GRADUATE RECITAL IN VOICE

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

By

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This recital program was constructed to feature songs and arias by composers from different periods. Baroque opera arias, German Lieder, Spanish songs, American songs, as well as Italian and French arias are all represented and grouped into seven sets. The pieces within each set were chosen in order to exhibit various emotions, as well as to represent different moods and atmosphere.

The recital begins with a set of three arias from operas by George Frideric Handel (1685-1759). The aria was the principal musical component of the Baroque opera which Handel used as a vehicle for affective expression. His use of affective devices applied to the music in relationship with the text combine to reveal the reactions and emotional states of his characters.

The first aria in the set is from the opera *Agrippina*. In “Bel piacere,” the character, Poppea sings about the joys of love. Her joy is reflected in the short ascending vocal phrases as well as the dance like rhythms in the accompaniment that feature alternating triple and duple meter. The second aria, “Ah! Spietato” from *Amadigi* is a song of love, passion, and betrayal. The text represents despair and anger that arises from the character’s desire for love which is being rejected. Both her despair and anger are
represented in contrasting A and B sections of the aria. Short repeated phrases enhance the feelings of despair and descending stepwise motion in the melody further reinforces the sadness felt by the character. The accompaniment in the A section features repetitive block chords in the minor mode which evoke a somber mood. The set concludes with an English aria, “Endless pleasure” from Semele. The story tells of Semele, a mortal, whose love affair with Jupiter, King of the Gods, comes to a drastic end in result of both the scheming of Jupiter’s jealous wife as well as her own arrogance. In the aria, Semele has been carried off by Jupiter, and she rejoices in the endless love she is enjoying.

The second set features German Lieder by Johannes Brahms (1833-1897). Although a Romantic era composer, his music contains both Romantic elements as well as Classical elements. Moreover, the great range in mood and the strong lyricism present in his music gives his Lieder a great amount of emotional intensity and expressive impact.

The first piece in the second set, “Immer leiser wird” is full of emotional intensity and set with a melancholy text about a young woman that is dying. In the song, the woman wishes and pleads for her lover to come to see her one last time before she passes away. A vocal line of dotted rhythms, and short descending phrases both illustrate the physical and emotional state of the singer. Although the accompaniment doubles or follows the vocal line throughout most of the piece, at one point the rhythm becomes syncopated in the right hand and there is a counter melody in the left which intensifies the emotional urgency of the young woman’s wishes. In contrast, “Wir wandelten,” the second song in the set is a love song with an expressive melody. Both the harmony and
movement in the accompaniment create a tranquil mood that is reflective in the text. In contrast to the previous songs, the final song of the set, “Der Jäger” is meant to be humorous and fun. In the song, a young woman explains that her lover is a hunter—not of animals—but of other girls. Resembling a waltz, the strophic form features three short verses and is very simple harmonically, rhythmically and melodically.

The first half of the recital concludes with “Prendi, per me sei libero,” an aria from the comic opera L’Elisir d’Amore by the Italian composer Gaetano Donizetti. This aria not only shows off the voice, but it is also entertaining for the audience, making it a great with which to conclude the first half of the recital. In the aria, Adina, who, until this point in the opera, has shown very little interest in Nemorino, has just purchased his enlistment papers back from the military because she has discovered that she does, in fact, love him and wants him to stay. The aria features two sections. The first is a beautiful lyrical section with long legato phrases and the second, in contrast, is an upbeat section full of virtuosic coloratura passages.

“Ah! Je veux vivre” from the opera Romeo et Juliette by the French composer Charles Gounod (1818-1893) opens the second half of the recital. The opera is based on William Shakespeare’s Romeo and Juliet. In the aria, Juliette sings about love and explains that she would like to live inside her dream where it is eternally spring. The waltz accompaniment repeats throughout the piece and adds to the buoyant and lively feel that is present in the melodic line. The repetitive text and melody are broken up with several coloratura passages that not only make the song more entertaining, but also help illustrate the joy and happiness expressed by Juliette.
The fifth set contains four Spanish songs by Enrique Granados (1867-1916). Granados was an accomplished pianist and composer of songs for voice and piano. His most popular vocal work is the *Collection de tonadillas* (character songs) that are based on the lives and the romantic interactions of the women and men of eighteenth century Madrid. Although the four songs featured in this recital were accompanied by the guitar, they were originally composed with piano accompaniment that imitated various guitar playing techniques.

The first song of the fifth set, “Amor y odio” features a gentle folk like melody with text about the grief and sorrow that love has caused a woman because the man who she fell in love with does nothing to show her love back. The contrast between love and hate is illustrated in the music with the shift between major and minor mode. “El tra la la y el punteado” is a charming song about a woman that informs her man that she intends to keep on singing no matter what he does or says to her. The mood is both teasing and playful. In ”El mirar de la maja,” a woman tells, of the effect her fiery, passionate gaze has on her lover. The accompaniment is a series of broken chords and is built on a rhythmic ostinato. The set ends with “El majo discreto.” The mood is very playful and fun. In the song, a woman describes her man to be ugly, but because he is adequate in other ways and can keep secrets, she does not mind.

The sixth set features songs by three American composer: Ned Rorem, Samuel Barber, and Richard Hageman. The first song, “I am Rose” by Ned Rorem is lighthearted and whimsical. It is a humorous song based on a poem from a children’s book written by
Gertrude Stein. The book follows the struggles of a nine-year-old girl named Rose who is trying to establish her identity in a world that is unstable. After she overcomes various obstacles, she finally has a sense of who she is. The text, along with short phrases, simple rhythmic and melodic motives all evoke a childlike feel. In addition, the accompaniment imitates the melodic line in a higher register than the voice which adds to the innocent, childlike nature of the song. The second Rorem piece, “Little Elegy” creates a calming mood with the legato stepwise motion present in the vocal line. The first phrase of the accompaniment is in the right hand only; it repeats a simple chordal pattern and moves in stepwise motion on each beat. The second phrase of the melody is almost identical to the first, however the texture becomes denser with the addition of the bass line. Also, instead of simple triads, this time Rorem uses extended chords, giving the text more impact and depth. The third song of the set is Samuel Barber’s “Sure on this shining night.” The vocal phrases are long and lyrical and the persistent pulsating accompaniment helps maintain dramatic intensity throughout the song while the echoing of the melody by the piano creates an atmospheric mood of serenity. The set concludes with “Do not go my love” by Richard Hageman. Hageman captures the fear, and the sadness of potentially losing a loved one. Although melodically and rhythmically simple, the accompaniment is more complex and helps drive the emotions and set the mood and urgency throughout the piece.

Just as the first half ended with an aria by Donizetti, the second half does as well. In the aria “Norina’s Cavatina,” from the comic opera, Don Pasquale, Norina is reading a romance novel aloud and then explains that she knows all the tricks of ensnaring a man.
It is a playful and entertaining aria that features a section of sustained legato phrases as well as a section of rapid passages. The many trills and other vocal ornaments that show off the voice make it a great piece to end the recital.

Music when combined with text intensifies all emotions. Whether joy or sorrow—the songs and arias in this recital illustrate this perfectly. From the humor and playfulness of “Norina's Cavatina” to the emotionally intense “Immer leiser wird,” the music plays vital roles to create the mood of the song, the drama of the text and the overall emotional impact of the piece.
California State University, Northridge
Mike Curb College Of Arts, Media And Communication
Department Of Music

Present

Alexandra Sanfilippo
Soprano

A Student Of Diane Ketchie

In Her Master Of Music Recital

In Partial Fulfillment Of The Master Of Music Degree
In Vocal Performance.

Landon Baumgard, Piano
Victor Trejo, Guitar

May 11, 2013 4:30PM
Music Recital Hall
Program

I

Bel Piacere
From *Agrippina*

Ah! Spietato!
From *Amadigi*
Endless pleasure
From *Semele*

II

*Immer leiser wird*
Wir wandelten
Der Jäger

Johannes Brahms
(1833-1897)

III

*Prendi, per me sei libero*
From *L'Elisir d'Amore*

Gaetano Donizetti
(1797-1848)

Intermission

IV

Ah! Je veux vivre
From *Roméo et Juliette*

Charles Gounod
(1818-1893)
Amor y Odio
El tra la la y el punteado
El mirar de la maja
El majo discreto

Enrique Granados
(1867–1916)

Little Elegy
I am Rose
Sure on this shining night
Do not go my love

Ned Rorem
(1923–)
Samuel Barber
(1910–1981)
Richard Hageman
(1882–1906)

Norina’s Cavatina
From Don Pasquale

Gaetano Donizetti
(1797–1848)

*Please hold your applause until the end of each set