

There are common threads holding all of the compositions in this volume together. Most obviously, they were all composed during the Romantic period over roughly a 30-year span in the latter half of the nineteenth century. *Tristan und Isolde* was written between 1857 and 1859, *Romeo and Juliet* from 1870 to 1880, and *Sleeping Beauty* between 1888 and 1889. Each of these compositions has been arranged for a variety of instruments and ensembles. Leopold Stokowski created orchestral arrangements of Wagner's themes during his time as conductor of the Philadelphia Orchestra. Different variations of *Romeo and Juliet's* love theme have been heard in countless TV shows and movies, including *The Jazz Singer* (1927), *Columbo* (1977), *Wayne's World* (1992), and *South Park* (1997). Tchaikovsky's *Sleeping Beauty* melodies were famously adapted for Disney's 1958 animated film. I have sat in orchestras performing arrangements of each of these works, thoroughly enjoying my role playing the prescribed harp parts, but also imagining the potential of the harp taking on the entire work.

Each of these compositions has story-telling and emotion at its core. They contain powerful imagery and were composed from similar Romantic worldviews. Each composition asks the audience to go beyond casual listening and imagine something, or experience something larger than the music at the surface. They each have a similar musical profile, with yearning harmonies that ache and melodies that flow, always seeking resolution. The transcriptions in this collection owe a debt to the rich history of piano transcriptions of orchestral works. Throughout the nineteenth century, the piano was a fixture

in the homes of the new middle class in Europe and North America. Not only was the piano a symbol of wealth, but it was also a favorite form of musical recreation in the home. Arrangements of orchestral pieces were an important way to spread knowledge of new orchestral music in the days before recordings. Complex arrangements were sometimes for four-hand piano, for two players sitting side by side at a single piano, a practice often a part of courtship.

The harp, indeed, bears many similarities to the piano, yet lacks the same rich history of orchestral transcriptions. This is in part due to the harp's structural inconsistencies in the nineteenth century as it underwent a massive redesign, shifting from a single-action to a double-action mechanism. While harps also enjoyed a place in domestic music-making, they lacked the mainstream popularity of the piano. These transcriptions are a gesture to fill a void in the repertoire of what could have been, had the harp's technical revolution come at a slightly different point in time.

Transcriptions are crucial to the harp's repertoire. They can make something old, new again. They can surprise a listener. The right arrangements can take a huge orchestral composition and turn it into an equally powerful, yet intimate and personal encounter. Romantic transcriptions require some ingenuity, not only to accommodate polyphonic lines and intense chromaticism, but also to retain and convey the essence of the music. Ultimately, I wish to honor the original composers by retaining the integrity of the original compositions, while also making them sound as though they had always been intended for the harp.

Liebestod
“Tristan und Isolde”

3.

Overture-fantasia
“Romeo and Juliet”

14.

Panorama
“Sleeping Beauty Suite, Op. 68a”

48.

Waltz
“Sleeping Beauty Suite, Op. 68a”

54.

Liebested

from *Tristan und Isolde*

Richard Wagner
arr. Erin Freund



Sehr mässig beginnen

pp ppp pp ppp

G \flat C \flat D \flat F \flat D \flat A \sharp F \sharp G \sharp C \sharp

F \sharp G \sharp E \sharp F \sharp B \flat A \flat D \flat

C \sharp C \sharp E \flat

G \flat C \flat F \sharp C \sharp A \sharp C \sharp D \sharp C \sharp