Bernstein's ability to develop entire works from small melodic motifs. I argue that this descending chromatic line, followed by rests each time, evokes a questioning and even somewhat accusatory atmosphere within the music.

This interpretation makes sense if we briefly look back on the history of oxtail. African slaves were fed the offcuts of meat thought to be unappealing by plantation owners (Hill, 2008). As a result of this, people believed that eating the tail of an ox was below them, a disdainful dish to consume. However, as gourmands have discovered these offcuts for themselves, oxtail has grown in popularity throughout the world and is now considered a delicacy (Hill, 2008). Alternatively, one could also interpret the opening motif as a musical metaphor of the swaying of the tail of an ox. In my performance of this piece, I incorporated a fluid arm gesture, reminiscent of a flicking tail, so as to assist the audience in hearing this musical metaphor at play in the music.

The voice enters in the upbeat to bar three, indicated to be sung *mezzo piano* and *legato e dolce*[10]. While the piano repeats its downward motif the vocal line slowly ascends on the words "Are you too proud to serve your friends an Ox-tail stew? / *La queue de boeuf n'est pas un mets à dédaigner*" (bars 2–7). The melody set to these words begins and ends on C an octave apart and centres around the pitches F–G–

[10] Smooth and sweetly (transl.).

E♭–A, all of which appear on the strongest beats of the bar, which in turn emphasises the words “you” (bar 3), “proud” (bar 4), “serve” (bar 5), and “Ox” (bar 6). By emphasising the aforementioned words in an ascending fashion, Bernstein is able to hint at his personal feelings about this dish – that one should be proud to serve oxtail.

The questioning melody as described above contains the blues note E♭, found in the C major blues scale. The incorporation of blues notes is commonplace in Bernstein’s oeuvre and is a significant part of what makes his music accessible (Laird & Lin, 2015). Blues notes developed from the tradition of jazz and singing the blues. These chromatic notes are often associated with such emotions as sadness, pain, or discomfort (Morris, 2010). This blues note is effective in the opening melody as it is set on the word “serve” (bar 5), which suggests the discomfort one may feel if you have to serve your friends such an unusual dish as oxtail. Furthermore, the incorporation of blues notes here contributes to the uncomfortable, questioning feeling evoked in the piano introduction.

Typically, within Art song composition, composers tend to make use of tonic-dominant (I–V) intervals or cadences to ask questions and the reverse (V–I) to answer them (Schmidt-Jones, 2007). They do so because resolving the harmony to the tonic provides clarity and conclusion for the listener (Schmidt-Jones, 2007). However, in *Queues de Boeuf* the questioning melody ends on the tonic (IV–I), thus creating a certain ambiguity or incongruity between the words and music. In an instance like this, it is up to the vocal colour and enunciation of the performer to make the music sound more questioning, especially if she elects to sing the text in English. In my performance of this work, I achieved this by leaning into the word “you” (bar 3), to make the line sound more interrogatory.

The English text that follows in section Ab (bars 8–16) confirms this as Bernstein answers his own question. He composed a series of descending chromatic lines for the piano and indicated *accelerando* and *crescendo* that build in intensity until the entrance of the voice singing “You’re wrong!” (bar 8). The vocal line continues as it steadily ascends towards A5 (bar 14) on the text “For if you have enough of them, you’ll find you can make a fine *ragout*” (bars 9–16). The highest pitch of the line falls on the word “fine” and is marked with a crescendo. I imagined here that our chef starts losing her temper somewhat at the very thought that the audience might be uncomfortable eating oxtail stew, and in a fluster yells out at the top of her range that the dish is really quite fine.

I argue that the chef’s annoyance continues into the next section as the vocal line in section Ba falls between D♭4 and F♭4 and should be sung “darkly” (bar 17) over the text “Remove the tails which you have used to make the stew”. This is particularly challenging for a soprano, because this section falls within the low chest register and requires transitions over the *primo passaggio* of the voice (Miller,

2000). Within this section, and unlike that of *Plum Pudding*, Bernstein adheres to both the English and French word emphasis in his rhythmic setting of the respective texts, akin to the traditions of *Lied* and *mélodie* composition. The piano in section Ba (bars 17–20) plays rolling, chromatic, scale-like passages in contrary motion that repeatedly slur towards a hard accent on D♭. The density of the chromaticism, particularly in contrary motion, adds to the opaque, dark quality of the music here, and further reflects the angst felt by the chef. Alternatively, it is possible that Bernstein composed this almost atonal section to evince the rich, dark colour of oxtail stew, with each accent representing the chef lifting a tail from the pot.

Section B introduces a number of metre shifts in the time signature (see Table 2). These shifting and/or overlapping time signatures vacillate between groupings of two and three beats, which again reflects the influence of Bernstein's modern contemporaries, Stravinsky and Copland (Laird & Lin, 2015). By overlaying groupings of two and three beats Bernstein creates cross-rhythms within the music. Giger (2009) explains that the "rhythmic interest of twentieth-century music arises from the fascination with jazz and that jazz has not only bequeathed new rhythms to music, but . . . taught composers the handling of cross-rhythms" (p. 317). These cross-rhythms create a broadening within the bar and allow the singer more time to express the words "with relish and charm" (as indicated in bar 25).

Overall, the ambiguity I experienced in my interpretation and performance of *Queues de Boeuf* stems from Bernstein's modern rhythmic and harmonic approach, combined with his choice of vernacular jazz elements, all while simultaneously making use of musical metaphor that paints an unexpected picture of an oxtail recipe.

4.1.3 *Tavouk Gueunksis*

Bernstein offers the audience something sweet and unusual within the third song of *La Bonne Cuisine,* namely the Turkish dish *Tavouk Gueunksis*. This dish does not appear in Dumont's original cookbook *La Bonne Cuisine Française,* but rather appears in the Turkish pastry and sweets section of his revised cookbook, *Bonne Cuisine* (Food and Wine Mavens, 2013). This exotic recipe describes a chicken dish prepared in the style of *Mahallebi*, a rice porridge prepared with milk and sugar. The form and tonal structure of *Tavouk Gueunksis* is outlined in the table below:

Table 3

Form and tonal structure of Tavouk Gueunksis:

Section		Bars	Key signature
Introduction		1–3	C Major
A	a	4–12	E♭ Major
	b	13–29	C Major
Coda		30–32	C Major

A mere two minutes into this song cycle and the audience has already ingested two full courses! Bernstein offers both the audience and performers a moment to breathe by setting the tempo of the introduction to a more manageable *Adagio* (crotchet = 63 bpm). This slower tempo feels expansive as compared to the *tempi* set for the first two songs. While the introduction commences in C major, the opening melody neither begins nor ends on C. The piano begins with *marcato* octaves on the 7th note of the major scale (B), marked with strong accents and preceded by grace notes on the same pitch (bars 1–2). These *marcato* notes are then complemented by the entrance of the voice indicated to be sung *forte* and *declamando*[11]. Bernstein's English words here offer his personal reflections on the recipe: "*Tavouk Gueunksis,* so Oriental!" (Introduction) and "*Tavouk Gueunksis,* a Turkish heaven!" (Coda); the French words remain the same in both the Introduction and Coda: "*Tavouk Gueunksis, poitrine de poule"*[12].

I argue that Bernstein composed the music of the Introduction and Coda to reflect or paint his personal reflections, as identified above. The slower tempo and wide chords in the music here evince a *secco recitativo* feel which allows the singer to express more rhythmic freedom to heighten the expression of the words. In McGown's performance (France Musique, 2019) she achieves this effect by singing a *tenuto* over each syllable in addition to creating a full, impassioned or declamatory tone as she announces the name of the dish "Tavouk Gueunksis", enunciating each consonant with intent. This expresses to the audience the respect that should be afforded this exotic dish, and hints at the serious atmosphere to follow in Section A. The serious tone is completely inverted after the breath mark in bar two, where the accompaniment offers warmer major chords in inversion while the vocal line ascends in a *legato* fashion marked with a *decrescendo*. The notes themselves reflect that Bernstein views this dish as a simply heavenly creation. Both McGown and her collaborative pianist Onéto-Bensaïd (France Musique, 2019)

[11] Declamatory (transl.)
[12] It is interesting to note that in Jennie Tourel and Leonard Bernstein's recording of this piece, Tourel elects to translate the French directly in the introduction and coda as opposed to singing Bernstein's idiomatic translation. Tourel sings "*Tavouk Gueunksis* with breast of chicken". (Bernstein, 1998)

further cultivate a heavenly atmosphere here through the use of serene facial expressions over the breath mark. Both singer and pianist have the unspoken power to trick, or at least lead the audience to a certain belief or conclusion about what something should mean through physical actions, such as facial expressions, gestures, or movements. Bernstein prepares the audience for the modulation to come as the final chord of the introduction is the tonic chord of the new key of Section Aa, namely, E♭ major.

The expansive, calm atmosphere cultivated in the Introduction is dramatically contrasted in the whole of Section A that follows. Bernstein indicates this section to be performed a*llegretto alla Turca* (crotchet = 100 bpm). The instruction *allegretto alla Turca*, meaning briskly in the Turkish way, was made famous in the Classical period through the works of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791) and Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827) (Badura-Skoda, 2001). Perhaps one of the most memorable of these Turkish-inspired works is the third movement of Mozart's *Piano Sonata No. 11 in A major* (±1780) (Schwarm, 2016). This sonata presents rhythmic elements that are akin to a military march, with a two-beat bar and binary rhythm (Schwarm, 2016). Turkish marches originally developed during the rise of the Ottoman Empire and were commonly heard in the *Janissary*[13] music bands of that time (Koskoff, 2008). It became commonplace in the Classical period for serious Western classical compositions to include references to exotic music, and as such these exotic sounds and their respective associations were assimilated into Western classical music (Badura-Skoda, 2001). Bernstein's choice to compose *Tavouk Gueunksis* in an *alla Turca* style demonstrates his ability to remain steadfast to the Western European classical tradition that he adored, while simultaneously being open to exotic, eclectic influences.

Bernstein's adapts this *alla Turca* march in his own unique way. He used a "brittle" (bar 4), repetitive rhythmic motif played by the left hand on the piano in the odd metre of 5/8. This rhythm could be likened to the sounds of a *tambour* drum pattern. Bernstein makes use of the grouping pattern 2+3 here, setting two semiquavers and one quaver over beats one and two, followed by two semiquavers and two quavers across beats three, four, and five. This can once again be understood as a compositional influence that Bernstein drew from his modern contemporaries Copland and Stravinsky (Laird & Lin, 2015). The right hand emphasises this brittle motif with grace-notes on each strong beat (1 and 3). This fast-passed note can be likened to the sound of *shwam*, a wind instrument that typically appeared in *Janissary* military bands. The quick sound movements created through the use of grace notes create a shrill sound that embellishes the rhythm and makes the music sound more intimidating. In my experience, a feeling of irony arises when singing above a two-beat march-like structure that has been augmented across five beats. The very idea of co-ordinating a large group of soldiers in a five-count march is far from sensical,

[13] The Janissary bands of the Ottoman empire are thought to be the oldest variety of military, marching bands. These bands were noted for their use of powerful percussion and shrill winds (Koskoff, 2008).

but it does afford the audience an opportunity to giggle. This irony arises because Bernstein is making use of the traditional stylistic devices of *alla Turca,* a musical form which is supposed to be very serious, but for a completely different effect – relaying a recipe. This points towards a sense of ambiguity at play in this section, arising from the fact that Turkish marches were composed during times of war in order to intimidate enemies and ignite passion amongst marching soldiers. There is incongruity at play here, because Bernstein composes a war-like march over such a silly text as "Put a chicken to boil, young and tender and sweet; then in the Arab manner you slice it up into pieces." The indication "brittle" in the accompaniment further undermines the *alla Turca* style, as the piano is imitating a war drum which should sound strong and powerful, not brittle and therefore weak.

The steady rumbling piano line propels Section A forward like soldiers marching to war. Above this rumbling motif the vocal line enters with the text "Put a chicken to boil"; this line is punctuated throughout with strong, harsh accents. I interpreted these to be sung in a menacing manner with a darker tone colour to reflect the atmosphere created within the piano part. The words to follow, "young and tender and sweet" (bar 7), are mostly set to the same pitches, but with the strong accents removed to reflect the soft, sweet texture of well-cooked chicken. Section Aa ends with the text "then in the Arab manner you slice it up into pieces" (bars 8–12). Here Bernstein makes use of two word-painting devices: firstly, a grace-note over the word "Arab" to reflect the singing style of Arabic cultures, or alternatively, to imitate a *shwam*; and secondly, he punctuates this line with *staccati* that could reflect the quick chopping actions of a knife cutting through meat.

Section Ab returns to C major and builds on what has just been heard. The piano part soldiers on with its brittle rhythm, but this time both the vocal and piano parts are composed with increased chromaticism. This results in a powerful growing line that reaches its climax in bar 22 over the word "*Mahallebi*". Up to this point I cultivated a stage presence and tone colour that is reflective of intimidating war chants, even though I was singing about a delicious chicken dish. The harmony over *Mahallebi* introduces warmer tones, which is appropriate because we have moved from savoury chicken to the sweet porridge of *Mahallebi*. The vocal line here is indicated to be sung *pianissimo subito*, with the instruction to "hold [the note] as long as possible, but not beyond indication" (bar 25), while the pianist plays out an embellished version of the vocal melody of Aa. I elected to embellish this long-sustained note with quick, ascending flicks or glides into the upper register of my voice to mimic the sounds of a *shwam* that were previously heard in the accompaniment. The incongruity that results from singing a recipe over a war-like rhythm creates humour within the music. Given Bernstein's proclivity for accessibility, it is arguable that this kind of humour was meant to make this music more accessible to his audiences.

It is worthwhile to note that Bernstein composed this song after World War II. By allowing, and even encouraging American audiences to laugh at the sound of a war march in the wake of the horror experienced during the World Wars, he presents them with an opportunity to heal. This thinking is reinforced by a quote from the Leonard Bernstein Office (n.d.) on Bernstein's understanding of the humour of music: "Humour is the touchstone of art. We release our emotions through participating in humour just as surely as we release them through participating in art, through laughter we release hostility, aggression, fear, embarrassment, loneliness…"

4.1.4 *Civet à Toute Vitesse* (Rabbit at Top Speed)

Bernstein concludes *La Bonne Cuisine* in a flurry with his exciting rendition of *Civet à Toute Vitesse* (Rabbit at Top Speed). He borrowed the recipe for a savoury rabbit stew from the game section of *Dumont's* cookbook. From my perspective as a performer, this song appears the least ambiguous, owing to the fact that Bernstein's eclecticism seamlessly and successfully merges with traditions in Art song composition, and this is contrary to what I found in the first three pieces of the song cycle. Ambiguity is further alleviated in *Civet à Toute Vitesse* insofar as Bernstein offers performers a great number of indications and expressive markings throughout the score that aid them in their interpretations.

Civet à Toute Vitesse is the only song in *La Bonne Cuisine* that is through-composed. I argue that it is easier, most of the time, to find new interpretations for a non-repetitive, constantly changing and evolving text (words and music). When interpreting *Civet à Toute Vitesse,* performers are able to look to the changing music as it flows alongside the words of the recipe in order to make informed interpretive decisions. I believe that it can safely be said that Bernstein would agree with this approach of making sense of his music as he himself believed that organised sound is always in itself supercharged with meaning (Bernstein, 1981).

Table 4

Form and tonal structure of Civet à Toute Vitesse:

Section		Bars	Tonal Centre
Introduction		1–2	E
A	a	3–9	
	a'	10–17	
B	a	18–31	
	b	31–39	
C		40–47	

The whole song revolves around the tonal centre E and is mostly composed in 4/8 time. The work commences with a two-bar piano introduction, played *presto* (quaver = 208 bpm). Bernstein indicates the score here with *martellato*[14], instructing the pianist to hammer out a series of jolty chords in a descending motif, set over wide leaps. This motif, played *forte*, cuts through the silence as if the chef, dropped her pots and pans to the floor upon the realisation that she would be receiving "a sudden guest" (bar 3) for a meal. This two-bar motif is used as a punctuating device at the end of vocal phrases, perhaps in order to portray the chef's nervousness and somewhat clumsy actions as she prepares a meal in a flustered mental state.

The vocal line of Section A begins in bar 3. In my performance of this work I included a loud gasp over the upbeat to bar three, just before jumping into an explanation of how to prepare a rabbit stew in "no time" (bar 6–7). This creates a more dramatic effect inasmuch as the chef is explaining how to prepare this meal so quickly that she barely stops to breathe. The vocal line here is indicated to be sung "breathlessly" and *piano.* I observed in Tourel's (Bernstein, 1998) English rendition that she opted to take this indication literally, creating a thinner, breathy tone. It can be very effective when singing classical music to use tone colours other than those deemed good classical vocal technique, for special effects. Furthermore, it is understandable that the chef would speak at a rambling speed, in a breathless manner, given that she is flustered at the arrival of a sudden guest. In McGown's (France Musique, 2019) French rendition she maintains a warmer, more balanced *chiaroscuro* tone colour; this makes sense in that McGown is a *mezzo soprano* and would naturally have more warmth in her voice within her mixed middle range. She creates a feeling of breathlessness via sharper breaths between phrases. Petitbon (2004) also opts to maintain a warmer *chiaroscuro* tone colour but sings the text faster than both Tourel and McGown, thus relying on her tempo to create the feeling of breathlessness.

Keeping up with the sheer speed of this work is a feat in and of itself as Bernstein sets a single note per syllable in both the English and French recipes. This results in *Civet à Toute Vitesse* sounding much like a patter song[15], once again demonstrating the accessibility of Bernstein's music through his incorporation of Broadway influences within serious Art songs. Contrary to *Plum Pudding,* Bernstein's music in *Civet à Toute Vitesse* still adheres to the natural word emphasis that arises in the idiomatic pronunciation of each language, and further sets the melody stepwise (as opposed to his usual wide leaps), rushing up and

[14] Hammered (transl.) Instructs the performer to play with strong and detached accents.
[15] Patter songs are classified as comic songs that are composed with a rapid *tempo* and require the performer to enunciate the greatest number of words in the shortest time possible. Composers of patter songs typically write one note per syllable in their songs. Patter songs grew in popularity in the Broadway theatre as well as in comic opera (Patter song, 2001).

down, much like the motion of a rabbit evading a hungry chef. The piano in Section A moves in parallel fifths, marked mostly with *staccati*, which further assist in word-painting to reflect the skittish motion of a rabbit. The above shows how Bernstein composed eclectically, but also adhered to the tradition of Art song composition by word-painting motions of gesture and paying close attention to the idiomatic speech rhythms of both languages. This accurate word emphasis is broken at the end of phrase Aa (bar 6–8) and Aa' (14–16), as he writes hard accents over each syllable. I argue that Bernstein does this in order to emphasise or exclaim the final words of each phrase: “no time!” and “Livers mashed!”. Over these words, Tourel (Bernstein, 1998) creates more of an exclaiming, shouting tone, appropriate to Broadway theatre. McGown (France Musique, 2019) and Petitbon (2004) opt to create a somewhat grumbled, growled tone. While word-painting is common in Art songs, the singing style that these performers adopt at the end of the abovementioned phrases is heard more commonly in vernacular jazz traditions. As was showcased in the other songs of this song cycle, a sense of ambiguity arises in those moments where Bernstein’s composition encourages his performers to break from a traditional interpretation, and offer a more idiosyncratic response to the music. The three different interpretive approaches offered by these performers point to the fact that the sense of ambiguity experienced in this piece specifically, and in *La Bonne Cuisine* generally, makes the music more amenable to a variety of non-traditional interpretations.

The fast paced and flustering start of Section A momentarily shifts to a calmer atmosphere in Section B. Bernstein achieves this by writing the vocal line *legato*, using longer note values. The piano contributes to the atmospheric change here as the right hand doubles the vocal line with warm major chords beneath, and the left hand plays out a pedal point on C with syncopated octaves above. This change in atmosphere suggests that the chef is slightly more relaxed now that cooking is underway. The rich and warm *legato* line is briefly interrupted by *recitativo*-like passages composed over repeated notes, an element borrowed from operatic traditions. These *recitativo*-like passages present asides from the chef. In these moments her authority shines through as the piano maintains a bar of silence, offering the vocal line full command of the music as the chef instructs whoever is listening to chop “as fine as possible” (bar 21), or offers approximations of how many potatoes one would need for this stew, “say twenty-five or so” (bar 25). The third aside presents the only metre change in the whole song (3/4) and is indicated with “forgetting the haste” over the words “A bottle and a half of rich claret” (bars 26–27). In this moment the piano plays out a C minor sustained 7th chord with *ritardando*. It is as if in this moment the action pauses, while the chef loses herself in a sip of wine, gaining some liquid courage, but quickly snapping out of it in the following bar as per Bernstein’s instruction “remembering the same” (bar 28). The calm atmosphere falls away as the piano jumps in with demisemiquavers with a *tremolo* effect that undulates from *forte* to *piano* as the performer sings the words “Boil it up don’t waste a minute, on the very hottest fire / *Fait' bouillir à tout'*

vitesse" (bar 28–30). Again, Bernstein is making use of word-painting devices as the piano emulates the sound of boiling water.

The *tremolo* effect ends as soon as the boiling is done. Bernstein proceeds with Section Bb (bars 31–39), in which the vocal line lies between B3 and A♭4 and is indicated to be sung *dolce*[16] (bar 32). It is particularly challenging for a soprano to create a sweet, but also warm tone within the chest and lower part of the mixed register[17] of the voice. Thankfully this *dolce* section quickly transforms to *misterioso*[18] over the text "carefully apply the flame". The voice sings an ascending line while the piano plays *staccato* broken chords across a syncopated rhythm. One could infer here that the chef is growing in confidence as she describes the manner in which the finest restaurants cook their food, while the piano underpins the nervous energy.

This nervous energy carries us into Section C. The chef has run out of time and Bernstein makes this clear by marking this whole section with *accelerando* to *prestissimo*. The music throughout this section, in both the piano and vocal parts, is littered with short note values, hard accents, and *crescendo* markings. These frantic sounds are appropriate as the chef barks out the final instructions for preparing the stew.

The work ends felicitously, as the vocal line states the words "And serve / *servez*" (bar 46–47) over the pitches G♯4 to B3. This downward interval seems to paint the chef as taking a bow or lowering the dish to a table to be served. Above this, the piano proudly rings a slow major 6th interval in upper octaves, announcing that the dish is ready.

[16] Sweetly (transl.)

[17] The mixed register is the range between the passaggi, indicated by Miller (2000) to be between E-♭4 and F♯5. The mixed register can also be dived into two parts. The low-mixed register situated between E♭4 to C♯5 and the high-mixed register situated between C♯5 and F♯5.

[18] Mysteriously (transl.)

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Summary

In this study I set out to explore ambiguity in Leonard Bernstein's song cycle *La Bonne Cuisine* and how it challenges the interpretation and performance of this work. Suurpää (2014) and Ali (2010) explain that the words of Art songs, usually poetry, are almost always the composer's point of departure, and so it is the responsibility of classical singers to scrutinise the words first when they study Art songs. This enables the singer to effectively relay the message or meaning of the poem to the audience in a compelling manner (Sell, 2005). However, Bernstein elected to compose *La Bonne Cuisine* based on a set of recipes. This evoked a feeling of ambiguity in me as a performer, because a recipe is unconventional lyrical content. After a detailed study of the words of an Art song, the performer needs to examine the music score. Classical singers study both the vocal lines and piano parts of Art songs because both are equally important in reflecting the meaning of the words (Sams & Johnson, 2001; Garret, 2007). However, upon first glance, the music of *La Bonne Cuisine* appears more like a technical study than an Art song, as there are no obvious indications of how the music could meaningfully reflect a list of ingredients.

In order to make sense of, and consequently overcome the ambiguity I experienced when studying and performing *La Bonne Cuisine*, I conducted a literature review that contextualises Art song composition and interpretation, and explores Leonard Bernstein, the man and his music, with reference to his musico-historical context and his compositional language, specifically his treatment of melody, rhythm, and harmony. This led to the identification of two central concepts that are at the heart of Bernstein's compositional language – eclecticism and accessibility (Laird & Lin, 2015).

After reviewing the existing literature on Bernstein and Art song composition, I adopted a research design combining practice-led and hermeneutic methodologies, which enabled me to conduct a close reading of the text (words and music) of *La Bonne Cuisine.* Kramer (2011) explains that the process of close reading requires the performer to read and re-read the text in order to offer vivid descriptions of the patterns within the music, but also to describe one's personal response to the drama and vigour of the music experience. Moreover, a close reading requires a sensitivity to history, which enabled me to contextualise the patterns within the text in relation to their worldly, historical origins (Kramer, 2004). This process revealed sections of the music that are incongruous and give rise to ambiguity. I then contextualised these incongruous elements in relation to Bernstein's desire to remain eclectic and accessible in his compositions, which assisted me in ameliorating the ambiguity I experienced when interpreting and performing this work.

5.2 Addressing the research questions

5.2.1 How do the concepts of eclecticism and accessibility in Bernstein's compositional language contribute to the experience of ambiguity in *La Bonne Cuisine*?

As previously discussed, Bernstein was a proudly eclectic musician. His eclecticism is clearly audible in *La Bonne Cuisine* because it is composed in a style that is consistently inconsistent, which is to say that the coherence of his music lies in his ability to be consistently eclectic. Bernstein's eclecticism therefore contributes to an experience of ambiguity because he did not adhere to a single style of composing. When I first studied this song cycle, this eclecticism gave rise to a sense of ambiguity in me as a performing artist as it was difficult to know from which stylistic framework to interpret the music. However, I was able to make sense of Bernstein's somewhat extreme eclecticism through a close look at his musico-historical context, the early 20th century. This period of history is noted for Western classical composers' typically atypical approach to composition. Composers during this time were therefore able to transform the tropes of the Western classical canon into innovative compositions that would excite contemporary audiences.

Through insights gleaned from the literature review and the process of a close reading of *La Bonne Cuisine*, I was able to isolate various influences that contributed to Bernstein's eclecticism. From the wider cannon of Western classical music, he was inspired by the tradition of composing whole works on the development of small melodic motifs; the incorporation of exotic Turkish rhythms; the tradition of *recitativo*; and trends in Art song composition, such as writing for voice and piano as equal partners, or making use of occasional word-painting devices. He would use word-painting techniques for individual words or to suggests elements not explicitly named, such as the steady beating action of preparing batter in *Plum Pudding*, the swaying of the tail of an ox in *Queues de Boeuf,* or the motion of a rabbit in *Civet à Toute Vitesse.* However, these word-painting devices are found infrequently in this work, and so it is important for performers to remain creative in their interpretations of the text. *La Bonne Cuisine* also illustrates the inspiration Bernstein drew from other early 20th century serious music composers, such as the incorporation of shifting metre and odd groupings in his rhythmic writing, as well as his use of neo-classical tonality in combination with harsh dissonances (always for programmatic purposes). Bernstein likely opted to make use of neo-classical tonality with programmatic dissonance because he wanted his audiences to be able to appreciate his music from the first listening. Neo-classical tonality offered audiences sounds that were more familiar to their ears, which makes it more likely that they would appreciate neo-classical compositions from the first listening. All of the above highlights both Bernstein's eclecticism and his desire to make his music accessible. It can be said that he was so deeply influenced

by the aforementioned traditions because he himself wanted to be remembered as a serious classical music composer (Berger, 1996).

However, Bernstein was also known to be an incredibly sociable human being, and one who desperately wanted to be able to communicate with his audiences (Laird & Lin, 2015). He strove to load his music with ideas that are easily and readily comprehensible and accessible to his audiences. His eclecticism, therefore, also extended to vernacular genres through his incorporation of cross-rhythms, syncopation, and blues notes inspired by jazz, a genre that increasingly grew in popularity in America during this time in history (Giger, 2009). To this end he also borrowed themes from the Broadway theatre, such as light-hearted lyrics that promote humour instead of address intense human emotion. I argue that on the one hand, the humour in *La Bonne Cuisine* is what makes it more accessible to an audience because it is easy to enjoy or appreciate a joke when it is being shared with you. On the other hand, it creates a feeling of ambiguity for me as a performer because the need to explain a joke to oneself oftentimes robs one of its humour. In an instance such as this, a performer needs to ask the question: Is it even possible to understand the musical jokes of great composers of the past, whom we will never have the opportunity to meet in person?

5.2.2 How can a combined practice-led and hermeneutic approach, entailing a close reading of *La Bonne Cuisine,* assist the performer in navigating through the experience of ambiguity in this song cycle?

In order to navigate through the experience of ambiguity in *La Bonne Cuisine*, and to offer a meaningful and informed interpretation thereof, I opted to make use of a combined practice-led and hermeneutic research design, facilitated by a close reading. Kramer (2011) explains that hermeneutics refers to the art of interpreting texts, and further that “music is interpreted by being performed” (p. 1). Kramer implies a natural link between hermeneutics and music, which further implies a link between hermeneutics and practice-led research. By way of a close reading, a performing artist can use hermeneutics as a vehicle to find meaning within the piece that she is studying. This is because a close reading requires a repetitive process of reading and re-reading a text to arrive at a multiplicity of interpretations, and a nuanced understanding thereof, which further involves a sensitivity to history, and in turn results in an informed act of creativity. While a close reading is considered an analytical tool within hermeneutic methodologies, the nature of practice-led activities inevitably also results in a close reading insofar as the artistic practice of classical singers involves a repetitive process of study, inner reflection, and creative engagement with music texts. Thus, the combined practice-led and hermeneutic approach, enhanced by the iterative process of a close reading, enabled me to glean as much significance from the text as possible in order to highlight various incongruous elements that give rise to ambiguity. Further, this approach allowed me

to draw on my insights as a performer, to both describe the patterns of the music and offer my personal responses and inner reflections to the dramatic nature of the musical experience.

Bernstein's decision to compose *La Bonne Cuisine* based on a set of recipes is a major contributing factor to the ambiguity I experienced when studying and performing this work. In order to overcome the lack of expressive or emotive content in the recipes, I imagined myself as the chef, and in doing so I was able to tap into her emotions while she shares her recipes with others. I portrayed her as awkward and uncomfortable as she relays her recipes to actual people (instead of cooking behind the scenes), angry at the arrogance of those who still believe oxtail is a dish to be scorned, or in a flustered state at the arrival of an unexpected guest for dinner. Moreover, a sense of ambiguity arises from the incongruity resulting from the extremely technical music written to reflect simple recipes. This incongruity gives rise to humour in the music. By incorporating acting skills, such as the use of exaggerated facial expression, movement, and gesture, I was able to make the humour within this song cycle more obvious, and therefore less ambiguous. In addition, by understanding how to manipulate tone colour and enunciation, I was able to make the text more intelligible so that the meaning will be immediately clearer, and therefore less ambiguous for the audience. The personal, inner reflections, brought about by the close reading that informed these actions and decisions, assisted me in ameliorating the ambiguity of *La Bonne Cuisine* in my close reading.

An important element, both within hermeneutics and the artistic practice of classical singing, is a sensitivity to history. Applying this to the close reading further assisted me in overcoming the ambiguity of *La Bonne Cuisine*, because I was able to supplement my analysis of the patterns of the music with more worldly descriptions. In *Tavouk Gueunksis* I could draw on my understanding of the history of *alla Turca* in order to highlight the ambiguity resulting from the setting of recipes to war marches, whereas in *Queues de Boeuf* I was able to research the history of oxtail in order to understand the unusual harmonies used to express the uncomfortable or disdainful feelings people have expressed towards that dish in the past. This sensitivity to history also benefitted my close reading by highlighting incongruities between the tradition of Art song composition and Bernstein's eclectic compositional language that drew him further from that tradition.

5.2.3 How is a sense of ambiguity brought about by the interplay of words and music in *La Bonne Cuisine*?

The words of Art songs, usually poetry, are virtually always the composer's creative point of departure, and so composers rely on the mood and emotional nuances within the poem to guide them in their composition (Suurpää, 2014). It is therefore the responsibility of a singer to begin with the text, as the

composer does, in order to become familiar with the intricacies, meaning, nuances, emotions, and context of the poem. In doing so, the singer is able to identify elements of the text that can be used to enhance expression, convincingly tell a story, or relay a message to the audience (Sell, 2005).

Recipes offer the singer very little insight into the meaning of the complex music at hand. The French recipes are incomplete and provide only a list of ingredients with very few actual cooking instructions. Bernstein's idiosyncratic English version of the recipes are not direct translations of the French recipes, but do at least offer the performer slightly more emotive content or opinion. Upon reflection, I found it beneficial to consider Bernstein's English version of the recipes as the "poetry" of the song cycle, as this made it easier to make sense of the complex music that was composed to reflect it. When performed in French, as I did, this adds another layer of ambiguity to the interplay of words and music; while the singer sings one set of words, she needs to hold the meaning of another in her mind in order to make sense of the complex music notes that she is singing. Even so, the typical or traditional approach of isolating the words first, so as to make sense of the meanings or possible interpretations of an Art song, makes less sense for a composition as unusual as this one.

Upon first glance, I found that the whimsical nature of the recipes was incongruous with the intensely technical music Bernstein elected to compose to reflect those recipes. Several examples of this can be cited. First, the opening section of *Plum Pudding,* the performer lists a series of ingredients with measurements while singing at 192 bpm in a *recitativo*-like style, all while dealing with the rapid laryngeal and breath adjustments required to negotiate the *primo passaggio*. Secondly, in *Queues de Boeuf* the singer describes part of the recipe for oxtail as she consistently deals with alternating metre and chromatic accompaniment. Lastly, in *Tavouk Gueunksis* the chef describes the recipe for a sweet chicken and rice porridge while singing over a Turkish war-march in the odd meter of 5/8.

On the one hand, Bernstein strove to continue in the tradition of serious Art song composition by composing a song cycle that is secular, composed for voice and piano as equal partners, makes use of occasional word-painting devices, coheres according to formal structures and musical procedures, and contains music that exemplifies the atmosphere of the poem or recipe, such as the hustle and bustle of cooking in a kitchen. On the other hand, he deviates from this tradition in his decision to compose a song cycle based on light-hearted recipes, and furthermore, he does not consistently adhere to the natural word emphasis that results from the idiomatic pronunciation of either language (French or English). The presence of these seemingly incompatible stylistic elements in the same composition added to the experience of ambiguity which arose in me as a performer.

5.2.4 How does the experience of ambiguity in Leonard Bernstein's song cycle *La Bonne Cuisine* challenge the interpretation of this work?

Ambiguity is defined by Oxford University Press (2010) and Allen (1990) as something that is unclear or indistinct and possesses the quality of being open to numerous interpretations. While one could argue that there is an element of ambiguity at play in all music compositions, I argue that *La Bonne Cuisine* is particularly ambiguous for three main reasons. Firstly, Bernstein's eccentric decision to use unconventional lyrical content (recipes) rather than poetry leaves the performer without those traditional poetic markers that she would typically use to interpret and perform a song cycle. Secondly, Bernstein's desire to be both eclectic and accessible in his composition of words and music gives rise to a mixed and ambiguous style in the song cycle. And thirdly, Bernstein's musico-historical context lends itself to possible ambiguity due to the atypical and radical manner of composition in the early 20th century, which challenges conventional interpretation and performance. While I was able to overcome the experience of ambiguity in *La Bonne Cuisine* through this process of research, other performers who choose to study this idiosyncratic work may also experience a similar sense of ambiguity when offering interpretive decisions and will therefore need to undergo this journey of understanding for themselves.

I posit that ambiguity could arise for classical singers because from the very beginning of our journey as vocalists, we are exposed to Art songs and the deeply emotional, serious poetry that comes with it. From the get-go, classical singers are trained to interpret the complex texts of Art songs by delving deep into the historical and cultural contexts of those texts in order to arrive at a detailed and nuanced understanding of the multiple and intricate meanings thereof. While *La Bonne Cuisine* does contain complex music, the words – recipes – rob us of the opportunity to unpack the nuanced meaning of the words in relation to music inasmuch, as a recipe is simply a set of instructions intended to be interpreted at face value. For this reason, the performer runs the risk of searching for emotive, profound meanings in words that offer nothing of the sort. Hence, the ambiguity that arises from trying to interpret *La Bonne Cuisine* could well be as a result of our training as classical singers, as it is hard to make peace with the fact that there is no poetry to be found, and no deciphering of deeper meanings to be done.

This research study helped me to better understand Bernstein, both as a person and as a musician. The composer is still remembered today as a person who liked to have fun, and who poked fun at others and at music itself. This line of thought is confirmed by Secrest (1994), who writes that for Bernstein "the idea that music could be – ought to be – fun is a recurrent theme" (p. 248). In *La Bonne Cuisine*, Bernstein pokes fun at the audience by bringing everyday life, such as a recipe, into serious music, as opposed to the emotion-filled poetry of Art songs that could have excluded certain audience members who appreciated a more light-hearted and amusing approach to entertainment. Furthermore, Bernstein is also

poking fun, most of all, at performers. I argue that ambiguity arises when interpreting *La Bonne Cuisine* because the performer is essentially the butt of Bernstein's musical joke. The performer prepares for a serious recital, dresses the part, appears onstage, and needs to perform this song cycle without getting lost in the technicality of the music. Here a sense of ambiguity arises from needing to appear silly on stage, so that the humour of the performed moment is clear, while simultaneously coping with the highly technical nature of the music.

This study could therefore assist performers to understand that *La Bonne Cuisine* is consistently inconsistent in its genre. This ongoing eclecticism is what creates an odd kind of unity within the music, which Laird and Lin (2015) describe as that "magic factor which is the individuated thing called Bernstein" (p. 21). In addition, performers could benefit from the understanding of *La Bonne Cuisine* as a musical joke. While the audience are the ones who receive this humour, it is up to the performer to make the humour apparent, even at her own expense.

5.3 Recommendations for further study

I have identified and described various elements in *La Bonne Cuisine* that present technical challenges, both for free phonation as well as effective ensemble work. It would be of value to conduct a study of *La Bonne Cuisine* that specifically offers practicable or pedagogical steps that would assist performers to understand and overcome these technical challenges. Additionally, the literature review highlights how *La Bonne Cuisine* specifically, and Bernstein's oeuvre generally, could be interpreted to be supercharged with ambiguity and, as a result, one could conduct a study or close reading of Bernstein's larger vocal works using ambiguity as a central theme. Finally, Bernstein's shorter song cycles *La Bonne Cuisine* and *I Hate Music!* both lend themselves to be analysed via Bernstein's system of musico-linguistics, which also revolves around the concept of the ambiguity of music.

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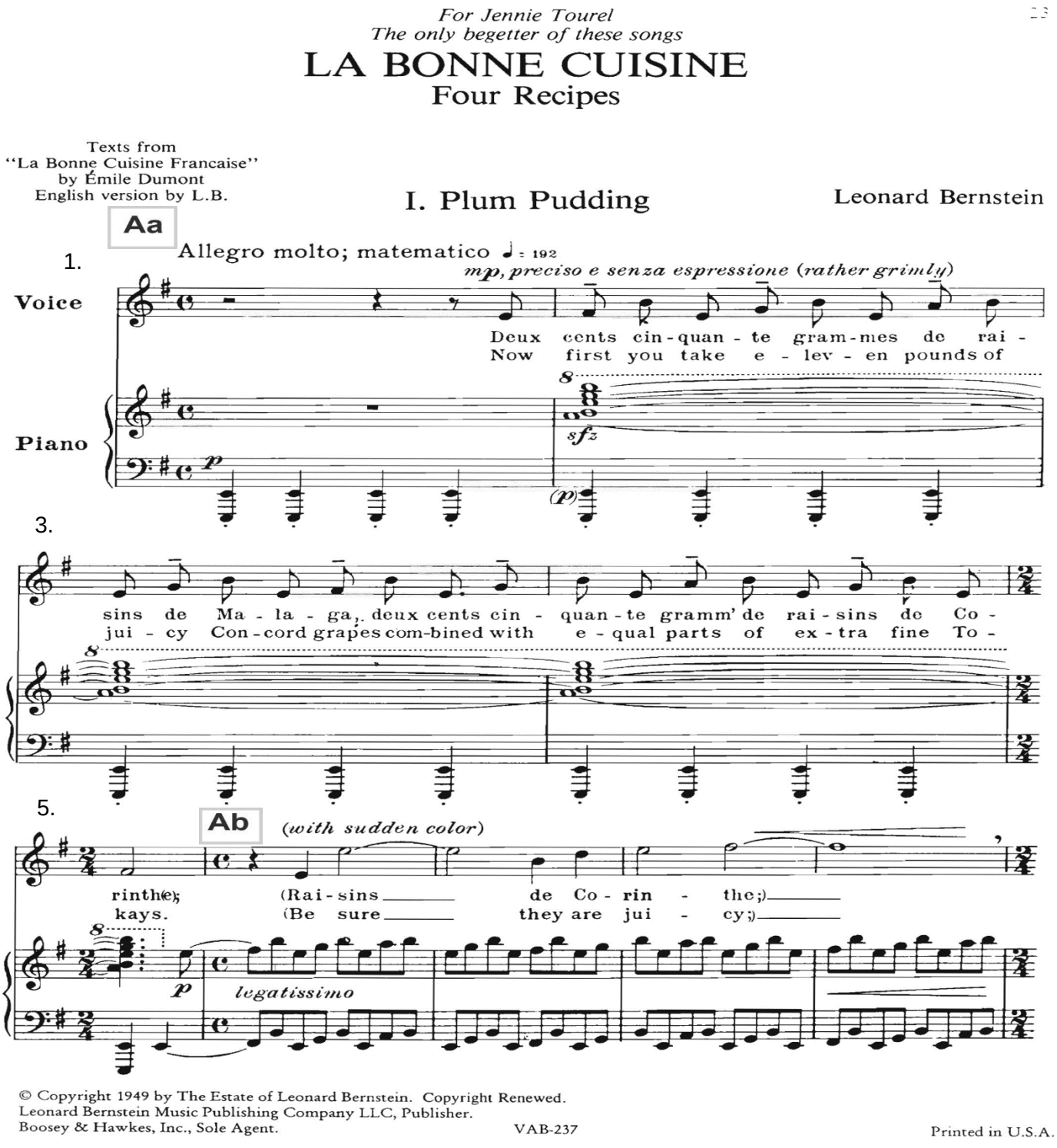
APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: *LA BONNE CUISINE* – COMPLETE MUSIC SCORE[19]



For Jennie Tourel
The only begetter of these songs

LA BONNE CUISINE
Four Recipes

Texts from
"La Bonne Cuisine Francaise"
by Émile Dumont
English version by L.B.

I. Plum Pudding

Leonard Bernstein

Aa

Allegro molto; matematico ♩ = 192

1.

mp, preciso e senza espressione (rather grimly)

Voice

Deux cents cin-quan-te gram-mes de rai-
Now first you take e-lev-en pounds of

Piano

sfz

3.

sins de Ma-la-ga, deux cents cin-quan-te gramm' de rai-sins de Co-
jui-cy Con-cord grapes com-bined with e-qual parts of ex-tra fine To-

5.

Ab

(with sudden color)

rinthe);
kays.

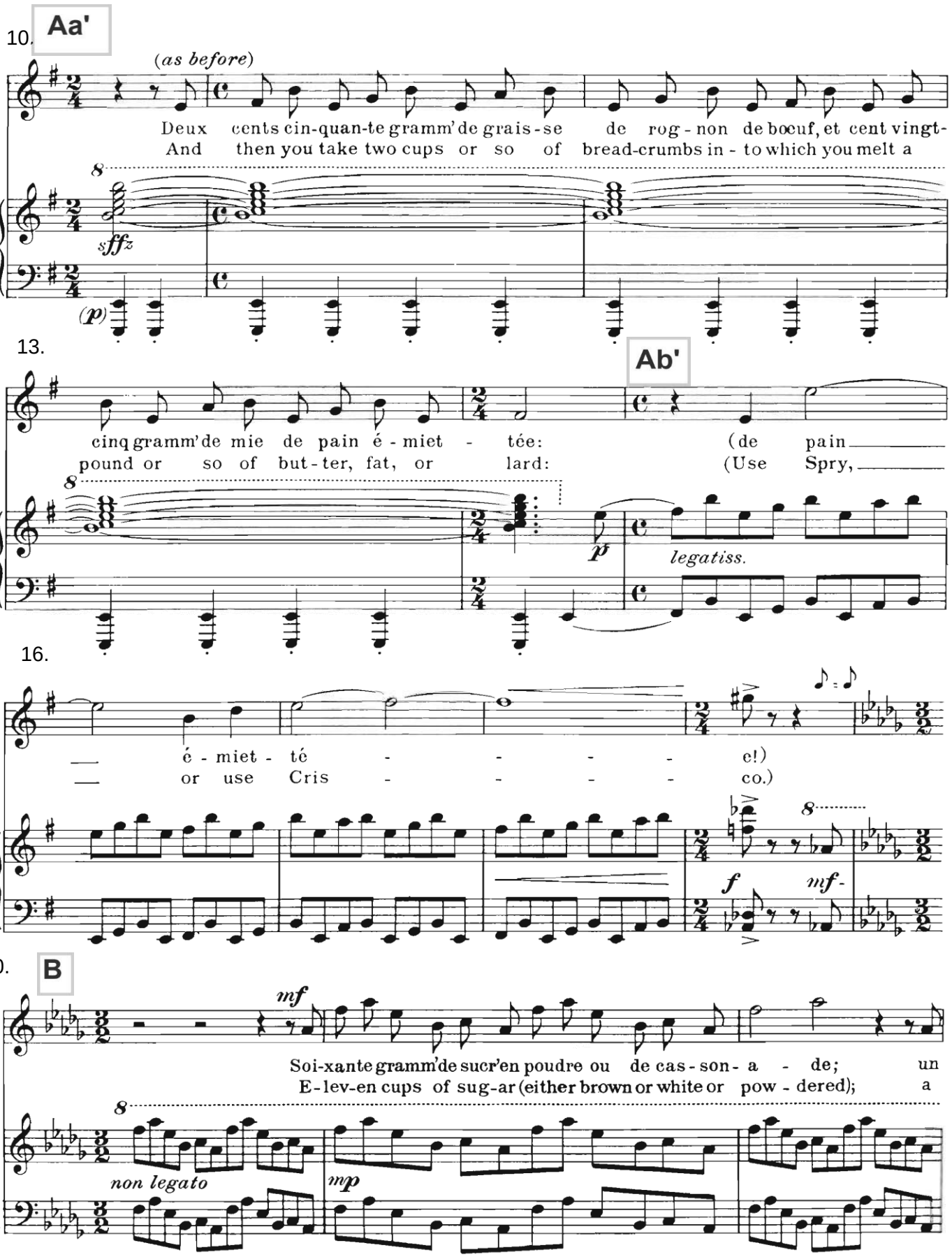
(Rai-sins de Co-rin-the;)
(Be sure they are jui-cy;)

legatissimo

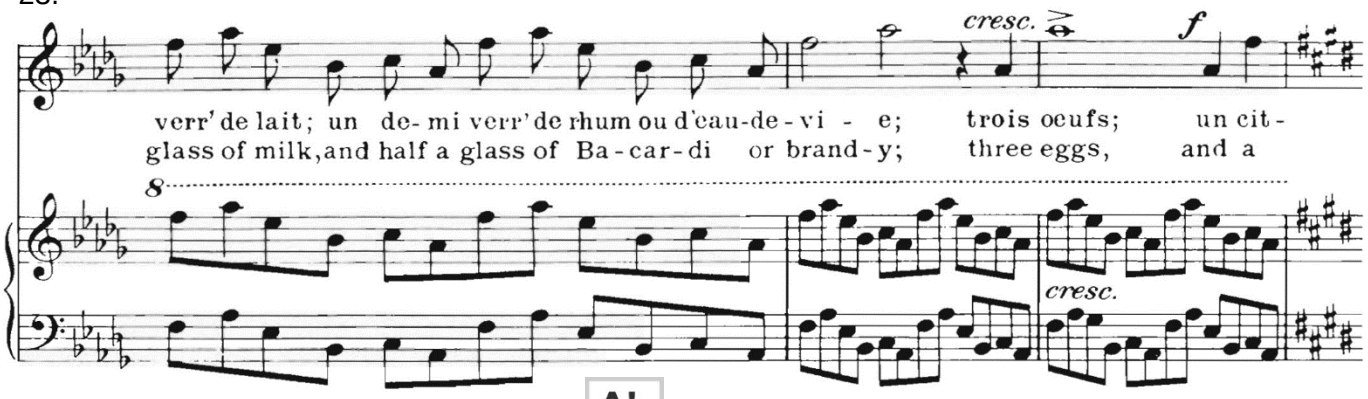
VAB-237

Printed in U.S.A.

[19] Sourced from the *Leonard Bernstein Song Album* (1947/1988).

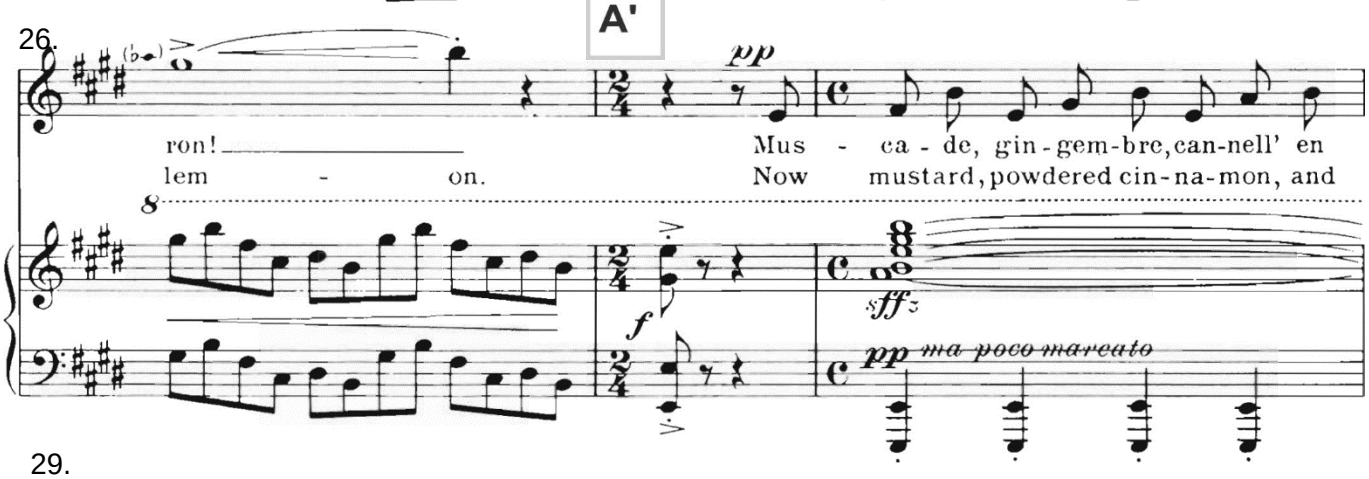

Aa'
10.
(as before)
Deux cents cin-quan-te gramm' de grais-se de rog-non de boeuf, et cent vingt-
And then you take two cups or so of bread-crumbs in-to which you melt a
sffz
(p)
13.
Ab'
cinq gramm' de mie de pain é-miet-tée: (de pain
pound or so of but-ter, fat, or lard: (Use Spry,
p
legatiss.
16.
é-miet-té - - - - e!)
or use Cris - - - - co.)
f
mf-
20.
B
mf
Soi-xante gramm' de sucr' en poudre ou de cas-son-a-de; un
E-lev-en cups of sug-ar (either brown or white or pow-dered); a
non legato
mp

23.

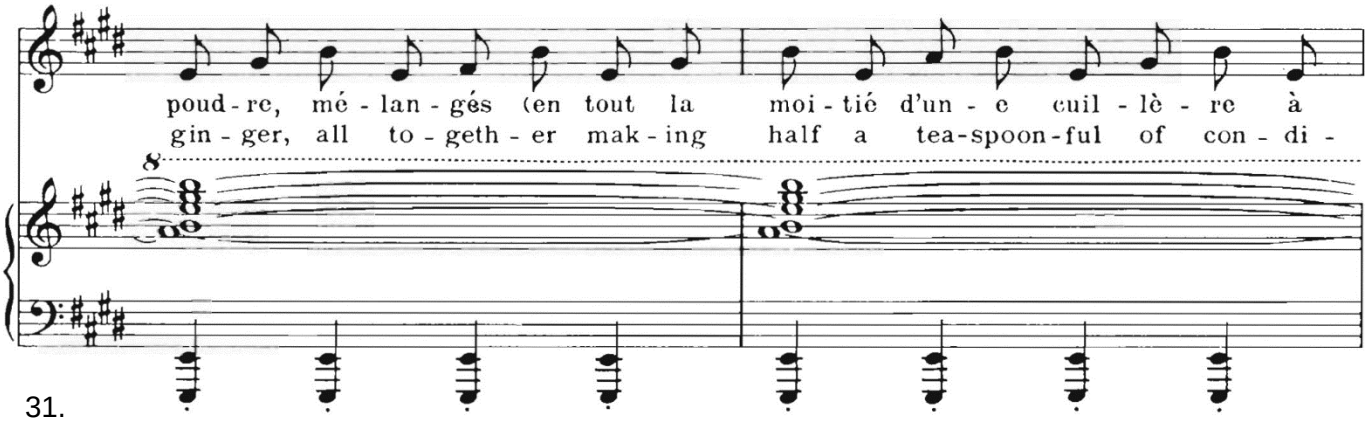

cresc.
f
verr' de lait; un de- mi verr' de rhum ou d'eau-de- vi - e; trois oeufs; un cit-
glass of milk, and half a glass of Ba - car - di or brand - y; three eggs, and a
8
cresc.

A'

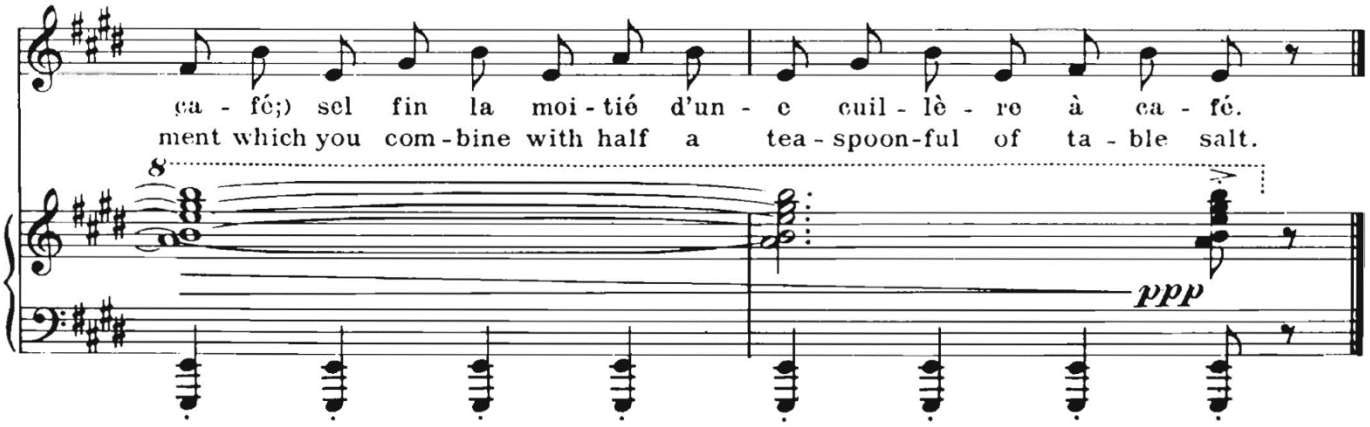
26.


pp
ron! Mus - ca - de, gin - gem - bre, can-nell' en
lem - on. Now mustard, powdered cin - na - mon, and
8
f
sff
pp ma poco marcato

29.


poud - re, mé - lan - gés (en tout la moi - tié d'un - e cuil - lè - re à
gin - ger, all to - geth - er mak - ing half a tea-spoon-ful of con - di -
8

31.


ça - fé;) sel fin la moi - tié d'un - e cuil - lè - re à ca - fé.
ment which you com - bine with half a tea - spoon-ful of ta - ble salt.
8
ppp

II. Queues de Bœuf
(Ox-tails)

Aa

1. Allegretto ♩. = 88

mp legato e dolce

La queue de
Are you too

4.

poco accel.

bœuf n'est pas un mets à dé - dai - gner.
proud to serve your friends an ox - tail stew?

poco accel.
cresc.

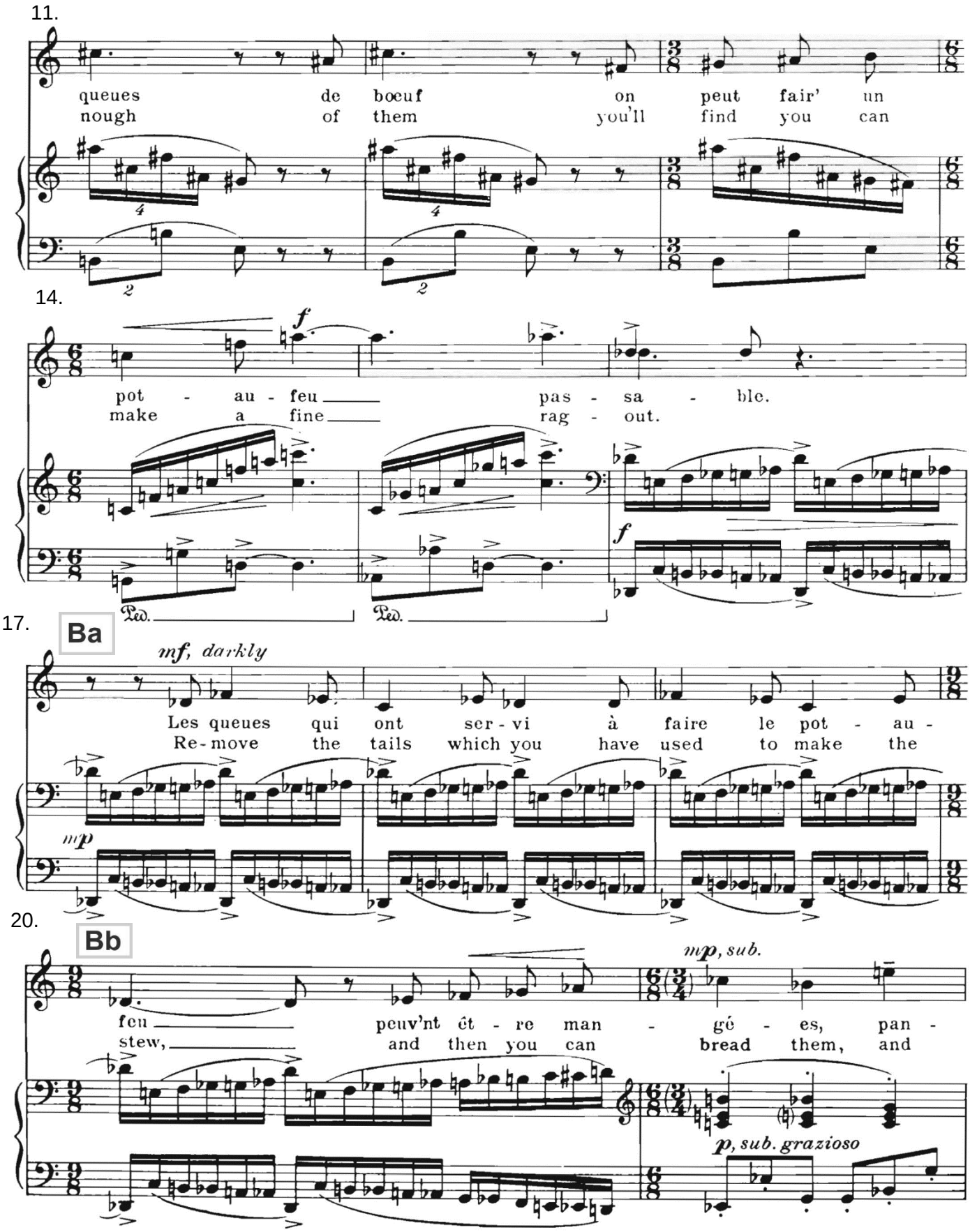
Ab

8.

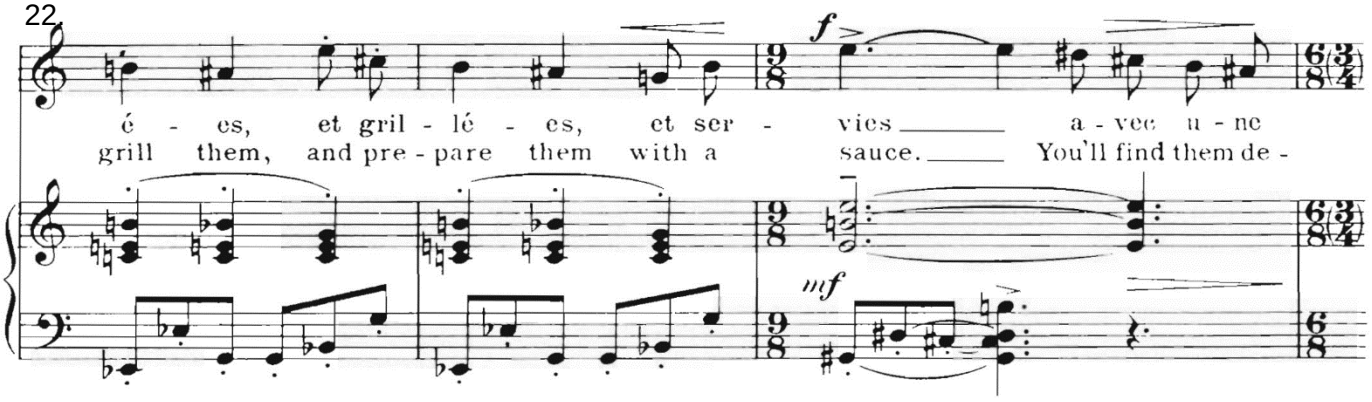
mf poco più mosso

D'a - bord a - vec as - sez de
You're wrong! For if you have e -

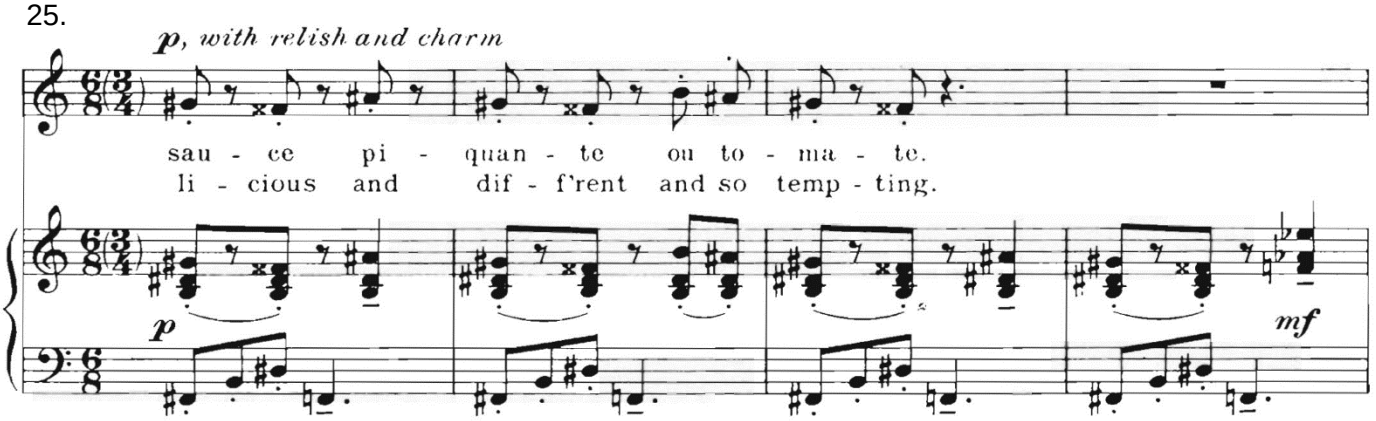
mf *poco più mosso*


11.
queues de bœuf on peut fair' un
nough of them you'll find you can
14.
f
pot - au - feu pas - sa - ble.
make a fine rag - out.
Ped. Ped.
17.
Ba
mf, darkly
Les queues qui ont ser - vi à faire le pot - au -
Re - move the tails which you have used to make the
mp
20.
Bb
mp, sub.
feu peuv'nt êt - re man - gé - es, pan -
stew, and then you can bread them, and
p, sub. grazioso

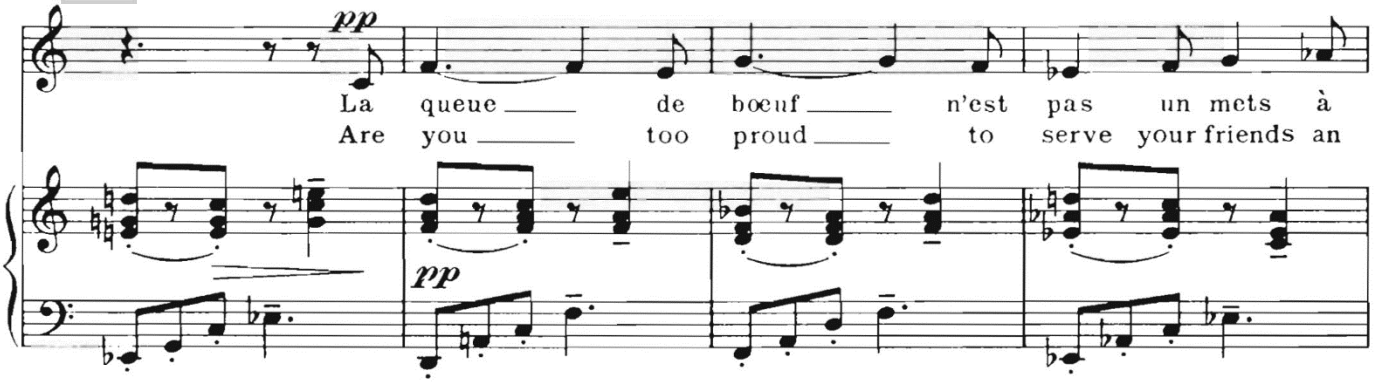
22.


é - es, et gril - lé - es, et ser - vies a - vec u - ne
grill them, and pre - pare them with a sauce. You'll find them de -
f
mf

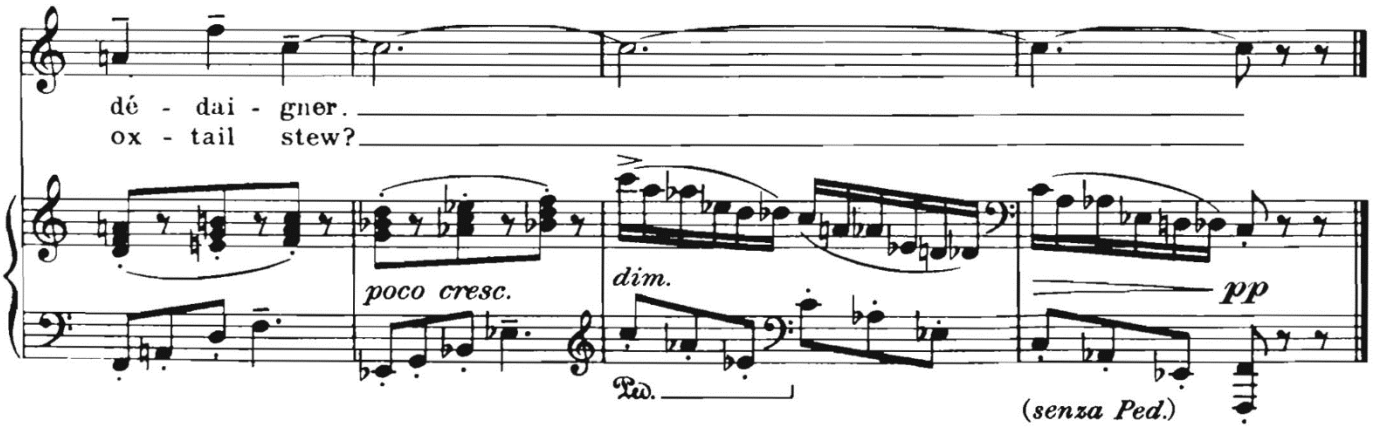
25.


p, with relish and charm
sau - ce pi - quan - te ou to - ma - te.
li - cious and dif - f'rent and so temp - ting.
p
mf

29. **A'**

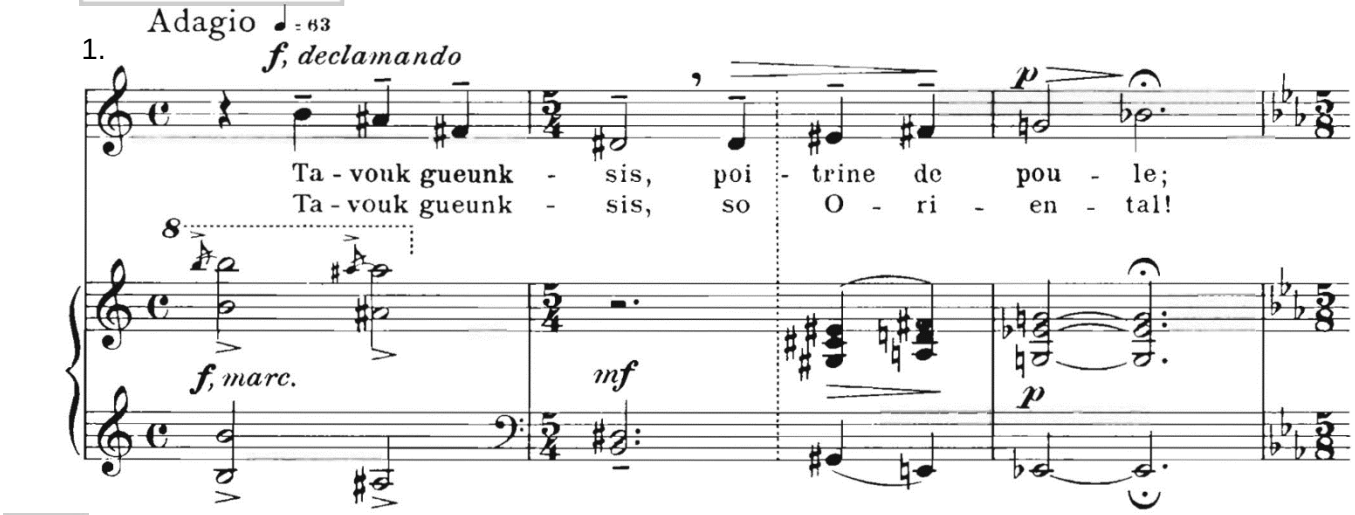

pp
La queue de bœuf n'est pas un mets à
Are you too proud to serve your friends an
pp

33.

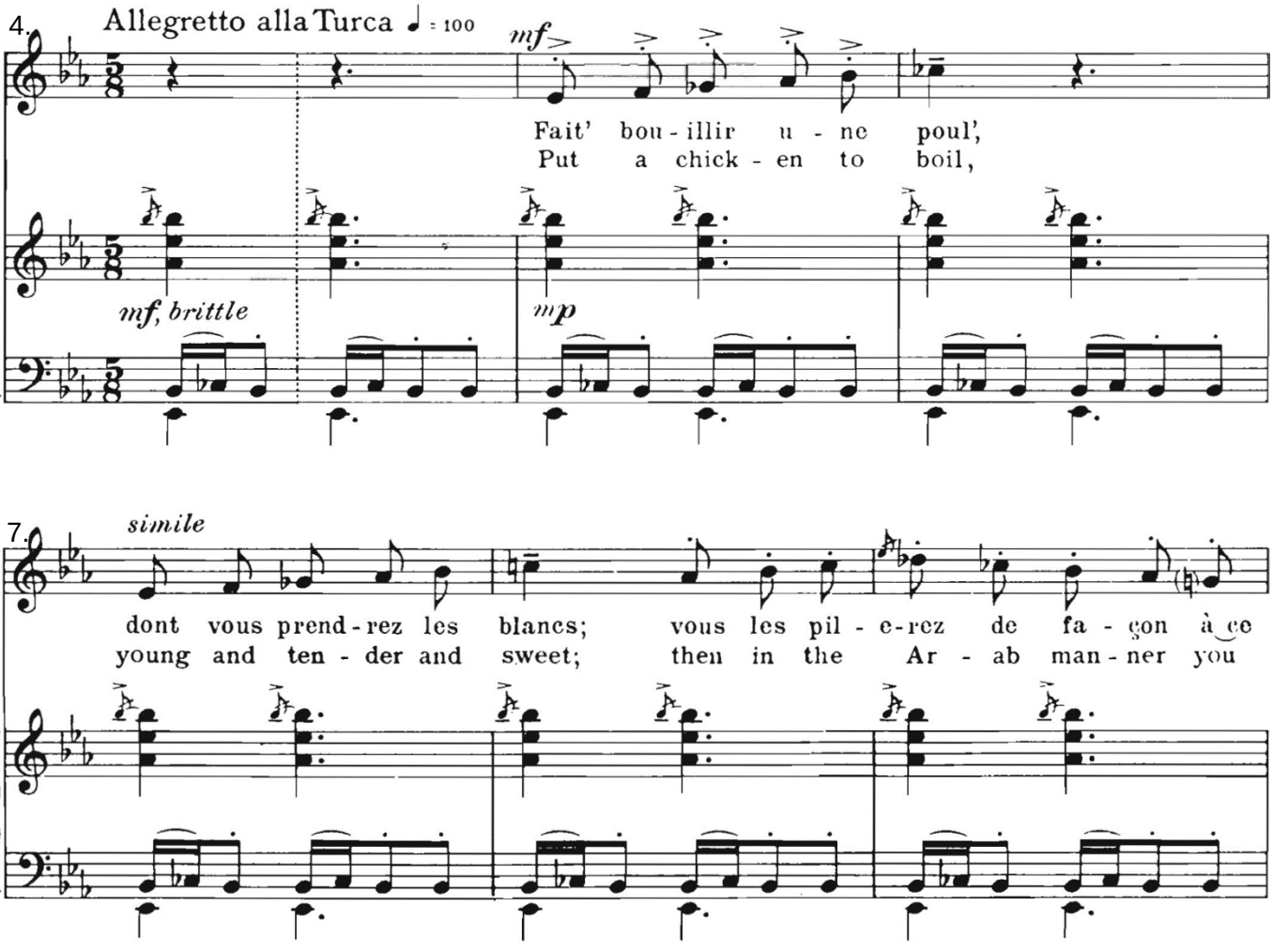

dé - dai - gner.
ox - tail stew?
poco cresc.
dim.
pp
Ped.
(senza Ped.)

III. Tavouk Gueunksis

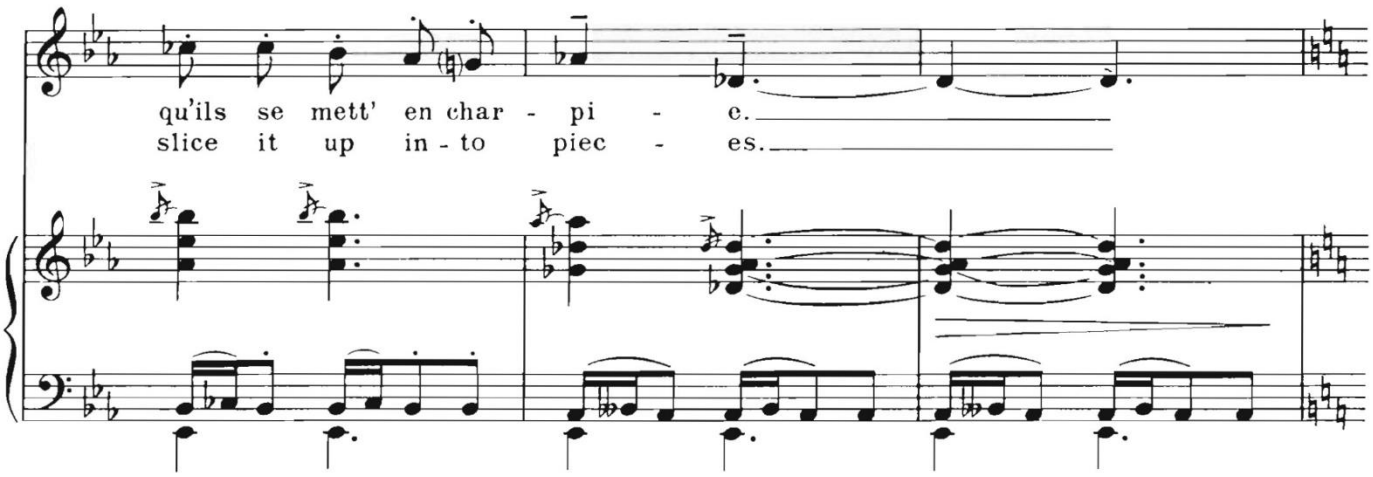
Introduction



Aa

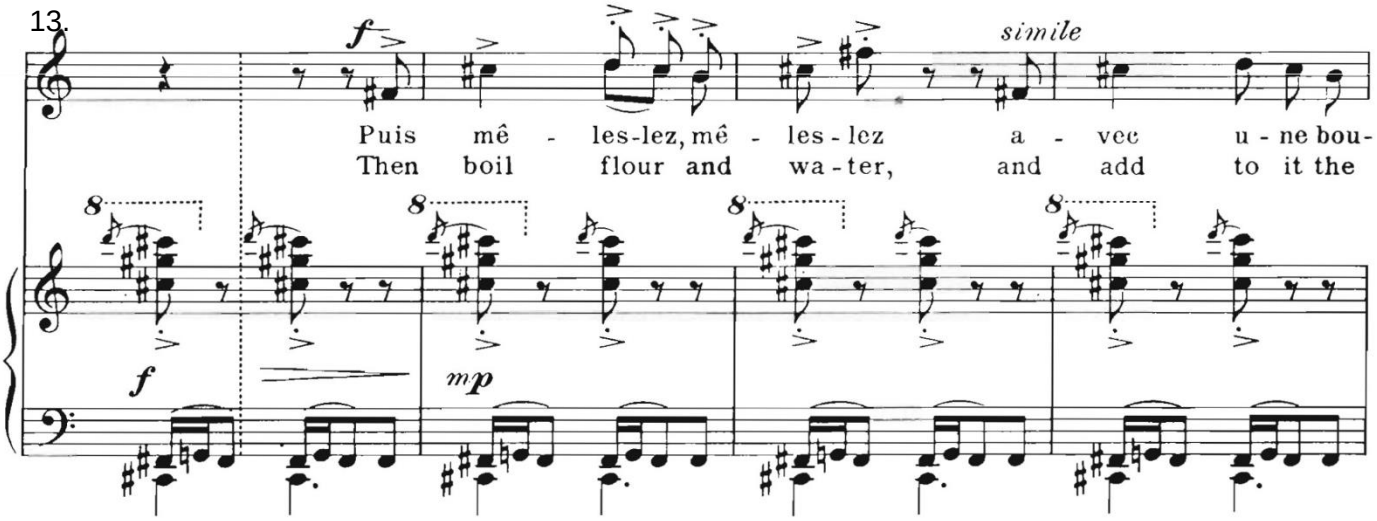


10.

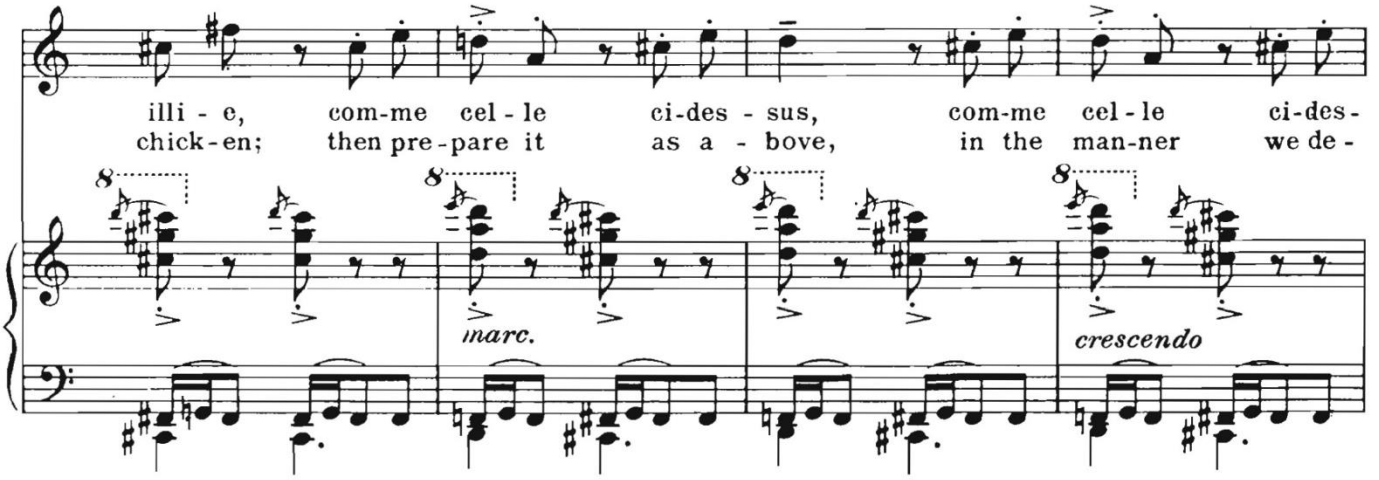

qu'ils se mett' en char - pi - c.
slice it up in - to piec - es.

Ab

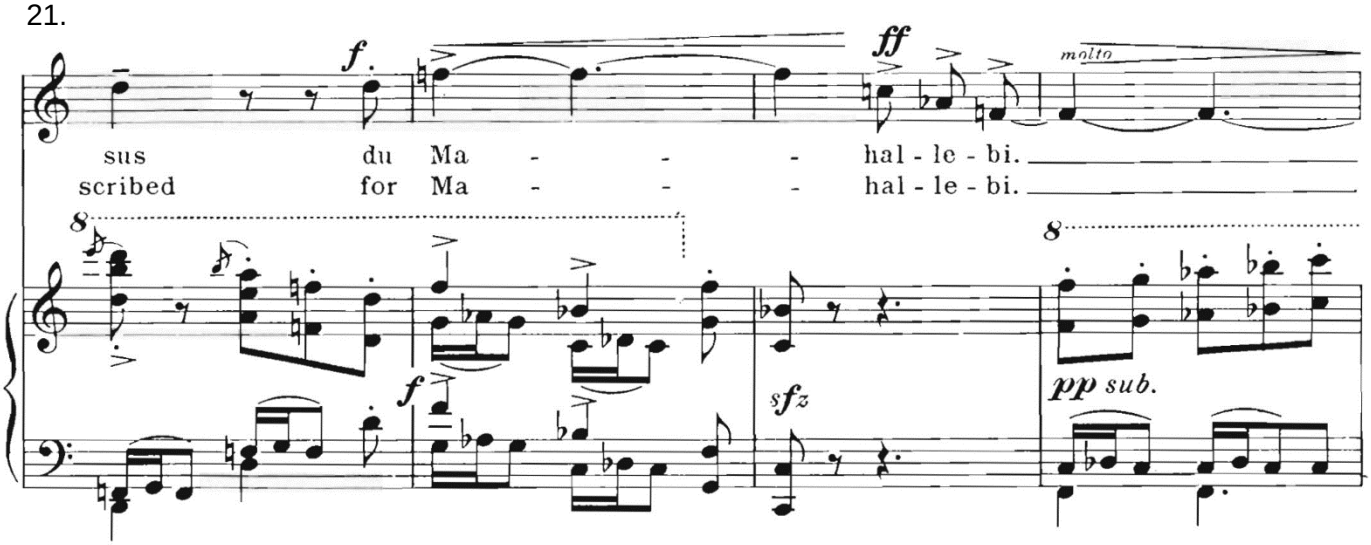
13.


f
simile
Puis mê - les-lez, mê - les-lez a - vec u - ne bou-
Then boil flour and wa-ter, and add to it the
f
mp

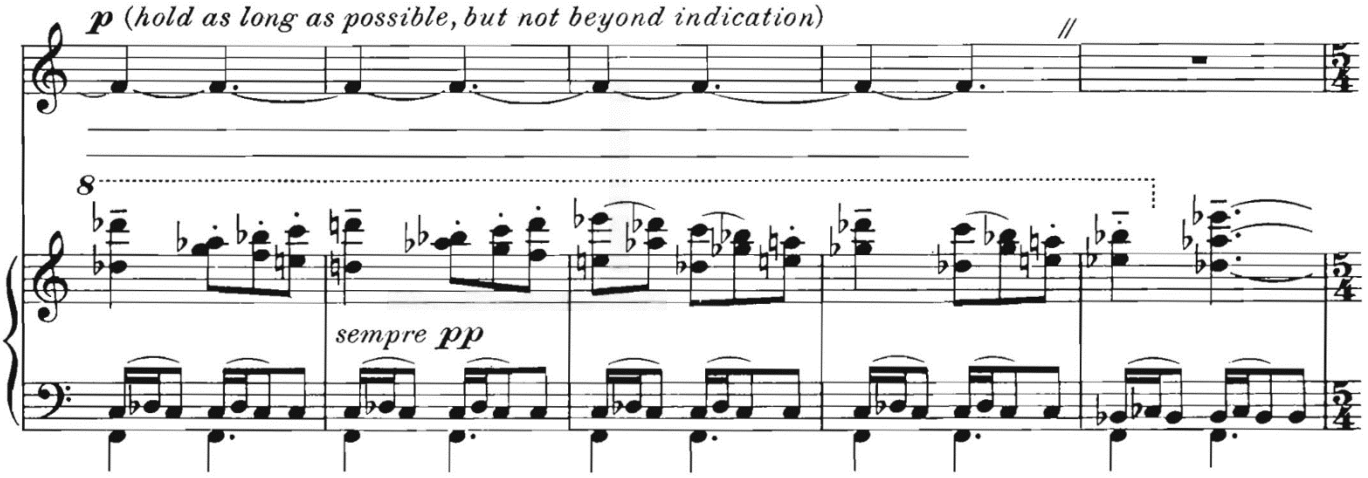
17.


illi - e, com-me cel - le ci-des - sus, com-me cel - le ci-des-
chick-en; then pre-pare it as a - bove, in the man-ner we de-
marc.
crescendo

21.

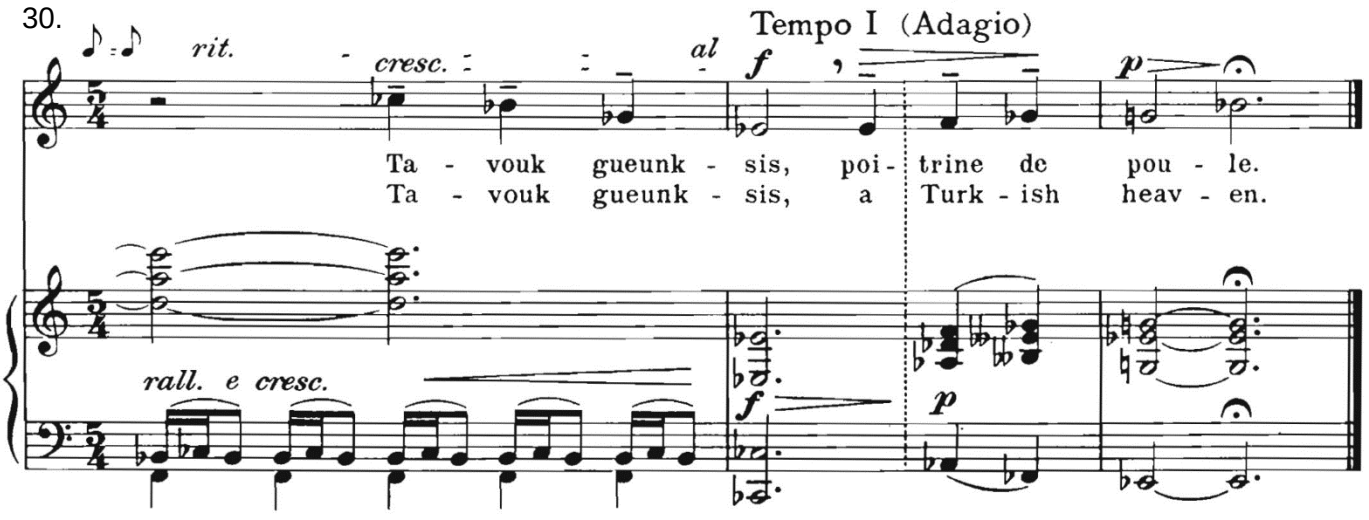

f
ff
molto
sus du Ma - - - hal - le - bi.
scribed for Ma - - - hal - le - bi.
8
f
sfz
8
pp sub.

25.


p (hold as long as possible, but not beyond indication)
//
8
sempre pp

Coda

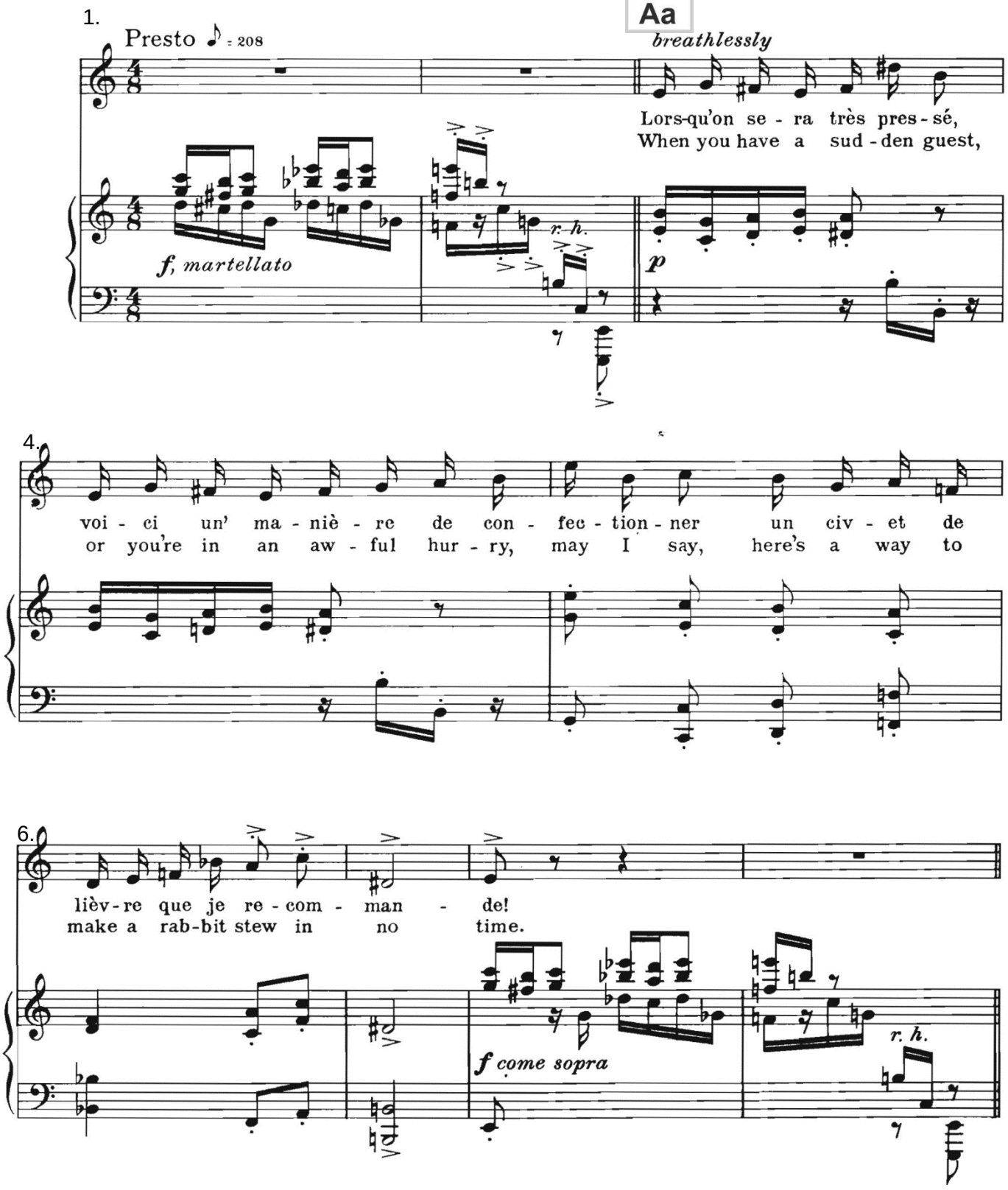
30.


rit.
cresc.
al
Tempo I (Adagio)
f
p
Ta - vouk gueunk - sis, poi - trine de pou - le.
Ta - vouk gueunk - sis, a Turk - ish heav - en.
rall. e cresc.
f
p

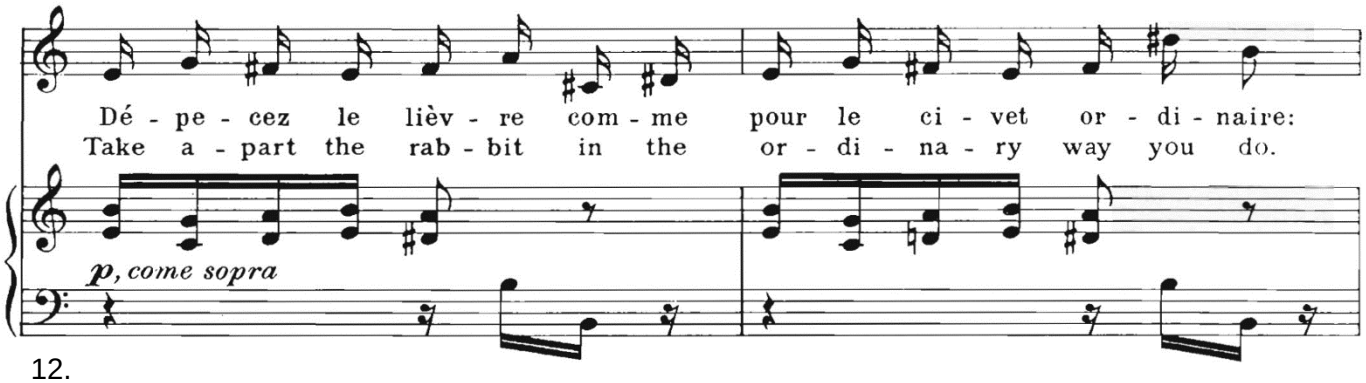
IV. Civet à Toute Vitesse
(Rabbit at Top Speed)

Introduction

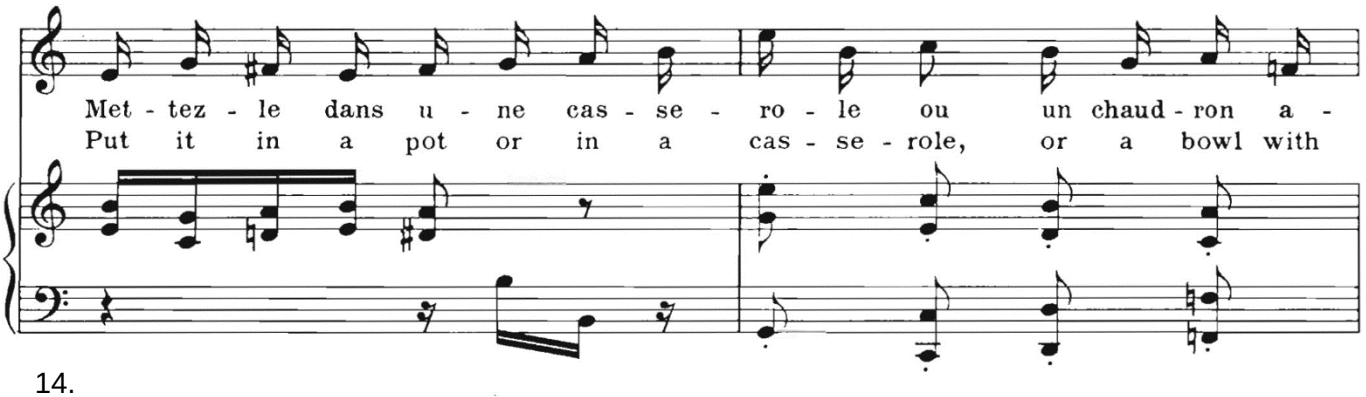
Aa



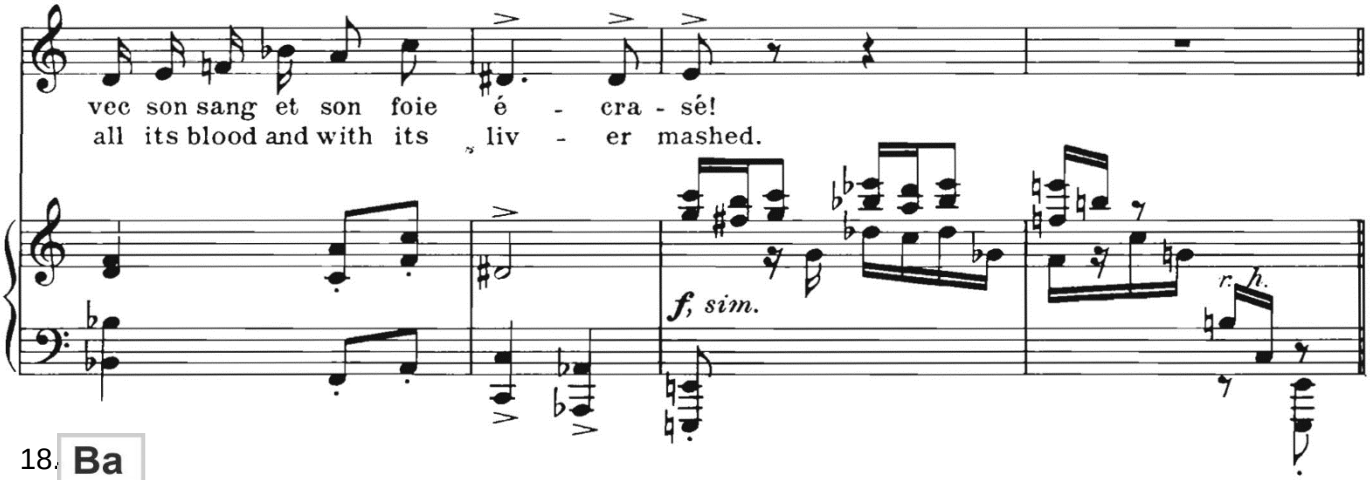
10. **Aa'**



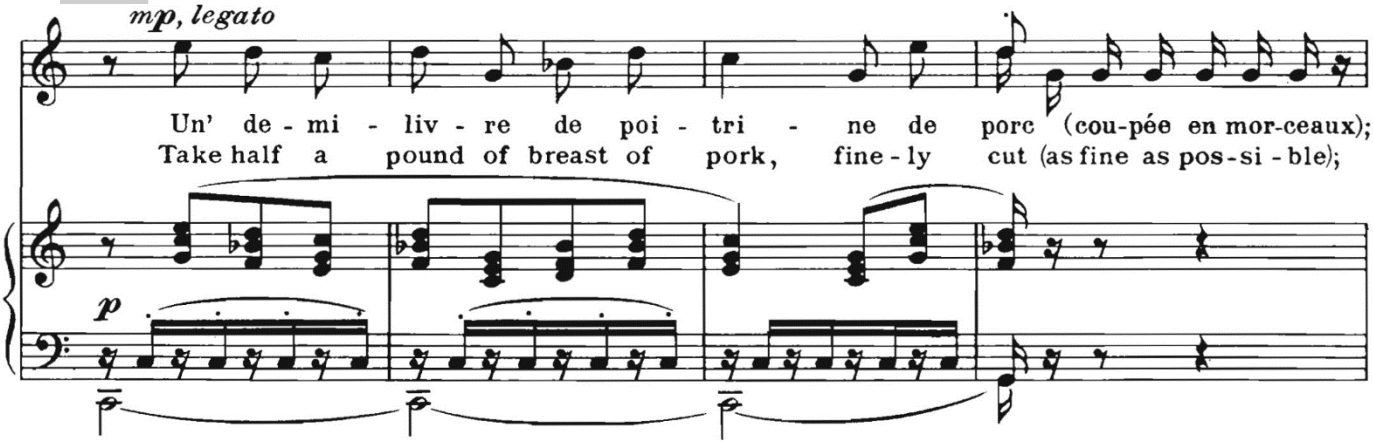
12.

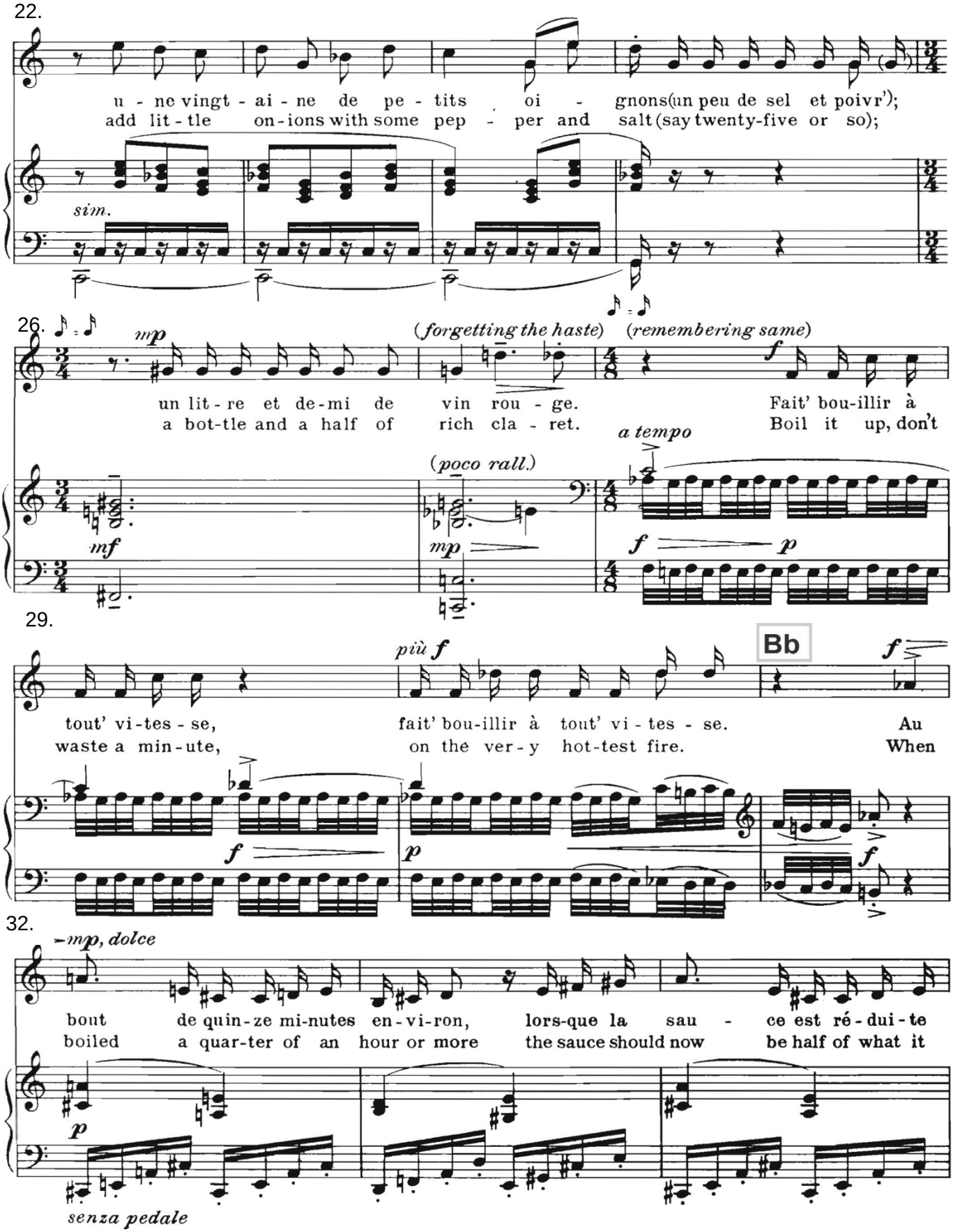


14.

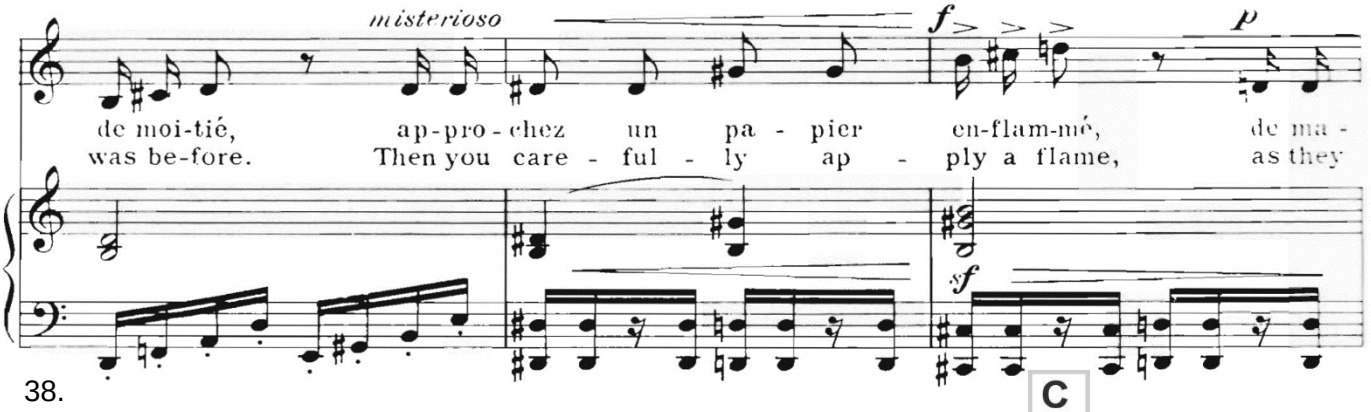


18. **Ba**

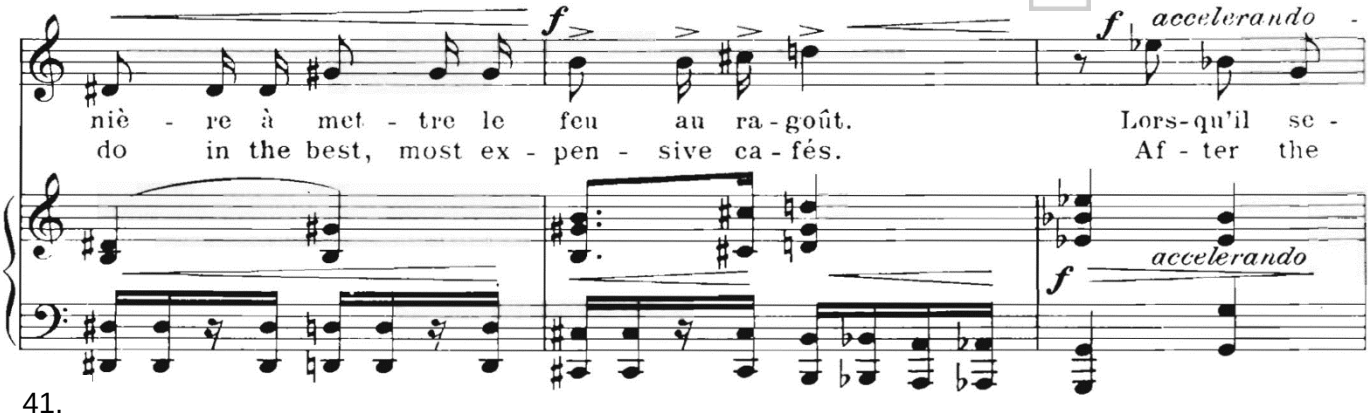



22.
u - ne vingt - ai - ne de pe - tits oi - gnons(un peu de sel et poivr');
add lit - tle on - ions with some pep - per and salt(say twenty-five or so);
sim.
26.
mp
(forgetting the haste)
(remembering same)
un lit - re et de - mi de vin rou - ge.
a bot-tle and a half of rich cla - ret.
Fait' bou-illir à
Boil it up, don't
a tempo
(poco rall.)
mf
mp
f
p
29.
più f
Bb
f
tout' vi-tes - se,
waste a min-ute,
fait' bou-illir à tout' vi - tes - se.
on the ver-y hot-test fire.
Au
When
f
p
f
32.
mp, dolce
bout de quin-ze mi-nutes en-vi-ron,
boiled a quar-ter of an hour or more
lors-que la sau - ce est ré - dui - te
the sauce should now be half of what it
p
senza pedale

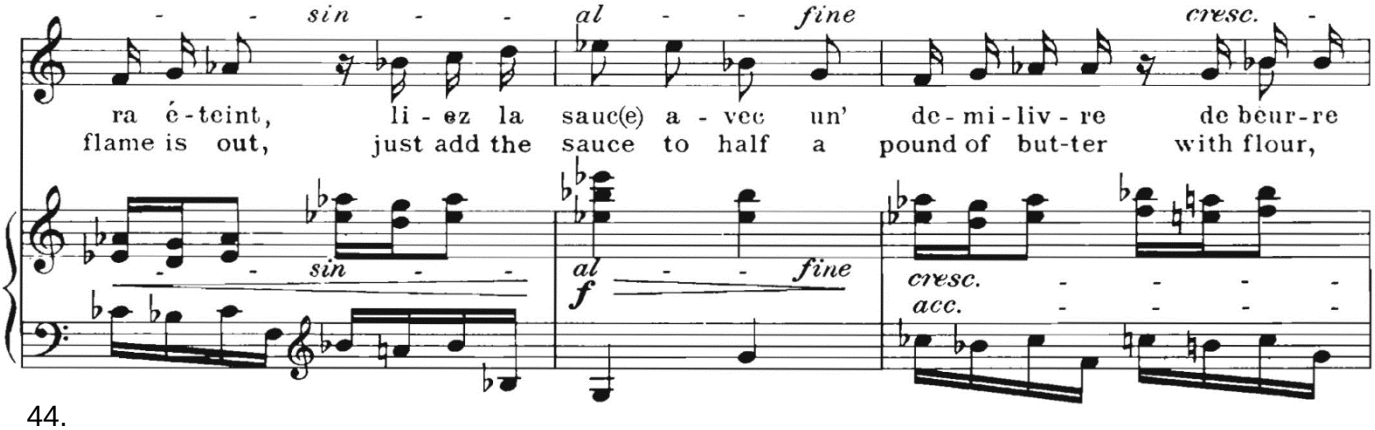
35.


misterioso
f
p
de moi-tié, ap-pro-chez un pa - pier en-flam-mé, de ma -
was be-fore. Then you care - ful - ly ap - ply a flame, as they
sf

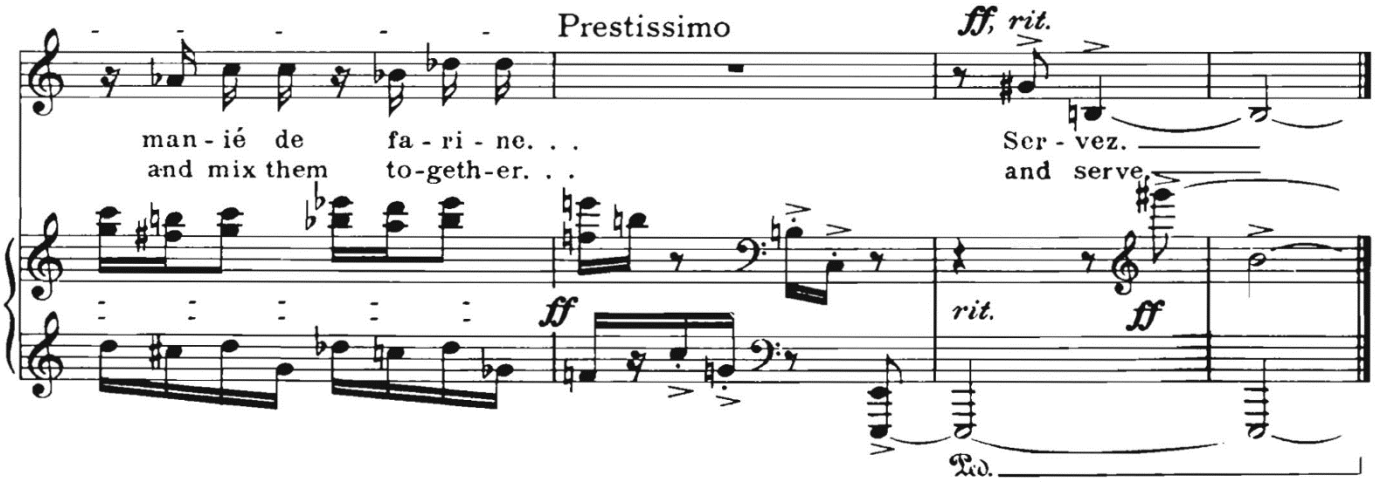
38.


C
f
f accelerando
niè - re à met - tre le feu au ra-goût. Lors-qu'il se -
do in the best, most ex - pen - sive ca-fés. Af - ter the
accelerando
f

41.


sin - - al - - fine
cresc.
ra é-teint, li-ez la sauc(e) a-vec un' de-mi-liv-re de beur-re
flame is out, just add the sauce to half a pound of but-ter with flour,
sin - - -
al - - fine
f
cresc. - - - - -
acc. - - - - -

44.


Prestissimo
fff, rit.
man-ié de fa-ri-ne. . . Ser-vez.
and mix them to-geth-er. . . and serve.
fff
rit.
fff
Ped.

APPENDIX B: *LA BONNE CUISINE* – WORDS – ENGLISH[20]

I. Plum Pudding

Now first you take eleven pounds of juicy Concord grapes combined with equal parts of extra Tokays (Be sure they are juicy). And then you take two cups or so of bread-crumbs into which you melt a pound or so of butter, fat, or lard: (Use Spry, or use Crisco). Eleven cups of sugar (either brown or white or powdered): a glass of milk, and half a glass of Bacardi or brandy; three eggs, and a lemon. Now mustard, powdered cinnamon, and ginger, all together making half a tea-spoon-ful of condiment which you combine with half a tea-spoon-ful of table salt.

II. *Queues de Boeuf* (Ox Tails)

Are you too proud to serve your friends an Ox-tail stew? You're wrong! For if you have enough of them you'll find you can make a fine ragout. Remove the tails which you have used to make the stew, and then you can bread them, and grill them, and prepare them with a sauce. You'll find them delicious and different and so temping. Are you too proud to serve your friends an Ox-tail stew?

III. *Tavouk Guenksis* (shredded chicken in rice porridge with bread and milk)

Tavouk Gueunksis, so Oriental! Put a chicken to boil, young and tender and sweet; then in the Arab manner you slice it up into pieces. Then boil flour and water, and add to it the chicken; then prepare it as above, in the manner we described for Mahallebi. Tavouk Gueunksis, a Turkish heaven.

IV. *Civet à Toute Vitesse* (Rabbit at Top Speed)

When you have a sudden guest, or you're in an awful hurry, may I say, here's a way to make a rabbit stew in no time. Take apart the rabbit in the ordinary way you do. Put it in a pot or in a casserole, or a bowl with all its blood and with liver mashed. Take a half a pound of breast of pork, finely cut (as fine as possible); add little onions with some pepper and salt (say twenty-five or so); a bottle and a half of rich claret. Boil it up, don't waste a minute, on the very hottest fire. When boiled a quarter of an hour or more the sauce should now be half of what it was before. Then you carefully apply a flame, as they do in the best, most expensive cafes. After the flame is out, just add the sauce to half a pound of butter with flour, and mix them together…and serve.

[20] Leonard Bernstein elected to write the English text himself. The text here does not reflect an exact translation of the French recipe but rather Bernstein's idiosyncratic interpretation thereof. The text provided above was sourced from the *Leonard Bernstein Song Album* (1947/1988).

APPENDIX C: *LA BONNE CUISINE* – WORDS – FRENCH[21]

I. *Plum Pudding*

Deux cents cinquante grammes de raisins de Malaga,

Deux cents cinquante grammes de raisins de Corinthe,

Deux cents cinquante grammes de graisse de rognon de bœuf,

Et cent vingte cinq grammes de mie de pain émiettée,

Soixante grammes de sucre en poudre ou de cassonade,

Un verre de lait; un demi verre de rhum ou d'eau-de-vie;

Trois œufs; un citron!

Muscade, gingimbre, cannelle en poudre, mélangés

(En tout la moitié d'une cuillère à café)

Sel fin la moitié d'une cuillère à café.

II. *Queues de Boeuf*

La queue de boeuf n'est pas un mets à dédaigner.

D'abord avec assez de queues de boeuf on peut fair' un pot-au-feu passable.

Les queues qui ont servi à faire le pot-au-feu peuv'nt être mangées,

panées, et grillées, et servies avec une sauce piquante ou tomate.

La queues de boeuf n'est pas un mets à dé daigner.

III. *Tavouk Guenksis*

Tavouk gueunksis, poitrine de poule;

Fait' bouillir une poul',

[21] Sourced from the *Leonard Bernstein Song Album* (1947/1988).

dont vous prendre les blancs;

vous les pilerez de façon à cequ'ils se mett' en charpie.

Puis mêleslez, mêleslez avec une bouillie,

comme celle cidessus, comme celle cidessus du Mahallebi.

Tavouk gueunksis, poitrine de poule.

IV*. Civet à Toute Vitesse*

Lorsque on sera très pressé,

voici un' manière de confectionner

un civet de lièvre que je recommande!

Dépecez le lièvre comme pour le civet ordinaire:

Mettez-le dans une casserole ou chaudron

avec son sang et son foie écrasé!

Un'demi-livre de poitrine de porc

(coupée en morceaux);

une vingtaine de petits oignons

(un peu de sel et poivr');

un litre e demi de vin rouge.

Fait' bouillir à tout' vitesse.

Au bout de quinze minutes environ,

lorsque la sauce est réduite de moitié,

approchez un papier enflammé,

de manière à mettre le feu au ragoût.

Lorsqu'il sera éteint, liez la sauc(e)

avec un' demi-livre de beurre manié de farine. Servez

APPENDIX D: *LA BONNE CUISINE* – LITERAL TRANSLATION OF FRENCH RECIPES[22]

I. *Plum Pudding*

250 grams of Malaga grapes, 250 grams of Corinth grapes; 250 grams of beef kidney fat, and 125 grams of bread crumbs. 60 grams of powdered or brown sugar; a glass of milk, a half glass of rum or brandy, 3 eggs, a lemon! Powdered nutmeg, ginger, cinnamon, mixed (all together about half a teaspoon); half a teaspoon of finely ground salt.

II. *Queues de Boeuf* (Ox Tails)

Ox-tails is not a dish to be scorned. First of all, with enough ox-tails you can make a tolerable stew. The tails that were used to make the stew can be eaten, breaded, and broiled, and served with hot tomato sauce. Ox-tails is not a dish to be scorned.

III. *Tavouk Gueunksis*

Tavouk Gueunksis, breast of hen; put a hen to boil, and take the white meat and chop it into shreds. Mix it with a broth, like the one for Mahallebi. Tavouk Gueunksis, breast of hen.

IV. *Civet à Toute Vitesse* (Rabbit at Top Speed)

Should you be in a hurry, here's a method for preparing a rabbit stew that I recommend! Cut up the rabbit (hare) as for an ordinary stew: put it in a pot with its blood and river mashed. A half-pound of breast of pork, chopped; twenty or so small onions (a dash of salt and pepper); a litre and a half of red wine. Bring the quickly to boil. After about fifteen minutes, when the sauce is reduced to half of what it was, apply a fire, to set the stew aflame. When the fire goes out, add to the sauce half a pound of butter, worked with flour … and serve.

[22] A literal translation of the French recipes that appear in Bernstein's song cycle *La Bonne Cuisine* was provided by Ron Mendelsohn and published in the *Leonard Bernstein Song Album* (1947/1988).

APPENDIX E: GLOSSARY

Adagio	Slow and gracefully
A tempo	Indicates a return to the original *tempo*
Accelerando sin al fine	Speed up until the end
Alla Turca	In the style of a Turkish military band
Allegretto	Faster than a walking pace but not faster than *Allegro*
Allegro	Fast and lively
Comme sopra	As previously
Common time	Four quarter note beats per measure
Crescendo	Gradually getting louder
Declamando	Declamatory
Decrescendo	*G*radually getting softer
Dolce	Sweetly
Forte	Loud
Legatissimo	Very connected and/or smoothly
Legato	Connected and/or smoothly
Marcato	Indicates a note should be played more forcefully than the surrounding music
Matematico	Mathematically
Martellato	Hammered
Mezzo piano	Moderately soft
Misterioso	Mysteriously
Molto	Very
Pianissimo	Very soft
Piano	Soft

Più	More
Preciso e senza espressione	Precisely and without expression
Presto	Very fast, rapidly
Prestissimo	Faster than *presto*
Recitativo	A vocal passage, conveying narrative text, composed to mimic the natural range and rhythms of speech
Ritardando	Gradually slow down
Secco recitativo	A recitative accompanied by static chords
Senza pedale	Play without the sustain or mute pedal
Sforzando	An accent that is played suddenly loud and then immediately diminishes in volume
Simile	A directive for the performer to play the indicated passage of music in a similar way to the previous passage (sim.)
Staccato	Short and detached (pl. *staccati)*
Subito	Suddenly
Tempo	Speed (pl. *tempi)*
Tenuto	Indicates to hold the note for its full length (pl. *tenuti*)
Tremolo	In a trembling effect