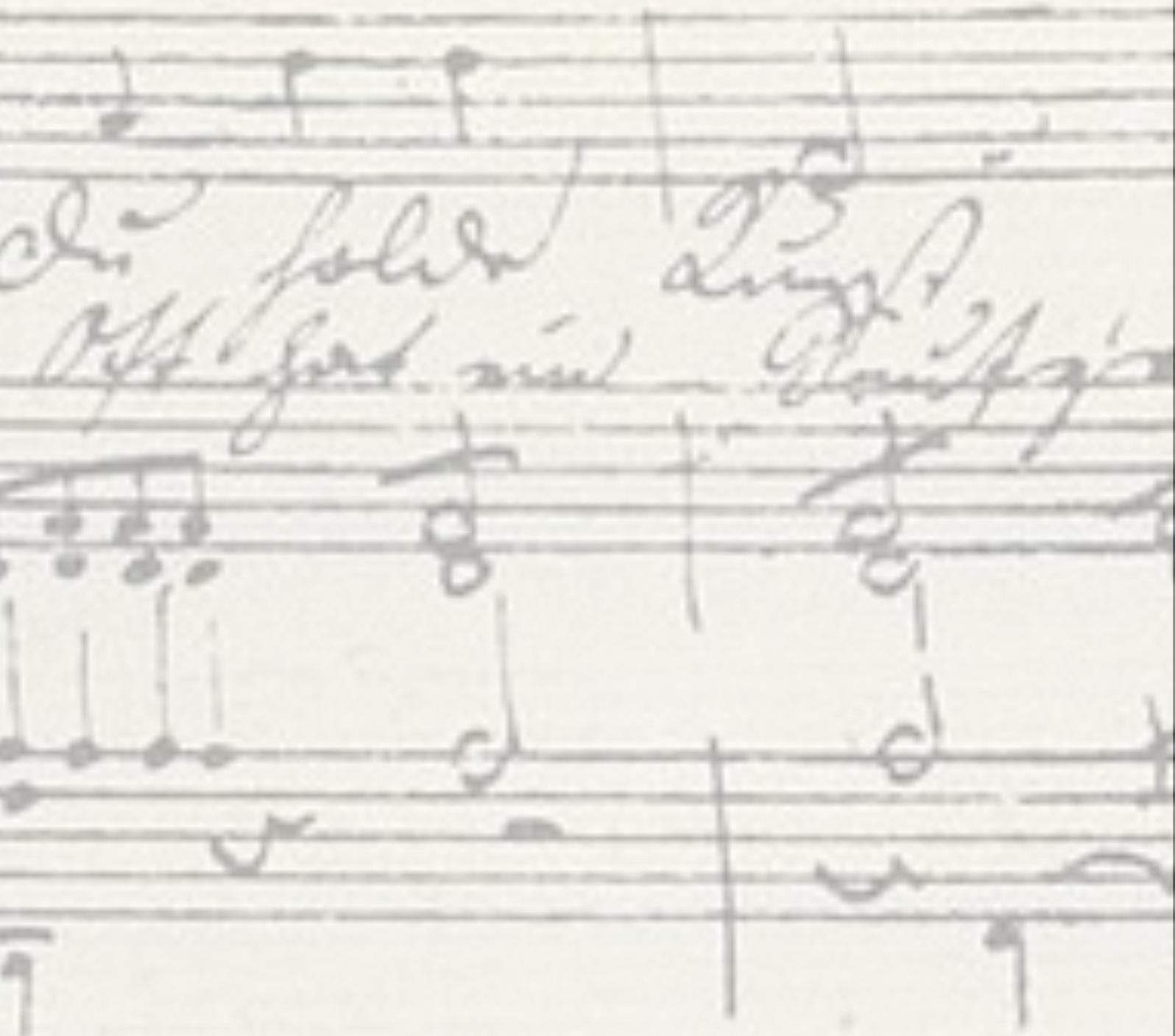




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Cover

The cover references Schubert's *An die Musik*, a song that, in a very personal way, gives thanks to music for its power to fill us with warmth and lift us out of the dreariness of everyday life. Image sourced from https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:An_die_Musik.jpg

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From the Editor

Julia Nafisi

University of Melbourne

It is my great pleasure to introduce this latest volume of *Australian Voice* which is also the first issue produced under my editorship. I would like to take this opportunity to thank my predecessors in this role, Adele Nisbet and Helen Mitchell, whose dedication and expertise ascertained the quality of this journal. With great humility, I took on this role at the beginning of 2018 and have since strived both for continuity and fresh impulses.

Earlier this year I succeeded in recruiting Professor Martin Vácha of the University of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna to join our editorial board. As Vice-President of the European Voice Teacher Association (EVTA), Martin represents a distinctly European perspective, broadening the scope of our journal.

Australian Voice stands its ground as a quality research journal in an ever-growing and fast-moving area of research. Covering all singing and voice related disciplines, it occupies a niche alongside the US-based *Journal of Voice* and *Journal of Singing*. Given the breathtaking pace and diversity of research in our field however, there appears to be ample room for *Australian Voice* to grow and increase its impact as a recognised international player and forum for discussion and research-dissemination.

This issue presents five research articles and two book/film reviews. The articles are:

“Pauline Viardot as Salonnère” (by Linda Barcan) describes the salon of the legendary singer, composer and teacher - daughter of Manuel Garcia. It is part of a larger body of research by the author committed to investigating Viardot’s vocal pedagogy.

“Music Theatre Performance Strategies for the Private Singing Studio” (by Jacqui Cuny), explores practical strategies to assist and inspire teachers in their pursuit of developing expressive, authentic, musical theatre performers.

“Communicating Artistic Integrity: Collaborative Production in Recording Processes” (by Diane Hughes and Mark Evans) discusses collaborative production during the recording

processes of a contemporary singer-songwriter. An ethnographic case study, the article details the context and methods of collaboration between singer-songwriter and co-producer Jodi Martin, and vocal director and co-producer, Diane Hughes.

“Hidden Virtuosity: The Choral Soprano in the Studio” (by Morag Atchinson) compares and evaluates the vocal demands placed on choral and solo sopranos in a classical music context. It is suggested that through better collaboration between voice teachers and conductors, a rehearsal technique may be developed that benefits both solo and choral singers.

“Now Touch the Air Softly: Reflections Upon Art Songs in the Recording Studio” (by Paul McMahon) examines, through an autoethnographic approach, some of the complexities underpinning the phases of research, score study, rehearsal and recording as the foundation of a recent project chronicling selected art songs by composer Calvin Bowman (b. 1972).

The reviews featured in this volume are:

A History of Vocal Pedagogy – Intuition and Science by Joseph Talia (2017), OAM (by Dianne Spence) and *Up from Down-Under. The Australian Origins of Frederick Matthias Alexander and the Alexander Technique* (2017) as well as *F M Alexander: His Life. His Legacy. Documentary Film* (2015) both by Rosslyn McLeod (by Julia Nafisi).

I would like to thank all authors and reviewers for their outstanding work and hope this volume may serve to delight and inspire its readers.

Please note that *Australian Voice* welcomes submissions at any time – all information can be found on www.australianvoice.net.au

Julia Nafisi

Pauline Viardot as Salonnière

Linda Barcan

Melbourne Conservatorium of Music, University of Melbourne

ABSTRACT: Pauline Viardot was one of the foremost opera singers of her day, praised by audiences, critics and peers for her vocal abilities and dramatic sensibilities. Attracted by her musicality, her intelligence and the range, flexibility and quality of her voice, the biggest names in nineteenth-century European musical life hastened to enlist her talents. As a practicing composer, producing 150 original songs and 200 vocal arrangements across her lifetime, Viardot cultivated the careers of aspiring composers whose work she admired. At the same time, she nurtured a studio of pupils who were introduced in her salons to a circle of influential friends and colleagues drawn to the great *salonnière*. The descriptions of Viardot's salon contained in this article form part of a larger body of research committed to investigating Viardot's vocal pedagogy. My contention is that as useful as the Garcia family's inherited pedagogical tools were to Viardot the teacher, it was in her salon that her pupils learned their most valuable lessons, through performance practice and industry connections.

KEYWORDS: *Pauline Viardot, Parisian salon, salonnière, soirée musicale.*

INTRODUCTION

My first memory. A very well-lit salon, many ladies and gentlemen lined up, seated in tight rows – a large, lit chandelier. Under the chandelier, a table; on that table, a small child's chair – on that small chair, a little girl. A play is being performed in a puppet theatre. The characters, at least those who make them move, are singing quartets intermingled with dialogue. The artists are: Manuel Garcia *père*¹, Manuel Garcia *fils*,² Madame Garcia and my sister Maria Félicité Garcia. I am the heroine of the party. I perfectly remember that in the first row of spectators in front of me, one could see heads of the Dukes of Wellington and Cambridge. I was four years old³. (Viardot-Garcia as cited in Poriss, 2017, pp. 30-31)

THE little girl of this recollection would grow up to be Pauline Viardot-Garcia (1821-1910), one of the most renowned opera singers of the second half of the nineteenth century. The description depicts what must have been the young Pauline Garcia's earliest experience of a Parisian salon. The "heroine of the party" could have had little notion of the part she would later play within the salon phenomenon:

first as a performer in others' salons, then as the hostess of her own.

As a performer, Viardot was admired for her musicianship, her intelligence, her powerful personality onstage and off, and the range, flexibility and quality of her voice. As such, she attracted the biggest names in nineteenth-century French musical circles, many of whom composed with her in mind. Camille Saint-Saëns (1835-1921) wrote his *Dalila* for her, Johannes Brahms (1833-1897) his *Alto Rhapsody*, Charles Gounod (1818-1893) his *Sappho*, Hector Berlioz (1803-1869) his *Orphée*, *Didon* and *Cassandre*, and Giacomo Meyerbeer (1791-1864) his *Fidès*.

As a composer, Viardot's impressive output included 150 songs, 200 vocal arrangements and a number of piano and chamber works⁴. There can be little doubt that her compositional skills and experience allowed her to maintain a relationship with her musician friends more equal in nature than that of mere muse or interpreter. Indeed, Viardot's musicianship, which she attributed to the influence of her father Manuel Garcia I⁵, saw her collaborating with experienced colleagues like Berlioz, as well as cultivating the careers of aspiring composers like Charles Gounod, Jules Massenet (1842-1912) and Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924).

These figures and many others besides comprised Pauline Viardot's inner circle of friends, mentors and mentees. From the age of 27 until the end of her long life, Viardot nurtured her "circle" through her salon, bringing composers and performers together, the latter often interpreting works by the former. A particular feature of the Viardot salon was that many of the performers were her pupils. It is the thesis of my current research that for Viardot this was not just a case of convenience, nor of serendipity, but rather a conscious effort on her part to provide her pupils with essential performance practice, and to introduce them to influential figures from the musical and artistic life of nineteenth-century France. In this way, the spheres which made up Viardot's life - circle, studio and salon - were brought into alignment.

Pauline Viardot's Background and Training

Pauline Viardot was the youngest member of a musical dynasty headed by Manuel del Pópulo García (1775-183) and his second wife Joaquina Stichès. Of Spanish descent, with links to the Italian *bel canto* tradition of performance and pedagogy, this was a family for whom "genius appeared to be inherited" (Franz Liszt, 1859, as cited in Hall-Swadley, 2013). According to Camille Saint-Saëns "music was in the air they breathed" (Saint-Saëns, 1919, p. 146).

Garcia I was an operatic tenor particularly associated with the works of Mozart and Rossini. He was also a prolific composer, with nearly 70 stage works and a similar number of songs to his name (Radomski, 2000, pp. 762-782). Rossini declared of his friend that "if his *savoir faire* had been in proportion to his talent and knowledge, he would have been the premier musician of his age" (Héritte-Viardot, 1913, p. 4). Garcia's offspring were similarly destined for fame in the musical world.

The eldest daughter, Maria Garcia (1808-1836), known after her marriage as La Malibran, was a celebrated contralto. She achieved operatic stardom at an early age and experienced a stellar career that ended only on her tragically premature death at 28.

The eldest son, Manuel Garcia II (1805-1906), began his professional life as a baritone, performing with his family in the Americas[i], before abandoning his operatic career to concentrate on vocal pedagogy and research (Garcia 1847a, 1847b). He became the most famous voice teacher of his time, with an impressive list of high-achieving pupils.

Both performer and teacher roles were combined in the personage of Garcia I's youngest and allegedly favourite child, Pauline.

Recognising his daughter's talents, Garcia I took great care that Pauline received a rigorous musical education. Her formal training began at the age of four with organ lessons, then continued with counterpoint and composition classes at the Paris Conservatoire under Anton Reicha. She was sent to Franz Liszt for piano lessons, and by the age of eight she was accompanying her father's voice lessons.

Garcia taught singing to all three of his children (Radomski, 2000). He was rumoured to be a harsh teacher, at least to Manuel and Maria. On the other hand, Saint-Saëns reports Viardot as saying that "neither she nor her sister was abused by their father". Rather "they learned music without realizing it, just as they learned to talk" (Saint-

Saëns, 1919, p. 6)⁶. Ferris claims "her proud father [Garcia I] was wont to say, whenever a buzz of ecstatic pleasure over the singing of Mme. Malibran met his ear, 'There is a younger sister who is a greater genius than she'" (Ferris, 1891, p. 55).

Garcia I's skills as a composer were of great benefit to his teaching. In a letter to her friend, the conductor Julius Rietz, Viardot wrote: "It was my father who taught me music - when, I have no idea, because I do not remember the time I did not know it. I have several great portfolios full of solfeggios, canons and airs written for me... Whenever I want to practise airs which are difficult and really useful to me, I return to those which my father wrote when I was ten years old - I sang them but very little worse then, than I do now" (as cited in Baker, 1916, pp. 34-36)⁷. Although only 11 years old when he died, Viardot had benefitted from at least three years' exposure to her father's teachings (Kearley, 1998, p. 96).

Following her sister Maria's death, Pauline was persuaded by her mother and her bereaved brother-in-law, the violinist Charles de Bériot, to strive for a career as a singer. Building on Pauline's early exposure as both pupil and accompanist in Manuel *père's* studio, her mother⁸ and brother⁹ took over her vocal development.

Pauline was also an autodidact (Ferris, 1891, p. 51). Having greeted her change in circumstances with the words "Ed io anche son cantatrice!" (Schoen-René, 1941, p. 126), Viardot approached her training with customary diligence. According to one of her pupils, "With ardor [Madame Viardot] began to work on the *solfeggi* which Don Manuel had written out for her sister's training. When there was no more to be learned from these, Pauline composed others for herself on the same pattern... Schubert, for whose work her father had shown a fervent enthusiasm, became Pauline's first great love in music. She copied all his songs and used them for her *solfeggi*" (Schoen-René, 1941, p. 125)¹⁰.

The hard work paid off, and in November 1838 Pauline made her Parisian concert debut at Madame Caroline Jaubert's salon. The 17-year-old Pauline Garcia's entry into musical life was welcomed by Alfred de Musset, as well as by fellow critics Léon Escudier and Théophile Gautier, all of whom pronounced her worthy of her sister's mantle. In what seems a ghoulish re-enactment, Pauline made her operatic debut in 1839 in the same role and in the same city as her sister – as Desdemona in Rossini's *Otello* at Her Majesty's Theatre in London.

Pauline Viardot's Studio

If Garcia I's teaching prepared Pauline for a career as an opera singer, it also furnished her with exercises and instructions that would allow her to teach from a relatively young age. Saint-Saëns lamented that Viardot "spent half her life in teaching pupils, and the world knew nothing about it" (Saint-Saëns, 1919, pp. 146-148). Her teaching career began in 1848, whilst she was still an active performer. During this time, she organised her contracts so as to spend six months teaching and six months performing (Schoen-René, 1941, pp. 51, 138), before fully committing herself to the teacher's role following her official retirement from the stage in 1862 (Fitzlyon, 1965, p. 371). Viardot continued her teaching activities until just three days before her death in 1910. She therefore taught for a total of 62 years, more than double her time as a performer, and her studio produced pupils whose artistry would delight European and American concert- and opera-goers of the next generation.

The Parisian Salon

According to David Tunley, Parisian salons of the nineteenth century were "presided over by colourful and (usually) very cultivated women of mature years, many of whom devoted their entire energies to their little 'courts'" (Tunley, 1997, p. 6). Some notable *salonnières* of nineteenth-century Paris included the Countess Marie d'Agoult, who hosted Rossini, Berlioz, Chopin, Paganini, Liszt, Malibran, Viardot, Giuditta Pasta, Henriette Sontag and Adolphe Nourrit; Princess Christina Belgiojoso (Bellini, Rossini, George Sand, Stendhal, Alfred De Musset); Princess Metternich (Wagner, Liszt, Gounod, Saint-Saëns, Viardot) and of course, Viardot herself (Leung-Wolf, 1996, pp. 259-266).

Pauline Viardot's Salon

In 1848, ten years after her operatic debut, Pauline Viardot was a successful mezzo-soprano with an international career, based in Paris. She and her husband Louis purchased a house at 48, rue de Douai in the fashionable 9th arrondissement (Kendall-Davies, 2013, p. 310). It was there, as Saint-Saëns reminisces "during the [Second] Empire the Viardots used to give in their apartment on Thursday evenings really fine musical festivals, which my surviving contemporaries still remember (Saint-Saëns, 1919, p. 148).

Saint-Saëns' reference to this historical and political moment in France's history is significant. Louis Viardot's republican sympathies had created

problems for the Viardots in the past, and when in 1852 the Second Empire was declared, Viardot "found herself unofficially banned from France's operatic houses" (Escobar, 2012, p. 18). According to Saint-Saëns, "the disdained star consoled herself by shining in the salons" (Saint-Saëns, 1900, pp. 149-150).

Viardot hosted her first Parisian salon from 1848 to 1863. In 1863 the family re-located to Baden-Baden, a move largely motivated by Louis' disenchantment with France's political regime. Pauline established her second salon at the Villa Viardot in Baden-Baden, running regular Sunday *matinées* from 1863 to 1870. The outbreak of the Prussian War precipitated a short residency in London, whence the Viardots returned to Paris in 1871 after a ten-year absence from France. Here Pauline presided over her third salon from 1871 to 1883¹¹. In 1883, following the deaths of her husband Louis and her long-term companion Ivan Turgenev, Viardot moved to an apartment on the Boulevard Saint-Germain, where she remained until her death, continuing to welcome guests to her musical *soirées* (Schoen-René, 1941; Johnson, 2004).

The guests to Viardot's salon were drawn not just from the musical sphere but also from literary, artistic and political domains. Regular frequenters of her salon included musicians Berlioz, Gounod, Saint-Saëns, Fauré and Rubenstein, statesmen Wilhelm I of Prussia and Otto von Bismarck, the writers George Sand, Charles Dickens, George Eliot, and of course her lifelong companion and ardent admirer, the Russian novelist, poet and playwright, Ivan Turgenev. These were the audiences to whom Viardot's more senior students were introduced as young artists, presenting standard repertoire as well as their teacher's own compositions in the form of art songs and operettas.

Viardot's belief in her pupils' pedagogical development through performance practice was such that she made considerable changes to her various residences in order to mount her musical *soirées* and theatrical productions. During the 1850s, renovations and additions were made to the rue de Douai residence, indeed her prized organ room was a converted greenhouse (Everist, 2001, p. 172). In Baden-Baden a theatre was built in the grounds of her villa, where she, her students and family members produced *opérettes de salon* of her own composition on libretti by Turgenev. The operettas most frequently performed were *Le Dernier Sorcier*, *L'Ogre*, and *Trop de Femmes*. According to Melinda Johnson, one of the principal objectives of these operetta performances was to

provide stage experience for Pauline's most advanced students (Johnson, 2004, p. 73).

There are numerous primary source descriptions of Viardot's salons in Paris and Baden-Baden. Many accounts remark on the physical features of the rue de Douai salon: the drawing room with Pleyel piano, the picture gallery and the Cavaillé-Coll organ, housed in a purpose-built room designed by Viardot:

The salon was furnished in a very severe style, no cumbersome trinkets, lots of space. The furniture, lacquered in white and covered in light-coloured silk, was pushed against the walls. To the left of the piano two steps led to a picture gallery which received daylight from the ceiling. There were the organ and a small number of paintings of great value, including an excellent portrait of Turgenev from the brush of Kharlamof, perhaps the best available of the great Russian writer. A movable partition separated the salon from Louis Viardot's office. (Viardot, c.1973, p. 2)

Madame Jeanne Mairret's account:

M. Viardot had added to the original building a picture-gallery, a delightful room, a step or two lower than the salon. Here, many of the music-lovers, the men especially, congregated. The drawing-room was not very large, and the piano took up a great deal of space. Once ensconced in a chair, there was not much chance of moving before the end of the evening. (Mairret, 1908, p. 309)

Finally, Saint-Saëns:

From the salon in which the famous portrait [of Pauline Viardot] by Ary Scheffer was hung and which was devoted to ordinary instrumental and vocal music, we went down a short staircase to a gallery filled with valuable paintings, and finally to an exquisite organ, one of Cavaillé-Coll's masterpieces... I had the honour of being [Madame Viardot's] regular accompanist both at the organ and the piano. (Saint-Saëns, 1919, pp. 148-149)

Other diarists remarked on musical features, in particular Viardot's own performances. One of the pieces Saint-Saëns had the honour of performing with Viardot was Schubert's *Der Erlkönig* (The Erl-King), "of which she made a terrible and fascinating creation of the highest degree" (Saint-Saëns, 1900, pp. 149-150). Viardot was renowned for her dramatic interpretation of this Lied, and several accounts of her performances exist. Princess Metternich wrote:

Happily, Madame Viardot-Garcia, the famous singer and incomparable artist whom today only Lilli Lehmann resembles, at least as far as vocal range and style are concerned, was present. With her customary goodwill, she came to my aid and asked Liszt to accompany her in "The Erl-King". I

won the day! Yes, I heard "The Erl-King", sung by Mme Viardot and accompanied by Liszt. I can state that it would be very difficult not to retain for the rest of one's life a magnificent and powerful impression of this. (Metternich, 1923, p. 103)

Madame Jeanne Mairret described her own experience:

It was when Mme. Viardot herself consented to sing, which did not often happen, that her guests were really content. To use the artistic jargon, there were "holes in her voice", and no one knew it better than she—but who thought of any flaw in the instrument? The great artist carried her hearers away with her in a whirlwind of passion, of sentiment, of horror, or pity. Music with her, as it had been with her sister, was alive, vibrating, all conquering. One evening she sang "The Erl-King". At the end, there was a moment of absolute silence before the frenzied applause broke out. (Mairret, 1908, pp. 309-310)

It could be argued that in her salon appearances, Viardot acted as a performing mentor to her pupils, modelling for them the musical, stylistic and dramatic skills she had acquired over the course of a thirty-year career.

According to Jeanne Mairret, Madame Viardot's salon was "a social as well as intellectual and musical centre" (Mairret, 1908, pp. 309-310). My current research contends that there were secondary but equally significant consequences, both pedagogical and professional in nature. My thesis argues that as useful as the Garcia family's inherited pedagogical tools were to Viardot the teacher, it was in her salon that her pupils learned their most valuable lessons.

CONCLUSION

According to Jeanne Mairret, Madame Viardot's salon was "a social as well as intellectual and musical centre" (Mairret, 1908, pp. 309-310). We might add that her salon was literally and figuratively a sort of greenhouse, in which the compositional, performative and pedagogical skills of Madame Viardot and her circle were cultivated. As old archives are re-opened, new understandings regarding the degree and depth of Viardot's multiple roles as mentor, collaborator, composer and performer continue to emerge. My current research contends that there were secondary but equally significant consequences, both pedagogical and professional in nature. The focus of my research is on the pedagogical value of the salon, and on its utility as a way for the advanced pre-professional student to make an impression on the

musical world. The Viardot salon provides a model for such an investigation, supporting the argument that, as useful as the Garcia family's inherited pedagogical tools were to Viardot the teacher, it

was in her salon that her pupils learned their most valuable lessons.

NOTES

- 1 Garcia the Elder, or Garcia I.
- 2 Garcia the Younger, or Garcia II.
- 3 Musicologist Hilary Poriss has uncovered this opening paragraph in the manuscript of Pauline Viardot's unfinished and unpublished autobiography, now housed in the Houghton Library at Harvard University.
- 4 See Escobar, Angelica Minero, "Enriching the French romance: Pauline Viardot-Garcia's early cosmopolitan songs (1838-1850)". PhD diss., Rutgers The State University of New Jersey-New Brunswick, 2012; Waddington, Patrick. *The Musical Works of Pauline Viardot-Garcia (1821-1910): A Chronological Catalogue*. 2013. https://dspace.ucalgary.ca/bitstream/1880/49849/1/Viardot_catalogue_2013.pdf.
- 5 "It is incredible what my father wrote in the way of masses, symphonies, detached pieces, unaccompanied quartets, etc." (Letter from Viardot to Julius Rietz, 15th June, 1859, as cited in Baker, 1916, pp. 34-36).
- 6 Another of Manuel's pupils, the Countess de Merlin, reported Garcia as saying that he had never had cause to "exercise harshness" with his youngest and favourite daughter, Pauline, since she could be "led by a silken thread" (Merlin, 1840, pp. 9-10). Ferris adds extra information: "Pauline can be guided by a thread of silk," [Garcia] would say, "but Maria needs a hand of iron" (Ferris, 1891, p. 51). In addition to her compliance, Pauline was known in the family for her industriousness, which earned her the nickname "the ant".
- 7 Although admiring her father's capacity for composition, in other parts of this letter Viardot criticises her father's compositional haste, the unequal quality of his output and his lack of discrimination in his choice of libretti and poetry.
- 8 "Mme. Garcia firmly declined [Pauline taking lessons from Rossini, suggested by French tenor and former Garcia *père* pupil Adolphe Nourrit], and said that if her son Manuel could not come to her from Rome for the purpose of training Pauline's voice, she herself was equal to the task, knowing the principles on which the Garcia school of the voice was founded" (Ferris, 1891, p. 51).
- 9 "She studied...the art of singing with her father and mother, but principally with her brother Manuel" (quotation from Viardot's obituary as cited in Baker, 1915, p. 350).
- 10 Nicholas Žekulin, contrastingly, describes Pauline Garcia at this time as "the quick if originally reluctant pupil" (Žekulin, 1989, p. 2).
- 11 When in Paris, the Viardot family also maintained a country home at Courtavenel (1844-1873) and at Bougival (1873-1883).

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BIOGRAPHY

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Musical Theatre Performance Strategies for the Private Singing Studio

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ABSTRACT: Today's singing pedagogue is often called upon to teach numerous styles of vocal music, and none more complex and varied than Musical Theatre (MT). This diverse genre encompasses over one hundred years of singing and acting expression, and to effectively communicate the repertoire, the aspiring MT performer must authentically inhabit an imaginary world and successfully draw his or her audience into it. To achieve this performance artistry, the synthesis - that is the combining of singing and acting must be addressed. It is often left to the private singing teacher to step into the domain of performance coach and train students in this skill of synthesis. Anecdotal evidence suggests, however, that few teachers feel qualified or equipped for the task. A number of contemporary acting methods, some derived from renowned Russian acting teacher Stanislavski's pioneering work, contain concepts that can accommodate the specific rigours of the MT stage and translate well for use in the private teaching studio. Drawing upon nearly 40 years of professional performance, directing and training in musical theatre and her recent postgraduate research, the author seeks to share her accumulated knowledge and practical strategies to assist and inspire teachers in their pursuit of developing expressive, authentic, musical theatre performers.

KEYWORDS: *Musical Theatre, singing/acting synthesis, singing acting strategies, performance coaching*

INTRODUCTION

Creating believable characterisation and delivering expressive, authentic emotions through song are essential skills for today's musical theatre (MT) performers. Whilst there is much common ground in the way a singer or actor uses his or her voice and body to express story and dramatic meaning, the teaching methods of these disciplines can vary greatly. The established skills of singing, acting and dance are considered foundational when auditioning for professional work or entry into a MT tertiary course. Although most prospective students have undertaken years of singing and dancing training prior to auditioning for entry into these undergraduate degrees, many have received little or no technical training in acting or instruction to effectively integrate character and storytelling into a song. Often it is left to singing teachers to teach this synthesis of singing and acting to their students. According to LoVetri and

Weekly's surveys of MT teachers (2003, 2009), most singing teachers have never been coached in MT specific techniques and there are only limited opportunities for private teachers to acquire the necessary MT acting skills. How then can teachers equip themselves to teach their students?

The Constructs of Musical Theatre

To teach MT singing effectively, one must understand its constructs. MT has been defined as a 20th and 21st century North American and Western European art form, derived from late 19th century operetta, music hall, vaudeville and pastiche entertainment forms of the day (Bourne, Garnier & Kenny, 2011, p. 437). And Dunbar (2013) defines MT as the

complex sum of its parts, musical theatre is defined on the basis of its integrated-ness: that is, the degree and frequency with which song flows from dialogue, or music combines with storytelling plots. Historians trace an increasing co-operation in the working relations of song, dance, and plot in emerging forms. (p. 203)

Kenrick (2008) on the other hand describes the subject as a combination of five key elements: music and lyrics (the songs), book/libretto (the connective story expressed in script or dialogue), choreography (the dance), staging (all stage movement), and the physical production (the sets, costumes, and technical aspects). "Over the centuries, a great deal of creative energy has been spent in *integrating* these elements, making them all smooth-flowing parts of the storytelling process" (p. 15).

MT is stylistically diverse and encompasses a huge range of singing and acting approaches. Performance artistry in this genre depends on the integration of an established healthy, dynamic, singing technique with an intelligent, imaginative, and focused acting technique. The essence and success of MT relies on the suspension of belief and the implicit acceptance by the audience that characters inhabit a world where they will move naturally and effortlessly among singing, acting and dancing as they communicate and tell their

story (Deer & Dal Vera, 2008). The “music, book, lyrics, orchestration, dance, underscore, and finally even the audience’s understanding of performance are linked in a common endeavour to present a coherent development of plot and character” (Taylor, p. 77). It is widely accepted that the *dramatic through-line* is carried in the text of a song. Singing becomes an imperative when a vocalisation threshold is reached, i.e. the emotional stakes are increased and there is a heightened need for communication. In Bean’s (2007) words: “I remain silent until I have to speak, and then I speak until I have to sing” (p. 168).

Styles of MT are almost as varied as the number of shows running currently on Broadway. Over the last 50 years this evolving and revolving form of communication has incorporated all forms of Contemporary Commercial Music (CCM) including rock, pop, folk and rap, bringing the full gamut of musical style to the stage (Bourne & Kenny, 2016). Jukebox musicals, operetta, revivals of Golden Era icons, contemporary, gritty realism, concept musicals, pop opera, and magical Disney extravaganzas are now part of the MT canon (Kenrick, 2008). The current MT performer is required to be vocally flexible in technique and stylistic delivery, able to perform a song in anything from high, semi-classical *legit* style to grunge punk rock (Green, Freeman, Edwards & Meyer, 2014). Pedagogues have defined and redefined vocal qualities pertinent to these styles. Terminology including *legit*, *belt* and *mix* are now characteristically used, and scientific research has come a long way to understand their registration and other physiological differences (Bourne & Garnier, 2012). Saunders–Barton (2005) commented:

Musical Theatre composers have long since abandoned this classical voice model and casting calls are for singers who command a fully integrated mixed voice. The musical theatre performer must now step effortlessly with no discernible transition from speaking to singing and from singing to speaking, combining a full vocal range that doesn’t unexpectedly break, shift or flip, but is available in a seamless continuum from the lowest to the highest note. (p. 281)

The Music Theatre Singer Actor

Nowadays, working MT singers are required to be skilled in dynamic, emotionally connected acting in “a real union between dramatic content and vocal quality” (Kayes as cited in Melton, 2007, p. 100). Pat Wilson, an Australian educator and

performer agrees that the 21st Century MT “verismo” style – more dramatic, realistic, gritty and gutsy – places greater pressure on the singer to act convincingly and create authentic characterisation whilst singing in quite a high and unnatural physical state (Wilson as cited in Melton, 2007).

In MT circles, the well-trained singer/actor/dancer is often referred to as a “triple threat” performer, as he or she exhibits the three skills necessary to excel. Ideally, musical background knowledge, kinaesthetic awareness, imagination, emotional connection, resonance, breath and body alignment, physical dexterity and balance are employed to craft a synthesised dynamic performance. Thurman and Welch refer to this connection as the “neuropsychobiological self” (2000: xxiii). Distinguished Australian pedagogue, Jean Callaghan, reinforced the concept that brain, breath and voice or “B, B, V” should engage and respond in that order (Callaghan, 2018), suggesting that great singing technique and solid acting technique must be effectively integrated to create the illusion of reality in an imaginary, artificial world. Or, in the words of H. Wesley Balk (1985), “All systems involve an interplay between the...needs of each part of the system... High synergy within a system indicates a healthy system, one that is functioning at its best” (p. 73).

The development of a reliable singing technique will usually take priority at the beginning stages of all MT singing work. Correct body alignment, good breath management and airflow, monitoring laryngeal function and the appropriate use of registration, resonance and articulation form part of most singing instruction. As a general rule in MT, preference will be given to a thyro-arytenoid dominant, speech quality vocal tone, and the development of safe belting technique, as the expected vocal qualities of the MT performer (Kayes, 2000; Edwin, 2004). In addition, the MT singer must learn to communicate a song’s story, which can affect vocal tone quality. In the author’s experience only few teachers have completed specific training in synthesising acting and vocal technique and many are thus ill equipped to teach the extremes of vocal style required for the modern musical. Bourne and Kenny’s 2016 survey of voice pedagogues showed considerable differences in approaches to teaching MT styles and highlighted the need for training teachers in a pedagogy specific to MT. Recent research undertaken by the author confirms this (Cuny, 2018).

A Dilemma

The question of when and how to introduce performance and/or acting techniques into song study can be challenging for any studio teacher. Opinions on this subject vary widely with most controversies arising from the complexities inherent in acting and singing techniques. Balk (1977) suggests that, although music and words can be seen as two opposing forces, theatre composers have sought a vision large enough to encompass and reconcile the most diverse extremes. “The highest truth is a synthesis of contraries” (p. 6). Whilst referring mostly to opera, Balk’s perception that the collaboration of singing and acting achieve a transcendent mode also holds true for musical theatre when he says that:

song is the most compelling way of seducing the word away from its concern with an ungenerous reality to a more deeply felt ideality. To have the best of both worlds, to combine the clarity of reason with the turbulence of feeling, is to sing. (p. 7)

He goes on to state that the integration of singing and acting must commence in the vocal lessons without interfering unduly with the process of laying a strong technical foundation (p. 18).

Balk contends that the stylistic expression of music is first and foremost a technical one, requiring a firmly disciplined, authoritarian approach to the demands of score, conductor, voice teacher or coach. By its very nature, singing is an external, anatomical expression. Acting, on the other hand, can draw upon the internal processes of imagination and memory. Its delivery is not confined by melody, rhythm and tempo. Recognising a need for an integrated aesthetic, Balk pioneered exploratory work in developing singer/actor skills and focused on the integration of disciplines using specifically devised MT exercises which explored “music, words and their interrelationship in the action-crucible of performance” (1985, p. ix).

Melton and Tom (2012) also make several pertinent recommendations that address the often seemingly contradictory or even mutually exclusive requirements of the simultaneous delivery of voice, movement and acting. These suggestions include the need for communication, the adaptation of breathing patterns and the inclusion of movement-based exercises in voice classes. It is suggested that training for MT should focus on the common denominators between the disciplines of singing and acting. The difference

between “sounding good” versus “sounding appropriate” can equate to a tug of war between a singer’s vocal skillset and an actor’s characterisation and communication skill. MT requires integration or synthesis: that is the singing actor or acting singer must be equally concerned with both voice quality and a whole body “response to impulse and imagination” (p. xi). As Wilson (2011) puts it:

Is it utopian to dream of a collegial cohort of interdisciplinary acting/singing/speaking experts who train theatre performers? Can a future for theatre training be seen where experts have been cajoled out of their safe old pigeonholes (labelled “singing teacher” “acting coach” or “spoken-coach teacher”) and all work under the banner of “vocal/emotional theatre specialists?”...I think that performers would derive even more benefit from theatre training, which moves seamlessly among the crafts of acting, singing and speaking, whilst maintaining sensitivity towards the spirit of integrated emotional truth behind it all. (p. 299)

The Challenge of Synthesis

Early in the author’s professional performing career a MT director said: “Let the song become a scene and the scene become a song”, thus summing up the concept of singing/acting synthesis. In the quest of how this can be achieved and taught, the aspiring MT singer and teacher may want to internalize some of the methods and approaches that masters of the craft of acting have conceived over the last 100 years.

The technique of so-called “transactions”, developed in 1909 by Konstantin Stanislavski, is arguably one of the fundamentals of acting technique, giving the performer greater freedom to explore imagination and creative ability (Benedetti, 1999). Starting from “a place of self-analysis and critique”, Stanislavski created a system that “revolutionised actor training and rehearsal techniques” (Benedetti, 1999, p.169). It was his conviction that his method would “mobilise conscious thought and will to create psychological realism” (Stanislavski 1938, p.16).

Many influential acting teachers of the last century have stood on Stanislavski’s shoulders. These include Uta Hagen (1973), Sanford Meisner (1987), and more recently Declan Donnellan (2002) and Ivana Chubbick (2004).

The methods of a number of other theatre teachers can also be applied to singers and actors. Michael Chekhov, who had studied under Stanislavski, developed an alternate approach that

engages the power of imagination rather than emotional recall. His method includes the use of physical expression that embodies the essence of a character - so-called “Psychological Gesture” to stimulate internal responses (Chekhov, 1953, 2002). David Craig, who pioneered the move toward dynamic, realistic acting in song (1978, 1990), used a more text-based approach. His master classes, videos and books, challenge the previous norm of “act when you speak and then when the music is cued, burst into beautiful song”. Whilst this disconnect was considered a norm in the styles of earlier 20th century musicals, it is not considered part of more recent MT performance. A number of pedagogues have followed Craig’s lead including the already mentioned Wesley H. Balk (1985), Rocco and dal Vera (2008) and Moore and Bergman (2016), Their texts articulate specific MT acting methods that aim to train educators, singing teachers and students in what is still a relatively new and constantly evolving art form.

In his directing classes, renowned Australian actor and director Dean Carey refers to a triangular paradigm (See Figure 1) that places the play at the pinnacle, with director and cast both serving the text. With the text - or story - accepted as paramount, the process of synthesis can truly occur.

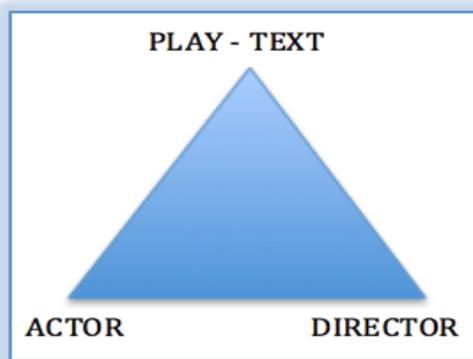


Figure 1. Dean Carey's paradigm of the ideal relationship among actor, director and text.

There is anecdotal evidence of some singing teachers’ conviction that singing technique must be firmly established and embedded in a song *before* the performance or acting part of the work should commence. Emotion is supposedly to be added on, as if it was a matter of adding a costume or putting on a jacket or coat. However, some leading pedagogues suggest that acting training and synthesis can begin at the earliest stages in the singing studio and may even enhance the technical

process. Janice Chapman (2013), referring to the work of Estill (1996), and contemporary teacher and researcher Dane Chalfin (2015) for instance use so-called “primal sounds” as an interface with the “emotional motor system” to gain immediate connection and improved vocalisation. This strategy draws upon instinctual vocal “set ups” to produce vibrant vocal tone (Chapman, 2013, pp. 17 -22).

Moss (2005), on the other hand, posits that the tendency to attribute a character or text with a certain emotional quality may in fact be unhelpful as an approach to story telling. He even claims, “playing an emotion or mood spells doom” (the word “mood” spelt backwards), (p. 44). This opinion is supported by British voice teacher Patsy Rodenberg (2007), who reaffirms the need for actors to be totally “connected in the present moment” and “interacting with the surrounding stimulus” in what she describes as the “Second Circle” (p. 21). The resultant state of connectedness or presence is a key element in experiencing that special “magic” of synergistic performance artistry.

It is the author’s belief that teaching performance synthesis in the MT singing studio requires a working model. Beginning with Jean Callaghan’s initial concept of “brain, breath and voice” (Callaghan, 2018) as discussed earlier, the author suggests that the MT performer can respond authentically to stimuli by harnessing the body’s natural responses, including primal sound. Pictured below is the author’s first attempt at a model of the MT synthesis process see (Figure 2):

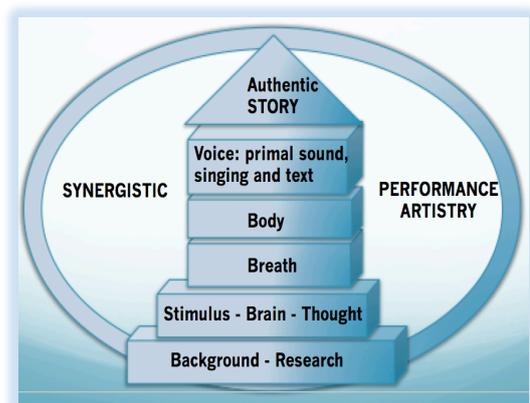


Figure 2. A working model of the MT synthesis process, the building blocks from research to performance.

It is suggested that the objective of dynamic storytelling and synergistic mastery can be best achieved when the performance is based on the

specificity found through researching the background of the character and text. This may create a resource that performers will naturally draw upon when they actively respond to the stimuli in a spontaneous way. In acting terms, this is often referred to as being “in the present moment”.

A single clear thought is a powerful tool, and the subtext that is created by it can often carry accompanying emotions that arrive fresh and spontaneously. Silverberg (1994) supports this notion of emotions or feelings being a by-product of thinking and doing. He describes the legendary acting teacher, Sanford Meisner’s acting tools as the “reality of doing” (p.20). As we “approach, our emotions come freely, as a side benefit, a gift, when our attention is on something else and that something else is what we are doing. The great news here is that when our attention is not on being emotional, our emotions suddenly become much more available.” (p.28).

Drawing on the above masters, the author has created certain acting essentials and practical applications to expand the first three building blocks in her MT synthesis model (see Figure 2). These can equip the singing teacher with fundamental strategies that will encourage students to make the required neuro-psycho-biological connection to the text and effectively tell their story.

Acting Tools for the Studio

Background and Research

Background research is arguably a helpful tool to approach a character one wishes to embody — one must first know the story before one can tell it. Text and music can be interpreted in ways that will help to direct the student’s thought process. This, in turn, prompts the body’s response to the lyric that is sung. In an adaptation of Uta Hagen’s (1973) acting methods, the following steps may be helpful.

Firstly, find the song’s *super-text* or overarching theme. Ask questions like “What’s going on?”; “Why am I here?”; “What do I want?”

Secondly, establish the *context* of the song – the given circumstances and relationships. Ask: “Who am I?”; “What am I doing?”; “When and where is this happening?”; “Why?”

Then look at *the moment before* the song begins. This can be the acting moment in the story of the musical or an imagined scene if the song is being sung as a stand-alone piece. It will establish the singer’s perspective and provide a natural

impetus to sing. Create a clear *other* and focus your attention and relate to him or her. It may be you, a protagonist or an antagonist. Ask: “To whom am I singing?”; “How do I feel about that relationship?” The introduction to a song can provide a strong acting stimulus and/or can be interpreted as an audible expression of a performer’s first thought.

Stimulus – Brain – Thought

It is important to remember that breath, body and voice will respond instantly to the stimulus or thought. In a professional setting, a melody and lyric may be performed up to eight times a week, or 400 times a year, and a fresh thought before each phrase will keep the body’s response dynamic and believable.

Unpack the text. Look at the transitive verbs — the “doing” verbs that advance dramatic action; the story is carried and directed by these. Adjectives and adverbs are important descriptors that bring colour and life to the story. Negatives are strong oppositional statements that contain power. Poetic devices like alliterations and rhymes are also signposts and require attention. Notice and highlight these words in the song’s delivery. Speak the lyric as a monologue. Find the shifts in thought and how they interlink. Work with a partner and find the transactions of listening and responding to thought and text.

Develop a *subtext* i.e. the performer’s wants and objectives (“What do I want?”; “What’s in the way?”). Objectives drive dramatic action (“What will I do about it?”), and prompt the use of tactics (“How will I get it?”) (Chubbick, 2004; Moss, 2005).

Establish the *stakes*. Ask questions like “How important is this to me?”; “How much do I want this thing?” This will help to establish the energy or importance of the song.

Use *personalisation*. Drawing from your real life, activate emotional recall or sense memory. Silverberg (1994) calls this process “living truthfully under imaginary circumstances” (p.34).

Explore *substitution* (Chubbick, 2004). Endow the person you are singing to with attributes drawn from other human or non-human sources to make sense of the overall objectives of a song. This can be a safe strategy for the younger student, as using substitutions of pets or food can be used to engender strong physical connections and emotions, without exploring fragile or potentially unsafe memories.

Beware of the “E-word”: *emotion*. Playing an emotion rather than an action stimulated by thought will only produce a false sense of story. The student will start “telegraphing” or trying to tell you, the audience, how they feel, or want you to feel, instead of being connected to the moment.

Body

Use *physicality*. Ask your student, “Where do you feel the story?”; “Where is your energy? - is it in your mind, your heart or your will (head, heart or gut)?” Finding the embodied expression of a character and working from external to internal (Edwin, 2004) can provide a balance to Stanislavski’s internal to external approach to acting. Chekhov’s *Psychological Gesture* is another helpful tool here (Chekhov, 1953/2002). Donnellan (2002) uses *referencing* and *targeting* to bring dimension to a song’s environment and allows performers to place people specifically in their imaginary world.

These foundational acting techniques will help to inform the student’s body, breath and voice. As the student practises, it is important to check that singing technique is functioning organically and doesn’t take over the delivery of the song and impair the truthfulness of the moment. Bergman and Moore (2016) describe a concept developed by Balk (1977) addressing this concern: a continuum that describes the range of colour and tone available to the performer - everything from *OOPS* (“One and Only Perfect Sound”) to *UBU* (“Ugly But Useful”) (Bergman and Moore, p. 64). Students can be directed to explore the full gamut of sounds available on this continuum - from groaning or yelling to beautiful clarity. It is argued that, if the student has done his/her homework and can technically sing the song, there is no “wrong” sounds as long as they are connected to authentic storytelling. Indeed, the author recently witnessed the successful use of *UBU* sounds in several musicals currently presented on Broadway. It appears to become a common practice in some contemporary MT to eschew a more traditionally beautiful sound quality for one that expresses the text more authentically.

And then there’s the music...

A myriad of musical elements can assist the students’ interpretation of a song. Many of the composer’s intentions are manifest in tempo, melodic contour, harmonic and rhythmic shifts, key changes, dynamics, texture, timbre and form,

in both vocal and accompaniment parts. Each element has been specifically crafted to create a platform from which the singer can work. For example, a rhythm may match the pulse of a character’s heartbeat and provide a sense of the energy the song requires. So another question for a student may be: “Is the song one that is metaphorically or physically sung on the ‘front foot’ (with forward driving wants and physical energy), or on the ‘back foot’ (more grounded, reflective or passive)?”

CONCLUSION

In singing and acting, mastering the technique is arguably an essential component in creating performance art, as well as safeguarding the student. While expressive singing and healthy singing are not mutually exclusive, expressivity may at times infringe on the healthiest option. However, even the most expressive singing alone does not yet make great MT. Thus, there is often a need for teachers to instruct MT students in areas beyond the voice. The singing pedagogue informs and provides the concepts and training with which to build a student’s technical and performance skill, but the same teacher may be required to take on the role of acting coach or director. Students need instruction in how to “act a song” so that they may find focus and specificity in their storytelling. A performance coach will encourage singers to explore choices that may serve to improve, expand and enhance a performance.

The author’s research to date has reconfirmed several pitfalls for singing teachers. The first is that some teachers believe that singing technique must be fully established before acting the song should commence. The author suggests that commencing singing and acting approaches to a song simultaneously is not only possible but also often ideal (Cuny, 2018). Working from the synthesis model and using stimulus and thought (subtext) to direct body responses including primal sounds, both singing and acting techniques can be developed concurrently. Thoughts and actions inherent in a story can also assist in finding the appropriate breath and resonance needed for the style and genre of the piece.

A second pitfall is the assumption that strategies that work for teachers who are performers will automatically work for their students, or that the same acting or synthesis exercise will produce the same result in every student. The journey to find truth in the moment is unique. The quintessential tool for teachers is to

ask questions, and to continue asking, with an open and inquiring mind and without the assumption that the answer is definitive or known.

As teachers and their students explore possibilities, it is important to create space in the studio for *play*. Teachers can learn which techniques work and which do not without compromising the wellbeing and health of the student – both mentally and physically. Then one will find the journey of acting through song to be an exciting voyage of discovery for both teacher and student.

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BIOGRAPHY

Jacqui Cuny has been performing and teaching in many aspects of musical theatre for the past 38 years. Graduating in 1980 from the Queensland Conservatorium and the University of Qld, she began her professional career with QT in 1981, and toured Australia in major commercial musicals before moving to England to further her career. Returning to Australia in 1989, Jacqui continued performing and has expanded her pedagogical understanding of both singing and acting, studying a number of methodologies. She recently completed her Masters of Music Studies with Distinction; her dissertation explored the teaching and learning of singing/acting synthesis within a tertiary institution – an area of great passion for her. Jacqui is commencing her Doctoral studies in 2019 and plans to explore differing aspects of singing, acting and voice training in search of a workable, dynamic model for teaching MT synergy.

Communicating Artistic Integrity: Collaborative Production in Recording Processes

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ABSTRACT: For the contemporary singer-songwriter, recording and communicating artistic intent may prove complex. This complexity is due, in part, to the construction of a resultant aesthetic in audio recording that conveys emotion and intent. It is also due to those contemporary singer-songwriters who work with others (such as producers and audio engineers) to interpret and construct that aesthetic. This article discusses collaborative production during the studio recording processes of a contemporary singer-songwriter. The research employs an ethnographic case study approach that details the context and methods of collaboration specifically between an artist/singer-songwriter and a vocal director/co-producer in the recording of several tracks for an EP. Analyses of progressive and reflective journal logs, reflections/interview and recordings reveal a consistent focus on the connection between music and voice; expressive techniques and documented production decisions add insights into facilitating and maintaining artistic integrity in recording processes and production. The research identified that production considerations, connectivity and artistic intent can impact the ways in which integrity is represented and/or maintained.

KEYWORDS: *singer-songwriter, singing voice, recording, co-producer, production*

INTRODUCTION

Actually, the first thing that struck me when I heard the mix was how emotive and clear the vocal performance was! Here is a classic example of the benefit of co-production: I would have re-recorded the vocal, but [the co-producer] wanted to keep it how it was as she thought it was extra-emotive that way. And she was right. (Martin, Reflection)

The above quotation highlights the importance of the singing voice in a recorded context from an artist's perspective. While the focus on the audibility and emotive capability of the singing voice is clearly apparent in the above reflection, the connection to recorded representation of the artist's voice on a particular track and the suggestion of its being "extra-emotive" is also evident. The reflection further demonstrates an interpersonal connection to that voice through the process of co-

producing in studio recording (artist and co-producer). In this scenario, it was the co-producer (working collaboratively with the artist in overseeing the recording processes) that aided the integrity of the vocal by suggesting that it should not be re-recorded.

This article focuses on documented, interdisciplinary insights (between artist and co-producer; vocal direction and co-producer). In doing so, it provides unique perspectives where both intrapersonal expressivity (the singer-songwriter) and interpersonal expressivity (musicians, audio engineers and co-producer) combine to promote artistic integrity in vocal, musical and emotive/expressive components. The research documents and analyses the collaborative processes and mechanisms that facilitate and communicate such integrity in the audio capture of performances of original songs. In doing so, the findings promote an integrated study of music and voice during the recording processes of pre-production, production, and post-production (mixing and mastering).

Collaboration during recording processes is evident in the interaction between the artist and accompanying musicians, together with those involved in the capture and mixing of sound, namely audio engineers and producers. At times, the perceptive and interpretative contributions of others, including musicians, are used to determine a sound scape that when *produced* becomes the resultant aesthetic. Just as the role of audio engineer is crucial to sound capture, it is the role of producer that can encompass musical arrangement, track compilation, sound placement and spatial quality. The resultant aesthetic/product is highly relevant as it is usually how an audience perceives or *hears* an artist; equally, the resultant aesthetic adds context to the artist. For artists near the beginning of their career it can also become the sonic marker of their products for years to come. However, the resultant aesthetic and/or product is not always the shared vision of nor representative of the artist (see Hughes, 2012, p. 63; Winehouse

as cited in Mulholland, 2004). This is despite production aesthetics purportedly being representative of and connected to artistic vision. Often, a “strong [artistic/individualised] vision” (see Padgham, Guest, Parr, Bradfield, & Craig, as cited in Massey, 2009, p. 328) can be essential to a project’s realisation.

RESEARCH AIMS AND METHODS

The impetus for this research was three-fold. Firstly, collaborative production during the recording process to produce a resultant aesthetic that communicates the artist, the artist’s music and intent, is largely undocumented. Typically, research on expressive performance investigates a range of musical instruments and associated performances (e.g. Aho & Eerola, 2012; Barhet, Depalle, Kronland-Martinet, & Ystad, 2010; Repp, 1999). In discussions of music as an emotional communicator, the context of the composer’s intent and the realised performance is usually highlighted (e.g. Juslin, 2005, p. 87). However, Juslin makes the distinction between the perception of emotions “in the music” (Juslin, 2005, p. 91) and the induction of emotion “in response to the music” (Juslin, 2005, p. 91). In the case of the singer-songwriter, the intrapersonal musical processes usually involve both emotional responses and expression of those responses. Such singer-songwriter processes are also under-researched.

Secondly, the research discussed in this article relates to a case study of the co-producer collaborative production (between artist and vocal director) of the *World Turning EP* (Martin, 2011a). Described as an Australian “songstress” (Booth, 2013), Jodi Martin is a contemporary folk singer known for her song-craft. Prior to the recording of *World Turning EP*, Martin had recorded and released four albums: *Sandcastles* (1997), *Water and Wood* (2001), *Twenty One Stairs* (2003) and *15 Minutes Out to Sea* (2005). At the time of the *World Turning EP* release, Martin wrote, “it has been longer than I want to admit between releases [...] I simply wasn’t ready to come out with anything before I was totally happy with the songs” (Martin, 2011b). Martin wanted to record again and to be involved in collaborative production. She had a body of unreleased work and was keen to work with others on “organic” representations of that work. Organic in this context refers to captured and processed representation where notional “authenticity” in vocal and musical representation is sought and prized. In many ways, it is Martin’s artistic intent to be authentically heard in the

resultant aesthetic that forms the basis of her artistic integrity. Encompassed within that integrity are her voice, musicality, expressivity and narrative forms (lyrics and arrangements). We draw on Martin’s intent and insights to define the term, artistic integrity, as truthful representation in the recorded capture and processing of the singer-songwriter (see also Hughes, 2014b). This approach opposes those, such as Hennion (1989), who see only manipulation and deconstruction in the studio approaches to vocal performance:

You do not rewrite singers: you dress them up, you try different styles of songs on them, you put make-up on them, you search out faults, you simplify, you reduce the complex traits of a personality to a single dominant characteristic. (Hennion, 1989, p. 410)

The third impetus stemmed from an interest in the practical realisation of Martin’s goals. The aim was to investigate the collaborative co-production of Martin and Hughes particularly in relation to recorded vocals. Co-producer and co-author, Hughes, had periodically worked with Martin as vocal coach some years prior to embarking on the project. Hughes was keen to investigate whether production collaboration between Martin and Hughes would facilitate Martin’s artistic and vocal intent. Fellow researcher and co-author, Evans, provided “fresh ears” (Hughes, Journal) during the recording processes. The study was approved by the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee.

Drawing on ethnographic principles of participant-observation (Robson, 2002, p. 187), multiple research methods were utilised in the research design, data collection and means of analysis. The conceptual framework (see Figure 1) details the relationship between the primary research question, sub-set questions, the participants, the research design and the analyses. Data was collected through pre-production meeting notes (Hughes), progressive journals maintained during each recording session (Hughes), reflections on each session (Martin and Hughes), and reflective post-production interview/discussions (Martin and Hughes; Hughes and Evans). Methods of analysis included progressive comparative analyses of the notes, journals, reflections and interview so as to determine the realisation of project aims as well as the identification of emergent themes. Visual representations (spectrograms and waveforms) and tempo calculations (beats per minute – BPM) facilitated analyses of recordings in relation to expressive techniques; paralinguistic analysis enabled identification of idiosyncratic expression.

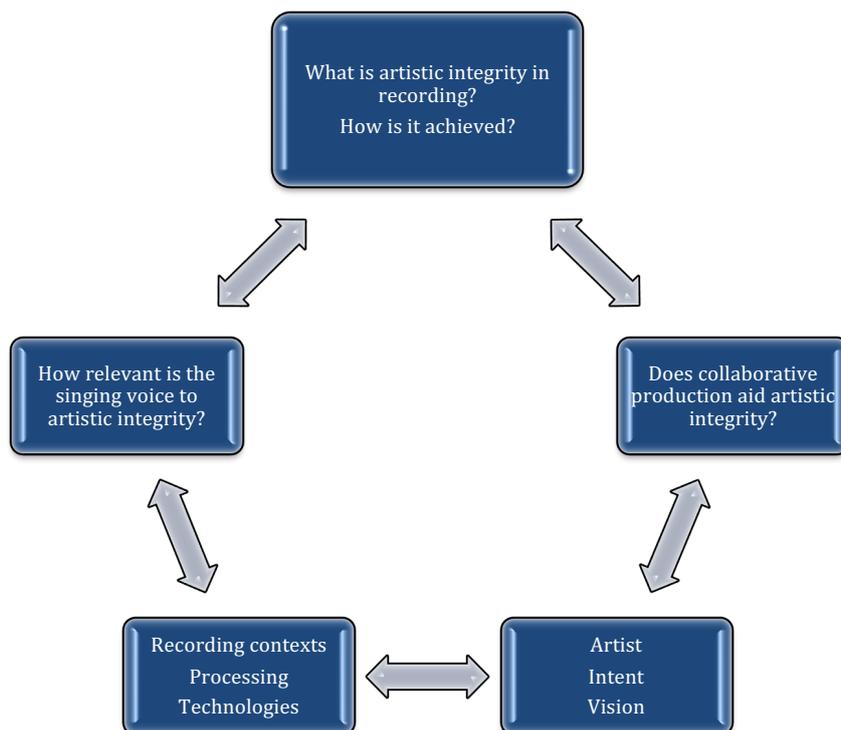


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

CONTEXT

The Vocal Instrument and Connectivity

The voice is the means of verbal, human communication. It enables humans to converse, to express and to emote. As a person emotes or responds, the voice may convey involuntary utterances or “inarticulate articulacy” (Frith, 1996, p. 192). The human “bodymind” connection (Thurman & Welch, 2000, pp. xiii-xv) is ever present in vocalisations; intrapersonal processing is evident in value-emotive categorisations (Thurman, 2000, p. 94) which occur in response to a range of stimuli (Thurman, 2000, pp. 92-94). Emotions (innate and acquired) (Thurman, 2000, pp. 112-113) are processed through “a linkage of brain areas that process value-emotive *and* [original emphasis] higher order conceptual categorisations” (Thurman, 2000, p. 113). In relation to performers, Leigh-Post (2014) also discusses skill related memory through which “perceptual memories become expectancies, they become our ‘tools of the trade’” (p. 60). Artistic pursuits, including singing, may therefore draw on such aspects as learning, memory and language (including metaphorical) that trigger “bodily

feeling” (Thurman, 2000, p. 117) or emotive states:

‘Memoried’ perceptual, value-emotive, and conceptual categorisations are the general resources that bodyminds draw on for these forms of [artistic] self-expression. Many, perhaps most, are implicit memories so that the memories are not of specific episodes that occurred in the past, but of general ‘forms’ or intensity variations in feeling reaction – *as-if* [original emphasis] feeling states. (Thurman, 2000, pp. 117-118)

Frith (1996) further hypothesizes the ways in which embodied individuality may relate to “vocal identity [...] the *voice as a person* [original emphasis]” (p. 196). Indeed, individuality in expression and emotive voice usage are prized in contemporary vocal artistry (see Hughes, 2010; 2014a). Dynamic variation, articulatory function and paralinguistic features (see Poyatos, 1993) aid expressive techniques and vocal colour. At times, these features are complementary and the singer’s ability to demonstrate these features will typically distinguish an emotive performer from a purely technical performer as Miller (1996) explains, “without mastery of dynamic contrasts, the best vocal production becomes inexpressive and uninteresting [...] vocal coloration and dynamic

level are inseparable” (p. 171). At times, these features are also underscored or mirrored by musical accompaniment and arrangement.

Despite the connection between the singing voice and emotion, research in this area has tended to focus on Western classical singing and listener perception of emotion or expressive techniques (e.g. Howes, Callaghan, Davis, Kenny, & Thorpe, 2004; Scherer, Sundberg, Tamarit, & Salomão, 2015; Scherer, Sundberg, Fantini, Trznadel & Eyben, 2017). As contemporary singing is more aligned to speech than Western classical singing, it seems relevant to compare prosodic elements or expressive means (Thurman, 2000, p. 117) of the spoken voice to those used in contemporary singing (e.g. Lacasse, 2010), and particularly in relation to paralinguistic features (e.g. Rodero, 2010). In his analysis of recorded popular singing, Lacasse includes “phonographic staging effects” (2010, p. 242) or the technological effects applied to the singing voice in post-production processing and mixing that correspond to an emotional state. Lacasse (2010) also argues that it is the singing voice in popular music that provides the common link between artist and listener, and cites the singing voice as the communicator of emotion. He reasons that “the aesthetics of popular recorded music is first and foremost anchored in performance; more precisely in individualised performances of feelings and emotions, as expressed by an artist, a song character, in short a voice” (Lacasse, 2010, p. 226). In the case of the singer-songwriter, intrapersonal processing, emotive connectivity and embodied vocalisations become immersed as the expressive narratives are sung.

The Singer-Songwriter

The contemporary singer-songwriter tradition evolved in the 1960s. Following this tradition, the contemporary singer-songwriter is often viewed as being representative of a distinct musical style that began as “essentially acoustic and introspective” (Knopfler, 2003). Because the usual intent of such singer-songwriters is to be personally expressive (e.g. singing their own narratives or the narratives of others whom they are connected to or are familiar with), the singer-songwriter is often more focused on organic representations of his or her music than on producing mainstream artifacts. Despite this focus and intent, several contemporary singer-songwriters (e.g. Jason Mraz, Passenger, Colbie Caillat) have also charted as mainstream artists:

Sometimes (though rarely) [the reflective singer-songwriter] even breaks the rules ... and crosses over the dance floor to join the mainstream of commercial "product" [...] I can name twenty or more extraordinary young singer-songwriters out there in cyberspace and in the clubs making great work - real work - most without labels even - most who'll never become household names. (Knopfler, 2003)

The quote above also highlights the realities faced by many singer-songwriters. Despite an artistic intention to be “organic”, another 21st Century reality is the need for singer-songwriters to engage with technology to be both literally and metaphorically “heard”. Being heard is essential in live and recorded contexts, and extends to the dissemination of music in physical, digital and/or online environments (see also Hughes, Evans, Morrow, & Keith, 2016). In studio recording situations where there is usually no audience, the singer-songwriter is dependent upon intrapersonal processing and interpersonal interactions with technicians, engineers and producers. These often occur in isolated locations and with people unfamiliar to the singer-songwriter.

Recording Stages, Processes and Roles

The democratisation of recording technologies has brought about a shift in the types of recording environments and products. For most recordings (whether they are recorded in home or commercial studio environments), however, the interaction of the artist with other people is almost inevitable. This interaction can occur in any phase of recording such as in pre-production, during production, or in post-production (mixing and mastering). The interactions with others may include musicians (often during pre-production rehearsals and recording; sometimes only during particular recording sessions), recording personnel such as the producer (all stages of production) and audio engineers (typically during recording and post-recording sessions for mixing/mastering). Of significance is the role of producer, whether that is in overseeing a project or acting in the combined role of producer/engineer (see McDonald, 2018). The producer role is particularly significant if the relationship with the artist is new or unfamiliar, as it is the producer that often has creative input or makes decisions that impact on the resultant recorded aesthetic. An audio engineer also makes decisions on capturing sound, and sometimes on how that sound is processed. For example,

microphone positions for recording can impact the overall resultant aesthetic. In this context, Barrett (2010) offers the example of “close mic’ing [...] putting the listener among the musicians rather than in a spectator’s seat” (p. 100).

Our focus on co-producer collaboration is purposeful. Below, we analyse the processes that lead to the communication of a unified aesthetic. In relation to creative and interactive musical contexts, such processes are under-researched. Bayley (2010) highlights this in her discussion about a typical research focus into Western traditions that emphasises “the end result rather than the process of arriving at that result” (pp. 220-221).

FINDINGS

Creative flow

Pre-production processes and rehearsals were viewed as positive for the project’s creative “flow” (see Csikszentmihalyi, 1996). In reflective journal entries, Hughes noted a preference for extended collaboration during pre-production. Similarly, Martin noted the significance of pre-production preparation and rehearsal in relation to vocal layering. She commented, “the harmonies were finished [in recording] very quickly also, and my harmony pre-pro[duction] really paid off once again, in the ease and speed of recording. So – all the vocals were ‘in the can!’” (Martin, Reflection). Pre-production time not only made recording more time efficient, it allowed for a greater understanding and trust to develop between the co-producers. In recording sessions, particularly when multiple tracks are being layered, the concept of flow is crucial to creativity, expressivity and artistic integrity. This was highlighted in our research throughout the production processes when recording sessions were either highly productive or when flow was hampered by such things as studio inaccessibility. However, it was when flow was interrupted during actual recording sessions that the significance of missed opportunities for sustained musical expression was most noticeable. Issues such as time constraints and the feeling of being “rushed”, including the necessity for some sessions to end at specific times, also interrupted creative flow.

Limited studio time, technical issues and extended set up time are not uncommon in

recording processes, as the recording environment (including the equipment/set-up) is often unique to the session requirements. Learning to adjust or to compromise (such as recording at another time), while being far from ideal or in the moment, are often skills that may lead to more ideal outcomes that, in turn, underpin rather than undermine artistic integrity.

Certainly, as our findings reveal, the ability to effectively and consistently communicate artistic goals, even when the flow is hindered, can produce positive results. Additionally, a co-producer working collaboratively with an artist can be a strong advocate throughout the recording stages and processes. Such a role can distance the artist from having to resolve potential issues if or as they arise.

Co-producer Collaboration

The findings identified that the most significant benefit to collaborative production was having another person involved in overseeing production decisions and in fostering artistic integrity. This was highlighted through a shared focus on music and voice. While at times both producers listened and focused differently in sessions (e.g. Martin through headphone levels often focused on musical aspects; Hughes listened mainly through studio monitors and preferred to isolate and listen to the vocal tracks separately), the vocals (recording and processing) were a priority for both. At the outset, Martin was keen to show presence in the vocal. She also wanted the voice (and lyrics) to be distinct in mix placement, particularly in relation to other instruments which was evident when she made mixing notes such as to “make sure [the flute] doesn’t crowd the vocal” (Martin, Reflection). Hughes and Evans also listened to individual tracks, session “bounces” (unmixed session takes) and mixes on different audio equipment to determine vocal prominence and integrity, and to note any anomalies.

In both reflections and in a post-production interview, Martin attributed good vocal takes in the studio to the additional collaboration between Hughes (and her vocal direction) and Martin (as singer). In her production journal, Martin commented that the guidance provided by Hughes “in getting great vocal qualities and performances out of me is wonderful” (Martin, Reflection). Martin also commented on feeling “comfortable” in the studio environment.

While both Martin and Hughes focused on the vocal takes during the recording sessions, perhaps one notable point of difference in their collaboration was between *literal* and *predictive* hearing. In relation to “Oh My Heart” (as featured on Martin, 2011a), Martin explains:

After [“Oh My Heart” was mixed] and [the engineer] brought the volume up, that section [the beginning] is now my favourite part of the whole song! That vocal performance is one that I consider one of my best ever, and I am horrified to think that I might’ve scrapped it! (Martin, Reflection)

By slightly increasing the level of the more breathy and whispering aspects of the vocals, the vocal contrasts in both tone and quality were maintained in the final mix of “Oh My Heart”. The artistic integrity of the vocal performance, including its emotive nuances, was therefore protected.

CONCLUSION

The research findings highlight that co-producer collaboration in recording processes and production can strengthen artistic integrity. Those making collaborative production decisions, however, need to trust each other and to effectively communicate throughout the stages of recording so as to optimise the resultant aesthetic. Furthermore, the findings attest to the function of a vocal advocate and to the types of listening required during recording processes. The findings also reveal that pre-production preparation and an understanding of recording processes is highly relevant to the artist who is co- or self-producing.

While the research discussed in this article is based on the perspectives and interactions of two co-producers in a particular recording context, the authors suggest that future research on multiple recording perspectives (including musicians and engineers) is warranted. Such insights would further understandings of recording and processes, and of artistic integrity more broadly.

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Hidden Virtuosity: The Choral Soprano in the Studio

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ABSTRACT: Although the notion that “choral singing ruins your voice” has become less prevalent, there still remains a certain discipline divide between soloists and choristers. Voice teachers take great care to give relevant technical instructions and appropriate solo repertoire to their developing students. Choral singers on the other hand, often receive little or no technical instruction yet are asked to sing music that can, in certain ways, and especially for choral sopranos, be much more challenging than standard soloist repertoire. Looking at some exemplary solo arias in comparison with complementary choral writing, this paper evaluates the vocal demands placed on choral and solo sopranos in a classical music context. It also investigates how pedagogues may ensure greater vocal freedom within the choral rehearsal and performance spaces. It is suggested that through better collaboration between voice teachers and conductors, a rehearsal technique may be developed that benefits both the solo and choral singer. It is further argued that pedagogues should work on choral music with the same commitment in the studio as they do with solo repertoire, engage more actively with the choral world and broaden the musical scope of vocal tuition.

KEYWORDS: *soprano, studio, soloist, choir, pedagogy*

INTRODUCTION

Voice teachers are usually very conscious of giving appropriate repertoire to their developing singers; folk songs, Italian songs and early Lieder are often studied in the early years (Chipman, 2008). This repertoire is carefully chosen for both technical and musical reasons. Conversely, the technical and musical demands placed on singers of ‘standard’ choral repertoire often far exceed those found in the repertoire sung by aspiring soloists in their early training. A first-year singer at university level would typically be singing predominantly English and Italian songs but may well be involved in a large-scale work as a chorister.

Taking a closer look at a programme of a typical choral concert, it is evident that the vocal skills required by the singers are very diverse, with music that could include a 16th century piece by Thomas Tallis, a movement from an oratorio such as Handel’s *Messiah* (late 18th century) and a newly-commissioned work. Whilst any soloist would typically be able to draw on years of

technical and stylistic training, untrained or developing singers in community choirs, school choirs, university choirs and youth choirs are expected to perform these works often without any vocal tuition. Exploring the vocal demands placed upon an aspiring solo soprano and a choral soprano in their respective standard repertoire, this paper looks at ways in which vocal pedagogues can help the choral soprano in the studio as well as in rehearsal.

After many years of teaching in both secondary and tertiary environments the author identified a need for effective training for aspiring classical soloists in an ensemble/choral settings. By comparing a recital of operatic music with complementary choral repertoire, the vocal techniques required by both the solo soprano and choral soprano were explored (Atchison, 2013). The study went on to address the perceived antagonism between the choral and solo worlds that is often seen in universities (Olson, 2010; McCann & Buchanan, 2013).

The majority of the baroque and classical choral repertoire performed by choirs today was originally written for professional choral singers (i.e. singers employed by the church) and is often more complex than the corresponding orchestral writing (Smith & Young, 2001). But whilst its complexities have not changed, this music is today often sung by community choirs with largely untrained singers - and it is arguably the soprano part where most problems arise. Sopranos “sing at pitch levels in a range where the human ear is keenly sensitive” (Davids & Latour, 2012, p. 195) and is therefore the most prominent line with their mistakes and technical limitations inevitably most noticeable. A very good soprano section can hide a less developed bass section, but an excellent bass section cannot hide a weak soprano section. The author has personally witnessed rehearsal scenarios in different parts of the world in which the soprano section has received nothing short of ridicule from the conductor, as well as the rest of the choir or ensemble, even when they were performing as well as, if not better, than the other sections. The notion that the soprano line is the

easiest as it “just sings the tune” is, at the very least, misleading.

Leading American choral conductor Howard Swann (1988) notes that “every element in a rehearsal or performance, whether technical, emotional or interpretive, will affect a singer and will influence his tone” (p. 6). Consequently, the choral rehearsal becomes a singing lesson, with the conductor taking on the role of the singing teacher, whether they are a proficient vocal technician or not. University choirs are predominantly made up of voice students and an average voice student in the USA will “by the time they graduate [...] have spent a minimum of 512 hours singing in a choir compared to the [...] 128 hours of singing under individual instruction [...] [i.e. four times as long]” (Olson, 2010, p. 23) across their four-year degree. The ratio is slightly less dramatic but still considerable for university choristers in New Zealand where, over a three-year degree, voice students can expect to sing in a choir for 228 hours versus 98 hours in individual tuition (i.e. 2.3 times as long)¹. Greater awareness of the vocal demands placed on their singers may lead singing teachers and conductors to work together towards developing a vocal technique that serves singers when singing both solo and choral literature. This seems a far better solution than banning young – solo sopranos from choir singing as is sometimes suggested in order to “save” a singer’s voice.

Richard Miller (2000) writes that “[c]horal sound is patently vocal sound; the same principles of efficient production apply to both the solo singer and the chorister” (p. 84). The renowned New Zealand singing teacher Isabel Cunningham builds on this observation saying there is “one voice, one technique, and there is only one way to use the voice effectively and without strain” (Personal communication, November 14, 2012). This suggests that, at least within the classical choral and solo worlds, one technique of vocal production, can serve a number of vocal styles. The soprano Lilli Lehmann (1848-1929) was renowned not only for her flawless technique but also the breadth of her repertoire, singing music from Mozart to Wagner, changing her vocal quality as demanded by each style (Lehmann, 1922/1993). This skill is rare and it would be very unusual for a modern classical singer to move between a wide variety of *Fächer* (i.e. voice types associated with operatic roles) and styles within one recital. Choristers on the other hand, are routinely expected to sing repertoire back to back that ranges from the renaissance to the twenty-first century. Furthermore, the disparity between the physical

endurance and vocal loading² placed on soloists compared with choristers is significant. Neither in opera nor oratorio, does a soloist sing for prolonged periods of time, with pieces structured so that “soloists rest their voices during the choral numbers and other soloists’ arias” (Chipman, 2008, p. 135). Conversely, in many large-scale oratorios, choristers are granted only three or four minutes rest (sometimes while still standing) during arias and orchestral movements. In the case of the Mozart *Requiem*, which is used as an example later in this paper, it is only in the “Tuba mirum”, the “Recordare” and the “Benedictus” that the choir does not sing; a mere twelve minutes within a fifty-minute work.

What Can Vocal Pedagogues Do to Help the Choral Soprano?

Treating choral repertoire the same way as solo repertoire in the voice lesson would help to bridge the perceived gap in professionalism between the solo and the choral soprano. By collaborating with conductors and working on choral parts with the same commitment in the studio as they do with solo repertoire and vocal technique, vocal pedagogues could help to ensure that a healthy voice production becomes an integral part of the choral rehearsal. In the following, some of the techniques required of the solo soprano and choral soprano will be discussed through examples of contrasting standard repertoire and vocal exercises to use in both the choral rehearsal and voice studio will be suggested.

Secondo Passaggio

Table 1. The typical female *passaggi* points from Miller (2000, p. 25).

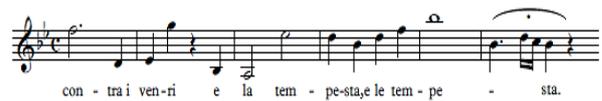
Voice	<i>primo passaggio</i>	<i>secondo passaggio</i>
Soprano	Eflat4	F#5
Mezzo-soprano	F4	F5/F#5
Contralto	G4	Eflat5

One specific vocal challenge for the choral soprano arises from the fact that much of the choral writing sits in a vocal range referred to as the *secondo passaggio* (see Table 1). The term denotes a range where the voice needs to transition from “one resonance area to the next” without losing control of the vocal mechanism resulting in the feared “vocal crack” (Chipman, 2008, p. 81) and to sing continuously in this tessitura is arguably a challenge for any singer, and much

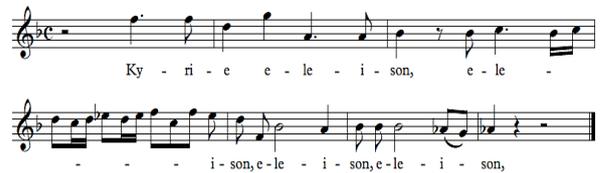
more so for the inexperienced vocalist. The integration of registers is essential for classical singing (Miller, 2000) and Katharin Rundus (2009) explains that “our goal for traditional singing, both solo and choral, is to create a seamless range in all voices, seemingly without any register breaks or interruptions” (p. 95). As the singer moves up the scale, the thyroid cartilage should tilt forward, over the cricoid cartilage, creating length and tension in the vocal folds, allowing them to vibrate with less breath pressure (Baldy, 2010). The thyroid cartilage must tilt in order to access the upper notes of the voice while maintaining a similar vocal colour (Miller, 2000). Untrained choral sopranos and young sopranos often present with an airy sound and need to be taught how to tilt the thyroid cartilage as this helps with removing a breathy tone, when accessing the upper register (Baldy, 2010). It is very important for soloists and choristers alike to be able to sing with a clear tone above the *passaggio* so every note has a core and as well as a full harmonic structure.

Mozart

The songs and soubrette soprano arias of Mozart are one of the sources of repertoire for the developing soprano (Ragan, 2016). These pieces are beautiful to sing, but do not come without their own technical challenges. Rupert Christiansen describes some of Mozart’s roles as “uniquely gratifying and cruelly testing to sing,” with many roles requiring “a heroic dramatic compass that can effortlessly scale down to a liquid legato” (Christiansen, 1995, p. 40). The role of Fiordiligi from *Così fan tutte* is one such role. Her aria “Come scoglio” demands a high level of technical ability from the singer - dramatic singing, coloratura lines and lyricism. It was written for Ferraresi del Bene, a singer who Mozart reportedly did not like. Mozart exploited the extreme range of Ferraresi del Bene’s voice by “writing single notes separated by such wide intervals that the singer was constantly having to alternate between the soprano and alto colouring of her voice with hilarious results” (Hughes, 1972, p. 161); see Example 1. It is not unlike the soprano line in Mozart’s *Requiem*. Passages from the “Kyrie” and “Come scoglio” show some similarities in structure (see Examples 1 and 2). Both passages require agility in the coloratura and flexibility between the registers in wide leaps, spanning a major 7th in the *Requiem* and an octave plus fifth in the aria.



Example 1. Mozart, W. A. (1790/1952). Bars 34-39. *Così fan tutte*, act 1, no. 14, “Come scoglio”.



Example 2. Mozart, W. A. (1791/2005). Bars 27-33. *Requiem*, “Kyrie”.

In these examples the singer (solo as well as choral) is required to display dramatic legato singing, the ability to sing over the *passaggio* with ease while negotiating large intervallic leaps. In both pieces the soprano is expected to sing above the staff without straining the voice and maintain the beauty of line. This requires a sustained support, a released larynx and re-articulation of the vowel to keep the line. The choral writing here requires, “as much effort and artistry as the aria” (Christiansen, 1995, p. 40). While a soprano singing the “Kyrie” as part of a choir will certainly not need to sing with the same projection as if they were singing “Come scoglio”, much of the same vocal principles apply.

Exercises for the Choral Rehearsal and Studio

The exercises of Nicola Vaccai are a mainstay of the voice studio and were written primarily for amateur singers “as an alternative to the endless hours of tedious scales required of professional singers and students” (Elliott, 2006, p. 137). The exercises range from interval training to stylistic training and are easily studied in the studio and the choral rehearsal. Vaccai’s exercise for octaves would be of great benefit to any choral soprano studying the intervallic leaps in Mozart’s *Requiem*; see Example 3.

Exercise for the Choral Rehearsal and Studio



Example 7. Coloratura exercise

Exercises like the above can be used in the studio and choral rehearsal when preparing singers for runs. They can be sung on any vowel and the variation of rhythm aids in the production of even runs; see Example 7.

Fauré

The “Pie Jesu” originally written for the French treble Louis Aubert, is one of Fauré’s best known soprano arias and is often sung by young sopranos (Kern Holman, 2013). Like many French arias, the soprano needs “skill in floating the voice, using a delicious silver-like beauty of tone” (Legge, 2002, p. 64). Similar demands are also found in Fauré’s choral writing. The following soprano line from the “Sanctus” is technically challenging for the singer. It requires ease of singing over the secondo passaggio and a sustained spinning line; see Example 8.



Example 8. Fauré, G. (1890/1975). Bars 35-42. *Requiem*, “Sanctus”.

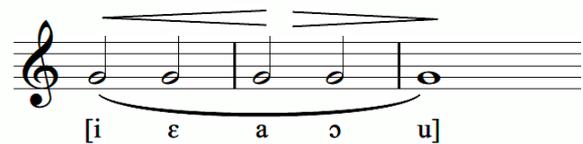
The techniques required in the “Sanctus” are no different from the those required in the “Pie Jesu”; see Example 9. One may even argue that the choral parts were more difficult through the additional demand of choral blend. Given that “[V]owels are distinguished largely by their first and second formant frequencies” (Davids & LaTour, 2012, p. 94), harmonics will not match and a phrase may sound out of tune unless the entire section matches up their vowel shape. Singers need to have the same concept of the sung vowel and tailored exercises should be used in both the studio and choral rehearsal to achieve this.



Example 9. Fauré, G. (1890/1975). Bars 1-7. *Requiem*, “Pie Jesu”.

Exercises for the Choral Rehearsal and the Studio

Suggested exercises for phrases like the above may include those that encourage a uniform vowel, an even *messa di voce* and *sostenuto*, and those that enable the soprano to move through the passaggio on a “lighter mechanism”, allowing for a tension-free phonation (Chipman, 2008); see Examples 10 and 11.



Example 10. *Messa di voce* exercise over the five primary vowels.



Example 11. Exercise to encourage sopranos to maintain a lighter registration over the *passaggio*. This exercise should be done on [a], [ɑ], and [ɔ]

Tippett

The choral writing of Michael Tippett in *A Child of our Time* (1941/1944) is another example of similar musical and technical demands being put on soloists and choristers. The difficult chromaticism, long melismatic passages and again a tessitura that sits across the secondo passaggio are almost identical, and equally challenging for the soloist and the chorister; see Examples 12 and 13.



Example 12. Tippett, M. (1941/1944). Bars 9-14. *A Child of our Time*, No. 28.

Allegretto 48
How shall I feed my chil-dren on so small a
55 2 mp How shall I feed my chil-dren on so small a wage?
66

Example 13. Tippett, M. (1941/1944). Bars 49-65. *A Child of our Time*, No. 7.

Both of these phrases require integration of the registers, efficient breath support and excellent aural skills in order for the notes to be correct. It has been shown that vocal technique is often neglected or forgotten when trying to sing the correct notes and rhythms, making sight-reading difficult passages particularly fatiguing for the choral singer (Davids & LaTour, 2012). Passages such as the above should therefore not be sight-read in rehearsal but worked into the vocal mechanism first rhythmically and then on pitches to ensure a stable technique.

Exercises for the Choral Rehearsal and Studio

The author suggests that in order to safely and efficiently learn difficult music of the kind presented in *A Child of Our Time* (Tippett, 1941/1944), attention to rhythm must be the first priority. Once the correct rhythm has been internalised, the notes will be much easier. One tried and trusted exercise would be to intone the difficult passages on one note before working on the written notes; compare Examples 12 and 14.

ff How shall we have pa-tience for the con-fu-sion of the mys-ter-y?
4 ff Who will com-fort us in the go-ing through?
p

Example 14. Tippett, M. (1941/1944). Bars 9-14. *A Child of our Time*, No. 7. Rhythmic exercise on one note.

Beethoven

Choral performances are often marred by musical and technical limitations, so much so that instrumentalists and audiences may come to the conclusion that this is “just how choirs and choral pieces sound” Perhaps the most notorious soprano choral line is found in Beethoven’s *Ninth Symphony*. Betty Jeanne Chipman (2008) writes, “in my opinion, high school or university choirs should never sing Beethoven’s *Ninth Symphony* [as the passages] are too intense, too long, too high, and too loud for young voices” (p. 136). The

soprano line is particularly taxing on the voice and it is a difficult piece for any singer, however accomplished. A voice teacher would never give a big Verdi or Wagner aria to anyone without the required technique and years of experience behind them, so how can choral singers with little or no technique be expected to sing Beethoven’s 9th? The soprano line from “An die Freude” is intense, relentless and sits on or above the secondo passaggio most of the time; see Example 15. A phrase such as the below will almost inevitably result in vocal fatigue for the other than highly skilled choral soprano, and in turn might result in shrill or out-of-tune singing.

f Küsse gab sie uns, und Re-ben, ei-nen Freund, ge-prüft im Tod; Wol-lust ward dem Wurm ge-ge-ben, und der Che-rub steht vor Gott, und der Che-rub steht vor Gott, steht vor Gott, ff

Example 15. Beethoven, L. (1824/1895). Bars 8-16. *Symphony 9*, Movement 4.

Exercises for the Choral Rehearsal and Studio

The following exercise by Herbert-Caesari (1950) would be useful for preparing a soprano section for the heights of the “An die Freude” chorus. It can be sung in different articulations (e.g. staccato, legato, slurred) and keys, starting in mid-range and gradually moving upwards. The use of the trill may aid in relaxing the laryngeal position. Physical movement, such as mirroring the trill with a waving hand gesture or a pianistic finger trill in the air or on a surface (Miller, 2004) can add a humorous energy to the exercise while helping engage the body; see Example 16.

Example 16. Herbert-Caesari, E. (1950). 50 *Vocalises*, No. 43.

Corporate Technique

It has been shown that better communication and a mutual understanding between the singing teacher and choral conductor is conducive to the development of a shared group-singing technique or “corporate technique” (Atchison, 2017). Through her work with a number of choirs in New Zealand, the author could demonstrate that the

presence and active input of voice teachers who share similar vocal aesthetics and values with the conductor during a rehearsal, increases singers' confidence and vocal technique and leads to a higher level of performance.

The last ten years have seen the introduction of a "vocal consultant" as a firm part of a choral team in New Zealand. It is now becoming common practice to have a vocal specialist in every rehearsal addressing matters of vocal technique in concert with the conductor's musical work. Choristers reportedly value the technical advice and see the benefit of this input. Many choirs, especially at secondary school level, have a voice teacher regularly attend choral rehearsals and then work with the singers in the studio on both choral and solo repertoire; this type of collaboration lies at the core of what the author calls "corporate technique", the beneficial effect of which she witnessed in her role as a voice teacher at a New Zealand High School³. At this High School, most choristers regularly attended singing lessons with an itinerant teacher who supported their choir rehearsals as a vocal consultant. The choirs at this school have won the top awards at the national choral competition *The Big Sing* over the last decade and have won prizes in international competitions, most notably the *Summa Cum Laude Festival* in Vienna (SCL, 2014). Choir members have gone on to undergraduate and postgraduate study in voice both in NZ and abroad, and the school continues to supply singers to the national choirs. Virtually all successful professional singers to come out of New Zealand over the last twenty years had a strong choral background with most having sung in one of NZ's celebrated national choirs (Atchison, 2013). Many other choirs have mirrored this framework, thereby improving their performance.

CONCLUSION

Taking a closer look to some examples of choral repertoire, like those exemplified in this paper, it is easy to see why many singing teachers would be opposed to choral participation – a stance which is however not practical. Margaret Olson (2010, quoting American soprano and voice educator Susan Sondrol Jones) states the obvious:

By far, the majority of voice students who pass through voice studios in colleges and universities will be singing in ensembles as their career progresses – not having

solo careers. So, they need to learn how to sing correctly in the ensemble. (Jones as quoted in Olson, 2010, p. 114)

Furthermore, the choir is the place where young singers can be introduced a variety of musical styles and techniques in the comfort of singing with others. It may be possible that through corporate technique, Richard Miller's (2004) description of singing by sensation as "freedom-inducing" (p. 68) may be experienced by more singers. Coloratura lines become easier when shared between the singers, with singers dropping out at staggered moments – a technique that needs to be practiced. Less skilled sopranos can gain confidence in singing high notes as they can 'sing into the sound' of a more confident singer's resonance and learn how to match vowels and harmonics. Most importantly, corporate technique encourages communication and exchange between the voice studio and the choral rehearsal.

Given that it is an integral part of most singers' lives, choral music should be welcomed into the studio and singers be encouraged to sing with their "studio voice", rather than their "choral voice" that may be breathy and lacking in vibrato (McKinney, 2005). Greater freedom of tone, flexibility and the ability to change vocal colour and style is beneficial for any choral setting. For an optimal outcome, choir directors need to give careful consideration to their choice of repertoire and singing teachers should seek to be actively involved in the teaching of choral music at studio level. Singers need to be encouraged to take choral music into their lessons rather than left to believe that they would be wasting time when they could be working on solo repertoire. After all, for most amateur singers, solo performance opportunities are limited, and it is choral repertoire that will always be the mainstay of their singing.

All singers need to have a solid and flexible technique, so they are able to sing a wide range of music and be diverse in their music making. It is the creed of the author that choral training needs to be actively aligned with studio teaching and particularly the role of the choral soprano be taken more seriously. Good vocal technique in choirs, and greater parity between solo and choral singing will lead to better overall performances.

NOTES

1. This data is based on the author's personal experience as a lecturer in a NZ University.
2. "Vocal loading is a combination of prolonged voice use and additional loading factors (e.g.

background noise, acoustics, air quality) affecting the fundamental frequency, type and loudness of phonation or the vibratory characteristics of the vocal folds as well as the external frame of the larynx” (Vilkman, 2004, p. 1).

3. The author taught as an itinerant voice teacher and vocal consultant at this High School from 2004-2017.

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BIOGRAPHY

Dr Morag Atchison is one of New Zealand's leading sopranos and pedagogues. She studied at the University of Auckland and Royal Academy of Music (London), and was a Kathleen Ferrier finalist and a prize-winner in the Royal

Over-Seas League Competition. Morag sings regularly with all of New Zealand's major orchestras, opera companies, and choral societies, and has performed in Canada, the USA, Italy, The Netherlands, France, Kenya, Seychelles, and throughout the UK. Morag is a Lecturer in voice at the University of Auckland, is a vocal tutor for the NZ Youth Choir, the University of Auckland Chamber Choir, and for many years worked with the award-winning Choralation from Westlake Girls' and Boys' High Schools. She is a sought-after tutor for vocal and choral workshops around the country. In 2013 Morag was awarded a Doctorate in Musical Arts from the University of Auckland, the first DMA in vocal studies from a New Zealand University. In 2017 Morag presented at the World Choral Symposium in Barcelona and the International Congress of Voice Teachers in Stockholm.

Now Touch the Air Softly: Reflections Upon Art Songs in the Recording Studio

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ABSTRACT: Artists contribute to music's rich performative tradition through the presentation of art songs — the lyrical merging of text and music composed for voice and piano. While audio recordings offer a vehicle for performers to document their work through sounds across time, singers' preparatory processes and the creative realization of art songs within the environs of the recording studio are seldom discussed. Through an autoethnographic approach, this article examines some of the complexities underpinning the phases of research, score study, rehearsal and recording as the foundation of a recent project chronicling selected art songs by composer Calvin Bowman (b. 1972). Offering a critical account reflecting upon the nuances of artistic practice, the author discusses the subtleties of preparing comparatively new works for their premiere recording, the vocalist's responses to sensitivities within the poetry, challenges in building commonality of interpretive purpose and intricate musical bonds between singer and composer-accompanist, while reflecting upon the significance of the producer's role in appraising and supporting the musicians and broader issues concerning the practice of music-making.

KEYWORDS: *art songs, song recording, voice and piano*

INTRODUCTION

Depicted as an expression of poetical essence and “intimate communion” between composer, poet, singer, pianist and audience (Olsen, 2015, p. ix), art songs allow artists to contribute to music's rich performative tradition through the lyrical merging of text and music for voice and piano (Meister, 1992, p. xviii; Kimball, 2005, p. 1). Noted exponents of the form including tenor Peter Pears (1910–1986), baritone Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau (1925–2012) and accompanist Gerald Moore (1899–1987) have observed performers' tonal suppleness, sense of light and shade, synergetic musical refinement, imaginative zeal and grasp of textual nuance as essential in bringing such multifaceted entities to life (Headington, 1992, p. 306; Fischer-Dieskau, 1989, pp. 87, 331; Moore, 1962, pp. 64, 163). Through a critical, autoethnographic account (Polkinghorne, 1997, 15–16; Reed-Danahay, 1997) deliberating upon the preparation and recording of selected solo songs by the

Australian composer Calvin Bowman (b. 1972), this article aims to scrutinize creative practices intimately linked in the realisation of new art songs. The current research makes available insider knowledge — affiliations within rehearsal processes and dialogue between the composer-accompanist and performer — as analytically reflective experiences imperative in illuminating performative processes applicable to the formulation and audio documentation of original works (Burke & Onsmann, 2017, p. x).

In May 2017, more than fifty of Calvin Bowman's art songs were recorded in Melbourne at the Australian Broadcasting Corporation's Iwaki Auditorium by soprano, tenor and baritone soloists, accompanied by the composer. The recorded works were subsequently released as a two-CD set on the internationally-renowned Decca label.¹ A noted organist and pianist, Fulbright scholar and Doctoral graduate of Yale University, Bowman's compositional style identifies deeply with the elegant melodic gifts of British art song composers including Roger Quilter (1877–1953), George Butterworth (1885–1916), Ivor Gurney (1890–1937) and Gerald Finzi (1901–1956). For their sophisticated negotiation of complex chromatic harmony, deferential service to the text, technical facility and spiritual empathy, Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750), Hugo Wolf (1860–1903) and Samuel Barber (1910–1981) also loom as deities in the province of Bowman's output. Owing much in form to the tonal language of the nineteenth century, the songs discussed in this paper are miniatures ranging in length from a mere sixty-three seconds (“The Swing”) to three minutes and thirty-six seconds (“Summer comes with colour”).

The genesis of this project took shape over several years. I first met Bowman more than a decade ago through his role as the orchestral keyboard specialist for the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra. In January 2013, we became academic colleagues at the Australian National University's School of Music. During vocal performance seminars in which Bowman acted as the

accompanist, discussion soon turned to our mutual love of English art song and Bowman's desire to document his expanding song repertory through commercial recordings. Over the course of 2014–15, we chatted in nebulous terms about undertaking a reading session of his vocal repertory for tenor voice, or a concert of such repertoire. However, other research, teaching, performance and life commitments foiled these realisations. After several thwarted applications for funding through established Australian arts bodies to support the recording of his vocal music, the composer decided in mid-2016 to finance an entire recording project himself, with the assistance of a Go-Fund-Me campaign mounted through social media.

Preparing the Scores

1 February 2017 sees a formal offer from Bowman to record some fifteen art songs, totalling approximately thirty-four minutes of vocal music (Table 1). Scheduled for the period 22–26 May 2017, this inspiring project is becoming reality. By 11 February we have completed the contractual negotiations and most of the vocal scores arrive in pdf form on Wednesday 22 February. I print them to hard copy, checking the suitability of vocal range in each piece. As I examine each song, it becomes apparent that several are too low for me in their original key. Thankfully, Bowman is immediately agreeable to transposing “Fresh Fields”, “Now touch the air softly”, “Crossing the bar”, and “The Birds” up a tone.

While none of these songs were composed with my voice specifically in mind, Bowman grew well acquainted with my singing through various recordings and our employment at the ANU over a period of years, as well as conjoint performances in works by Monteverdi, Handel and Bach². He is confident the selected songs are well matched to my voice — time will tell. I am interested to know how the composer determined the songs to be recorded by each of the three distinctly different singers involved in this project. He assures me that while many of the songs are quite interchangeable, he gave careful thought to their allocation with respect to the singers' vocal timbre, and the disposition and expressive range of the works themselves.

Two of the designated fifteen songs have previously been recorded for commercial release³. In order to maintain consistency through all the works prepared for this project and to ensure my interpretation is guided by essential elements within the scores themselves, I make a point of not

listening to either recording until after the project is completed (Bowen, 1999, p. 438; Philip, 2004, pp. 244–245).

Table 1. A chronological list of art songs by Calvin Bowman recorded by the tenor soloist on 22–23 May 2017.

Year Composed	Title	Length	Poet
1997	Fresh Fields	1.35	Oliver St. John Gogarty
	Non Dolet	2.31	
	Death may be very gentle	1.50	
	The Swing	1.03	Robert Louis Stevenson
	Escape at Bedtime	3.03	
1997, rev. 2017	The Rainbow	1.24	Walter de la Mare
	Unpausing	1.40	
1998	Sallie's Musical Box	1.27	
1999	Crossing the Bar	2.24	Alfred, Lord Tennyson
c. 2003	Summer comes with Colour	3.36	David Campbell
2004	Now Touch the Air Softly	2.54	William Jay Smith
	Words by the Water	3.28	
	Tulip	1.33	
2014	The Birds	2.19	Hilaire Belloc
2015	The Seasons	2.32	

Looking through the fifteen songs in turn, several notions come to mind. Firstly, I sense the responsibility entrusted to me through this project. That is, the realization of works in a premiere recording under the composer's direction in which the outcome — unlike most concerts — will be documented in perpetuity. Over the last fifty years, “it has gradually become less and less acceptable for mistakes and bad tuning to find their way onto the finished disc” (Philip, 2004, pp. 42–43). The manner in which learning these new works in detail will unfold over the coming months — given the listening public's expectation of essentially flawless performance in recordings

(Moore, 1962, pp. 64–66; Meister, 1980, p. 196; Tomes, 2004, p. 157; Williamon, 2004, p. 9) — begins to play on my mind. Recording these songs as a musical and vocal account that justifies the composer’s confidence in selecting me for the task becomes a high priority. Come what may, I am determined to avoid a self-indulgent, “blemish-free but antiseptic” account (Tomes, 2004, p. 141).

The peculiarities of this particular endeavour also begin to infiltrate my thoughts. Under ideal circumstances, a recording project is the culmination of a concert event or a series of live performances (Philip, 2004, pp. 48, 60; Hope 2017, p. 151). Performing for an audience allows the artists to engage in critical reflection and provides opportunities to learn much about the works themselves, and the manner in which the musical ideas and performers’ approaches unfold through the preparatory and performance phases. Yet Bowman now lives in Ballarat and I reside in Canberra — our taxing schedules over the next few months mean no concerts are possible in the lead up to the studio dates. Furthermore, UK-based producer Phil Rowlands’ limited availability means rescheduling the recording dates is both logistically and financially impractical. Concerns my contributions to the recording may be under-prepared or lacking in the nuances that develop through the rotational cycle of rehearsal, performance and self-reflection begin to nag my subconscious mind.

Poetry

Sharon Mabry and other scholars discuss the impact of text declamation within the singer’s interpretive armoury and the significance of vocalists’ engagement with the text (Hemsley, 1998, p. 155; Hines, 1982, p. 307; Mabry, 2002, p. 21). Words “express thoughts [...] Everything concerned with the intellectual content of a song” (Hemsley, 1998, p. 13), and many individualities of art song suggest “the text should be of primary importance in the finished product” (Meister, 1992, p. xvii). Baritone Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau describes the commonalities between music and poetry stating that “together, they have the power to lend intellectual form to what is sensed and felt, to transmute both into a language that no other art can express. The magic power that dwells in music and poetry has the ability ceaselessly to transform us” (Fischer-Dieskau, 1976, p. 28). Pianist, composer and voice teacher Sergius Kagen notes the command of musical phrasing and vocal recitation are frequently governed by singers’

comprehension of nuances within language (Kagen, 1950, p. 35).

As a way of contextualising and accessing Bowman’s songs in a more substantive, rigorous way, it’s appropriate at this early stage to discover more about the texts with which I will become closely acquainted over the course of the next three months. Verses by Walter de la Mare, Alfred Tennyson and Robert Louis Stevenson are well known to me through vocal settings by Benjamin Britten, Roger Quilter and Ralph Vaughan Williams, however the works of other poets are less familiar. From the interpretive perspective, I begin to read each of the poems to gain a sense of their ebb and flow (Reeves, 1900, p. 14; Hemsley, 1998, pp. 112–13, 117). Bowman favours evocative poetry of lyrical sensibility and rhythmic drive; some of the texts deliberate upon the exotic mysticism of nature (“Crossing the Bar”, “Escape at Bedtime”, “Fresh Fields”, “The Rainbow”, “The Seasons”, “Summer comes with Colour”, “Tulip”), another offers heart-felt declarations of longing and desire (“Words by the Water”), while some touch upon childhood innocence (“Now touch the air softly”, “Sallie’s Musical Box”, “The Swing”), tender melancholy (“Unpausing”) and the pathos of mortality (“Death may be very gentle”, “The Birds”, “Non Dolet”).

The emotional response invoked when reading some of the poetry takes me wholly by surprise. Tears were close by each day last week as William Jay Smith’s “Now touch the air softly” conjured images of my daughter. Such reactions don’t bode well on a practical level, as intimidating emotions often force the larynx to constrict, disabling balanced vocal production (Hemsley, 1998, p. 9). While the expression of passions arising from music and poetry are the very essence of vocal technique (Fuchs, 1963, pp. 173–174; Hemsley, 1998, p. 8; Lamperti, 1931, pp. 28–29; Mabry, 2002, p. 25), finding means to carry the text’s emotions via the imagination and the voice without surpassing the point of no return is proving challenging, to say the least (Dunsby, 2002, p. 225; Juslin et al., 2004, p. 249; Järviö, 2006, p. 73).

Upon reflection, perhaps it is the text’s tender poignancy that resonates deeply with parental devotion. Images and thoughts resound: being present at Lauren’s birth, holding her for the first time, watching her grow through stages of infancy and experiencing the curiosity and tumbles before the first tentative steps, as well as the heart-breaking times I was forced to leave a tearful infant in child-care as the responsibilities of working life intruded. Similarly, the bursting

anticipation of first days at pre-school and primary school, the uncontained pleasure at birthdays and Christmas, and the way she helps those around her unwrap their presents by unceremoniously ripping off the paper to explore the treasures beneath. Or now as an independent, feisty young lady of ten who matches it on the soccer field with much bigger boys. Perhaps it is these tangible, yet fleeting moments of my daughter's life that orbit so emphatically as I read the poem's text once more. Without doubt, this particular verse has framed for me what is really most important in my life, when inconsequential, yet time-consuming things so often get in the way. At this moment, I feel immense gratitude to the composer for bringing such salient texts to bear through music.

English Art Song Recordings

Stefan Reid advocates "listening to the performance of others is the most effective means of developing interpretive skill" (Reid, 2002, p. 107). As a way of cultivating effective melodic dexterity, instrumentalists including György Sándor indicate "we can learn much from listening to and watching good singers, who breathe and phrase music with more freedom and spontaneity than can any instrumentalist" (Sándor, 1981, p. 211). The months leading into this song project see regular inspiration sought within the soundscape of English art song recordings performed by several remarkable singers and pianists. Perhaps unsurprisingly, English tenors — particularly Anthony Rolfe Johnson (1940–2010) — feature heavily in my selected playlists. Whether in the Bach Passions under Gardiner (Bach, 1986, 1989), the exquisite accounts of Handel's oratorios (Handel, 1978, 1982), his deeply moving interpretations of Lieder (Schubert, 2000) or within his catalogue of English art song recordings, the depth of colours and sheer beauty of Rolfe Johnson's voice have long enticed me. At this time, I find myself drawn to his accounts of Butterworth's *A Shropshire Lad* and Ireland's *The Land of Lost Content* with David Willison (Rolfe Johnson & Willison, 1993), to his splendid partnerships with Graham Johnson (b. 1950) in Shakespearean songs (Rolfe Johnson & Johnson, 1991), as well as their inspired readings of music by Vaughan Williams (Vaughan Williams, 1996).

Other English tenors including Philip Langridge (Britten, 1996), Martyn Hill (Hill, Ball & Ogden, 1995), Adrian Thompson (Thompson, Varcoe, Burnside & Quartet, 1990; Thompson, Maltman & Constable, 1997) and Mark Padmore (Padmore & Vignoles, 2005) take their turn. Not

to be outdone, bass-baritone Sir Bryn Terfel's readings of Finzi and Vaughan Williams (Terfel & Martineau, 1995) and Sir Thomas Allen's pairing with Geoffrey Parsons in Quilter's *Seven Elizabethan Lyrics* (op. 12) (Allen & Parsons, 1990) are uplifting and acutely perceptive in their collective artistry. The recorded legacy of these celebrated practitioners offers much to me as regards subtlety of tonal shading, textual clarity and nuances of phrasing, while fuelling enthusiasm for the ongoing preparation of Bowman's vocal works.

Absorbing the Songs

February moves into March as I prepare for impending performances of the Evangelist in Bach's *St John Passion* (Melbourne) and *St Matthew Passion* (Brisbane), while finalizing an article for publication and maintaining other regular duties aligned with an academic position. I'm struggling to devote the practice time to the Bowman scores that feels necessary. While I have performed the two major works by Bach many times over the years, such are the demands placed upon the singer by the sheer scope of the roles, that each requires — of me at least — a significant allocation of daily private practice to reset the text and music within my voice and into the forefront of my consciousness. Yet at the same time, I experience more than a little guilt with the art songs sitting largely unattended on a shelf in my office. As the *St John Passion* performance rolls past on Sunday, 19 March, I feel a little of the pressure ease as I cross off this engagement from the current musical mix. Sitting on the plane to Canberra, I am able to resolve a greater allocation of practice time to the Bowman scores.

Thomas Hemsley discusses the intimate relationship of vocal melody and accompaniment, noting the latter "often gives essential clues to the singer as to how the song should be sung, and which must be studied and thoroughly absorbed" (Hemsley, 1998, p. 135). On 30 March, Bowman emails me recordings of each song's accompaniment for reference within my practice. These I gratefully accept; as a supplement to my rudimentary keyboard skills, the audio files become a valuable aid to the learning process, as each passing day sees an escalating pressure to "hit the ground running" within the limited studio time we have available in May. The same day, the composer emails transposed scores of the four works as I've requested, and I can now sink my metaphorical teeth into them. As I work through each of the fifteen pieces in detail, the Bach

Passions provide context for the next stage of my learning process. Through its personal appeal and vocal fit, I've come to recognize the music of the early eighteenth and twentieth centuries as being particularly suited to my voice (Kagen, 1950, pp. 99–103, 105; Headington, 1992, p. 188). As an aid in learning major works from these periods, it is generally straightforward to access a range of high-quality studio recordings by specialist practitioners (McMahon, 2013, pp. 206–207; McMahon, 2014, pp. 273–274). Plácido Domingo remarks upon the significance of recordings in developing his technique through a shrewd awareness of the repertoire (Hines, 1982, p. 102).

Yet no such audio platform exists within the current project. With the exception of the two pieces previously mentioned, May 2017 will see the first commercial recording of these songs. However, the absence of studio realisations and other source materials in this preparatory phase serves to focus my attention directly upon the scores themselves. Edward T. Cone proposes a “performer’s first obligation” is the score, whereby interpretation reflects “a deeply felt personal involvement with the musical thought of the composition” (Cone, 1995, p. 244). Davies (2001) suggests adherence to directives within the score realizes performance in its most heightened form (pp. 152–175). Similarly, John Rink discusses the manner in which musicians articulate interpretations through “considered study of the score” (Rink, 1990, p. 323). Before anything else, I note carefully the tempo and dynamic markings, as well as the key and time signatures and modulations or variants that occur in each of the songs. In many ways, this activity proves a valuable exercise in directing my attention to the very framework underpinning these songs, ensuring the interpretation is governed by directives within the scores themselves, rather than by assumptions drawn from recordings reflecting the way experts feel the songs should be presented.

Vocal Exploration of the Scores

Practitioners and scholars discuss the performers’ crucial role in realizing musical notation (Cook, 2013, p. 236; Mach, 1980, p. 116; Martin, 1993, p. 122; Palmer, 1997, pp. 118–119). As Walter Frei notes, “the score is only a partial representation of the work: it needs the element of sound, and calls for an interpreter, a ‘go-between’ and translator, who will thus translate it” (Frei, 1999, pp. 2, 10). The tangible presence of the composer as a creative partner in the preparation, rehearsal and recording processes forms a stimulating facet of

the project (Borgo, 2005, p. 10; Cook, 2013, p. 236). Far from my usual performance profile in preparing scores by centuries-dead musicians, the opportunity to speak face-to-face with the composer — or at least regularly by telephone — about aspects of the scores themselves is advantageous. In most cases, the rhythm and pitch of the melodic lines are relatively straightforward. However, the capacity for direct feedback from the composer is beneficial in several domains. My lack of pianistic dexterity makes learning some of these songs difficult. For example, despite diligent attempts, I cannot get my fingers around the accompaniments to “Tulip” (Figure 1) and “Summer comes with colour” (Figure 2). Similarly, I find it hard to know how the indicated quasi recitativo should be construed in “Summer comes with colour”, as the rhythm in a six-bar section seems strictly notated (Figure 3).

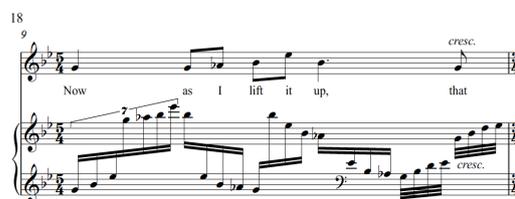


Figure 1. Accompaniment within *Tulip*, bar nine. Music by Calvin Bowman © Copyright Universal Music Publishing Pty Ltd. Print rights administered in Australia and New Zealand by Hal Leonard Australia Pty Ltd ABN 13 085 333 713 www.halleonard.com.au. Used by Permission. All Rights Reserved. Unauthorised Reproduction is Illegal. Text from 'Poems 1947 - 1957 (Atlantic-Little, Brown), 1957. Copyright 1957 by William Jay Smith. Used by permission of the Estate of William Jay Smith.

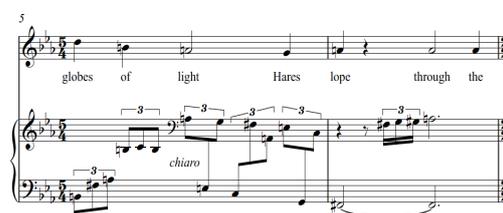


Figure 2. Accompaniment within *Summer comes with colour*, bars five and six. Music by Calvin Bowman © Copyright Universal Music Publishing Pty Ltd. Print rights administered in Australia and New Zealand by Hal Leonard Australia Pty Ltd ABN 13 085 333 713 www.halleonard.com.au. Used by Permission. All Rights Reserved. Unauthorised Reproduction is Illegal. Text reproduced by permission, Curtis Brown (Australia) Pty Ltd.

The image shows a musical score for the song "Summer comes with colour" by Calvin Bowman. It consists of three systems of music. The first system shows the vocal line starting with a *p quasi recitativo* marking and the lyrics "Where in shim- mer... to the knees The". The second system continues the vocal line with trills and the piano accompaniment. The third system shows the vocal line with lyrics "trees count their los- ses... And for- get- ting- cold rea- son..." and the piano accompaniment with various dynamic markings like *cresc.*, *subito p*, and *cresc.*

Figure 3. The melodic line notated *quasi recitativo* in “Summer comes with colour”. Music by Calvin Bowman © Copyright Universal Music Publishing Pty Ltd. Print rights administered in Australia and New Zealand by Hal Leonard Australia Pty Ltd ABN 13 085 333 713 www.halleonard.com.au. Used by Permission. All Rights Reserved. Unauthorised Reproduction is Illegal. Text reproduced by permission, Curtis Brown (Australia) Pty Ltd.

Discussion with Bowman allows resolution of both issues: he undertakes to combine the accompaniment and melodic lines in recorded sections of “Tulip” and “Summer comes with colour”, which duly arrive on 26 April. Similarly, the composer suggests the *quasi recitativo* section should be interpreted in the rhythm of speech, while avoiding any sense of stringency or rigidity that is perhaps implied through the precisely dictated notation.

Recent research suggests goal setting, self-evaluation strategies and awareness of long-term perspectives are characteristics of the practice of expert musicians (Chaffin & Lemieux, 2004, pp. 22, 24–28). My daily routine through the working week sees the hour from 8.00 to 9.00am dedicated to vocal practice. I relish the solitary nature of such intensive activity (Jørgensen, 2004, p. 85; Reid, 2002, p. 102), with no telephone, emails, meetings, students or staff presenting interruptions. Since combining academic and performing careers over a decade ago, I’ve found such a schedule to be the most productive way of balancing two parallel yet complimentary streams of work, while commencing the day with a

mentally, physically and artistically invigorating process detached from the omnipresent computer screen.

Early April sees the splitting of my practice time between the Evangelist role in the *St Matthew Passion* and Bowman’s songs. Having made a fair, if preliminary start on the new material, ten days out from the performance of Bach’s most imposing vocal role the Bowman songs move to the backburner, as I mentally and vocally ramp up to the Good Friday performance on 14 April. Returning to Canberra the following Monday, the obstacles presented by other major works have now dissipated, allowing me to dedicate the next five weeks of practice time entirely to the art song material. Such a realisation presents a double-edged sword, as it feels I’ve made only minimal progress since February and five weeks seems too brief for these songs to emerge wholly formed in the studio environment.

As a means of moving “beyond the notes” (Emmerson, 2009, p. 105; Mabry, 2002, pp. 35–36; Thom, 2007, pp. 62–63), the literature reveals the performers’ desire to arouse the imagination via poetic metaphors within the text (Hahn, 1957, p. 74–75; Miller, 1996, pp. 110–111). Through diligent adherence to a daily practice schedule as April rolls into May, I’m becoming more intimately acquainted with the nuances of each piece. Having gained fluency in the rhythmic and harmonic elements of the songs, what concerns me now is the evolution of the vocal line to reflect crucial shades within the text.

In discussing the aesthetic sensibilities of Benjamin Britten and Peter Pears, Donald Mitchell describes the interaction between composer and performer in pursuing vocal and pianistic hues within the poetry (Blythe, 1972, pp. 432–437). Regular telephone conversations with Bowman see us consider, in an interpretive sense, how the music should most effectively reflect the textual essence. In “Tulip”, for example, alertness to the articulation of consonants, to the definition of vowel colours and care in aligning the melody and accompaniment when applying *rubato* in key words allows sensuousness to emerge in the phrase “the flower came and brought its beauty, and its name” (Figure 4).

Similarly, the suppleness of delivery implied through the composer’s indicated *recitativo* in the first two staves of “Death may be very gentle” (Figure 5) allows me to develop syllabic inflection and variance in tempo, much as in the rhetorical carriage of eighteenth-century vocal music (McMahon, 2017, pp. 18–24). Such is the essence of performative technique, in which

emotive, lyrical and musical impulses are brought to fruition through the musicians' interaction (Hemsley, 1998, pp. 6–7; Connolly & Williamon 2004, p. 221).

5
Is - tan - bul the flow - er

6
came and brought its beau - ty, and its

7
name.

Figure 4. “Tulip”, bars 5–7. Music by Calvin Bowman © Copyright Universal Music Publishing Pty Ltd. Print rights administered in Australia and New Zealand by Hal Leonard Australia Pty Ltd ABN 13 085 333 713 www.halleonard.com.au. Used by Permission. All Rights Reserved. Unauthorised Reproduction is Illegal. Text from *Poems 1947 - 1957* (Atlantic-Little, Brown), 1957. Copyright 1957 by William Jay Smith. Used by permission of the Estate of William Jay Smith.

for Eileen and Ken Britter
III Death may be very gentle

9

Voice *p* *recitativo*
Death may be ve - ry gen - tle af - ter all:

Piano *p*

2 *mf* *cresc. con moto*
He turns his face a - way from ar - ro - gant knights Who

Figure 5. “Death may be very gentle”, bars 1–2. Music by Calvin Bowman © Copyright Universal Music Publishing Pty Ltd. Print rights administered in Australia and New Zealand by Hal Leonard Australia Pty Ltd ABN 13 085 333 713 www.halleonard.com.au. Used by Permission. All Rights Reserved.

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Rehearsals with the Composer-accompanist

Throughout May, despite the escalation of academic duties in the lead up to end of semester assessments and the processing of marks and reports, I have adhered to my allocated morning practice schedule. Notwithstanding regular email and telephone contact with the composer and access to the basic audio recordings of the accompaniments, I’ve undertaken the past three months preparation in relative isolation and look forward to stepping up to the next level. As someone who is used to one or two days of intensive rehearsal before concert performances of eighteenth-century works, it seems time now for amalgamating the vocal and piano components to realize these songs in their representative state.

Bowman and I discuss plans for a concentrated rehearsal period immediately prior to the recording sessions. For our first piano-vocal rehearsal, he visits Canberra in order for us to address the fifteen songs in detail. We set aside two rehearsal blocks on Friday 19 May between 10.00am and 3.00pm. The song accompaniments recorded on Calvin’s iPhone have been useful — to a point — and are certainly more beneficial than my own fumbling efforts at the keyboard. However, it is the nature of such ad hoc sound bites that the essence of subtlety in the accepted give-and-take between accompanist and singer is absent, and I am mindful to avoid becoming too rigidly dependant on these audio samples.

As the first rehearsal approaches, feelings of apprehension and uncertainty towards elements of the unknown emerge. I’m conscious of the personal, artistic and creative investment composers instinctively outlay in their works (Meister, 1980, p. 189; Johnson, 2003, p. 209) and cognizant of my desire to meet Bowman’s expectations for these songs, while maintaining my own performance benchmarks (Emmons & Thomas, 1998, pp. 3–4). Not least of all, I’m aware of the pressure created by the former’s considerable financial investment bringing this entire project to fruition. There is no turning back now.

After we run the first piece in the cramped confines of a rehearsal room at the School of Music, Bowman offers his appreciation of my musicianship and comments upon the way fresh, unanticipated shades have emerged in the voice; such statements are satisfying and reassuring. As we work through each song in turn, he takes an

affirmative approach to discussion of points in the scores where more time or space are appropriate (“Death may be very gentle”, “Escape at Bedtime”), where emphasis on, or colour within particular words are required (“The Rainbow”, “Non Dolet”), as well as pointing out my erroneous re-ordering of some words (“Crossing the bar”). We spend considerable time on the pieces that have caused me most anxiety, particularly as we reconcile the alignment of accompaniment and melodic lines in “Summer comes with colour” and “Tulip”, while invoking the necessary sensitivity in “Now touch the air softly” and “Words by the Water”.

Bowman’s overriding desire is to capture poignant expressivity that avoids the cloying nature of sentimentality (Cone, 1995, pp. 251 – 252; Cook, 2013, p. 79). In attempting to evade such indulgence, I am reminded of Gerald Moore’s criticism of sentimental “extravagance” entering the interpretation of Schubert’s *Winterreise* (Moore, 1975, p. 118). Perhaps it is simplicity of approach that is required in the current project, in which the singer and accompanist are as of one expressive purpose in allowing the music to unfold in an uncluttered, tasteful manner (Hemsley, 1998, p. 193; Schiff, 1998, p. 208). Furthermore, while engaging insightfully with the text, we could allow a certain “wilfulness” (Emmerson, 2009, p. 108) and flights of “unexpected musical magic” (Emmons & Sonntag, 1979, p. 132) to colour the exchange of ideas in the rehearsal and recording processes.

Bowman’s comments on aspects of our interpretation are regularly punctuated by self-effacing references to his piano playing. He admits to feeling apprehensive about formally recording his accompaniments and apologetically suggests he’ll be better prepared by the time we reach the studio. Yet such inadequacies seem products of the pianist’s mind — I hear no such defects. In reference to the bonds forged between singer and pianist in vocal repertoire, Stephen Emmerson advocates “making music with an instrument that literally has to breathe...[as] something all instrumentalists should continue to do, lest we forget” (Emmerson, 2009, p. 105). Significantly, Bowman is a generous and musically incisive accompanist who is always mindful of where and when I need to breathe, as well as points in the music where time should be taken for prominence or effect (Moore, 1962, pp. 202–203; Fischer-Dieskau, 1989, p. 330; Hemsley, 1998, p. 174). Perhaps most significantly, Bowman regularly seeks my point of view in discussing the range of mood, character, tempo and dynamics necessary in

the songs—the “acoustic factors used to express emotions in performance” (Juslin et al., 2004, p. 250) — while maintaining a liberal approach to new interpretive ideas (Moore, 1962, p. 213–14; Emmons & Sonntag, 1979, p. 136; Emmerson, 2017, p. 29). These songs are now developing a living presence; I sense a supple fluency emerging between voice and piano, which in turn allows the songs’ individualities and ways in which the accompaniment complements the melodic lines to enter my active consciousness.

Rehearsals in Melbourne

On Sunday 21 May, I land at Tullamarine Airport in the mid-afternoon to meet Bowman before our rehearsal at St Oswald’s Anglican Church, Glen Iris. He is the regular organist at this church and its surrounds provide a pleasant venue for our first Melbourne rehearsal. After Friday’s extensive four-hour session, we are able to move through most of the pieces relatively smoothly. Some we both agree require more attention to detail, such as polishing the realization of notated tempo variations (“Escape at Bedtime”), unifying the synchronization of chord and note changes when moving through bars with fermatas (“Unpausing”) and applying rubato to realize the punctuation of the text in “Now touch the air softly”. Bowman’s experience as a vocal accompanist is advantageous in negotiating these elements, and the note of confidence in his voice when discussing our foray into the recording studio is heartening.

On Monday 22 May, we rehearse through the mid-afternoon in a small studio at the rear of the ABC’s Melbourne headquarters. The composer voices concern about his keyboard stamina and the amount of playing he will undertake throughout each of the recording sessions over the next four days. Coupled with the less than optimal state of the rehearsal piano’s mechanism, we decide to conserve our mental and physical reserves through a relatively brief session. We run each of the fifteen pieces only once, using the time to cement the choice of tempi in each of the songs, to remind ourselves of the dynamic variations, points of phrasing and textual nuances we have discussed in previous rehearsals, and to ensure the demanding junctions in songs such as “Summer comes with colour”, “Tulip” and “The Swing” are functioning cohesively.

Recording

On Tuesday 23 May, we have two recording sessions scheduled in the ABC’s Iwaki

Auditorium from 3.30–5.00pm and 7.00–10.00pm. The morning is fresh as I take a long walk by the banks of the Yarra River, before spending time on a vocal warm up and looking over the scores in my hotel room. The Quest Apartments at Southbank are a three-minute stroll from the ABC building, and soprano Sara Macliver is finishing her second session as I arrive to meet producer and sound engineer Phil Rowlands for the first time. As a three-time Grammy nominated practitioner, Rowlands is internationally renowned for the recording and production of classical music. Having recently read the imposing artist list, past projects and reviews on his website (<http://www.philrowlands.com>), some apprehension and feelings of inadequacy about my contribution bubble to the surface.

After we undertake a balance and sound check before the first piece, Rowlands speedily resets and adjusts the microphone positions and we are ready to begin (Figure 6).



Figure 6. Equipment and personnel in the studio. © Ian Kemp, reproduced with permission (<https://www.iankempphotography.com>)

Besides an extensive array of microphones, his studio setup includes a video camera trained on the artists, allowing him vision of the studio from his desk in the green room, as well as a two-way audio link between the desk and the studio, offering ease of communication between the two venues without wasting time physically traversing them (Figure 7).



Figure 7. Producer Phil Rowlands' desk in the Green Room. © Ian Kemp, reproduced with permission (<https://www.iankempphotography.com>)

Now as the past months of work are about to culminate, my voice and body feel uneasy, and nerves are not presently allowing me to find a comfortable vocal trajectory. I wish a previous day's rehearsal time in the Iwaki Auditorium was possible, as its acoustic atmosphere is quite unlike the rehearsal spaces in which I've been working on the songs.

Although his demeanour is unobtrusively cheery, Bowman has — perhaps subconsciously — left the role of composer behind to concentrate wholly on his keyboard partnership with the singers. I muse upon the nuances drawn from the piano by Benjamin Britten in recital collaborations with tenor Peter Pears (Headington, 1992, pp. 230–231) and Gerald Moore with Victoria de los Angeles (Moore, 1962, p. 174), as well as the striking partnerships in song rendered by artists of more recent times, including Iain Burnside and Sir Bryn Terfel. It's an immense week at the keyboard for Bowman, as he will accompany the three singers in some twenty-four hours of scheduled recording over the next four days. Gerald Moore and others have commented upon the accompanist's necessary resilience (Moore, 1962, pp. 196–197); Bowman remains steadfastly determined when discussing his physical and mental stamina for such a formidable task.

Within each song, we settle into a routine of recording a complete take — a performance, as it were (Clarke, 2002, p. 187; Philip, 2004, pp. 56, 60–61) — after which I listen to a playback at Rowlands' desk in the Green Room. Bowman and I then return to the studio to record the song proper, usually taking smaller sections at the producer's request. Rowlands' efficient, calm manner and his affirmative way of expressing

critical commentary quickly puts me at ease. His observations on each take demonstrate keen musical insights, as he searches for beauty and spontaneity that will “captivate on second and third and fourth listening” (Philip, 2004, p. 56). Susan Tomes remarks upon the necessity of producers advising the performers of material not yet recorded in a suitably precise way (Tomes, 2004, p. 147). I feel confident in Rowlands’ assessments and attention to detail, as he candidly informs me when a note, bar or phrase needs to be covered through other takes.

Rowlands’ comments on each segment target specific elements requiring our attention; in my case, predominantly attentiveness to correcting intonation in some notes, maintaining the unanimity of ensemble between voice and piano during shifts in tempo, and highlighting particular text without distorting the consistency of vocal production or phrasing. Despite Rowlands’ supporting tone, my voice seems reluctant, in motoring terminology, to enter top gear. I have neither the luxury of ultimate artistic control nor the influence of singers like Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau to truncate recording sessions with the onset of physical or mental fatigue (Moore, 1962, p. 183). Scholars describe the vexatious experiences and negative emotions singers encounter within sub-standard execution under pressure, particularly insecurity, irritation and resentment (Emmons & Thomas, 1998, pp. 22–23). Perhaps my present anxiety is caused by the desire to avoid inaccuracies or through being too cautious with minutiae (Meister, 1980, p. 196)? Somewhat deflated as the first session passes, I venture across the road for dinner at the restaurant adjoining the Melbourne Recital Centre.

Returning to the ABC in time to commence the second session some thirty minutes prior to the scheduled time, I feel marginally revived. The evening session proceeds in what becomes a more productive and vocally engaging manner than was evident this afternoon. As 9.30pm rolls around my voice feels fresh and I’m keen to continue recording while things are progressing so well. However, accompanist and producer are both fatigued by a twelve-hour working day and we therefore agree to call a halt. In the two sessions, we have completed nine songs with a further six to record tomorrow afternoon. Considering the first session was less productive than I hoped, it seems we have accomplished an effective day’s work, though doubts about the quality of my vocal contributions linger.

The literature points to performers’ personalized, adaptable pre-performance agenda

incorporating physical activity, an appropriate diet and relaxation, as well as a vocal warm up (Connolly & Williamon, 2004, p. 232). Wednesday, 24 May, dawns another sharp, well-defined Melbourne morning. I am up early to deal with work emails, to take in a post-breakfast walk by the Yarra River, mid-morning coffee and an extended vocal warm up before the final recording session commences. I’m determined to complete today’s recording in the vocally engaged mode I captured within last night’s session. Sara Macliver’s final recording session has run a little over time and a short break is required before we commence. Fortunately, we are quickly into stride and the studio has a positive air to it this afternoon—the end is in sight. As per previous sessions, the six songs are set down initially with a complete take, followed by small sections and patches where required. Rowlands is thorough and exacting in his requests for particular portions, and by the end of the session he is confident we have all the material covered. Macliver and I say fond goodbyes to our composer/ accompanist and producer, sharing a taxi to Tullamarine in time for a celebratory beer before boarding our corresponding flights.

Post-production

In addition to preparing for a concert with the Queensland Symphony Orchestra, June–August 2017 sees me ensconced in the day-to-day tasks of academic life: student assessments, processing of grades, mid-year graduations and the commencement of Semester Two teaching. While taking a short break on the NSW Central Coast with my family in mid-August, Phil Rowlands forwards the first edits for critical review by the artists. After listening intently to each track through multiple sittings over the course of several days, I’m feeling optimistic and have only a small number of requests for amendments. My comments relate largely to inconsistency of vowel tone or pitch in isolated notes or sections pertaining to six pieces. At this stage, I’m pleased to note many tracks appear to require little further editing.

I return to work on 22 August, having drafted and emailed my comments and requests on the first edit to Rowlands. Less than a month later, the second edits arrive via email. While the failings of my self-critical nature will never allow complete satisfaction with any recording I’ve made, the second edit is a credit to Rowlands’ capabilities and to the fortitude, perseverance and musicianship of composer and accompanist Calvin

Bowman, as well as the captivating appeal of his songs for voice and piano.

CONCLUSION

Through an autoethnographic narrative, this paper has documented the phases of a major music recording project. Themes encapsulated through reflexivity concern the learning and rehearsal processes, the navigation of interpretive routes with a composer/ accompanist, the discernible differences between the live concert and recording studio environments and interaction with the producer within the studio. As a singer who primarily concertizes in eighteenth-century repertoire, the opportunity to rigorously engage once more with contemporary song repertory for voice and piano has been gratifying. Perhaps the release of this new recording and the commercial publication of Bowman's scores will not only affirm the aesthetic virtues of his work (see Appendix), but also allow the dissemination of substantive materials to contemporary audiences through digital media.

Learning and rehearsal processes

The absence of pre-existing, formal studio recordings for all but two songs in this project forced a shift away from an approach encompassing commercial recordings as a source of inspiration in the initial stages of learning. The lack of such recordings served to promote the vocal scores as a foundational learning tool. In preparing each song, I commenced with a clean slate, taking careful note of the variations in key and time signatures, Italian tempo indications and metronome markings, dynamic and tenuto markings as the micro detail, before considering the perspectives of mood and character within each piece through the relationship of text and music.

Bowman's recorded piano accompaniments were a significant boost to the quality of my preparation in the initial stages of learning and for developing a sense of familiarity on a broader level; likewise, several troublesome melodic lines and accompaniment united through practice recordings assisted me to correctly learn the rhythm and pitch of these sections. However, conscious of a sense of rigidity or lack of nuanced flexibility developing through over-reliance on such recorded apparatus, I maintained a cautious approach in referring to these recorded excerpts.

The quirks of concert schedules mean we infrequently have the luxury of working on one project at a time. While I am reasonably proficient at juggling multiple tasks and the benefit of accumulated experience has seen the cultivation of an efficient, concentrated practice regime, reflection upon this project reveals a craving for the artistic indulgence of a singular assignment, allowing the establishment of a robust musical and vocal platform upon which to craft the interpretation of each song. Yet it was merely the latter stages of preparation that offered a continuous five-week period in which I was permitted to focus solely upon these art songs; such was the time of most significant progress in the preparatory phase.

Upon reflection, the studio realization of these fifteen diverse miniatures saw an assorted array of emotions including nervous anticipation, individual exasperation, stoic resolve and ultimately, a gratifying sense of accomplishment. The vagaries of the human voice played their part within the first recording session, although perhaps it was the more cerebral elements of the activity that necessitated recalibration. Once the voice, mind and body were more effectively integrated through the second and third periods in the studio, the process itself was artistically fulfilling. Consideration of such a project confirms the requisite psychological resilience essential to singers. It's a type of mental robustness one learns in being able to deal with the self, understanding who and what you are in overcoming a default, self-critical stance.

The composer-accompanist

Regular dialogue with the composer during the months preceding the recording enhanced my understanding of the musical materials, as well as cultivating efficiency in the rehearsals undertaken immediately prior to the recording sessions. During such time, we unified our intentions in the approach to upbeats and the duration of concluding notes, while building characterization and fluctuations of mood in each piece.

Most significant of all, the rehearsals themselves saw us discuss at length the manner in which the eloquence of the text and music should be brought to the fore, unifying our expressive purpose through the fusion of vocal colours and nuances in the accompaniment. Developing my awareness of the songs through consistent discussion with Bowman also helped to build upon the conception of the poems presented by the composer through the scores, allowing the

establishment of a firm base for my own creative input. The cornerstones of this recording were the discipline and thoroughness with which we prepared our individual parts, the dialogue and interaction evident prior to and within the intensive rehearsals as a means of creating a joint conception of each song, which in turn acted as a catalyst for spontaneity and creativity within the studio setting.

Concert and recording studio environments

Presentation of repertoire in the live setting is a performer's means of holistically engaging the vocal, dramatic and creative complexities of the task at hand. In retrospect, Bowman's songs placed as the centrepiece of a series of concerts scheduled several months prior to the studio bookings could have assisted in reinforcing the depth of my expressive connection with the text, while polishing the links between voice and piano, serving our self-reflective processes, and instilling confidence in the integrity of the interpretation. Such elements are noted for future endeavours.

The audio presentation of original repertoire for voice and piano presents the challenge of stimulating the listener's imagination without the luxury of audience familiarity with the musical language or the visual impetus apparent within the concert environment. While my hope is the audio tracks in their completed state will move the audience and reflect a sense of the performers' autonomy, it is difficult to surpass in a recording the immediacy, the sense of physical engagement and the undeviating interaction one finds in performing for a live audience.

In considering the performer's perspective, the processes of studio recording and concert performance represent wholly diverse undertakings. In the live environment, the audience draws upon the performers' body language and other visual elements — the rapport between the artists on stage and the singer's penchant for facial expression, eye contact and bodily movement — that supplement the aural elements of performance. From a performative perspective, such a manner of live presentation allows the artists to live in the moment, where self-consciousness and concerns over irregularities or mistakes become subservient to the intensive presentation of musical, vocal and illustrative facets as a means of engaging and invigorating the audience.

In empathetic live performance, the artists instantly negotiate tempo, dynamics, mood and vocal tone in building spontaneity of

interpretation. Yet some vocal elements that convince in performance don't necessarily work for recording. With the artist's energy and willingness to take risks in concert performance, I can push the envelope through vocal characterization, rubato and phrasing that I wouldn't attempt in the recording studio, as the permanency of the recorded artefact prevents such leaps of faith. That is, the outcomes of a recording remain the same each time the recording is replayed, and sometimes a more conservative approach in the studio is necessary to achieve outcomes that are convincing over multiple repetitions.

Interaction with the producer

As an obsessive performer, I rarely listen to any recording I have made without inwardly squirming as aspects of the tonal characteristics, intonation or textual clarity fail to meet expectations. Listening to studio playbacks is confronting, as the proximity and starkness of imperfections are immediately apparent. The marked difference between the aural quality physically apparent in the act of singing, and the tonal quality I encounter when listening to myself in playback are also challenging. These two auditory states are so significantly distinctive, it is sometimes difficult to resolve the same person produces them. It's as if another singer adopts entirely my words and inflections, grunts and agreements — disconcerting, to say the least.

Yet analysis of work in the studio through the critical examination of playbacks is vital to the process of learning. Producers are, inevitably, not singers; they are often listening with a judiciously intent, though generalist perspective. As essential to self-assessment of the vocal and performative components requiring development, or to inferior elements I may be unaware of until they are accessible aurally, studio playbacks present the opportunity to note the traits I can improve upon in the moment of recording. After all, once an error or a moment of inadequacy is released on disc, it is apparent each time the recording is played.

The activity of recording itself is enigmatic. In comparison to the self-sufficient nature of concert preparation and performance, I relied heavily on the judgement of producer Phil Rowlands as the studio recording proceeded. I am not one of those musicians with instant recollection of the varying qualities of particular takes, and from past experience, what sounds enticing at the time of recording is often revealed by the playbacks as less beguiling. Rowlands'

positive and methodical disposition was a catalyst to achieve the most creatively enticing outcome possible. The producer ultimately seeks to not only capture the music created in the most aurally engaging way, but to deftly edit the various takes and patches in post-production, seamlessly documenting the studio output as an artistically sensitive and musically engaging entity.

In researching, learning, rehearsing and recording the works considered in this article, the project's collaborative elements — prolonged artistic interchange between composer and singer, and the tripartite interface between vocalist, accompanist and producer within the studio — resonate most intensely. Such alliances reveal multilayered complexities through the interaction of music's physical, spiritual, aural and cerebral elements. Ultimately, it is the music itself we serve.

ENDNOTES

1 *Real and Right and True: Songs by Calvin Bowman*, Decca/ Universal Music Australia (4817051).

2 Handel's *Ode to St Cecilia's Day* performed at the ANU School of Music 3 October 2013 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FIT7cpD9rwc>; Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo* performed at the ANU School of Music in August 2014 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KhDMNUqox1w>; Bach *St Matthew Passion* conducted by Joseph Nolan at St George's Cathedral, Perth, 6 April 2014 (<https://www.perthcathedral.org/News/st-matthew-passion-concert-receives-high-praise.html>).

3 "Now touch the air softly": soprano Emma Matthews, Orchestre Philharmonique de Monte-Carlo conducted by Brad Cohen, *Emma Matthews in Monte Carlo* (Deutsche Grammophon/ ABC Classics, 4763555). "Crossing the bar": soprano Sara Macliver, Catherine Davis (piano) *Seraphim* (ABC Classics, 4764362).

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APPENDIX

Critical acclaim within the press

“...Bowman's songs certainly have tunes and they are beautifully sung here by Sara Macliver, Paul McMahon and Christopher Richardson...But perhaps the greatest test of a songwriter is the ability to take a well-known poem and fit a tune to it in such a way that it seems always to have needed it. That's how I have felt each time I've heard McMahon singing Bowman's setting of Tennyson's *Crossing the Bar*” (Ford, 2018).

“...It is music that soothes and smiles, like those familiar nursery tunes in granny's music box. It makes singers sound good. Soprano Sara Macliver, tenor Paul McMahon and baritone Christopher Richardson obviously adore singing it and audiences relish it. Each singer produces a smooth, carefully textured line, with perfect intonation and phrasing...” (Plush, 2018).

“...Australian composer Calvin Bowman's beautiful pieces are awash with the idioms of English song, from the wistfulness of Ivor Gurney in *The Rainbow* to the biting wit of Warlock in *West Sussex Drinking Song* and, in the salty *Three Sea Songs*, Stanford's halcyon zest for naval life. Bowman's songs speak directly, their music stunningly—and often very simply—illuminating some of the English language's most potent lines, whether they be A. E. Housman's ode to the soft peace of death or Hilaire Belloc's salute to the dawn. Every song is given a sensitive, deeply touching performance from a superb array of singers and pianists.” (Real and Right and True, 2018).

“...Bowman is also no mean accompanist and accompanied his fellow artists, soprano Sara Macliver, tenor Paul McMahon and baritone Christopher Richardson through a generous selection of his songs. Macliver was apt at capturing contrasting moods of de la Mare's from his lunar reverie, *Silver* through to the raucous ride

of witches in *The Ride-by-Nights*. McMahon's classic tenor instrument is well suited to this music, and was particularly expressive in childlike settings of Robert Louis Stevenson" (Way, 2018).

"...This double album of art songs by Melbourne composer, pianist and organist Calvin Bowman is sometimes revelatory and always absorbing. It contains 56 world premiere recordings of his miniatures, beautifully sung by soprano Sara Macliver, tenor Paul McMahon and bass-baritone Christopher Richardson...Macliver is ravishing, especially in her pure, sweet higher register, while McMahon and Richardson share her intimate understanding, singing expressively, sensitively and with clarity..." (Zwartz, 2018).

BIOGRAPHY

Tenor Paul McMahon is a graduate of Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University (Doctor of Philosophy, Graduate Diploma of Music), Sydney Conservatorium of Music (Master of Music (Performance)) and the University of Southern Queensland (Bachelor of Creative Arts). In 2002, he was awarded a Churchill Fellowship for intensive study of Baroque repertoire under Marius van Altena at the Royal Conservatoire in The Hague. Published regularly through Taylor and Francis (<https://www.tandfonline.com>), Springer (<http://www.springer.com>), Australian Academic Press (<https://www.australianacademicpress.com.au>) and ABC Classic FM (<http://www.abc.net.au/classic/>), Paul's research interests include historical performance practice, music performance and vocal pedagogy. He is currently a Senior Lecturer in Music, Deputy Head of School and Convenor of Performance at the School of Music, The Australian National University. Performing regularly as a soloist with symphony orchestras, chamber music groups and choirs throughout Australia, New Zealand and Asia, Paul is one of Australia's leading exponents of baroque repertoire, particularly the Evangelist role in the Passions of J. S. Bach. Career highlights include Bach's *Johannes Passion* with the Australian Chamber Orchestra (<http://www.aco.com.au/>) under Richard Tognetti; Bach's *Matthäus-Passion* with the Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra under Roy Goodman (<http://www.roygoodman.com/>); Haydn's *Die*

Schöpfung with the Australian Opera and Ballet Orchestra under Richard Hickox, Mozart's Great Mass in C Minor with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra under Masaaki Suzuki (<http://www.mso.com.au/>) and Mozart's Requiem with the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra (<http://www.hkpo.com/eng/home/index.jsp>) under Manfred Honeck.

Paul's recent collaborations include recitals with the renowned pianists Bengt Forsberg and Kathryn Stott (<http://www.kathrynstott.com/index.htm>), the New Zealand String Quartet (<http://www.nzsq.co.nz/>) and the Australia Ensemble (<http://www.ae.unsw.edu.au/>). Paul has appeared as soloist in Opera Australia's annual Williamstown concert, he performed Don Ottavio in *Don Giovanni* for Opera Queensland and principal roles in *Semele*, *The Fairy Queen*, *L'Orfeo*, *Idomeneo* and *David and Jonathan* for Pinchgut Opera. He has appeared as soloist in the Australian Festival of Chamber Music, the festivals of Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane and he has given concerts for broadcast on BBC Radio 3, ABC Classic FM and the MBS network. Paul was a member of The Song Company from 1996 to 2001, touring regularly with this vocal ensemble throughout Australia, Asia and Europe, and a member of Sounds Baroque (2003–2005) in the Musica Viva in Schools program. He is a featured artist with Tommie Andersson (lute) and Daniel Yeadon (viola da gamba) in the Musica Viva Australia Countrywide Program.

Paul's discography includes the Decca art song double-cd set *Real and Right and True*, a solo album of English, French and Italian lute songs entitled *A Painted Tale*; a CD and DVD recording of Handel's *Messiah*; Handel's *Semele*; Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo*; Purcell's *The Fairy Queen*; Mozart's Requiem and *Idomeneo*, Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana* and Fauré's *La naissance de Venus*. He is featured on *Swoon - A Visual and Musical Odyssey* and *The Swoon Collection Gold Edition*; the Christmas discs *Perfect Day*, *Silent Night* and *Glorious Night*; *Prayer for Peace*; *Eternity*; *Danny Boy*, *Ye Banks and Braes*, *Praise II* and the soundtrack to the Australian feature film *The Bank*.

A History of Vocal Pedagogy – Intuition and Science

By Joseph Talia, OAM (Australian Academic Press)

Dianne Spence, B.Mus (Adel), AUA (Adel), A.Mus.A, M.I.M.T

Private studio teacher, Balaklava, South Australia

Joseph Talia (2017). *A History of Vocal Pedagogy – Intuition and Science*. Australian Academic Press.

A History of Vocal Pedagogy – Intuition and Science is the first in a series of several books on vocal pedagogy by Melbourne based noted tenor, teacher, scholar and opera director Joseph Talia OA. Encompassing 45 chapters on over 650 pages, and with foreword written by esteemed soprano Lisa Gasteen OA, *A History of Vocal Pedagogy* sets expectations high.

After the portrait of Maria Callas on the front cover, it was in fact the bibliography that first drew me to the book. It is an impressive assembly of over 240 book titles and monographs plus over 250 journal articles, constituting an arguably pretty comprehensive library of the subject – as far as publications in English are concerned.

A History of Vocal Pedagogy represents 15 years of research by Talia. We learn in the foreword that the author uses “scientific and physiological frameworks to analyse historical pedagogies to the art of singing”. For me, the juxtaposition of the scientific approach with the, often colourful, characters of the portrayed singing teachers from the 16th century until the time of Caruso and Pavarotti, worked well and lent much charm to the reading.

The reader is first introduced to the Pioneers of Vocal Art, then given insight into the Bolognese School. Then come the Garcia and Lamperti Dynasties, followed by extensive information about Garcia’s Disciples, and finally the Independents who sought to step out of the shadow of their predecessors.

It is intriguing to read about the different concepts, knowledge and methodologies passed down from teacher to student, e.g. Garcia and Marchesi, and their influence on, among others, Nellie Melba. This particular genealogy would make a most fascinating study on its own and we realise its reach into our time when Lisa Gasteen mentions in her Foreword that she was “vocally twice removed from Garcia Fils!”

I enjoyed learning about the development of laryngoscopes in 1855 by Manuel Garcia, a feat that was certainly a gamechanger in the scientific approach to the singing voice. His quest was to improve the training of voices in the vocal style referred to as Bel Canto, which of course simply means Beautiful Singing. This is the style most closely associated with Rossini operas in the 19th century and still held up as gold standard by many.

This book highlights impressively the role of the “human factor” in any “clash of ideas” in the arena of scientific research. In Chapter 23 (on Manuel Garcia) for instance, we learn how the coup de glotte incited a great controversy about the onset of sound and we also have the opportunity to contemplate his theories of timbres as presented to the French Academy of Sciences in 1841 (p. 227).

The passion and reliance on instincts innate to the art form of singing, regularly lead to conflicts based on real or perceived differences or misunderstandings between teachers and students or, even more so, teachers of different “camps”. There is a description of this phenomenon in chapter 30, where Talia details a controversy caused by H.H. Curtis, a New York throat specialist who worked with Metropolitan opera singers. Curtis launched an attack on Mathilde Marchesi’s - Nellie Melba’s teacher - method, regarding the idea of a “firm attack at the vocal folds” (p. 354).

Another huge playground for conflicting ideas is and was the vast area of breathing technique. The thread of ideas on breathing is set out clearly and very detailed in the table of contents, and one can move through the centuries of vocal technique from the Castrati schools through to our own time. I recommend in particular the page on Richard Miller and the Appoggio system of breath management (p. 272).

Many a reader may recognise their own teachers’ vocabulary in the book and be able to trace it back to its historical roots or a particular pedagogue. There is for instance an account of Joan Sutherland’s and Richard Bonynges’. pedagogical influences. It is fascinating to trace

their roots to De Reszke, who taught Clive Carey, who taught Joan Sutherland (p. 552).

The validity and longevity of great pedagogical ideas is confirmed in a quote from Berton Coffin about De Reszke: “Great teaching is not lost: it is handed down in various forms, and the fruits may be heard afterwards for many generations” (p. 552).

Talia also ventures to give his own opinion on several occasions and for instance rues the “emasculatation” of young singers of today, trying to be “inoffensive” (p. 555). A fairly modern consideration seems to be the perceived conflict between vocal technique and the desire to give everything to the operatic (or, although not mentioned here, musical theatre) role. Emotions in opera (and MT) are notoriously larger than life, making it even more imperative that singers have the technique and passion to match this heightened level of expressivity. It is important that teachers of young singers recognise this tension and find ways to overcome it.

I found this book both interesting and, due to the same comprehensiveness that makes its quality, also challenging. It shows most eloquently that the development of singing teachers’ art, craft and intuition has a long and rich history. Many deep-thinking and talented people have developed ideas and systems over the centuries many of which we still lean upon.

Overall, the book gives the reader a clear historical record of the development of voice production and vocal science pertaining to Western Classical Singing, over 450 years. It gives surprisingly in-depth characterisations of the great teachers of singing, their respective approaches and students as well as a lively account of their discussions about vocal technique. Most of all, it encourages us all to keep asking ourselves: what indeed makes a great singer and a great pedagogue? And how can we be the best teacher possible?

And this quest is not necessarily limited to classical voice, but that is for another book.

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BIOGRAPHY

Dianne Spence is a vocal and piano teacher from Balaklava, SA. She has taught students in Classical and Musical Theatre styles for 35 years, and is a choral conductor and church organist. She has been a founding chairman of the Balaklava Community Arts and Eisteddfod.

Up from Down-Under: The Australian Origins of Frederick Matthias Alexander and the Alexander Technique

By Rosslyn McLeod (Mouritz)

Julia Nafisi

University of Melbourne

Rosslyn McLeod. (2017). *Up from Down-Under. The Australian Origins of Frederick Matthias Alexander and the Alexander Technique* (4th ed.). Mouritz.

The *Alexander Technique* teaches fundamental facts about functional movement and the mind-body connection. It was developed by the Australian actor Frederick Matthias Alexander (1869-1955) in the 1890s. Having lost his voice, he used mirrors to study himself to discover if his problem was caused by something he was doing. Subsequently he not only managed to remedy his own vocal problems but realised that most people suffered from the same postural defects he had noticed in himself and developed a technique that is now practised in more than 40 countries both for its general health benefits and specific merits for actors, dancers, instrumentalists and singers. There are many international organisations dedicated to F. M. Alexander's work and numerous books in several languages about the man and his work. Events like the 11th *World Alexander Congress* that has just been held in Chicago (July 29th – Aug 4th 2018) demonstrate, with more than 500 teachers attending, the continued significance of Alexander's work.

However, at the time of the first conception of Rosslyn McLeod's *Up from Down-Under* in the late 1980's, there was no comprehensive biography of F. M. Alexander, little information about his life in general and even less regarding his Australian years (1869-1904). McLeod set to task and the first edition of *Up from Down-Under. The Australian Origins of Frederick Matthias Alexander and the Alexander Technique* was published in 1994 with a second and third edition following in 1995 and a fourth, revised and enlarged edition in 2017. The latter is the subject of this review.

Author and filmmaker, Rosslyn McLeod (born 1937) has long had a passionate interest in the work and life of F.M. Alexander. A music educator originally from Sydney now living in Adelaide, she began training as an Alexander

teacher in the 1970s and has subsequently given much time to bringing the *Alexander Technique* to public attention.

The journey leading to the book is a fascinating tale in itself. True investigative journalism, in a pre-internet era where research meant countless hours in public libraries and archives, looking through stacks of old newspaper records as well as locating and reconnecting with descendants of some of F.M. Alexander's colleagues and students.

Violinist Gertrude Summerhayes and singer Lilian Twycross for instance were regular parts of F.M.s acting performance group. The author recalls: "The daughter of Gertrude Summerhayes had two wonderful family scrapbooks detailing Gertrude's violin playing and her mother's (Madame Cecilia Summerhayes) piano playing. The scrapbooks had two original programs of FM and his fellow artists performances in Melbourne, May 11th, 1898 (McLeod, 2017, p. 91), and Adelaide, July 22nd 1898 (ibid, p. 93)."

The singer Lilian Twycross not only sang as part of the concert party, but also trained with Alexander in the late 1890's in Melbourne to become Chief Assistant at his studio.

The author further interviewed and obtained material from two of Dr Alexander Leeper's (long time Warden at Trinity College, the University of Melbourne) daughters' who stated that "it was like being in a time machine – they talked to me of the early 1900's (this interview was in the late 1980's) as though it was yesterday" (McLeod, personal communication, Feb 2018). She also held interviews with the granddaughter of Dr Charles Bage, F. M.'s doctor and pupil and Ken Alexander, scholar on the Alexander family tree.

The book portrays both F.M Alexander, the man and the country of his birth and professional development. Here follows a brief summary of the book chapters.

Chapters 1-4 (*Early Australia; England – the Alexander Brothers; Gold Gold; Van Diemen's Land 1830-1880s*) paint a vivid picture of the historical, social and cultural context into which F.

M. was born and follows him through his overall happy and successful school years including his appointment as Pupil Teacher, a so-called “Monitor”.

In chapters 5-7 (*F. M. Alexander, Wynyard and Warratah; Marvellous Melbourne; F. M. Alexander in Melbourne*) we see the protagonist conclude his schooling under the positive and inspiring influence of his teacher Robert Robertson, take up the position of junior accountant at the Mt Bischoff Tin Mine and develop his interests in the arts, especially amateur dramatic performances. He moves to Melbourne in the 1880's when the city was “on the crest of a wave” p. 43), has no difficulty finding employment that allows him to pursue the study of all aspects of drama. He studies under Mr F. W. Hill, the son of T. P. Hill, author of the “standard Australasian work on elocution” *The Oratorical Trainer – A System of Voice culture* (p. 52). Alexander appears in numerous recitation performances, steadily increases his repertoire to include several Shakespeare characters and finds acclaim in contemporary reviews, e.g. “*Table Talk*” (p.60).

Chapter 8 (*Interlude*) describes the pivot point of Alexander's life, namely his increasing voice problems and, unable to find help, his setting out to understand and remedy their cause. The consequent development of his technique rests on the “learning to inhibit a habitual response to a stimulus and learning to choose a more appropriate way to respond (ibid. p. 63).”

Chapters 9 and 10 (*On Tour – Tasmania and New Zealand and Teaching and Reciting*) lay out beautifully and through countless contemporary documents how Alexander, having regained his full vocal capacities, went on “Grand Elocutionary Recital” tour and then established himself in Melbourne as reciter and teacher. The numerous reviews quoted from newspapers and pamphlets of the time, as well as excerpts of articles on his craft, by Alexander himself, give as much an insight into an artform that has all but disappeared as they are testimony to Alexander's high level of accomplishment. The grateful reader marvels at the effort that would have gone into retrieving and assembling these time documents.

Chapters 11 and 12 (*Miss Lilian Twycross and Dr Alexander Leeper*) focus on two highly interesting and successful personalities who admired and worked with Alexander and came to be most influential in carrying forth his legacy.

In Chapter 13 (*Sydney*) we follow Alexander to Sydney where he moves in 1900 to continue his work, take on the role of director of

the Sydney Dramatic and Operatic Conservatorium and start to broaden the direction of his work from the “more specific vocal and breathing areas to the all-embracing field of general health” (ibid. p.138). The book leaves its protagonist when he moves to England in 1904, never to return to his country of origin until his death in 1955.

There follows, as Appendix I, 25 pages of *Alexander's Autobiographical Sketch*, an eminently fascinating account of some aspects of his life in Alexander's own voice, including the astonishing tale of his winning the means of travelling to England at the “Newmarket Handicap” horse race.

Further Appendices present a list of poems recited by Alexander (II), a selection of these (III) and a poem by Alexander himself (IV) making the reader once again contemplate the lost – or forgotten – art of “elocution”. There are further copies of facsimiles of the 1902 prospectus for the Sydney Dramatic and Operatic Conservatorium (Appendix V) and (VI), a reprint of an article “Self-reliance and Perseverance” in the Alexander Journal no. 26, 2017, by the author.

The idea of showing visual images of Tasmania and Alexander's work in action, supplemented by pertinent interviews grew during the research for the book and resulted in the documentary film *FM Alexander. His Life. His Legacy*.

Rosslyn McLeod. (2015). *F M Alexander: His Life... His Legacy... (Documentary Film)*. www.fmalexanderdoc.com

Using contemporary photos and drawings to illustrate a succinctly scripted narration, the film creates a vivid picture of Tasmania in the mid- to late 1800s in general and Alexander's circumstances in particular.

Poignantly and with simple clarity we learn of the chain of events and thoughts that led Alexander to conceive and formulate his technique.

Interviews are interwoven with footage of Alexander Teacher Diana Devitt-Dawson's with a 16 year old student, linking the information to practical application. Footage of F.M. Alexander himself at work gives a wonderful impression of the charisma and calm intensity of the master.

Interviewees include Erica Whittaker, first generation Alexander trainee, flautist James Galway, medical professionals Prof Paul Little, Prof Lucy Brown, Prof Galen Cranz and members

of King's College Choir (interviewed in 2014 on their Australian tour).

There is a remarkable interview with Erika Whittaker, one of the seven people who joined the first Alexander teacher training course starting in London in 1931 and run by Alexander himself. She recalls how, at first, he was reluctant to train teachers. He was then in his 60's, deeply immersed and experienced in his craft. Thankfully he let himself be convinced and started training selected candidates with characteristic rigour, working with a limited number of people until his death in London in 1955.

The film also features the film-maker herself and her close friend, Jeannie Kelso playing some wonderful Celtic music.

Meticulously researched, well written and presented, both the book *Up from Down-Under. The Australian Origins of Frederick Matthias Alexander and the Alexander Technique*, and the documentary film *FM Alexander. His Life. His Legacy*. make a fascinating and thought-provoking contributions to the body of works on a man whose remarkable life and discoveries will continue to be a source of inspiration and provide material for exploration long into the future.

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BIOGRAPHY

Julia began her voice training in her hometown Munich/Germany and continued her studies in Vienna/Austria, then launching into performing across Europe and later Australia. Her qualifications include Bühnenreifeprüfung Oper (Final Stage Examination Opera), a MMus (Vocal Pedagogy), Grad Dip Ed and a PhD. She now divides her time between performing, teaching and researching, the latter with a focus on the role of gesture and body-movement in voice teaching/therapy and performance as well as German Lieder in Australia and has published numerous articles on both topics. Julia currently teaches Voice at the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music and is an Honorary Research Fellow at

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