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Graduate Recital

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GRADUATE RECITAL

by

Naunie B. Gardner

A report of a recital performed in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree

of

MASTER OF MUSIC

in

Applied Music

UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY
Logan, Utah

1966
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Naumie B. Gardner
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Music For A While ........................................ Purcell
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Dovo Sono (Le Nozze di Figaro) ......................... Mozart

Countess Almaviva is aware that her husband's affections are waning and that
he is paying attention to her maid, Susanna. However, Susanna is planning to
marry Figaro and the two women decide to change clothes and trap the Count.
While the Countess is awaiting Susanna's arrival she laments the fact that she
must suffer such humiliation and longs for days of love and happiness to return
again.

Nacht und Träume ............................................. Schubert
Holy Night, thou art descending.
Dreams too, are floating downward,
Like thy moonlight through the space,
Through the quiet hearts of men.

They behold it with joy,
And call aloud when the day breaks:
Return again, Holy Night,
Sweet dreams, return again!

Verborgenheit (Concealment) .............................. Wolf
Let, o world, o let me be!
Tempt me not with charitable gifts,
Let this heart; in solitude, feel
Its joy, its pain!
I do not know the cause of this sadness,
It is indefinable pain;

Yet, constantly through my tears I see
The friendly rays of sunshine.
Often I am barely conscious
When the bright joy breaks
Through the darkness, and wondrously
Lightens my heart.

Meine Liebe ist Grün ........................................ Brahms
My love is green like the lilac bush,
And my beloved is fair like the sun!
It shines upon the lilac bush
And fills it with fragrance and delight.

My soul has wings of the nightingale
And floats in the blossoming lilac.
And shouts and sings, overcome by the
fragrance,
Many songs that are drunk with love.

Pace, pace mio Dio! (La forza del destino) ............. Verdi
Don Alvaro accidentally wounds the father of Leonora, whom he loves. When the
father dies Don Alvaro is forced to leave. Leonora spends years trying to find
him. Here she prays to God to relieve her of her tortured dreams and memories.
INTRODUCTION

The student of singing faces many problems which are peculiar to him and are not shared by other musicians. If a person decided that he wished to become a fine violinist or a skilled instrumentalist of any sort, his logical course of action would be to select the finest instrument he could afford on which he might facilitate his development. Unfortunately a singer cannot do this. He is confined to his own instrument and often he does not realize the capacities he possesses in range, quality, or technique. Full realization of these capacities will be greatly influenced by a variety of factors. Nature itself has much to offer by way of providing an instrument for the singer, but it is the responsibility of the singer to develop his instrument to the utmost degree of perfection. A singer who possesses sufficient discipline, ambition, and musicality, should realize the greater part of his normal voice range and perhaps, through training, extend this range. He should recognize the timbre of his voice and, with guidance and hard work, be able to enrich the quality. Hopefully, a singer will develop the technical skill, ease and flexibility most suited to his own singing apparatus.

There are some voices which are naturally endowed with a quality of beauty. While it must be a distinct advantage to possess such an instrument, even this is no assurance of success. Motivation and desire, along with sufficient talent, surely must be the prime factors in any musician's success.
Consider the problems of a singer who is highly motivated but lacking in a flexible instrument which will lend itself readily to a bel canto technique. Such a person will certainly have to compensate for his deficiency by acquiring some rigid disciplines, both physical and mental. He will certainly have further to go in "discovering" and developing his voice, its range, its quality and most suitable techniques, than would a more apparently talented singer. It may even be necessary for this singer to endure the humiliation of producing unpleasant sounds before he can learn to produce acceptable sounds. Certainly it will take years of patient work and rigorous training before he can hope to produce a smoothly flowing music line, a pure "floating" sound, or a real pianissimo. A faulty vocal technique can even interfere with the production of a truly musical phrase. It seems logical to this writer that a singer, working within the inadequacies of such an instrument, may find it necessary to be labelled a "non-talent" for some period of time.

What then is it that pushes this person into further pursuit of such frustration as often accompanies vocal training? Perhaps it is because even the poorest singer has his "good" days when he somehow feels the soul satisfying experience of free singing, of opening the throat and producing an exciting sound that is completely and personally "himself". It then becomes the challenge of the singer to use this sound to produce a satisfying musical experience. On days such as this a singer feels he must pursue this art because he has found the perfect means of artistic expression for himself.
PREPARATION

As this writer began preparation for the recital, many problems of performance began to manifest themselves, problems which are not encountered in opera or oratorio. First one must consider the problem of endurance. Would this singer be able to meet the demands of one full hour of recital performance?

Inasmuch as some of the compositions chosen seemed more demanding than others, it seemed advisable to alternate numbers which placed great physical stress upon the singer with those which allowed some moments of ease and relaxation. It is also necessary to consider significant periods and styles of vocal literature and choose songs and arias which are representative.

Of all the vocal performing arts, recital singing may well offer the greatest challenge to singers. It is the responsibility of the singer to communicate to the audience throughout the entire performance, and this must be done without the aid of props, scenery, chorus, staging or lighting, elements that are so common to some other media of vocal performance. It then becomes apparent that it is the sole responsibility of the singer, together with a good accompanist, to keep the feeling of spontaneity and life flowing throughout the performance. Each song or aria requires a change of mood and emotion and it is often difficult for a singer to accomplish this readily.

In order to accurately represent the important forms of vocal literature, it is necessary to have singing proficiencies in a minimum of four languages: English, Italian, French and German. Each language offers a unique challenge.
One difficulty in singing English lies in the fact that each section of our country tends to develop its own peculiar inflections and accents. It is difficult to sing English songs without falling victim to one's own speech habits.

Inasmuch as the greater part of the singing is done on the vowel sound, let us first consider the problems of vowel production as it relates to habits of speech. Let us say that each vowel, in order to be freely produced, must be allowed to "float on the breath" and therefore employ all of the resonators which the body affords. In order to accomplish this a singer must accomplish a feat of muscular coordination, this being a coordination of abdominal muscles, muscles of the pharyngeal and laryngeal regions, of the tongue, and even muscles affecting the use of the upper head cavities. This singer, in preparing her English songs, found a greater tendency to constrict the muscles of the throat, thus restricting the use of all body resonators. Problems normally encountered in singing the vowel sounds were magnified through use of the English language. Constriction of the throat muscles surely affected all vowel sounds but the dark vowels such as (u) and (ɔ) tended to become darker with use of the English language. Vowels of higher resonance such as (ɛ) and (i) tended to become tight and pinched. The (a) vowel which ordinarily makes use of the upper and lower resonance of the before mentioned vowels, seems to be most affected by speech habits. It proved to be a difficult task for this singer to achieve the muscular balance with which to produce a good (ɑ).1 If a singer is unable to employ full resonance of

1 I shall use the standard phonetic alphabet to represent vowel sounds.
this vowel it tends to be "caught in the throat" and restricted in sound.
It seemed to be most difficult for this singer to employ the upper re-
sonance of this vowel and the resultant sound was quite distorted, lost
somewhere between (O) and (A).

Another problem in singing English songs is in the use of the diphe-
thong. Such vowels as (e) are actually pronounced (e-ɨ), as in the
word "play". The tendency is to pronounce the (ɨ) much too soon; the
jaw often tightens and the sound is distorted.

Regarding consonant production, a great many problems also tend to
arise. It is difficult for a singer to pronounce the consonant sounds
without interrupting the flow, or line of music. Some consonants such
as (t) or (d) tend to produce an explosion of breath which may interrupt
the sound as well as interfere with vocal production. It is the task of
the singer, then, to learn to use the tongue as independently as possible.
The use of the tongue should not affect the jaw or throat muscles. Conso-
nants requiring the use of the jaw must be sung in a relaxed easy manner
in order not to affect the muscles of the throat.

The problems mentioned above are certainly problems which can be
encountered in other languages. It is merely that, when performing in
other languages, it is easier to get "outside oneself" and avoid the pit-
falls of one's own speech habits.

The Italian language seems to lend itself most readily to acquiring
a vocal proficiency. The sounds, if a singer can acquire an accurate
pronunciation, promote a desired tonal placement and freer production of
sound. The language, on the whole, is bright and the placement of sound
is forward. It lacks many of the dark, gutteral sounds which tend to pull
the tone into the throat.
In Italian the consonants (t) and (d) are dentalized, thereby avoiding the explosion of breath that often accompanies the production of these consonants in the English language.

The language is also simplified by the fact that there is not a wide variety of pronunciations for the five basic vowel sounds and there are no diphthongs.

Italian vowels are short and clearcut. They are never slurred and every vowel is clearly enunciated, e.g., "general" is frequently pronounced "genral". In the equivalent Italian word "generale" every syllable is clearly enunciated, "ge-ne-ra-le".\(^2\)

Within the French and German languages there are many vowel sounds common to both languages, but which are not found in English and Italian. The German umlaut has equivalent sounds in some French words, e.g.,
grün and tu; schön and peu; hörbar and cœur.\(^3\)

The French language, in its nasal vowels, has a characteristic all its own. These may be represented in the following examples: vin; dan; mon; and un.

The French have a unique way of pronouncing an (r). It is somewhat like a voiced gurgle in the back of the throat and is produced by vibrating the uvula. However this tends to produce a throaty singing tone and is never used in performance. In its place a singer uses an (r) which is rolled with the tip of the tongue.

\(^2\)Rebora, Piero, Cassell's Italian Dictionary, pg. vii.

\(^3\)Even though phonetics charts show these sounds to be the same, in actual pronunciation the French drop the jaw lower, causing the sound to be deeper.
The German consonant blend (ch) has two unique pronunciations, e.g., in the word *Ach* it is pronounced forward by placing the tongue behind the teeth; in the word *Bach* it is pronounced in the back of the throat.

If one were to make a statement as to the overall effect of each of these individual languages, he would probably define the German language in terms of having a crisp, exaggerated pronunciation, while employing a forward vowel placement. The French language carries a soft liquid effect and tends to have a dark or deep placement.

The pronunciation characteristics of these languages have been barely touched upon. It is the feeling of this writer that, in order to acquire a minimum proficiency in the use of any language, one should devote at least one year, and preferably two years of study toward its mastery.
ANALYSIS

MUSIC FOR A WHILE: Purcell (1659-1695)

"Purcell is as much the boast of England in music as Shakespeare in the drama, Milton in epic poetry, Locke in metaphysics, or Sir Isaac Newton in mathematics."4

Purcell's brief career unfolded at the court of Charles II, extending through the reign of James II into the period of William and Mary. He held various posts as singer, organist and composer . . . His works cover a wide range from sacred choruses to "popular ditties". Although an English artist, . . . he linked his art to the mainstream of baroque music, and . . . his style, taken over by Handel, laid the foundations for the huge festivals of choral singing that are still the backbone of musical life in England.5

He is probably remembered best for his opera, Dido and Aeneas, which is based upon the Roman setting of Virgil's fourth book of Aeneas.

The Purcell song chosen for this recital, Music for A While, also draws upon Greek mythology. Purcell wrote a great amount of incidental music and songs for plays. Music for A While was written in 1692 for Oedipus, a play written by Dryden and Lee. The song itself refers to Alecto, a character from Greek and Roman mythology:

Music for a while
Shall all your cares beguile
Wond'ring how your pains were eas'd
And disdain'd to be pleased,
Till Alecto free the dead
From their eternal bands
Till the snakes drop
And the whip from out her hands.
Music for a while
Shall all your cares beguile.

4Machlis, Joseph, The Enjoyment of Music, p. 421
5Ibid. p. 421
Alecto was one of the last three Furies, goddesses of vengeance. They had snakes for hair and ornamented themselves with torches and whips. They punished people for every kind of crime, pursued them into the lower world and drove them mad.

The song is written with a *basso ostinato*. The realization of the un-figured bass is by John Edmunds. Purcell had a love for the *basso ostinato* and his skill is manifest in many compositions which he treated in this manner.

Purcell was a master at text painting. He combined words and music with remarkable results. Words such as "eternal" and "wond'ring" are carried out for a length of time on a series of melismatic notes. The repetition of the word "drop" is emphasized by the use of eighth rests between each note and is strengthened by a drop in pitch from one statement of the word to another. The repetition of the word "eas'd" is beautifully set to two notes, descending stepwise in a series of patterns, these being separated by eighth rests, thus emphasizing the phrasing and giving the word stronger meaning.

FLOW MY TEARS: John Dowland (1563-1626)

Dowland distinguished himself as a composer and a lutenist and had a great reputation in both areas. "His four books of ayres are the most important English contribution to the literature of solo song with lute accompaniment." The ayre "was a late development in England and was a purely homophonic song in strophic style. The accompanying voices were usually played on the lute...Its most distinguishing characteristic was its strophic form."

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6 Westrup and Harrison, *New College Encyclopedia of Music*, p. 206
7 Wold, Milo and Cykler, *An Outline History of Music*, p. 58
Flow my Tears is strophic in nature although a little more complex. Analysis shows it to be in the form of AABBC, although the C section has much the same effect as a coda and can be repeated if the performer wishes.

The song bears no time signature although the editor, Edmund Horace Fellowes, has inserted bar lines, the meters of these measures being dictated by the natural accentuation of the words.

Dynamic markings are inserted by the editor although he specifies that these are not binding. It is the responsibility of the singer to become intimate enough with the words and music to realize the intent of the composer. One of the difficulties of performing these songs is that of achieving a simplicity of interpretation to suit the mood of the song.

Dowland's first book of ayres was of a very simple design, some of the melodies being founded on folk songs.

The second book shows a wonderful advance in the art of song writing; in these the conventional square-set design is almost entirely abandoned, while the independent importance of the lute accompaniment is developed in a manner that was brought to perfection two centuries later by Schubert.

From this second book of ayres by Dowland comes the famous Lachrymae (Flow my Tears).

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Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians, Volume II, p. 757
DOVE SONO (Le Nozze di Figaro): Mozart (1756-1791)

Mozart's genius manifests itself in Figaro, the triumph of his opera writing career. It is based on Beaumarchais's comedy, La folle journée ou Le Mariage de Figaro. The libretto was written by Lorenzo da Ponte, who stated, "I set to work and as fast as I wrote the words, Mozart set them to music."9

The aria, Dove sono, occurs in act three of the opera. The Countess Almaviva is aware that her husband's affections are waning and that he is paying attention to her maid, Susanna. However, Susanna is planning to marry Figaro and the two women decide to change clothes and trap the Count. While the Countess is awaiting Susanna's arrival she laments the fact that she must suffer such humiliation, and longs for days of love and happiness to return again.

To this writer Dove sono is one of the finest examples of Mozart's skill. It begins with recitative, quite typical of this operatic style. Recitative singing is difficult. It must be "cast off" in a natural way, as though spoken. The difficulty encountered by this writer lay in the tendency to oversing and belabor the recitative. However, there are portions of this recitative which reach a high dramatic level and the demands upon the singer are great.

The aria presents another problem. The first portion is made up of long, flowing phrases which require great breath and tone control. The song becomes more climactic and then subsides into a restatement of the original theme which must be sung pianissimo. (This in itself is one of the greatest challenges this singer had to meet.) The aria then changes

9Sauls, Glen, Recording Notes, Angel Records, 3608 D/L, p. 4
tempo to suit the change of mood of the text, offering a new style of declamation. This is achieved through the use of trills and melismas in the melodic line. The aria gradually climbs to a climactic ending, calling forth more technical facility on the part of the performer. It soars to a final A\textsuperscript{II} which is repeated twice again before the climactic final phrase. This writer feels that there is such challenge in singing Mozart that one could spend a lifetime trying to master the style. Even if the mastery of style were never complete, the attempt to master the style would certainly be beneficial to the technique.

VERBORGENHEIT: Hugo Wolf (1860-1903)

Hugo Wolf was the master of the lied in the post-romantic era. He introduced the methods of Wagnerian music-drama into the domain of song lyricism. His miniature tone dramas are notable for the concentration of thought and feeling. Songs such as Verborgenheit (Secrecy) ... offer a splendid introduction to Wolf's highly personal art.\textsuperscript{10}

The song was composed on the 13th of March, 1888. Wolf had suffered a long period of hardship prior to this time. His activities as a critic had gained him the hostilities of a great many of his contemporaries and success was difficult. However, in 1887 Friedrich Eckstein, a friend of Wolf's, arranged for publication of some small works.

On February 6 he set to music "Der Tambour", a poem by Eduard Mörike and a few days later new songs, all settings of this poet, began to pour from his pen in an apparently endless stream. The composer seemed to have become the helpless instrument of higher power and himself watched with incredulous joy while song followed song.\textsuperscript{11}

\textsuperscript{10}Wachlis, Op. Cit., P. 511
\textsuperscript{11}Groves Dictionary of Music, Vol. IX, p. 335
The challenge this singer experienced with this composition lay greatly in the emotional portrayal of the song. It is written in ABCA form. It is the feeling of this writer that, in keeping with the text, the mood of the first section of the song should be one of utter resignation. In the next section the melody and accompaniment begin to increase in intensity. In the C section the song reaches the peak of emotional intensity in the final phrase. This leads beautifully into the A section in which one again subsides into the feeling of sad resignation.

**NACHT UND TRÄUME: Schubert (1797-1828)**

There is a great parallel between the lives of Mozart and Schubert. Both showed great talent at an early age and both were tremendously productive, and massive amounts of literature have been left to us by each. Each suffered great miseries of poverty and each died at an early age. The great difference was in the fact that Schubert never succeeded in writing opera, this being a source of great unhappiness to him. Both of these men had a decided gift for melody and both composed quickly. (Schubert's setting for Goethe's Erlkönig was done in a single afternoon.)

*Nacht und Traume* is a tremendous example of Schubert's melodic genius. The slow, long sustained phrases and the *pianissimo* needed to portray the proper mood of the song proves to be the great challenge for singers. The challenge is not only in the vocal techniques required to sing it but in actually providing the proper mood or climate for this song. Schubert possessed an extraordinary capacity for translating the mood of a poem into sound, and a singer must carefully consider the intentions of the composer when attempting to perform his music. The words alone are a
statement of what the vocal performance should be and Schubert's genius was at its peak in setting it to music.

Holy Night, thou art descending,
Dreams too, are floating downward,
Like thy moonlight through the space,
Through the quiet hearts of men,
They behold it with joy,
And call aloud when the day breaks;
Return again, Holy Night,
Sweet dreams, return again!

The form of the song is binary, a striking harmonic change marking the beginning of the second section. It was set to words written by M. V. Collin and was published in 1825, three years before the composer's death. It was written during the period of his great productivity in vocal literature. Soon to follow were the great cycle, Die Winterreise and songs of the collection, Schwanengesang.

MEINE LIEBE IST GRÜN: Brahms (1833-1897)

As a song writer Brahms stands in direct line of succession to Schubert and Schumann. His output includes about two-hundred solo songs and an almost equal number for two, three and four voices.

Meine Liebe ist Grün is one of his more popular songs and holds its share of problems for the performer. The accompaniment is frenetic against a smooth flowing vocal line and it is often difficult for this singer to maintain equilibrium and not be affected by the excitement of the accompaniment. This singer often found the vocal line taking on a frantic aspect when actually this was not necessary if one could maintain independence from the accompaniment. The song is short and in strophic form, although there are only two stanzas. However, the song is demanding and requires tremendous strength and support to sustain an even flow of the music.
The song is one of nine songs belonging to opus 63, written in 1874. It is set to words of Felix Schumann, a son of Robert and Clara Schumann. The exuberance of *Meine Liebe ist Grün* somewhat overshadows the other songs of this opus and in this respect there may be few to equal it.

**PACE, PACE, MIO DIO: Verdi (1813–1901)**

In the case of Giuseppe Verdi, the most widely loved of operatic composers, it happened too – as with Wagner – that the time, the place, and the personality were happily met. He inherited a rich tradition, his capacity for growth was matched by masterful energy and will, and he was granted a long span of life in which his gifts attained their full flower.  

*La Forza del destino* premiered in St. Petersburg, November 10, 1862. The opera is based upon the play *Don Alvaro, o la fuerza del sino* by Saavedra. The libretto for the opera was written by Francesco Piave and was later revised by Ghislanzoni. *La Forza del destino* belongs to the rich middle period of Verdi's creative life, a period that produced *La Traviata, Il Trovatore, and Aida*.

This writer realizes that this graduate recital was more heavily weighted with opera than is usually the custom. Reasons for adding *Pace, Pace* to the recital were: 1) this singer's experiences have, in the past, been greatly on the operatic side; 2) the whole program was new to this singer. Due to a prolonged throat ailment there had not been opportunity to sing any of the recital numbers publicly prior to performance. *Pace, pace* would provide an opportunity to relax mentally inasmuch as it had been performed before; 3) *Pace, pace* has been unusually comfortable for this singer, vocally. It was realized that in the process of singing new
literature in a first recital situation, some vocal problems could arise. This singer knew that the song could act as a stabilizer and pull her back into line if problems arose. Strangely enough, this is exactly what happened and happily the aria served its purpose.

In the beginning of the opera Don Alvaro accidentally wounds the father of Leonora, the girl whom he loves. When the father dies Don Alvaro is forced to leave. Leonora spends years trying to find him. She masquerades as a man and vainly searches for him. Finally she takes refuge in a cloister and asks permission to live in a cave nearby. The padre, upon hearing her story, grants permission, blesses her dwelling and places a curse upon anyone who dare enter. Leonora is unaware that Don Alvaro is dwelling in a neighboring monastary.

The third act begins with Leonora's plea for peace. She asks God to relieve her of her tortured dreams and memories. (\textit{Pace, pace, mio Dio.})

The sixteen measure introduction is \textit{allegro agitato} and bears a quality of unrest which might well depict the inner turmoil of Leonora. As it resolves into its final tonic, an F major chord, the vocal line begins an octave above, F\textsuperscript{4}, which is sustained for four counts before it drops to the octave below. The contrast of this long sustained \textit{Pace}, as compared to the agitato of the introduction, serves well to give the listener the impression of a prayer for peace midst strife and turmoil. This prayer, \textit{Pace}, is repeated twice, descending by half steps and moves into the final phrase of the opening section of the song.

The entire four measures of the vocal line are then repeated in the accompaniment. Here commences a four measure presentation of new thematic material in which Leonora refers to the misfortune of her previous years. Once more occurs a restatement of the original four measures in the accompaniment. (\textit{Pace, pace, pace mio Dio, pace mio Dio.})
Now begins development of thematic material similar to that referred to above as being in the second section, or middle section. The contour of the melodic line climbs higher, phrase by phrase. Throughout this thirty measure section there occurs in the accompaniment, as well as in the vocal line, themes which represent both the turmoil and the prayer for peace. The last eight measures of this section carry the *pace* theme throughout. The piano begins the half step descent of the original *pace, pace* vocal line, in contrast to the opening declamation *pace*, which now laments "In van la pace", soaring from a B♭ to a sustained B♭. Throughout the remainder of this section there occurs a gradual subsiding of dynamic level and emotional intensity. The vocal line descends gradually, subsiding into one final statement of the heroine, "In vain, my soul begs for peace."

In performance the aria is occasionally ended here, but the following section carries such impact that this writer chose to retain it in recital performance.

Four measures in the accompaniment serve as interlude into the next section. The intensity of the previous section has subsided but the feeling of unrest still pervades.

Leonora hears sounds of a quarrel outside and someone coming toward her dwelling. She, in violent declamation, states that her dwelling is holy and anyone who enters shall be accursed. The text is accompanied by an intensive climb upward in the melodic line, as well as in the dynamic level. The accompaniment, together with the voice, achieve a great *fortissimo*, this serving to strengthen the final curse, "maledizione", which ends the aria on a prolonged B♭.
LES NUITS D'ÈTE: Berlioz (1803-1869)

French vocal literature has always presented a great challenge to this singer. The challenge has not been so much in the mastery of the language and the notes as it has been in the mastery of the style and artistic refinements of French vocal literature. Therefore, this singer has, in the past, felt great reservation and even awe in her approach to French music.

For several reasons the discovery of Les Nuits d'Ète was a happy one. Here were some French songs which not only appealed to musical tastes but which seemed to "lend themselves" to the vocal technique which this singer had acquired. This is not to say that the songs are easily sung. The demands are great. There is wide variation in voice range and in dynamic level. However, the songs are written in a style which tends to complement the vocal technique of this singer. This is perhaps why a fair amount of comfort and ease were experienced in performance of these songs.

There has been a great deal of controversy about Berlioz' abilities as a composer:

Berlioz' melody has been most diversely and contradictorily judged. More often than not it has been admired while certain critics and composers have harshly denied it any merit . . . Many of his famous tunes have been called either magnificent or else devoid of any beauty whatever. This is true, for instance, of the song "L'absence", whose success has remained constant for a century, but in which most musicians think fit to condemn harmonic solecisms, commonplace writing or an "aggressive ugliness" in the vocal line.  

Jay Harrison, editor of Musical America, reviewed Les Nuits d'Ète favorably:

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Berlioz' Nuits d'été (Summer Nights) is frankly and simply a masterpiece. No less an authority than the great musicologist Alfed Einstein said of the composer: "Berlioz sowed the seeds for the entire musical lyricism of the Nineteenth Century in the French language - in its color, noble sentimentality, and refined sensuousness and grace."

High praise, this especally for a man who, in the public imagination, is thought of primarily as instrumental composer. The truth is that Berlioz navigated easily on all seas of composition. And as for his melodic sense, if one sits back even during the performance of an instrumental composition and listens carefully to the richness of tune that emerges, it becomes obvious that orchestral sparks are far and away from being his major concern. Melody - darting, singing, expansive melody - is everywhere in abundance. No wonder then, that Nuits d'été represents a peak of French vocal writing that has never been surpassed.14

The six songs in this cycle were composed in 1832 with piano accompaniment, although in later years they were orchestrated.

LE SPECTRE DE LA ROSE

Open your closed eyelid
Gently touched by a virginal dream!
I am the spectre of the rose
That you wore last night at the ball.
You have taken me still covered yet with the pearls
Of the sprinkler's silvery tears,
"And amid brilliant festivities
You carried me through the night.

O you, who were the cause of my death,
Without your being able to escape him,
My rose-coloured spectre will come
Every night to dance at your bedside.
But have no fear at all: I do not ask
Either a mass or De Profundis
"This fragrant perfume is my soul,
And I am from paradise.

My destiny could be envied,
And to have so beautiful a fate,
More than one would have given his life.
For on your breast I have my tomb,
And on the alabaster where I repose,
A poet wrote with a kiss:
"Here lies a rose
Which all kings might envy."

14 Harrison, Jay S., Recording Notes
The song is a prolonged protestation of deep love and passion.

There are three sections, these being observable in the English translation above. The first two lines of each section bear the same thematic material, after which the composer develops the material in a manner suitable to the text of each section. The end of the first two sections are marked by high dynamic level in both voice and accompaniment and are strengthened by a climb in melodic contour. (Asterisks mark the high points.) One will note that climactic musical points correspond to the textual climaxes. The last section carries no such climax. The music beautifully sinks into an attitude of repose and peace, a fitting commentary on the death of a rose, one which had lived happily.

SUR LES LAGUNES (LAMENTO)

My fair friend is dead,
I will mourn forever;
She has taken with her into the tomb
My soul and my love.
Without waiting for me,
She has returned to heaven
And the angel who led her away
Did not wish to take me.
*How bitter is my fate!
Oh! to go to sea without love!

The white form
Is lying in the coffin;
How all of nature
Seems gloomy to me!
The forgotten dove
Weeps and dreams of the absent one;
My soul weeps and feels
That it is left alone!
*How bitter is my fate!
Oh! to go to sea without love!
The immense night over me,
Spreads like a shroud;
I am singing my song,
That heaven alone can hear.
Oh! How fair she was,
And how much I loved her!
I will never love
A woman as much as I loved her . . .
"How bitter is my fate!
Oh! to go to sea without love!

The song is deeply mournful, lamenting the death of a loved one. The
lament itself (marked by an asterisk) is from the depths of the soul. It
is a simple ascension and descension of a minor third on the words, "Que
mon sort est amer", (how bitter is my fate). The second line of the
lament begins on a long G and descends downward dynamically as well as
melodically, over a minor scale.

The song is in three sections. The opening lines of the first and
third sections are the same melodically, although harmonically they are
different. The composer carries a consistent melodic use of a minor
third throughout the entire song. In the opening line of the second
section he makes startling use of a major third to portray these words,
"La blanche creature", (the white form), this referring to the dead one
lying in the coffin.

The composer carries the lament of the last verse even further
by ending the song on a long diminishing "ah", succeeded by another which
"wails" upward a half step and back. This singer tried to emphasize this
wail by keeping the vibrato out of the voice until the last part of the
second phrase.
L'ABSENCE

Come back, come back, my beloved
Like a flower far from the sun
The flower of my life is closed
Far from your rosy smile!

*What distance between our hearts!
What space between our kisses!
Oh bitter fate, oh cruel absence!
Oh great unappeased desires!

Come back, come back, my beloved!
Like a flower far from the sun,
The flower of my life is closed
Far from your rosy smile!

*From here to where you are, how wide the country,
How many cities and hamlets,
How many valleys and mountains
To tire the hoofs of the horses!

Come back, come back, my beloved!
Like a flower far from the sun,
The flower of my life is closed
Far from your rosy smile!

This song is also in three parts. In this instance the three sections are exactly the same but are separated by twelve measures (marked by an asterisk) of music which correspond to each other in every way except that the second of these sections is written a third higher than the first.

The opening theme is presented in the accompaniment and then immediately echoed in the vocal line. It is repeated again in the vocal line and is then echoed in the accompaniment. The remainder of the section is made up of ten measures in which the composer develops the thematic material. The tempo is adagio and the opening phrase, consisting of two notes (sol up to do), is simply set. It portrays to the listener a feeling of great loneliness and need. In this writer's opinion it is an exquisite combination of poetry and music, as are the other two Berlioz songs previously discussed.
LA MAMMA MORTA: Giordano (1867-1948)

Giordano was a contemporary of Mascagni and it is possible to see similarities in the style of writing verismo opera. However, Giordano never achieved the fame or success of Mascagni. He confined himself mainly to operatic composition and of his works, Andrea Chenier has retained the most popularity.

Giordano has been a target for a great deal of criticism:

Giordano was a typical member of the group of composers who sprang into fame in the wake of Mascagni, whose crudely effective methods of workmanship his earlier operas reproduce with singular fidelity. In Andrea Chenier he displayed a more definite individuality of style, but still lacked quality. He had an exuberant if undistinguished gift of melody and a strong feeling for dramatic effect, but his scores lack solidity, and in his music the usual theatrical tricks for exhorting applause too often take the place of a sincere expression of emotion.15

In spite of the apparent flaws in his technique of composition, this writer feels that it would be safe to say that the music from Andrea Chenier is exciting. This is particularly true of the aria in the third act, La mamma morta, which carries such dramatic force that the remainder of the opera seems anticlimactic by contrast.

Andrea Chenier, the poet-patriot, is brought before the Tribunal on false charges of treason. Maddalena goes to Gerard, a person of high position who is in love with her and promises to yield to his passion if he will save Chenier. In this aria, she explains how, after her mother's death, her faithful servant Borsa suffered dishonour in order to save her mistress. During that terrible time Maddalena had learned the full meaning of love.

In *varismo* opera the recitative is not clearly distinguishable from
the aria as it is in the operas of the previous era. This aria opens with
a declamation by the heroine in which she prepares the way for the aria it-
self. She begins by telling Gerard of her mother's death. She tells of
wandering at night with her servant Bersi, and seeing her home in flames.
The orchestral accompaniment, through the use of a tremolo in the upper
notes and a series of appoggiatura in the lower notes, takes on a frenzied
aspect and the tempo becomes greatly increased. She speaks of her hunger
and misery and of how her faithful servant Bersi sacrificed her virtue to
earn money to keep Maddalena alive. It was through the sacrifice of others
that she learned the meaning of love.

The melody of this entire opening section is supported by a chordal
harmony which gives it the effect of being recitative. The melodic con-
tour of this entire section climbs gradually in pitch and the intensity
gradually increases until a long $F/#$ is sustained, leading directly into
the opening phrase of the aria. Here the heroine is concerned with her
vision of love and its full meaning. The accompaniment is strongly
rhythmic throughout. The aria itself is binary in form. The opening
line of music of each section is exactly the same although the accompani-
ment is much more complex in the second part. The rest of the developmental
material differs within each section, the first part ending on a sustained
$F/#$, as did the opening section. The second part of the song mounts con-
tinually in its dramatic content until it reaches a peak of excitement.
Although the melody descends rapidly within the next four measures, none
of the impact of the final words are lost; "Io son l'amore", (I am love).
This writer feels sure that no amount of previous vocal experience could render a first recital anything but a learning experience. Regardless of the many hours spent in rehearsal and careful planning there are the inevitable unforeseen problems which tend to loom up in a moment of crisis. These are the moments which prove to be of greatest value to a performer. These are the moments when one can gain insight into his own discipline, its weaknesses and its strengths. This singer understood more about her vocal technique in that one arduous evening than she had within a year of weekly lessons.

Any experienced singer of moderate intelligence will attempt, in programming a recital, to allow and plan for complications which may occur through stress of performance. This singer had not made sufficient allowance for this and had not fully realized the danger of scheduling a song such as *Nacht und Traume* immediately after an aria as demanding as *Dove sono*. The nervous energy accumulated within the performance of *Dove sono* made it literally impossible to immediately achieve the level of tranquility necessary for the Schubert song. Fortunately, there are moments when our problems do not always work against us. This hyper-tensive state seemed to work positively in the performance of the ex-huberant Brahms song, this singer actually achieving a performance superior to rehearsal of this song.

Without discounting her concern over her vocal endurance, this singer feels certain that the element of time here proved to be a distinct advantage. After the initial burst of nervous excitement had passed, there
was an opportunity to relax, to regain composure, to concentrate on performance and to use profitably whatever technique had been acquired. This singer feels she was correct in placing a comfortable number such as *Pace, pace* within the program. It truly afforded the necessary tool for establishing technique and placement.

All of these elements previously mentioned seemed to combine favorably for the remainder of the recital. In addition there was the fact that the French language seemed to lend itself to a better vocal production at this stage of the singer's development. With these forces working favorably, a long sought after goal was finally achieved. It was in the midst of the second French song that this singer realized that she had been able to rise above her own insecurities and technical problems and concentrate solely on the expression of the music. If nothing else of a positive nature had occurred, this would have done much to make the evening a personal success.
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