A LYRIC TENOR’S LONGING FOR THE PASSIONATE LOVE

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

By

Qian Wang

December 2014
The abstract of Qian Wang is approved:

Dr. David Sannerud ____________________ Date

Professor David Aks ____________________ Date

Dr. Deanna A. Murray, Chair ____________________ Date

California State University, Northridge
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Signature page……………………………………………………………………..ii

A Lyric Tenor’s Longing For The Passionate Love

.................................................................iv
ABSTRACT

A LYRIC TENOR’S LONGING FOR THE PASSIONATE LOVE

by

Qian Wang

Master of Music, Performance

The repertoire on this recital demonstrates longing for love at different moments in our lives. The kinds of love expressed are romantic love, love of nature, and love of the sacred. These songs find ideal expression in the lyric tenor voice. The choice of these texts shows that no matter what changes throughout our lives, we always yearn for the expression of passionate love.

The recital begins with three Baroque Era arias; the text of these arias express romantic love as well as love of nature. It starts with “Per la Gloria D’adorarvi” by Giovanni Bononcini. It is an aria from an opera called “Griselda.” Bononcini expresses this young man’s love and yearning by extending the notes and making the tone smooth and meaningful. Although in this context the young man should suffer from being afraid of losing his beloved, the piano part is not slow and sad. Instead, the music is playful and colorful, expressing a beautiful charm of pure young love.

“Vittoria, vittoria,” composed by G. Carissimi, is also a colorful and playful tune talking about the lost love. The aria starts with forte with a victorious tune, but this optimistic way of expressing actually shows a lot of energy from such sadness. The last song in this set, “Gia il sole dal Gange,” is about love towards nature. It is an aria from Scarlatti’s opera “L’Honesta negl’Amori” (honesty in live affairs). This
canzonetta expresses the coming of the sun after the night, shining on the Ganges River. This aria is strongly rhythmic with spirit melody set in two strophes, which is the typical form established by Scarlatti, the da capo aria form (ABA). Similar to “Per La Gloria D’adorarvi,” the accompaniment is a mirror of the voice part. This aria praises the vitality and hope of a new beginning, expressing the love of nature and also the love for life.

“Music, when soft voices die,” “Take, o take those lips away” and” Now sleeps the crimson pedal” are a group of songs from English Art Song Revival Era. They are three English poems set to music by Roger Quilter. “Take, o take those lips away” is a poem from “Measure for Measure,” the last comedy written by Shakespeare. The extremely lyrical melody expresses a sad mood of unrequited love. “Music, when soft voices die” is an elegant song with a mournful and delicate melody. The text is philosophically talking about when a rose dies its smell would remain. When the music stops, the vibration lingers in your mind, and this is symbolic of when the beloved is gone, you would still feel the love in your heart. It sends the wishful message that romantic love could remain and last forever. The third Quilter song in this set is “Now sleeps the crimson pedal,” it is one of his best-known songs. It is famous for it’s elegant melody and for the sensitivity to the words. Quilter gives the piano a melody before becoming a simple accompaniment, doubling the vocal line for much of the song. The sweet melody in the accompaniment has a feeling of a flower opening as the speaker of the poem wishes to remain with his lover, urging her to stay with him forever.
The two German Lieder by Schubert end the first half of my recital. These are two contrasting songs. The first two Lieder show that music is so great that we could express any sentiments and moments in our lives, no matter joyous scenes, dolorous thoughts, or even deep ponders. “Wanderers Nachtlied II” is a poem written by Goethe in 1780. The piano part keeps the simple patterns, accompanying the voice and supporting the words that capture the stillness and inner peace moment. This lied is musically simple with a declaimed vocal line. “Die forelle” is in a totally different mood. It is a vivid, playful song with high capability of creating mental pictures. Schubert uses the luxuriant piano accompaniment to paint a vivifying scene. The rapid sixteenth note pattern plays throughout the accompaniment to imitate the rapid flow of water.

The recital resumes with a modern Italian group of songs by Tosti, Donaudi and Bellini. These romance love songs are all strophic setting and written in an aria style. Bellini is the most representative composer of this kind of composition. “Vaga luna” is one of the most well known works composed by Bellini. In this delicate song, the poet pleas with the moon, praying that it will take his expression of love to his beloved. The piano introduction mirrors the vocal part and when the voice comes in, the piano has a simple broken chord accompaniment, which allows the voice to dominate. Even though Donaudy and Tosti didn't write opera, they are written in the operatic style of Puccini. “O del mio amato ben” is an impassioned lament for a lost love. The piece starts out calm, with the piano supporting the vocal phrasing before it grows and becomes more passionate and dense with texture. Continuing on the idea
of falling in love, Tosti’s “A Vucchella” is a sweet love song to praise the beloved’s little mouth and desiring a kiss from it. The repeating text of “Dammillo” expresses his desired urge to get the kiss.

The French group shows love to the ideal world, to precious life, and, not surprisingly, to romance as well. Faure’s “Ici-bas” compares the ideal world to the real world, expressing the desire to keep friends and lovers forever, as it is often known that they tend to drift apart from a person in the real world. These comparisons start in a slow and dolce tempo, and then it gradually grows agitated when the text refers to friendship and love. After the music fades out on the word “remain,” it brings back the calmness on “forever.” Debussy’s “Beau Soir” is in his impressionistic style. The composer blends the text and musical material together so well, the phrasing in voice and piano is extremely lyrical. The wave-like triplets in the bass line imitate the flow of the river, as well as the wave of a wheat field. The beautiful scene washes with the setting sun and the warm evening breeze expressing how life is a one-way trip which we need to cherish and love it as much as we can.

The last French art song “Extase,” Duparc molds the texture, slowly transforming and building up the intensity of the piece. The piano part plays steady broken chords to set up an erotogenic mood while the text is parabolic. The “Death” is really about the most joyful moment between lovers.

As the subject of love continues on, my last set is two Chinese songs about romance love, and love for the hometown, as well as love for peace. “A Lovely Rose” is a strophic love song. Two verses represent two character’s voices. The first verse is
the young man’s aspirations to the girl and the second verse is the girl speaking to the young man. The piano introduction brings out the vocal melody and the sequence patterns in the accompaniment construct a lovely scene between two sentimental youngsters. “Hometown,” composed by Chinese composer Huabai Lu, is an anti-war song. The composer uses a delicate melody in the beginning to paint out the beautiful view of the village he lives in. The flowing scales of the accompaniment in the beginning imitate the willow leaves swinging in the spring breeze, also imitating the pure water running under the bridge. The drastic repeated chords, followed by rapid descending scales later indicates the enemy’s approach and shows that peace no longer exists. The last two questioning phrases, “when will I be back to your arms? Will everything go back to the way they used to be?,” burst out anguishly with a bare accompaniment. It brings out the pure, emotional yell from the desired heart. The continuing rapid descending scales in the postlude expresses the despair and rage, also showing the man’s deep-felt love for his beautiful village, for the peace and for the beautiful life he used to live.

Thus, we finish the love circle – the romantic love, love of nature, love of the sacred, and, as we all should, love for our most beautiful lives.
Program

I
Gia il sole dal gange  
Alessandro Scarlatti
Per la gloria d’adorarvi  
Giovanni Battista Bononcini
Vittoria, Vittoria  
Gian Giacomo Carissimi

II
Music, When Soft Voices Die  
Roger Quilter
Take, O Take Those Lips Away  
Roger Quilter

III
Wanderes Nachtlied II  
Franz Seraphicus Peter Schubert
Die Forelle  
Franz Seraphicus Peter Schubert

----------------------
Intermission
-------------------

IV
A Vucchella  
Francesco Paolo Tosti
O del mio amato ben  
Stefano Donaudy
Vaga luna che inargenti  
Vincenzo Bellini

V
Extase  
Henry Dupac
Ici-bas  
Gabriel Fauré

VI
Quanto è bella, quanto è cara  
Gaetano Donizetti
From L'elisir d'amore

VII
A Lovely Rose  
Luobin Wang
Hometown  
Huabai Lu