

Emily

by [James Como](#) (May 2019)



Concert in the Opera House, Max Liebermann, 1921

I recently wrote that *Wuthering Heights* is in the “key of revenge.” When I sent that piece to my friend Emily she was struck by the idea that fictions can be in a key: she must revisit some favorites. Then we would talk it over. As for me, an old accordion player: I know what a musical key is but have no idea what difference a key makes to a piece of music, especially since one key can be transposed into another, retaining exactly the same melodic line, unlike, say, transposing revenge to love (as some have tried to do with the other Emily’s masterpiece). Or do different keys resonate

differently with and within our souls? “Auntie Em” (as I call her) would have an answer.

You would believe me if you had ever heard Emily sing—and there is some chance you have, for she is Emily Pulley, the acclaimed operatic soprano. (Whether you’ve had that great pleasure or not, you may hear her in the New York [debut](#) of Benjamin Britten’s *Owen Wingrave*—from the Henry James ghost story—running from May 9th to May 12th, presented by The Little Opera Theatre of New York at the GK Arts Center, 29 Jay Street, Brooklyn.)

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