

Incorporation of Uncommon Choices in Senior Vocal Recitals

by
Daniel Seth Fridley

A PROJECT

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Oregon State University

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(Honors Scholar)

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Abstract approved: _____

Richard Poppino

As I prepared my senior vocal recital, I grew frustrated that there was no guidance to assist me or my teacher in incorporating elements outside of the standard recital framework: uncommon choices. Because I gained a great deal of practical experience from my own recital preparation, I decided to craft a document to outline important issues to consider as well as provide helpful resources for students seeking to incorporate uncommon choices into their recitals, and for teachers as they assist and counsel them in this process. In this thesis, the programs of past senior vocal recitals in the Oregon State University music area are surveyed to find the standard repertoire inclusions, and then possibilities for alternative choices are examined. The choices examined are use of transpositions, language, genres, larger works, ensembles, and the physical program. This thesis concludes that the benefits of including uncommon choices in a senior vocal recital outweigh the challenges of doing so, as long as they serve to create a balanced aesthetic experience.

Key Words: Senior Recital, Ensembles, Program, Repertoire, Uncommon Choices

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I understand that my project will become part of the permanent collection of Oregon State University, University Honors College. My signature below authorizes release of my project to any reader upon request.

Daniel Seth Fridley, Author

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Introduction

On May 3, 2014, I presented my senior vocal recital at the First Congregational United Church of Christ in Corvallis, Oregon. It was my capstone requirement for the vocal performance option of the Bachelor of Arts in Music degree at Oregon State University, and the highlight of my performing career up to that point. In the months prior to presenting this recital, I made many choices about the repertoire that would be featured and the program (both musical and physical) that I would present to the audience. I had attended many of my colleagues' recitals during my undergraduate years at Oregon State and had a good sense of what the expectations were for a senior vocal recital. However, I knew that I had some interests that lay outside of the normal repertoire selection for these recitals, and I wanted to incorporate them into my recital.

The process of doing so was filled with unforeseen difficulties, and I grew frustrated that there was no guidance to assist me or my teacher in incorporating any of the choices that I wished to make. I gained a great deal of practical experience from the process that led to these choices while I prepared my senior recital, and a desire to share this practical experience led me to the focus of my Honors College thesis. By analyzing senior recitals in the past at Oregon State, as well as incorporating my own practical experience with uncommon choices, this document will serve as a point of departure for students seeking to incorporate uncommon choices into their recitals, and for their teachers as they go about assisting and counseling them in this process. By their nature, these uncommon choices cannot be comprehensively collected and addressed; individual interests and unique situations will give rise to more choices than can be predicted by any

one artist. But this thesis seeks to serve as a general guide to the most prevalent uncommon choices for a senior recital.

This thesis looks briefly at an historical overview of the vocal recital and examines why senior recitals are a useful part of an undergraduate curriculum. Then, an in-depth analysis of past senior voice recitals at Oregon State University is given, illuminating many of the common choices that are made. The nature of uncommon choices is then discussed briefly before individual choices are examined in more detail. Singing from a transposition is examined first, as the process of transposition is involved in a number of other uncommon choices. Also examined are choices regarding languages, genres, larger cohesive works, instrumental and vocal ensembles, as well as the choices involved in the preparation of the physical program. Each type of uncommon choice is examined in two ways: directly and indirectly. Direct examination stems from my practical experience on my senior recital, with insights into the issues I grappled with, the challenges I faced, and the benefits that I believe those choices offer. Indirect examination analyzes each type of uncommon choice beyond the work that I did personally on my recital to encompass other potential situations and address the concerns that pertain to them. Finally, the performance of my senior recital is evaluated, the balance of uncommon choices with the entirety of the recital program is discussed, and some next steps for both performers and teachers are highlighted.

This thesis is written to directly address situations that performers and teachers will find at Oregon State University, since the analysis of past recital programs and the personal experience both come from that institution. Extrapolating or applying these

guidelines to similar situations at other universities would not be difficult, however, making this document potentially useful for a much broader audience.

Senior Recital Background

Senior recitals are ubiquitous as a requirement in Western classical music programs around the world. A senior vocal recital is a public performance of largely classical vocal repertoire in a number of languages, from a variety of historical periods, presented with collaborative musicians, and presented entirely acoustically. Once the model for the activities of professional singers, the vocal recital as a professional product by which singers make a living has declined dramatically, even since a few decades ago (Poppino, “Recital History”). Given that fact, some might question the relevance of the senior recital as part of the process of developing a professional singer. The vocal recital, however, has a long and extensive history as an art form and offers numerous benefits to both the singer and the school, and should by no means be excluded from the curriculum of developing singers.

The idea of the solo performance as a demonstration of skill and mastery stretches back throughout recorded history. Although Franz Liszt is credited with developing the format of the modern piano recital, events very similar to a vocal recital occurred much earlier (Grout 627, 636). During the Renaissance, specific singers were appointed court musicians with the task of presenting concerts for their lord’s or lady’s pleasure (Grout 154-155). In many regions of Europe in the Middle Ages, wandering minstrels (jongleurs or troubadours) would perform solo concerts to pay for lodging in an inn, or for the

evening's entertainment at a noble court (Grout 73-75). Even earlier, the Greeks had an extensive tradition of solo vocal performance found in written and pictorial records (Grout 10-12). One would expect no less from the culture which spawned the myth of Orpheus, the singer who, with his performance, convinced the lord of the underworld to relinquish his dead wife back to him (Bulfinch 133-134).

The vocal recital reached its current form in the nineteenth century, as music patronage shifted from the nobility and the church to a public audience, and as art songs assumed their current status as a significant art form (Poppino, "Recital History"). This tradition has been inherited by classical vocal performers and is still the model for a recital. However, as professional interest in recitals wanes, recitals remain useful in an educational setting as a rite of passage. The established model of the vocal recital that was developed in the nineteenth century is now undergoing change and paving the way for the beneficial inclusion of uncommon choices.

In most programs of study, an aspiring singer will present their work to the faculty for evaluation at many occasions. As part of the transition from the educational system to the professional world, it is logical that singers present their work to a public audience instead, paving the way for other such performances during their career. In this way, the senior recital not only serves as an element of professional training, but also as a public demonstration of what the singers have learned in their career as students. This has the potential to reflect well on not only the singer, but also on the institution which the student attended — another reason that senior recitals should be a part of the curriculum.

A vocal recital allows a singer to explore a number of facets of performance that are not possible in any other format. There is a cumulative effect from programming pieces in a performance setting, one that is not achieved by singing them in isolation. The repertoire has what might be called emergent behaviors caused by the interactions between pieces, which make the experience of a recital greater and more beneficial than the experience of singing all of the selected pieces at separate and distinct times. This type of interaction can also be seen in art exhibits — the nature of the exhibit as a whole is different than the individual nature of the pieces being exhibited alone, and the relationships between these different works of art function to enhance the entirety of the experience. The recital is also a way to explore performances that take a substantial amount of endurance and concentration. Even operatic roles of similar singing length are spread out and broken up by other elements. In almost no other setting is the singer alone the primary focus of the audience for such an extended period of time.

A unique feature of the recital is that it can be individually tailored to suit the strengths of a specific performer. Operatic roles and oratorio performances, in contrast, though comprising most of a singer's career opportunities, have set requirements and their demands on singers are standard and expected. By choosing repertoire that is particularly suited to a specific voice and by introducing uncommon choices that capitalize on individual strengths in the performer, recitals offer a wide array of potential personal flair. Also to be considered are the numerous decisions about how, where, and when the recital will be presented.

With all of these potential options and the rich history of the recital, it can be quite difficult for a singer to make choices about their recital. Being overwhelmed with choices often leads to inaction, or to taking the path of least resistance. This, while understandable, has led to senior recitals that are standardized to the point of lacking rigor and being less creative. Even without detailed analysis of recital programs, a few patterns emerge readily: recitals tend toward presentations consisting of some art songs and some arias, and usually include English, German, French, and Italian. They are normally presented with piano accompaniment, and the solo singer is featured alone.

There is certainly nothing wrong with this model of senior recital, and there have been many successful recitals that follow it. It presents a well-rounded musician, includes different languages and styles, and presents material from the standard vocal repertoire. In some cases, this typical format can be focused to showcase a particular singer's talents, or to explore a specific interest. In many cases, though, singers simply follow the accepted formula as if it were a required and standardized format.

Anything that does not fit into the above description is, by definition, an uncommon choice. The nature of these choices is that they take more effort than the default options in presenting a recital, but they can also create increased dividends for the performer as well as for the audience. An example is the choice of recital venue for Oregon State University students. Technically, any location that is not room 303 of Benton Hall on the Oregon State University campus is an uncommon choice, since that is the hall that is provided free for student recital use. However, the hall seats only sixty people, and the acoustics do not particularly suit voice recitals; seeking a recital location

outside of this option has become so commonplace as to not register as an uncommon choice anymore. At many institutions with more comprehensive facilities, this would still count as an uncommon choice, but at Oregon State it is part of the expected normal routine for a senior vocal recital.

Senior Recitals at OSU

In order to understand what freedom individual performers have to make uncommon choices, the rules and regulations must first be clearly understood. At this time, the most updated source of these guidelines is the *Oregon State University Department of Music Vocal Studies Information & Guidelines* for 2013-2014. Most of the information pertaining to recitals discusses the recital application process and the recital hearing requirements, tasks which are required to gain faculty approval for student recital plans. The only regulations that have bearing directly on the content of the recital are as follows:

You are required to present ... a full recital (60 or more minutes of music) in your senior year. ... Any performers you plan to use in your recital must appear at the hearing. ... You need to offer your printed program [at the hearing] as you intend it to look at the recital. Translations are required. You also need to include whatever other program notes you wish to print, such as bios, thanks, blurbs about the pieces, etc. Programs must be cleared with Erin Sneller and with the Recital Hearing Committee (Poppino, *Vocal Studies* 21-22).

Surprisingly little information is contained in the handbook about requirements for the recital itself. This is done purposefully, so that voice students have a greater degree of freedom in choosing their repertoire and how to present their recital. It should

be noted here that this does not by any means give students free reign to do whatever they wish with a senior recital program. The student's teacher must still approve of the choices being made, and the program as a whole must be approved by the recital hearing committee. These relationships serve to ensure that choices made by students are realistic, achievable, and will not misrepresent them or the institution artistically as they present themselves to the public. However, this leaves a great deal more freedom for the performer to make choices than would often be inferred from attending many senior recitals.

In order to understand the uncommon choices being presented in this thesis, one must first understand the typical senior recital program. While the following analysis is based only on senior vocal recitals at Oregon State University and, correspondingly, has a relatively low sample size, it is representative of over a decade of senior vocal recitals and all of the studio teachers currently teaching at OSU (and some who no longer teach there) are represented by the programs. To keep consistency, only senior vocal recitals were examined. Recitals of singers of all vocal ranges were included. These programs comprise the complete music department archive of vocal senior recital programs, dating from 2004.

By analyzing the choices that performers have made in the past, the standard program makes itself obvious, and uncommon choices can be discussed more clearly. I looked at the repertoire that each recital presented, and some salient groupings of that repertoire, to determine trends in the data. I also examined the physical program that was presented, as it is a part of the recital experience for the audience. All the data analyzed

in the following section is included in the resource appendix, and copies of the scanned programs are available from the Oregon State University music area by request. In the following tables, some figures are rounded and may not add up to 100%.

Table 1: Languages Included in Recitals

English	100%
French	100%
German	86%
Italian	79%
Other	21%

Of the senior recitals surveyed, only English and French were universally represented, with German and Italian following close behind. Of the 21% which included a language that was not one of these ‘common four,’ one recital included a non-texted vocalise, and the other two additional languages represented were Czech and Latin, presented in one recital each. These statistics make the typical language conventions for a senior recital obvious. Using other languages outside of these four is rare and, therefore, an uncommon choice.

Table 2: Genres Included in Recitals

Art Song	100%
Aria	93%
Folk Song	14%

Art songs were included unanimously, making this another pillar of the standard recital. In fact, 68% of the content in these recitals was art song repertoire, making it the

most common genre of repertoire performed. Though folk song was not significantly represented in the broad survey of recitals, those recitals that did include folk songs had a dramatically higher proportion of folk songs than would otherwise be expected, given the normal distribution between art song and arias — 31% of those recitals including folk song were devoted to that repertoire. Despite this incorporation of folk song on a few recitals, the standard repertoire for the senior recital is predominantly Western art song with aria selections. Other genres of performance, therefore, are uncommon choices.

Table 3: Sources of Arias in Recitals

Opera	55%
Concert	21%
Oratorio	17%
Mass/Cantata	6%

Of the recitals that included arias, a figure removed from unanimity by one recital that focused solely on song, the majority were drawn from opera. Concert and oratorio arias were represented as well, but cantata or mass arias were insignificant contributions to the figures. In the recitals that included arias, an average of 23.8% of the recital was devoted to aria repertoire, a figure which makes a good deal of sense. Arias are more technically demanding than songs, are often longer, and were written originally for orchestral accompaniment, while songs are more idiomatically performed with just piano.

A corollary to the examination of genres comes from a look at larger works, such as complete song cycles or cantatas performed as a whole. Although 50% of the recitals examined presented such a larger work, only one of them was a cantata; the others were

song cycles that varied in length from three songs to sixteen songs. The differences between the selections of larger works make it hard to combine all of these choices into one general category. While many recitals offered larger works, the unique nature of the works that were performed still makes this an uncommon choice.

Ensembles featured in a surprising 50% of senior recitals, though half of those ensembles were vocal duets. Two recitals included a larger vocal ensemble (one a trio and one a choir), and two included an instrumental ensemble playing in addition to the piano. Though vocal duets are a fairly common choice on senior recitals, the rarity of any other kind of ensemble makes the overall choice of ensemble inclusion an uncommon choice.

Few significant data emerged regarding periods of performance, but a brief analysis may still be of interest to the reader. For simplicity's sake, the periods have here been reduced to Baroque, Classical, 20th Century, and Romantic (a deplorable catch-all which is used here only to avoid the fragmenting of the 1800s into multiple, extremely specific vocal periods). Although no recital presented music from earlier than the Baroque period, that repertoire is different enough from the standard art song and aria format that it will be considered as a separate genre, rather than simply a different period.

Table 4: Periods of Music in Recitals

Romantic	100%
Twentieth Century	86%
Baroque	57%
Classical	50%

The only period that was universally represented in these recitals is the Romantic. Though the period definition of ‘Romantic’ covers the most broad scope of genres and composers of vocal literature, the most common composers featured from this period were Schumann and Schubert, forming the vast majority of the pieces present in the recitals surveyed. Other composers from this broad and diverse expanse of time accounted for only a fraction of the Romantic music presented.

Table 4.5: Romantic Composers

Schumann	60%
Schubert	27%
Other	13%

The next-most common period was the twentieth century, and all but one of these selections were in English (that one was in French), making the overwhelming standard a twentieth-century piece in English. Closely matched in frequency were the Baroque and Classical periods. A similar analysis of the Baroque composers presented finds that 63% of the repertoire was by Handel, with the remaining 37% by Bach. No other composers were represented from the Baroque period. The only composer presented from the Classical period was Mozart. Though this data does not illuminate a type of uncommon choice, it certainly makes the standardization of recital repertoire apparent.

Table 5: Physical Program Inclusions

Biography	93%
Acknowledgements	79%
Translations	64%
Program Notes	43%

Finally, the physical program presented must be analyzed, as it is an important part of the audience's experience of the recital. There are many choices to be made when preparing a physical program, and the fact that so many options exist is actually in itself an uncommon choice on the part of Oregon State University — many other colleges have a standardized format or even a template for their programs. All but one of the recital programs included some form of biography, and the one seems to have omitted it due to the space restraints of a single-sheet program. The programs that did not seem to include translations likely had a separate packet of translations that has since been lost in the archives, since translations are a required component of the recital program. Of the surviving translations, 78% included both original text and English translation, while 22% omitted the original text. In the selections that included program notes, only two included notes from pieces not drawn from operatic sources. Given the nature of my research, I was unable to analyze where and how the programs were printed and designed, but that is another key component and choice. Although the programs have obvious common features — translations, biographies, and acknowledgements — there are enough choices in the presentation of each of these, and how they relate to any other uncommon choices that were made in the recital, that it is worth spending some time

discussing the options available to students when they make the physical program for their recital.

In summary, the typical senior recital features repertoire in English, French, German, and Italian; is predominantly individual art songs with some arias; spans from the Baroque era through 20th Century repertoire; features the soloist with piano accompaniment; and has some form of physical program. While many of the recitals surveyed did use and incorporate a single uncommon choice, specific types of these choices were still so unique as to make the individual choices uncommon rather than standard.

Uncommon Choices in a Senior Recital

Uncommon choices allow for creative freedom in the performance. Rather than feeling like a specific format must be followed, they allow for performers to make conscious choices about their recital, which is the capstone of their undergraduate studies in performance. These choices allow students to take on challenges unique to their skills. Some students, for example, have an special facility with certain languages, while others might have particular experience performing in a particular style, or specific connections to instrumentalists that allow them to explore accompaniment other than or in addition to piano. Similarly, they allow students to use uniquely available resources, such as instrumentalists or a family member who is a native speaker of an uncommon language, to perform otherwise inaccessible repertoire. Finally, making uncommon choices can increase opportunities for self-directed study. A student with interest in an uncommon

genre will, in the course of preparing pieces from it for a recital, study it further and develop their skills and abilities. Similarly, a student who wants to develop experience working with ensembles can get coaching and experience more easily if also working toward fulfilling the requirement of the recital than if taking on an independent project.

The potential drawbacks of uncommon choices for the performer involve the fact that being non-standard in their nature, they require some additional level of time or commitment to successfully execute. They add complexity to the already difficult task of planning a recital. They often add extra rehearsal time, and also potentially increase the amount of research and study for preparation that is required of a senior recital. These potentials should be assessed and balanced against students' interest in uncommon choices so that they do not become overwhelmed when preparing their recital.

In addition to the benefits uncommon choices can have for the performer, they can also be beneficial for the audience. Much can be said about limiting the standardization of performances — it can help to sustain audience interest, and that has a significant impact on the art form. The more diverse senior recital offerings become, the less likely a potential audience member will choose not to go because they believe that they know what will be presented. The more often they are confronted with an uncommon choice done well, the more often they may choose to go to a recital where they do not have a personal connection to the performer. In this way, uncommon choices not only sustain audience interest within the context of a recital program, but also audience development over a broader span of time. Gradually, this increased audience

interest builds support for the vocal program at an institution, resulting in increased attendance at recitals and increased support for the students giving them.

An historical example of uncommon choices sustaining audience interest is found in the career of Samuel Ramey, a prolific performer known as the most recorded bass. His first song recital, in 1987, performed with accompanist Warren Jones, was naturally well attended, but was not reviewed well. The nicely balanced program of art song in different languages didn't inspire or excite the audience. In contrast, Ramey's next song recital in 1995 received rave reviews, and the audience was captivated with Ramey's performance. Since each of these programs was performed multiple times, not just in one night, the chance of Ramey's performance changing dramatically between the two is quite low. A later conversation with Warren Jones revealed the difference between the two recitals. In the first recital, Ramey attempted to create a balanced and conventional program, while in the second he abandoned that concept and simply performed songs that he wanted to perform. Though this example should not serve as a license to serve personal whim and fancy, it does make a strong case for the inclusion of uncommon choices that inspire the performer's interest; that interest will translate directly to audience engagement (Poppino, "Recital History").

The potential downsides of uncommon choices from the audience perspective are similar to those for the performer. Faced with a program containing too many uncommon choices, audience members can feel that there is nothing to relate to and that there is no internal cohesion in the recital. Unusual choices can also add length to the recital, which

is often taken up with stage reshuffling rather than music. Past a certain point, the inclusion of uncommon choices can be distracting to an audience, rather than engaging.

Overall, the benefits of including uncommon choices to some degree in a recital program outweigh the potential drawbacks. The drawbacks mainly occur when uncommon choices are used out of balance with the rest of the recital program, and can be avoided when care is taken to maintain this balance. This balance is achieved when students work in conjunction with their teachers to plan the recital program, as the input of the teacher is vital to maintaining balance between uncommon choices and traditional repertoire, and they can accurately assess which choices and how many the student will be able to take on without overwhelming themselves or their recital audience.

With a working knowledge of what a standard recital is comprised of, the uncommon choices available to students must now be examined in detail. Starting with the uncommon choice of transposing repertoire and moving through uncommon languages, uncommon genres, inclusions of larger works, use of various ensembles, and the different choices available in the physical program, these major choices will be analyzed first through the lens of practical experience from my senior recital program, and then from observations of past recitals and conjecture in order to provide students and teachers additional information about the possibilities and potential challenges of these uncommon choices. While not all of the uncommon choices made in my senior recital were successful, they provide useful examples for future vocal majors planning a senior recital and wanting to make uncommon choices; they can also assist faculty in advising students on recital preparation.

Transposition

Singing from a transposition, particularly when a piece is presented in a specific key, is itself a somewhat uncommon choice. When considering a transposition on a recital, a singer must first ask why they are transposing the piece. I transposed *Prestitoma* from Handel's *Giulio Cesare in Egitto* on my recital to sing outside my normal voice type, and this decision will be examined as one of the few compelling reasons to perform this type of transposition. The other possible reasons are common concert transpositions, transpositions for developing singers, and transposition of pieces that do not have specific keys. Once the decision has been made to sing a transposition, the piece must then actually *be* transposed, and some resources and tips for helping that process along are included. Finally, as with any change to a score, there are certain considerations one must be aware of, and the most common of these are presented here as well.

Perhaps the most questionable example of a piece needing transposition is for singers wishing to sing repertoire written specifically for other voice types. This primarily becomes a concern when dealing with arias, as most art songs are not restricted to specific voice parts. Schubert, for example, often transposed his own songs written for high voice into low keys so that his favorite singer, Michael Vogl, could sing them (Bostridge 165-168). There are few compelling reasons to do this, particularly when the difference in voice types is drastic enough to require transposition. Reasons so rare are, of necessity, personal to individual singers, and the legitimacy of these efforts is a matter

to be discussed between the student and teacher. In an effort to shed some light on a potential reason for such a transposition, I will relate the justification I used for my recital to transpose *Presti omai* down an octave.

The role of Caesar in Handel's *Giulio Cesare* is one of many leading operatic roles from the Baroque period that were written for castrati. These voices, which dominated *opera seria* throughout the 17th and 18th centuries, were created by surgically removing the testicles of a prepubescent boy, a process which would cause him to retain his unchanged voice as the rest of his body developed. The disruption of the natural development also caused large limbs and a dramatically-sized chest cavity to develop in the boys, which led to both an impressive stage presence and also their remarkable ability for breath control. Castrati were schooled intensely in conservatory environments, but though many thousands of boys were castrated, comparatively few ended up with successful careers, and those who did were still ridiculed off-stage for not being 'whole' men. Despite this, there was a tremendous demand for them in Italian opera, and it was almost impossible to have a successful premier without a leading role sung by a castrato (Grout 322, 418-419, 456-457).

Eventually the process of castration began to be seen as inhumane, and operatic castrato roles faded as the abilities of the new, heroic tenor voice grew. This decline brought about a conundrum for opera companies, particularly later in the twentieth century, as the resurgent popularity of Baroque music brought the question of how these roles should be performed to light.

As it stands today, there are three options that opera companies have for staging a role originally written for a castrato: countertenor, mezzo-soprano, and bass-baritone. Each of these three possibilities has its own benefits and drawbacks. Countertenors possess a male on-stage presence and the original pitch level, but often do not have comparable power to females singing in the same range, which limits their ability to portray heroic roles. Mezzos have the power that counter-tenors sometimes lack, and also sing at the original pitch level, but there is no disguising the distinctive female timbre, and even the most talented singing actresses struggle with the demands of accurately portraying a convincing heroic male — particularly so in this era of HD transmissions and recorded close-ups. The third option of using bass-baritones is diminishing in prevalence as the period performance movement continues to grow, but it still offers tangible advantages. Bass-baritones have the male presence and, combined with the lower timbre, often carry the power and respect that would be associated with these heroic characters. Many low-voiced males lack the required flexibility and coloratura for the castrato parts, however, and there is no hiding the much lower registration.

My choice to sing *Presti omai* as a bass stemmed from my desire to include a heroic aria in my senior recital. Bases often have parts written for them as villains or wise old men, but rarely are they the heroic protagonist. There was sufficient precedent with other bases and bass-baritones singing castrato roles for me to justify this transposition, particularly since singers of the voice type which I was appropriating

material from no longer exist. There are many more common reasons to transpose pieces, however, that did not feature on my senior recital.

A far more common reason for transposition is referred to as a ‘common concert transposition.’ These are transpositions of certain pieces in the standard repertoire that are commonly used by singers, and relatively established. They range from the pedagogical purpose of the multitudinous keys of the *26 Italian Art Songs and Arias* book, where pieces are transposed into various keys so that there can be a standard repertory of beginning-level literature for singers of all voice types to learn, to common transpositions of difficult operatic arias to make them either fit the vocal demands of the rest of the role better, or to make them easier to negotiate by modern singers. Though such pedagogical tools as mentioned above are often thought of as beneath the notice of those giving senior recitals, attention should be paid to performing basic music well. Cecilia Bartoli, a well-known coloratura mezzo with an interest in early music, performs selections from these pieces at a high level of ability, and it is certainly refreshing to hear them as they were originally intended to be sung, by a professional musician, rather than a beginning student (Bartoli). Most all of these common transpositions are completely acceptable in a recital setting, and would not be questioned for authenticity. For basses, a common example is “La calunnia” from Rossini’s *Il barbiere di Siviglia*. Though originally written in D, the high F#s are a challenge to so many basses, and so far outside of the demands of the rest of the role, that it is almost impossible to find it included in an anthology in its original key. Instead, it is most prevalent in the common transposition of C, lowering the high notes to Es. Another common example of these types of

transpositions are the multiple keys of Schubert songs and even of his song cycles. *Winterreise*, for example, though originally written in a decidedly tenor range, has garnered attention predominantly as a low-voiced cycle for baritones and bass-baritones to interpret (Bostridge 165-168).

An important distinction should be made between common concert transpositions that are used for pedagogical purposes and transpositions made to accommodate developing singers. While the first purpose is completely acceptable, the second use enters into a grey area. While certain pieces, predominantly arias, were written for specific singers and cannot be matched easily by normal singers of that voice type, many pieces were written with specific ranges and voice types in mind. There is a danger in transposing pieces down to ameliorate high notes or up to fix them firmer in a singer's range. That being said, the decision on how much that transposition is appropriate versus how much new repertoire that does not need to be transposed should instead be chosen for a recital is to be made between teacher and student, as it is a decision heavily influenced by the singer's personal level of technical development. Transpositions like this, however, should by no means be a catch-all to allow singers to perform repertoire that they are not technically ready for yet.

The other acceptable and relatively common incidence of transposition occurs when a piece does not have a specific key. The most common example of this is found in folk song, where melodies are constantly being transposed to fit individual singers' ranges. In that, and other traditional genres, keys are malleable and accompaniments are adjusted to fit the setting of the performance. A performer must consider how important

the key of the piece is to the musical meaning. Other examples of this phenomenon may be found outside the realm of folk song, but generally will not be found with fully notated accompaniment, or at least will usually have explanatory text about the flexibility of keys. Since they are notated without a set key, these are actually the most acceptable transpositions to sing. While some might quibble about arias like “La calunnia” based on preference for either the original or the commonly transposed key, there would be very little notice paid to different keys for songs drawn from a fakebook, for example, where only the melody and chord symbols are written.

Once the decision has been made to transpose a piece for whatever reason, unless it is a common concert transposition that is readily available, a transposition has to be either obtained or created. Though a potentially daunting process, there are a few resources that greatly help the student with this task. The first and main decision to make is whether to transpose the piece oneself, or acquire it from an outside source. I transposed all of the pieces that required it on my senior recital myself, but I would not recommend attempting a transposition unless a student is intimately familiar with a notation software program such as Finale or Sibelius.

If attempting to personally create a transposition, the cost of preparation will be saved, but the time spent preparing that piece increased. I used a family owned copy of Finale to perform all of the transpositions on my senior recital. If one finds oneself regularly transposing, or also has an interest in composing or arranging music, it would be my recommendation to purchase a copy of Finale or Sibelius for one’s personal use. Students receive a substantial discount on these products. There are also computers

within the Music Resource Center at Oregon State University (and there should be similar computers at any institution with a music program) that come equipped with both notation software programs. Do make sure that work is saved properly on these public computers if they are used, however — often, the use of shared drives deletes work whenever a user logs off. There are, at present, a few cheaper alternatives to Finale and Sibelius that might be appealing for their cost-saving potential, but none of them match the functionality and potential of those two main programs. This may change in the future, but it is likely that as the other programs increase their functionality, they will also increase their price.

If the transposition is being acquired rather than created, there are two main options. One can look for a transposed version that already exists in various books or through online sources. A useful tool is Schubertline (see Appendix), a website which contains common transpositions of many art songs (not just those composed by Schubert). Its database is growing, so it is a good and continually developing resource for acquiring transpositions. The other possibility is getting someone else to transpose the piece. This option eliminates the potential for not finding the right key and also allows for a greater degree of control over the end product. Generally, there will be one or two students whose proficiency with Finale or Sibelius makes them ideal for this task. Questions directed to composition faculty if there are any, and theory faculty if there are not will generally produce names of students who will transpose pieces for a nominal fee.

When transposing a piece, there are some important considerations regardless of process and reasoning. Particularly in any piece where there are instruments other than

the singer and the piano accompaniment, one must be sure not to transpose out of the playable range of the instruments. Adjustments that make melodies work well for the voice might take the instrumental part outside the range of possible performance, particularly when the composer uses the full range available to the instruments. In addition, one must bear in mind (particularly when transposing by half step) that many instruments do not fare particularly well in certain keys. Intonation can suffer in additional instruments, and even collaborative pianists will sometimes request that a difficult key be transposed enharmonically so they can read it in flats or sharps, respectively. I encountered both of these difficulties in preparing Handel's *Spande ancor a mio dispetto*. I intended to transpose the entire cantata down a half-step in order to emulate Baroque period pitch (tuning to A=415 instead of A=440). However, the string players rebelled at the new key of Eb minor and requested that I lower the entire piece by a whole step to D minor instead of just a half-step. Also, in the transposition process, I transposed the violin parts below their playable range, since Handel had written a virtuosic figure that terminated on the lowest open string of the violin. Fortunately, since it only happened on that occasion, I simply switched their part to cascade down to the third scale degree, but often these types of difficulties are not as easy to manipulate and alter.

Another consideration for transpositions is the harmonic context of the piece. While the range and key signature considerations mainly apply to transpositions of small increments, when a large increment is employed, such as shifting a melody line down the octave, it can alter the way the harmonies are laid out, effectively changing the voicing of

chords. This is particularly noticeable when the piano accompaniment plays in harmony with the vocal line; changing this harmony from a 3rd above or below the singer to a 10th or a 6th away is a dramatic difference, and these kinds of changes can negatively affect the way the harmony is perceived by the audience. Fortunately, since in most cases the accompaniment will be transposed up or down with the vocal line, this should not be an often-occurring issue.

Finally, there are authenticity issues when transposition occurs. While the modern system of equal temperament allows free movement between any key, this was definitely not always the case. Associations of certain moods or emotions with specific keys had more tangible causes through history, as the system of intonation in certain keys was noticeably different than in others. While I am not advocating performing in a different temperament in order to recreate the original key feeling, it is worth noting that many composers wrote in specific keys for very specific reasons. Beethoven's famous association of heroism with Eb major and suffering with c minor come to mind as salient examples (Grout 575-583). When transposing, be aware of any associations the composer might have had with specific keys, as they develop another dimension of choice in the decision to transpose a piece.

Languages

There are a plethora of languages in the world and most, if not all of them, have music to sing. With all of this opportunity, it is a shame that vocal recital repertoire is typically restricted to the 'Big Four' languages: English, French, German, and Italian.

Understandably, not every language in the world has much to offer in the way of repertoire suitable for recital performance, but there are plenty of languages outside of those four that do. Latin bears the heritage of the Roman Catholic mass and a tremendous amount of liturgical music was written in this language. Spanish, besides being a very common second language in the United States, has wonderful song traditions and contains the zarzuela repertoire. Russian is the language of opera staples such as Prince Igor, Boris Godunov, and Eugene Onegin. The Czech language also contains regular features of the operatic repertoire. Aside from these primary choices for uncommon languages, there are many other languages that have repertoire well-suited for a senior vocal recital.

Despite all of these possibilities in language, lack of resources often make it difficult to choose to perform a piece in an uncommon language. After all, how many programs can boast Czech diction instruction? The focus of diction classes is often restricted to the ‘Big Four’ languages, in an effort to prepare students for as broad a base in classical repertoire as possible. This can lead students to feel like they do not have the skills or resources to perform music in a different language and prevent them from making a choice like this.

In reality, though diction classes focus on specific languages, they also impart the essential skills to picking up facility with singing in any language — identifying and breaking words up into phonemes, producing sounds that are not found in the English language, and the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). With these tools, it does not take much else to be able to perform pieces in an uncommon language. It can be

enormously beneficial as well. Of course, if the singer already has developed fluency in a language through study or life experience, making use of that skill in performance is a valuable transfer of knowledge, and one that takes little if any extra preparation. However, even if a singer has never spoken a word of an uncommon language, performing music in that language can help pave the way to further study, if the language is of particular interest to the singer, or just develop the potential for further excursions into a language's repertoire. Of course, the music of a language impacts the music that is written in that language, infusing it with qualities that are dependent on that particular language. Singing works written in uncommon languages, just like singing works from different periods and styles, not only develops musicianship in the singer, but also adds a great deal of interest during the recital process. Furthermore, there are cases where, for whatever reason, singing in a particular language can bring out certain subjective qualities in voices that simply are not elicited by other languages.

I chose to perform a set of Russian folk songs on my senior recital. Not only did it allow me to develop some facility with the Russian language in preparation for Russian operatic repertoire, it also uncovered a different sound quality in my vocal production as a whole. The dark color of Russian vowels profoundly affected the way that my resonant space balanced and resulted in a fundamentally different sound in my voice than that which was displayed in any of the other sets. Why these vocal affinities form is beyond the scope of this paper, but where they do exist, they should be capitalized upon in the same way a technical facility for coloratura would be.

There are many ways to find repertoire in uncommon languages, and each institution will have its own resources available. Much of this repertoire can be obtained through the online Petrucci Music Library (see Appendix), though often only in full-score format, or acquired through an interlibrary loan to an academic institution that does possess the material. In some cases, making the purchase of a particular book is useful, or one may be seeking a collection of works written in a single language. In this regard, I can recommend no service higher than that of Glendower Jones, an independent music publisher and reprinter. He maintains an excellent collection of standard repertoire in all languages and also has the resources to acquire copies of rare or hard-to-find music. It is worth noting that on my senior recital, *Spande ancor, Liederkrantz für die Bassstimme, Le Cor*, and the whole Russian set were all acquired through Jones. At exceedingly affordable rates, he is the best service for those who do not have local or institutional access to sources of uncommon repertoire. He can be found at his Classical Vocal Reprints website (see Appendix).

Once music has been obtained, the significant difficulties of performing in an uncommon language still remain for the singer. The language must be accurately translated, and the singer must acquire accurate and satisfactory diction in the language while integrating it into their vocal technique. There are innumerable references for translations in all languages, and since they stay predominantly the same for uncommon languages as they are for the ‘Big Four’ languages, I will not go into detail about them here. Diction resources, on the other hand, are more rare for the uncommon languages,

since most diction learning is done in a series of classes that generally will not extend to uncommon languages.

The International Phonetic Alphabet is an invaluable resource when it comes to learning a language's diction. Not only does it allow singers to understand a pronunciation guide (or an IPA transcription of a specific piece), it also allows them to dictate the sounds that are made on recordings of the piece, or during work with a native speaker, so students are not left struggling and trying to remember what exactly the sound was that a certain character represented.

While there are many websites that can be found which break down the diction of a language into phonemes, nothing can match working with a native speaker. Their knowledge of the language can catch exceptions that the websites cannot, and they will also be able to point out certain ways in which the phonemes interact to change the pronunciation. Even things as basic as where the word stress or phrasal stress is in a line of the text, while difficult to glean from a website's textual description, are easily gained from work with a native speaker. If one does not have access to a native speaker, of course, websites can provide adequate instruction in diction, but will involve more work in ensuring that the diction is sufficient to do the language justice in performance. I was lucky enough in preparing my Russian set to work with a woman whose job is translating Russian and Ukrainian. Not only was she able to correct the translation (the book I was using had transliterations for singing the pieces in English, rather than true translations), she gave me exacting pronunciation information in only two hours, which I was able to work with on my own afterward due to my use of IPA.

The two slight cautions in using native speakers concern lyric diction and dialects. In some languages, the spoken language differs significantly in pronunciation from the language when sung (French is notorious for this). Care should be taken to avoid errors of pronunciation perpetuated by learning the spoken diction rather than the lyric diction. Oftentimes, speakers of these languages are not familiar with the lyric diction unless they are singers themselves. Also, in languages where there are many regional dialects, be sure to either pursue the most pure and widely accepted form of the language, or a particularly specific dialect that has some salient reason for performance — the dialect of the region where a composer was from, for example. Even with these factors, however, the benefits of having the help of a native speaker are tremendous and should be sought out if at all possible.

Genres

The typical senior vocal recital is comprised of art songs and arias, but these are only a small portion of the world's musical heritage. Even assuming that the recital being presented focuses on classical vocalism, which eliminates popular music from the list of possible genre choices, there are still options outside of art songs and arias. Including one of these uncommon genres in a recital can help fulfill a special interest of a singer, but will certainly include a fair amount of background research. The performance practice of the standard recital repertoire is common and understood well enough that any teacher can handily instruct in it, but these uncommon genres may venture outside the expertise of certain teachers, in which case the student should be responsible for the

extensive listening and reading that are required to develop an accurate and authentic approach to the music being performed. The variety that they add to a recital program is beneficial for the audience as well. For the purpose of this thesis, the uncommon genres that will be discussed will be restricted to Western music and predominantly genres that I explored in my own senior recital, though a singer from Africa, for example, might want to present a traditional chant, or Chinese students may wish to incorporate a selection from Chinese opera for contrast. Since many of these exceptions would include a departure from classical technique, the acceptability of which varies from program to program, the genres discussed here will be early music, folk songs, and spirituals. In all three of these genres, slight changes must be made to the music to make it fit into the concert stage to a greater degree.

Though many recitals will feature works from the Baroque period, it is rare for them to include works that predate Bach and Handel (the only two Baroque composers who appeared in recitals at Oregon State University). This eliminates approximately four centuries of notated vocal music — approximately the same amount of time as from the Baroque period to modern day. After all, one of the reasons that music history is studied is to enable performers to use knowledge of the development of musical styles to inform their performances. Many significant innovations happened during the early Baroque and earlier, including the development of opera, writing of recitative, and a greater focus on instrumental and vocal solo capabilities (Grout 288). Many of the works that appear in these early Baroque and pre-Baroque periods are not art songs or arias; however, they

still use elements of classical vocalism, and should be considered as viable choices for a senior recital.

The individual challenges that will be presented by choosing pieces of early music to perform are too unique to explore in depth, but an analysis of the choices that I made on my senior recital may serve as example and reference for the thought process behind similar choices and as a framework on which to base decisions. In my recital, I presented three selections in three different styles from the early music genre: a lute song distilled from polyphonic texture, a recitative-like monody, and a dance tune using an ensemble. They each presented unique challenges, but all were beneficial additions to the recital program.

Marco Cara's *Non è tempo* was originally written in 1504 as a piece in three-voice texture. Though it could easily be sung by a choir or simply played by a group of three instrumentalists, I reduced the lower two voices to a lute part and sang the top voice. This matched an arrangement found in a later publication of the same melody arranged for voice and lute. This kind of arranging was commonplace at the time, as specifying the performing forces for a work was still a novel concept. While normally it would work to sing the top line of the arrangement and have the other instrument(s) play the lower lines, there will be some cases where doing so would leave the voice on a harmonic line rather than the main melody, or, depending on the range of the voice, having the harmonic support inverted to be above the singing line would negatively affect the relationship of intervals. This is a largely case-specific decision, and is left up to individual performers with a caution to be aware that these possibilities exist. Overall,

however, the best solution for these types of piece is to sing the top line and have the accompaniment play the others.

Kapsberger's *Pietà* comes directly from the early recitative-style monody of the Florentine Camerata, the group that was responsible for the creation of opera as a classical style (Grout 310-315). A more baroque piece, usually the continuo would be played by a theorbo or archlute (larger lutes with additional bass strings), but lacking those, it worked quite well with a smaller Renaissance instrument as well as a cello for the bass notes. Though not as period-appropriate as using a viola da gamba, it fit my resources much better. A difficulty here and with similar styles is that composers used figured bass notation as a short-hand to write accompaniment, fully expecting the realization to be improvised (or at least created and worked out) by the performers, likely in a different manner each time. Since this is no longer a prevalent style, finding someone who can craft an appropriate accompaniment — especially one that is more detailed and intricate than simply playing the indicated chords — from a figured bass line for a given accompanying instrument can be a challenge. When possible, look for completed realizations of the piece, or listen to recordings to develop stylistic ideas to flesh out the accompaniment past basic chords.

Caccini's *Dalla porta d'Oriente*, while also belonging to the monody genre, uses a fuller ensemble, demonstrating the potential for adding and improvising that exists in early music, as well as a more authentic presentation of a dance-oriented tune. Similarly to *Pietà*, the Renaissance lute was used in place of the deeper-toned and more appropriate theorbo, and a cello was added to double the bass-line. Because of the dance-like nature

of the piece, I added a tambourine to flesh out the rhythms, as frame drums of all kinds were quite prevalent during the period. A large portion of the music was still improvisatory in nature, and I attempted to recreate this by changing the style of the accompaniment in each verse. As with ornamentation in any style, the key is to appear to be spontaneously creating while not jeopardizing the integrity of the performance by throwing caution to the wind and creating on the spot.

One of the most significant questions in performing early music is what instruments to have playing the accompaniment. Period accuracy and style will be greatly increased with a more authentic accompaniment than the piano. Options include the lute, viol, harpsichord, and theorbo, as well as variations on all of these instruments. Barring the presence of extraordinary early music resources, the instruments one can expect to be able to realistically consider are the lute and harpsichord. While I was lucky enough to have a father who plays lute, many singers who wish to present early music selections will not be so lucky. Apart from some close relation or friend, or colleague if at an institution where early music is prevalent, I would suggest the Lute Society of America (see Appendix). They have rosters of players in all of the states and would be more than willing to assist a student in finding a lutenist to accompany them. While choosing a lute player, the same considerations should be taken as when choosing any other form of instrumental accompaniment, but there are a few lute-specific concerns. While a lute like the one played by my father in the recordings of my recital will work admirably for Renaissance or Medieval music, Baroque repertoire is performed more idiomatically with an archlute or theorbo.

Folk song, though not technically part of the Western art song tradition, nevertheless has a rich history in classical music as well as cultural significance. During the nineteenth century, many classical musicians turned back to the folk music of their native countries, both to highlight characteristic elements of their sound in the nationalistic impulse of the time and to find musical inspiration reminiscent of the sounds of their childhood and culture (Grout 687-688). Many composers, such as Ralph Vaughan Williams, have arranged compilations of their country's native folk songs, which are often now performed as assimilated art songs or hymns (Grout 797-798). The influence of folk song traditions on classical music cannot be overstated, and the inclusion of folk songs on a classical vocal recital can point out some of those parallels and relationships. The copious amounts of folk song repertoire from different cultures also make it a good way to add different regional styles or characteristic sounds to a senior recital; since classical composers drew from folk idioms to create national styles, singing folk songs can evoke the roots of those styles. However, just like not every piece of classical music has inherent worth, the plethora of folk songs certainly contains many songs that are of little value in comparison to others. These songs should not be sung blindly, but with an eye to musical quality.

In my senior recital, I performed a set of three folk songs in Russian. Since folk songs are not meant to be in a fixed key, I felt no compunctions about transposing them down from the e minor they were originally found in (the entire book of folk songs was written exclusively in e minor, another indication that the key is not particularly significant) to a lower c minor, giving it added potential for depth, as well as enabling me

to interpolate a higher, more dramatic ending to one of the pieces. When preparing folk songs, or other pieces that are not completely classical in nature, one must pay attention to the style that one is performing in. Though many publications of folk songs will have detailed editing marks, in this case the songs were strophic and differed in text enough that the dynamics did not make sense over the course of the entire piece. After listening to Dmitri Hvorostovsky, a renowned Russian baritone, perform Russian folk songs as well as Russian classical music, I interpolated dynamic markings, as well as a few rhythmic alterations that I felt fit the text and the idiom of Russian folk music. Performing folk songs is a delicate balancing act between adhering to the music and altering it for a more stylistic interpretation. In a way, it allows students to be the arranger of the songs, a unique opportunity in the classical vocal world.

Although the folk songs tend to have relatively free reign with key signatures and moderate use of embellishments and arranging techniques, it is still important to sing them without compromising technique. Though the folk songs of eastern Europe are generally sung with a piercing nasality (as exemplified by The Bulgarian State Radio and Television Female Vocal Choir), that is not a reason to transfer those exact sounds to the recital hall (Koutev). Rather, attempts should be made at approximating similar tonal ideals while still maintaining healthy vocal production.

There is one subgenre of folk song that deserves unique mention: the African-American spiritual. The earliest purely American musical tradition, these spirituals developed out of slave songs to form the roots for the styles of jazz, blues, rock, and most modern popular music (Katz Vii-Xvi). Not only does the spiritual have tremendous

cultural and musical impact as a genre, it is also particularly significant to Americans. Just as the folk songs of other cultures embody a national identity, so too do spirituals for America. Some care must be taken, though, particularly with songs that come from such a culturally significant background to ensure that the presentation of the spiritual does not seem to be mocking, sarcastic, or mimicking. Though there was a tradition of both whites and blacks performing in black-face in many venues from the nineteenth through twentieth centuries, much of that tradition is now considered racist, and is vehemently opposed (Moham).

The spiritual genre is integral to the American musical sound. Antonin Dvorak was brought to America as a professor and tasked to develop a unique sound for the United States (Grout 757-758). Though not all musicologists agree on the degree to which he based this sound on slave songs and African-American spirituals, it is known that he listened extensively to this music, as well as Native American music (Grout 757-758). In fact, it is due to the nature of his work in America that we have a common set of concert arrangements of these spirituals. Dvorak's assistant in gathering musical material was one Harry T. Burleigh, who was responsible for singing most of the African-American spirituals to Dvorak (Grout 758). By later creating the most widely available and prestigious collection of solo voice arrangements of spirituals, Burleigh brought together a disparate tradition into a form accessible to classical musicians (Moham). For many, performing these spirituals as arranged by Burleigh (or another similar arranger) is enough, and certainly is a way to include the repertoire of an uncommon genre in a recital. But just as the authentic performance movement is altering performance practice

for early music, so too are scholars looking at the somewhat anachronistic arrangements of concert spirituals (Moham).

Just as the performance of early music can be enhanced by knowledge about the performance practice of the time, so too can spirituals. Spirituals were primarily a vocal tradition; the slaves who sang them would not have had access to a piano for accompaniment, and the tradition was transmitted orally from singer to singer. Sometimes these performers had access to stringed instruments, and early itinerant singing preachers often accompanied themselves with the slide guitar due to its ability to imitate their vocal stylings (Moham). I endeavored to use my knowledge of these performance practices to enhance my presentation of “Wade in the Water.” I began with a soulful call and response between the voice and the slide guitar, a common style for beginning a song in the oral tradition. I then sang with the guitar and blended this arrangement into the Burleigh arrangement, with the guitar still playing along. Not only did this develop an effective presentation style, it also mimicked in some way the addition of voices as others gathered to sing along with the spiritual.

This is just one way to modify or include other elements in a concert arrangement of a spiritual in an effort to increase its authenticity. Though it was a success on my recital, there are some potential pitfalls of these efforts. In sliding close to a very different vocal style, performing like this could have a negative effect on the integration of technique. Also, if not presented coherently as part of the recital, the switch in style could be quite abrupt and jarring for the audience. If one is interested in pursuing additional uncommon choices when presenting spirituals, one must keep these cautions in

mind. There are also numerous other possibilities for extending the spiritual performance, including improvisation, the extent to which vocal scoops and ornaments are included, and creating a personal arrangement of the song.

No matter whether one is performing a strictly concert-arranged spiritual or if one has attempted to recreate an authentic performance setting and arrangement, there is one overriding concern when performing spiritual music: to express its underlying desire for freedom in a way which is respectful of the tradition. Whatever choices are made, the audience's reception of the songs must be considered, and they must be presented in a way in which the audience will receive them as legitimate music, rather than a dalliance in the folk idiom. While this warning also goes for folk songs, since spirituals are the songs of a people who historically have been oppressed in America and who still face injustice on a daily basis, it is considerably more significant in this case.

Aside from the concert collections of spirituals that are commonly found in music stores and any that might be found through Glendower Jones, a valuable resource in locating more uncommon repertoire of this genre is Carren Moham (see Appendix). Having done extensive research in African-American spirituals and their inclusion in recital programs, she is not only able to recommend particular spirituals for performance, but also is able to give informed and critical feedback about any further uncommon choices being made while presenting a spiritual. She is a reliable authority on whether or not these performances verge on offensive imitation, but her overriding focus is to increase the performance and knowledge of spirituals, so she will be very supportive of student efforts and motivations.

All together, these three uncommon genres provide rich opportunities for singers to engage their personal interests in a national style or specific repertoire. They are only a selection of uncommon choices of genre — many more possibilities exist. These possibilities and others should be discussed between teacher and student before being included in a recital program, but for balance and intention rather than any sense of defending their legitimacy. Students wishing to present uncommon choices in these genres should be prepared with ample justification for their choice, particularly at institutions such as Oregon State University where the repertoire on vocal recitals is more standard through tradition. That being said, the teacher can present reasons to not perform specific genres; for example, my teacher advised me against performing a chant set because she felt that it would work against the technique that we were currently trying to develop. Keep this, as well as recital balance, in mind, but feel free to explore repertoire that is of great interest, and present it in a senior recital.

Larger Cohesive Works

Standard vocal recital programming includes stand-alone arias and collected sets of individual art songs. These songs can be organized by composer, period, language, theme, or simply in a random assortment, but they are collections of individual pieces. Often, these sets were not composed together and intended to be performed as a cohesive unit. There are two uncommon choices that stand out as ways to perform larger cohesive works within the recital, and those are the song cycle and the cantata. Both are written to

be performed as a unit rather than as disparate parts, and both have a multitude of different options and difficulties that come with them.

Though many programs do in fact contain a song cycle, there are many variations in what that means, as well as many different possibilities for presenting a song cycle. Song cycles range in length from three songs to twenty-four and longer, and from short, five-minute entries, to upwards of an hour; some cycles are connected by a theme, and some by a plot, while others are simply a collected series of songs that were published as a cycle — further, some are an example of a composer setting poems of one particular poet, while others draw their material from multiple sources (Emmons 259-260). These differences make for a wide variety of options and possibilities for a recital and can shed light on such topics as the method a composer used to set certain ideas. Though Schubert's *Winterreise* functions as a recital in and of itself, as it lasts approximately 70 minutes and has 24 pieces within it, it is a classic example of a plot-driven song cycle with poems drawn from one source. The *Liederkrantz für die Bassstimme* cycle by Carl Loewe that I performed on my senior recital, on the other hand, is only five selections, and is drawn from different poets. Shorter song cycles are much more performable on senior recitals, though depending on what portion of the recital program one is willing to devote to that one entity, longer cycles can be considered (the longest in record at Oregon State University is a performance of the 16-song cycle *Dichterliebe* by Schumann). Since it is generally advised to have some balance in a senior recital, be cautious when considering these longer cycles, as they significantly restrict the other options for the program.

One of the main concerns with a song cycle is to keep audience attention throughout its duration. While individual songs in sets can have this problem, these sets generally last no longer than three or four songs, and there is a customary pause in between songs on the set that allows a short break for the audience. However, with a song cycle, even if it is short, there is a more unified intent, and it should be treated in many ways as one longer unit. Sometimes songs in a cycle should flow together without a break, while other times a performer might want to accentuate a pause between songs for dramatic purposes. Following the general convention of performing song cycles, they should be performed without a break no matter the number of songs, which can add to the potential difficulty of vocal fatigue, depending on the length of the cycle in question.

If these concerns can be met and a suitable song cycle found, however, it makes a great addition to a recital. The continuity of focus is similar to that of performing an operatic role where there is a good deal of successive musical material. It also allows a singer to explore a particular composer's style in more detail, or the way a particular poet's texts are conveyed in song.

The other possibility for this type of uncommon choice is a cantata. Though they may require more work than a song cycle to prepare, as they often involve the use of various instrumentalists or even a choir (both possibilities which are discussed in the ensemble section), they are still a worthwhile form to explore for the purpose of including a larger cohesive work in a recital program. They do, however, face the same difficulties that a song cycle does with ensuring continuity, particularly in cantatas longer than three or four movements. The primary distinction between cantatas is made between

solo cantatas and those composed for multiple soloists. As the recital is meant primarily to showcase the vocal talents of a single singer, cantatas meant for multiple soloists should be considered only under rare circumstances.

There are two types of solo cantata: secular and sacred. Secular cantatas, being composed primarily for the enjoyment of the nobility, are full of virtuosic technical demands for the singer, as the secular cantata was one of the ways a singer could display their skill. My choice of the secular cantata *Spande ancor a mio dispetto* by Handel, for example, was three movements in length, and featured myself, two violins, and continuo. It was noticeably technically demanding, with many leaps of tenths in the vocal line, and running figures meant to resemble rivers and waterfalls. Despite this, I felt it was easier to maintain my focus and the audience's attention through the three movements of this cantata than I did during the five songs of Loewe's song cycle. Secular cantatas like this one can be an opportunity for virtuosic singing as well as a good way to integrate a larger work into a recital, making a good choice to consider for singers exploring this option.

Sacred cantatas are another option, but carry some additional considerations. Sacred cantatas were primarily written with a specific liturgical context. Whether their texts are drawn from the Bible directly or from a cantata writer, they were often written for performance on a specific day of the liturgical year, and their continued existence in the repertory was not counted on or even expected. Since this is the case, many also carry with them the expectation of the composer that they would be performed as part of a church service, and often the texts were chosen or the cantatas written so that they would enhance the rest of the service in particular ways. Needless to say, it is neither

appropriate for a recital setting nor feasible to recreate an entire church service on a particular day of the year to encapsulate the authentic performance of these works, but these are all aspects of the context that must be considered when preparing the cantata for performance. Finally, in presenting a sacred cantata, the performer (regardless of their personal beliefs or lack thereof) should be aware of the spiritual message that they are conveying, and take that into account to a certain degree when performing the work.

Ensembles

Though the senior vocal recital is primarily a showcase for the solo singer, it is founded on a basic collaboration — that of the piano accompaniment. However, much of the great vocal repertoire is ensemble-based, with either additional instruments and/or singers. There is no reason why the inclusion of such repertoire should detract from the personal focus of the senior recital, and in many ways, the addition of an ensemble can enhance the recital. It is a significant way to break up the uniform texture of a single voice with piano accompaniment and opens up the option for many of the other uncommon choices presented here, as they will often include an ensemble component. It familiarizes singers with the process of working with other singers and with instrumentalists, one that will continue throughout their career. In addition, it adds a slice of self-promotional and entrepreneurial training to the recital preparation, as singers and players have to be sought out, rehearsals have to be organized, and other considerations need to be addressed. The ensemble choices can primarily be broken down into vocal

ensembles (duets, larger ensembles, and choirs), which I did not perform on my senior recital but which are featured frequently enough that they deserve primary mention, and instrumental ensembles (piano replacements, additional instruments, and full ensembles), all of which I did on my senior recital. Regardless of ensemble type, there are also some resources for finding singers and players, as well as pertinent considerations for any use of ensemble in a vocal recital program.

The vocal duet is by far the most common ensemble option. Since it is so commonly done, it requires little explanation, but a general summary of the cautions will be useful since it not only sheds light on the workings of duet choices, but also serves as a foundation and basis for the other vocal ensembles. There are several considerations to be made when choosing a duet. The first is the balance between the two voices and their corresponding parts. If one voice is dramatically louder or softer than the other, the ensemble will generally not work, unless that dynamic difference is called for in the score. Likewise, if one part of the duet is sizably larger than the other, it becomes less a duet and more a solo piece with an interjection — fundamentally not an ensemble any longer. If a piece of that nature is particularly captivating, ensure that the part that is sizably larger is sung by the person whose recital it is, so they do not become upstaged in their own performance.

Another consideration is whether the duet performance will be reciprocal; that is, will it then be performed it with the guest singer on their recital as well. If not, the third consideration becomes even more significant — that of length. Besides courtesy to fellow singers and their time, picking a duet with limited length also allows it to be

prepared more quickly and reliably — a boon, when it is one of many elements being prepared for an extensive senior recital. The final consideration is whether or not to stage the duet, and this largely comes down to a matter of the time available and the performance space. Of course, no staging of a duet or other ensemble should be outlandish enough to disrupt the recital environment, but since many duets are operatic, staging can help demonstrate the plot. Staging should only be taken on if one feels comfortable moonlighting as a stage director; bringing someone in to stage it for you is generally not an option that is available. Also, the options for staging change dramatically based on the location of the performance, making performance location a consideration when thinking about staging a duet.

The larger vocal ensemble, be it trio, quartet, or greater, has many similarities to the duet in terms of planning for a recital. The balance of voices and parts is just as significant, though with larger ensembles there is more room for having smaller parts without them being insignificant. Length is always a factor, and staging has even more possibilities for complexity when additional performers are added. The main consideration that applies to these larger vocal ensembles is a caution to limit the number of performers involved. In a way that is more significant in vocal ensembles than it is in instrumental ones, additional performers exponentially increase the difficulty of preparing a vocal ensemble, as well as greatly increasing the amount of rehearsal time that will be needed to prepare it for performance. Since these other singers should also be performing from memory, except in highly uncommon and circumstantial cases, increasing the number of performers also increases the chance for a memory slip or other

error on-stage in a way that is not applicable to instrumental ensembles, where performers are reading from music. Due to the fact that it is much less likely in these ensembles that they will be drawn from a non-operatic source than it is with duets, it also makes the case for staging the larger vocal ensemble much stronger.

The last type of vocal ensemble is the choir. Due to the large size of this ensemble and the difficulty of preparing it, it must be advised against except for highly uncommon circumstances. Even a small choir of eight singers will need considerable preparation outside of normal rehearsal times, and the inclusion of a choir introduces a host of other considerations. Though using a conductor is a consideration that will be further detailed in the instrumental section, it is also a necessity for a choral performance in order to coordinate that many singers without undermining the focus of the solo performer. A choir introduces complex issues of sound balance that are on a higher level than even a large vocal ensemble like a sextet. Though in one case at Oregon State a choir was used on a senior vocal recital, their use is understandably rare as it is difficult to achieve successfully. Be extremely cautious if planning to involve a choir in a recital.

The first choice of instrumental ensemble is the possibility of replacing the piano with a different accompanying instrument. The main choices for this would be harpsichord, organ, or a stringed instrument like guitar or lute. It is much more rare, but still sometimes possible to use a melody instrument like a cello or violin as the sole accompanying instrument; this depends entirely on the repertoire being presented. I used a lute as a solo accompanying instrument in place of the piano for portions of my lute set on my senior recital (though the set grew to include a three-person ensemble), and the

process and considerations specifically for using lute in this fashion are found in that section. Selections like this should only be a portion of the recital, so they do not do away with the pianist entirely, but only displace them for a set or so. Each of the choices of instrument has advantages for certain repertoire, but they all have specific challenges to face as well.

Harpsichords and organs add wonderful variety when used in early music selections. Since the piano had not been invented then and the earlier pianoforte was just being developed around Bach's death (Gillespie 9-11), they are also a much more authentic solution for performance. Organs can also be used with liturgical music up through the twentieth century, and there are pieces written for organ and voice as well as harpsichord and voice. Harpsichord and organ are advantageous because it is more than likely that the collaborative pianist already accompanying the recital will also be able to play these instruments. This means that rather than finding a player *and* instruments, one only has to procure use of the instruments. It also has the advantage of capitalizing on the already developed accompanying relationship there. For many students, finding a harpsichord is as easy as petitioning the head of the keyboard studies program for use of their harpsichord. At Oregon State, the piano studies program has a harpsichord, and there is also one at the First United Methodist Church of Corvallis. Harpsichords are notoriously difficult to move, however, which means that even moving it on or off the stage risks it being taken out of tune. The best place for pieces involving harpsichord would be at the beginning of the recital, or just after intermission, so that the instrument can be tuned immediately prior to its performance. With organ, the challenge is simply

finding a church location that has a satisfactory instrument installed — one not too loud, not too soft, and that accommodates a visual connection from accompanist to singer. Portative organs offer a solution to this problem, but are much more difficult to find and extremely difficult to move.

Stringed instruments can also make a nice addition to the accompaniment of a recital. Guitar can add flair to Spanish-language selections in many cases, and lute can enrich early music performances. Balalaikas, if accessible, make wonderful additions to Slavic folk selections, and banjos can be used for early American song. The choices of stringed instrument depend on the repertoire being performed. Generally, if the choice of a stringed instrument like guitar or lute is made, a player separate from the regular accompanist will need to be located. There are cases where this is not true, of course, and they should be taken advantage of when possible. The main issue with these types of instruments is volume. Unless amplification is sought (something that this thesis strongly advises against), such stringed instruments can be easily overpowered by a strong voice. While this can be ameliorated in the comfortable parts of the vocal range by simply singing softer, as the vocal writing approaches the extremes of range, this task becomes more and more difficult, and is likely to negatively change the vocal timbre in an effort to match the instrument's volume. Be cautious of these factors, and try to pick a piece that does not stress the extremes of vocal range, so the accompaniment is not drowned out.

The simplest addition of instruments into a recital is one or more instruments (usually no more than two) playing with the piano. Even at three instruments, the difficulties that are addressed in the large instrumental ensemble section start to come

into play, but with one or two instruments, they are not significant yet. Music with this kind of descant instrument is plentiful — a violin line, a trumpet line, even a duet between two instruments with voice and piano. On my senior recital, the *Per questa bella mano* selection could easily have been done with a piano and the bass, rather than using a fuller ensemble. When choices like this can be made, it is advantageous to reduce to a piano and instrument or two rather than using the fuller ensemble because it saves a great deal of time and preparation effort. The coordination necessary is greatly reduced, and there is less potential for error. Another example of this kind of combination on my recital is “Wade in the Water,” where a guitar was used as an additional instrument to the piano. This kind of collaboration is readily available for folk songs, as many of them come written with guitar chords in the music as well as a piano part. The primary difficulty for this tier of instrumental involvement is coordinating rehearsals with the pianist. There also has to be someone who has a score making all the parts visible so they can coordinate if people make mistakes for entrances, etc. during rehearsals. Generally this will be the accompanist, as the singer will be pushing toward memorized performance, but some accompanists are not comfortable with that responsibility and would want the singer to keep track of the other instruments in the rehearsal setting.

The last, and by far the most complex way of using instruments in a recital, is a full chamber ensemble. This has the potential to vary in size from a string quartet to an entire orchestra, though using a full orchestra is an unfeasible task in an undergraduate voice recital. Singing with a chamber ensemble is an extraordinary experience. It allows the performer to integrate artistically with a number of other musicians and, in some

cases, allows the orchestral colors of woodwinds, brass, or strings to come forth. The piano, marvelous an instrument as it is, cannot replicate these textures exactly no matter how talented the player. One consideration that restricts the size of the ensemble is the physical space for performance. The instruments being used must fit in the hall with the singer, and with some performance spaces, this serves to limit the possible ensemble size.

I had three examples of the inclusion of full ensembles on my recital: *Spande ancor* with strings, continuo, and harpsichord included five players; *Per questa bella mano* included a string quartet, obbligato bass line, and piano reduction; and the lute set involved not only a lute, but also a cello and tambourine. Though all of these were tremendous fun to prepare and to perform, the only set that was completely successful was the lute set. The difficulties that the other two selections faced were the lack of a conductor coupled with inadequate rehearsal time.

The main consideration with any large ensemble is the use of a conductor. It is practically unfeasible to perform selections with a full ensemble without a conductor, and using a conductor has many advantages. In instrumental ensembles, it gives players a figure of authority to follow and a way for them to be certain where they are in the piece. It gives singers one person to coordinate artistic decisions with, rather than however many happen to be in the ensemble. Once the conductor is clear on a singer's artistic goals and interpretation, they are then responsible for communicating that information to the players. The conductor can also reduce the amount of rehearsal time necessary to perform a selection with an instrumental ensemble by rehearsing the instrumentalists alone to work out any kinks in their parts before integrating the vocal line. Furthermore,

if the instrumental selection in question has recitative sections, a conductor is all but required. Though highly experienced players can perform recitative by simply following a singer, it is considerably easier for everyone involved if a conductor is there to guide them. It permits a singer to be more artistic with the recitative lines without worrying about the ensemble losing their place. It also allows the ensemble to simply watch the conductor like they would do in any other ensemble setting, and not worry about following the vocal line as well as their own part. The same considerations apply to using a conductor for choral selections, with the added caveat that most choral artists are used to getting precise information about their blend and balance, as well as artistic instruction, from a conductor. Trying to operate a choir without that leadership is a dubious proposition.

Another significant consideration for the use of ensembles, and one that can be difficult to surmount, is that of rehearsal time. It is difficult enough to organize a performance with a pre-established chamber ensemble that rehearses regularly — and they have the advantage of knowing each other and being familiar with singing or playing together in that setting, which an ad hoc ensemble will not. It takes a combination of stellar musicianship and rehearsal time to achieve an adequate product. It is a delicate balance to organize an ensemble of musicians who have enough experience operating with a low-rehearsal requirement but who are not cost prohibitive to recruit for a recital.

In my use of instruments on *Spande ancor*, for example, I was able to have only three somewhat brief rehearsals, as well as the performance of a selection for my recital hearing, and the performance of the entirety for my dress rehearsal two nights before the

main actual performance. The first rehearsal occurred a little over a month and a half before the recital, with the second rehearsal three weeks prior, and the last rehearsal two nights before the recital to correct mistakes that had occurred in the dress rehearsal. These rehearsals were not nearly adequate to prepare a piece of that difficulty, particularly when I was not using a conductor.

As a general rule, with musicians not used to performing together as an ensemble, or who are unused to the stylistic demands of the music being performed, I would suggest weekly rehearsals for at least the month and a half prior to the recital, though two months would be ideal. For players who are significantly more experienced, such as professionals, less time is required, and an initial run-through plus two rehearsals should be plenty. Anne Ridlington, the cellist I used for my lute song set, and principal cellist of the Eugene Symphony, is a good example of this caliber of player. Unfortunately, the amount of rehearsal must be determined for the entire ensemble based on the progress and proficiency of the most inexperienced member, so choose musicians wisely with this balance of time in mind. If using a conductor for the ensembles, again keep in mind that they should be able to alleviate some of the scheduling pressure for rehearsals by working with the instrumentalists alone to prepare their parts and ensemble unity.

A similar concern is the requirement for musicians to be present at the recital hearing. These requirements vary by institution, but currently at Oregon State, singers must present one selection from each distinct ensemble that will be used on the recital, and all of the musicians involved must be present at the time of the recital hearing. When that schedule complexity is added to the fact that at least three teachers must also be

present at the hearing, it becomes increasingly difficult to schedule as the number of musicians involved in the recital grows.

If singers decide to include an ensemble choice on their senior recital, finding other singers or instrumentalists to join them can be daunting if it is a new process. Not only must one seek these musicians out, their skill level and appropriateness for the music being performed must also be determined. One of the factors that led to my inclusion of so many ensemble pieces on my recital was that, after two years of being the orchestra librarian for the Corvallis-OSU Symphony Orchestra, I had close ties to a number of orchestral players, and the process of finding instrumentalists to join me on my recital was unusually simple. All institutions are urged to take whatever measures they can to make this process easier for students, as the ease of finding fellow musicians can be the deciding factor for whether or not students choose to do uncommon and exciting repertoire.

When seeking vocalists, the easiest course of action is to contact the other teachers at the institution. If they have students that they feel are capable of the material and are not too busy to take it on as a project, they will suggest those students. Since they also have all the information about a student's technical and artistic development, they will be able to take that into consideration when making recommendations; rarely will such a recommendation yield a student who is not ready for the part. These selections and recommendations are by far the easiest, as often the singer will also know the fellow students in question. If there are no students at the institution who are capable of performing the selection, it is possible to approach professional singers in the area, but

this possibility should only be looked into after the vocal resources at the institution are exhausted.

The process for finding a choir of singers is slightly different, in that a singer should go through the choir director(s) for recommendations. Often, directors will ask for volunteers who are available for the length of time required, but sometimes students will have to contact the singers directly and ask them to take part in the recital project. If the choral resources are not available due to time conflicts, ensemble restrictions, etc., other singers in the institution may be sought out and formed into a choir. It is always recommended that current choral scholars be sought out first, however, as they are practiced with this sort of ensemble singing and currently engaged in it, whereas other singers may not be used to that style. Though more complicated than finding individual singers simply due to the number of singers involved, this method of seeking involvement is still rather simple and straightforward.

Finding instrumentalists can be a whole different story. Singers are often not as familiar with the instrumental students in a program and do not have as much contact with their teachers either. As with singers, it is recommended that players be sought inside the institution before community and professional players are considered, but at many institutions, such as OSU, there are not enough skilled student players to go around, and additional assistance must be sought from outside sources. There are two approaches to locating players: talking to their teachers and talking to the ensemble directors. I would recommend both; their ensemble directors will be able to give a good sense of their commitment to projects and their general skill, while the teachers will have

more knowledge about their suitability for specific pieces, as well as their availability to work on a recital. Ensemble directors may well refer a singer to the principals of certain instrument sections, particularly when orchestral players are being sought; be prepared to talk to them as well.

When seeking players outside of the institution, it becomes more difficult to verify skill levels. If one is familiar with a player's work from attending concerts, this is made much easier, but often, even if one has seen them play in an ensemble, it is difficult to get a good grasp on their abilities. If they do play in an ensemble outside of the institution, the director of that ensemble can be approached in the same way as the director of an institutional ensemble. Though generally professional players will be more than capable of any of the music on a senior vocal recital, there can be technical demands that are unrealistic for certain circumstances, and the players' schedules must be taken into account for how much time they will realistically be able to spend with the music.

Finding a conductor is actually much easier than one might think. At an institution with a conducting program, such as Oregon State, there are many students who are eagerly seeking more opportunities to conduct. Even at institutions without conducting programs, there are likely to be certain students who are interested in conducting and who have competent skills to lead this level of repertoire. Caution is advisable in this situation, however, if there is recitative in the ensemble selection, as it is notoriously difficult to conduct and does take a fair amount of skill to lead the ensemble. Make sure to find a conductor who is willing to spearhead the ensemble rehearsals themselves; they should be willing to rehearse the instrumentalists or choir in addition to

the rehearsals integrating the vocal line, and they should be willing to go over detailed information about the artistic decisions being made.

Logistical concerns for the recital program are also increased when ensembles are in use. Besides having enough space for an ensemble to perform, the time it takes to set that ensemble up must be accounted for, as well as the extra pressure that this puts on the master of ceremonies. The larger the ensemble, the more time it takes to both set it up and tear it down, and instrumental ensembles even more so than vocal ones. This adds a considerable amount of time before the ensemble performs, as well as after it, and needs to be figured into how the recital will flow as a whole. When possible, ensembles like this should be performed either at the beginning of the recital, as the last set before intermission, as the first set after intermission, or as the conclusion of the recital. Those four locations in the program allow either the set-up or take-down to be accomplished during a time in which the audience is not waiting to hear the performance. Furthermore, the personnel who will make these transitions happen needs to be considered. Normally, the duties of a master of ceremonies are relatively light — introductions, announcements, and the like. But when using ensembles like this, they become a stagehand as well, and with larger ensembles, might even have to ask for help to make the transitions happen in a timely fashion. Make sure that the master of ceremonies feels comfortable doing this moving and is familiar enough with the ensembles involved that they can place chairs and stands approximately where they belong without too much explanation being required.

Once musicians have been found and repertoire decided upon, parts need to be made for the musicians to rehearse with and use in performance. For vocal ensembles

smaller than a choir, a simple photocopy of the score or piano/vocal part should suffice. For choral use, the singers simply need a score that goes into a binder well. For instrumentalists, making parts can be trickier. If pre-made instrumental parts are accessible or included, by all means use those. However, if there is only a score to work from, those parts will need to be created. This process is best executed in Finale or Sibelius like the process of transposition, but is much simpler, since the part only needs to be accurately entered into the program and printed off. In the course of preparing parts for my instrumental selections, I used pre-made parts, created parts from a score, and even composed rough sketches of parts (I wrote out a rhythmic pattern for my tambourine player to improvise upon in *Dalla porta d'Oriente*). Regardless of the nature of the ensemble, make sure to have at least two extra copies of each part when they are created, so that musicians who forget their music do not jeopardize the success of a rehearsal or the recital itself.

The other kind of part that might be necessary is a reduction so that rehearsals with only one's collaborative pianist can take place. If there is not a significant keyboard contribution in the ensemble, a piano reduction will be necessary so that rehearsals with the accompanist can take place as the repertoire is being learned, and the piece can be brought in to lessons to receive feedback and technical advice. Again, this is a process involving Finale or Sibelius, but if anything, this process is slightly more complex than transposing. If the student lacks significant experience with these programs, it is advised that someone else does it. Of course, the easiest solution is finding a pre-made piano reduction of the score, and there are often piano/vocal arrangements of many ensemble

pieces. Be sure, however, that whatever reduction ends up being used is similar enough to the full score to be completely recognizable when rehearsals start with the ensemble instead of just piano, so there is not an uncomfortable shock at that time.

The final consideration for using ensembles on a recital, and a significant one, is that of paying the musicians. One of the reasons that the vocal duet is so prominent in senior recitals is because fellow singers will usually consider recital reciprocity adequate payment for providing their services, and when that is not available, will often simply agree to get ensemble experience, practice with a certain role, language, or style, or simply to help out a fellow vocalist or friend. The same goes for vocal trios. When choirs are involved or when instrumentalists are being used, however, payment is usually expected, and it is this cost that makes instrumental ensembles so challenging to manage. Though using highly skilled players significantly decreases the rehearsal time necessary to prepare a product, it also significantly increases the cost, and professional players are often out of the budget considerations for undergraduate recitals. One of the difficulties in this regard that is specific to Oregon State University is that there is no consistent system for payment of musicians, and individuals must work out their own deals while hiring musicians.

On my recital, for example, I negotiated individual deals with instrumentalists, varying from performing for free as a favor (my father on lute), to performing and later receiving a \$20 gift certificate (student players), to the generously low price of \$150 (a professional player for two rehearsals and the performance). While this negotiation experience can be viewed as valuable and pertinent professional training, more often than

not it can be overwhelming and serve to discourage vocalists from using instrumentalists on their recital at all. Even with my position and relationship with the orchestral players that I used on my recital, it was still an awkward process and difficult to balance with the rest of the preparation for my recital. It is my recommendation that the voice faculty of any institution collaborate with the instrumental faculty and draw up guidelines for different payment levels like the ones that exist delineating differences between student and professional accompanists. These prices should be expressed in a per-service fee, as that is the industry standard for instrumentalists, and have different degrees for student players and professionals. It might also be appropriate to offer different rates based on the complexity of the piece(s), so there could be a student rate for simple collaboration (one or two pieces that will not require much practice) that is lower than the rate for complex collaboration (three or more pieces, or a piece that requires considerable practice time). Though similar protocols will be more difficult to establish with professional musicians in the area, they tend to be amenable to doing favors for students, remembering their own experiences while in school.

Though it seems like there are more drawbacks than potential advantages to using ensembles on a recital, I urge students to consider their inclusion. Limiting the number of ensembles included on the recital program will tremendously ease the accompanying concerns, and working with an ensemble piece can end up being the highlight of a recital program.

Physical Program

The physical program of a senior voice recital is often overlooked as a significant element of the presentation. However, programs are the primary source of extra-musical information for the audience of the recital and, as such, are integral to the repertoire recital being understood and the audience having the information it needs to enjoy the experience. Programs also provide a list of the student's accomplishments, as well as information on the other performers who will appear on the recital. Besides the requirements for any recital program, such as a properly formatted list of the pieces to be performed, the elements that necessitate choices include translations, program notes, biographies, acknowledgements, and formatting. I chose to strive toward as professional a program as I could produce, which greatly increased the expense of the process, but also involved a great deal of consideration of all of these choices.

All programs are required to include translations in some regard, but there are a number of individual choices that are possible within this requirement. The first is whether the translations will be included in the main body of the program or as part of a separate handout. While it looks more professional to have them included in the program — the reasoning behind my choosing this option — it is also more expensive to have programs printed that way, and if there are lots of translations, such programs can become quite large. Having a separate handout saves on costs, but also increases the chance of papers rustling during the recital as the audience turns pages to follow the translations (program page turns are much quieter than separate booklet page turns). The next decision about translations is whether to include the original language as well as the

translation. Including the original language helps the audience by letting them see the text in its original form, as well as follow along with the words that are actually being sung. I chose to do this on the off chance that there might be people fluent in one of the various languages on the program in my audience. It also roughly doubles the length of the translations, though this is more of a concern if they are part of the program and not a separate booklet. If the decision to include the original language is made, it should be applied the same way to every piece in the recital program. It should be noted that including the original language also enables the audience to pick up on any memory slips that might occur or any errors in diction more easily than if it was not included; though this should not be a consideration, it is something one should be aware of. On a similar note, if the program includes languages that have non-Roman alphabets, such as Russian, there is a choice to present the original characters, a transliteration, or both. In my opinion, the point of including the original language is so the audience can see it, and so the original characters should be presented. Generally, in the transliterations, there are options on what method is used, which has the potential for very different-looking text representing the same original characters. Presenting both seems to be overkill, as it would triple the length of the pertinent translation section rather than simply doubling it. For pieces in English, there is no translation required, but the text of the piece is often still presented in the translation section so that the audience can review the poetry and follow along with the performance. Whether or not this is done is personal preference, but as diction can be a finicky beast, I would advise singers to include the printed English text as well. Finally, there is the source of the translation to consider. Though all singers

should have a word-for-word literal translation of the original language that they have been referencing, that is rarely an acceptable (or even understandable) translation to print in a program. The question then arises of using someone else's more poetic translation or creating a personal version. I am in favor of the latter option, something that I did for my own senior recital, because it allows the words to be picked carefully to express the meaning that is identified in the piece. It also allows time to develop a personal relationship with the poetry of the song, which can greatly assist in artistic expression. That being said, it does take a considerable amount of time to transition a literal translation into a poetic and understandable one, and often involves linguistic issues like translating idioms. Regardless of what choices are made when preparing translations, they should be presented legibly, intelligently, and in a manner that communicates clearly to the audience.

Whether or not to write program notes and which selections to write them for is another decision to be made when crafting the physical program for a recital.

As shown in the analysis of recitals at Oregon State University, many recitals include program notes only for the selections that are drawn from the larger context of an opera, and a good number do not include program notes at all. I found that including program notes about the uncommon choices in my senior recital served as an introduction and explanation that I could not otherwise give. Given the large number of uncommon choices on my senior recital, that left only a few sets without program notes, though, which was not something that I wanted — so I ended up writing program notes for each set individually. Writing program notes is easy for an operatic selection. The audience

should know which character is presented, what their motivations are, and the surrounding plot. Program notes for uncommon choices are also easy to write. There is a great deal of information to be presented about the pieces, and sometimes this can serve to include justification for a particularly uncommon choice. For an average set of art songs, however, program notes can be a little more challenging to write. They involve delving into the history and background of the composer and poet, as well as including notes on the style of the piece, any pertinent literary themes in the works, and their relation to the body of art song repertoire as a whole. The best way to gain experience writing program notes is to peruse the notes found in most concert programs.

Every recital program should include a biography of the main performer and the piano accompanist. Whether these biographies include a headshot of both parties, of only one, or none of them is up to the student presenting the recital and their accompanist. If any other musicians are involved in the recital, though, there is the question of whether or not to include a biography for them as well. Of course, they should be credited in the list of pieces that forms the most basic of physical programs, but it can be gracious to give them a short (2-3 sentence) biography space as well. I would advise against allowing the other musicians the space to include headshots, but crediting them more significantly for their work and assistance on the recital is a welcome courtesy.

The last section of content on a senior recital program is the acknowledgements. Though these are often hastily written and include a good number of personal jokes, it is important to spend some time and attention in preparing this section. When applying to graduate schools, a singer is required to present a copy of their senior recital program,

and any unprofessionalism in the acknowledgements section will be noticed and taken into consideration by the school they are applying to. That being said, it is important to sincerely thank the people who have been part of one's education, and those who have furthered one's artistic achievements. It is customary to thank one's teacher and accompanist, as well as any other musicians who took part in the recital, in addition to parents, family, and friends for their support. The location where the recital is being held must be thanked for making the space available, as should the master of ceremonies and anyone who is volunteering to help logistically (with stage moves or preparing the reception). It is polite to also thank the rest of the school faculty, particularly ones who have had significant influence on musical development. As a general rule, short and to the point, though heartfelt acknowledgements are the best at conveying sincere gratitude and the least likely to become overly wordy.

For a student who is not talented in graphic design, creating and formatting a recital program (particularly one with translations, program notes, etc. included) can be a daunting task. This is one of the reasons that so many recital programs are so basic in nature and sometimes not particularly high quality. Though many institutions insist on a standard formatting for recital programs that comes with templates, Oregon State students are left largely to their own devices, other than the program having to pass the recital hearing committee. I attempted to create my own program for both my junior and senior recitals and gave up quickly, knowing that I would not be satisfied with my own efforts at graphic design. I had a friend who is a graphic design student and I paid him a small fee to design the program and format the elements into an appealing layout. Though this

saved me a considerable amount of time, it is not necessarily an option that is available for all students. They might not have the money to pay for the service, or they might not have any contact with graphic designers. It would be a valuable service for the Oregon State music area to coordinate a fee scale for such graphic design work, and cultivate contacts within the graphic design program at OSU for students to gain experience working on projects like this. I mainly chose this option because I was obsessive about how the program looked, but not skilled or patient enough to get the product to that level with my own limited design resources. The one thing I would mention here is another caution to keep the program looking professional; remember that it will be used as a reference for your work later.

Finally, once the program is designed and all of the content is created, the time comes to print the final product. There are innumerable artistic decisions that relate to the printing, from the weight of the paper to color options, but they can mainly be boiled down to a balance of two concerns: price and professional appearance. Professional appearance can be enhanced by using nicer paper and by printing at higher qualities, but that also increases the price of creating the programs. Since there should be at least 50 programs created (I created 150 and still ran out of programs for my actual recital), this can result in an extremely costly process. I also made the mistake of using FEDEX for my printing services, only finding out later that Oregon State University has student printing services that cost a fraction of what FEDEX charges. These student printing services are an important option to explore for students at any institution, and they are usually present in some capacity.

Though I am quite proud of the finished product of my senior recital program, I recommend a policy change regarding programs at Oregon State University. It would be a significant assistance to vocal students to have a fully formatted template with customization options and guidelines for their recital program. This could be as simple as a one-page sheet with a list of pieces being performed, performer names, and performance location and time on the front, and biographies and acknowledgements on the back (translations would be prepared as a separate packet). There is no need to make this a mandatory format, but it would be an exceedingly useful tool to have as at least a minimum. If the format were to be that simple, it would also be feasible for the department to offer free printing services for student recital programs, so there would be an assured moderate quality to the printing (rather than students printing them at home), and it would limit student costs for the recital. Of course, the institution can choose whether to require this more limited program of all recitals, thereby standardizing what the audience sees, or giving it as a minimum requirement and allowing students to choose to go beyond its bounds if they wish.

Conclusion

A significant portion of every recital planning process is the reflection afterward. In an effort to further illuminate the use of uncommon choices in senior recitals, I will share some of my reflections on my own senior recital. Since the recital included many uncommon choices, the reflection offers a perspective on how they worked, and if they didn't work, what went wrong, and how someone could approach those choices

differently to succeed. It is also a good introduction to the concept of balance on a senior recital.

My choice to transpose *Presti omai* was successful. It did not take much effort to do, since I was already experienced with transposing song through Finale, and it allowed me to sing an heroic aria and an entrance aria to start my senior recital. My inclusion of a song cycle (*Liederkrantz für die Bassstimme*) also worked. There was no additional effort for me, and since it was a five-song cycle and the individual songs were fairly short, it fit together into one set without stressing the bounds of larger works. The chamber cantata *Spande ancor* was not as successful. Though it was tremendously fun to prepare, it also met with considerable challenges: transposition of the music, not enough rehearsal time, and a continuo section that was not used to playing together. If I had had one or two more rehearsals and, more importantly, if I had used a conductor, I think the final product would have been much more successful. As a side note, I faced the same difficulties in the concert aria *Per questa bella mano*, and the solutions to make it work would have been the same as well. The set of lute songs was a success, and I credit this primarily to the fact that I had plenty of rehearsal with the lute player. The cellist had very easy parts and was a consummate professional, and the percussionist was improvising rhythms from a rough sketch that I had given him. For an ensemble like this, the rehearsal time I had was sufficient. Only the larger ensembles suffered from a lack of rehearsal, and most of that was due to the conjoined lack of a conductor. The set of Russian folk songs was a tremendous success. Once I memorized the diction of this uncommon language, the language brought out a color in my voice that no other language has, and with my

accompanist dramatically styling the piano parts, I was able to ride the emotional wave of the Russian music to great effect. Finally, my spiritual performance was also a success. Though there were some questions concerning the stylistic authenticity of the slide guitar, the guitarist and I were able to rehearse enough to make it convincing, and our research into the historic performance of spirituals paid off.

In the future, my main consideration would be to not incorporate quite so many uncommon choices into a recital. I was excited about exploring these types of repertoire and felt comfortable enough with some of the uncommon choices that they took almost no additional work, but including an ensemble component in half of my sets required more rehearsal time than I had available, and was the reason that those sets were less successful than the rest of the recital. My recital analysis can serve as a guide for teachers and students to talk about the balance of uncommon choices in senior recitals. But what makes a balanced recital that includes uncommon choices? The balance here is dependent on the amount of extra work that each uncommon choice needs to be successful. The danger of including too many uncommon choices is that, like I experienced, there will not be enough time to make all of them successful. Of course, choices that are uncommon but fall into place with very little additional work are wonderful when they do happen, but are somewhat unusual, as all of the uncommon choices explored in this thesis involve some level of work in addition to the standard requirements for preparing a recital. Those choices that require less work tend to be those that play well to the student's balance of skills, such as proficiency in an uncommon language, previous experience with transposition, or friendship with many

instrumental student colleagues. The primary guideline for balance between uncommon choices and standard repertoire is this: the uncommon choices on a recital should not take significantly more attention to prepare than is spent on the rest of the recital as a whole. Therefore, it is often wise to limit uncommon choices to a third of any given recital program. That allows for approximately four to seven selections to be uncommon choices, which will end up being plenty with the extra preparation that they require.

Of course, stretching one's capabilities as an artist is valuable, and it causes one to grow musically because of it. Though the above recommendation is standard for most cases, individual students have such wildly different interests and abilities that it is impossible to state with any degree of universal applicability what the correct balance of uncommon choices to standard repertoire is for any one student. That choice should be made between the student and the teacher, who at the time of the senior recital is by now quite familiar with the student's capabilities and interests and can help guide them to have a balanced and successful recital. The recital as a holistic entity should be considered, particularly at an undergraduate level. While professionals often have extremely specific and uncommon recitals in order to focus on particular repertoire or explore a particular language or composer, an undergraduate recital is still part of the education experience in which a performer's horizons are broadened, and they are exposed to new and different things. Keeping a balanced repertoire in a senior recital not only allows them to explore different languages, national styles, and periods, but also serves as plain evidence to graduate programs that the singer is able to sing in all of those ways.

The next step for a performer, particularly one in a position to begin preparing a senior vocal recital, is to consider the uncommon choices outlined above. See if any of them resonate with you, or if you have a particular interest that might fit into one of these categories. If none of them is interesting to you, that is not a problem whatsoever! There is plenty of material to interest many singers and their audiences in the standard recital repertoire of art songs and arias. However, if any of the choices above do resonate with you or speak to your interests, explore them. Keep in mind the cautions that I have outlined above and discuss potential options with your teacher. Follow your interests into the uncommon choices. Do not choose these simply because you can, but because you are genuinely interested in them.

Furthermore, if you are interested in obtaining audience feedback, solicit it. The standard assumption for an audience is that applause signifies the acceptance and enjoyment of a set of music. However, due to the requirements of courtesy, applause is an expected reaction to a set, no matter how much it was truly enjoyed. As a performer, even variations in the duration and intensity of applause can be difficult to read, and do not provide specific feedback about what the audience enjoyed. I was lucky enough to have many genuine audience responses conveyed to me at my reception, and even afterwards by way of e-mail and in-person communication with various audience members. This feedback reinforced my observation that the lute set, Russian set, and spiritual had been particularly effective uncommon choices, as they featured in practically all of the comments in one way or another. Particularly when incorporating some number of uncommon choices into a recital, soliciting this feedback from the

audience can be an invaluable tool in your reflection. I was planning on including a survey on the effectiveness of my printed program in my recital, until I realized that to write about it in this thesis would have required a prohibitively long and disruptive process of standardization and survey preparation. But if a thesis is not resting on the data, include a survey in the program, or have your master of ceremonies announce that you welcome e-mail feedback after the recital.

The next step for a teacher is to open up dialogue with your students about uncommon choices on recitals. Often, voice teachers are responsible for a great deal of the repertoire choice in a student's undergraduate career, and it is your job to make sure — even if the student is primarily choosing their own repertoire — that the student remains balanced in their efforts and explorations. By the time a student starts preparing a senior recital you, as their teacher, should be fairly well acquainted with any musical special interests that they may have. If you see a possibility for a fruitful exploration of that interest through one of the uncommon choices outlined above (or an uncommon choice not mentioned in this thesis), encourage the student to pursue it, while ensuring that their recital program overall remains balanced and successful.

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Resource Appendix

Dr. Carren Moham

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Dr. Moham is an extensive resource for anyone thinking about performing spirituals on vocal recitals. She has done extensive research into presenting the tradition respectfully, as well as identifying lesser-known sources for African-American music.

Glendower Jones

Website: www.classicalvocalrep.com

This website is the home page for Glendower Jones's extensive catalogue (available for free download) of reprinted works. As mentioned in the thesis, his services were responsible for my acquisition of nearly half of the music on my recital.

Lute Society of America

Website: www.cs.dartmouth.edu/~lsa/aboutUs/index.html

This particular website includes the directory listings for the officers of the Lute Society of America. These are the people who would serve as the contact point for students interested in seeking a lutenist for their recital.

My Recital Program

Website: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c3tpLMcl7y8&list=PLsd7xU4M0P13uMNCZgLY6UYc_6VmaiW7G

This is a link to the YouTube playlist containing video recordings of my entire senior vocal recital. For a scanned copy of the physical program, contact the OSU music area at liberalarts.oregonstate.edu/school-arts-and-communication/music, or e-mail me at dancingfridley@gmail.com.

Oregon State University Music Area

Website: liberalarts.oregonstate.edu/school-arts-and-communication/music

The contact point for requesting physical copies of any of the programs which were analyzed for this thesis.

Petrucci Music Library

Website: imslp.org

This library collects scores and parts that are in public domain. Though sometimes the scores are close to illegible, this website is an invaluable tool for finding instrumental parts and scores to pieces.

Schubertline

Website: www.schubertline.co.uk/home.htm

This website provides an online compendium of art songs by various composers (not just Schubert) in many keys. It is a good resource to find already transposed versions of art songs.

Analysis of Choices from OSU Programs

Included German Language - 86% (12/14)
Included English Language - 100% (14/14)
Included French Language - 100% (14/14)
Included Italian Language - 79% (11/14)
Included Another Language - 21% (3/14)
 1 Included Czech
 1 Included Latin
 1 Included a non-language Vocalise
Included Baroque Period - 57% (8/14)
 Baroque Period was Handel - 63% (5/8)
 Baroque Period was Bach - 37% (3/8)
Included 20th Century - 86% (12/14)
 20th Century was English - 94% (17/18)
 Other Language was French - represented once
Included Romantic, Bel Canto, or other 1800s - 100% (14/14)
 Romantic was Schumann - 60% (31/52)
 Romantic was Schubert - 27% (14/52)
Included Classical - 50% (7/14)
 Classical was Mozart - 100% (16/16)
Included arias - 93% (13/14)
 Opera arias - 55% (26/47)
 Oratorio arias - 17% (8/47)
 Mass/cantata arias - 6% (3/47)
 Concert arias - 21% (10/47)
 Average percentage of arias in recitals including arias - 23.8%
Included folk songs - 14% (2/14)
 Average percentage of folk songs in recitals including folk songs - 31%
Included art songs - 100% (14/14)
 Average percentage of art songs in recitals - 68%
Included a larger work - 50% (7/14)
 Included a full song cycle - 43% (6/14)
 Included a cantata - 7% (1/14)
Included an ensemble - 50% (7/14)
 Ensemble was a duet - 50% (5/10)
 Ensemble was larger vocal - 30% (2/10)
 Ensemble was instrumental - 20% (2/10)
Average and Standard of Deviation for number of pieces - Average: 16.29; St.Dev: 2.71
Included program notes - 43% (6/14)
 Program notes on more than opera sets - 33% (2/6)
Included translations - 64% (9/14)
 Percentage of Translations line-by-line - 78% (7/9)
 Percentage of Translations English only - 22% (2/9)
Included biography - 93% (13/14)
Included acknowledgements - 79% (11/14)

Alison Duever

- German, Baroque, Handel, 3 concert? arias
- English, 20th Century, Britten, 4 folk songs
- Italian, Classical, Mozart, 1 opera aria
- French, 1800s, Debussy, 4 “ariettes oubliés”
- English, 20th Century, Argento, 1 opera aria
- French, 1800s, Gounod, 1 opera aria
- Biography, Acknowledgements (including for 1 violinist, not credited to a performance in the program)

Amanda Osman

- English, Baroque, Handel, 1 oratorio aria
- Italian, 1800s, Bellini, 3 concert? arias
- French, 1800s, Bizet, 2 art songs
- Italian, Classical, Mozart, 2 opera arias
- English, 20th Century, Menotti, 1 opera aria
- German, 1800s-20th Century, Strauss, 4 songs
- English, 20th Century, Menotti, 1 opera duet, other singer
- English, late 1800s, Gilbert/Sullivan, 1 operetta trio, other singers
- Translations (only English), Program Notes (opera duet, operetta trio), Biography, Acknowledgements

Bryce Tomlin

- English, 20th Century, Britten, 3 art songs
- German, Classical, Mozart, 1 opera aria
- German, Romantic, Schubert, 4 art songs
- Italian, Classical, Mozart, 1 opera aria
- French, 20th Century, Britten, 5 art songs
- Italian, Classical, Mozart, 1 opera duet, other singer
- Program Notes (song cycles of Britten), Biography, Acknowledgements

Conrad Buck

- English, Baroque, Handel, 1 oratorio aria
- French/German, Classical, Mozart, 3 art songs
- German, Romantic, Brahms, full song cycle (8 songs)
- German, 1800s-1900s, Korngold, 1 opera aria
- French, 1800s-1900s, Fauré, full song cycle (4 songs)
- English, 20th Century, Berg/Perkinson/Coleridge-Taylor, 4 art songs

Daniel Madrid

- German, Romantic, Schubert, 3 art songs
- English, 1800s-1900s, Griffes, full song cycle (5 songs)
- English, 1800s-1900s, Griffes, 1 art song
- Italian, Classical, Mozart, 1 opera aria
- German, 1800s, Wagner, 1 opera aria
- Italian, Classical, Mozart, 1 opera duet, other singer
- French, 1800s, Offenbach, 1 opera ... scene?, 3 other singers
- Translations (English/language line by line), Program Notes (opera arias, duet), Biography, Acknowledgements

Elise Gidley

- German, 1800s, Wolf, 4 art songs
- German, Baroque, Bach, 1 solo cantata (aria, recit, aria, chorale), 1 trumpet, 1 violin, 1 cello
- Italian, Bel Canto, Rossini, 1 art song
- German/French, Romantic/1800s, Mendelssohn/Schumann/Debussy/Schubert, 4 art songs (moon themed)
- English, 20th Century, Duke, 3 art songs
- Italian, Bel Canto, Donizetti, 1 opera aria
- English, 20th Century, Willson, 1 musical theater song
- Translations (English only), Program Notes (every set), Biography, Acknowledgements

Ian Scott

- German, Romantic, Schumann, full song cycle (16 songs)
- French, 1800s-1900s, Dupont/Saint-Saëns/Debussy, 3 art songs
- English, 20th Century, Weill/Gershwin, 2 musical theater songs
- Translations (English/language line by line), Biography, Acknowledgements

Jeffrey Larkin

- English, Baroque, Handel, 2 oratorio arias
- French, 1800s-1900s, Hahn, 4 art songs
- French, 1800s, Berlioz, 1 song, 2 oratorio arias
- German, Romantic, Schumann, 3 art songs
- English, 20th Century, Finzi, 4 art songs
- Translations (English/language line by line), Program Notes (everything), Biography, Acknowledgements

Keenan Kemper

- Latin, Baroque, Bach, 1 mass aria
- English, 20th Century, Rorem, full song cycle (10 songs)
- Italian, 1800s, Verdi, 1 opera aria
- English, 1800s, Mendelssohn, 1 oratorio aria
- French, 1800s-1900s, Debussy, 3 art songs
- English, 1800s-1900s, Vaughan Williams, 3 art songs
- Translations (English/language paragraph by paragraph), Brief Biography

Laurel Mehaffey

- Italian, Baroque, Handel, 1 opera aria
- French, 1800s-1900s, Chaminade, 3 art songs
- German, Romantic, Schumann (Robert & Clara), 4 art songs
- Italian, Classical, Mozart, 1 opera aria, 1 opera duet, 1 other singer
- English, 20th Century, Moore/Floyd, 2 opera arias
- Italian, Bel Canto, Bellini, 1 opera aria
- Italian, Classical, Mozart, 1 opera aria
- Biography, Acknowledgements

Mari Stoner

- English, 20th Century, Floyd, 1 opera aria
- Czech, 1800s, Dvorak, complete song cycle (7 songs)
- English, 20th Century, Floyd, 1 opera aria
- German, Romantic, Schumann, 4 art songs
- French, 1900s, Leguerney, 4 art songs
- Italian, Bel Canto, Bellini, 1 opera aria/cabaletta
- Translations (English/language line by line), Program Notes (opera selections only), Biography, Acknowledgements

Melissa Simpson

- German, Baroque, Bach, 1 oratorio aria
- French, 1800s-1900s, Faure/Duparc/Hahn, 4 art songs
- Italian, Bel Canto, Donizetti, 1 opera cavatina
- German, Romantic, Schubert, 3 art songs
- Non-language, 1800s-1900s, Faure, 1 vocalise
- English, 20th Century, Britten, 5 folk songs
- Biography, Acknowledgements

Nickoli Strommer

- English, 20th Century, Duke, 3 art songs
- German, Romantic, Schubert, 4 art songs
- English, 20th Century, Gershwin, 1 musical theater/opera duet, 1 other singer
- French, 1800s-1900s, Ravel, 1 song cycle (3 songs)
- English, 1800s-1900s, Vaughan Williams, 1 song cycle (5 songs), 8 other singers (choir) and conductor
- Italian, 1800s, Verdi, 1 opera aria
- Translations (English/language line by line), Biography, Acknowledgements

Timothy Brassfield

- Italian, 1800s, Tosti/Verdi, 3 art songs
- French, 1800s, Faure, 3 art songs
- English, 1800s-1900s, Butterworth, 4 art songs
- Italian, Classical, Mozart, 2 opera arias
- Translations (English/language line by line), Biography