Graduate recital in voice

A graduate project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Music in Music, Performance

by Angelina Hu

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ABSTRACT

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By

Angelina Hu

Master in Music, Performance

My recital program embraces five languages and spans four periods of western music, two Chinese folk songs, and one Chinese art song. The styles represented are the Mozart concert aria, German Lied, French mélodie, Spanish art song, and Chinese folk and art song. These songs reflect the traditional style and characteristics of their times and cultural origins. They bring the audience on an emotional journey, traveling through the jewels of each respective culture.

In 1778, Mozart composed the concert aria “Basta, Vincesti… Ah, non lasciarmi” for soprano and orchestra (K. 295a). The story of the text comes from Greek mythology. In this aria, Dido tries to convince Aeneas not to leave her, and then Aeneas painfully asks himself how can he leave her. The greatest expressive challenge in the piece is to vocally express Dido’s emotional struggle of anger and sorrow. The singer must dive into Dido’s inner emotional world to empathize with her feelings and to express her complicated emotions.

Richard Strauss was a leading German composer of the late Romantic and early twentieth century. His song “Die Nacht” Op.10, No. 3 composed in 1885, describes the descending night that steals everything away from the world. The poet fears that their beloved will also be stolen away by the night. The singer must express a fear of loss as well as passion for their beloved. The piece “Breit uber mein haupt” is one song from 6 Lieder aus ‘Lotosblätter’, Op.19, first published in 1888. The poetry expresses a longing for their lover’s hair, their eyes, their face, and
their soul. It is a challenge to capture vocally the passion and love of the text and musical writing. “Morgen” from Op. 27 is the last song from a set of four songs composed in 1894. The song describes the silent joy brought by the daylight. The poetry speaks of being united through the day in “the muted silence of happiness.” The poem captures the profound connection of love through the silence of the morning. Breath control is one of the primary technical challenges, as the piece has long phrases and a slow tempo. By mastering the control of the release of air through use of the diaphragm, the singer is able to navigate the lengthy phrases with expression and power to capture the character of the poetry. “Kling” is the third song from a set of five songs entitled 5 Lieder, Op. 48 composed in 1900. The poetry speaks about personal transformation and the release of the past. It uses nature metaphors to connect the poet’s sense of rebirth with the rebirth of the world. The poem has an almost psalm-like character and is composed of rich imagery. The piece is challenging and rests as one of the most difficult art songs of the modern repertoire. The song builds with gradually accelerated rhythm that climaxes on a powerful high C in the final phrase of the song. While technically demanding, Strauss’ decision to build musically to the final high C is a fitting expression of the final line of text “Resound, my soul, resound.”

Fêtes Galantes for voice and piano, is a beautiful and influential song cycle composed by Debussy in 1891-1904. Debussy’s art song repertoire is an important cornerstone for the vocal graduate student to master the challenges of early 20th century music. The cycle is impressionistic in style. Every piece is a challenging for the singer, both technically and artistically. In addition, the piano accompaniment is not generally supportive of the vocal part rhythmically, and the singer must be independent of the accompaniment, as the melody is not expressed in the piano. Debussy’s vocal writing is an important part of vocal training at the graduate student level. The singer must take time to understand the musical background, and
analyze the difference between the vocal line and the musical textures of the accompaniment. The singer must be sensitive to the deep expression of love in both the text and music. The composer's cynical attitude toward love adds layers of depth to the proper interpretation of the songs. With thoughtful analysis and practice one can master the characteristics of Debussy.

The Collection of little songs in the antique style composed by Fernando Granados between 1896 - 1900 captures the mood and color of Spain. The lovely “El tra la la y el punteado” tells of a “maja” (a colloquial word for attractive woman) who informs her man that she intends to keep singing no matter what he does or says to her. “El majo timido” tells about a “timid man” who looks in at her at night but never comes in. She is amused by his shyness, but at the same time interested in him. Both songs are challenging Spanish folk songs that play with the Spanish girl’s passion, romance, and flirting. When a singer approaches these pieces, she must become the woman or “maja.” She must express the flirtatious character of the music and the simplicity of the folk poetry. The folkloric Spanish melodies are rich and beautiful as is the musical texture of Granados accompaniments. Spanish song writer Fernando Obradors (1897-1945) composed “Del cabello más sutil” which is a beautiful song describing the beauty of the softness of a woman’s hair. It is a song with affectionate and joyful rhythm. The smoothness of the hair makes the singer want to kiss their love.

The folk song “Qumandi Flower” is written in the Uighur style of China. The passionate poetry ignites hope and romance between two lovers. The poetry expresses their love metaphorically using imagery of a blooming flower. The rhythm is syncopated and intense. The syncopated and lively rhythms inspire the listener to get up and dance to the music. The vocal contrast between the slow and fast tempos inspires a desire to sing and dance. The Han Folk genres song “Embroidered Purse” is another classic song in the folk tradition of China. The poetry expresses a young lady's happiness and longing while she embroiders a purse for her
lover. The most difficult aspect of the song is to vocally differentiate the young lady's three different feelings of shyness, longing, and hope. The art song “Pamir, How Beautiful My Hometown” comes from song cycle *Motherland Seasons – Autumn* composed by Qiufeng Zheng during the 1980’s. Pamir is a place with beautiful natural scenery located in Xin Jiang China where the Uighur people live. The text praises the rich mountains and rivers of the motherland, and the people's happy life. The rhythmic contrast is very strong, beginning from lyrical and slow and then transitions to 7/8 meter with a driving tempo. The singer needs not only to control the syncopated rhythm and the slow tempo at the beginning, but must also use a wide vocal range. The singer also needs to capture the beauty of Pamir and express affection towards the Chinese motherland.

A graduate vocal recital is an opportunity to develop musical experience and accomplishment. Through the recital presentation of different periods and different languages, one learns to appreciate the charm and value of Western and Eastern music. They are indeed the musical cultural treasures in the world.
California State University Northridge
Mike Curb College of Arts, Media, and Communication
Department of Music

Presents

The Master of Music Recital of

Angelina Hu

Soprano

Carol Roberts, Piano

From the Studio of Dr. David Sannerud

February 22, 2014
4:30 PM
Music Recital Hall

In Partial Fulfillment of the Master of Music Degree
In Voice Performance
Program

Basta, vincesti... Ah non lasciarmi, no .................. Mozart (1756-1791)

Die Nacht .............................................. Richard Strauss (1864-1949)

Breit über mein

Morgen

Kling

Intermission

En Sourdine ........................................... Claude Debussy (1862-1918)

Fantoches

Clair de Lune

El tra la la y el punteado ......................... Enrique Granados (1867-1916)

Del cabello más sutil ............................... Fernando Obradors (1897-1945)

El majo tímido .......................................... E. Granados

Qumandi Flower ........................................ Chinese Folk Song

Embroidered Purse .................................. Chinese Folk Song

Pamir – How Beautiful My Hometown ................. Qiu Feng Zheng (b. 1931)
**Translations**

*Basta, vincesti…Ah non lasciarmi, no*
Just, you won ... Oh do not leave me, no

Just, you won, here's the sheet.
See how much I adore you still ungrateful.
With your eyes only
I take away all defenses and disarms me;

You have the heart to betray me? And then leave me?

Ah, do not leave me, no, my lovely idol;
Whom I will trust, if you deceive me?
Life would be failing in saying: goodbye,
What I could not live among so many troubles!

**Die Nacht**
The night

Night steps out of the woods,
And sneaks softly out of the trees,
Looks about in a wide circle,
Now beware.

All the lights of this earth,
All flowers, all colors
It extinguishes, and steals the sheaves
From the field.

It takes everything that is dear,
Takes the silver from the stream,
Takes away, from the cathedral's copper roof,
The gold.

The shrubs stand plundered,
Draw nearer, soul to soul;
Oh, I fear the night will also steal
You from me.

**Breit über mein**
Spread over my head your black hair

Spread over my head your black hair,
and incline to me your face,
so that into my soul, so brightly and clearly,
will stream your eye's light.

I do not want the splendor of the sun above,
or the glittering crown of stars;
I want only the night of your locks
and the radiance of your gaze.

**Morgen**
Tomorrow

And tomorrow the sun will shine again,
and on the path I will take,
it will unite us again, we happy ones,
upon this sun-breathing earth…
And to the shore, the wide shore with blue waves,
we will descend quietly and slowly;
we will look mutely into each other's eyes
and the silence of happiness will settle upon us.
Kling
Ring

Ring!
My soul gives forth a pure sound.
And I imagined the poor thing
Already torn apart
By the furious outrages of frantic times.

Sing!
My soul the confessional song
Of exuberance reclaimed;
Lift the pall from your heart.
Hail to thee, chiming note within.

Ring!
Ring out your life,
Fresh, upwelling image.
Blossoming has taken place
Upon the withered field.

En Sourdine
Muted

Calm in the half-day
That the high branches make,
Let us soak well our love
In this profound silence.

Let us mingle our souls, our hearts
And our ecstatic senses
Among the vague languor
Of the pines and the bushes.

Close your eyes halfway,
Cross your arms on your breast,
And from your sleeping heart
Chase away forever all plans.

Let us abandon ourselves
To the breeze, rocking and soft,
Which comes to your feet to wrinkle
The waves of auburn lawns.

And when, solemnly, the evening
From the black oaks falls,
The voice of our despair,
The nightingale, will sing.

**Fantoches**

**Puppets**

Scaramouche and Pulcinella,
brought together by some evil scheme
gesticulate, black beneath the moon.

Meanwhile, the learned doctor
from Bologna slowly gathers
medicinal herbs in the brown grass.

Then his sassy-faced daughter
sneaks underneath the arbor
half-naked, in quest
Of her handsome Spanish pirate,  
whose distress a languorous nightingale  
deafeningly proclaims.

**Clair de Lune**  
Moonlight

Your soul is a chosen landscape  
charmed by masques and revelers  
playing the lute and dancing and almost  
sad beneath their fanciful disguises!

Even while singing, in a minor key,  
of victorious love and fortunate living  
they do not seem to believe in their happiness,  
and their song mingles with the moonlight,

the calm moonlight, sad and beautiful,  
which sets the birds in the trees dreaming,  
and makes the fountains sob with ecstasy,  
the tall slender fountains among the marble statues!

**El tra la la y el punteado**  
The tra la la and the Assertion

Soon the young man you are speaking about will be mine,  
for there are some things to which I always answer singing.  
tra la la...  
No matter how much you question,  
tra la la...  
it does not excite any doubts in me.  
just as little as it deters me from my song.
tra la la...

**Del cabello más sutil**  
Of the softest hair

Of the softest hair  
which you have in your braid,  
I would make a chain  
so that I may bring you to my side.  
A jug in your home,  
little one, I would like to be...  
so that I may kiss you  
each time you take a drink.

**El majo tímido**  
The Timid Youth

In the night a youth comes to my window lattice  
and looks at me.  
As soon as he sees me, he sighs  
and he runs away.  
Oh! What a frightened youth.  
If life should pass so  
I will be very amused.  
Once again he comes and runs away,  
showing no ardor,  
and gently I say to him:  
Good-bye, Sir Phantom!  
Oh! What a frightened youth.  
If life should pass so  
I will be very amused.
**Qumandi Flower**

Amongst the Roses  
There is a Qumandi  
beautiful blossom  
in enchanting fragrance  
Ah. . .  
Gentle breeze  
Breathing songs  
Come my love  
to capture my heart  
Ah. . .

**Embroidered Purse**

My enchanted moon  
From crescent to her full  
Whispering in spring grace  
  
With peach blossom flare  
Came a lover’s stare  
give me your purse of love  
  
embroil with sailing boat  
sail in gentle air  
guess what I care  
  
embroil two love birds  
Perched on the river beds  
cuddle their love affair  
  
capture a young man’s heart  
ensnare a sweet lass’s art
hurry with yearning start

**Pamir – How Beautiful My Hometown**

Lark is singing in the sky
Pamir – my hometown is so beautiful and high

Green pasture where cattle graze
Barley fragrance with intoxicating trace
Spring water, roses are grace
Eagle siren in the air space
Ah … my hometown is so beautiful.

On the Fifteenth the moon is bright
Snow mountain covered in silver light
valley wind blowing so high
patrol tower border line in sight

Ah … my hometown is so beautiful.