GRADUATE VOICE RECITAL

An abstract submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
For the degree of Master of Music
In Performance

By

Shannon Elyse Gomes

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ABSTRACT

GRADUATE VOICE RECITAL

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In Performance

In selecting repertoire for my graduate recital, I chose songs and arias with compelling texts that were well supported by especially challenging and beautiful piano accompaniments. The piano accompaniments served to enhance the text and mood of each musical selection and added nuance and specificity to the lyrics and vocal line. A solo recital is a satisfying collaborative experience; as both singer and pianist are equally responsible for communicating the essence of each musical selection to the audience.

The first set of my recital program is comprised of two works by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791) who is considered to be one of the most prolific and influential composers of the Classical era. In his lifetime he composed over 600 works spanning from symphonic to operatic works. The aria “Una donna quindici anni”, from Cosi fan tutte, a comic opera, with libretto written by Lorenzo Da Ponte, shows Mozart’s uncanny ability to capture a character’s essence through music. Mozart is able to perfectly convey Despina’s station, background, cleverness and wit so clearly that he almost eliminates the necessity for a translation of the text. When the aria begins we are instantly aware that this character, Despina, the lady servant, is very different in
demeanor from the other two female roles in the scene. It is, not only, set in a slightly lower register, but it has lines that are broken, and speech-like, as opposed to the more soaring, legato lines of the other women. The music is also witty, charming and sparkling to further capture Despina’s personality.

The second selection in this set, *Vado, ma dove*, is a concert aria, with libretto, also, by Lorenzo Da Ponte. It is a free standing aria written for soprano and orchestra and is designed specifically for performance in a concert rather than as part of an opera. It is particularly interesting because it contains two contrasting sections within it that convey, first, the performer’s confusion as to why her lover has left her, and then, her resolve to love him despite all obstacles. She asks Cupid for guidance to help her beloved survive. Just as the two texts are contrasting, the music is equally contrasting. The piece begins in \( \frac{4}{4} \) with eighth notes driving the musical line forward. Then, as the second section begins, the meter changes to \( \frac{3}{4} \) with a rolling triplet accompaniment that helps to slow the piece. The result is one of calmness and serenity as the vocalist, then, enters with a beautiful, sustained legato line.

Hugo Wolf (1860 – 1903) an Austrian composer, most well-known for his art songs, is the composer of the second set of pieces. In these works Wolf creates accompaniments that not only support the text, but help to bring it into sharper focus. “Verborgenheit”, which was written in 1888, is in ABA form, and is about withdrawal from the world and seclusion. This is underscored by the static and repetitive legato line of the accompaniment. “In dem Schatten meiner Locken” is flirtier in nature. The accompaniment perfectly and playfully sets the stage for the singer’s entrance. It is light-hearted and inquisitive without being concerned about the answer to the questions it asks.
“Alle gingen, Herz, zur Ruh” is a piece that pulls at your heart strings. It is about a lost love; with the slow chromaticism of the accompaniment helping to create a sense of longing and despair. The mood of the accompaniment intensifies the restlessness in the first measure by repeating a triplet tied to two eighth notes which disguises the beat. Then, by the time the beat is solidified the tempo begins to increase until the climax is reached at “your thoughts wander to your love”. The final piece in this set, “Er ist’s”, speaks of springtime and the excitement that fills the air. The virtuosic constant triplet patterns in this incredibly complex accompaniment work to, not only drive the piece forward, but to depict the sounds and sights of emerging spring. The postlude erupts in a rapturous explosion of sound that perfectly portrays the excitement of the text.

The third set consists of an aria by Gian Carlo Menotti (1911–2007), an Italian-American composer and librettist who strived to produce compositions that appealed to the public. He was the first to write a composition for television, and was a two time Pulitzer Prize winner. The aria "Steal Me Sweet Thief", from his opera The Old Maid and the Thief, composed specifically for performance on the radio, is about a young maid who is confused as to why her advances toward a visiting drifter, “the Thief”, are not being returned. She is worried that time will steal her youth and her possibilities for love, and she wants the thief to rescue her from that fate by stealing her away from her mundane existence as servant to an “old maid”. In the recitative the young maid explains that she has made herself very “available” to the thief, and she is incredibly frustrated that her advances have been ignored. In this section, the accompaniment is sparse, as is common with most recitatives, but it takes it a step further, often adding comment, punctuation and sometimes a bit of humor to the end of each phrase and leads the way to
each new vocal entrance. Then, in the contrasting aria which follows, the maid shows her vulnerability as she explains her fears of dying old and alone, and her desire to find love and passion before her looks vanish. The accompaniment then slows down and becomes much richer in texture and underscores this mood with beautiful and rich legato lines.

Giacomo Puccini (1858 –1924) was an Italian composer whose operas are among the most frequently performed in the standard repertoire. Puccini’s popularity is most often accredited to his masterful ability to write for the voice, incorporating beautiful legato lines with descriptive and dramatic texts, and for his moving orchestrations which are so well written that they could probably stand on their own. Mimi’s aria “Donde Lieta” is no exception. The aria, from *La Bohème*, one of his most well-known operas, written in four acts, with libretto by Luigi Illica and Giuseppe Giacosa, is sung in the third act when Mimi and Rudolfo realize that Mimi is dying, and she feels it would be less painful if they separate amicably now. Puccini masterfully builds the drama of the aria by writing an accompaniment that intensifies and resolves as the emotions of the text do the same. First, it softly introduces the story, intensifies, the pitch raises, and music begins to speed up. Until the next moment of calm resolve, and then at the end of the piece, when the text reaches its emotional peak, the accompaniment does as well, playing rising octaves that mirror the vocal line.

The fifth set is a song cycle of works by Francis Poulenc (1899 –1963), a French composer who wrote music in many genres, including art song, solo piano music, chamber music, oratorio, opera, ballet music, and orchestral music. In this song cycle, *Air Chantés* (1927–8), written to the poetry of Jean Moréas, Poulenc effortlessly blends the meaning of the text with the musicality of the accompaniment. “Air Romantique” speaks
of a better time to come, and a raven who accompanies the singer on their journey. This piece takes a moderately fast tempo and the vocal line sings in rapid succession as if someone is excitedly telling a story, over a dark and somber accompaniment. Between each vocal section, the accompaniment continues on with the musical idea, until the vocal line enters again to continue the story. All the while, there is a consistency of sixteenth notes representing the raven that is constantly beside you, but never diverting you from your path. “Air Champêtre”, is an even more animated selection than the one heard previously. It begins in a brilliant major key, with a short piano introduction followed by the entrance of the vocal line that first enters with an excited outburst “Belle source”, or beautiful spring. There is an exuberance in the accompaniment that, along with the vocal line, is full of leaps expressing the joy of the mood. The third selection in this set, “Air Grave”, is highly contrasting from the two heard previously. It is in a minor key, with a dark and somber mood depicting a story of anger and remorse. Finally, the last piece in this set, “Air Vif”, is also in a minor key, but brings us around full circle. It is so fast, high energy and full of the sparkling splendor of nature that one cannot help but feel energized and happy despite the minor tonality.

The final set contains Spanish pieces by two Catalan composers, Frederico Mompou (1893 – 1987) and Fernando Obradors (1897 - 1945), who created small but highly effective bodies of work. Many composers from Catalonia, a region of northern Spain which borders France, left Spain to find fame and fortune in France, but Mompou and Obradors stayed true to their roots, living in Spain their entire lives. They did, however, both study the French compositional style and that influence is immensely apparent in their compositions. As a result of their Spanish compositional backgrounds,
they attempted to use the piano to emulate the guitar that was so popular in their music of the time. “Pastoral”, by Mompou, begins with a chordal accompaniment that replicates a single strum of the guitar. Then, as the mood of the piece intensifies, the accompaniment becomes more complex and the vocal line moves up in pitch. The following pieces, by Obradors, also emulate the sound of the guitar. “Al Amor” uses a staccato and repetitive left hand which creates a sense of urgency, and it is within the musical interlude that the guitar sounds become even more apparent with the accompaniment replicating a strumming rising and falling pattern. “La Guitarra sin prima” is the only piece, whose text is on the subject of the guitar. The piano emulates plucking a single string of the guitar throughout the piece, which helps to create a calm and content mood. “Coplas de Curro Dulce”, written in A minor, creates tension for the anticipatory nature of the text with its driving and rapid accompaniment. This time the guitar-like sound can be first be heard in the vocal line when the singer begins in $\frac{6}{8}$ with a set of rising and falling patterns on “ah”, then as the singer holds out the last note of this section the accompaniment begins with a repetitive and consistent “strum-like” sixteenth note pattern in $\frac{9}{8}$. The composer’s virtuoso writing for the piano in both the introduction and the postlude is especially thrilling and high energy, thus, providing a wonderfully satisfying conclusion to the recital.
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHridge
MIKE CURB COLLEGE OF ARTS, MEDIA,
AND COMMUNICATION
DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC

Present

Shannon E. Gomes
Soprano

A student of Professor Diane Ketchie

In her

Master of Music Recital

Accompanied by Carol Roberts

Sunday, May 2nd, 2010
4:30 p.m.
Music Recital Hall

*In partial fulfillment of the Masters of Music degree
in vocal performance
Recital Program

Please hold your applause until the end of each set

Vado, ma dove 
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart 
(1756 – 1791)

Una donna a quindici anni 
from *Cosi Fan Tutti*

***

Verborgenheit 
Hugo Wolf 
(1860 – 1903)

In dem Schatten meiner Locken
Alle gingen, Herz, zur Ruh
Er ist’s

***

Steal me, Sweet Thief 
Gian Carlo Menotti 
(1911 – 2007)

from *The Old Maid and the Thief*

*** Intermission ***
Donde Lieta

from *La Bohème*

Giacomo Puccini

(1858 – 1924)

***

Airs Chantés

Air Romantique

Air Champêtre

Air Grave

Air Vif

Francis Poulenc

(1899 – 1963)

***

Pastoral

Federico Mompou

(1893 – 1987)

Al Amor

Fernando J. Obradors

(1897 – 1945)

La guitarra sin prima

Coplas de curro dulce
Text Translations

Una donna a quindici anni

A woman of fifteen years
Must know all-the best fashions:
Where the devil has his tail,
What is good, and bad.
She-must know the little tricks
that enamor the lovers,
To feign laughter, to feign tears,
invent the reasons why.

She must in the same moment
give attention to a hundred
And with her eyes, speak with a thousand,
Give hope to all be they handsome or ugly,
To know how to hide one’s feelings
without confusion,
Without blushing, to know how to lie,
And this queen from her high throne
With an “I can and I want”
make herself obeyed.
It seems they have a taste
for such a doctrine;
Long live Despina
who knows how to serve.

Vado, ma dove

I go, to where? Oh gods!
For his torment,
For my torment,
Does heaven not feel pity?!

You who speak to my heart,
Guide my footsteps, oh Cupid;
Remove now that obstacle
That makes me doubt.

Verborenheit

Leave me alone, oh world!
Tempt me not with the gifts of love,
Leave this heart alone to have
Its joy, its pain!

Why I grieve, I do not know,
It is an unknown pain;
At all times I look through tears
At the sun’s lovely light.
Often, suddenly when I least expect it,
And the bright joy flashes
Through the difficulties, that oppress me,
Blissfully in my breast.

Leave me alone, oh world!
Tempt me not with the gifts of love,
Leave this heart alone to have
Its joy, its pain!

In dem Schatten meiner Locken

In the shade of my tresses
My lover has fallen asleep.
Shall I wake him up now? Ah, no!

Carefully comb I my curly
Locks daily in the early morning,
But in vain is my effort,
Because the winds dishevels them.
Curls, shadows, winds, rushing,
Put my beloved to sleep.
Shall I wake him up now? Ah, no!

I must listen to how it grieves him,
That he has languished already so long,
That to him life gives and takes
This my brown cheek,
And he calls me a snake;
And yet he as fallen asleep with me.
Shall I wake him up now? Ah, no!
**Alle gingen, Herz, zur Ruh**

Everyone rests, my heart,  
All sleep except you.  
Because hopeless cares  
Drives slumber from your bed,  
And your thoughts wander in silent worry  
To their love.

**Er ist’s!**

Spring lets its blue ribbon  
Again flutter in the breeze;  
Sweet, well known scents  
Sweeps portentously the land.

Violets are dreaming already,  
Want soon to arrive.  
Listen, from far off a soft harp tone!  
Spring, yes, it is you!  
I have heard your coming!

**Donde Lieta**

To that place which happily  
she left at your call of love,  
Returns alone Mimi  
to her solitary nest.  
She returns once again  
to weave false flowers.  
Goodbye, without resentment.

Listen. Gather the little things  
that I have spread about.  
In my drawer are kept that ring of gold  
And the book of prayers.

Wrap everything in an apron  
And I will send the doorman for it.

Listen, under the pillow  
there is the bonnet pink  
If you like, keep it  
as a memory of our love!  
Goodbye, without resentment.

**Air Romantique**

I walked in the countryside  
with the wind of the storm,  
Beneath the pale morning,  
beneath the clouds low;  
A raven dark and accompanied my journey,  
And in the puddles of water  
splashed my steps.

The lightening on the horizon  
made flash its flame  
And the north wind redoubled  
its long moans;  
But the tempest was too weak for my soul,  
Which drowned out the thunder  
with its beating.

From the remains golden of the ash  
and of the maple tree  
The autumn composed its sparkling loot,  
And the raven always,  
with a flight relentless,  
Without changing my fate in the least.

**Air Champêtre**

Beautiful spring, I will never forget,  
That one day, guided by the friendship  
Delighted, I gazed at your face, oh goddess,  
Lost beneath the moss, beneath the moss  
half hidden.

Had he but remained, this friend for whom  
I weep,  
Oh nymph, and served you in devotion,  
To mingle again with the breeze that  
caresses you,  
And to respond to your waters hidden.
Air Grave

Ah! be off now, unhappy thoughts!
Oh! Anger, oh remorse!
Memories which have
My two temples pressed,
With the grip of the dead.

Paths with moss overgrown,
Misty fountains,
Grottoes deep, voices
Of birds and of the wind

Lights of uncertain origin
Of the wild undergrowth,
Insects, animals,
Beauty to come,
Do not reject me,
Oh divine nature
I am your supplicant.
Ah! be off now,
Oh! Anger, oh remorse!

Air Vif

The bounty of the orchard and the splendor
of the garden,
The flowers of the field, of the wood,
bursting with pleasure
Alas! Above their heads the wind raises its
voice.

But you noble ocean whom the assault of
tempests
Not can ravage,
Certainly with more dignity when you
lament
You lose yourself in daydreams.

Pastoral

The roads in the afternoon
Become one with the night
By them I should go to you
Our love that is hidden.
By them I should go to you.
As the light on the mountains
Like the breeze on the sea
As the smell of the flowers
As the smell of the flowers.

Al Amor

Give me, Love, kisses without number,
As the number of hairs on my head,
And give me a thousand and a hundred
after that,
And a hundred and a thousand after that...
And after those many thousands... give me
three more!
And so that no one feels bad...
Let us tear up the tally
And begin counting backwards!

La Guitarra sin Prima

The guitar w/o strong sounding complaints
As I am with you for certain
Oh! Walks!
As I am with you
What will be?
The guitar which I play is not prime
But has fine silver supports
Oh! Walks!
But has fine silver supports
What will be?

Coplas de Curro Dulce

Tiny is the bride,
Tiny is the groom,
Tiny is the living room,
Tiny is the bedroom.
That is why I want
A tiny bed with a mosquito net.
**Program Notes**

**Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart** (1756 –1791) is considered to be one of the most prolific and influential composers of the Classical era. In his lifetime he composed over 600 works spanning from the symphonic to the operatic.

*Cosi fan tutte* is an opera buffa, with libretto written by Lorenzo Da Ponte. It is a comic opera in which Don Alfonso, an old philosopher, is determined to prove to his two young friends, Guglielmo and Ferrando, that their fiancées, Fiordiligi and Dorabella, are not to be trusted. He tells the ladies that their fiancés have been called up to duty, and then introduces them to the “Albanians”. The aria, “Una donna quindici anni”, is sung by Despina, the ladies’ maid, who, after being recruited by Don Alfonso to aid in his deceptions, encourages the ladies to succumb to the advances of the “Albanians”.

*Vado, ma dove* is a concert aria, with libretto, also, by Lorenzo DaPonte. It is a free standing aria written for soprano and orchestra, specifically for performance in a concert rather than as part of an opera.

**Hugo Wolf** (1860 – 1903) was an Austrian composer, most well-known for his art songs. “Verborgenheit” and “Er Ist’s” are songs from his collection of Mörke Lieder, while “In dem Schatten meiner Locken” and “Alle gingen, Herz, zur Ruh” are from his collection of Spanish Lieder, *Spanisches Liederbuch*. These works were composed during two of his most productive years, 1888 and 1889. They are from two very distinct poetic backgrounds, which appear on the surface, to be contrasting, but convey the subjects of love and nature in a cohesive way.

**Gian Carlo Menotti** (1911 – 2007) was an Italian-American composer and librettist who strived to produce compositions that appealed to the popular taste. He was the first to write a composition for television, and was a two time Pulitizer Prize winner. His opera *The Old Maid and the Thief* was one of the first operas composed specifically for performance on the radio, and aired in 1939. This one-act opera, is about an old maid, Miss Todd, who is a busybody in her small town, and her housemaid Laetitia who is a young, catty eavesdropper who is wary of becoming an Old Maid like her employer. Bob, a wanderer, comes to Miss Todd’s door one afternoon while the town gossip, Miss Pinkerton is visiting. Enamored of his beauty, Laetitia easily convinces Miss Todd to let him stay. Getting acquainted with each other Laetitia then convinces Bob to stay by promising him more food and accommodations without any cost. Eventually, Laetitia begins to fall in love with the wanderer and sings "Steal Me Sweet Thief", an aria of her love for him, asking him to steal her away before time ravages and withers her looks.
Giacomo Puccini (1858–1924) was an Italian composer whose operas are among the most frequently performed in the standard repertoire. One of his most well-known, *La bohème*, is an opera in four acts, with libretto by Luigi Illica and Giuseppe Giacosa. It tells the story of two friends, Rodolfo and Marcello, their lovers, Mimi and Musetta, and the hardships that their love must endure in order to survive. Mimi’s aria “Donde Lieta” is sung in the third act when Mimi and Rodolfo realize that Mimi is dying, and she feels it would be less painful if they separate amicably now.

Francis Poulenc (1899–1963) was a French composer who wrote music in many genres, including art song, solo piano music, chamber music, oratorio, opera, ballet music, and orchestral music. In his song cycle *Air Chantes* (1927–8), written to the poetry of Jean Moréas, he effortlessly blends the meaning of the text with the musicality of the accompaniment.

Frederico Mompou (1893–1987) and Fernando Obradors (1897–1945) were both Catalan composers who created small but highly effective bodies of work. Many composers from Catalonia, a region of northern Spain which borders France, left Spain to find fame and fortune in France, but Mompou and Obradors stayed true to their roots living in Spain their entire lives. However, the French influence is immensely apparent in their compositions.