CHAMPIONING THE LIVES AND WORKS OF AMERICAN WOMEN ARTISTS: A PERFORMANCE GUIDE TO LIBBY LARSEN'S SONG CYCLE *MARY CASSATT (1844-1926): SEVEN SONGS FOR MEZZO-SOPRANO, SOLO TROMBONE, AND ORCHESTRA (WITH 15 PROJECTIONS OF CASSATT'S PAINTINGS)* (1994)

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty
of the
North Dakota State University
of Agriculture and Applied Science

By

Catherine Mary Tlusty

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of
DOCTOR OF MUSICAL ARTS

Major Program:
Music

August 2018

Fargo, North Dakota

North Dakota State University
Graduate School

Title

CHAMPIONING THE LIVES AND WORKS OF AMERICAN WOMEN ARTISTS: A PERFORMER'S GUIDE TO LIBBY LARSEN'S SONG CYCLE *MARY CASSATT (1844-1926): SEVEN SONGS FOR MEZZO-SOPRANO, SOLO TROMBONE, AND ORCHESTRA (WITH 15 PROJECTIONS OF CASSATT'S PAINTINGS)* (1994)

By

Catherine Mary Tlusty

The Supervisory Committee certifies that this ***disquisition*** complies with North Dakota State University's regulations and meets the accepted standards for the degree of

DOCTOR OF MUSICAL ARTS

SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE:

John Miller, PhD
Chair

Kelly Burns, DMA

Mariane Lemieux-Wottrich, DMA

John K. Cox, PhD

Approved:

10/03/2022
Date

John Miller
Department Chair

ABSTRACT

Libby Larsen (b. 1950), one of America's leading composers, has written in nearly every genre of classical music. Among her catalogue of vocal music are choral works, operas, art song, and song cycles. Larsen's song cycles are known for their texts that portray strong women and are written by female writers. Larsen's declamatory text settings, which are influence by her training in Gregorian chant, capture the struggles and triumphs of these strong female figures. Her recitative-like melodies bring to life these women such as the artist Mary Cassatt (1844-1926) in Larsen's song cycle *Mary Cassatt (1844-1926): Seven songs for mezzo-soprano, solo trombone, and orchestra (with 15 projections of Cassatt's paintings)* (1994). In addition to her plainchant-influenced vocal melodies, Larsen utilizes the solo trombone to communicate Cassatt's inner voice and projections of Cassatt's paintings to demonstrate the artist's evolution.

The use of the trombone in this song cycle arose from the terms of the commission. The Grand Rapids Symphony Orchestra and The Keller Foundation commissioned *Mary Cassatt* to be premiered by Fred P. Keller's (b. 1944) wife, Linn Maxwell Keller (1943-2016). Fred Keller chose the trombone as the solo instrument because he thought it would be an interesting combination with mezzo-soprano and orchestra. Transcribed interviews published in journals, newspapers, and dissertations, my personal interview with Larsen, a review of biographical information about the composer, and my own analysis of the score will provide a thorough background of Larsen's use of this ensemble in this song cycle. Few song cycles in modern repertoire are accompanied by a full orchestra and utilize a solo instrument as an equal partner to the voice. This dissertation will bring to the forefront an awareness of *Mary Cassatt* and will provide thorough background information about the composer and the artist and an analysis of the score to support performances of this song cycle.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Libby Larsen and her staff for the guidance they provided to me while researching this document. I am especially grateful to Libby Larsen for the time she devoted to my personal interview of her.

DEDICATION

This disquisition is dedicated to my daughter, Elisabeth, who inspires me every day to uplift all women.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF MUSICAL EXAMPLES

CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

Libby Larsen (b. 1950) is known for her numerous song cycles and choral works that champion the lives of courageous and ambitious women. Larsen, who completed her PhD in Composition during a time when female composers were scarce, sought women artists and writers who also chose their own path rather than the path others expected for them.[1] One of these artists, whom she admired, was the impressionist painter Mary Cassatt (1844-1926), who left behind her upper-class family in western Pennsylvania to study painting in Europe. In 1994, Larsen had the opportunity to give voice to Cassatt in Larsen's song cycle *Mary Cassatt (1844-1926): Seven songs for mezzo-soprano, solo trombone, and orchestra (with 15 projections of Cassatt's paintings)*. This dissertation serves as a performance guide for *Mary Cassatt* by providing essential information about Larsen and her compositional traits, Cassatt and her life as a female artist in the male-dominated Parisian art scene, and an analysis of the score. By making this knowledge available, singers will possess the tools needed to program and perform this extraordinary song cycle.

It is my opinion that *Mary Cassatt* is an under-represented song cycle in Larsen's catalogue of vocal music. Literature that addresses *Mary Cassatt* references the original scoring for orchestra, making this logistically unfeasible for many singers. However, Larsen rescored the orchestral score into a piano reduction, which is available by request through her website.[2] Furthermore, the original score states that "A minimum of 2 slide projectors with a dissolve unit is needed to project the 15 slides of Mary Cassatt's paintings."[3] It should be noted that the

[1] Libby Larsen, interview by author, Minneapolis, October 16, 2017.

[2] Libby Larsen, "Works," Libby Larsen, accessed May 10, 2021, https://libbylarsen.com/works/mary-cassatt-seven-songs-for-mezzo-soprano-solo-trombone-and-piano.

[3] Libby Larsen, *Mary Cassatt (1844-1926): Seven songs for mezzo-soprano, solo trombone, and orchestra (with 15 projections of Cassatt's paintings)*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), Front Matter: Instrumentation.

images of Cassatt's paintings are currently included on a DVD, which are easily projected using current technology. While it is my speculation that logistical challenges prevent singers from performing *Mary Cassatt*, Larsen's piano reduction and advancements in technology make performances achievable.

In addition to the possibility that singers are hesitant to program *Mary Cassatt*, the song cycle is scarcely mentioned in scholarship about Larsen and her vocal works. In Denise Von Glahn's (b. 1950) biography of Larsen *Libby Larsen: Composing an American Life* (2017), *Mary Cassatt* is briefly mentioned in a section discussing American artists who serve as subjects for Larsen's compositions. The author devotes more time to *Black Birds, Red Hills* (1997), Larsen's work for Clarinet, Viola, and Piano that pays tribute to American female artist Georgia O'Keefe (1887-1986).[4] Other dissertations about Larsen's song cycles focus on *Me (Brenda Ueland)* (1987), *Beloved, Thou Hast Brought Me Many Flowers* (1994), *Songs from Letters: Calamity Jane to Her Daughter Janey* (1998), *Try Me, Good King: Last Words of the Wives of Henry VIII* (2000), *De toda la eternidad* (2002), and *Sifting through the Ruins* (2005). In Carol Kimball's book, *Song: A Guide to Art Song Style and Literature*, Kimball mentions the artist Cassatt only when discussing Larsen's use of prose and texts written by strong women.[5] These brief mentions are common among literature in my discipline; therefore, more information about *Mary Cassatt* is needed in the singing community.

Mary Cassatt represents Larsen's compositional traits, her evolution as a composer, and her tendency to favor female subjects and texts. In this song cycle, Larsen incorporated unaccompanied and ametrical speech-like settings of text, modal tonalities, motives, and the

[4] Denise Von Glahn, *Libby Larsen: Composing an American Life* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2017), 172.

[5] Carol Kimball, *Song: A Guide to Art Song Style and* Literature, Revised ed. (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard Corp., 2005), 331.

variety of musical genres that influenced Larsen as a child. Furthermore, Larsen composed *Mary Cassatt* during a period when she was particularly interested in combining visual art with her music compositions.[6] Larsen's inclusion of fifteen of Cassatt's paintings to be projected during the song cycle fully engages the audience in the story of Cassatt's journey as a female artist in a male-dominated discipline—a journey with which Larsen identifies. It was stories like Cassatt's that Larsen searched for when she was a young female composer in a male-dominated field. This song cycle exemplifies Larsen's characteristic compositional style and her connection with fellow female artists.

The number of female composers has steadily increased since the medieval period in music history. A quick glance at Oxford Music Online supports this by showing large increases in the number of biographies of female composers. While there is a steady increase from the Renaissance period to the Baroque period and from the Classical period to the Romantic period, the largest increase in female composers' biographies is seen following 1960.[7] Yet, according to the Institute for Composer Diversity, less than 10% of works programmed for performances by 120 Orchestras in the 2019-2020 season were composed by women.[8] In order to set a starting place to increase diversity in concert programming, the Institute suggests 15% of works performed should be by female composers.[9] Female singers can increase the number of works performed by taking the initiative to perform more music composed by women. In the case of *Mary Cassatt*, we have the opportunity not only to represent Larsen, but also Cassatt—a female artist whom Larsen admired for her singular focus on painting regardless of societal and familial

[6] Larsen, interview by author.

[7] "Women Composers by Time Period" in *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online* (Oxford University Press, 2021), accessed May 11, 2021, https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/page/women-composers-by-time-period.

[8] Institute for Composer Diversity, "Orchestra Season Analysis," State University of New York at Fredonia School of Music, 2020, accessed May 11, 2021, https://www.composerdiversity.com/orchestra-seasons.

[9] Ibid.

expectations. By performing *Mary Cassatt*, we have the opportunity to champion the lives and works of two American female artists: Mary Cassatt and Libby Larsen.

Larsen's journey as a composer is examined in Chapter Two, beginning with Larsen's earliest musical memories, her introduction to Gregorian Chant in elementary school, and her progress as a young composer. This chapter introduces the musical traits that are characteristic of her vocal music. The text is the dominant force in her musical choices; therefore, I discuss the process she follows in setting text. In addition to how she sets text, Larsen's predilection for texts written by women is explained. Chapter Two provides the information about Larsen's compositional traits and journey as a female composer that will be beneficial for performing *Mary Cassatt.*

Cassatt is profiled in Chapter Three. This chapter begins by explaining the familial and societal expectations of Cassatt, who was born in the patriarchal Victorian period. It becomes clear what future was expected of her and how her choice to travel to Europe to study painting was an astounding move for a woman in her time. In this biographical chapter, I describe the barriers Cassatt overcame in the Salon-driven and male-dominated art scene in Paris. I examine the important relationships Cassatt held with artists and patrons—particularly with her colleague Edgar Degas (1834-1917). Because Larsen focuses on Cassatt's choices, hurdles, and relationships in the song cycle, it is important to study this information prior to performing this song cycle.

Chapter Four focuses on the song cycle, *Mary Cassatt*. I offer an analysis of the piano reduction of this song cycle, which traces Larsen's introduction, recurrence, and development of motives, her unaccompanied setting of text, her use of the ensemble, and the choice of Cassatt's paintings that accompany the music. When appropriate for a deeper understanding of the score, I

compare the piano reduction with the full orchestral score. The analysis of the score, coupled with the material from previous chapters will allow for a thoughtful and informed performance of *Mary Cassatt.*

The information I present in this study comes from a thorough review of biographical literature about Larsen and Cassatt. In 2017, *Libby Larsen: Composing an American Life* by Denise Von Glahn, was published. Von Glahn was privy to Larsen's personal documents, conducted numerous interviews, and closely examined Larsen's musical scores.[10] Von Glahn places Larsen's catalogue of music within contexts that are important to her and that shaped her: her family, religion, nature, academia, gender, technology, and collaborators.[11] Other primary sources include numerous interviews with Larsen, including a personal interview I conducted with her. Several dissertations and book chapters provided insight into Larsen's compositional style, her preference for setting prose authored by women, and her methodology of setting texts. Finally, my research contains a thorough study of both the orchestral score and the piano reduction, informed by the information presented in this dissertation.

A course presented at Boston's Museum of Fine Arts during a 2016 exhibition of Cassatt's paintings shed light on Cassatt's place among Parisian artists. This four-week course included lectures given by leading experts on Cassatt and was released on YouTube in late 2016. Additionally, articles written by Cassatt's friend and patron, Louisine Havemeyer (1855-1929) serve as a primary resource about Cassatt's painting style and her relationship with Degas. In addition to biographical information, I viewed numerous Cassatt paintings, including the paintings Larsen chose to project during the song cycle. These materials were vital in providing information about Cassatt in this document.

[10] Von Glahn, *Libby Larsen: Composing an American Life*, xvi.
[11] Ibid., Table of Contents.

Given the large body of literature about each of these women, but the lack of information about *Mary Cassatt*, this document aims to gather and present the details necessary to give an informed and well-prepared performance of this song cycle. This document illuminates the similar choices that each artist made, their propensity for female subjects, their artistic styles, and how Larsen exemplifies their similarities in *Mary Cassatt.* It is my hope, that given this body of knowledge, more singers will choose to program this work in upcoming recitals.

CHAPTER 2: LIBBY LARSEN: MUSICAL TRAINING AND COMPOSITIONAL PRACTICES

Libby Larsen's vocal compositions are known for their declamatory vocal lines, a characteristic that can be traced to her early training in Gregorian chant. The freedom she finds in chant and in the rhythm of American English influence her preference for prose as texts for her solo songs. Larsen is drawn to first-person prose by female authors that depict strong female characters such as Willa Cather's (1873-1947) novel *My Ántonia* (1918), which in 2000, Larsen set in a song cycle for high voice and piano.[12] Larsen's song cycles are also unique as several employ a solo instrument, which in addition to piano or orchestra, accompany her distinctive chant-like vocal melodies. Larsen's early training in Gregorian chant, her tendency to choose prose and strong female characters, the conditions of her commissions, and her methodology of setting text determines the manner in which she uses the mezzo-soprano, orchestra, and solo trombone in *Mary Cassatt* (1994). In this chapter, a complete review of biographical material I have located in books and dissertations as well as an interview with the composer will inform my discussion of Larsen's musical training, her preference for prose texts and strong female characters, the commission of this song cycle, and her unique compositional techniques.

Larsen's earliest musical memory dates back to when she was two years old and heard her older sister practicing the piano in the family home in Delaware.[13] Larsen knew then that she wanted to pursue music as a career.[14] When Larsen was three years old, her family moved to

[12] Libby Larsen, "Works," Libby Larsen, accessed August 15, 2022, https://libbylarsen.com/works/my-antonia.

[13] Libby Larsen, San Francisco Conservatory of Music Commencement Address, May 24, 1997, in "Words to Live by: A Selected Collection of Inspiring Commencement Addresses," transcribed by Francesca Blasing, *American Music Teacher* 47, no. 5 (April 1998): 34, accessed March 17, 2016, https://ezproxy.lib.ndsu.nodak.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/935794?.

[14] Ibid.

Minneapolis.[15] Larsen attended Christ the King Catholic School where she was trained in Gregorian chant, solfege, and composition.[16] Her first-grade teacher, Sister Helen Marie, taught the students to sing unaccompanied Gregorian chant and to read musical notation by intervals and by singing solfege using movable *do.*[17] The students did not sing in parts but sang only monophonic chant. [18] Larsen was drawn to the fluidity and flexibility in chant, which she felt instilled in her a "very intuitive, sensitive kind of musicianship."[19] Her training in chant was most influential on her vocal compositions due to its freedom, fluidity, and attention to prosody—the intentional setting of text to accentuate the stressed syllables of the language. The declamatory delivery of the text in *Mary Cassatt* demonstrates the influence of Larsen's training in Gregorian chant.

Larsen credits being taught the reading and writing of music simultaneously with reading and writing English for her ability to compose songs in elementary school.[20] In the sixth grade, she was inspired by the Spanish words *los pollitos* (the chicks) to write a short song. The Spanish language was different than the English and Latin she had previously learned, and the words had a particular "bounce" to them. Larsen felt *los pollitos* was "so musical that it had to be musicized."[21] The influence of Gregorian chant on Larsen could also be seen in a game called "Elements" which she played with her friends during recess. This improvised call-and-response

---

[15] Tina Milhorn Stallard, *Women of Influence in Contemporary Music: Nine American Composers*, edited by Michael Slayton, (Lanham, MD.: Scarecrow Press, 2011), 191.

[16] Ibid.

[17] F. S. Ponick, "Libby Larsen: An American Composer." *Teaching Music* 7, no. 3 (Dec. 1999): 24, accessed March 23, 2016, https://ezproxy.lib.ndsu.nodak.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=keh&AN=2637748&site=ehost-live&scope=site.

[18] Deborah B. Crall, "Context and Commission in Large-Scale Texted Works of Libby Larsen." (PhD diss., The Catholic University of America, 2013), 275, ProQuest 1315224081.

[19]Ann McCutchan, *The Muse That Sings: Composers Speak about the Creative Process* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 144.

[20] Ponick, "Libby Larsen: An American Composer," 24.

[21] Crall, "Context and Commission," 271.

game was similar to the priest's intonation and the responses of the students during school masses and prayer services.[22] In the seventh grade, she was asked to write a school song for the students to sing every day.[23]

Larsen began piano lessons at age seven and continued singing Gregorian Chant throughout elementary and middle school; however, when she joined her high school choir, her experience in singing changed significantly. She transitioned from monophonic, unmetered, unaccompanied singing to four-part choral singing often accompanied by the piano. Adjusting to metered music and piano pitches was uncomfortable for her, feeling unnatural and out-of-tune compared to Gregorian Chant.[24]

During the summer between her junior and senior year in high school, Larsen met William Lydell, one of her most influential teachers. She applied to the Twin Cities Institute for Talented Youth and was accepted into the music program where Lydell was one of her teachers. Larsen recalls that he taught music theory based on Paul Hindemith's (1895-1963) pedagogy; and by the end of the summer, the class was composing music.[25] Lydell was the first to inspire Larsen to consider a life in music and told her that being a musician was hard work, but a rewarding endeavor.[26]

Although Larsen enjoyed composing and had played piano for several years, she enrolled at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities (UMN) as a voice performance major. One of the music professors at the university, Arnold Caswell, raced sailboats at the same lake as Larsen and her sister, and he often heard Larsen singing on her boat.[27] Caswell suggested she pursue

---

[22] Ibid.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Jennifer Kelly, *In Her Own Words: Conversations with Composers in the United States* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2013), 303.
[25] Crall, "Context and Commission," 273.
[26] Ponick, "Libby Larsen: An American Composer," 24.
[27] Crall, "Context and Commission," 275.

singing.[28] Larsen appreciated his encouragement since her family did not support her decision to pursue music. By the end of her freshman year, Larsen was convinced she would spend her life composing music.[29]

After graduating with her Bachelor's degree, Larsen continued to study composition at UMN. Vern Sutton (b. 1938), UMN's opera director, was her first mentor.[30] He encouraged her to write an opera and suggested she compose an opera based on E.B. White's (1899-1985) children's story *Charlotte's Web* (1952). Larsen composed a short opera, *Some Pig*, which Sutton produced. Sutton taught her to always think of composing in terms of the piece's performance rather than its compositional techniques. This lesson carries through in her practices today. Larsen will not compose any music unless a performance is scheduled, and that performance is part of her commission contract. Dominick Argento (1927-2019), her PhD advisor, further shaped how she sets text to music. He taught her to set text by the natural flow of the speech, stating that if you set text contrary to this flow, the text cannot be understood. She also studied Argento's song settings of prose texts, which in turn motivated Larsen's preference for prose. She said of Argento's songs: "I began to discover the kind of musicality that comes from well written prose. It creates extraordinarily interesting melody especially when dealing with American English."[31]

When Larsen completed her PhD, she chose not to pursue a career in academia. Instead, she co-founded the Minnesota Composers Forum (1973), now the American Composer's Forum. The Forum gave her and other composers the opportunity to have their compositions performed and provided commissions from a variety of sources. Since founding the American Composer's

[28] Ibid.
[29] Larsen. "San Francisco Conservatory of Music Commencement Address," 35.
[30] Crall, "Context and Commission," 13.
[31] Crall, "Context and Commission," 32-33.

Forum, she has composed in nearly every genre, has been composer-in-residence with the Minnesota Orchestra, the Charlotte Symphony, and the Colorado Symphony, and has won a Grammy award.

As a composer who writes mostly on commission, Larsen is most content when she is commissioned to compose for friends, one of whom is Eugenia Zukerman (b. 1944), the flutist for whom Larsen wrote *Notes Slipped under the Door* (2001). Another favorite collaboration is with her friend, mezzo-soprano Suzanne Mentzer (b. 1957), for whom she has composed several song cycles. Larsen involves her commissioners from the start by honoring their choices regarding "the musical program, texts, subject of the work, forces used, and any limitations."[32] Larsen compares working with these choices to an "intellectual puzzle."[33]

The Grand Rapids Symphony Orchestra and the Keller Foundation commissioned *Mary Cassatt*. The first performance of *Mary Cassatt* was to be given by Fred Keller's (b. 1944) wife, Linn Maxwell Keller (1943-2016). In the case of *Mary Cassatt*, it was Fred Keller who chose the trombone to be the solo instrument that personifies Cassatt's alter-ego.[34]

For the texts for her vocal works, Larsen often chooses prose, written by women, which portrays a strong female character. In an interview with Susan Chastain, published in the *International Alliance for Women in Music Journal*, Larsen states that she is drawn to texts in which the character undergoes an honest personal or spiritual struggle. In a comparison of "female" and "male" texts, Larsen finds texts written by women to be more honest and direct than texts written by men. Mary Cassatt is an example of a woman about whom Larsen prefers to compose songs.

---

[32] Crall, "Context and Commission," 1.
[33] Crall, "Context and Commission," 2.
[34] VanderVeen, Don. "Keller in Tune with Arts." *Grand Rapids Business Journal* 12, no. 11 (Mar. 1994): 1.

Larsen begins composing vocal music by speaking the text repeatedly, until she memorizes it. According to Kori Lea Jennings's dissertation, "A Performance Guide to Libby Larsen's *Sifting through the Ruins* for Mezzo-Soprano, Viola, and Piano," Larsen's method of speaking the text repeatedly allows her to determine the meter, rhythms, phrase structure, and color of the vocal line. In setting prose, Larsen writes the rhythm and melody first, and adds the meter and bar lines later. The resulting chant-like melodic line often switches meter or has no meter, much like Gregorian chant.

Larsen's training in Gregorian Chant during her elementary school years is the single most influential component in her compositional style. The natural inflection of the text inherent in the vocal melody of chant is seen in her solo vocal compositions including *Mary Cassatt*. The terms of the commission led to the unique combinations of mezzo-soprano, orchestra, and solo trombone in *Mary Cassatt*. This song cycle examines uniquely female subjects—*Mary Cassatt* has as its central character a strong woman typical of Larsen's song cycles. In writing and setting the text, which Larsen wrote based on her own research about Cassatt, Larsen carefully follows the natural flow of American speech patterns and the cadence and timbre of the female voice when choosing meter, rhythm, and pitches. As I will demonstrate in Chapter 4, *Mary Cassatt* represents Larsen's compositional practices and style for solo vocal music.

CHAPTER 3: MARY CASSATT, THE AMERICAN IMPRESSIONIST

The American Impressionist artist Mary Cassatt is most known for her paintings of women and children. Though Cassatt was a successful artist in Europe for over a decade and several of her earlier paintings were accepted into exhibitions at the Paris Salon, she did not shift her focus to these subjects until the 1880s. These well-known images, however, most closely represent the art she wished to create on her own terms—bold women shown in everyday moments. Her commitment to this subject defines her independent nature as an American woman who carved an unexpected path.

3.1. Early Years

Cassatt's parents, who would later disapprove of her decision to pursue a painting career, provided her with childhood experiences that paved the way for her unconventional career choice. Mary Stevenson Cassatt was born in 1844 in Allegheny City, Pennsylvania, which is now part of Pittsburgh.[35] Cassatt's mother, Katherine Kelso Johnston Cassatt (1816-1895), was from a well-to-do banking family and Cassatt's father, Robert Simpson Cassatt (1806-1891), was a stockbroker who provided a conventional, upper-middle class life for the Cassatt family.[36] When Cassatt was seven-years-old, her family travelled to Europe to seek medical treatment for her brother Robert, who was afflicted with a bone disease.[37] The Cassatts lived in France and Germany from 1851 to 1855.[38] During this time, Mary Cassatt began taking drawing lessons.[39]

---

[35] H. Barbara Weinberg, "Mary Stevenson Cassatt (1844-1926) in Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History," The Metropolitan Museum of Art, October 2004, accessed November 12, 2018, http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/cast/hd_cast.htm.

[36] The Art Story, "Mary Cassatt Overview and Analysis," The Art Story, accessed November 12, 2018, https://www.theartstory.org/artist-cassatt-mary.htm.

[37] Elliot Bostwick Davis, "Mary Cassatt's Formation: Forging a Path as a Woman in a Man's World" Video of lecture, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, (April 5, 2016), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yw4siXzujU4.

[38] The Art Story, "Mary Cassatt Overview and Analysis."

[39] Sarah Bochicchio, "Mary Cassatt Painted Domestic Life in a Way Male Impressionists Couldn't - Artsy," accessed November 12, 2018, https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-mary-cassatt-painted-domestic-life-way-male-impressionists.

In addition to these lessons, the Cassatt family visited the major capital cities in Europe, and Cassatt became fluent in both French and German.[40] It is likely that Cassatt attended the 1855 Paris World's Fair where she would have seen the art of Courbet, Delacroix, and Manet.[41] Cassatt's brother Robert died in Germany in 1855, and the Cassatts returned to the United States.[42] After the family returned to the United States, Cassatt lived in Philadelphia for the rest of her childhood, where she began her formal art education.

When Cassatt was sixteen years old, she enrolled in the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, where she studied art from 1860 to 1862.[43] Cassatt's father did not support her enrollment at the Academy.[44] She was quickly disillusioned with the Academy, which did not allow women to study painting. Because customarily women became housewives, the Academy chose not to invest in female artists.[45] Additionally, the United States was not supportive of art, nor were there any large art museums for artists to exhibit their work.[46] These factors led Cassatt to petition her parents to allow her to study painting in Europe in 1865.[47] This was an astonishing request for several reasons. The norms in the latter half of the nineteenth century would have dictated that Cassatt marry within her social class and raise a family. The idea that a young woman would choose any vocation was highly unusual. The fact that Cassatt chose a vocation in art, a world dominated by men, was courageous. Although her parents granted her permission to study abroad, it is asserted that her father responded to her choice to become an artist by saying

[40] Bostwick Davis, "Mary Cassatt's Formation."
[41] The Art Story, "Mary Cassatt Overview and Analysis"; Bostwick Davis, "Mary Cassatt's Formation."
[42] Bostwick Davis, "Mary Cassatt's Formation."
[43] The Art Story "Mary Cassatt Overview and Analysis."
[44] Edsitement: The Best of Humanities on the Web, "Mary Cassatt: A Woman of Independent Mind," National Endowment for the Humanities, accessed November 12, 2018, https://edsitement.neh.gov/mary-cassatt-woman-independent-mind.
[45] Erica Hirshler, "An American in Paris: Cassatt, Degas, and the Impressionists in the 1870s," Video of lecture, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (April 12, 2006), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RIu-U10790M.
[46] Ibid.
[47] "Edsitement, "Mary Cassatt: A Woman of Independent Mind,"

"I would almost rather see you dead."[48] Her father never approved of her art training nor her art career, and he refused to fund her endeavors.

Despite her father's disapproval, Cassatt's mother accompanied her on the week-long boat trip to Europe.[49] Upon arriving in Europe, Cassatt began an independent and informal art education. Prior to 1897, women were not admitted to art schools in Paris.[50] Cassatt studied privately with Jean-Léon Gérôme (1824-1904) and honed her craft by copying the paintings of the masters in the Louvre and in other exhibitions. Cassatt took painting seriously and studied in Paris and in Italy.[51] While it was fashionable for young women to travel abroad to study art for one or two years, Cassatt was a tenacious art student and had no intention of returning to the United States.[52]

Regardless of her intentions, Cassatt was forced to return to the United States during the Franco-Prussian war from 1870-1871. Cassatt was frustrated at home because there were no opportunities for her to continue painting. In a letter to her friend Emily Sartain (1841-1927), Cassatt wrote, "I cannot tell you what I suffer for the want of seeing a good picture."[53] She was eager to return to Europe and to resume painting after her two-year hiatus from art. Upon returning to Europe, Cassatt renewed her studies in Spain, Italy, and Holland.[54] By 1874, she was an established artist in Paris, and her paintings had been accepted into the Paris Salon.

---

[48] Ibid.
[49] Hirshler, "An American in Paris"; Bostwick Davis, "Mary Cassatt's Formation."
[50] Hirshler, "An American in Paris."
[51] Nancy Caldwell Sorel, "When Edgar Degas Met Mary Cassatt" *Independent*, March 2, 1996. Accessed November 12, 2018. https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/when-edgar-degas-met-mary-cassatt-1339935.html.
[52] Ibid.
[53] Hirshler, "An American in Paris."
[54] The Art Story, "Mary Cassatt Overview and Analysis."

3.2. The Paris Salon

The Paris Salon was a vital part of the French art scene, and acceptance of an artist's painting into the Salon was imperative for a successful career. All serious artists aimed to have their work accepted into an exhibition at the Salon. The Salon, and its jurors, were able to catapult or to stifle an artist's career. Knowing that her paintings must be exhibited and well-received for her to have the career that she desired, Cassatt submitted paintings to the Salon for more than a decade. Because she was a female artist and an American, acceptance of her paintings into the Salon was unlikely compared to the exhibition of paintings by European male artists who preceded her for nearly two centuries.

The Paris Salon was established in the seventeenth century by the *Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture*, an institute of art founded by King Louis XIV.[55] The government-sponsored Salon followed the trends and the training of the *Académie.* In the nineteenth century, the Salon was the only public establishment where artists could have their work displayed. These annual exhibits were central to the cultural life in Paris. The salon attracted approximately 10,000 visitors per day.[56] As many as 1,000,000 people attended the exhibitions at the Salon, sometimes requiring the exhibits to remain open for several months.[57] By the 1820s, the exhibitions took place in large commercial buildings. The popularity of the Salon grew through the nineteenth century.

The acceptance of artists' work into the Salon was essential to the artist's success. Artists submitted paintings or sculptures to a panel of jurors who choose which works would be shown.

[55] Hélène Delacour and Bernard Leca, "The Decline and Fall of the Paris Salon : A Study of the Deinstitutionalization Pro Cess of a Field Configuring Event in the Cultural Activities," *M@n@gement* 14, no. 1 (July 1, 2011): 436–66, https://doi.org/10.3917/mana.141.0436.

[56] Hirshler, "An American in Paris."

[57] Delacour and Leca, "The Decline and Fall of the Paris Salon."

The jurors were associated with the *Académie* and were also artists.[58] If the jurors accepted an artist's submission, the artist could potentially reap the benefits of the exposure the Salon provided. Not only did the general public purchase tickets to see the exhibits, but other influential parties visited the Salon. This included not only artists, curators, dealers, the press, and art critics but also art collectors whose purchases were influenced by the opinions of the critics and jurors.[59] The jurors chose paintings in the exhibition to receive awards and medals.[60] Paintings that received the most prestigious awards sold for higher prices. Aside from the exposure and the sale of an artist's paintings or sculptures, there was also the possibility for a new work to be commissioned by a collector. An ambitious Cassatt knew the importance of submitting her work and the jury's acceptance of her paintings if she were to succeed as an artist.

Cassatt submitted her painting, *A Mandoline Player* (1868), to the Salon in 1868 under the name Mary Stevenson—Stevenson was her middle name.[61] This painting was in the Romantic style of Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot (1796-1875) and Thomas Couture (1815-1879), with whom she had studied.[62] Like other paintings of that time, the background of the painting was dark and brown, and the young girl playing the mandolin was painted with dark and heavy colors.[63] This was the first of Cassatt's paintings accepted by the jury. She did not submit another painting until after the Franco-Prussian War.

Following Cassatt's return to Europe after the war, her painting *Two Women Throwing Flowers During Carnival* (1872) was accepted into the Salon. Not only was this painting well-

---

[58] Ibid.

[59] Hirshler, "An American in Paris."

[60] Delacour and Leca, "The Decline and Fall of the Paris Salon."

[61] Mary Cassatt: The Complete Works, "Biography," Marycassatt.org, 2002-2017, accessed November 14, 2018, https://www.marycassatt.org/biography.html.

[62] Mary Cassatt: The Complete Works, "Biography."

[63] "A Mandoline Player by Mary Cassatt," *The Famous Artists,* accessed November 15, 2018, http://www.thefamousartists.com/mary-cassatt/a-mandoline-player.

received by the critics, press, and public, but this painting was sold at the exhibition. The success of *Two Women Throwing Flowers During Carnival* at the 1872 exhibition contributed to Cassatt's subsequent notoriety outside of Paris. It was unusual for an American to have paintings chosen by the Salon's jury. Furthermore, the jury rarely took seriously art created by women. The juries approved of Cassatt's early painting style that replicated traditional painting conventions.

As Cassatt began to experiment with colors, her work began to fall out of the Salon juror's favor. In 1875, she submitted two paintings to the Salon. At least one of the paintings is known to have been rejected.[64] The rejection of this submission for "being too bright" is referred to in the song "Early Work."[65] Cassatt darkened the background and resubmitted the painting for the 1876 Salon exhibition, which the jury accepted.[66] Cassatt submitted two paintings the following year, both of which were rejected.[67] This was the first year since her return to Europe after the Franco-Prussian War that she did not have a painting shown at the exhibition of the Paris Salon.[68]

Cassatt persisted in developing her own style of painting which was disliked by the jurors linked to the *Académie.* By the mid-nineteenth century, the jurors rejected works submitted by Cassatt and other Impressionists whose paintings displayed the use of brighter colors and looser brush strokes than the paintings of their more traditional contemporaries.[69] The Emperor Napoleon III (1808-1873) gave these artists who were rejected by the Salon an opportunity to show their work at the *Salon des Refusés* (Salon of the Refused). This led to even more avenues

[64] The Art Story, "Mary Cassatt Overview and Analysis."
[65] Larsen, *Mary Cassatt,* 32.
[66] Mary Cassatt: The Complete Works, "Biography."
[67] Ibid.
[68] Ibid.
[69] Andrea Hope, "The Salon de Paris," The Kiama Art Gallery: Stories about Modern Art, March 13, 2015, accessed November 14, 2018, https://kiamaartgallery.wordpress.com/2015/03/13/the-salon-de-paris/.

for artists to show their work independent of the Salon jurors. These independent art exhibitions, coupled with an important visit by fellow artist Edgar Degas (1834-1917), changed the course of Cassatt's career.

3.3. Edgar Degas

Degas was one of the most important and influential figures in Cassatt's career. When the artists met during Degas's visit to Cassatt's studio, he invited her to join him in an exhibition with artists known as the Impressionists.[70] This invitation began a long friendship in which the two artists worked closely together influencing each other's style. Cassatt's relationship with Degas allowed her to develop her style of bright, bold colors and to paint the subject with which she was most familiar—ordinary women and children in domestic settings. Because of Degas, Cassatt was able to paint what she wanted and what she knew.

Prior to the artists' first meeting, they had seen and admired each other's paintings. In an account by Cassatt's American friend and art collector Lousine Havemeyer (1855-1929), Degas saw Cassatt's painting, *Ida* (1874) at the 1874 Salon Exhibition and remarked, "C'est vrai. Voilà quelqu'un qui sent comme moi." (It's true. Here is someone who feels as I do.)[71] Cassatt and Havemeyer were introduced to Degas's art when they saw his paintings of dancers. In a letter to Havemeyer, Cassatt recalls first seeing these paintings, writing, "How well I remember, nearly forty years ago, seeing for the first time Degas's pastels in the window of a picture dealer on the Boulevard Haussmann. I used to go and flatten my nose against that window and absorb all I could of his art. It changed my life. I saw art then as I wanted to see it."[72] Seeing his work permitted Cassatt to experiment with brighter and bolder colors, abandoning the dark

[70] Sorel, "When Edgar Degas Met Mary Cassatt."

[71] Louisine W. Havemeyer, "Mary Cassatt," *Bulletin of the Pennsylvania Museum* 22, no. 113 (1927): 377, https://doi.org/10.2307/3794355.

[72] Ibid.

backgrounds preferred by the jurors of the Paris Salon.[73] Cassatt often encouraged art collectors, including her friend Havemeyer, to purchase Degas's paintings further substantiating her respect and admiration for him.[74] This mutual respect and admiration for each other continued for a lifetime.

In 1877, Degas visited Cassatt at her apartment, and after looking at her paintings, he invited her to join a group of artists who called themselves the "Independents."[75] This movement in art would later be referred to as "impressionism." As he left her apartment, he said to her, "Most women paint as though they are trimming hats. Not you."[76] Cassatt said of his invitation, "I accepted with joy. [Degas's invitation to exhibit with the Impressionists] Now I could work with absolute independence without considering the opinion of a jury. I had already recognized who were my true masters. I admired Manet, Courbet, and Degas. I took leave of conventional art. I began to live."[77]

Degas's influence on Cassatt's style is seen in her painting *Little Girl in a Blue Armchair* (1878), which is part of the National Gallery of Art's permanent collection. In 1903, Cassatt wrote to a friend that the little girl who was the model for this painting was the daughter of a friend of Degas.[78] This is the first connection between Cassatt and Degas in this painting.

In this same letter, Cassatt wrote that Degas helped her with the background. This was supported during the restoration of the painting around 2010, which showed a series of brush

---

[73] "Impressionists With Benefits? The Painting Partnership of Degas and Cassatt," Steve Inskeep and Renee Montagne, *Morning Edition*, aired May 23, 2014, on NPR.

[74] Weinberg, "Mary Stevenson Cassatt."

[75] Ibid.

[76] Sorel, "When Edgar Degas Met Mary Cassatt."

[77] Havemeyer, "Mary Cassatt."

[78] Sadie Dingfelder, "The National Gallery of Art Uncovers the True Relationship Between Impressionists Mary Cassatt and Edgar Degas (And It Wasn't Romantic)," *Washington Post*, May 14, 2014. Accessed on July 5, 2021, https://www.washingtonpost.com/express/wp/2014/05/14/the-national-gallery-of-art-uncovers-the-true-relationship-between-impressionists-mary-cassatt-and-edgar-degas-and-it-wasnt-romantic/.

strokes that were not typical of Cassatt's work.[79] However, these small horizontal strokes of grey paint in the background followed patterns that were characteristic of Degas's paintings.[80] Further examination of the painting using infrared light provided evidence that a change was made to the background.[81] It was determined that Cassatt had originally painted a straight wall, but Degas changed this to include a corner, giving the room more depth.[82] In conjunction with her friendship with Degas, this painting begins a new style of painting for Cassatt. It is these everyday domestic images and images of mothers and children for which she is best known. Degas's invitation allowed her to paint what she wanted, and Larsen believes, what she knew.[83]

3.4 The Impressionists

Cassatt and Degas, who were disgruntled with the jury system of the Salon, referred to themselves as "Independents" rather than "Impressionists," who they believed to be careless.[84] However, the group of artists—independents or impressionists—who broke away from the Salon system shared painting styles and techniques that were not well received by the jurors of the Salon. These artists worked with bolder, brighter colors and painted with freer brushstrokes than what was being exhibited at the Salon.[85] Additionally, artists were experimenting with different mediums. In Cassatt's case, she worked with pastels and metallics and was influenced by Japanese drawing techniques. Cassatt was pleased to be a part of this group and to create and show the art she wanted.

---

[79] Ibid.
[80] Ibid.
[81] Ibid.
[82] Ibid.
[83] Larsen, interview by author.
[84] "Impressionists With Benefits?" Steve Inskeep and Renee Montagne.
[85] Carol Kort, "Mary Cassatt," *A to Z of American Women in the Visual Arts,* New York 2002. Accessed October 23, 2014, http://www.fofweb.com/activelink2.asp?ItemID=WE52&iPin=WVA020&SingleRecord=True.

The independent artists began discussing showing their work on their own as early as 1867.[86] Prior to Cassatt joining this group, they held three shows, in 1874, 1876, and 1877. These shows were open to any member of the group of independent artists. Cassatt submitted two paintings to the exhibit in 1879—*In the Loge* (1978) and *Women Reading* (1879).[87] She exhibited with the Independents in three more shows through 1886. These shows gave Cassatt the artistic freedom she desired and allowed her to sell her work.

While Cassatt resembled the other independents in style, she differed from them in subject matter. The impressionist artists often chose landscapes and social gatherings as their subjects. Cassatt, along with Degas, were focused on the human form. While many of Degas's popular paintings are of dancers, Cassatt was painting scenes depicting audience members at the opera and scenes of domestic life. Both artists were using female models for their paintings. However, Cassatt's focus on female subjects evolved into the paintings of women and children for which she is most well-known.

3.5 Maturity

Cassatt is known for her paintings of women, which was not an innovative subject in the 19th century. However, Cassatt's placement of women in her paintings was unique to her. Her experience in society gave her a perspective into the role of women that was different than her male colleagues. This perspective was on display in her art whether her subject was at the opera or at home. Cassatt found both commercial success and popularity in Europe and the United States during this period of maturity.

Cassatt's mature period can be marked by two events. First, the invitation from Degas to exhibit her work with the Independents. Second, in that same year, Cassatt's family came to live

[86] Hirshler, "An American in Paris."
[87] Ibid.

with her in Paris. Her family responsibilities began to influence her paintings. Her sister Lydia (1837-1882) became her model for several paintings. Additionally, her daily life centered around her family and their home. During this time, her paintings showed women having tea, sewing, or reading. Likely, these subjects reflected the domestic life she settled into when she began living with her family.

As the turn of the century was approaching, the role of women began to shift. The literacy rate for women was increasing, and women were demanding higher levels of education. Women across the world were fighting for voting rights. Mothers were questioning their sole responsibility in raising children, and divorce was becoming more common than before. Furthermore, economic disparity highlighted the plight of poor pregnant women and rates of infanticide were climbing.[88] The question remains which of these situations fed Cassatt's tendency to focus on female subjects.

While many art historians lean towards Cassatt painting the life she knew around her, Norma Broude addresses the question of Cassatt's motives in her article, "Mary Cassatt: Modern Woman or the Cult of True Womanhood?" On one hand, Cassatt defied all expectations of an upper-middle-class woman by becoming a successful, professional artist. On the other hand, we are left wondering if she chose to focus on women to further uplift women during a time of a major shift in how women perceived themselves or if she was preserving more traditional roles of women. Broude presents an interesting alternative in which she states that the women who would be patrons of art tended to uphold traditional gender roles.[89] While Cassatt was a capable

[88] Norma Broude, "Mary Cassatt: Modern Woman or the Cult of True Womanhood?" *Woman's Art Journal*, Fall 2000/Winter 2001, 40.

[89] Ibid.

businesswoman, her paintings themselves and her support of the suffrage movement support the former.

CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS OF MARY CASSATT (1844-1926): SEVEN SONGS FOR MEZZO-SOPRANO, SOLO TROMBONE, AND ORCHESTRA (WITH 15 PROJECTIONS OF CASSATT'S PAINTINGS) (1994)

In the song cycle *Mary Cassatt*, Larsen dramatizes the strong spirit of the Impressionist artist Mary Cassatt. Each song in this cycle tells part of this female artist's struggle and determination in the patriarchal Victorian society of the nineteenth century. Larsen includes the difficulties that Cassatt faced as a female painter in the French male-dominated world of the Parisian Salon. Using text from the artist's personal letters to convey Cassatt's spirit and determination, Larsen traces Cassatt's life from early adulthood in 1868, when she decided to become an artist, to her mature, established years as an artist in the early 1900s.

Larsen illustrates Cassatt's story using an unusual ensemble for a song cycle. To personify Cassatt's story, Larsen assigns the three performing forces of the ensemble—mezzo-soprano, solo trombone, and orchestra—to three aspects of Cassatt's persona. Each member of this ensemble is integral to telling Cassatt's story. Cassatt is portrayed by the mezzo-soprano, who sings the text, which was written by Larsen. Larsen based the text of this song cycle on the artist's letters and is supplemented by Larsen's research about the artist. The trombone plays the artist's inner voice, which expresses her inner thoughts or provides commentary about the artist's challenges and relationships. At times, these voices are the voices of people Cassatt encounters, but in this song-cycle, they are filtered through Cassatt's own mind. Maybe the most unusual component of Larson's ensemble is the non-performing one. Larsen chose fifteen paintings by Cassatt to be projected on a screen throughout performances of this cycle. The paintings illustrate Cassatt's journey as she developed her own identity as a painter, and at times, the mezzo-soprano sings text that refers directly to the paintings behind her. The singer, solo

trombone, orchestra, and paintings merge to portray Cassatt in this unique song cycle. Unfortunately, this compelling song-cycle is overlooked in performance and scholarship of song cycles for women.

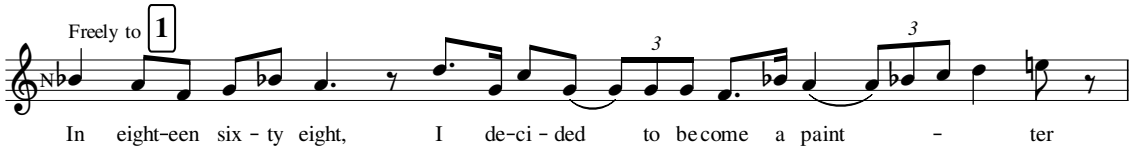
As covered in a previous chapter, Larsen incorporated the music of her childhood and adolescence into her work as a composer. The influence of learning Gregorian chant during elementary school is evident in her meter-less, unaccompanied vocal melodies. Larsen avoids major and minor tonality in favor of the church modes she learned in elementary school. She also incorporates the styles of the popular genres that she heard in her home during her childhood, such as musical theater and bebop. In *Mary Cassatt,* Larsen employs many of her characteristic compositional techniques. She uses motives as building blocks for this song cycle. Larsen adapts the popular French dance music, the can-can, as one motive, and composes a rocking, lullaby-like theme, which provides self-soothing for the artist. Thus, Larsen combines her compositional style and a unique ensemble (complete with paintings), with Cassatt's own words to bring to life the artist's strong and spirited character.

4.1. "To Be a Painter"

In “To Be a Painter,” the first of the seven songs in this cycle, Cassatt announces that she has decided to become a painter and to move to Europe. In this song, Larsen employs several of her characteristic devices—including unaccompanied chant-inspired vocal melodies with no meter; modal tonal centers, the introduction of motives; changing meters; symbolic intervals; and text painting. The mezzo-soprano sings an unaccompanied phrase in the opening measure. In this phrase, the singer declares that in 1868, she decided to become a painter. In place of a time signature, Larsen writes the meter notation "N" at the beginning of this measure and marks the measure “Freely,” signifying that there is no strict sense of meter for this passage **(ex. 1)**. Larsen

expects the singer to adhere to the rhythmic notation; however, because there is no meter in this line, the singer is given the freedom to sing the line in a recitative-like manner.[90] This first measure establishes the G Dorian mode and ends on an E-natural, which is a half-step higher than what a listener accustomed to major and minor tonality would anticipate. In the use of this mode, Larsen gives listeners the sense that Cassatt is exposed and taking a risk. Larsen creates conflicting senses of unease and freedom with this lack of a time signature, the lack of accompaniment, and the G Dorian Mode and conveys the nineteenth century norm that a young woman of Cassatt's social class would not pursue her own independent career.

Example 1. "To Be a Painter," opening unaccompanied phrase, m.1.

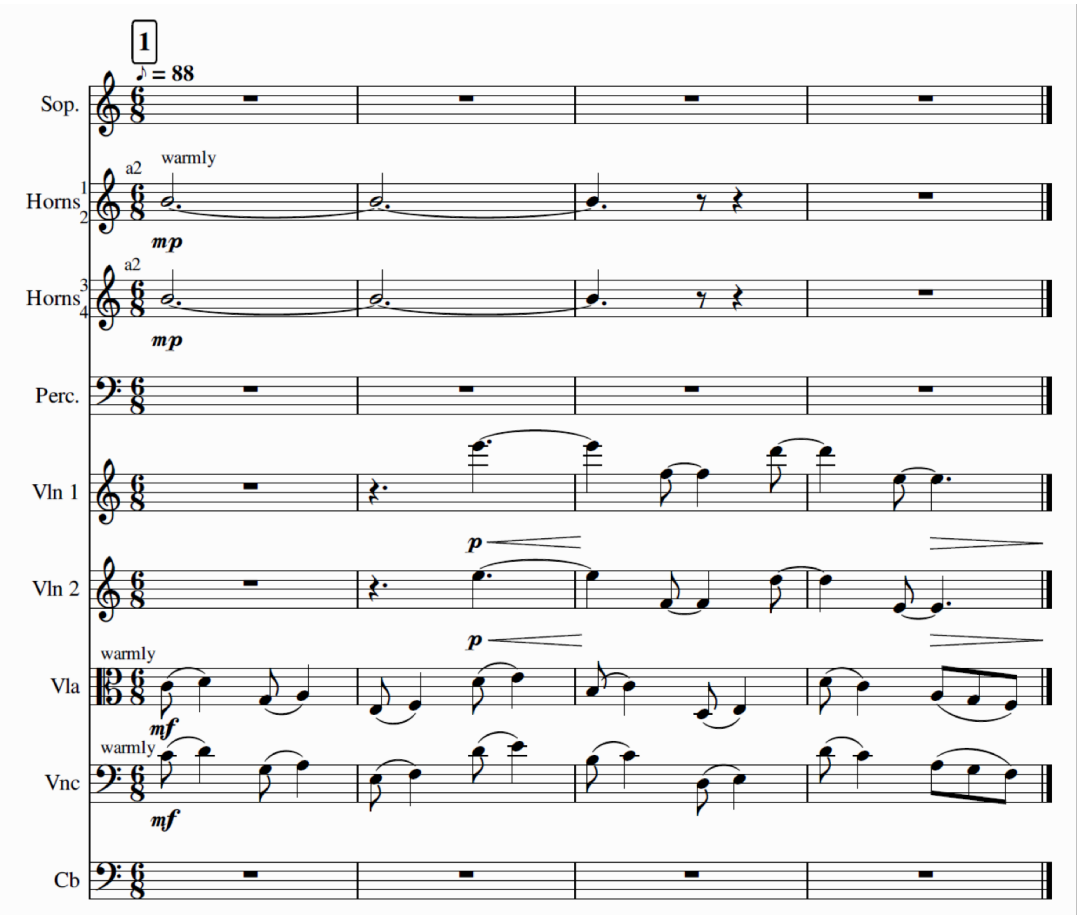


Immediately following this first statement of Cassatt's independence, Larsen introduces the first motive. For this motive, she changes the time signature from N to 6/8 and marks the passage "warmly." This time signature and expressive marking, in addition to the eighth-note followed by a quarter-note rhythmic pattern create a rocking motion, which Larsen refers to as "self-soothing."[91] In the orchestra score, the horns play a pedal tone on an E4 while the violas and cellos play the motive of paired ascending seconds. Larsen uses seconds to show motion or a journey, and at this moment in the song cycle she uses the interval of a second to represent Cassatt's journey.[92] The first and second violins enter in measure 2 and play pairs of descending sevenths, which is the inversion of a second, an octave apart from each other. The four measures in which this self-soothing motive is stated, are set in the C Ionian mode (**ex. 2**). The duple

[90] Larsen, interview by author.
[91] Ibid.

compound meter, the pedal tone, the eighth note-quarter note rhythm, and the pairings of seconds evoke a rocking motion one might find soothing. This self-soothing motive recurs throughout the cycle as a constant touchstone for Cassatt and serves to comfort the artist throughout her journey.[93]

Example 2. “To Be a Painter” self-soothing motive, mm. 2-5.

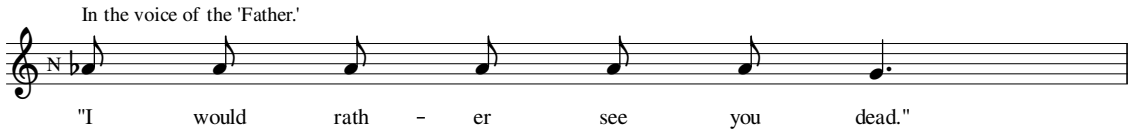


Following the introduction of this self-soothing motive, Cassatt courageously asserts her plan to move to Europe to study painting. The prospect of Cassatt becoming a painter and moving to Europe displeased her father, which Larsen addresses in the subsequent text. Larsen highlights this speech-like text by giving no accompaniment to the orchestra. The melody of

[93] Ibid.

Cassatt's opening lines in which she sings, "When I told Father, he said to me," is conjunct, shifting from 6/8 to 3/8 to accommodate the stressed syllables of the words.[94] Larsen not only shifts meter, but also shifts modes returning to G Dorian. This vocal line crescendos, but before Cassatt shares her father's reply, Larsen inserts a caesura and then changes the meter to N. Next, Cassatt's father replies, in an unaccompanied, nearly monotone melody, "I would rather see you dead."[95] This phrase is sung on one pitch (A-flat) except for the descending half-step at the end on the word dead **(ex. 3)**. Larsen instructs the singer to designate a voice for the father. Following this tense conversation between Cassatt and her father, Larsen returns to the self-soothing theme for the next five measures.

Example 3. "To Be a Painter," Cassatt's father's reply, repeated notes (monotone) and a descending half-step, m. 10.

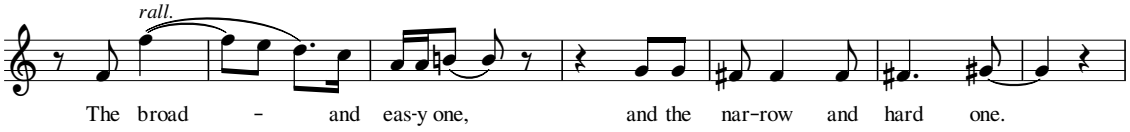


In the melodies of Cassatt's final lines of text in this song, Larsen uses text painting. As Cassatt recognizes that her road ahead will be difficult, she sings, "There are two ways for an artist. The broad and easy one, and the narrow and hard one."[96] Larsen sets "the broad" using an ascending octave leap, and she sets "and the narrow and hard one" all within a whole step **(ex. 4)**. By using minor and major seconds to set the text "and the narrow and hard one," Larsen foreshadows that Cassatt's own journey will be narrow and hard. Larsen further exemplifies Cassatt's difficult journey by accompanying this text with a series of harmonic tritones between the bass, doubled by the timpani, and the violins. Following Larsen's foreshadowing of Cassatt's

[94] Larsen*, Mary Cassatt,* 2.
[95] Ibid.
[96] Ibid., 3.

challenging road ahead, Larsen returns to the self-soothing motive, built on pairs of seconds, to end this song.

Example 4. "To Be a Painter," contrasting melodic intervals Larsen uses for "The broad" (8ve) and for "and the narrow and hard one." (m2 and M2).



In "To Be a Painter," Larsen employs her characteristic compositional style—unaccompanied chant-like vocal melodies, shifting meter or no meter, modes, motives, symbolic intervals, and text painting. Larsen shifts between no meter (N) and various time signatures to accommodate the chant-like conversation between Cassatt and her father, often unaccompanied, and moving between G Dorian and C Ionian modes. At rehearsal mark 1, she introduces the self-soothing motive that recurs throughout this song. She concludes this song by incorporating text painting into the final lines of text. It is important to note that neither the solo trombone plays, nor are any of Cassatt's paintings projected. Perhaps this is because Cassatt has yet to find her voice as an artist.

4.2. "Travels"

In the second song, “Travels,” Larsen is inspired by letters that Cassatt wrote to her family, which depicts Cassatt’s first trip to Europe with her friend Emily Sartain. Cassatt writes to her family about how they are "roughing it" in Italy; but because the atmosphere provides subjects for wonderful paintings, they would tolerate uncomfortable accommodations to which they were not accustomed.[97] After Cassatt sings about their accommodations and the scenery, the song shifts to a contrasting section in which Cassatt tells about her paintings that were rejected

[97] Ibid., 8-12.

by the Paris Salon, her discouragement that prevented her from painting for several months, and her doubts about remaining in Europe.

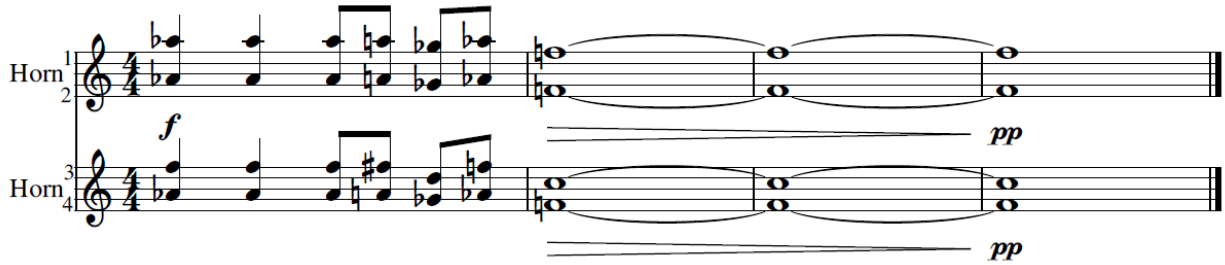
Cassatt's journey is illustrated by a new motive in "Travels," which is based on the French can-can. In addition to this motive, Larsen returns to the self-soothing motive introduced in "To be a painter." Also, as in the first song, Larsen includes unaccompanied vocal melodies, which also demonstrate Larsen's use of text painting. Cassatt's journey is symbolized by Larsen's use of seconds to show travelling, and tritones to show Cassatt's distress. Larsen pays close attention to the natural flow of Cassatt's text in the numerous meter changes throughout this song. While Cassatt's paintings are not yet projected in this song, however, Larsen introduces the solo trombone in the beginning of "Travels." This addition is the most significant element in this song.

The solo trombone serves as the voice Cassatt hears in her own mind, communicating her innermost thoughts and emotions and begins in m. 2 of "Travels" with a boisterous solo that portrays the two young artists travelling through Europe. Following this solo, Larsen establishes the second motive in this song cycle **(ex. 5)**. This motive is extracted from the "can-can."[98] The can-can is bawdy dance music that became popular in the first half of the nineteenth century in France. The dance, known for its high kicks, continues to be part of the French cabaret tradition. This can-can motive is introduced by the horns in m. 42, and is performed by various instruments in the orchestra, the solo trombone, and the mezzo-soprano at different points in the song cycle. Larsen develops this motive by leaving out the first two beats to shorten the motive, by adjusting the final intervals to end on a higher pitch, and by using augmentation to lengthen the rhythmic value of the eighth notes. Even in the first statement of the motive in m. 42, the flutes, tuba, and

[98] Larsen, interview by author.

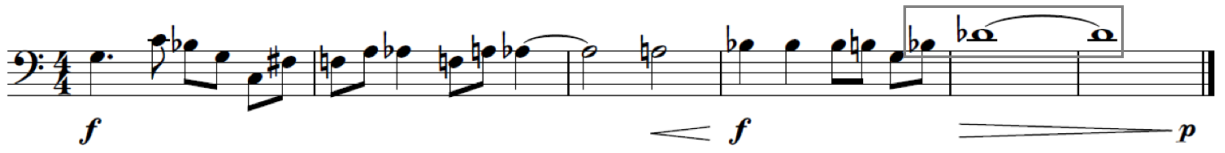
contrabass emphasize the shortened motive by playing it with the horns. This shortened version of the motive is played by the oboes and the bass at the beginning of m. 45 and then by the solo trombone in the last half of that measure. The shortened can-can motive is passed around the members of the ensemble throughout the song.

Example 5. “Travels,” the can-can motive, mm. 42-45.



The solo trombone plays the second development of the motive, in which the final interval is ascending, not descending. In m. 55, the solo trombone repeats its boisterous melody from the beginning of “Travels,” but Larsen ends the solo with the entire can-can motive. In the original statement of the can-can motive, Larsen ends the motive with a descending minor third between the final two pitches. In this development of the motive, Larsen displaces the final pitch so the interval between the final two pitches is an ascending minor third **(ex. 6)**.

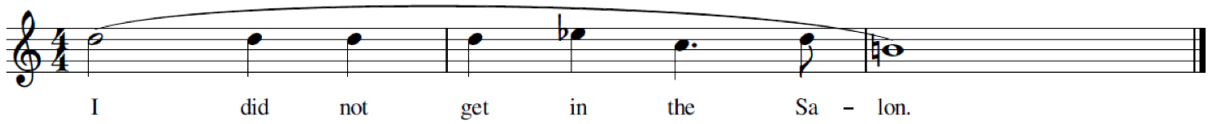
Example 6. “Travels” the developed can-can motive with an ascending minor third (B-flat to D-flat), solo trombone, mm. 55-60.



The final development of the can-can theme is through augmentation, which lengthens the rhythmic values of the notes. Augmentation of the can-can theme often occurs in the vocal melody. Although the mezzo-soprano sings the can-can theme earlier in this song, the

augmentation of this theme first occurs in mm. 98-99. Instead of using four eighth notes in the end of the motive, Larsen uses two quarter notes and a dotted quarter note in m. 99 **(ex. 7)**.

Example 7. "Travels," augmented can-can theme, vocal melody, mm. 98-100.



In addition to the can-can motive, Larsen returns to the self-soothing motive introduced in the previous song, "To Be a Painter." After the boisterous and bawdy can-can music in which Cassatt writes about her journey through Europe, the text and the music shifts. Cassatt writes about her painting being rejected by the jury of the Paris Salon. She was so discouraged that she stayed in Paris for several months, without painting. At this point in the text, Larsen inserts the self-soothing motive as Cassatt admits that she is not doing well and is discouraged. After Cassatt contemplates returning home to Pennsylvania, Larsen concludes "Travels" with the self-soothing motive. The return to this motive suggests that Cassatt is homesick, but that she faces the challenge of forging ahead in the male-dominated Parisian art circle and must choose if she will continue the journey she has planned for herself.

Larsen emphasizes Cassatt's struggle with a cappella settings of text for which Larsen shifts the meter between 4/4, 5/4, and 6/4 to accommodate the natural flow of Cassatt's words. None of these unaccompanied vocal passages are set with no meter in "Travels." In this song, Larsen uses both accompanied and unaccompanied settings to juxtapose Cassatt's excitement over her adventures in Europe with her disillusionment over details that did not meet her expectations. For example, in the beginning of "Travels" when Cassatt writes to her family about the scenery, costumes, and surroundings that are "good for painters," Larsen composes a sparse

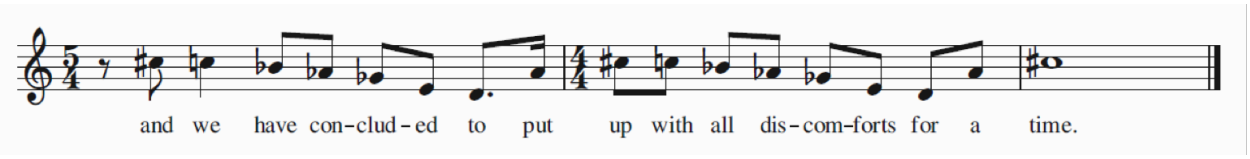
accompaniment underneath the text.[99] To contrast this excitement, when Cassatt writes about the poor accommodations, Larsen sets this line with no accompaniment and emphasizes that the entire trip is not perfect. The next line of text that Larsen sets unaccompanied is when Cassatt shares the news that she did not get in the Salon.[100] While Cassatt continues to share her disappointment, Larsen uses her characteristic unaccompanied settings of text. This setting allows the audience to focus on the challenges that Cassatt had to overcome to become an established female American painter in Paris.

To expose the struggles Cassatt initially faces, Larsen employs symbolic intervals and text painting. Seconds illustrate Cassatt's early journey as she travels through Europe studying painting. Dissonant intervals, such as tritones and sevenths, and disjunct melodies reveal the challenges the artist met early on in her trip. The clearest example of Larsen's use of seconds is in mm. 90-94, when the harp and the violas play seconds by alternating the notes A and B. This display of travelling is repeated by the mezzo-soprano in m. 95 as she begins to sing the text, "Did Mother tell you of my misfortune last Spring?"[101] The seventh, which is the inversion of the second, appears in the second line of text in this song. As the mezzo-soprano sings, "We are roughing it…" Larsen writes a descending minor seventh on the word "roughing." This dissonant interval is the first hint to the audience that Cassatt's time in Europe was not ideal. Larsen utilizes the minor seventh again in m. 64 to illustrate that the accommodations could be improved. The other dissonant interval Larsen uses to depict Cassatt's trials is the tritone. In mm. 72-73, Larsen sets the text "And we have concluded to put up with all discomforts for a time." on descending whole steps which later ascend to begin the descending whole steps again.[102] As the

[99] Larsen, *Mary Cassatt*, 9-11.
[100] Ibid., 16.
[101] Ibid., 15-16.
[102] Ibid., 12.

melody ascends, Larsen inserts a tritone between the pitches D and A-flat. She does this in both m. 72 and m. 73 **(ex. 8)**. Finally, many of the vocal melodies in "Travels" are disjunct, leaping by fifths, sixths, and sevenths. Two of the most disjunct vocal melodies are at mm. 63-65 and mm. 114-115. In mm. 63-65, the first interval in the mezzo-soprano's melody is a descending fifth and in the following measure, there is an ascending seventh. This disjunct melody is composed for the text "But could be vastly improved in accommodations."[103] In mm. 114-115, the first two intervals that the mezzo-soprano sings are a descending major sixth and an ascending fifth. In m. 115, the vocal melody ascends a major third from F4 to A4 and then ascends a perfect fourth from A4 to D5. The vocal melody ascends further from the D5 to an E5. This disjunct melody alludes to Cassatt's indecision regarding her future by painting the text "I am waiting to hear from home."[104] Through her use of seconds, tritones, sevenths, and disjunct melodies, Larsen effectively reveals Cassatt's initial difficulties while she was finding her way during her first solo trip to Europe.

Example 8. "Travels." Tritones used in the vocal melody, mm. 72-74.



In "Travels," Larsen writes the text from letters Cassatt wrote to her family in Pennsylvania. In these letters, Cassatt describes the excitement and the disillusionments she experiences during her initial time in Europe. Larsen depicts both the young artist's joys and her struggles by restating and developing two themes—the self-soothing motive that Larsen introduces in the first song and the can-can theme she introduces in this song. Unaccompanied

[103] Ibid., 10.
[104] Ibid., 19.

vocal melodies, dissonant intervals, and disjunct melodies reveal the obstacles the young Cassatt encountered. Most significantly in this song, Larsen introduces the solo trombone, which will serve as Cassatt's inner voice for the rest of the song cycle, giving the audience additional insight into her innermost thoughts and emotions.

4.3. "Franco-Prussian War"

The third song is titled, "Franco-Prussian War." During the time of this war (1870-71), Cassatt returned home to live with her family. This was the only time Cassatt would live in the United States for the rest of her adult life. Larsen sets Cassatt's return to the United States as a purely orchestral song without projections of paintings nor the use of the solo trombone. During this time, Cassatt does not paint and therefore her voice is muted. However, the music Larsen composes for this song is rhythmic and percussive, imitating the sounds of battle, and employing a full percussion section. This short piece begins with a trumpet fanfare, and it ends with a series of dissonant chords that build intensity in long crescendos. This battle song leads directly into the next song without pause.

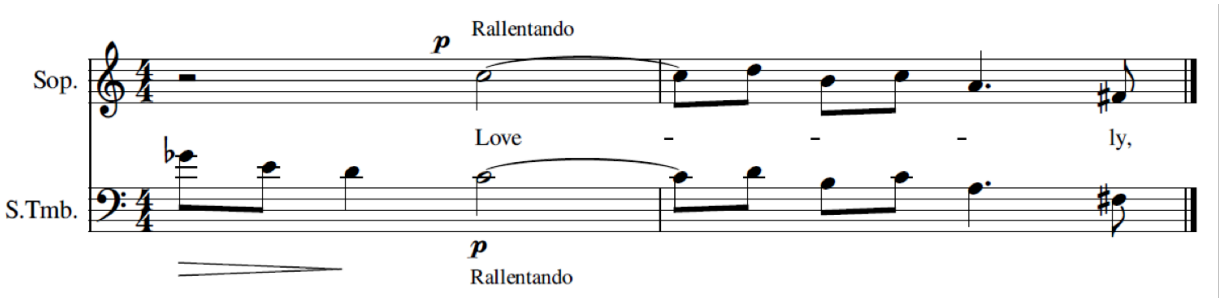
4.4. "Europe Again"

After spending two years with her family in the United States during the Franco-Prussian War, Cassatt is eager to return to Europe and to resume her painting. Larsen captures Cassatt's zeal in "Europe Again" by composing unaccompanied and disjunct melodies for the solo trombone and the mezzo-soprano. The can-can motive returns in the voice and solo trombone parts, further reflecting her elation over returning to her painting in Europe. The most significant additions to this song are Larsen's introduction of the chime and the first projection of one of Cassatt's paintings, *Bacchante* (1872), which symbolize Cassatt finding and asserting her own voice.

This song begins with an unaccompanied trombone solo encompassing a two-octave range (E2-E4), with large intervallic leaps. Larsen marks this trombone solo, includes flutter-tonguing, to be played "furiously" and sets it with no meter (N).[105] The voice enters in m. 2 with the same frenetic pace previously established by the trombone. This vocal phrase, "Oh how wild I am to get to my work," also covers a broad vocal range (E4-G5) and is disjunct.[106] Immediately following this declaration, the chimes enter for the first time. In Larsen's music, the chime represents breaking free.[107] In this song, Cassatt the artist is working, the trombone often echoes or doubles the voice or lower strings.

At m. 160, Larsen chooses for one of Cassatt's early paintings *Bacchante* (1872) to be projected. *Bacchante* is a painting of a young girl, who is wearing a wreath of ivy on her head and playing the cymbals. As this painting is being projected, Cassatt sings about working on the cymbals and the background. In mm. 177-8, the mezzo-soprano sings, and the trombone plays the can-can theme an octave apart **(ex. 9)**.

Example 9. Octave duet of the can-can motive, mezzo soprano and solo trombone, mm. 178-9.



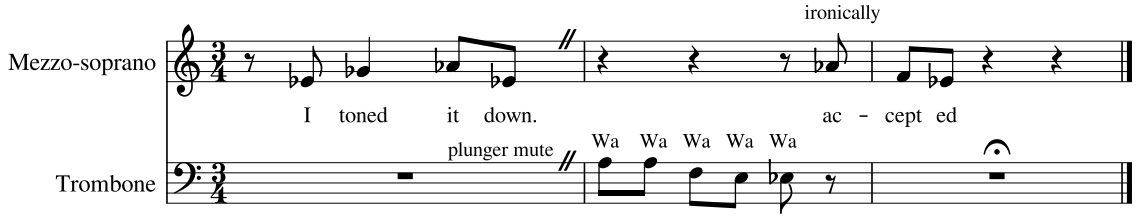
4.5. "Early Work"

The song "Early Work" consists of two sections: the first about Cassatt's paintings being accepted or rejected from the Salon and the second about a scene at the opera, which inspired a

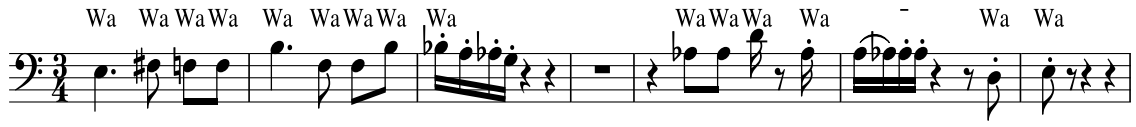
[105] Ibid., 27.
[106] Ibid.
[107] Larsen, interview by author.

painting. The interchange between the solo trombone and voice in the first section is the most entertaining of the cycle. As Cassatt's painting *The Young Bride* (c. 1875) is projected, the singer tells the story of Cassatt taking a painting to the Salon, but it being rejected because it was too bright. She re-submitted the painting toned down. At this point in the song, the trombone uses a plunger mute to play a sad, sorry "wah-wah-wah-wah," just before the singer announces this painting was "accepted" **(ex. 10)**. The projection changes to *The Little Girl in the Blue Armchair* (1878), as the mezzo-soprano sings how Cassatt took another painting to the exhibition. The trombone continues to play with the plunger mute, as the singer sings, with disgust, "rejected," and representing one or more of the jurors speaking, which Cassatt does not want to hear **(ex. 11)**. When Cassatt proclaims whether her work was accepted or rejected, it is always pronounced and exposed because it is unaccompanied.

Example 10. "Early Work," trombone with plunger mute, mm. 198-200.



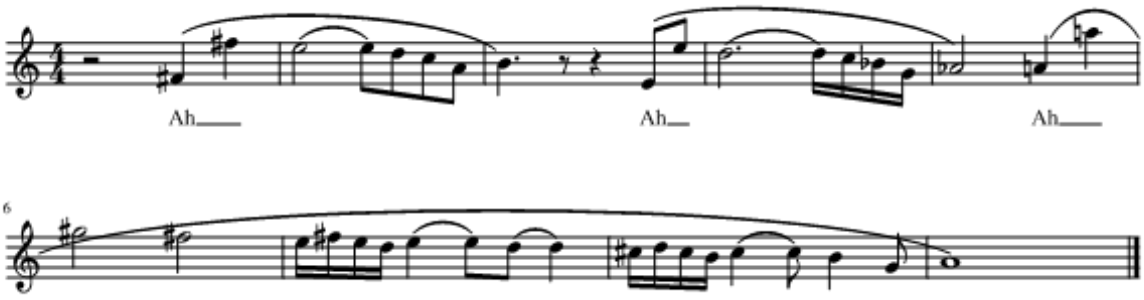
Example 11. "Early Work," solo trombone representing the voices of the jurors, mm. 226-28.



The second section of "Early Work" contrasts this setting. The projection slowly changes to *Lydia, Seated in a Loge* (c. 1879) as the second section of "Early Work" begins. This painting shows Cassatt's sister Lydia at the opera. The orchestra returns to the self-soothing thematic material of the first song, while the trombone plays a seductive melody. After a short instrumental interlude, the projection changes to *At the Opera* (1880), the painting described in

the remainder of “Early Work.” This viewpoint and perception in this painting is different than the theater paintings of Cassatt's contemporaries. Other painters in Cassatt's circle would have painted the audience as if they were looking at the audience from the stage. However, Cassatt focuses on a male and a female audience member from her perspective in the box seats. The other audience members are out of focus so the gaze of the male operagoer on the female operagoer is the focus of the painting. The female operagoer is looking ahead, and it is unclear if she knows the gentleman is looking at her through his opera glasses. Larsen narrates this with two contrasting vocal lines. One melody tells the story of the interaction between the female and the male operagoers. This melody that the mezzo-soprano sings proceeds is built on half steps and is more speech-like. The second melody, repeated on "Ah" is a seductive melody that characterizes the flirtation between these operagoers. This melody is aria-like constructed with large, dramatic leaps **(ex. 12)**. In addition to these vocal melodies, this entire section has a seductive tango feel in the instrumentation. As Cassatt narrates how the two operagoers gaze in each other’s direction, or just past the other, but never directly at each other, this tango that Larsen writes for the voice, the trombone, and the orchestra represents the flirting gaze of the gentleman and the woman who is avoiding his gaze.

Example 12. "Early Work," seductive melody at the opera, mm. 291-99.



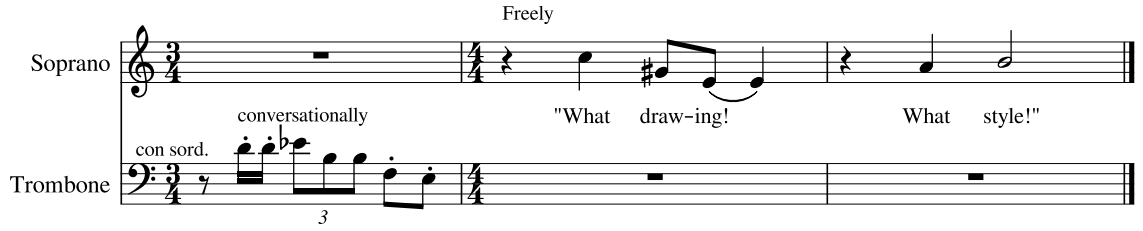
4.6. "Degas"

The following song, “Degas,” is about Cassatt meeting Degas and the relationship that ensued between the two artists. To portray their relationship, Larsen utilizes the interaction between the mezzo-soprano and the trombone. The text is set carefully for the audience to understand the context of Cassatt and Degas’s relationship. At the beginning, the singer quotes Degas, singing “Degas said to me …. ‘I will not believe that a woman can draw so well.’” Cassatt replies in disgust, “Degas.” This text is all set unaccompanied, and marked “freely, meno mosso.” The artists knew of each other and their work for years. Cassatt knew of Degas’s critics and impersonates them in this song, hovering on a B4 as they criticize Degas for his paintings of laundresses and dancers. Cassatt’s response, unaccompanied, is “An original boy this Degas.” The next insult from Degas is unaccompanied and set with no meter. He says to Cassatt, “Women should not express opinion about style—since they have no sense of what style ought to be.” Cassatt answers Degas in her paintings.

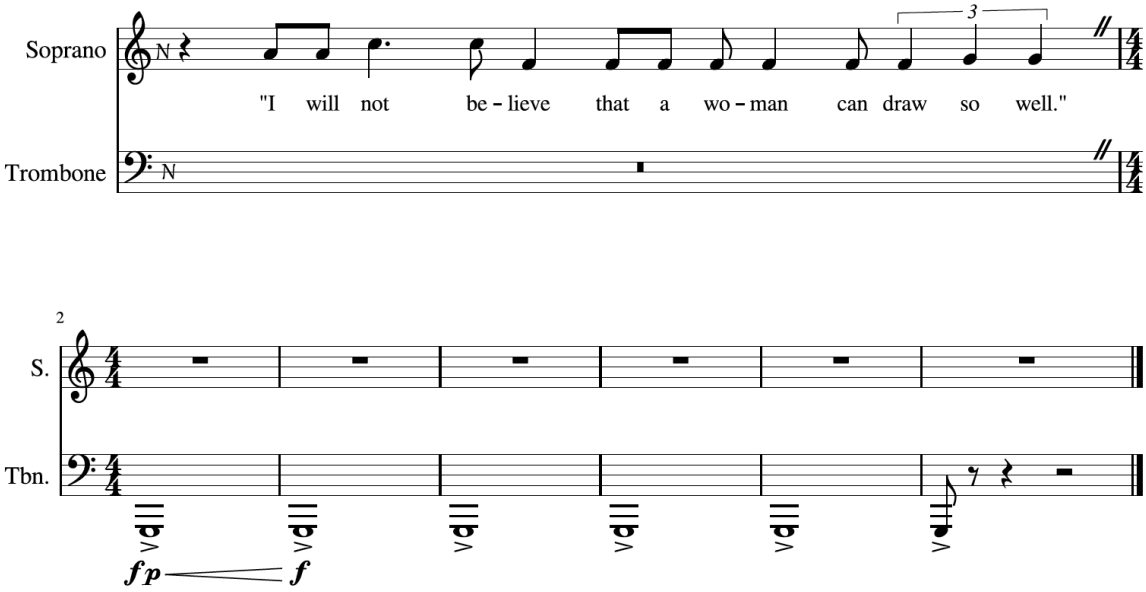
Up until this point in the song, only *The Boating Party* (1893) has been projected for a short time while the voice sings about Degas knowing about Cassatt’s previous work. At the point where Cassatt says she will paint her answer, *Girl Arranging Her Hair* (1886) is projected during a legato, lyrical instrumental interlude and one of the trombone’s more contemplative solos. As Degas studies this painting, he eventually turns to walk away. The trombone plays a speech-like figure, and he mutters, “What drawing! What style!” **(ex. 13)**. As the projection changes to *Woman Bathing* (1891), Degas challenges Cassatt one more time, preceded by the speech-like figure in the trombone, “You modeled the back?” Cassatt replies that she knows what a woman’s back looks like. Larsen repeats the first quote where Degas says, “I will not believe that a woman can draw so well,” and the song ends with five long blasts of G1 followed

by a final short blast **(ex. 14)**. These blasts reveal Cassatt's feelings about her friendship with Degas.

Example 13. "Degas," speech-like trombone figure, mm. 437-40.



Example 14. Low trombone blasts that represent how Cassatt responded to Degas, mm. 457-63.



4.7. "Maturity"

The final song, "Maturity" includes the most projections of Cassatt's paintings. Up to this point, only eight of fifteen paintings have been shown, leaving seven yet to be displayed in this final song. The seven paintings are chosen from her pictures of women and children. While *Baby Reaching for an Apple* (1893) is projected, the orchestra and solo trombone play the rocking theme that Larsen introduced in the first song. The mezzo-soprano enters and tells the story of one of Cassatt's American friends, who asks if the woman in her painting was "apart from her

relationship to man."[108] Cassatt replies that there are plenty of men in her other paintings. As the sweet and tender music returns, the mezzo-soprano sings of Cassatt's wish to convey the charm of the sweetness of childhood and the dream of motherhood. Had she not explored these feminine relationships, she would have felt she failed in her career. The trombone does not play here. The mezzo-soprano begins to sing a lullaby-like melody often answered by the trombone. The song and the cycle end as the singer sings, unaccompanied, "Almost all my pictures with children have the mother holding them, would you could hear them talk, their philosophy would astonish you!"[109] As the orchestra returns to the opening rocking theme of the cycle, the singer repeats, accompanied only by the chimes, "Would you could hear them talk, their philosophy would astonish you!" The cycle ends with a final note sounded by the trombone and a short-lived projection of *The Family* (c. 1886).

The theme of motherhood and the feminine spirit, Cassatt's feistiness in her relationship with Degas, her perseverance despite jurors' opinions and rejections of her work, the interruption of the war, the trials of the poor starving artist, and her father's disapproval of her becoming an artist all create the picture of a woman who is courageous, strong-willed, and yet fully feminine. These qualities are all ones Larsen looks for when choosing subjects for her vocal music. Larsen is inspired by these women to create song cycles through which singers can pass on their stories. As artists and performers, we can also find inspiration in women like Mary Cassatt. Through Larsen's skillful ensemble setting, the singer, trombone, and Cassatt's paintings fully embody and portray the mind, thoughts, and spirit of Cassatt. In *Mary Cassatt,* Larsen provides female singers a song cycle to satisfy female singers' desire for music that reflects our uniquely female inner strength, resolve, and determination.

---

[108] Larsen, *Mary Cassatt*, 67.
[109] Ibid., 74.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

This disquisition serves two purposes: first to champion the lives and works of two American women artists—composer Libby Larsen and painter Mary Cassatt—and second as a performance guide to assist others in their performance of *Mary Cassatt*. These women are connected by the choices they made about how they would live their lives. Both women rebuffed the lives prescribed for them by their families, societal norms, and their contemporaries. Each encountered a moment when choosing their artistic endeavors was disparaged by their male counterparts. However, both artists persevered and intently created and followed their own paths. Their success in male-dominated fields is worthy of praise. By choosing to perform Larsen's song cycle *Mary Cassatt*, female singers can shine a light on and uplift fellow successful women artists.

In Chapters 1 and 2, I make a case for choosing this work to perform and provide details to consider prior to programming. Of particular importance is the need for female singers to promote music by women composers. In Chapter 1, I include basic information about the song cycle such as the required performing forces—mezzo-soprano, solo trombone, piano, and slide projections of Cassatt's paintings—and its place in Larsen's output. I continue to discuss Larsen's own journey as a female composer in Chapter 2. I also include Larsen's compositional process for setting text as it pertains to this song cycle. These two chapters serve to inform the performers about the song cycle *Mary Cassatt*, the path Larsen chose that led to her success, and her treatment of text.

The third chapter traces Cassatt's life beginning with her childhood that influenced her choice to become an artist. Of note in this chapter is her father's disapproval of her vocation. This becomes the impetus of the first song in the song cycle. The remainder of the chapter

follows Cassatt as she travels to Europe making a name for herself in the Parisian art circle. Her disdain for the Paris Salon becomes evident as many of her submissions were rejected. However, her paintings caught the eye of her colleague Degas, who invited her to show with a group of artists who wanted to be independent of the Salon and its jurors. This relationship with Degas proves to be one of the most significant relationships in her life. Cassatt credits Degas and his offer to show her paintings with his group with allowing her to paint the way she chose to paint rather than painting to appease the jurors and critics. Finally, this chapter examines the subject matter for which she is known—women in everyday pastimes and women and children. These paintings reflect both the shifts in the role of women in late 19th century society and the life that she knew directly. The biographical material presented in this chapter is pertinent to the text of *Mary Cassatt*.

Finally, in Chapter 4, I present an analysis of the orchestral version of *Mary Cassatt*. In this chapter, I trace the elements common to Larsen's compositional style, specifically her use of meter, unaccompanied text settings, motives, modes, meaningful intervals, symbolic instrumental timbre, and text painting. Each section of this chapter corresponds with each song in the song cycle. In addition to examining Larsen's compositional elements, I provide musical examples from the score to illustrate these elements. My analysis of the orchestra score informs each of the performers of their roles in telling the story of Mary Cassatt.

REFERENCES

Books

Ammer, Christine. *Unsung: A History of Women in American Music*. 2nd ed. Portland, OR: Amadeus Press, 2001.

Fuller, Sophie. *The Pandora Guide to Women Composers: Britain and the United States, 1629 – Present.* London: Pandora, 1994.

Kelly, Jennifer. *In Her Own Words: Conversations with Composers in the United States*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2013.

Kimball, Carol. *Song: A Guide to Art Song Style and Literature*. Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard, 2006.

McCutchan, Ann. *The Muse That Sings: Composers Speak about the Creative Process*. New York: Oxford, 1999.

Pendle, Karin. *Women & Music: A History.* 2nd ed. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001.

Raines, Robert. *Composition in the Digital World: Conversations with 21st Century American Composers*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015.

Stallard, Tina Milhorn. "Libby Larsen." In *Women of Influence in Contemporary Music: Nine American Composers*, edited by Michael Slayton, 191-250. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2011.

Von Glahn, Denise. *Libby Larsen: Composing an American Life*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2017.

Dissertations and Theses

Barol-Gilmore, Juline Erika. "'Beloved, Thou Hast Brought Me Many Flowers' and 'Sifting through the Ruins': An Analysis of Two Chamber Song Cycles by Libby Larsen." DMA diss., University of Nevada, 2010.

Bezerra, Jeanenne Gray Barton. "The Relationship between Text and Music in the Works of Libby Larsen." Master's thesis, Baylor University, 1999.

Crall, Deborah. "Context and Commission in Large-scale Texted Works of Libby Larsen." PhD diss., Catholic University of America, 2013.

Jennings, Kori Lea. "A Performance Guide to Libby Larsen's *Sifting Through the Ruins* for Mezzo-Soprano, Viola and Piano." DMA diss., Louisiana State University, 2011.

Milnor, Tina M. “Music and Memoir: Libby Larsen’s Settings of First-Person Texts by Women. *Me (Brenda Ueland); Songs from Letters: Calamity Jane to Her Daughter Janey; Try Me, Good King: Last Words of the Wives of Henry VIII*.” DMA diss., University of Cincinnati, 2004.

Snydacker, Sarah Elizabeth. “The New American Song: A Catalog of Published Songs by 25 Living American Composers.” PhD diss., University of Iowa, 2011.

Wisuthseriwong, Christy L. “Libby Larsen’s *De toda la eternidad*: Creating Infinity through the Words of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz.” DMA diss., University of North Carolina, 2011.

Journal Articles

Blasing, Francesca. “Words to Live By: A Selected Collection of Inspiring Commencement Addresses.” *American Music Teacher* 47, no. 5 (Apr./May 1998): 32-39, 118-119. http://www.jstor.org/stable/43545343.

Broude, Norma. “Mary Cassatt: Modern Woman or the Cult of True Womanhood?” *Woman’s Art Journal* 21, no. 2 (Autumn/Winter 2001): 36-43. http://www.jstor.org/stable/1358749.

Chastain, Susan. “A Conversation with Libby Larsen.” *International Alliance for Women in Music Journal* 2, no. 1 (Feb. 1996): 4-7.

Delacour, Héléne and Bernard Leca. “The Decline and Fall of the Paris Salon: a Study of the Deinstitutionalization Pro- cess of a Field Configuring Event in the Cultural Activities.” *M@n@gement* 14, no. 1 (July 2011): 436-66. Accessed August 30, 2022. https://doi.org/10.3917/mana.141.0436.

Erdmann, Thomas R. “The Difference between Art and Entertainment, the Importance of Electricity on the Compositional Art, James Brown, and More: A Conversation with the Composer Libby Larsen.” *Women of Note Quarterly: The Magazine of Historical and Contemporary Women Composers* 8, no. 1 (Feb. 2000): 1, 3-8.

Green, Cynthia. “Interview with Composer Libby Larsen.” *International League of Women Composers Journal* (June 1992): 24-27.

Havemeyer, Lousine W. “Mary Cassatt.” *Bulletin of the Pennsylvania Museum* 22, no. 113 (May 1927): 377-82.

Kelly, Jennifer. “Libby Larsen: Insights and Influences through Love Songs.” *Choral Journal* 48, no. 8 (2008): 22-32.

Kelton, Katherine. Review of *Grand Larsen-y: Vocal Music of Libby Larsen*, by Terry Rhodes, Ellen Williams, Benton Hess, and Steven Reiss. *American Music* 27, no. 1 (Spring 2009): 111-13.

Mabry, Sharon. "More Song Cycles by Women Composers." *Journal of Singing: The Official Journal of the National Association of Teachers of Singing* 56, no. 2 (Nov./Dec. 1999): 45-46.

Moss, Linell Gray. "An Interview with the Composer Libby Larsen." *International Alliance for Women in Music Journal* 5, no. 1 (Winter 1999): 8-10.

Norton, Kay. "Interest Group Reports: Research on Gender in American Music." *Sonneck Society for American Music Bulletin* 24, no. 2 (Summer 1998). Accessed September 30, 2014. http://american-music.org/publications/bullarchive/intrst242.htm.

Ponick, F.S. "Libby Larsen: An American Composer." *Teaching Music* 7, no. 3 (Dec. 1999): 24. https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=keh&AN=2637748&site=ehost-live&scope=site.

Secrest, Glenda Denise. "'Songs from Letters' and 'Cowboy Songs' by Libby Larsen: Two Different Approaches to Western Mythology and Western Mythological Figures." *Journal of Singing: The Official Journal of the National Association of Teachers of Singing* 64, no. 1 (Sept. 2007): 21-30.

Magazine and Newspaper Articles

Dingfelder, Sadie. "The National Gallery of Art Uncovers the True Relationship Between Impressionists Mary Cassatt and Edgar Degas (And It Wasn't Romantic)." *Washington Post*, May 14, 2014. Accessed on July 5, 2021. https://www.washingtonpost.com/express/wp/2014/05/14/the-national-gallery-of-art-uncovers-the-true-relationship-between-impressionists-mary-cassatt-and-edgar-degas-and-it-wasnt-romantic/.

Duckett, Jodi. "Notes on the Classical and Band Scene." *Morning Call*, April 5, 2001. Accessed February 16, 2016. http://articles.mcall.com/2001-04-05/entertainment/3363528_1_miami-string-quartet-chamber-music-concert-piano-part.

Kennicott, Philip. "Text Message." *Opera News* 72, no. 2 (Aug. 2008): 34-35.

Meisler, Stanley. "Exhibit Shows Degas' and Cassatt's Painterly Influence on Each Other." *Los Angeles Times*, May 24, 2014. Accessed November 12, 2018. https://www.latimes.com/entertainment/arts/la-et-cm-ca-degas-cassatt-20140525-story.html

Sorel, Nancy Caldwell. "When Edgar Degas Met Mary Cassatt." *Independent*, Mar. 2, 1996. Accessed November 12, 2018. https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/when-edgar-degas-met-mary-cassatt-1339935.html

Trotter, Herman. "Michael Christie Comes Back for 'Extravaganza': Final Edition." *Buffalo News*, Feb. 14, 1999, Entertainment section.

VanderVeen, Don. "Keller in Tune with Arts." *Grand Rapids Business Journal* 12, no. 11 (Mar. 1994): 1.

Encyclopedia Article

Kort, Carol, and Liz Sonneborn. "Mary Cassatt." In *A to Z of American Women in the Visual Arts*. American History Online. New York: Facts on File, 2002. Accessed October 14, 2014. http://www.fofweb.com/activelink2.asp?ItemID=WE52&iPin=WVA020 &SingleRecord+True.

Mathews, Nancy Mowll. "Cassatt, Mary (Stevenson)." In *Grove Art Online. Oxford Art Online.* Oxford University Press, 2003. Accessed November 12, 2018. https://www .oxfordartonline.com/groveart/view/10.1093/gao/9781884446054.001.0001/oao-9781884446054-e-7000014598.

"Women Composers by Time Period." In *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online.* Oxford University Press. Accessed May 11, 2021. https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/ page/1900.

Music Scores

Larsen, Libby. Mary Cassatt (1844-1926): Seven Songs for Mezzo-Soprano, Solo Trombone, and Orchestra (With 15 Projections of Cassatt's Paintings). New York: Oxford University Press, 1994.

------. *Notes Slipped Under the Door*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003.

Videos

Davis, Elliot Bostwick. "Mary Cassatt's Formation: Forging a Path as a Woman in a Man's World." Video of lecture, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, April 5, 2016. Accessed August 30, 2022. https://youtu.be/yw4siXzujU4.

Hirshler, Erica. "An American in Paris: Cassatt, Degas, and the Impressionists in the 1870s." Video of lecture, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, April 12, 2016. Accessed August 30, 2022. https://youtu.be/RIu-U10790M.

Websites

The Art Story. "Mary Cassatt." The Art Story. Accessed November 12, 2018. https://www.theartstory.org/artist-cassatt-mary.htm.

Bochicchio, Sarah. "Mary Cassatt Painted Domestic Life in a Way Male Impressionists Couldn't." Artsy. Accessed November 12, 2018. https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy -editorial-mary-cassatt-painted-domestic-life-way-male-impressionists.

Clevenger, Chris. "Symphonic Delight." BlueRidgeNow.com. Accessed October 14, 2014. http://www.blueridgenow.com/article/20030228/news/302280302.

Edsitement: The Best of Humanities on the Web. “Mary Cassatt: A Woman of Independent Mind.” National Endowment for the Humanities. Accessed November 12, 2018. https.//edsitement.neh.gov/mary-cassatt-woman-independent-mind.

Hope, Andrea. “The Salon de Paris.” The Kiama Art Gallery: Stories about Modern Art. March 13, 2015. Accessed November 14, 2018. https://kiamaartgallery.wordpress.com/2015/03/13/the-salon-de-paris/.

“Impressionists with Benefits? The Painting Relationship of Degas and Cassatt.” Susan Stamberg. *Morning Edition*, NPR, May 23, 2014. Accessed November 12, 2018. https://www.npr.org/2014/05/23/314617607/impressionists-with-benefits-the-painting-partnership-of-degas-and-cassatt.

Institute for Composer Diversity. “Orchestra Season Analysis.” State University of New York at Fredonia School of Music, 2020. Accessed May 11, 2021. https://www.composerdiversity.com/orchestra-seasons.

“Interview: Libby Larsen in Conversation (Part 1).” Transcribed by Ruth Carver. Examiner.com. Accessed October 27, 2014. http://www.examiner.com/article/interview-libby-larsen-conversation-part-1.

"Libby Larsen." Accessed December 8, 2014. http://libbylarsen.com.

Living Music. “Interview Record: An Interview with Libby Larsen by Lisa Raschiatore.” Transcribed by Mark Clague. October 11, 2003. Accessed September 24, 2014. http://sitemaker.umich.edu/livingmusic/browse_interviews&mode=single&recordID=00000000000000000000000000000000000000042544&nextMode=list#interview.

“A Mandoline Player by Mary Cassatt.” *The Famous Artists*. Accessed November 15, 2018. http://www.thefamousartists.com/mary-cassatt/a-mandoline-player.

Mary Cassatt: The Complete Works. Marycassatt.org, 2002-2017. Accessed November 14, 2018. https://www.marycassatt.org.

Rosenfeld, Jason. "The Salon and The Royal Academy in the Nineteenth Century." In Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Accessed December 9, 2014. http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/sara/hd_sara.htm.

Weinberg, H. Barbara. “Mary Stevenson Cassatt (1844–1926).” In Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History. October 2004. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000–. Accessed November 12, 2018. http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/cast/hd_cast.htm.

Interview

Libby Larsen, interview by author, Minneapolis, October 16, 2017.