CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE

Sonority of a Soprano:
THE GRADUATE RECITAL OF JACLYN URBAN, SOPRANO LEGGIERO

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Table of Contents

Signature Page                      ii
Abstract                             iii
Program Notes                       1
Works Cited                         15
ABSTRACT

SONORITY OF A SOPRANO:

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No matter what the style, the historical period, or the national or racial characteristics, the essential core of a singer’s successful performance is empathy…The notes written down by the composer…were conceived with a certain sonority in mind…And one of those instruments was the human voice, which, while not changed physiologically, is now required to perform music so very different from what existed formerly that an entirely different technique has developed, with quite a different sonority as a result…to some extent, an “authentic” performance is a chimera.¹

The repertoire constituting this Graduate Recital is made up of a varied collection of oratorio, arias, Lieder, chanson, and art songs, which range from Baroque up until the Contemporary era. Inspired by George Newton’s, _Sonority in Singing_, I have chosen material of varying styles and techniques, inviting a historical study of the vocal sonorities intended by the composer, appropriate to the compositional styles of vocal writing at the time. A necessary disclaimer is that, due to the natural evolution of technology in music and human perceptions of beautiful sound, re-creating the music to
be exactly as the composer intended is unlikely to succeed, even to the musicians who subscribe to *Purism*, though it certainly will come close and pay a valuable homage. The intention, when pure in nature, is the most honest and honorable gift a vocalist can offer to the composers and sonorities of the past.

The emergence of the *bel canto* style between 1630 and 1640...The *bel canto* style represents the reaction of musicians against the dictates of the poets...the music was now coordinated with, rather than subordinated to, the words...Each piece had a basic affection...The abstract intellectual character of this kind of expressiveness was not only one with the philosophical and esthetic climate; it was the only kind of expressiveness possible with the voices and instruments that existed.²

The opening selection, “Come all ye songsters” (1692) by Henry Purcell, is a work indicative of England’s music during the Baroque; it was strongly influenced by theatrical tradition, Shakespeare, and poetry and is derived from *The Fairy Queen*, a dramatic theater piece or semi-opera. The work is actually derived from Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and was renamed *The Fairy Queen* because of the emphasis on the supernatural elements of the play. In fact, this piece is sung by Titania, a fairy; Titania and her fairies revel in singing this song, as if singing a lullaby to the allegorical characters Night, Mystery, Secrecy and Sleep. She is typically played by a female soprano, though it is important to note that, generally speaking at this time, a soprano role was also often played by countertenor, or male alto, which explains the comfortable and relatively lower tessitura for a soprano. This was before the castrati, (who would sing at even higher tessituras), became en vogue. Purcell defined the height of the English rhetorical style by combining both Italian and French influences in his vocal music; he incorporated the expression, and legato line of the Italians and the light, dance motifs of
the French. In Purcell’s music, the ornamentation is often precisely written out, as is apparent in this song. Through the use of recitative and arioso passages, alternating florid and sustained melody, Purcell creates a communicative text, enhancing the more valuable parts of the text, apparent in “Come all ye songsters”.

During the Baroque era, music became a delineative language of emotion rather than a personal expression of it…If the music is to be projected well…it is the performer’s ornamentation that raises the performance above the mere sounding of words and notes…Vocal technique now is generally directed toward the big sound that makes possible the dramatic fervor required by more recent music. Einstein points to the problem in discussing the performance of Bach’s music. “I am convinced…that we put too much emotion…where it is intended to be purely descriptive.”

In the Baroque period, Germany was also strongly influenced by Italy and France. Henry Schütz wrote his treatise on singing, ‘Manier’ in 1650, based on the principles of the ‘seconda prattica’ of the early Italian school, and was also influenced by the French courtly dances. Germany exhibits its own unique style, influenced by the Lutheran doctrine within sacred music, as demonstrated by Johann Sebastian Bach. Ideally, a singer of late Baroque music should be able to master many different kinds of trills, as these ornamentations were reverential, intending to express a word in a more sacred manner. Bach was a devout Lutheran and wrote more ornaments into his music than most of his contemporaries. He is considered perhaps the most prolific composer the Baroque era; as a German cantor and choirmaster in Leipzig, he produced a variety of sacred choral and solo works for the church. His music bears his signature compositional style of superb contrapuntal, rhythmic, and textural techniques. One of Johann Sebastian Bach’s major vocal works is the Magnificat in D major (1733). In general, the complexity of Bach’s music leaves little room for improvisation by the vocalist. In “Quia respexit
humilitatem”, the vocal line is simpler, so one has the liberty to add appoggiaturas or trills, in good taste. The text imbues a humble and reverential tone, plaintively offered by the vocalist. The various treatises on singing of the time are a great resource for modern singers who are interested in specializing in early music; Pier Francesco Tosi’s *Observations on the Florid Song* Trans. by John Galliard, (1743) or Giulio Caccini’s *Le Nuove Musiche* (1602), offer detailed direction on proper singing style, and improvisatory choices.

Change had been in the air…the first manifestation of a kind of music emphasizing simple personal feeling, rejecting the abstract doctrine of the affections…elimination of …“wearisome” ornamentation in search for truth in expression.⁵

During the Classical era, there was a decline of castrato singers and an increased use of sopranos and mezzos in opera and classical music. Mozart enjoyed becoming acquainted with his singers so that he could compose in a fashion that highlighted his/her strengths. He favored the cantabile, expressive singing of true emotion, versus bravura that could be void of emotion or overdone. This is evident in ‘Vedrai, Carino’, which has a lyrical melody and comfortable tessitura, designed for the character, Susanna, designated as a soubrette fach role and composed for one of his favorite leading ladies of the time, Nancy Storace.⁶ Susanna is playfully beseeching her love, Masetto, to accept her love as an antidote for the wounds he received from the sinister, Don Giovanni. The aria is representative of Mozart’s writing style. Singing Mozart, one must be able to perform a melodic arc, in a simple cantabile manner, though it is appropriate within the style to employ selective portamento and appoggiatura; these devices were viewed positively as a graceful way to emphasize text. Legato, cantabile singing was quickly
gaining popularity, yet one of the most important objectives was, and should still be, to highlight the differences in mood expression. Classical music demands significant but well-chosen executed trills, and cadenzas, and vibrato to be kept minimal, though Mozart appreciated the “natural tremble”. In general, the Italian and French school would tend to observe a more florid ornamentation versus the German school, which had a more conservative, simpler approach to ornamentation. These conflicting schools do challenge a singer today, who must choose the most appropriate way to express the composer’s wishes, complemented by their individual style, of course.

Mere agility was secondary, in eighteenth-century bel canto technique, to “the subtleties involved in sustaining a long holding-note, breath control and everything goes with adagio singing”...the singer often taking extreme liberty with the embellishments... Using both techniques, sombre and clear timbre, Garcia gave his students a much wider interpretive range...as the combination of larger theaters and louder orchestras forced to singers to concentrate on power...The true art of bel canto ended with the disappearance of the castrati...

“Bel Canto”, meaning “beautiful singing” was used in the treatises of the 17th and 18th c., however, in the mid-19th, the term came into vogue. As part of the nationalist movement taking place in Europe, “bel canto” was used in reference to the florid, Italian approach, contrary to the German declamatory style. The early 19th c. brought an increased interest in musical entertainment of the middle class; as the opera industry grew, operas from the 17th and 18th c. were being repeated, encouraging new modifications to the original score, reducing the authority and intentions of the composer, and offering singers more autonomy. The principles of “beautiful singing” remained fairly consistent from Caccini to Garcia; “from the early 17th c to the time of Rossini (and Donizetti), the musical goals for singers were a sweet, pure tone, blended registers, command of messa di voce, portamento, and a facility for executing florid ornaments,
and an ability to convey the emotions of a text”.

Vocal pedagogues began to offer more complex definitions of the voice ranges, as the scientific understanding of the voice began to evolve following Garcia II’s invention of the laryngoscope in 1854. Vibrato was still much more restrained than the general public is accustomed to today; the more vigorous vibrato commonly heard today was used exclusively for dramatic effect. To gain an idea of the more slight vibrato that was en vogue in the early 19th c., one can listen to early 20th c. recordings like soprano, Adelina Patti, which demonstrates the appropriate use of “vibrato, tempi flexibility, vibrato, portamento and ornamentations” or glean wisdom from Vaccai’s *Practical Method of Italian Singing* (1832). The art of improvising florid embellishments reached its peak with Italian singers of early 19th c. The basic trend was to embellish with good taste, more often on the da capo section, and modify the fioritura, though leaving the cantabile section simple. The gentle, relaxed production favored since the 17th c. were still central, and legato sonority became increasingly popular. For the modern day composer, it is helpful to take Garcia’s advice that, “Rhythm and tempi may be adjusted to suit breathing, phrasing, expression, and ornamentation, in the name of “bel canto” and heightened expressivity”. This is evident in “Pronta io son”, from *Don Pasquale*, a libretto by Giovanni Ruffini, and one of Donizetti’s *opera buffa* masterpieces. “Pronta io son” is a duet between the elderly doctor, Malatesta, and young Norina, whom conspire to dupe the miserly patriarch, Don Pasquale. Norina desires to marry Ernesto, Don Pasquale’s nephew, but Don Pasquale refuses to allow their union, as she has no wealth. To further insult his nephew’s wishes, Don Pasquale summons his doctor to find him a young bride. Dr. Malatesta endeavors to teach Don Pasquale a lesson for this foolishness by conspiring with Norina to dupe Don
Pasquale. Norina is deliberately playful and motivated in this piece, which is demonstrated by her lyrical lines devoted to Ernesto, juxtaposed with lively “patter” sections of the ensuing mischief. The tempo is variable here, in order to effectively convey the mood and maintain the appropriate energetic level of the piece. In addition, the melody requires significant breath management and stamina, and phrasing can be adjusted to make appropriate concessions for the singer. A work full of cantabile, fioritura, and dramatic expressions, “Pronta io son” is a fantastic example of 18th century ‘bel canto’ writing.

The end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries had found the esthetic pendulum swinging back toward Romanticism, an outlook on life comparable to the Romanticism of the early Baroque, which had invented opera and dramatic music…Now singers developed a new timbre that held the possibility for real dramatic singing. German Lieder rapidly gained popularity as it was able to convey important themes of 19th c. Romanticism while appealing to a larger audience. Poets such as Eichendorff and Mackay wrote poems that painted vast landscapes and depicted the individuals’ places in the natural world and helped define German national identify. The lied was a perfect form for combining music and poetry, art and literature, natural landscapes and interior life of the individual”; all themes that were gaining wide popularity of the growing middle class. Over the course of the 19th c., lieder were also arranged for voice and orchestra (common in the works of Mahler, Strauss and Wagner). Regardless of the size of the concert hall, however, lieder begs intimate communication between the singer and accompanist, providing a unique experience for the audience. During the later 19th c., lieder was also being published into large public compilations, and Kimball shares the contrasting roles of both composers: Wolf took precautions to ensure that every detail
was correct in the publication and was a stern critic of his performances, and emphasized
the value of the poet’s contribution; clear diction and natural declamation were of utmost
importance. Strauss also oversaw the publication of all of his songs (except for the ‘Last
Four Songs’) and, contrary to Wolf, left most decisions about articulation and dramatic
interpretation to the singer. While most of his songs were written for high voice, he was
flexible regarding rearranging transposition of his works. The percussive qualities of
the German language was a challenge for the German singers of the 19th c. who tried to
combine the legato line of the Italian school while remaining expressive in their own
language. In German Lieder singing, elaborate ornamentation was rarely employed,
contrary to the popular virtuosity in the Italian school. Vibrato can be used as an
expressive device only, whereas portamento can be used more liberally, also for primarily
expressive and dramatic purposes. Rubato and tempo flexibility began to be used to such
a great degree, that composers needed to include more descriptive tempo instructions.
Wolf’s “Verschwiegene liebe”, text set to a poem by Eichendorff (1888), bears a magical
and delicate blend of harmonies and textures that easily lulls the listener into the
daydream of the lovestruck singer. (Wolf’s) taste for poetry and his ability to flawlessly
portray the text with a palette of dissonance and chromaticism, all the while retaining a
tonal center, has set him apart from other composers as the master of the pinnacle of art
song. “Morgen!”, set to Mackay’s text, by Richard Strauss (1893-4), has been
described as “motionless ecstasy”. The wondrous, drifting prelude sets a tone of bliss
suspended throughout the entire work. The vocal line maintains a delicate interplay with
the texture of the piano accompaniment, leading the listener into the soaring heights of
languorous phrasing.
The rise of Romantic opera in the early years of the nineteenth century…the center of its development was Paris…\textsuperscript{20} As composers expanded their expressive vocabulary, employing either agility or amplitude as suited their purpose, singers had a practical choice to make: they would have to become specialists and prepare themselves as either lyric or dramatic types.\textsuperscript{21}

In the late 19\textsuperscript{th} c., “music dramas” were a part of the revolution in music led by Wagner, and, Massenet, along with Charles Gounod, epitomized the French tradition of Grand opera at this time. Massenet’s mélodies are graceful and sincere, and his music has an innate charm that has attracted many fans. Massenet's passion for melody infused with tenderness and sensuality, paired well with Goethe's romantic novel, \textit{Werther}, which was consequently adapted into a libretto, by Edouard Blau, Paul Milliet and George Hartman in 1887.\textsuperscript{22} Massenet’s tendency toward employing sensual vocal lines is displayed in the youthful aria, “Frere voyez…du gai soleil”, sung by Sophie to Werther, who is attempting to cheer him up from his brooding infatuation with her sister, Charlotte. Her lines are initially vibrant and take on a cantabile texture as she shifts from her encouraging declamation to an innocent reverie in the beauty and joy she see around her. The vocal style in French grand opera was at its peak during the transition from the sentimentalism of \textit{Bel Canto} into the more powerful vocal employment seen in the music dramas of Wagner, and, yet to be seen, in the ensuing Verismo opera of Puccini, Verdi, and their contemporaries. (Vocal literature from the depot of Wagner’s “music dramas”, nor Verdi or Puccini’s operatic offerings are chosen in this programming, as these compositional styles do not boast to highlight the strengths of a light lyric; This repertoire was often written with bigger, more powerful voices in mind, with the exception of select roles for the soprano leggiero). Massenet's popularity with the French
began to decrease under the growing popularity of fellow Frenchman, Debussy, and impressionistic/symbolistic compositional writing; Massenet was actually seen as old-fashioned by the time he died.  

French *mélodie* follows Debussy’s stipulation that “clarity of expression, precision and concentration of form are qualities peculiar to the French genius.” It is an art… that deals much more with sensitive impressions and perceptions than with direct emotions. Pierre Bernac, the great French singer some of whose recordings are reviewed below, has observed “the Lied is essentially a Romantic phenomenon, whereas the French mélodie is post-Romantic and often reacts against sentimental effusion.” The *mélodie*, then, combines precision with lyricism to achieve a controlled profundity that does not preclude sensuousness of sound, beauty of sonority or subtle harmony.

French *Mélodie* took longer than German Lied to develop, partly due to the destruction resulting from the French Revolution. French poetry was flourishing, however – Massenet, Duparc, amongst others, set music to poetry, under the predominantly Italian influence of traveling operas singers. The later French Mélodie of Faure, Debussy and Ravel, began to shift French music in a new direction and style. The music of Wagner contributed to the breakdown of tonality, as he and his later contemporaries, Debussy and Ravel began to explore chromaticism and exotic elements such as the Javanese gamelan. The latter and many of their students began creating a new harmonic landscape, highlighting the sound of the music, rather than the virtuosity of the performer – evident in Debussy’s ‘Beau Soir’. Composers’ relationship to singers was pivotal at this time and today’s singers are fortunately left with written records of such encounters, providing helpful advice for singing authentic to the composer’s wishes. Jane Bathori, known as a “muse” to many of the fin-de siècle composers, has bequeathed various written accounts, especially detailing her prized collaborations with Debussy in
There was a strict shift from virtuosity to an adherence of the notated score and respect to the composer’s intentions; this was a reaction against the excesses of Romanticism. Elliot enumerates upon the characteristics of authentic singing for Mélodie; portamento and rubato were used with great subtlety and restraint, leaving showmanship aside in order the honor the composer. Also, French music of the 17th and 18th c had been characterized by restrained grace and beauty, especially compared to the heavily ornamented Italian style and declamatory German school. Since the French language did not have the same strong, rhythmic inflection of the Italian language, nor the percussive consonant groupings of English or German languages, syllable stress was made by duration. Most late 18th c. and early 19th c. singing manuals stressed diction and dramatic expression without much emphasis on vocal technique, resulting in a lack in legato line and cantabile singing. Interestingly enough, French diction is regarded differently today than it was in the late 19th and early 20th c. “In contrast with the even vowels and fast light consonants that are taught today, singers in fin-de-siècle France used vowels with a variety of lengths and even employed expressive double consonants. One could consider observing Benigne de Bacilly’s 17th c. rules for long and short syllables when approaching French Mélodies of this era.”

Debussy’s “Beau Soir”, set to Bourget’s text (1877-88) is an elegant representation of his early Impressionistic style. and phrasing is extremely lyrical (similar to Massenet’s sensual tendencies), as he paints the setting of the sun and dusk quietly blanketing the world.
Almost all voice were learning a new technique that would add volume and dramatic intensity to the sound. Only the soprano leggiero was exempt from this striving for a different sonority...By the first decade of the twentieth century, the conventional division of operatic roles into lyric, dramatic, and coloratura was accepted...voices recognized as having a better florid technique...more suited for the earlier music.  

Neo-Classical Spanish composer Joaquin Rodrigo was a successful pianist, composer, and musicologist. “His first works reveal the influence of composers of his time such as Ravel and Stravinsky, but the personal voice is quickly heard which would go on to create a notable chapter in the cultural history of Spain in the 20th century, where the originality of Rodrigo’s musical inspiration goes hand in hand with a devotion to the fundamental values of his tradition”.  

Like Richard Strauss, Rodrigo felt a particular affection throughout his life for the soprano voice, for which he wrote almost all his songs. As Elliot includes, he wrote a good deal for Victoria de los Angeles, particularly enthralled with her purity of style and diction, though had no intentions of exclusivity, and is quoted, “I do not object to transposition if this brings them into the reach of a greater number of singers. However, most of my songs have been composed for specific soprano voice, keeping in mind the particular range and qualities and characteristics of that voice.”

Cuatro madrigales amatorios, or Four Madrigals of Love, was written in 1947. All four songs are set to the sixteenth-century poetry of Juan Vasquez’s collection entitled Recopilacion de sonetos y sonetos y villancicos a quatro y a cinco. Rodrigo wrote the work with clear inspiration from late Renaissance/early Baroque themes; evidenced in the terraced dynamics, few crescendi and rhythmic structures that are simple and typical of Baroque Spanish folk music. Wade explains, “In the late 1930s, Rodrigo first heard the settings of these texts by the Renaissance masters of the vihuela (an early type of guitar), when Emilio Pujol, playing a
reproduction vihuela, accompanied the soprano, Conchita Badía, in Paris. Throughout the cycle, Rodrigo pays tribute to the early Spanish masters creating his own themes in close homage to the originals. This short cycle examines different facets of love, including despair, deceit, and delight; the third piece, “De donde venis, amore?” (“From where are you coming from, love?”) is presented in this recital, and is the most playful; the character accuses her love of being with another and interplays with the piano in staccato, melodic and rhythmic gestures.

Manuel María Ponce Cuéllar was a Neo-classical, Mexican composer music educator and scholar of Mexican music, whom connected the concert scene with a usually forgotten tradition of popular song and Mexican folklore. In 1912, Ponce composed his most famous work Estrellita (little star). The music invokes the fervent emotion of the singer; the richness and escalating contour of the melody illustrates the desperate expression of the vocalist, whom is pleading her lover to bestow upon her a clear affirmation that she is loved, less she die. As a result of his activity promoting the music of Mexico and writing melodies like Estrellita, Ponce was given the title “Creator of the Modern Mexican Song.” He was also the first Mexican composer to project popular music onto the world stage: Estrellita, for example, has been part of the repertoire of the main repertoire for the vocalist and orchestra in international concert halls. Ponce actively advocated music nationalism and in 1914 gave his first lecture on this subject:

Our salons welcomed only foreign music in 1910, such as Italianate romanzas and operatic arias transcribed for piano. Their doors remained resolutely closed to the canción mexicana until at last the revolutionary cannon in the north announced the imminent destruction of the old order... Singers traveling about through the republic spread far and wide the new nationalist song; everywhere the idea gained
impetus that the republic should have its own musical art faithfully mirroring its own soul.\textsuperscript{34}

Ponce had a varied musical education; he studied solfege, music theory and analysis in Mexico, Italy and Germany. In Germany he was encouraged by his fellow German students to incorporate Mexican folk elements, in his compositions rather than dedicating himself to European-classic style.\textsuperscript{35} Significantly, two of his fellow students made important contributions to the 20th century guitar repertoire - the aforementioned Spaniard, Joaquin Rodrigo, as well as Brazilian, Heitor Villa-Lobos.

These compositions by Rodrigo and Ponce, both require the vocalist to adopt the neo-classical vocal inflections indicative of their respective era of inspiration; Rodrigo: Baroque and Ponce: Romantic.

According to Miller, the Italians work to achieve balance between breathing, phonation, and resonance, a balance made much easier by the language. The basic principles enunciated by Mancini have been adapted, in the studios of Italy (and America) “to the taste and music of today.”\textsuperscript{36}

A popular, contemporary, American composer Richard Hundley has a distinct compositional style that can be traced back to his own musical training, his own singing experience, and his work as studio accompanist for famous vocalists. Like the great Lied composers of the 19th century, Hundley uses the piano as a full partner with the voice. Hundley's own singing experience is an important element; his vocal lines that are always lyrical and well-liked by vocalists. "He is an impassioned lyricist, who loves to caress the words with beguiling melody. Singers clearly love to sing these songs...though tricky, they're a balm for weary throats and weary ears."\textsuperscript{37} Hundley is attentive in his collaborations with a singer. In a letter to the composer, American operatic soprano Anna
Moffo wrote that his songs are "vocally rewarding," and she "found him to have a truly great gift of melody and a way with setting words to these melodies..." Throughout his life, Hundley has had close relationships with many of America's great composers; Lee Hoiby, John Corigliano. Henry Cowell, Gian Carlo Menotti, Leonard Bernstein, and Samuel Barber. Many parallels to the great composers of the past can drawn, as his melodies employ the vocal elements of bel canto, though they are modernized by an accompaniment that incorporates use of non-traditional devices such as meter changes and contemporary harmonies. Echoing the tastes of 'bel canto' singing, the melodies call for a beautiful tone, purity of intonation, and a clear, resonant sound, making them a valuable resource for vocal instruction. “The Astronomers (An Epitaph)” is a tender, lyrical piece that provokes the imagination and calls for the singer to establish and maintain one overall mood. The text is based upon an inscription found in Allegheny, Pennsylvania, and is combined with an opening prologue written by Richard Hundley. It alludes to the state of eternal life, and illustrates mystery and spirituality. Susan Campbell is Hundley's beloved Grandmother, Anna Susan Campbell and the opening phrases should be sung simply, as if the singer were reading the headstone in the graveyard. The word "astronomers" breaks the monotone line and ushers in the aria section, momentarily stopping the forward motion of the piece and suggesting the suspension of death and the infinity of space. The last two notes, sung on the words "the night", a singer is to perform messa di voce. The last note fades as the accompaniment creates an ethereal atmosphere, alluding to the smallness of humanity in contrast to the vastness of the universe.

Libby Larsen, an American female composer, has established herself as a prolific composer of the 20th and 21st centuries, particularly in vocal repertoire. Larsen comments
on her background and compositional writing styles in auto-biographical content provided in a website dedicated to her, which is included below to shed light on her contribution to contemporary American vocal repertoire. Her affinity for writing for the singing voice is recounted by Larsen, “I love the human voice, especially when it sings. It seems to me that the human voice raised in song carries our spirit on its breath in a way that is essential, timeless, deeply mysterious and completely honest. I also love great texts - texts that invite you inside to play, discover and wonder .... I have a serious responsibility to work as diligently as I can to discover the music of the poem (or prose)...

If I do that work well, I move through the discovery of poetic devices to discover the melodic contour, meter (usually polymeter), syntax, counterpoint, and musical form of the poem.”

In an interview, Larsen responds to whether she has intention to write music that is particularly “American sounding”. She responds, “Several years ago I began examining rhythmic patterns, pitch range, tempo and phrase contour in American spoken English. I strive to understand how these characteristics represent our American lives and emotions, and to use these elements in my music. This, I think, is what makes it "American.”

Larsen expounds on her harmonic language and compositional techniques, “My music is built around tonal areas that are vaguely modal and reinforced through pedal tones in the bass. The key to my music is to hear tones that aren't articulated and to be able to listen to low tones...The way I conceive tonality is horizontal, not vertical, meaning that the line comes first and the harmonies result. Intervals generally have a particular significance in my music — I choose the interval, I like Lydian fourths and major thirds — and develop the meaning of that interval musically throughout a piece.”

Larsen’s compositional style and philosophy is apparent in her adaptation of Belle Starr’s
prose, “Buckin’ Bronco”, a piece that recounts the story of a young maiden who has fallen for the quintessential American cowboy, his rustic swagger and penchant for adventure and wanderlust. The piece commences with a tuneful, melodic a cappella entry made by a soprano, showcasing Larsen’s favored intervallic exchange. The rollicking accompaniment paints the picture of the Western frontier and modal shifts in tonal center keep the harmonic language engaging.

Continuing the eclectic, contemporary, American tradition is Copland, who, in the 1920's, was one of the first Americans to study in Paris with Nadia Boulanger. “Boulanger believed that to be American--or more generally non-European--was at that moment in music history an advantage. A non-European perspective could facilitate the development of innovative compositional ideas and a fresh expressive focus.”45 This belief is an accurate reflection of the influential role that American composers had, as they were not bound to the European tradition, and had the good fortune to be borne into both American heritage and varied European studies. Elliot describes Copland’s trademark style well, stating that, “The open texture that is often identified with Copland, is that of intervals of primarily fourths, fifths, minor sevenths, major seconds and major ninths. These open, spare harmonies are a reaction against the neo-romantic style of his contemporaries, and would eventually become synonymous with the American West and American music, popular and classical.”46 The Tender Land (composed 1952-1954) was commissioned by the League of Composers for the organization’s 30th anniversary. The librettist, “Horace Everett” had never written a libretto or a play before and based it on a text by James Agee, Let Us Now Praise Famous Men (1941). It was originally intended as an opera for television, but was rejected by NBC. Instead, it was premiered on April 1,
1954 by the New York City Opera. “As Copland's last work in his American populist style, *The Tender Land* is both traditional and progressive; while rooted in diatonicism and traditional operatic forms such as the aria, it is sung in the American vernacular and incorporates folksong.” Set in the 1930’s Midwest, the opera was influenced by Walker Evans’ stark photographs, which accompanied Agee’s book, and is essentially an opera about Laurie’s rebellion and awakening sense of autonomy as a young woman. "Laurie's Song" is performed at the beginning of the opera; She is about to graduate from high school, and feels conflicted about leaving her pleasant upbringing but is excited about what the future will bring. The song bears a mood of reminiscence and inner conflict, illustrated by a spacious melodic line that is motivated by constant changes in tempo and meter, as well as key.

Menotti (1911-2007), a contemporary of Copland, had his own unique compositional voice and favored vocal works. He composed two operas before the age of 13, when he began attendance at the Verdi Conservatory of Music in Milan. In spite of his Italian upbringing, Menotti was a self-described American composer - he moved to the United States at the age of 28 to attend the Curtis Institute of Music. While at Curtis, Menotti established a lifelong friendship with Samuel Barber, which they maintained until Barber’s death in 1981. Menotti’s style is particularly noted for his desire to reach an audience and connect them more intimately with a piece. He has been hailed for his multi-talented ability to fuse music and theater - he often directed his own works, wrote his own libretti, and proved success with relatively long runs on Broadway. *The Telephone* is a one-act opera with only three characters: Lucy, her boyfriend Ben, and her telephone (whose role throughout is quite important). Ben is intending to propose to Lucy,
but her phone continues to ring, always interrupting. “Hello? Oh Margaret, it’s you!” is a comedic piece in which the audience witnesses Lucy’s conversation with her friend Margaret. Throughout the aria, Lucy chatters along, with the piano roulades interrupting as Margaret clamors on, much to Lucy’s chagrin. The conversation alternates between gossip, polite inquiry, obligatory question-asking and laughter. Lucy often simply responds with real or feigned laughter in the short coloratura passages. She is anxious to hang up the phone and is finally successful, concluding her conversation with a dramatic, and comically exasperated flourish!

Hundley, Copland, and Menotti, each share their unique American voice, employing techniques that parallel historical compositional techniques, yet each with a penchant for drawing the audience into the music, providing a context that the audience can subscribe and relate to. A sonority is provided that pays homage to the historical lineage of vocal writing yet provides a dramatic and harmonic juxtaposition in order to support a vibrant and relevant tradition for today’s singers and their audiences.

Immersing oneself in studies of vocal styles appropriate to the historical performance practice is an effort that needs to be made as part of comprehensive study as a vocalist. The sonorities of the past are part of the rich vocal tradition and though society’s evolving taste makes an authentic performance difficult, it is a venerable and honorable task. It is my personal aim to take this academic study and commence technical vocal training in a specialized manner, in order to provide the most authentic-to-era performance possible as well as remaining true to my unique voice and providing a relevant contribution to the era to which I belong.
There can be no real turning back, it seems to me, to some of the very early sonorities; they would always seem too bizarre to most audiences. However, for music of the seventeenth and especially eighteenth centuries a compromise with present-day vocal technique is possible…it would result in a sound somewhat leaner…a floating sound that would never be unduly pressed for greater volume, a sound that did not disdain to blend easily and make full use of the light mechanism. ⁵⁰
California State University, Northridge
Mike Curb College of Arts, Media and Communication
Department of Music

present

Jaclyn Urban,
Soprano Leggiero

In her Master of Music Recital*

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A student of Diane Ketchie
Landon Baumgard, Collaborative Pianist

Jason Kennedy, Oboe
Thomas Balasz, Cello
John Haukoos, Baritone
Shannon Canchola, Flute
Andrew Duncan, Trumpet

Sunday, May 3, 4:30 pm
Cypress Recital Hall

*in partial fulfillment of the Master of Music degree in Vocal Arts Performance
Please hold your applause until the completion of each set

I.

Come, all ye songsters, *The Fairy Queen*  
Henry Purcell  
(1659-1695)

Magnificat in D  
*Quia respexit humilitatem*  
J.S. Bach  
(1685-1750)

Jason Kennedy, Oboe

II.

Vedrai, Carino, *Don Giovanni*  
Wolfgang Mozart  
(1756-1791)

Pronta io son, *Don Pasquale*  
Duet: Baritone, John Haukoos  
Gaetano Donizetti  
(1797-1848)

III.

Verschwiegene Liebe  
Hugo Wolf  
(1860-1903)

Morgen!  
Thomas Balasz, Cello  
Richard Strauss  
(1866-1939)

*Frere, voyez...du gai soleil, *Werther*  
Jules Massenet  
(1842-1912)

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~  Intermission  ~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~
V.

Beau Soir  
Shannon Canchola, Flute  
Claude Debussy  
(1866-1918)

Cuatros Madrigales Amatorios  
De donde venis, amore?  
Joaquin Rodrigo  
(1901-1999)

Estrellita  
Andrew Duncan, Trumpet  
Manuel Ponce  
(1882-1948)

VI.

Astronomers  
Richard Hundley  
(b. 1931)

Will there really be a morning?

Cowboy Songs  
Bucking Bronco  
Libby Larsen  
(b. 1950)

VII.

Laurie's Song, *The Tender Land*  
Aaron Copland  
(1900-1990)

*  

Hello, hello, Oh, Margaret it's you, *The Telephone*  
Gian Carlo Menotti  
(1911-2007)
Quia respexit humilatem
Text: J.S. Bach (1685–1750)

Quia respexit humilitatem
ancillae suae:
Ecce, enim ex hoc
beatam me dicent.

For he has regarded the humility
Translation: Magon Solomon

For he has regarded the humility
of his handmaiden:
behold, for from this time,
blessed may he be called.

Vedrai, carino
Text:
Vedrai, carino,
se sei buonino,
Che bel rimedio
ti voglio dar!
È naturale,
non dà disgusto,
E lo speziale
non lo sa far.
È un certo balsamo
Ch’io porto addosso,
Dare tel posso,
Se il vuoi provar.
Saper vorresti
dove mi sta?
Sentilo battere,
toccamì qua!

You will see, my dear
Translation: Camila Batista

You will see, my dear
if you’ll be good
what a cure
(to) you I’d like to give!
It’s natural
It won’t give you disgust
and the apothecary
Does not know how to make it.
It’s a certain balm
I carry within me
which I can give you,
If you would like to try it.
You want to know
where upon me, it is?
Feel it beat,
touch me here!

Pronta io son
Text: Giovanni Ruffini (1842)

MALATESTA
A punire il nipote,
che opponsi alle sue voglie
Don Pasqual s’è deciso a prender moglie.

NORINA
Già mel diceste.

MALATESTA
Or ben, io suo dottore,
vistolo così fermo nel proposto,

Ready I am
Translation: unknown

MALATESTA
To punish his nephew,
who opposes his wishes,
Don Pasquale has decided to take a wife.

NORINA
You already told me that.

MALATESTA
Very well. I am his doctor.
Seeing him so firm in his plan,
cambio tattica, e tosto nell’interesse vostro, e in quel d’Ernesto, mi pongo a secondarlo. convento una sorella, Don Pasquale sa ch’io tengo al convento una sorella
vi fo passar per quella -- egli non vi conosce -- e vi presento prìa ch’altri mi prevenga; vi vede e resta cotto.

NORINA
Va benissimo.

MALATESTA
Caldo caldo vi sposa. Carlotto mio cugino ci farà da Notaro. Al resto poi tocca pensare a voi. Lo fate disperar: il vecchio impazza, l’abbiamo a discrezione... Allor...

NORINA
Basta. Ho capito.

MALATESTA
Va benone.

NORINA
Pronta io son; purch’io non manchi all’amor del caro bene: farò imbrogli, farò scene, so ben io quel ch’ho da far.

MALATESTA
Voi sapete se d’Ernesto sono amico, e ben gli voglio, solo tende il nostro imbroglio Don Pasquale a corbellar.

NORINA
Siamo intesi. lo prendo impegno.

MALATESTA
Io la parte ecco v’insegno.

NORINA
I changed tactics and immediately, in your interest, And in that of Ernesto’s, long with him. I pretended to go along. He knows I have a sister in the convent.

MALATESTA
I will pass you off as her -- he doesn't know you -- and present you before anyone anticipates me. He will see you and be captivated.

NORINA
That’s excellent.

MALATESTA
He’ll marry you on the spot. My cousin Carlotto will play the Notary. Then it’s up to you to plan the rest. Drive him to despair: the old man crazy, we’ll have him at our discretion. And then...

NORINA
Enough. I understand.

MALATESTA
Excellent.

NORINA
I am ready -- as long as I don’t betray my beloved’s love; I’ll lay traps, I’ll play scenes – I know very well what I have to do.

MALATESTA
You know whether I am Ernesto’s friend and care for him; our trick is only intended to make a fool of Don Pasquale.

NORINA
We’re in agreement. I’ll take the job.

MALATESTA
Now look here, I'll teach you the part.
NORINA
Mi volete fiera?

MALATESTA
No.

NORINA
Mi volete mesta?

MALATESTA
No, la parte non è questa.

NORINA
Ho da pianger?

MALATESTA
No.

NORINA
O gridare?

MALATESTA
No, la parte non è questa.
State un poco ad ascoltar.
Convien far la semplicetta.

NORINA
La semplicetta?

MALATESTA
Io la parte ecco v'insegno.

NORINA
Posso in questo dar lezione.

MALATESTA
Collo torto, bocca stretta.

MALATESTA, NORINA
Or proviam quest'altra azione.

NORINA
Mi vergogno... son zitella...
grazie... serva... serva, signor si.

NORINA
Do you want me to be proud?

MALATESTA
No.

NORINA
Do you want me to be sad?

MALATESTA
No, that's not the part.

NORINA
Do I have to cry?

MALATESTA
No.

NORINA
Or scream?

MALATESTA
No, that isn't the part.
Listen to me for a moment.
You need to play the ingénue.

NORINA
The ingénue?

MALATESTA
Now look here, I'll teach you the part.

NORINA
I could give lessons in it.

MALATESTA
Your neck bent, your lips pursed.

MALATESTA, NORINA
Now let's try another action.

NORINA (acting)
I'm too shy ... I'm a maiden ... 
Thank you ... Your servant, yes sir!
MALATESTA
Brava, brava, bricconcella!
Va benissimo così.

MALATESTA
Collo torto.

NORINA
Così...

MALATESTA
Brava. Bocca stretta.

NORINA
Così...

MALATESTA
Ah brava.

MALATESTA
Sì, corriamo al gran cimento,
Pieno ho il cor d'ardimento.
La saetta fra non molto
sentiremo ad iscoppiar.
A quel vecchio affé la testa
questa volta ha da girar.
M'incomincio a vendicar.

MALATESTA
Yes, let's hasten to the great combat;
My heart is full of courage.
Very soon we'll hear
the thunderbolt hit.
For sure, that old man's head
is going to spin this time.

NORINA
Quel vecchione rimbambito
a miei voti invan contrasta;
io l'ho detto e tanto basta,
la saprò, la vo’ spuntar.

NORINA
That senile old man
fights against my wishes in vain;
I have said it, enough,
I know how to do it, I'll succeed.
Verschwiegene Liebe
Text: Josef von Eichendorff (1788 - 1857) Translation: Emily Ezust

Über Wipfel und Saaten
In den Glanz hinein -
Wer mag sie erraten,
Wer holte sie ein?
Gedanken sich wiegen,
Die Nacht ist verschwiegen,
Gedanken sind frei.

Errät es nur eine,
Wer an sie gedacht
Beim Rauschen der Haine,
Wenn niemand mehr wacht
Als die Wolken, die fliegen -
Mein Lieb ist verschwiegen
Und schön wie die Nacht.

Morgen!
Text: John Henry Mackay (1864 - 1933) Translation: Emily Ezust

Und morgen wird die Sonne
wieder scheinen,
und auf dem Wege, den ich gehen
werde wir uns,
die Glucklichen
sie wieder einen
inmitten dieser sonnenatmenden Erde . . .

Und zu dem Strand, dem weiten,
wogenblauen,
werden wir still und langsam
niedersteigen,
stumm werden wir uns in die
Augen schauen,
und auf uns sinkt des Glückes
stummes Schweigen . . .

Secret Love

Over treetops and corn
and into the splendor -
who may guess them,
who may catch up with them?
Thoughts sway,
the night is secretive;
thoughts run free

Only one guesses,
one who has thought of her
by the rustling of the grove,
when no one was watching any longer
except the clouds that flew by -
my love is secretive
and as fair as the night.

Morning! ('Morrow)

And tomorrow again the sun
will shine,
and of the path, which I go,
we will,
us happy ones
she will unite us again,

And to the shore, the wide shore with
blue waves,
we will still and slowly
descend
mute we will gaze in the
eyes of each other
and we shall sink in this blissful will
mute silence . . .
Frere, voyez..du gai soleil
Brothers, Look! From the gay sun

Text: Edouard Blau, Paul Millier, Georges Hartmann
Translation: unknown

Frère, voyez le beau bouquet!
Brother! Look at the lovely bouquet!
J’ai mis, pour le pasteur,
I’ve take them, for the pastor
le jardin au pillage.
From the garden I pillaged
Et puis l’on va danser!
And then, we shall dance!
Pour le premier menuet,
For the first minuet,
C’est sur vous que je compte...
It’s you that I’m counting on!
Ah! le sombre visage!
Ah! What a somber face
Mais aujourd’hui, monsieur Werther,
But today, Mr. Werther,
Tout le monde est joyeux,
All the world is joyful,
le bonheur est dans l’air!
Gladness is in the air!

Du gai soleil, plein de flamme
From the gay sun, filled with flame
Dans l’azur resplendissant,
in the air resplendent
La pure clarté descend
the pure radiance descends
De nos fronts jusqu’à notre âme.
From our head into our souls
Tout le monde est joyeux!
All is joyful!
Le bonheur est dans l’air!
Gladness is in in the air!
Et l’oiseau qui monte aux cieux,
and the bird who soars into the skies
Dans la brise qui soupire,
in the breeze that sighs
Est revenue pour nous dire
has returned for to tell us
Que Dieu permet d’être heureux.
That God permits us to be happy
Tout le monde est joyeux!
All the world is joyful!
Le bonheur est dans l’air!
Gladness is in the air!
Tout le monde est heureux
All the world is joyful!

Beau soir
Beautiful evening

Text: Paul Bourget (1852 - 1935)
Translation: Leslie McEwan

Lorsque au soleil couchant les rivière sont roses,
When the setting sun
Et qu’un tiède frisson court sur les champs de blé,
And a slight shudder rushes through the wheat fields,
Un conseil d’être heureux semble sortir des choses
A plea for happiness seems to rise out of all things
Et monter vers le cœur troublé ;
And mounts towards the troubled heart.
Un conseil de goûter le charme d’être au monde,
A plea to relish the charm to be in the world,
Cependant qu’on est jeune et que le soir est beau,
While there is youth and the evening is beautiful
Car nous nous en allons comme s’en va cette onde :
For we pass away,
Elle à la mer, -- nous au tombeau !
as the wave passes:
She (the wave) to the sea, we to the grave.
¿De donde venis, amore?
Text: Juan Vasquez

¿De dónde venís, amore?  
Bien sé yo de donde.  
¿De dónde venís, amigo?  
Fuere yo testigo. Ah!

From where are you coming, love
Translation: unknown

From where are you coming from, love?  
Well, I know from where  
From where are you coming from, friend  
I was your witness. Ah!

Estrellita
Text: Manuel M. Ponce (1883 - 1948)

Estrellita del lejano cielo,  
que miras mi dolor,  
que sabes mi sufrir.  
Baja y dime  
si me quiere un poco,  
porque yo no puedo sin su amor vivir.

¿Tu eres estrella mi faro de amor!  
Tu sabes que pronto he de morir.  
Baja y dime  
si me quiere un poco,  
porque yo no puedo sin su amor vivir

Little Star
Translation: Alfredo Kraus

Little star from the distant sky  
That watches my pain  
That knows my suffering  
Come down and tell me  
if you like me a little  
Because I can't live without your love

You are, little star, my beacon of love!  
You know that I will soon die  
Come down and tell me  
if you like me a little  
Because I can't live without your love

The Astronomers (An Epitaph)
Text: Anonymous

Susan Campbell 1863-1910  
Brian Campbell 1862-1909  
Astronomers  
We have loved the stars too deeply  
To be afraid of the night.

Will there really be a morning?
Text: Emily Dickinson (1830-1886)

Will there really be a "Morning"?  
Is there such a thing as "Day"?  
Could I see it from the mountains  
If I were as tall as they?
Has it feet like Water lilies?
Has it feathers like a Bird?
Is it brought from famous countries
Of which I have never heard?

Oh some Scholar! Oh some Sailor!
Oh some Wise Men from the skies!
Please to tell a little Pilgrim
Where the place called "Morning" lies!

**Bucking Bronco**
Text: Belle Starr (1848-1889)

My love is a rider, my love is a rider ...
My true love is a rider wild broncos he breaks,
though he promised to quit for my sake.
It's one foot in the stirrup and the saddle put on
with a swing and a jump he is mounted and gone.
The first time I met him it was early one spring
a riding a bronco a high headed thing.
The next time I saw him 'twas late in the fall
a swinging the girls at Tomlinson's ball.
He gave me some presents among them a ring
the return that I gave him was a far better thing;
A young maiden's heart, I'd have you all know,
that he won it by riding his bucking bronco.
Now all young maidens, where're you reside,
beware of the cowboy who swings rawhide,
He'll court you and pet you and leave you to go
in the spring up the trail on his bucking bronco.

**Laurie’s Song**
Text: Horner Everett

Once I thought I’d never grow tall as this fence.
Time dragged heavy and slow.
But April came and August went
before I knew just what they meant,
And little by little I grew
And as I grew I came to know
How fast the time could go.
Once I thought I’d never go
Outside this fence.
This space was plenty for me.
But I walked down that road one day,
and just what happened I can’t say.
But little by little it came to be
That line between the earth and sky
came beckoning to me.

Now the time has grown so short;
The world has grown so wide.
I’ll be graduated soon.
Why am I strange in side?
What makes me think I’d like to try
to go down all those roads beyond that line
above the earth and ’neath the sky?

Tomorrow when I sit upon that graduation
platform stand,
I know my hand will shake when I reach out
to take that paper with the ribboned band.

Now that all the learning’s done,
Oh who knows what will now begin?
Oh it’s so strange, I’m strange inside.
The time has grown so short, the world so wide.

**Hello! Hello! Oh, Margaret, it’s you**
Text: Gian Carlo Menotti (1911-2007)

Hello! Hello!
Oh, Margaret, it’s you.
I am so glad you called,
I was just thinking of you.
It’s been a long time since you called me.
No, my dear, I’m not feeling very well.
When? Where? I wish I could be there!
I’m afraid I must not. Hello? Hello?
What did you say, my darling?
What did you say? Hello? Hello?
Please speak louder!
I heard the funniest thing!
Jane and Paul are going
to get married next July. 
Don’t you think it is the funniest thing 
you ever heard? I know... of course...

And how are you? 
And how is John? 
And how is Jean? 
You must tell them that I send them my love. 
And how is Ursula, 
and how is Natalie, 
and how is Rosalie? 
I hope she’s got ten over her cold. 
And how is your mother, 
and how is your father, 
and how is dear little granny?

Ha, ha! Ha, ha!

Ha, ha! Ha, ha! 
Oh, dear! Well then, good-bye. 
I am so glad you called, 
I was just think of you. 
It’s been a long time since you called me. 
Yes, you already told me that. 
No my darling, of course I won’t forget! 
Yes, goodbye, my dear, good-bye 
Yes my darling, good-bye. Yes! 
Ha, ha! Ha, ha! 
That’s the funniest thing I ever heard! 
And how are you, 
and Bets, and Bob, 
and Sara, and Sam? 
You must tell them that I send them my love. 
And how is the pussycat, how is the dog? 
Oh, I’m so glad! Goodbye! 
Yes, Margaret! 
All right, all right!, good-bye! 
All right, all right!, good-bye! 
Now, Margaret, goodbye! So long.
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“We are mosaics—pieces of light, love history, stars—glued together with magic and music and words.” ~Anita Krizzan
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