

How to efficiently communicate between singers and listeners

by

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Abstract

The purpose of this senior thesis is to explore how to communicate effectively as a singer with an audience or listeners. This paper explains the works chosen for the mezzo-soprano solo concert, understanding the repertoire as well as the composer's story and socio-historical content.

The repertoire discussed in this paper includes

Clara Schumann, Sechs Lieder Op, 13

a. Ich stand in dunklen träumen

b. Sie liebten sich beide

c. Liebeszauber

d. Der Mond kommt still gegangen

e. Ich hab'in deinem Auge

F. Die stille lotosblume

Barbara Strozzi's Udite amanti, L'Eraclito Amoroso

Georges Bizet's L'amour est un oiseau rebelle, from *Carmen*.

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Table of Contents

List of Figures	vi
Acknowledgements	vii
Chapter 1 - Clara Schumann, Sechs Lieder Op, 13	1
Biographical Information.....	1
Song Background and Analysis.....	6
Sechs Lieder op.13	6
Ich stand in dunklen träumen	6
Sie liebten sich beide	8
Liebeszauber	10
Der Mond kommt still gegangen	12
Ich hab'in deinem Auge.....	14
Die stille lotosblume	16
Chapter 2 - Songs from the Seventeenth Century.....	20
Biographical Information.....	20
Song Background and Analysis.....	22
Specific Musical Characteristics.....	24
Chapter 3 - Habanera from the Opera <i>Carmen</i>	26
Biographical Information.....	26
Reasons for the Failure of Carmen's debut	31
Song Background and Analysis.....	32
L'amour est un oiseau rebelle.....	32
Chapter 4 - How to Portray a Character.....	38
Preparation	38
1. Background Check.....	38
2. Analyzing the Song.....	39
3. Performing	40
3-1. Body Language.....	40
3-2. Characterization.....	41
3-3. Character's Expressions	42

3-4. Different Languages	43
<i>Italian Diction</i>	43
<i>French Diction</i>	44
<i>German Diction</i>	44
4. Get Feedback and Internalize the Absorption.....	45
Deeper Impact for me	46
Bibliography	48

List of Figures

Figure 1 <i>Clara Schumann Seated at the Piano</i>	1
Figure 2 Op. 13, No. 1 “Ich stand in dunklen träumen” mm. 1-8.....	7
Figure 3 mm.5-6.....	7
Figure 4 mm. 19-20.....	7
Figure 5 Op. 13, No. 2 “Sie liebten sich beide” mm.18-19	9
Figure 6 Op. 13, No. 2 “Sie liebten sich beide” mm.14-15	9
Figure 7 Op. 13, No. 2 “Sie liebten sich beide” mm.28-30	10
Figure 8 Op. 13, No. 3 “Liebeszauber” mm.1-3	11
Figure 9 Op. 13, No. 4 “Der mond kommt still gegangen” mm.22-25	13
Figure 10 Op. 13, No. 5 “Ich hab'in deinem Auge” mm.9-13	14
Figure 11 Op. 13, No. 5 “Ich hab'in deinem Auge” mm.23-24	15
Figure 12 Op. 13, No. 5 “Ich hab'in deinem Auge” mm.26-34	15
Figure 13 Op. 13, No. 6 “Die stille lotosblume” mm.35-47	18
Figure 14 Op. 13, No. 6 “Die stille lotosblume” mm. 8-10.....	18
Figure 15 Op. 13, No. 6 “Die stille lotosblume” mm.1-2	19
Figure 16 <i>Barbara Strozzi</i>	20
Figure 17 <i>Barbara Strozzi</i> " udite Amanti,L' Eraclito amoroso", mm.151-163.....	23
Figure 18 <i>A portrait of Bizet by Camillo Midas</i>	26
Figure 19 Georges Bizet ‘s L'amour est un oiseau rebelle's title from <i>Carmen</i>	33
Figure 20 Rhythmic ostinato used in the habanera	34
Figure 21 Georges Bizet’s "L'amour est un oiseau rebelle" mm.1-3.....	34
Figure 22 Georges Bizet’s "L'amour est un oiseau rebelle" mm.5-7	35
Figure 23 Georges Bizet’s "L'amour est un oiseau rebelle" mm. 20-23.....	36

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Chapter 1 - Clara Schumann, Sechs Lieder Op, 13

Biographical Information

Clara Schumann, also known as Clara Schumann, née Wieck, (born September 13, 1819, Leipzig, Saxony, died May 20, 1896, Frankfurt, Germany) was one of the best-known German female musicians and composer of the Romantic period, and the spouse and musical partner of German composer and literary figure Robert Schumann. During her life, Clara Schumann was also highly respected as a composer, a fact that is rarely mentioned in music history textbooks.¹



Figure 1 *Clara Schumann Seated at the Piano*²

Clara inherited a very impressive musical talent from her parents. Clara's father, Friedrich Wieck (1785-1873), was a prominent music educator in Leipzig at the time, and although he was

¹ Eugene Gates, "Clara Schumann: A composer's Wife as Composer", in *The Kapralova Society Journal*, Vol.7,2 2009, p.1

² Getty Images. *Clara Schumann Seated at the Piano*, undated. Accessed March 22, 2022. <https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.er.lib.k-state.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-8500987673?rskey=pjv32c>

self-taught in music, he was a very shrewd businessman. He was eager to be recognized by others in the field of music, and he believed that he could achieve musical success by using the talents of his immediate family. Clara's mother, Mariane Tromlitz Wieck (1797-1872), was also a well-known singer and pianist. Mariane studied with Wieck during her childhood and continued to be his pupil after their marriage. She often appeared as a soprano in concerts at the Leipzig Opera House from 1816-1817. Each of Marianna's public appearances or performances contributed to Wieck's growing prestige as a music educator. This busy, endless lifestyle also led Marianna to resent Wieck, and the two eventually divorced in 1824.³

Gates, Eugene in "Clara Schumann: A Composer's Wife as Composer." states, "Even before Clara was born, her father was determined to mold her into a piano artist of the order." Wieck knew that a successful pianist would attract a great deal of social attention and would make him the most famous piano teacher in Europe. He pinned this desire on his daughter, whom he named Clara, which means "illustrious". Clara's father turned out to be a major influence on her life.⁴

In her early years, Clara was often cared for by a maid due to her parents' busy schedules, therefore Clara did not begin to speak until she was 4 or 5 years old. She wrote this in her diary,

"I was born at Leipzig, Sept. 13th 1819, ...and received the name Clara Josephine. . . . My father kept a musical lending-library and carried on a small business in pianofortes. Since both he and my mother were much occupied in teaching, and besides that my mother practised from one to two hours a day, I was chiefly left to the care of the maid She was not very fluent of speech, and it may well have been owing to this that I did not begin to pronounce even single words until I was between four and five, and up to that time understood as little as I spoke. But I had always been accustomed to hear a great deal of piano playing and my ear became more sensitive to musical sounds than to those of speech."⁵

³ Ibid., p.1

⁴ Ibid., p. 2

⁵ Ibid., p.1

Although she could not understand spoken language, by this time she was used to listening to many keyboards works, making her ears more sensitive to music.⁶ At the age of five, Clara also began to receive a rigorous musical education. When she was seven, she spent at least three hours a day at the piano. She began training in music theory and composition when she was 10 years old. On November 8, 1830, at the age of 11, Clara became known at a recital at the Gewandhaus in Leipzig, and many critics praised her playing, one of them was Ludwig Spohr. He wrote: “Her compositions, like the young artist herself, are among the most remarkable newcomers in the world of art.”⁷ As a result of this successful concert, Clara became more famous, and Wieck succeeded in raising his status as a music educator. By 1835, Clara had already established a reputation in Europe as a piano prodigy, and in 1838, she was honored by the Austrian court and elected to the prestigious Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde in Vienna. Her early musical admirers included Jakob Ludwig Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy, Frédéric François Chopin, Liszt Ferencz, and the man who would eventually become her husband, Robert Schumann.

When Clara was nine years old, she met Robert Schumann, who was eight years her senior. Robert was a student of Friedrich Wieck and later became Wieck’s son-in-law. As the two grew up in the same environment, they became friends in music and life. They exchanged musical ideas, quoted each other's works, and gradually developed a romantic love for one another. In November 1835 Robert told Clara of his love for her, but after Wieck’s strongly discouraged her, she complied with request to broke off contact with Schumann. In 1837, Schumann formally asked Clara's father for permission to marry her, but Friedrich shunned his

⁶ Ibid., p. 1

⁷ Ibid., p. 2

request. However, after three years of fighting Wieck, the lovers finally took the matter to court and in 1840 the court ruled that they were free to marry without Wieck's consent. The couple got married in 1840.⁸

Clara and Robert married at the day before her 21st birthday. Their married life was ideal but somewhat hampered by Clara's career as a touring concert pianist. There were two pianos in their shared home, but Robert Schumann demanded absolute silence when composing, causing Clara to sacrifice her time practicing piano and her own composing in exchange for his work. In addition, Clara spent most of her time on household chores. She had eight children in fourteen years, however due to financial troubles and Robert Schumann's mental sickness,⁹ Clara needed to resume piano tours to keep up with the family's daily expenses. From 1840 to 1854, Clara performed at least 139 public concerts. But rest and treatment failed to improve Schumann's illness, and in 1850 the couple decided to move to Düsseldorf, in hopes that the change in surroundings would bring Robert pleasure. But it was not until 1853 that the couple found a house with a room where Clara could practice without disturbing Robert's creativity. This was the first time since her marriage that she had her own studio.¹⁰ From 1853 onwards, the couple formed a close partnership with a young Johannes Brahms. After Robert Schumann's death in 1856, Clara continued this friendship throughout her life.

In February 1854, Robert finally had a nervous breakdown and attempted to drown himself in the Rhine River. He did not succeed, and he ended up being admitted to a private

⁸ Ibid., p. 3

⁹ Abraham Gerald E.H. 2019. "Robert Schumann | German Composer." In *Encyclopædia Britannica*.
<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Robert-Schumann>.

¹⁰ Eugene Gates, "Clara Schumann: A composer's Wife as Composer", in *The Kapralova Society Journal*, Vol.7,2 2009, p.5

psychiatric hospital near Bonn, Clara was forbidden to visit her husband in this hospital. Despite this separation, Clara had to start touring again in October 1854, when her youngest child was only four months old, in order to support her children and pay Robert's high medical expenses. Clara finally saw her husband on July 27th after more than two years, and Robert died two days after their meeting. Robert Schumann's death marked the beginning of Clara's forty-one years of widowhood. In October 1856, she placed her children with relatives, friends, and boarding schools, and then she resumed her career as a performer. For many years after that, she followed the same pattern of life and performed extensively in Europe and England. Although Clara's primary purpose in performing was to financially support her children, it is possible that touring also served her psychological needs as an artist and, on some level, comforted her from the grief caused by Robert's death. She edited not only her husband's collected works (published 1881-93) but also her own orchestral works (among them a piano concerto), chamber music, songs, and many solo piano pieces.

In 1873, due to health problems, Clara performed less frequently but continued to perform until 1888. In 1878, Clara began teaching piano at the Frankfurt Conservatory and gave a recital in October for the 50th anniversary of her musical career. In 1892, at the age of 73, she resigned from her job as a teacher at the conservatory but continued to teach in Frankfurt. Finally in 1896, at the age of 76, Clara Schumann died of a cerebral hemorrhage.¹¹

¹¹ Ibid., p. 6

Song Background and Analysis

Sechs Lieder op.13

Ich stand in dunklen träumen

Clara's first piece in Opus 13 is *Ich stand in dunklen träumen*, which was inspired by Heinrich Heine's twenty-third poem in *Die Heimkehr* (The Homing), (1823-1824). The poem is composed of three four-line stanzas, each consisting of eight bars of music, in a regular 4+4 structure. Nancy Walker in *A stylistic analysis of selected Lieder of Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel and Clara Wieck Schumann*, shows the following first five bars of the piece are the prelude, and the next four bars repeat the melodic line of the prelude. The first verse is a repeated eighth-note chord rhythm played by the piano, followed by a two-bar interlude. (See Figure 2) The second and third verses are connected by an unstable diminished seventh chord in measure 23. The final five bars, which concludes, are also almost identical to the melody of the introduction. Although the accompaniment is more conservative and repeats the melody, the use of chromatic scales makes the accompaniment more romantic and progressive. In addition to the similar length of each verse, the melody of each verse has a similar feel, and each verse begins with a weak start to the melody. The combination of eighth notes with dotted quarter notes and quarter notes with dotted quarter notes is used more often in this piece, and such combinations occur eight times in the piece. (See Figure 3 and Figure 4) In this piece, upward leaps and accented beats are used to emphasize the lyrics that are strongly expressed. For example, "Träumen" ("dreams") in measure

7 and "heimlich" ("secretly") in measure 12 are the higher notes used in the song, except for "von" ("on") in measure 26 of the third verse, which does not match this pattern.¹²

Nº 1. **Ziemlich langsam.** Clara Schumann, Op. 13.

Singstimme.

PIANOFORTE.

p

ritard. Ich stand in dunk-len Träu-men und starr-te ihr Bild-niss

Figure 2 Op. 13, No. 1 “Ich stand in dunklen träumen” mm. 1-8

Ich stand

Figure 3 mm.5-6

und wie

Figure 4 mm. 19-20

¹² Nancy Lucile Walker, *A stylistic analysis of selected Lieder of Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel and Clara Wieck Schumann*, (Indiana University, 1988),

<https://www.proquest.com/docview/303692046?accountid=11789&parentSessionId=07HB5CKyw0%2Bs%2BSx9WxrHjcdivbf1KKdIWz%2Bj6P%2B3vDg%3D&pq-origsite=primo>.

Ich stand in dunklen Träumen¹³

Ich stand in dunklen Träumen
Und starrte ihr Bildniss an,
Und das geliebte Antlitz
Heimlich zu leben begann.

I stood darkly dreaming
And stared at her picture,
And that beloved face
Sprang mysteriously to life.

Um ihre Lippen zog sich
Ein Lächeln wunderbar,
Und wie von Wehmuthstränen
Erglänzte ihr Augenpaar.

About her lips
A wondrous smile played,
And as with sad tears,
Her eyes gleamed.

Auch meine Thränen flossen
Mir von den Wangen herab,
Und ach, ich kanns nicht glauben,
Dass ich dich verloren hab!

And my tears flowed
Down my cheeks,
And ah, I cannot believe
That I have lost you!

Sie liebten sich beide

Sie liebten sich beide is the second piece in Clara's Opus 13 work, composed in 1842. The source of the composition is still Heinrich Heine's lyric poem *Die Heimkehr* (The Homing), and it is based on the thirty-third poem in the collection.¹⁴ The poem is in two parts of four-line stanzas, which Clara uses repetition in her compositions, in order to make the music and text work together. However, in order to fit the parts of the poem that need to be emphasized, Clara makes small changes to the rhythm of each stanza. For example, the "liebten" ("loved") in measures 5 is in eighth notes, while the "trennten" ("separated") in measures 19 of the second stanza is in eighth notes. (See Figure 5) "The purpose is to extend the duration of the "trennten" in the song so that it can be expressed better and more clearly. The same phenomenon occurs in measures 11 and measure 25. Both parts of the piece have roughly the same melody, except for

¹³ Richard, Stokes. 2005a. "Ich Stand in Dunkeln Träumen | Song Texts, Lyrics & Translations." Oxford Lieder. 2005. <https://www.oxfordlieder.co.uk/song/691>.

¹⁴ Ibid., p.74

the last two bars of each section. For example, in measure 14-15 the melody goes D-A-B-flat-G, (See Figure 6) but in measure 28-30 the melody becomes D-C-B-flat-G. (See Figure 7) For the piano accompaniment, the two sections are almost identical. The accompaniment in measure 12 and measure 26, for example, are both chords of the same function, but measure 26 uses a deeper layer of chords than measure 12, to emphasize the "gestorben" ("died") in the lyrics.¹⁵



Figure 5 Op. 13, No. 2 “Sie liebten sich beide” mm.18-19



Figure 6 Op. 13, No. 2 “Sie liebten sich beide” mm.14-15

¹⁵ Ibid., p.75



Figure 7 Op. 13, No. 2 “Sie liebten sich beide” mm.28-30

Sie liebten sich beide¹⁶

Sie liebten sich beide, doch keiner
Wollt es dem andern gestehn;
Sie sahen sich an so feindlich,
Und wollten vor Liebe vergehn.

They loved another, but neither
Wished to tell the other
They gave each other such hostile looks,
Yet nearly died of love.

Sie trennten sich endlich und sahn sich
Nur noch zuweilen im Traum;
Sie waren längst gestorben,
Und wussten es selber kaum.

In the end they parted and saw
Each other but rarely in dreams.
They died so long ago
And hardly knew it themselves.

Liebeszauber

Liebeszauber ("loves magic") is the third song of Opus 13 and was composed at the same time as "Sie liebten sich beide". These two pieces were also given to Robert Schumann as a birthday gift in 1842 and were considered by Robert to be Clara's best compositions up to that point. This piece was composed from Emanuel Geibel's five-stanza poem, the longest of the six pieces included in Opus 13. As Clara chose to repeat some of the text in the arrangement in the vocal line. For example, the last two lines of the fourth stanza and the final stanza. In the fourth

¹⁶ Richard, Stokes. 2005b. "Sie Liebten Sich Beide | Song Texts, Lyrics & Translations." Oxford Lieder. 2005.
<https://www.oxfordlieder.co.uk/song/770>.

stanza "um Blumen, Wald und Schlucht ergoss sich goldig rother Schein" ("around the flowers, forest and ravine emptied themselves of their golden-red light") is repeated twice.¹⁷ In contrast to the other stanzas, which are mostly eight bars long, the fourth stanza extends directly to thirteen bars. The same recurring situation occurs in the final stanza, where "war nur sein Wiederhall" ("was only its echo") is also repeated. The piano accompaniment is also very characteristic because of the repeated use of eight-note triplet chords which is rarely. unlike the other pieces, this one has no intro, and the vocal melody takes precedence over the accompaniment. (See Figure 8) This is because in most vocal works, listeners are cued to what is coming to them by the style and timbre of the piano accompaniment.¹⁸ But the vocal melody in this piece takes precedence over the piano accompaniment, and the listener does not know the beat and other information about the entire piece in advance, which is why the beginning of this piece is rather unusual.

6

LIEBESZAUBER.
(Geibel.)

Nº 3. **Bewegt.**

Singstimme: Die Lie - - be sass als Nach - ti - gall im Ro - senbusch und

PIANOFORTE.

Figure 8 Op. 13, No. 3 "Liebeszauber" mm.1-3

¹⁷ Ibid., p.77

¹⁸ Xinyu, Chen. "Research on the Role of Piano Accompaniment in Vocal Music Singing." *the proceeding of the* (2019), p.1170

Liebeszauber¹⁹

Die Liebe saß als Nachtigall
Im Rosenbusch und sang;
Es flog der wunderschöne Schall
Den grünen Wald entlang.
Und wie er klang, - da stieg im Kreis
Aus tausend Kelchen Duft,
Und alle Wipfel rauschten leis',
Und leiser ging die Luft;
Die Bäche schwiegen, die noch kaum.
Geplätschert von den Höh'n,
Die Rehlein standen wie im Traum.
Und lauschten dem Getön.
Und hell und immer heller floß.
Der Sonne Glanz herein,
Um Blumen, Wald und Schlucht ergoß.
Sich goldig roter Schein.
Ich aber zog den Wald entlang
Und hörte auch den Schall.
Ach! was seit jener Stund'
War nur sein Widerhall.

Love, as a nightingale,
Perched on a rosebush and sang;
The wondrous sound floated
Along the green forest.
And as it sounded, there arose a scent
From a thousand calyxes,
And all the treetops rustled softly,
And the breeze moved softer still;
The brooks fell silent, barely
Having babbled from the heights,
The fawns stood as if in a dream
And listened to the sound.
Brighter, and ever brighter
The sun shone on the scene,
And poured its red glow
Over flowers, forest and glen.
But I made my way along the path
And also heard the sound.
Ah! all that I've sung since that hour
Was merely its echo.

Der Mond kommt still gegangen

Der Mond kommt still gegangen ("The moon rises slowly") is the fourth piece in Clara's Opus 13, which was composed roughly in 1842. Emanuel Geibel wrote the lyrics differently from the other songs in the work, as the song has three verses. the first two verses are strophic, but the rhythm has been changed. The first two verses are strophic, but the rhythm is changed a bit to help with the stress and count of syllables in the text. The third verse is different from the other verses in terms of melody and harmony. The third verse begins with the same music as the

¹⁹ Richard, Stokes. 2005c. "Liebeszauber | Song Texts, Lyrics & Translations." Oxford Lieder. 2005.

<https://www.oxfordlieder.co.uk/song/771>.

other strophe. However, at measure 23, the vocal melody suddenly rises to a climax, but the highest note, "liebchens" ("beloved's"), is used not as tonic but as a submediant. (See Figure 9) The first and second verse both have A-Flat major, but in the final verse the major is changed to D-Flat major, and the use of D-Flat and minor seventh chords with accented double D-Flat, enhanced by a 6-bar postlude, echoes the final verse.²⁰



Figure 9 Op. 13, No. 4 “Der mond kommt still gegangen” mm.22-25

Der Mond kommt still gegangen²¹

Der Mond kommt still gegangen
Mit seinem gold'nen
Da schläft in holdem Prangen
Die müde Erde ein.
Und auf den Lüften schwanken
Aus manchem treuen
Viel tausend Liebesgedanken
Über die Schläfer hin.
Und drunten im Tale, da funkeln

The moon rises silently
Schein. With its golden glow.
The weary earth then falls asleep
In beauty and splendour.
Many thousand loving thoughts
Sinn From many faithful minds
Sway on the breezes
Over those who slumber.
And down in the valley

²⁰ Nancy Lucile Walker, *A stylistic analysis of selected Lieder of Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel and Clara Wieck Schumann*, (Indiana University, 1988), p.79-80

²¹ Richard, Stokes. 2005d. “Der Mond Kommt Still Gegangen | Song Texts, Lyrics & Translations.” Oxford Lieder. 2005. <https://www.oxfordlieder.co.uk/song/772>.

Die Fenster von Liebchens Haus;
Ich aber blicke im Dunklen
Still in die Welt hinaus.

The windows sparkle of my beloved's house;
But I in the darkness gaze
Silently out into the world.

Ich hab'in deinem Auge

In the summer of 1843, the fifth piece of Clara's Opus 13, *Ich hab'in deinem Auge* ("I have seen in your eyes"), was composed by Friedrich Rückert and has an ABA structure. This song has a four-bar interlude between verses one and two, but no interlude between verses two and three. (See Figure 10, 11) Like many of Clara's vocal works, the postlude contains a very melodic segment of the piece. In this piece, the postlude begins with the singing of the last note, A-flat, and the accompaniment chords gradually increase in pitch to B-flat, followed by a layered A-flat chord that culminates in the piece's climax. The first stanza is a two four-bar (4+4), a structure that is challenging for the vocalist to sing because it requires the performer to sing the stanza in one breath. In the third stanzas, the singer can use the rest to change breaths (2+4+2), which will instead be better integrated with the text.²² (See Figure 12)



Figure 10 Op. 13, No. 5 "Ich hab'in deinem Auge" mm.9-13

²² Ibid., p.80-82



Figure 11 Op. 13, No. 5 “Ich hab'in deinem Auge” mm.23-24

sie mir in Ro-sen stehn — und es den Strahl mir schik - - ken.

ritenuto

ritenuto

p

ritard.

Ped.

Figure 12 Op. 13, No. 5 “Ich hab'in deinem Auge” mm.26-34

Ich hab'in deinem Auge²³

Ich hab' in deinem Auge
Den Strahl der ewigen Liebe gesehen,
Ich sah auf deinen Wangen
Einmal die Rosen des Himmels stehn.
Und wie der Strahl im Aug' erlischt
Und wie die Rosen zerstieben,
Ihr Abglanz ewig neu erfrischt,
Ist mir im Herzen geblieben,
Und niemals werd' ich die Wangen seh'n
Und nie in's Auge dir blicken,
So werden sie mir in Rosen steh'n
Und es den Strahl mir schicken.

I saw in your eyes
The ray of eternal love,
I saw on your cheeks
The roses of heaven.
And as the ray dies in your eyes,
And as the roses scatter,
Their reflection, forever new,
Has remained in my heart,
And never will I look at your cheeks,
And never will I gaze into your eyes,
And not see the glow of roses,
And the ray of love.

Die stille lotosblume

The lyrics of Die stille lotosblume ("The peaceful lotus flower"), one of Clara's better compositions, are also derived from Emanuel Geibel's poem. It seems to be written in the same period as "Der Mond kommt still gegangen", but it is a different poem, the exact date of composition is unknown. The song has four verses; the first and second verse each use eight bars, and the melodies of these two stanzas are similar, however, the rhythmic and accented parts of these two stanzas have been adjusted by Clara according to the needs of the text. The third verse is based on the motives of the first two verses. The fourth verses start from measure 30, and due to the continuity of the text and music, this fragment does not look like a new material. Excluding the first four bars of the fourth verse, there is a three-bar interlude in the tune which sets the key in A-flat. The second half of the fourth verse is more of a coda with a pedal point on E-flat and lasts for thirteen bars.²⁴ (See Figure13) The accompaniment is also very interesting, as

²³ Richard, Stokes. 2005e. "Ich Hab' in Deinem Auge | Song Texts, Lyrics & Translations." Oxford Lieder. 2005. <https://www.oxfordlieder.co.uk/song/773>.

²⁴ Ibid., p.82

there is a fixed motivic pattern in piano, a triplet of eighth notes and a combination of four eighth notes. (See Figure 14) This combination is repeated almost throughout the piece, and the piano accompaniment keeps the musicality of the piece going and keeps the listener interested.

The opening section of the song is very considered unusual due to its two-bar introduction that resolves an ambiguous chord to the dominate seventh, and the harmonic structure of the melody is also an important element to mention, as the key of the piece is A-flat major, but ends in E-flat major.²⁵ (See Figure 15) This piece is from Emanuel Geibel's "Lieder als intermezzo IX" (1837), but the version is different from *An Anthology of German Literature in the Nineteenth Century* 1795-1910. The difference may be due to Clara's access to a different version of the poem, to changes made to the original, or to mistakes made in copying the poem. Such differences include Clara's use of "Lotosblume" instead of "Wasserrose," and in *Anthology of Music's* volume 21, Kurt Stephenson argues that Clara's use of "Lotosblume" instead of "Wasserrose" is the reason for the difference. Stephenson suggests that Clara made this change because Clara felt that "Lotosblume" was more romantic.²⁶

²⁵ Ibid., p.83

²⁶ Ibid., p.84

Innig.

O Blu - me, weisse Blu - me, kannst du das Lied ver - stehn ? o Blu - me, weisse

rit.

Blu - me, kannst du das Lied ver - stehn ?

6996

pp

Ped. *

Figure 13 Op. 13, No. 6 “Die stille lotosblume” mm.35-47

mf

l bli - tzen, der Kelch ist weiss wie Schnee. Da g

Figure 14 Op. 13, No. 6 “Die stille lotosblume” mm. 8-10



Figure 15 Op. 13, No. 6 “Die stille lotosblume” mm.1-2

Die stille Lotosblume²⁷

Die stille Lotosblume.
Steigt aus dem blauen
Die Blätter flimmern und blitzen,
Der Kelch ist weiß wie Schnee.

The silent lotus flower
See, Rises out of the blue lake,
Its leaves glitter and glow,
Its cup is as white as snow.

Da gießt der Mond vom
All seinen gold'nen Schein,
Gießt alle seine Strahlen
In ihren Schoß hinein.

Himmel The moon then pours from heaven
All its golden light,
Pours all its rays
Into the lotus flower's bosom.

Im Wasser um die Blume
Kreiset ein weißer Schwan,
Er singt so süß, so leise
Und schaut die Blume an.

In the water, round the flower,
A white swan circles,
It sings so sweetly, so quietly,
And gazes on the flower.

Er singt so süß, so leise
Und will im Singen vergehn.
O Blume, weiße Blume,
Kannst du das Lied verstehn?

It sings so sweetly, so quietly,
And wishes to die as it sings.
O flower, white flower,
Can you fathom the song?

²⁷ Richard, Stokes. 2005f. “Die Stille Lotosblume | Song Texts, Lyrics & Translations.” Oxford Lieder. 2005.
<https://www.oxfordlieder.co.uk/song/774>.

Chapter 2 - Songs from the Seventeenth Century

Biographical Information

Barbara Strozzi (1619-1677), was sometimes referred as Barbara Valle by her father the famous poet Giulio Strozzi and she was born in Venice, Italy. Venice was at the height of its cultural development, a city of wealth, peace, academic curiosity, and musical innovation. In addition to the influence of her social background, she was a composer and singer who grew up in a family environment with an academic and musical atmosphere.²⁸



Figure 16 *Barbara Strozzi*²⁹

Barbara's adoptive (and most likely biological) father was the poet Giulio Strozzi, who was the illegitimate son of Roberto Strozzi, Giulio was later recognized as a legitimate member of the Strozzi family, which was one of Florence's most powerful families, second only to the Medici in wealth and influence. Giulio was not only the founder of several academies or groups of creative intellectuals, but also a founder of the *Incogniti* in Venice, along with the writer

²⁸ Magner, Candace. n.d. "A Brief History | Barbara Strozzi." [Barbarastrozzi.com](https://barbarastrozzi.com/a-brief-history/). Accessed February 18, 2022. <https://barbarastrozzi.com/a-brief-history/>.

²⁹ AKG Images. *Barbara Strozzi* undated. Accessed April 1, 2022. <https://www.classicfm.com/discover-music/barbara-strozzi/>

Giovanni Francesco Loredano, one of its most influential members. This *Incogniti* was responsible, almost by itself, for the invention and dissemination of the genre known to future generations as opera - a new art form with a high degree of integration of music and theater. Members of the *Incogniti* were famous writers, poets, philosophers, and musicians, possibly including the Italian composer and singer Claudio Monteverdi.

Barbara Strozzi's mother was Isabella Garzoni, known as "Gregetta", a long-time servant of Giulio Strozzi. Giulio Strozzi's will of 1628 named Barbara as his legal testamentary heir, but Isabella Garzoni was the primary heir until Barbara came of age. Unfortunately, there is very little record of Barbara's musical training during her childhood but based on the dedication to *Vittoria della Rovere* of her first published opus, she mentions Francesco Cavalli (1602-1676). Cavalli, who at the time was the director of music at St. Mark's Basilica and was her preceptor and teacher from early days. Barbara's early works before 1644 are also untraceable. But in 1634 she was already associated with the *Incogniti* sessions, where she sang informally. In 1635, the composer Nicolò Fontei, in the dedication of a set of songs called *Bizzarrie poetiche* for which Giulio Strozzi wrote most of the texts, said that his songs were inspired by "mainly the kindest and most skillful of maidens, Lady Barbara" [principalmente la gentilissima, e virtuosissima donzella la Signora Barbara]. In addition to this, in the second book of his poems published in 1636, Nicolò Fontei calls Barbara "la virtuosissima cantatrice", the "most excellent singer" of Giulio Strozzi.³⁰ In 1637, Giulio Strozzi founded the *Accademia degli Unisoni*, an important literary academy that was also the musical branch of the *Incogniti* Academy. In this academy barbara's performances were institutionalized, as in the published minutes of the *Unisoni* (*Le*

³⁰ Magner, Candace. n.d. "A Brief History | Barbara Strozzi." Barbarastrozzi.com. Accessed February 18, 2022. <https://barbarastrozzi.com/a-brief-history/>.

veglie de' Signori Unisoni, 1638), in which Barbara not only sang songs but also presented themes for debate among the members.³¹

Barbara Strozzi officially began her career as a professional composer in 1644. The first of her eight publications were a volume of madrigals for two to five voices on texts by Giulio Strozzi, which she dedicated to Vittoria della Rovere, Grand Duchess of Tuscany. She dedicated to Vittoria della Rovere, Grand Duchess of Tuscany. She published all her works after Giulio's death in 1652 except for the missing work 4, which was dedicated to various patrons. These works suggest that Barbara may have been forced to use her compositional abilities to support her family after her father's death. In 1655, a year after her last known published works, she dedicated the now lost Op. 4 to Carlo II, Duke of Mantua, and composed several songs for the duke again a decade later. Although Barbara never married in her life, she had four children by 1651. The father of at least three of her children was probably Giovanni Paolo Widmann, a friend of Giulio Strozzi and the dedicatee of his *La finta pazza* of 1641.³²

Song Background and Analysis

Most of Barbara Strozzi's compositions were for female vocal accompaniment. She was not only one of the most famous female vocalists of her time, but also a very talented lute player. Her music is notable for several reasons. The first is that, probably influenced by her poet father, Giulio Strozzi was very careful with texts, establishing a real intimacy between text and music. The second reason is the eccentricity of the harmonies in her music. For example, "Udite amanti,

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ellen, Rosand, and Beth L. Glixon. 2001. "Strozzi, Barbara." Grove Music Online. January 20, 2001. <https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.er.lib.k-state.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000026987?rskey=9qPKYa>.

L'Eraclito amoroso" is a chaconne-slow and in triple time, and Barbara used many dissonances in this tragic work, bringing together the use of dissonance in this tragic work which in turn brings out the emotions of indecision and grief. The last phrase, in particular, is the only one in the piece that contains a fugue, and Barbara's final line, "Che m'uccida e sotterrimi" ("That it kills and buries)(Measure 159- Measure 163) (See Figure 17), Barbara's use of D-Sharp in the accompaniment forms an augmented fifth to the B natural in the vocal melody, a compositional technique that creates a clear conflict between vocal and accompaniment and gives the piece more depth. Thirdly, she was an independent woman who was bold and unafraid of social pressure. In 17th century Italy, most women were forced to use male pseudonyms to publish their works due to their social status, but Barbara was determined to sign her works under her own name. This act made her one of the first women writers of secular music to publish their works in this way. Also, she was a single mother of three, something that was almost unheard of in society at the time.³³



Figure 17 Barbara Strozzi "Udite amanti, L'Eraclito amoroso", mm.151-163

³³ Victoria, Longdon. 2019. "This Is the Amazing Story of Baroque Composer Barbara Strozzi." Classic FM. January 7, 2019. <https://www.classicfm.com/discover-music/barbara-strozzi/>.

Specific Musical Characteristics

Italian classical vocal works of the 17th century music are those composed in Italian as lyrics, reflecting the style of Italian vocal works of the time, and not specifically by Italian composers, including some foreign composers. These vocal works have a variety of themes, including declamations and arias from opera, and cantatas. In the history of Western music, the 17th century to the first half of the 18th century becomes the Baroque period, a period of continuation and development of humanist ideas in the history of musical thought. The beginning of the 17th century was the transition from the Renaissance period to the Baroque period, and the vocal works of this period were also influenced by the characteristics of music of these two periods.

Specific musical characteristics.³⁴

- 1) Diversification of vocal themes and the beginning of secularization of religious music.
- 2) The variety of instrumental music gradually increased, and formal orchestra formations began to appear.
- 3) Opera began to develop in this period, and polyphonic music began to transition to major music.
- 4) The use of bass, and in the Baroque period, more emphasis was placed on the change of intensity, and the rhythm became active.

³⁴ “浅谈 17 世纪意大利古典声乐作品艺术论文.” *Biyelunwen.yjbys.com*, 10 Aug. 2020,

biyelunwen.yjbys.com/fanwen/yishuxuebiyelunwen/707479.html. Accessed 2 Apr. 2022. (An Introduction to the Art of 17th Century Italian Classical Vocal Works Essay)

5) The tonality of the repertoire was dominated by the major and minor forms gradually replacing the conservative ecclesiastical modes.

Udite amanti,L' Eraclito Amoroso³⁵

Udite amanti la cagione, oh Dio !
Ch'a lagrimar mi porta:
Nell'adorato e bello idolo mio,
Che si fido credei, la fede è morta.

Vaghezza ho sol di piangere,
Mi pasco sol di lagrime,
Il duolo è mia delizia
E son miei gioie i gemiti.

Ogni martire aggradami,
Ogni dolor diletta mi,
I singulti mi sanano,
I sospir mi consolano.

Ma se la fede negami
Quell' incostante e perfido,
Almen fede serbatemi
Sino alla morte, O lagrime!

Ogni tristezza assalgami,
Ogni cordoglio eternisi,
Tanto ogni male affligami
Che m'uccida e sotterrini.

Listen, you lovers, to the reason - oh God!
For my weeping:
In my adored and beautiful idol,
Who I believed to be faithful, faith is dead.

I find charm only in weeping,
I nourish myself by my tears,
Grief is my delight
And my moans are my joy.

Every anguish pleases me,
Every sadness is my delight,
My sobs heal me,
And my sighs console me.

But if he denies faith,
He who is fickle and treacherous,
At least faithfully serve me
Until death, oh my sorrow!

Every tear soothes me,
All my mourning lasts forever,
So much does each ill afflict me
That it kills and buries me.

³⁵ Rosemary, Galton. "L'Eraclito Amoroso (Barbara Strozzi) - ChoralWiki." *Cpdl.org*, 2020,
[www.cpdl.org/wiki/index.php/L%27Eraclito_amoroso_\(Barbara_Strozzi\)](http://www.cpdl.org/wiki/index.php/L%27Eraclito_amoroso_(Barbara_Strozzi)).

Chapter 3 - Habanera from the Opera *Carmen*

Biographical Information

Georges Bizet (1838-1875) was a French composer. At the age of 36, his future achievements might have surpassed those of many composers of the 1860s and 1890s had it not been for his untimely death. His most famous work, *Carmen*, was first performed three months before his death and became one of the most popular operas of any era.



Figure 18 *A portrait of Bizet by Camillo Midas*³⁶

Both of Bizet's parents were musicians. His father, Adolphe-Armand Bizet (1810-1886), was born into a family of artisans and worked as a barber and wigmaker in Paris, but by the time

³⁶ DeAgostini/ Getty Images. *A portrait of Bizet by Camillo Midas*, undated. Accessed April 1, 2022.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/18/arts/music/george-bizet-home-museum.html>

of his marriage in 1837, Adolphe-Armand had become a voice teacher. Although he was a modest composer and released some works, he did not have a high standing as a musician. Bizet's mother, Aimée Delsarte (1815-1861), was born in Cambrai, while her brother François Delsarte was a well-known voice teacher and a proponent of Gluck's work and classicalism. François was an eccentric and unorthodox musician who was an important influence on Georges, and François's wife was also a professor of solo singing at the Conservatory of Music, so that Bizet grew up with the full benefit of a professional musical family.³⁷

Georges Bizet, the only son of his parents, showed amazing musical talent at an early age. At the age of eight, Bizet's father was surprised by his ability to sing pieces he had heard without looking at the music. So, the following year, his father decided to enroll Bizet in the Conservatory of Music and was successfully accepted and enrolled on October 9, 1848. He started in Antoine François Marmontel's piano class and won premier prix for solfège within six months. Pierre Zimmerman, Marmontel's predecessor, took an interest in Bizet and arranged for him to have private piano lessons and through targeted study and training, Bizet became an accomplished pianist and became known for his excellent sight-reading and ear training.

In 1852, Bizet entered François Benoist's organ class, and a year later took the composition class of Fromental Halévy, a brilliant composer known for an inquisitive spirit, whose operas were frequently performed at the Opéra-Comique and became a member of the Permanent Secretary of the Institute, a position of immense prestige in French academic circles

³⁷ Hugh, Macdonald. "Bizet, Georges." *Grove Music Online*, 20 Jan. 2001, www-oxfordmusiconline-com.er.lib.k-state.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000051829.

in 1854.³⁸ Attracted by Halévy's extensive knowledge, Bizet became closer with Halévy family and then married Halévy's daughter Geneviève in 1869.³⁹

Another major influence on Bizet's musical style was Charles Gounod (1818-1893), whom Bizet met through Zimmerman and whose daughter was also Zimmerman's wife. Bizet was influenced by many of Gounod's works, such as *Sapho*, played at the Opéra in 1851, the choruses for Ponsard's tragedy *Ulysse*, played at the Comédie-Française in 1852, and the First Symphony (1855). Bizet told Gounod in later years, "You were the beginning of my life as an artist. I spring from you".⁴⁰

Bizet's excellence at the Conservatoire earned him the Prix de Rome, the Academy's highest honor, and Bizet continued to grow as a composer and pianist. His first surviving works are several piano pieces published in 1854, the year in which three of his songs were published in print, including one by Bizet's father, and two in the same collection. In 1855, Bizet composed his first opera *La maison du docteur*, an overture in A major and Symphony in C, demonstrating his talent and compositional abilities.

In 1856, Bizet composed his second opera, *Le docteur Miracle*, and chose two young librettists, Léon Battu (1829-1857) and Ludovic Halévy (1837-1908). Halévy would later provide Jacques Offenbach with a number of famous texts under the pseudonym Jules Servières,⁴¹ and was also highly appreciated in the community as one of *Carmen*'s librettists. Bizet's *Carmen* was also performed continuously at the Théâtre des Bouffes-Parisiens in April 1857, and subsequently received The Award of the Prix de Rome. at the same time Bizet helped other

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Books by Halévy, Ludovic. <https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/author/1344>, Accessed April 4, 2022.

composers of the Parisian publisher with their arrangements, although this became his main income in his later years, and it also consumed a great deal of his time.

Bizet lived in Rome for nearly three years, from December 1857 to September 1860. During these three years he distanced himself from the music of Paris and developed a strong interest in Italian music, especially the music of Gioachino Rossini(1792-1868), and was not averse to changing the style of his compositions due to these influences. Although Bizet was enjoying a carefree ifestyle while living in Italy, he became increasingly concerned about the lack of quality music being created in Rome. In 1860 he learned of his mother's illness and returned to Paris and resumed his daily work: seeking performances of his operas, supplying works to publishers, organizing and conducting concerts, and making adaptations of works for other musicians for in order to financially support himself. In the summer of 1863, Bizet composed "Les pêcheurs de perles", his first full-length opera, which Berlioz reviewed and wrote a final article about in the Berlioz wrote his last article in the *Journal des débats*, in which he considered that Bizet had a serious talent with a great future.

After the death of Bizet's teacher, Fromental Halévy, in 1862, Geneviève, who was left without care, became engaged to Bizet in October 1867. However, the engagement was subsequently broken off because Geneviève's mother did not approve of her marrying an unsuccessful composer. But in this case, the two firmly married in June 1869 and were very happy for some time after the marriage. After their marriage, Bizet paid tribute to his father-in-law by completing and orchestrating the opera *Noé*, as this work was left unfinished by Halévy before his death. The work eventually could not be performed ten years after Bizet's death due to a confusing vocal score and the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War in July 1870.⁴²

⁴² Ibid.

Despite the failure of Bizet's opera *Djamileh* in 1872, he participated in the creation of two works, *L'arlésienne* and *Carmen*. Léon Carvalho (1825-1897) was Bizet's patron and the director of the Vaudeville theatre, but the small size of the orchestra and other reasons made *L'arlésienne*'s performance on October 1, 1872 not well received. The music press considered Bizet's music too demanding and complex, but musicians, including Reyer and Massenet, still admired Bizet's compositions. Bizet later adapted some excerpts of this music into a complete orchestral set, which was successfully performed at Padeloup in November and has been frequently reprised since.⁴³

Another work, *Carmen*, was Bizet's most famous composition before his death. The Opéra-Comique directors, Du Locle and De Leuven, invited Bizet to write an opera in three acts, with Meilhac and Halévy as librettists and proposing many of the themes, and Bizet proposed to write an opera in three acts based on Prosper Mérimée's novel *Carmen* which published in 1845. Bizet also proposed to use this novel *Carmen* as the theme for the opera. De Leuven eventually resigned and withdrew from the project because of the fights, murders and explicit sexuality of the main character, *Carmen*. But the orchestration of the opera continued, and Bizet not only completed the score in 1873, with Galli-Marié as Carmen's singer, but also completed the orchestration the following year, finally starting a long rehearsal process in September 1874. Although Bizet was opposed by the orchestra and the chorus during the rehearsal process, he was supported by Galli-Marié and did not make any compromises. The opera opened on March 3, 1875, and although the press and the audience were strongly uncomfortable with the content and

⁴³ ---, "Carmen." *Grove Music Online*, 1 Dec. 1992, doi-org.er.lib.k-state.edu/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.O008315.

heavily criticized after the performance, the success of the opera *Carmen* could not be resisted. It was performed as many as 45 times in 1875, and for then added three more to bring the number of performances to 48 in 1876. Although the Parisian administration remained silent about the work until 1883, it had already achieved worldwide success, a success that also stemmed from a performance in Vienna in October 1875. In this performance, Ernest Guiraud adapted the dialogue from the opera into a recitative that quickly spread throughout Europe and beyond.

After the *Carmen* opening, Bizet suffered from varicose veins, and his depression intensified after being subjected to poor press reviews, and he eventually developed rheumatism and pain in his ears and throat. Bizet died at the age of 36 in the early hours of June 3, a few hours after *Carmen's* 33rd performance. The funeral took place two days later at La Trinité church in Paris, where he was buried in Cimetière Père-Lachaise.⁴⁴

Reasons for the Failure of *Carmen's* debut

After the premiere of the music industry reviews and the crowd's reaction were very lukewarm. Several reasons could be speculated for the failure of the premiere of such a work of Bizet's heart and soul: ⁴⁵

- 1) Social unrest at the time, the "Paris Commune" movement broke out in 1871, and the failure of this movement led to a severe crackdown in Paris until 1875 or even 1879, when the political situation in France began to stabilize.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Shaocong, Wang. “歌剧《卡门》的分析第九篇——卡门首演失败的原因.” *知乎专栏*, 28 Oct. 2019, zhuanlan.zhihu.com/p/88964821. Accessed 2 Apr. 2022. (Analysis of the opera "Carmen" Part IX - Reasons for the failure of Carmen's premiere.)

(2) Political reasons - The diplomatic relationship between France and Spain was very delicate at that time. In *Carmen*, an opera set in Spain, Bizet incorporates many Spanish elements. At this time, Spain had gone through many wars of independence and was finally free from Napoleon's rule. It was on March 3, 1875, that Spain restored diplomatic relations with France, and it was on this date that *Carmen*, with its Spanish influence, was premiered.

3) The verismo characters and the work. The end of the pattern in which the hero and heroine eventually perish, the appearance of the underclass, the smuggling on the edge of the law and the traditional anti-moral image of the gypsies are beyond the traditional perception of the public.

Song Background and Analysis

L'amour est un oiseau rebelle

This piece appears in the first act of the opera *Carmen*. The scene begins with the main character, Carmen, arriving at the factory with a flower in her mouth and many admirers, and expresses her views on love by singing the famous Habanera dance song *L'amour est un oiseau rebelle*. She believes that love should be grasped at the right time: "If I love you, take care!".

The title of this work is *L'amour est un oiseau rebelle* (Love is a rebellious bird), but the author marked the word *Habanera* at the bottom of the title, so it was also translated as *Habanera*, and this aria is arguably the most famous opera aria for mezzo-soprano. (See Figure 19) This

form of music originated from the black dance music of Africa, and later spread to Cuba, and then from Cuba to Spain, and became a very popular folk music in Spain.⁴⁶

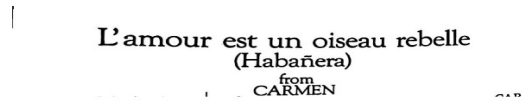


Figure 19 Georges Bizet 's L'amour est un oiseau rebelle's title from *Carmen*

Habanera originated from the English country dance contredanse, which gained popularity in Europe in the 18th century.⁴⁷ Although it was introduced weekly by the Spanish, it reached Cuba in the late 17th and early 19th centuries, which is the French version of the English country dance. This early dance consisted of two parts, each of 8 bars repeating a total of 32 bars. The black musicians transformed the contredanse rhythm into a contradanza habanera with a dotted and syncopated rhythm, a slow, mostly two-beat rhythm (See Figure 20 and 21) that was graceful and lighthearted and popular among all social classes of the time. Bizet's Habanera in *Carmen* refers to and draws from Iradier's *El arreglito*.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ ---, “歌剧《卡门》的分析第二篇——《哈巴涅拉舞曲》.” *知乎专栏*, 27 July 2019,

zhuanlan.zhihu.com/p/75522373. (“Habanera”, the second part of the analysis of the opera “Carmen”)

⁴⁷ Frances, Barulich, and Jan Fairley. “Habanera (Catalan Havanera).” *Grove Music Online*, 20 Jan. 2001, doi-org.er.lib.k-state.edu/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.12116.

⁴⁸ Ibid.



Figure 20 Rhythmic ostinato used in the habanera⁴⁹

136



Figure 21 Georges Bizet's "L'amour est un oiseau rebelle" mm.1-3

The song enters the A section from the fourth bar, which is composed of four consecutive downward gliding phrases, the entire melody does not exceed one octave, but the continuous chromatic downward movement allows the tonality to move between major and minor keys, and the whole melody seems rich and mysterious. The piano accompaniment maintains the main sustained tone in D-minor and the rhythmic bass of the harmonic decomposition to express the

⁴⁹ Ibid.

musical characteristics of the Spanish gypsy people. Note the small lines on the score that use some glissando to enhance the coherence of the lines. (See Figure 22)⁵⁰



Figure 22 Georges Bizet's "L'amour est un oiseau rebelle" mm.5-7

Before entering the B section there is a small melody in the middle for connection, which for the singer is four lines of "l'amour" (Love), but these four lines are treated differently, the first and second lines are marked with expressiveness, while the third and fourth lines are marked with crescendo and decrescendo notation respectively. (See Figure 23)

⁵⁰ ---. “歌剧《卡门》的分析第九篇——卡门首演失败的原因.” 知乎专栏, 28 Oct. 2019, zhuanlan.zhihu.com/p/88964821. Accessed 2 Apr. 2022. (Analysis of the opera "Carmen" Part IX - Reasons for the failure of Carmen's premiere.)



Figure 23 Georges Bizet's "L'amour est un oiseau rebelle" mm. 20-23

After four lines of L'amour articulation, completed the shift from D minor to D major, also into the b part, and the B section of the melody also seems brighter and more energetic, "Si tu ne m'aime pas, je t'aime, Si je t'aime, Prend garde à toi! " (If you don't love me, I love you, If I love you, beware!) Repeated four times, it is this seemingly nonsensical notion of love that gives her the deadly allure of a poison, making men feel a strong desire to conquer her, only to lose it when they think they have it.

L'amour est un oiseau rebelle⁵¹

L'amour est un oiseau rebelle
Que nul ne peut apprivoiser,
Et c'est bien en vain qu'on l'appelle
S'il lui convient de refuser.
Rien n'y fait; menace ou prière,
L'un parle bien, l'autre se tait;
Et c'est l'autre que je préfère,
Il n'a rien dit, mais il me plaît.
L'amour est enfant de Bohème,
Il n'a jamais, jamais connu de loi;
Si tu ne m'aimes pas, je t'aime;
Si je t'aime,
Prends garde à toi!
L'oiseau que tu croyais surprendre
Battit de l'aile et s'envola
L'amour est loin, tu peux l'attendre
Tu ne l'attends plus ... il est là
Tout autour de toi, vite, vite,
Il vient, s'en va, puis il revient
Tu crois le tenir, il t'évite,
Tu crois l'éviter, il te tient.
L'amour est enfant de Bohème,
Il n'a jamais connu de loi;
Si tu ne m'aimes pas, je t'aime;
Si je t'aime,
Prends garde à toi!

love is a rebellious bird
That no one can tame
And it is in vain that it is called
If he agrees to refuse
Nothing works; threat or prayer,
One speaks well, the other is silent;
And that's the other one I prefer,
He did not say anything, but I like him.
Love is Bohemian child,
He never, never knew a law;
If you do not love me, I love you;
If I love you
Beware!
The bird that you thought surprised
Battled the wing and flew away
Love is far away, you can wait for it
You do not expect him anymore ... he is here
All around you, fast, fast,
He comes, goes, then comes back
You think you're holding him, he's avoiding you,
You think you're avoiding him, he's holding you.
Love is Bohemian child,
He never knew a law;
If you do not love me, I love you;
If I love you,
Beware!

⁵¹ “Georges Bizet (Ft. Carmen (Anna Caterina Antonacci & Chorus) – L’amour Est Un Oiseau Rebelle (Habanera).” *Genius*, genius.com/Georges-bizet-lamour-est-un-oiseau-rebelle-habanera-annotated.

Chapter 4 - How to Portray a Character

A good singer not only has a high-quality instrument, but they also have the ability in performing for an audience more than simply knowing the music they are singing. The melody and the lyrics are closely related. Both words and melody are necessary to make a musical gesture, without either part they cannot exist alone. Thus, in my subjective view, the singer is helping the composers or songwriters to tell their story and feelings at the time in the form of a song. In this section, I will offer some ideas for how the singer can more accurately sing the story and express the emotions and create a more accurate characterization.

Preparation

1. Background Check

In any field, if you want to know the truth, researching, and searching on your own will give you a more accurate picture than listening to others. Comparing with listening to others even from experts, it's better to know our research is accurate since we cannot guarantee the credibility of the resource we got from others. When preparing to sing a new piece of music, a casual internet search and more in-depth research can be effective in providing the singer with an understanding of the background of the piece. The background can be divided into several categories: 1) biographical: the birth and death dates of composer and lyricists as well as their general biography; 2) epochal background: what period of music history was it in, and what were the specific musical characteristics? 3) Cultural context: The social environment of the material or spiritual culture that influenced the human mind and body. There are great differences in the cultures created by different histories, countries, regions, and ethnic groups, and these create different cultural contexts. Understanding the reasons, purposes, and influences of the composer

during the composition of the piece as well as the emotions or stories the lyricists wanted to express and the reasons for them when composing the piece. For example, when Chopin Fryderyk Franciszek (1810-1849), one of the leading composers in 19-century, was forced to leave his country because of the war, his works expressed more thoughts of nostalgia for his country or giving some moral support to his compatriots in the war.⁵²

2. Analyzing the Song

Songs are the most direct way for musicians and listeners to understand the composer. 1) The key signature, tempo markings, and rhythmic meter will build different atmosphere for the listener as to whether the tune is positive or negative. (Or both) Positive moods are mainly pleasant, life-affirming, and positive. Negative emotions, on the contrary, are crushing, distressing, crying or angry. (2) Another way is to analyze the lyrics, which also reflect the mood of the song by reading and reciting the lyrics can also lead us into the mood of the song. For example, the first music of Clara's Opus 13, Ich stand in dunklen Träumen (I stood darkly dreaming), It expresses the deep longing for the beloved. Through various channels, such as web videos, concerts, or audio, you can experience how other vocalists interpret the same piece and internalize it in your own performance style.

⁵² Jim, Samson. "Fryderyk Franciszek." *Grove Music Online*, 20 Jan. 2001, www-oxfordmusiconline-com.er.lib.k-state.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000051099?rskey=M5RLUT.

3. Performing

This topic is what I want to explore most in this section. Before that I would like to ask the question, what is performance? How to perform and what is the purpose of performance?

3-1. Body Language

In fact, in everyday life, 70% of communication is non-verbal, and body language plays a very important role in both life and work.⁵³ What is body language? Body language refers to how we use our bodies to communicate with others: all the movements we make when we talk, listen, and even think. In fact, from head to toe, we are constantly and unconsciously always sending messages. For example, when a person agrees or affirms something, they will nod their head in agreement. Conversely, if a person rejects or disagrees with something, they will shake their head from side to side. If they want to express the intensity of rejection, people will increase the amplitude of shaking their head from side to side or even add hand movements to express, such as crossing both small arms in front of the chest to form an "X" shape to express a higher degree of rejection.

Thus, we can infer at a deeper level that behavior and psychology have a mutual influence relationship. When people want to express their thoughts, in addition to the way to express with words, but also through behavior to express. As I said earlier, if people have thoughts of rejection, they will express their rejection through behavior. Reciprocally, behavior

⁵³ Max, Eggert. *Brilliant Body Language: Impress, Persuade and Succeed with the Power of Body Language*. Google Books, Pearson UK, 9 July 2012, books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=mdOFT2Qb16cC&oi=fnd&pg=PT5&dq=Eggert. Accessed 4 Apr. 2022.

can also influence psychology. When someone performs an action in front of you that has meaning, you will also be influenced. For example, when you walk into a noodle shop and one of the customers repeatedly drinks water while eating noodles, this one action of drinking water will affect your impression of the noodle shop, and perhaps you will think that the noodle shop may cook the noodles too salty or too spicy. Then the same theory can be applied to the characterization. If you want to convey the character's intention or purpose more accurately, you can put yourself in the character's shoes, think in the character's position and express it with body movements that are commonly accepted and understood by the public.

3-2. Characterization

Especially in opera performance, the external characteristics of the character are most easily understood by the audience such as clothing, hair, makeup, and props. This approach can directly give the audience a first impression of the character. Take music *L'amour est un oiseau rebelle* from opera *Carmen* as an example. The first is the costume, which can position the character in a time or place and even portray their social and economic status. In the version where Elina Garanca plays the female lead, Carmen, she wears unglamorous clothes. This shows that Carmen is not a person of high social status in the opera.⁵⁴ A character's hairstyle can contribute visually to a glimpse of their daily life. In the same video, Carmen is a lady with red flowers on her head and loose hair, through which you can roughly understand that Carmen is an unconventional, freedom-loving person. Makeup can tell the approximate age of the character,

⁵⁴ "Carmen : 'L'amour Est Un Oiseau Rebelle' (Elina Garanca)." *YouTube*, 3 Sept. 2014, www.youtube.com/watch?v=K2snTkaD64U.

comparing younger women with older women, who have a very different degree of makeup. For example, young women, their makeup will be more transparent, lighter makeup, but women of a certain age, they will be more mature in makeup, eye shadow and lipstick colors will be brighter and bolder. The last is the props. Elina's Carmen took out the oranges she ate from the dress on her chest while singing. Carmen with such behavior is also an independent woman who does not care about the eyes of others and is brave enough to be herself.

3-3. Character's Expressions

People's expressions are particularly complex, and by observing facial expressions one can sense the emotional changes or emotional states of the characters. The more detailed study of faces has led to Macro-expressions and Micro-expressions as a classification for observing expressions as well.1) Macro-expressions usually last from 3/4 to 2 seconds, and the six most common macro-expressions are happiness, sadness, fear, surprise, anger, and disgust. Macro-expressions occur mainly in multiple regions of the face and can be easily observed. For example, surprise expressions generally produce movement around the eyes, forehead, cheeks, and mouth, while sad expressions generally produce movement only near the mouth and cheeks.2) Micro-expressions are rapid, occur in a small area of the face, and generally last between 1/25th and 1/5th of a second. In general, micro-expressions are described as an involuntary pattern in the human body, but it is sufficient to be observed, but too brief to convey an emotion. So, whether it is Macro-expressions or Micro-expressions, they have a reference basis for characters to convey emotions or expressions.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ Shreve, M., et al. "Macro- and Micro-Expression Spotting in Long Videos Using Spatio-Temporal Strain." *Face and Gesture 2011*, 2011, www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Macro-and-micro-expression-spotting-in-long-

3-4. Different Languages

As a vocal student, it is inevitable that you need to be exposed to vocal works from different countries and different time periods. The International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) provides extensive guidance for vocal learners on pronunciation, but the accuracy of pronunciation varies from language to language. The most common languages used in vocal studies are English, German, Italian and French. Therefore, I will summarize some pronunciation rules for German, Italian and French.

*Italian Diction*⁵⁶

- a. Vowels: Italian has 5 pure vowels “a, e, i, o, u”. When singing Italian, you should pay attention to the pronunciation of each vowel, especially the diphthongs and multi-vowels. For example, in the pronunciation of “chio”, there are two vowels inside, so the two vowels “i” and “o” cannot be pronounced together.
- b. Consonants: First of all, we should pay attention to the turbidized sounds, such as p and t. In Italian pronunciation, the letter p is pronounced like [b], while the letter t is pronounced like [d].
- c. Special variant sounds: “gu” is pronounced as [gw], “ie” is pronounced as [je][je] (depending on whether it needs to be repeated), “qu” is pronounced as [kw], the letter s

videos-Shreve-Godavarthy/8a0f0b73a6ed12f8ea465f0b4688da761927381c, 10.1109/FG.2011.5771451.
Accessed 2 Apr. 2022.

⁵⁶ Cheri, Montgomery. *Italian Lyric Diction Workbook: A Graded Method of Phonetic Transcription That Employs Frequently Occurring Words from Italian Art Song Literature*. Nashville, Tn, S.T.M. Publishers, 2015.

appears between vowels pronunciation will change from [s] to [z], and the letter s appears before voiced consonant (“b, d, g, l, m, n, r, v”) are pronounced as [z].

d. [r] is pronounced in Italian with a regular up-and-down vibration of the tongue on the palate.

French Diction⁵⁷

a. [ə] does not need to be pronounced, and there are four cases of using [ə]. When ending in “-e, -es”; consonant + “e” + consonant + vowel; verbs ending in “-ent”; “re” + two consonants (“re” as a word prefix)

b. Nasalized consonants: [ã][õ][ɛ̃][œ̃] are very characteristic in French pronunciation. When these symbols are met, the nasalized sounds are added to the original [a][o][ɛ][œ].

c. Special sound: [ø] is a relatively easy sound to pronounce incorrectly. The secret to pronouncing this sound is to use the cavity shape of [o] to pronounce the [e] sound.

German Diction⁵⁸

a. Vowels: In German, there are closed long vowels and open short vowels.

Closed long vowels:

[ɑ:] [e:] [i:] [o:] [u:] [y:] [ɛ:] [ø:]

⁵⁷ Cheri, Montgomery. *French Lyric Diction Workbook: A Graded Method of Phonetic Transcription That Employs Frequently Occurring Words from French Art Song Literature*. Nashville, Tn, S.T.M. Publishers, 2015.

⁵⁸ ---. *German Lyric Diction Workbook: A Graded Method of Phonetic Transcription That Employs Frequently Occurring Words from German Art Song Literature*. Nashville, Tenn., S.T.M. Publishers, 2014.

Open short vowels:

[a][ɛ] [ɪ] [ɔ] [ʊ] [ʏ] [œ]

b. Consonants: If you pronounce words ending in “t, p, k”, remember to cloud them.

Convert [t] to [d], [p] to [b]; [k] to [g] respectively.

c. [ç] and [χ] are special pronunciations in German, note that they are pronounced with an [h] sound at the end

d. Special variations: the letter “v” is pronounced with an [f] sound in German; the letter “w” is pronounced with a [v] sound in German; the letter “h” is not pronounced if it comes after a vowel.

4. Get Feedback and Internalize the Absorption

Whether in vocal studies or for stage performance, we cannot sing a perfect song without training. Therefore, to be better the next time when singing, we need to get comments from others or from ourselves. The first choice is the teacher, because the teacher is the one who knows the most about the student's vocal condition and singing skills, so ask the teacher for feedback to get their professional comments and guidance. The second option is a classmate or friend, which may be controversial because one's classmates and friends cannot point out real singing problems, but they can act as an audience and provide some of their own feelings to avoid factors that would be overlooked in a real performance. The last thing I highly recommend is to record yourself while singing, and then play back the recording to see what needs to be improved or enhanced during the performance. By doing these three things, I believe that the singer will be able to perform more completely to a great extent.

Deeper Impact for me

Through the process of preparing and completing this thesis, I have learned a great deal and gained a deeper understanding of the vocal works I will be performing. After several years of graduate study, I have clearly understood my deficiencies and have made great progress in my professionalism through the help of my professors. These valuable experiences will help and support me in my future studies or teaching.

1) Systematic. In my previous vocal studies, I did not study new works in depth after I got them. Instead, I might just search the internet for audio or video to simply understand the melody or rhythm of the piece, which resulted in my not having my own ideas and feelings about the piece I was about to sing. However, during these years of graduate study, I have learned that the composer, the context of the composition, the lyrics, the emotion and even the phrasing are all instructive in successfully performing a piece of music. Reciting the lyrics and handling the change of breath are all delicate tasks that need to be done before singing. So, this helped me to be more prepared when I sing.

2) Comprehensiveness. For most Chinese vocal learners, in addition to Chinese vocal works, most of them choose Italian art songs as the repertoire of foreign songs. For most Chinese vocalists, they have little exposure to German, French or Russian vocal works. By learning the rules of pronunciation in French, German, and Italian in school, I hope to be able to be exposed to vocal works in those languages and to be prepared to teach my students in a way that they are not limited to Chinese or Italian works.

3) Scientific. I have always thought that vocal teaching is a very abstract subject that requires understanding or feeling the changes in the body when singing. But it turns out that vocal music is a "visual" discipline. When singing, both the changes in the throat and the

changes in the abdomen can be seen visually. Therefore, I hope that in the future I can teach my students to understand visually how the different muscles interact with each other when they sing and make them understand the direction and purpose of the movement of these muscles in order to sing more scientifically.

Although I am a vocalist and may be a vocal teacher in the future, it has always been my goal to improve my professionalism and teaching ability. I hope that through my learning experience I will be able to reflect and improve myself and that my future students will be able to avoid unnecessary mistakes as much as possible with my help. I believe that vocal learning needs to be integrated into life and even into life, and that one cannot stop and give up the opportunity to improve oneself after just a few years of study, and I hope that I can implement and execute such goals in the future.

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