TRANSFORMATIONS: THE DEVELOPMENTS OF RELATIONSHIPS
EXPRESSED THROUGH MUSIC

An abstract submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
For the degree of Master of Music in Performance

by
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Program 1
TRANSFORMATIONS:
A GRADUATE VOICE RECITAL

By
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Master of Music in Performance

Pieces from the vocal repertoire have been selected for this program that, through the fusion of music and sacred text, poetry, and/or monologue, have sought to express diverse powerful connections that have been, and always will be, part of the human condition.

Selections from Mozart’s Exsultate Jubilate display the powerful connection and evolution of a relationship between God and a believer struggling with his/her faith. In “Fulget, Amica Dies” (The friendly day shines forth), the text outlines how clouds, storms, and darkness have all fled as dawn approaches. The poet’s description of light overcoming darkness has a declarative tone, which is echoed in Mozart’s recitative setting. The push and pull of emphasis and poetic rhythm are perfectly combined with the rhythmic pulses in the recitative form, which together reveal the relationship between God and a devoted believer seeing light in what was once darkness. In “Tu Virginum Corona” (You, o crown of virgins) the relationship between God and the believer is further developed. The text is a prayer to Mary—a plea for comfort from feelings that make the heart sigh, or doubt. Although the dawn is approaching, the believer still has his/her doubts of God’s faithfulness. The repetition of the text throughout the aria reflects
this believer’s varied emotions while remaining determined to feel entirely at peace, and Mozart beautifully reflects this throughout the aria by modulating to several related keys, displayed in the underlying chord progressions and in the accidentals of the melodic line. Finally, in “Alleluja,” the believer has finally found peace and feels God’s presence and faithfulness. Mozart reflects this final stage of the relationship through several intricate ornamented melodic lines. In addition, Mozart does not stray far from the tonic and the dominant of the original key in the base progression, signifying the believer’s conviction in his/her newly founded faith and peace in God’s promise.

Separately, these selections of German lieder composed by Johannes Brahms tell different stories—but together they illustrate the progression and deterioration of two lovers. In the first piece, “O komme, holde Sommernacht” (Oh come, lovely summer-night), the two lovers are coming together for the first time. The text, written by German poet Melchior Grohe, metaphorically describes one lover seductively calling to another. The opening of the violet’s bosom and the bowing of the rose’s head to the twilight illustrate the lovers’ passion and their submission to one another. This passionate encounter is profoundly heard and seen through the colorful lull and swell of the accompaniment and of the melody, which demonstrates a common feature in German lieder known as text painting, where rhythm, meter, and melody come together to mirror an image—or in this case, a relationship—within the text. In the second piece, “Geheimnis” (Secret), we find our lovers in a euphoric afterglow from their heated encounter with one another. The text illustrates a gentle breeze throughout the blossom-filled trees, which can be heard in the steady lull of the accompaniment line. In the final lines of the lied, the vocal line has a push to a high note, followed by an extended note; it
could be argued that this demonstrates the couples’ sighs and their willingness to be completely open with one another, strengthening their love. Then, in “Immer leiser wirt mein Schlummer” (My slumber grows evermore light), it is revealed that one of the lovers is dying. Unlike the two previous pieces, the text in this lied is taken more literally. She claims that her grief trembles upon her like a veil; she is haunted by the voice of her lover, which she’ll hear call her—but then no one is there; and although she knows he will grow to kiss another when she is pale and cold, she still wants to see him one last time. The emotional progression from grief to despair; despair to acceptance; and acceptance to longing is beautifully demonstrated in the progression of the melodic line specifically. The general wave-like nature of the melodic line displays the swelling and flex of emotions within the dying lover. In addition, the spikes to the high notes mirror her transitions from one emotion to another as she slowly realizes and comes to terms with her fate. The importance of the melodic line can also be seen in the simplicity of the accompaniment, written in that manner to support the complexity of the melody. Finally, in “Meine liebe ist grün” (My love is green), the dying lover reflects on the childish dizziness that she felt when she first met her lover. The quick tempo of the piece speaks to her quickening heartbeat—and to the absurdity of her intoxicated declarations of love. In addition, the sporadic extended notes on words such as “liebe” and “grün” demonstrate her longing and love-sick sighs.

French composer Claude Debussy is known widely for his musical expression and text painting in vocal music—which makes him a wonderful composer to include on a recital illustrating diverse human relationships. Unlike the previous set, these mélodies do not fit together to create a cohesive progression of one relationship; instead, they depict
three separate types of relationships. First, in “C’est l’extase langoureuse” (It is the languorous ecstasy), the relationship between two lovers experiencing an extremely heated, one-time encounter unfolds. Debussy places particular emphasis on the rhythmic pulses and the dynamics to illustrate the intense heat and progression of sexual intimacy. The piece begins pianissimo, with the tempo slow and steady; this represents the beginning stages of sexual arousal. As the piece progresses, the tempo and dynamics flux, displaying the heightening arousal and transition into the plateau phase. Then, at “c’est la nôtre,” the dramatic note from Debussy reads “poco a poco animato e crescendo,” which translates into “little by little, more animated and increase in volume and/or intensity.” The tempo dramatically picks up as well, illustrating the lovers on their way to orgasm—and finally, at “Dont s’exhaule,” the steady fall of the melodic line combined with the decrescendo and the relaxation in the tempo illustrate that both lovers have reached their resolution. In “Il pleur dans mon cœur” (It weeps in my heart), another relationship is illuminated: the war within oneself. This mélodie displays a depressed being struggling to comprehend the reason behind his/her depression, eventually coming to the conclusion that there is no reason and, as a result, no cure. Debussy beautifully paints this picture through the accompaniment mimicking the sound of falling rain. In addition, the accompaniment has its own melodic line that plays against the vocal line, representing two lines of thought at war with one another. Finally, in “Chevaux de bois” (Merry-go-round), the poetry of Paul Verlaine metaphorically highlights the mortal condition of humanity, beginning with the girl in pink and ending with the mournful knell of the church tolls. In this poem, Verlaine illustrates the human relationship with life and our desire to live as long as possible—or, in this case, to never stop riding the merry-go-
round. Debussy once again blends a clever brew of gradual rhythmic and dynamic deterioration to display the gradual slowing of the merry-go-round—and, ultimately, the natural aging and deterioration of the human body.

Twentieth-century American composer Henry Mollicone’s Seven Songs take on a modern approach to diverse age-old human connections. This program highlights three of those seven diverse connections: “I Never Saw a Moor,” “If You Were Coming in the Fall,” and “Waiting.” In “I Never Saw a Moor,” Mollicone highlights the self-assuredness of a believer: “I never saw a moor, I never saw the sea; yet know I how the heather looks, and what a wave must be.” In other words, the believer does not need to see the ocean to know that it exists; it is the same when speaking about God. This first half of the poem inspires the accompaniment underneath the melody, which is not only written to echo ocean waves crashing onto the cliffs but to also emulate the peaceful nature of the believer, assured of his/her faith through God’s creations. In “If You Were Coming in the Fall,” Mollicone sets one of Emily Dickinson’s famous poems to music. The poem tells the story of a lover waiting for her soul mate to return; however, as years turn into centuries, her faith in the return of her love fades, eventually feeling like a bee that taunts, yet never stings. This emotional journey is illustrated through the progression of the accompaniment, which begins diatonically and is gradually consumed by chromatic chords and/or progressions. This metaphorically highlights the gradual failing faith of the waiting lover. “Waiting” paints a more positive picture reflecting the love of family: one of a mother bear in winter hibernation, having peaceful dreams of sharing honeycombs with her cubs, patiently waiting for Spring to come. Mollicone appropriately transforms this poem into a lullaby, allowing the vocal line to take point while the
accompaniment below provides a comforting and mellow support—like what one feels when with family.

Gaetano Donizetti’s Don Pasquale plays with the varied complicated relationships people have in love and with love. In “Quel guardo, il cavaliere… So anch’io la virtù magica” (The glance of the knight… Know also I the magical virtue), Donizetti highlights Norina’s relationship with love itself. At this point in the opera, Norina, a poor widow, is attempting to entertain herself while waiting for urgent news. She reads a passage in a book highlighting a chivalrous knight—and laughs, claiming that she knows the real ways to capture a man’s heart. Norina finds love to be something best attained by manipulation—a contrast from love pieces presented earlier in the program.

As is typical in Italian romantic opera, Donizetti provides a minimal amount of text painting; in fact, he does not use the background music to illustrate a picture—rather, he uses the background music to establish the overall emotion of the scene. In this case, Norina’s monologue is light and care-free, with an air of manipulation. Through the frequent use of grace notes in the accompaniment and in the vocal line, Donizetti is able to achieve a light-hearted bounce that better establishes the character of Norina and the mood of the scene while still maintaining its position of support for the vocal line.

From the commitment they have to God to the devotion of two young people in love, composers have long sought to put into music the intense sense of connection felt through various types of relationships. Through the fusion of music and sacred text, poetry, and/or monologue, the pieces selected for this program do just that, creating a relatable, satisfying program for both performer and audience.
PROGRAM
California State University Northridge
Mike Curb College of Arts, Media, and Communication
Department of Music
Present
Transformations
The Master of Music Recital of
Kayla Michelle Bailey, Soprano
In Partial Fulfillment of the Master of Music Degree in Performance
Recipient of the Buelah Allen Voice Scholarship Endowment
From the Studio of Dr. Deanna Murray
With Carol Roberts, Piano
April 6, 2013
7:30 p.m.
Music Recital Hall

I
Exsultate, Jubilate, K. 165: 
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart 1756-1791
Recitativo: Fulget, amica dies…
Larghetto: Tu virginum corona…
Allegro non troppo: Alleluja

II
O komme, holde Sommernacht 
Johannes Brahms 1833-1897
Geheimnis
Immer leiser wird mein Schlummer
Meine Liebe ist grün

INTERMISSION

III
C’est l’extase langoureuse 
Claude Debussy 1862-1918
Il pleure dans mon cœur
Chevaux de Bois

IV
I Never Saw a Moor 
Henry Mollicone 1946-
If You Were Coming in the Fall
Waiting

V
Quel guardo, il cavaliere… So anch’io la virtu magica 
Gaetano Donizetti 1797-1848
(from Don Pasquale)