

TOM CIPULLO

SONGS *for* SOPRANO

VOLUME 1

AVAILABLE EDITIONS

Volume 1	8871
Volume 2	8872

NOTES

The works in this volume were composed over more than fifteen years. Their range, both emotional and musical, reflect the themes that have fascinated me over that time.

Crickets (2001), was composed for the Joy In Singing's millennium celebration at Merkin Hall and is dedicated to soprano Meagan Miller. *Summer into Autumn Slips* is a setting of an excerpt from one of Emily Dickinson's poems. I would especially like to thank the MacDowell Colony, the site where this song was written.

In the 1990s, I was fortunate to be in residence at the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts when the marvelous poet Marilyn Kallet gave an informal reading of her works. Immediately struck by the musicality of her verse, I asked Marilyn if I could set some of her poems to music. *How to Get Heat Without Fire* was premiered in April 2000 at The Great Hall at The Cooper Union in New York. Sponsored jointly by Joy In Singing and the Lincoln Center Library, Jody Sheinbaum, soprano, gave that performance, while I accompanied. Over the years, *The Pocketbook* has proven the most popular of the songs and is often excerpted from the cycle. In the poem's original form, Marilyn Kallet ascribed a cost of \$370 to this magnificent handbag. Nowadays, no self-respecting soprano will admit to purchasing a luxury item for so little. Does any worthwhile purse at Bergdorf Goodman come so cheap? Thus, with the poet's permission, the lyrics were changed to reflect the times, substituting the already outdated sum of \$970. One can only imagine where this song is headed in the next decade!

The five songs of *In the Middle of a Life* are excerpted from the vocal chamber work *Secrets*. The latter piece is a collection of 15 solos, duets, and trios—all settings of poems by Linda Pastan. Because vocal trios are in rather short supply, revising some of the songs and offering them as a cycle for solo soprano seemed an eminently practical notion. With their dreamlike imagery and complex allusions, Linda Pastan's evocative poems were a particularly rich inspiration. I would like to express my deepest appreciation to her and to the immensely talented group that commissioned *Secrets*, the Mirror Visions Ensemble and its brilliant artistic director Tobé Malawista. I would like also to thank The Corporation of Yaddo and the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, the sites where most of the songs were written.

Rapture was composed for the wedding of two dear friends, both treasures of New York's musical life. Violinist Stani Dimitrova is the founder and artistic director of the ensemble PhiloSonia, and pianist Michael Brofman is the founder and artistic director of the Brooklyn Art Song Society. The George Eliot text was selected by the couple, and it was my great pleasure to attempt to capture its tenderness in music. The first two performances of the work were given, in quick succession, by sopranos Laura Strickling and Lucy Fitz Gibbon. Michael Brofman was at the piano in both performances at the Old Stone House in Brooklyn in 2017.

—Tom Cipullo
July 9, 2019

CONTENTS

Late Summer

1. Crickets 7
2. Summer into Autumn Slips 12

How to Get Heat without Fire

1. Why I Wear My Hair Long 16
2. Saying Goodbye 20
3. The Pocketbook 24
4. How to Get Heat without Fire 40

In the Middle of a Life

1. Because 49
2. Drift 58
3. In back of 63
4. RSVP: Regrets Only 70
5. In the Middle of a Life 73

Rapture 81

TEXTS

Late Summer

William Heyen, Emily Dickinson

1. Crickets

Evenings, where lawns are not sprayed with poisons,
you can still hear the crickets,
you can still see lightning bugs signaling,

look, a yellowgreen strobe under the trees,
but gone, but there again, sometimes
in the same spot, and sometimes not,

as the tiny purveyors of phosphor
drift past our houses, looking
for one another, and the crickets,

crickets, crickets, the ones that still
have their legs, keep scraping them together,
listen, maybe for the last time on earth, listen...

2. Summer into Autumn Slips

[As] Summer into Autumn slips
And yet we sooner say
“The Summer” than “the Autumn,” lest
We turn the sun away,

And almost count it an Affront
The presence to concede
Of one however lovely, not
The one that we have loved—

How to Get Heat without Fire

Marilyn Kallet

1. Why I Wear My Hair Long

I want to wrap it
around you
like a silk shirt

button it
slowly
carefully,

facing you
let the fringes
tickle your hips

until we ride
strong silken horses
glued on

& my flag
unfurls
a few strands

sticking
to your
lips.

2. Saying Goodbye

We embraced, there in the parking lot
of the ordinary.

How could I know your arms were arguing last things?
Your cheek in my hair.

For a moment I pressed against you. Goodbyes can be vast.

In a breath, we traded lives. I didn't know
you were a cliff I had reached the edge of.

Your touch echoed.

I simply followed it like song.

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Summer into Autumn Slips by Emily Dickinson. Excerpted from 1346. Public domain.

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Because, *Drift*, *In back of*, *RSVP: Regrets Only*, and *In the Middle of a Life* © Copyright 1998 by Linda Pastan. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

Rapture by George Eliot, the pen name for Mary Anne Evans. Public domain.

How to Get Heat without Fire

Marilyn Kallet

3. The Pocketbook

"Fluid Italian suede
in garnet,"
the copy croons.
I memorize the Bergdorf Goodman
catalogue,
the blonde with garnet lips
carrying my pocketbook
against her slim hip.
970 dollars.
Half a rent check,
one chunk of my daughter's
college.

After weeks of foreplay
I sell out my family,
dial the toll-free number.
It's miraculously
easy, just "ten working days"
and here it is, nestled
in a silk carrying-case.
For days I hide it
behind the recliner
playing peek-a-boo,
trying it out when my husband's
not at home.

Nothing else in my life's
this beautiful.
To keep it
I would have to buy
silk suits, tweed coats,
a silver Porsche,
house on Park Avenue.

My shoulders are unworthy
of the thick strap
in wine-red suede,
I would have to have inches
surgically added to my height.

"American women carry
their souls
in their pocketbooks,"
Edgar Allan Poe said.
Not just my soul,
my money,
my identity,
my credit cards.

This pocketbook soft
and red
like a womb,
room where I would
carry myself in comfort,
be my own mother,
be drunk with color.
970 dollars.

I could sell my
wedding ring,
break into neighbor's
houses,
after two years
in the women's
correctional facility
there it would be
waiting for me,
fluid Italian suede
[in] garnet,
big enough to carry
the collected works of Poe,
o my fair sister, o my soul.
*God bless you, Bergdorf Goodman!

* This line was added by Tom Cipullo

4. How to Get Heat Without Fire

Beneath the dark floor
there has always been love,
but the trick is
how to get down to it?
Shall I tear my way down
like a tiger clawing
the floorboards, when this
tearing down is what scarred you?
Whose mother is there
in the dark trying hard
to hide you from the memory
of the floorboards in flame?
How to get heat without fire?
To coax light open?
To ease you new into
the world if I am not
a mother, or a beloved?
Pull back? Peel back dead
bark, pull back the boards
we trample, throw each other
down on and through some days?
Turn the floor into a pool
we can dive deep into,
cradle the mothers,
let the animals swim their ways?
Has music ever saved anyone?
Then I will reenter my life
as sound,
as notes strung like pearls
that you have yearned
to enter.
I will be sound,
I will be sound,
and silence,
listening.

In the Middle of a Life

Linda Pastan

1. Because

Because the night you asked me,
the small scar of the quarter moon
had healed—the moon was whole again;
because life seemed so short;
because life stretched before me
like the darkened halls of nightmare;
because I knew exactly what I wanted;
because I knew exactly nothing;
because I shed my childhood with my clothes—
they both had years of wear left in them;
because your eyes were darker than my father's;
because my father said I could do better;
because I wanted badly to say no;
because Stanley Kowalski shouted "Stella...;"
because you were a door I could slam shut;
because endings are written before beginnings;
because I knew that after twenty years
you'd bring the plants inside for winter
and make a jungle we'd sleep in naked;
because I had free will;
because everything is ordained;
I said yes.

2. Drift

Lying in bed this morning
you read to me of continental drift,
how Africa and South America
sleeping once side by side
slowly slid apart;
how California even now
pushes off like a swimmer
from the country's edge, along
the San Andreas fault.
And I thought about you and me
who move in sleep each night
to the far reaches of the bed,
ranges of blanket between us.
It is a natural law this drift
and though we break it
as we break bread
over and over again, you remain
Africa with your deep shade,
your heat. And I, like California,
push off from your side
my two feet cold
against your back, dreaming
of Asia Minor.

In the Middle of a Life

Linda Pastan

3. In back of

"I'm looking for things back of
remarks that are said..."

—William Stafford

In back of "I love you"
stands "goodbye."
In back of
"goodbye"
stands "it was lovely
there in the grass, drenched
in so much green
together."
Words that wait
are dark as shadows
in the back room
of mirrors;
when you raise
your right hand
in greeting,
they raise their left
in farewell.

4. RSVP: Regrets Only

I regret that I can't come.
I regret the moment we met
and the way you pretended.
I regret the sun that day,
its warmth so artificial,
and I regret the way [that] pain
has taught me nothing.
I regret this invitation,
its phony formality, its ink
coming off like sin
on my clean fingers.
Since the day I met you,
I regret everything.

5. In the Middle of a Life

Tonight I understand
for the first time
how a woman might choose
her own death
as easily
as if it were a dark plum
she picked
from a basket
of bright peaches.
It wouldn't be despair
that moved her
or hunger,
but a kind of stillness.
The evenings are full
of closure: the pale flowers
of the shamrock fold
their fragile wings, everything
promised has been given.
There is always
that moment
when the sun balanced
on the rim
of the world
falls
and is lost at sea,
and the sky seems huge
and beautiful without it.
I lie down on my bed
giving myself
to the white sheets
as the white sheets of a sloop
must give themselves
to the wind,
setting out on a journey—
the last perhaps,
or even the first.

Rapture

George Eliot

Our caresses, our tender words, our still rapture under the influence of autumn sunsets, or pillared vistas, or calm majestic statues, or Beethoven symphonies, all bring with them the consciousness that they are mere waves and ripples mere waves and ripples in an unfathomable ocean of love and beauty; our emotion in its keenest moment passes from expression to silence, our love our love at its highest flood rushes, rushes, rushes beyond its object, and loses itself loses itself in the sense of divine mystery. Our caresses, our tender words, our still rapture.

Late Summer

for Soprano and Piano

for Meagan Miller

1. Crickets

William Heyen

Tom Cipullo (ASCAP)

Slow, very expressive (♩ = ca. 54) *a piacere* *poco* ***pp***

Voice: Eve - nings, eve - nings, where

Slow, very expressive (♩ = ca. 54) *a tempo* ***p*** ***pp***

Piano: *una corda*

2 *dolce* *poco* *poco* *riten.* *a tempo* ***p*** ***mp*** ***pp***

lawns are not sprayed with poi - sons, you can still hear the crick - ets,

dolce *a tempo* *espr.* *poco* *p*

pp semplice *ppp* *poco* *riten.* *p* *poco* *p*

tre corde *roll before the beat*

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6 *mp* *poco f* *riten.* *a tempo* *pp gently* *mp*

you can still see light-ning bugs sig-nal-ing, look, a

espr. sempre *mp* *mp* *riten.* *p* *a tempo* *p* *pp gently*

9 *dolce* *poco* (only if necessary) *f* *dolciss. pp sub.* *pochiss. riten.*

yel-low-green strobe un-der the trees, but gone, *pochiss. riten.* *8va*

12 *a tempo* *f* *a bit sharp* *poco* *poco riten.* *f*

but there a-gain, some-times in the same spot, and some - - times

a tempo *mf* *poco f* *poco riten.* *f*

2. Summer into Autumn Slips

Emily Dickinson
(excerpted from 1346)

Tom Cipullo (ASCAP)

Fast, but expressive and free ($\text{♩} = 116$) *subito riten. molto* *a tempo ma perdendosi*

Voice

Fast, but expressive and free ($\text{♩} = 116$) *subito riten. molto* *a tempo ma perdendosi*

Piano

f *p delicately*

4 *più riten.* *subito a tempo* *f emphatic*

più riten. *subito a tempo* ...Sum - mer in - to

7 *mp more gently* *poco riten.* *a tempo* ($\text{♩} = \text{♩ sempre}$)

Au - tumn slips

p *p staccatissimo*

12 8

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9 *ten.* *mf* *poco riten.* *p* *mf* *molto* *a tempo*

And yet we soon - er say "The Sum - mer" than "the

ten. *poco riten.* *a tempo*

mf *molto legato* *p* *mp* *molto*

11 *dolciss., poco cresc.* *più cresc.* *poco riten.* *a tempo*

pp *poco f* *poco >*

Au - - tumn," - lest We turn the sun a -

poco riten. *a tempo*

molto legato

bring out stems up left hand melody

14 *f*

way, And al - most

poco sim. *poco f* *poco* *sim.* *f passione*

How to Get Heat Without Fire

for Soprano and Piano

for Lucy Yates

1. Why I Wear My Hair Long

Marilyn Kallet (ASCAP)

Tom Cipullo (ASCAP)

Lively (♩ = 140)

Voice

Lively (♩ = 140)

Piano

p leggiero

Ped.

4

mp

mf

poco f

f

8

p

sub. p

I want to wrap it a - round you

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11 *p* *mp* *poco f*

like a silk shirt

p *mp* *poco f*

15 *p* *molto* *poco f*

but - ton it slow - ly care - ful - ly, fac - ing you

p *molto*

18 *allarg. molto* *a tempo* *p* *playfully* *poco f*

let the fring - es tick - le your hips

allarg. molto *a tempo* *colla voce* *playfully*

poco f *mp* *p* *mp*

Fin.

for Linda Larson

2. Saying Goodbye

Marilyn Kallet (ASCAP)

Tom Cipullo (ASCAP)

Slow, expressive (♩ = 66)

Piano

p *mp* *mf* *f* *longing* *poco*

dolce, teneramente *p* *mf* ,

angry *poco* *shying away* *meno* We em - braced, there in the

f *mf* *p* *mf*

10 *p* *p* *3* *mp*

park - ing lot Of the or - di - nar - y. How — could I know your arms were

legato *mp* *p*

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14 *mf* *riten.* *a tempo* *pressing forward* *mp* more optimistic 3

ar - gu - ing last things? Your cheek in my hair.

mf *p* *mp* *poco* *poco*

18 *mp* *poco* *f* *riten.* *a tempo* (♩ = 66) 3 3

For a mo - ment I pressed a - gainst you.

mf *poco* *f* *riten.* *a tempo* (♩ = 66) *poco* *f*

poco *più* *più*

22 *allarg. molto.* *free* *a tempo* *passione* *molto* *becoming angry* *pp* *p* 3 3

Good - byes can be vast. In a breath, we trad - ed

allarg. molto. *free* *poco* *a tempo* *poco* *mp* *poco* *poco* *poco*

f *sub. p* *p* *mp* *poco*

for Donna Doyle and Laura Min

3. The Pocketbook

Marilyn Kallet (ASCAP)

Tom Cipullo (ASCAP)

Fast, emphatic (♩ = 168)
(♩ = ♩ *sempre*)

Voice

Fast, emphatic (♩ = 168)
(♩ = ♩ *sempre*)

Piano

f

“Flu - id I - tal - ian suede, _____

5

f

flu - id I - tal - ian suede, _____

f

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9 *ff* $\text{♩} = \text{♩}$

flu - id I - tal - ian suede in gar - net,"

12 *ff* *poco sost.* *p* *port.*

"Flu - id I - tal - ian suede," the cop - y

colla voce

17 *a tempo* *f* *mp* *p*

croons. I mem - o - rize The Berg - dorf Good - man

a tempo *f* *mp* *p*

21 *teneramente* *p* *mf*

cat - a - logue. The blonde with gar - net lips

legato *mp*

25 *f* *ff*

car - ry - ing my pock - et - book a -

28 *f* *p*

gainst her slim hip.

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31 *p* wistful

Nine hun - dred sev - en - ty dol - lars,

pp legato

ff

33 *p*

nine hun - dred sev - en - ty dol - lars. Half a rent check,

pp

f

poco f

35 *p* *ff* *p* calculating

nine hun - dred sev - en - ty, one chunk, nine hun - dred,

p *mp* *p*

38 *ff* *sub. p* *poco f*

chunk, sev - en - ty, one chunk of my daugh - ter's col - lege.

41 *pp* *suspenseful* *cresc. poco a poco* *p*

Af - ter weeks of fore - play, af - ter weeks of

44 *mf* *poco f*

fore - play, af - ter weeks, af - ter weeks of fore - play

mp *mf*

poco

4. How to Get Heat Without Fire

Marilyn Kallet (ASCAP)

Tom Cipullo (ASCAP)

Slow, expressive (♩ = 92)

Piano *p legato*

mp

5 *f* Be - neath the dark floor there has

f

9 *mp* *poco riten.* *a tempo* *p* al - ways been love,

poco riten. *a tempo*

mp *p* *sempre legato*

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12 *pressing forward* *mf* *pressing more*

but the trick is how to get down to it?

pressing forward *pressing more*

15 *poco f legato* *(f)* *3*

Shall I tear my way down like a ti-ger claw-ing the floor-boards, when this

poco f legato *poco f*

19 *ff* *rall. mp* *p*

tear-ing down is what scarred you? Whose

rall.

*a tempo**ppp sostenuto
dolciss., teneramente*

22 *molto* *mf* *poco* *f* *legato*
darker, more anxious

moth - er is there in the dark try - ing hard to hide you from the

a tempo
ppp sempre legato *poco* *f*

25 *f* *poco* *f*

mem - o - ry of the floor - boards in flame? How to get

f *mf*

28 *mp* *pp*

heat with - out fire? To coax

p *pp*

for Tobé Malawista

Commissioned by the Mirror Visions Ensemble

In the Middle of a Life

for Soprano and Piano

1. Because

Linda Pastan

Tom Cipullo (ASCAP)

Con moto (♩ = 92)

Piano

p

3

p

Be - cause_ the

4

p

6

poco *mf*

night_ you asked me, _

poco f *f*

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9 *pp* gently *mp*

the small scar — of the quar - ter moon had healed —

12 *p* *molto* *poco f*

the moon — was — whole

pp *cresc. molto* *poco f*

15 *ff*

a - gain; —

f *p*

18 *mp* *more passionate*

be-cause life seemed so short; be-cause life

cresc.

21 *poco f* *f*

stretched be-fore me like the dark-ened halls of night-mare;

poco f *f*

25 *p* *molto* *ff sdegnante*

be-cause I knew ex-act-ly what I want-ed;

p *molto* *ff sdegnante*

28 *p floating*

be-cause I knew ex - act - ly noth - -

molto p *l.h.*

30

- - ing;

mp

33 *mp*

be-cause I shed my child-hood with my clothes— they

cresc. poco a poco

2. Drift

Linda Pastan

Tom Cipullo (ASCAP)

Not too slowly ♩ = 72

Piano *p teneramente sempre* *poco* *mp* *riten.* *p*

7 *a tempo* *p gently* 3 *relaxed pp* *ten.* *p*

Ly - ing in bed this morn - ing you read to me of con - ti - nent - al drift, how

a tempo *p* *relaxed pp*

10 *con moto mp* *poco f* *sub. ppp dolce* *pp*

Af - ri - ca and South Am - er - i - ca sleep - ing once side by side

con moto mp *poco f* *dolce* *sub. ppp legato*

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14 *mp* *f* *mp*

slow - ly slid a - part; how Cal - i - forn - ia

p *f* *sub. mp*

17 *mf*

e - ven now push - es off like a swim - mer from the coun - try's

mf

19 *f* (*sempre f*)

edge, a - long the San An - dre - as

f

Commissioned by the Mirror Visions Ensemble

3. In back of

Linda Pastan

Tom Cipullo (ASCAP)

Presto ♩ = 160

Voice

f *emphatically*

In back of "I

Piano

f *decresc.* *sim.*

love you" stands "good -

f *cresc.*

5 *f* *molto* *p* bye."

f *molto* *p*

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7 *poco f* *f*

In back of "good - bye" stands

cresc. *poco f* *cresc.*

9 *mp dreamy*

"it was love - ly there in the

dreamy *mp* *cresc.* *poco f*

12 *poco f* *f passione*

grass, drenched

cresc. *f passione*

14 *più passione*

in so

16 *f* *sub. pp*

much green to - geth - er."

f cresc. *pp sub.*

una corda

19 *p dolciss.*

Words that wait are

cresc. *mp* *molto cresc.* *f* *p dolciss.*

tre corde, l.h. legato

4. RSVP: Regrets Only

Linda Pastan

Tom Cipullo (ASCAP)

Well marked ♩ = ca. 80

p *semplice*

Voice

I re - gret that I can't come. I re -

Piano

Well marked ♩ = ca. 80

p *semplice*

5

gret the mo - ment we met and the way you pre - tend - ed.

f *p* *semplice*

9

pp *poco* *dolce, relaxed* *mp*

I re - gret the sun that day, its warmth so ar - ti - fi - cial,

poco riten. a tempo *poco riten.* ♩ = ♩

dolce, relaxed *8va*

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Commissioned by the Mirror Visions Ensemble

5. In the Middle of a Life

Linda Pastan

Tom Cipullo (ASCAP)

Not too slowly ♩ = ca. 80

sempre legato e poco sostenuto

Piano

pp

p

Leg. harmonically throughout

riten. molto

a tempo

pp

To - night I

poco f

meno f

mp

pp

9

p

mp

un - der - stand for the first time how a wo - man might

mp

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13 *poco f* *ff* *passione* *molto teneramente*

choose her own death as eas - i - ly as

poco f *ff* *teneramente* *molto*

17 *mp dolce* *p*

if it were a dark plum she picked from a bas - ket of

mp dolce *p*

21 *pp*

bright peach - es.

pp come sopra

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25 *p* *mp* *sonore* *passione poco f*

It would - n't be des - pair that moved her or hun - ger,

p *mp* *poco f*

29 *poco riten.* *a tempo* *relaxing teneramente molto mp* *p*

but a kind of still - - - ness.

poco riten. *a tempo* *relaxing teneramente* *f* *mp* *p*

33 *riten.* *a tempo* *dolcissimo, molto legato ppp*

The eve - nings are full

riten. *a tempo* *ppp dolciss. gently*

for Stanichka Dimitrova and Michael Brofman on the occasion of their wedding

Rapture

for Soprano and Piano

George Eliot* (1819–1880)

Tom Cipullo (ASCAP)

Slow, always expressive and free (♩ = ca. 64)

roll before the beat

pp

p

8va

3

ppp

Our ca - res - es, _____

mp

ppp

5

pp

our ten - der words, _____

mp

our still

mp

* George Eliot is the pen name for Mary Anne Evans. Her words are in the Public Domain.

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pressing forward *poco* **f** *poch. riten.* **ff**

rap - - - - - ture -

pressing forward *poch. riten.*

poco **f** **ff**

9 *a tempo* **pp** *poco* **p** *poch. riten.*

un - der the in - flu - ence of au - - - - - turn

a tempo *poch. riten.*

sub. pp *poco* **p**

11 *a tempo* **p** *pressing forward* **mp** *poco* **f**

sun - sets, or pil - lared vis - tas, or calm - - - - - ma -

a tempo *pressing forward* *poco* **f**

p

14 *rit.* *ff* Gently moving, calm *teneramente* *p*

jes - tic sta - tues, or

rit. Gently moving, calm *pp teneramente*

16 *3* *3*

Bee - tho - ven sym - pho - nies, all bring with them the

18 *mp* *poco* *f*

con - scious - ness that they are mere waves and rip - ples

mp *p*