

Bridges of Love – Sharon Farber

Bridges of Love is a song cycle comprised of three poems- all talk about love. Each of the poems reflects the different styles of the theme of non-romantic love: love that is uncommon, unconditional; love that is almost against all odds. These three poems are individual yet universal in their meaning, and I believe that love, as music, can bridge the gaps of faith and religion and can heal us all.

The first poem, “*For Wherever You Go, I Will Go*”, is taken from the book of Ruth, which has always fascinated me. It tells the story of love between two women- Ruth and Naomi (Ruth was Naomi’s daughter in law and she refused to leave her when both Naomi's’ and Ruth's husbands died). I find this story so beautiful- love that is truly devoted and honest, which is rare. In terms of musical style, the Viola represents Ruth, and as this is an ancient story, I used it almost like a Middle Eastern Instrument. The Clarinet represents Naomi, and the two instruments begin the cycle with imaginary dialogue between the two women, leading to the main theme in 7/8 and ending with singing of the original motif.

The second poem, “*Once I Knew*”, by Helen Keller, is a reminder of the power that love can bring to the handicapped. I especially loved the following lines:

*“But a little word from the fingers of another
fell into my hands that clutched at emptiness,
and my heart leaped up with the rapture of living”.*

We all know the story of Helen Keller and her unbelievable strength and intelligence in the face of nearly impossible odds. However, she could only have achieved so much by knowing the kind fingers of her teacher, who opened up her dark, silent world by drawing letters into her hand. The poem expresses how one loving touch can take us all from darkness to light.

For the last poem, “*Wine of Love*”, I chose a universal theme, one that would speak to everyone. I believe that we are all connected, and if we learn to love rather than respond with hatred, this can only become a more positive and beautiful world.

I am honored to have been commissioned by Mark Carlson and Pacific Serenade. I would also like to thank the wonderful musicians who made this piece possible tonight: Shawn Thuris, Gary Gray, Roland Kato and Robert Thies.

