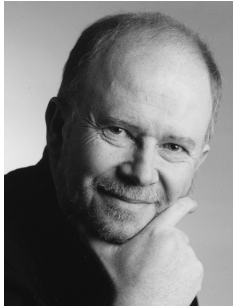


Paul Nordoff's Songs, Performed by the Composer

Leslie De'Ath




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EXACTLY TEN YEARS AGO, I wrote a rather effusive article extolling the greatness of Paul Nordoff's 37 unpublished settings of E.E. Cummings poems. The copious musical examples provided a mere glimpse of the worth of this unknown repertory of American art song.


Some of the observations in that article were driven by Nordoff's own words about the poems, which he described at some length in a fascinating primary source regarding his song writing. Originally recorded on reel to reel tape or cassette, this source contains Nordoff's own verbal descriptions of the fourteen songs on this compilation, followed in each case by a performance of the song by the composer himself... as both singer and accompanist!¹ Nordoff was a fine pianist, having studied with Olga Samaroff at the Philadelphia Conservatory, and the detail and difficulty of many of his accompaniments reflect this. In spite of not being a trained singer, he manages the Herculean task of singing each of them, tolerably well, while playing the accompaniments. The reader can hear these by following the links provided in this article to each of the performances.















Table 1 itemizes the collection, with as much detail as was available to me. The compilation divides into two sections, of unequal length, recorded in 1961 and 1972, respectively. For each song, links are provided in the table, first to Nordoff's verbal introduction and poetry recitation, then to his own performance, and then (when applicable) to a recent recording.

In 2015, a selection of 28 of Nordoff's 37 Cummings settings was recorded in the Maureen Forrester Recital Hall of Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, Ontario. The three singers are Leslie Fagan (soprano), Laura Pudwell (mezzo), and Daniel Lichti (bass baritone). I was the pianist. Ten of the fourteen songs Nordoff presented on his tape were also recorded by us and appear in the tracks immediately following Nordoff's recording.

If pictures are worth a thousand words, so are audio samples for musicians. The benefit of this article will be limited without reference to the audio links available at the NATS Multimedia website:  https://www.nats.org/Journal_of_Singing_Multimedia_.html

Nordoff had abandoned his career as a composer and his tenured professorship at Bard College rather suddenly in 1959, when he committed the balance of his professional career to music therapy. A strong impetus for this came in 1958, when Nordoff visited the Sunfield Children's Home for special needs children in Stourbridge, Worcestershire. The home was

TABLE 1. Reference chart for sound recordings of 38 poems of e.e. cummings read by Paul Nordoff, 1961–2018. All audio links are available at the *Journal of Singing* multimedia website:  https://www.nats.org/Journal_of_Singing_Multimedia_html. Individual sound links are embedded below, digital edition only.

CD Track	Poetry	Song title	Sound Clip
Part 1. “Poems by e.e. cummings (recorded December 1961, Philadelphia). Christmas greeting to Hep.”			
1	if a cheerfulest Elephantangelchild (1950)		 [Ex. 1]
2		if a cheerfulest Elephantangelchild (July 15–17, 1950)	 [Ex. 2]
			 [Ex. 3, Daniel Lichti]
3	hush) (1950)		 [Ex.4]
4		hush) (November 7, 1953)	 [Ex. 5]
			 [Ex. 6, Leslie Fagan]
5	if i (1938)		 [Ex. 7]
6		if i (February 26, 1956)	 [Ex. 8]
			 [Ex. 9, Leslie Fagan]
7	Tumbling-hair (1922)		 [Ex. 10]
8		tumbling-hair (April 29, 1948)	 [Ex. 11]
9	until and i heard (1944)		 [Ex. 12]
10		until and i heard (April 23, 1948)	 [Ex. 13]
11	love is more thicker (1940)		 [Ex. 14]
12		love is more thicker (June 24, 1943)	 [Ex. 15]
			 [Ex. 16, Daniel Lichti]
13	who sharpens every dull (1950)		 [Ex. 17]
14		who sharpens every dull (July 13, 1950)	 [Ex. 18]
			 [Ex. 19, Daniel Lichti]
15	Sam (1948)		 [Ex. 20]
16		Sam (1948)	 [Ex. 21]
17	these children singing in stone (1940)		 [Ex. 22]
18		these children singing in stone (June 24, 1943)	 [Ex. 23]
			 [Ex. 24, Daniel Lichti]
19	up into the silence (1940)		 [Ex. 25]
20		up into the silence (1948)	 [Ex. 26]
21	plato told him (1944)		 [Ex. 27]
22		plato told him (February 20, 1956)	 [Ex. 28]
			 [Ex. 29, Leslie Fagan]
23	let’s go to sleep (1956)		 [Ex. 30]
24		let’s go to sleep (February 19, 1956)	 [Ex. 31]
			 [Ex. 32, Laura Pudwell]
Part 2—“Poems by e.e. cummings (recorded 1972, Copenhagen). For two young Danish friends.”			
25	yes is a pleasant country (1944)		 [Ex. 33]
26		yes is a pleasant country (February 21, 1956)	 [Ex. 34]
			 [Ex. 35, Daniel Lichti]
27	if there are any heavens (1931)		 [Ex. 36]
28		if there are any heavens (December 7, 1941)	 [Ex. 37]
			 [Ex. 38, Laura Pudwell]

founded in 1930 by Friedrich Geuter, and was heavily influenced by the anthroposophic teachings of Rudolf Steiner in Switzerland. His son, Dr. Herbert Geuter, is “Hep,” the recipient of the taped Christmas greetings. While at Sunfield, Nordoff was asked by Herbert Geuter to play to one of the children and observe the child’s reactions, and the groundwork was set for a *volte face* in Nordoff’s career. Nordoff’s son Anthony described that time period to me.

I lived in England with my father the year he began work with “Hep” and Clive. They were working in our wonderful house at least 3 nights a week, 1959–1960, as I pursued my 8th-grade homework. A very exciting time — although [I was] too young to understand, there was an excitement and energy in the air, the feeling that something new and something brave was being birthed.²

Clive Robbins—the other half of the internationally renowned Nordoff-Robbins Music Therapy charity—had joined Sunfield in 1954, and that was where he and Nordoff first met. Sunfield offers residencies to the present day, and the Nordoff-Robbins Foundation remains a global charitable foundation today.

We learn from the recording that the Christmas greetings were recorded in the home of teacher and philanthropist, Nellie Lee Holt Bok (1901–1984). She was married to William Curtis Bok (1897–1962), a distinguished lawyer who was the son of one of the founders of the Curtis Institute of Music. The present recording was made in 1961, three years after meeting Geuter, when Paul was back in his home town, Philadelphia.

Clive Robbins inherited some of Nordoff’s manuscripts and other effects upon his colleague’s death in 1977. This included the tapes presently under discussion. In 2009, Robbins wrote of the recording,

Yes it is a fascinating CD of songs. He captures the Cummings essence just right—my favorite is probably “Up into the silence,” although I enjoy so many of them. “Sam,” “If a cheerfullest elephantangelchild,” “Once and I heard,” are all contenders. But I am amazed at how well he embraced the seriousness, imagination, playfulness and dear gentle quality of the de la Mare poems. Being there and hearing him perform his songs at Sunfield in 1958 absolutely set me up for what was to follow the following year.³

Cummings felt that Nordoff had violated his muse when he abandoned pure creative composing in favor of employing it as a tool for therapeutic use in institutional settings. Robbins had a very different view.

As regards Paul as a creative music therapist, playing and singing his songs is only one step away from doing the same process in the moment with a living model for inspiration. Same energy, love, resourcefulness, expressive freedom, presence of being.⁴

THE RECORDINGS

Tracks 1/2/3 if a cheerfullest elephantangelchild

We immediately encounter Nordoff’s deliberate, careful, empathetic manner of speaking here, which prevails throughout the recording. His recitations of the poetry that accompany his verbal introductions throughout reflect his respect and love for Cummings’s poetry. We are told that Cummings was once presented with an elephant for Christmas, which inspired the poem.⁵ The elephant was a favorite animal of Cummings as a child. Cummings was also an avid visual artist, and as early as 1921 had line-drawn an ink-on-paper elephant, now housed at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Nordoff tells Hep to “take particular notice of the ‘ifs,’” but leaves it up to the imagination to appreciate why. The poet later regretted having indulged himself of the obvious assonance of “proud round cloud” in the poem. But artists are often their own fiercest critics, and the wonder of youth that suffuses this poem surely exonerates him.⁶

His performance of this song shows his intuitive care for clear enunciation of the words, and perhaps also his tendency to accommodate his purely vocal limitations by frequent downward slides to the next pitch, especially on long notes. With score in hand, one also notices a freedom with rhythmic exactitude that prioritizes the expressivity of the moment above that of strict fidelity to the rhythm of the manuscript.⁷

Tracks 4/5/6 hush)

The restless, fidgety accompaniment through much of this song is an excellent example of Nordoff’s “modernism,” rambling capriciously through elusive tonalities, never settling into any, in a manner that defies any simplistic categorization into “traditional” vs. “modern.”

As always, the poem determines Nordoff's musical language—always brilliantly free of “-isms.”

The “nooners . . . standing together” are the smiling, content ones. We are admonished not to disturb them with our busy, inconsequential anxieties, lest we miss them entirely.

Tracks 7/8/9 if i

This is one of several Cummings poems that showcases the life of the humble underprivileged, who revel in life not in spite of their lot, but because of it. Farmer Sam, the scissors grinder, and this jobless itinerant are the heroes, the lifeblood of Cummings's America.

Unlike the first two songs, a period of almost twenty years passed between Cummings publishing this poem and Nordoff's musical setting. The symbiosis of poem and music is never closer than in this setting. The sectional nature of the music, in a loose A-B-A-C-A-C pattern, matches the poem like a glove. The mildly coarse language of “i” in the poem (“to hell with that” / “babe” / “lousy kid”) finds its analog in the jazzy syncopations and high spirited, ungainly leaps around the keyboard. This hobo is nobody's fool. Rather, he is like Shaw's Doolittle in *Pygmalion*—a “most original moralist,” with a heart so full of beauty, depth, and generosity that it collapses into bathos in its own enthusiastic hyperbole. Nordoff treats the voice part with a rhythmic freedom similar to popular music crooners of the mid-twentieth century, often landing behind the beat.

Tracks 10/11 Tumbling-hair

Nordoff states, without further elaboration, that this is one of Cummings's “painter poems.” Much has been theorized in literary criticism circles about this very early poem and its supposed implications. Nordoff cuts through all that in his introduction here, stating simply that *Tumbling-hair* was Cummings's daughter, Nancy Thayer (nicknamed “Mopsy” by him), and “another” was the mother. This is a verbal portrait of very personal nostalgia. The mother (“another”) was his cousin, Elaine Orr, who was married to Scofield Thayer at the time. Elaine married Cummings in 1924 and within months, demanded another divorce, leaving Cummings in disbelief. The poem however paints a carefree, loving time, prior to his marriage with Elaine.

Tumbling-hair was only three or four years old when this poem was published. The accompaniment is a

berceuse, cradling Mopsy as she picks flowers. Hidden behind this song's elegiac mood and berceuse-like accompaniment lies a vague melancholy. The poem bleeds imperceptibly from *Tumbling-hair* to “another,” making it ambiguous which of them has “eyes a little sorry.” And why are the daisies “bullying”?

Tracks 12/13 until and I heard

This song is “about a bird he must have heard singing in New Hampshire,” says Nordoff. The composer here finds a perfect balance between the temptation to write ingenuous onomatopoeic bird motifs, and the larger poetic message. Once again in this performance, the composer's freedom from the rhythmic exactitude that he employs in the score reflects an important aspect of interpreting his songs: In spite of the notational precision he indicates in the score, there should be a sense of recitative-like abandon and freedom on the part of the singer. So many of Nordoff's vocal lines sound freely nonmetric, nonrhythmic, as if floating above the rhythmic incisiveness of the accompaniment, revelling in its abandon and lack of repetition or meter. His performances on these tracks are certainly not unintended irregularities resulting from unedited takes and having to do double duty as both pianist and singer. Here he is deliberately evoking the nonmetric, random abandon of birdsong.

Tracks 14/15/16 love is more thicker

Nordoff confesses, “I hesitated to play this for him, because I set it in a kind of nightclub style. But he liked it very much.” For clarity, he tells Hep that the piano “begins on the third note of the first triplet in a 12/8 measure”—then counts the downbeat to drive it home! The voice, upon entering in the next bar, does the same thing. In this score, Nordoff tries to capture the syncopated freedom of both piano and voice by notating syncopations carefully. The song is written in A-flat major, but spends all its time (and ends) in D-flat major.

This is one of many Cummings poems about love. The complexity of love is reflected in the opposites in the poem: thicker/thinner, forget/recall, seldom/frequent, moonly/sunly. Unusually for him, it is set in strict metric, rhyming quatrains. In the song, this is by no means obvious, because of the composer's desire to evoke a jazz-like abandon in the irregularities of the rhythm in

the vocal line. One can almost hear the lazy brushes of the jazz drummer.

Tracks 17/18/19 who sharpens every dull

“This is the one about the scissors grinder,” Nordoff explains. Once an itinerant staple of American culture, much like cobblers and the door to door milkman, the scissors grinder has largely become a vestige of a simpler predigital era.⁸ The poetry and the music here are from 1950, however, and scissor sharpeners were still commonplace, often combining their social function with musical abilities. Thus the Pied Piper, and Schubert’s *Musensohn*. The mood of Nordoff’s setting matches that of Schubert, with its ebullient optimism. This itinerant lives nowhere, and everywhere. Nowhere does Cummings speak of knives or scissors. The women bring him “lives” to remedy, not knives. He cares not whether he is paid—his journey is about “sharpening wrong to right.” He is more missionary, more spiritual guide than salesman. The rollicking 12/8 of the song disappears completely on “he throws the world a kiss and swings his wheel upon his back and off he goes”—on his rollicking journey back to the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. Like Tolkien’s Tom Bombadil, he is forever just out of reach, *sans souci*, and sings songs of “sun, stars, moon and mist,” blithely unfettered by human despair. A steward of the earth, he embodies an indomitable cheerfulness. Once again, Nordoff’s setting is impeccably apt, responding to both the characterization and the inner message of the poem.

Tracks 20/21 Sam

Sam Ward was a farmer neighbor of Cummings at Silver Lake, New Hampshire, who took care of odd jobs around their farm, and became a good friend of the family. The poem was written in commemoration of Sam’s death. This character portrait belongs with “if I,” “Buffalo Bill,” and “who sharpens every dull”—all sympathetic vignettes of those who live their lives unencumbered by philosophic self-reflection. They are Cummings’s *unsung heroes*. He paints them, not as caricatures, but as people of substance and dignity, irrespective of their place in society. He found such individuals fascinating precisely because they were so different from his own life and psyche. In Sam’s eyes, Cummings did nothing of importance. Men are made to be “strong, brave, rough,

enduring . . . and if you ain’t really a man, you ain’t really alive. He stood like a father to me.”⁹ Cummings also painted a watercolor of Sam’s farm, and wrote a further poem about him, “rain or hail.”

Nordoff’s setting, like the poem, is a celebration of a life, not a lament. He sets it as a cakewalk with swash-buckling élan, which returns at the end, *meno mosso*, on “Sam was a man, grinned his grin done his chores laid him down. Sleep well.” A motif in the vocal line is the yokel’s yodel, on the words “how be you” and “nobody’ll know.”

Tracks 22/23/24 these children singing in stone

Nordoff introduces the music here by reciting the poem slowly, deliberately, syllable by syllable, in keeping with the “always children singing forever” the praises of God in the della Robbia frieze from the 1430s, housed in the Basilica della Santa Maria del Fiore in Florence.

The accompaniment unfolds without apparent meter or rhythm—chiselled whole-note chords resembling scaffolding, and like the “flowers opening forever.” The effect is of timeless permanence, and an almost surreal discomfort, only magnified by the revelry of the frieze. And being incarcerated for the past 600 years is but a drop in the bucket of eternity. The music is nominally tonal and ends in G minor. But the text is declaimed in a monody devoid of lyricism and tonal bearings. The disturbing incongruity inherent in the subject matter makes this a minimalist masterpiece of Nordoff’s song output.

Tracks 25/26 up into the silence

“This is another one of Cummings’s inimitable love songs,” says Nordoff. The composer’s setting is tonal and largely diatonic. If the poem depicts a departure, it is a tender, wistful one. There is an entire bar of silence at the beginning of this song—a wordless moment of understanding between the lovers. The tonal center subtly shifts from E-flat (stanza 1) to D-flat (stanza 2), then shifting to B-flat (stanza 3) and finally G (stanza 4). The rhythm of the melody, but not the notes, is identical in the first two stanzas. After new melodic material in stanza 3, the melodic contour of the opening returns for the final stanza. The contrasting third stanza speaks encouragingly of the “fine sunlight with a firm day,” as the dynamics and vocal line reach their high point. But the hint of melancholy returns in the fourth, as the poet

descends into “memory.” As with so many of Nordoff’s accompaniments, the chordal nature of the harmonies disguises his contrapuntal thinking, with SATB lines indicated with phrase markings over each line. This song could well be performed by a string quartet, without any adaptation.

Tracks 27/28/29 plato told

Cummings was an ardent pacifist throughout his life and had little good to say about the United States or its government. His poems that deal with war are caustically critical, and this is no exception. This wartime poem was published in 1944, and refers to New York City’s 6th Avenue elevated train track that was dismantled and sold to Japan, two years before Pearl Harbor. The “him” of the poem—the recipient of wise advice from Plato, Jesus, Lao Tse, and General (“War is hell”) Sherman—is often presumed to be a young soldier, eager to enter the battlefield at all costs to fight for his country, bursting with valor and impervious to being dissuaded. “Him” could just as easily be Uncle Sam generally.

Nordoff sets this text as a violent rant, in the style of the blues. Of all the songs on the recording, this one is beyond the composer’s vocal capabilities. It is a powerful statement nevertheless—one of Nordoff’s finest songs.

Tracks 30/31/32 let’s go to sleep

In the introduction, Nordoff says “one has to have had a bit of life experience to understand these poems.” This one appears to have been as close to Nordoff’s heart as any of the Cummings poems he set, to judge from the tremulousness in his voice while reciting of the poem. It is also a fitting conclusion to his Christmas gift to Hep.

The poem is wretched in its outpouring of dwindling options. It could be the lament of an itinerant, a victim of ongoing misfortune, mental illness or childhood abuse, a persecuted visible minority, a drug addict, a prosperous but disillusioned capitalist . . . in other words, Everyman. Eat yields to smoke—smoke yields to sing—sing yields to die—die yields to dream—and dream yields to sleep. The order is notable: die comes in the middle, not at the end, and ultimately yields to sleep. It is reminiscent of the hapless victim in *Winterreise*, condemned to life, not to the release of death. The world-weary resignation of the words is only leavened by the comfort that the poet is not alone, but shares the words with a friend—like

Schubert’s “Der Leiermann,” except here with his sanity still intact.

Nordoff set this poem as a “tired, sad blues.” The metronome markings seem very slow, but the composer adheres to them in his performance. The vocal and dramatic demands of this song are considerable for any singer.

The final two songs on the recording were made in 1972 in Copenhagen, eleven years after the Hep Christmas tape. These songs were recorded “for two young Danish friends.” Their identity, and the reason for making the recording, are not specified.

Tracks 33/34/35 yes is a pleasant country

“This is one of his love poems. . . . Very difficult.” Nordoff recites the poem to the two friends. English appears not to be their first language. He stops to explain how contractions work in English, and gives a gentle laugh at the challenge of explaining such convoluted use of the language, deciding it would be advisable to repeat the poem with more flow. He caps the recitation off by saying “wonderful, wonderful use of language.”

The musical setting is subdued, with a steady flow of chords in the piano on the second beat of the bar, unobtrusively supporting the vocal line. It is written to be performed with the left hand alone. Again, the composer’s performance has the freedom of intimate speech, by taking liberties with the alignment of vocal line and accompaniment. The score suggests tempo changes in no less than seventeen of the thirty-two bars. The apparent simplicity of the song disguises a wealth of subtle harmonic detail. Nordoff seems to be taking a magnifying glass to the score commensurate with Cummings’s intense scrutiny of words.

This, and the following song form a unified pair in many respects, even though both the poems and the music were written many years apart from one another. Both are love songs that exude tranquillity and contentment, with flower imagery playing a significant role in both. This song speaks of youthful love, while “if there are any heavens” addresses the abiding love that transcends death.

Tracks 36/37/38 if there are any heavens

“This is a poem he wrote about his mother.” Nordoff interrupts his recitation of the poem to explain the word

“pansy,” and a second, unidentified male voice joins in briefly in the explanation. Nordoff gets the meaning across first with the word “Viola,” and then “Stiefmutter” in German, which means both pansy and stepmother. Is this a deliberate connection on Cummings’s part, in a poem about his mother?

The poem was published in 1931, some 16 years before his mother, Rebecca Haswell Clarke, died. She may well have heard Nordoff’s setting of the poem, which dates from 1941. The poem is also a tribute to the bond between his mother and father, Rev. Edward Cummings, who had passed in 1926. Edward Cummings had taught sociology at Harvard before becoming a Unitarian minister in 1900. The poet had also written about his father in the poem “my father moved through dooms of love.” Nordoff did not set that poem to music, but it is in psalmic meter, able to be sung to a variety of hymn tunes. Cummings’s parents provided the poet with a childhood full of contentment, dignity, intelligence, tolerance, and love of the arts. This poem is his thank-you.

Nordoff’s setting is one of his finest. The vocal line is written with irregular rhythms, which the composer-as-singer’s interpretation takes even further liberties with, as if it is one continuous recitative. The song becomes more diatonic for three bars in E major, for the father’s entrance (E for Edward?), grounded as he was in belief and liturgy. A descending, disjunct triplet motive appears (“falling petals”?), and underscores the balance of the song. It concludes in a radiant B major, as the whole garden bows to the pair.

CONCLUSION

We have seen how helpful this source material is in terms of how to interpret the composer’s songs musically. In his verbal prefaces, Nordoff also breaks ground in critical study of the poetry, by virtue of his ringside seat, as it were, on the mind and muse of his friend Cummings.

Nordoff’s son Anthony heard this private recording for the first time, shortly before this article was submitted, and said,

I love hearing my father’s voice, a voice I grew up with, a magical marriage of singer and story teller. When doing recordings, or lecturing, he spoke slowly and clearly, wanting all words and nuances understood. Singing with

him, as a family around the piano, the music and song was always more than the notes and words. Regardless of subject, often humorous, sometimes made up on the spot by him, the singing was always deeply absorbed and became experience.¹⁰

Regarding Nordoff’s neglected legacy as a composer, perhaps Robbins said it best: “Paul’s part of American music/world music needs to be known. It feels like releasing a prisoner, unjustly hidden and denied his/her noble cultural rights.”¹¹

Acknowledgments

I have worked closely with my campus colleague and music therapist Colin Lee on Nordoff, and am indebted to him for his many insights and efforts, and granting permission to use the CD for this article, and to quote letters of Robbins. A graduate of the Nordoff-Robbins method himself, Lee was granted access to much of Nordoff’s unpublished manuscripts upon Robbins’s death in 2011, including the 37 Cummings settings. He is also the author of the only book-length study of the composer and his music.¹²

I acknowledge the support and willingness of the three performers on the modern recording, in granting permission for their performances to be used here. These songs were recorded by us without access to Nordoff’s own recording, as a guide to interpretation. Thus, although it is not the purpose of this study, this juxtaposition of performances incidentally provides a rare opportunity to observe at first hand that eternal dilemma of interpreters: how modern performances of works from the past can be transformed, from composer’s intent, to the printed page, then to the sensibilities of the interpreters.

I am also grateful to Paul’s son Anthony Nordoff and his wife Christi Pierce Nordoff, for permissions granted, and for their eager support for this study. Christi has recently written a fascinating article on the friendship between Paul, Estlin, and their wives Sabina and Marion, that began in 1945 at a party thrown by Agnes de Mille. The article is essential reading for anyone wishing to know more about the friendships that resulted in this unique contribution to twentieth-century American art song.¹³

NOTES

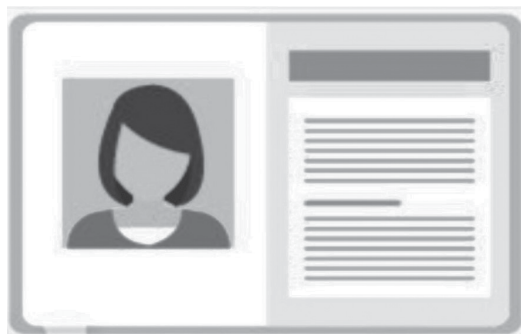
1. Leslie De'Ath, "A Sun Among Men"—The E. E. Cummings Songs of Paul Nordoff," *Journal of Singing* 69, no. 3 (January/February 2013): 307–323.
2. Email from Anthony Nordoff (September 6, 2022).
3. Letter to Colin Lee (October 18, 2008). The recording originally had five Nordoff settings of de la Mare poems, which are not on the CD available to me. Nordoff returned to Sunfield in September 1959.
4. Letter to Colin Lee (December 14, 2008).
5. Presumably a stuffed animal. But I haven't been able to confirm this.
6. Further commentary on the relationship of music to poem can be found in my earlier article on this body of songs.
7. All the Cummings songs are, at the time of writing, unfortunately still only in manuscript in the composer's hand. Efforts are underway to establish permissions for publication of these songs, hopefully in the near future.
8. I can personally recall a scissors grinder coming around my own neighborhood quite recently in Cambridge, Ontario, about once a month, ringing his bell. That is, until COVID hit.
9. E. E. Cummings, G. Stade, and F.W. Dupee, *Selected Letters of E.E. Cummings* (New York: Harcourt, Barce & World, 1969), 115–116.
10. Email from Anthony Nordoff (September 5, 2022).
11. Letter to Colin Lee (November 14, 2008).
12. Colin Andrew Lee, *Paul Nordoff: Composer & Music Therapist* (University Park, IL: Barcelona Publishers, 2014).
13. Christi Pierce Nordoff, "Artistic Inspirations: Paul and Sabina Nordoff's Friendship with E.E. Cummings and Marion Morehouse," in *Spring: The Journal of the E.E. Cummings Society* (forthcoming).

Leslie De'Ath is a Canadian vocal coach, pianist, conductor, and author. He taught for forty years in the Faculty of Music at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, Ontario, until his retirement in 2019. He was Music Director of Laurier Opera for much of that time, while also teaching studio piano and courses in lyric diction and keyboard literature. He has a wide ranging career in collaborative pianism, as accompanist, chamber player, and orchestral musician. His research interests, in addition to lyric diction and phonology, focus on largely forgotten vocal and piano repertory.

De'Ath is one of Canada's most recorded pianists, whose releases include the complete piano music of Cyril Scott on 9 CDs, the complete sonatas of Algernon Ashton, and works for two pianos by Florent Schmitt, as well as several recordings as accompanist for singers, including *Winterreise*, Wolf's *Italienische Liederbuch*, Liszt lieder, and several recordings as accompanist for the Elora Festival Singers. His work in researching the life and works of Cyril Scott resulted in co-editorship of *The Cyril Scott Companion* (2018, Boydell Press), along with Lewis Foreman and the composer's son Desmond. In addition to chapters on the Scott piano works, he compiled the definitive list of Scott's musical and literary works, along with a discography, as appendices to that volume. Much of this work would not have been possible without the tireless technical expertise of his son Graham, who has generated many complete scores and musical excerpts that have appeared in this journal, several books, and library holdings.

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