

**SHORT OPERAS FOR EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS
A PRODUCTION GUIDE**

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To my dearest love, Marc – my duet partner in life and in song

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Preface

Short operas are useful teaching tools because they provide students the opportunity to prepare and perform a role with a complete character arc.¹ In so doing, short operas can help students develop the skills needed to perform full-length operas. At the same time, they are often less vocally demanding for developing voices. Short operas are frequently performed as double-bills, which enable more singers to have roles in a program, especially if they are double-cast. Also, since very few short operas remain in the standard repertory, students are less likely to sing these roles again. This is helpful because when singers return to roles they sang as students, they often must overcome the “muscle memory” of their former, less developed techniques. Therefore, short operas can be used as a great educational tool for students to develop the vocal and dramatic skills they need without compromising their developing voices.

This document serves as a production guide of short operas that are suited for performance by student groups in educational settings, such as opera workshops or summer opera training programs. It is intended to assist teachers of these programs in selecting appropriate works for their students.

Short operas are also beneficial for opera training programs because they generally require fewer resources and less time to prepare than full-length operas. They typically have smaller casts, fewer set changes, and minimal technical requirements, reducing the manpower, equipment, and funding needed to produce a piece. Because of their short length, they require less rehearsal and preparation time than a full-length opera.

Since short operas usually require fewer resources, they are also often more portable, and therefore better suited for outreach where opera performances are brought to audiences that might not otherwise have access. I have participated in opera outreach performances at K-12 schools, special needs institutions, assisted living facilities, juvenile detention centers, bars, and museums. These performances can help increase interest in opera among the public and provide performing opportunities for students.

Like most operas in the standard repertory, short operas, both old and new, tend to favor male roles. Of the 50 most-performed operas from the 2018-2019 season,² most of which were full-length works,

¹A character arc is the behavioral transformation of a character caused by the events that occur throughout the course of a story.

²I obtained a list of the 50 most-performed operas from the 2018-2019 season by selecting “2018/2019” for the season, “opera” for the genre, “world” for the country, and “50” for the number of lines in my search on operabase.com. This list is reproduced in Table A.1. “Statistics,” OperaBase, accessed November 22, 2019, <https://www.operabase.com/statistics/en>.

only 4 (8% of the total) had majority-female casts (see Table A.1).³ Similarly, only 22.5% of the 275 one-act operas listed in W. Franklin Summers's *Operas in One Act: A Production Guide* have majority-female casts (see Table B.1). The lack of majority-female operas does not accurately reflect the gender demographics typical of opera training programs.

In my experience both as a student and stage director, opera training programs tend to enroll significantly more women than men. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, 68% of students graduating with bachelor's and master's degrees in Voice and Opera in the 2016-17 academic year were female.⁴ These statistics are consistent with previous years. The average percentages of graduating females in Voice and Opera programs between 2002-2017 were 70% and 69% for Bachelor's and Master's degrees, respectively (see Table C.1- C.3).⁵

Since opera training programs enroll significantly more women than men, but the repertoire favors male roles, it is challenging for educators to find operas that suit the needs of their students. Therefore, for this production guide, I have chosen short operas with predominantly female casts that are vocally appropriate for young singers in order to accommodate the demographic of singers often found in opera training programs. From my research, I have found only two short opera production guides in existence. Summers' *Operas in One Act*, published in 1997, contains useful information regarding 275 one-act operas in English.⁶ Similarly, Quaintance Eaton's book, *Opera Production: A Handbook*, published in 1961, contains information about both long and short operas in several languages.⁷

In my production guide, I will write about obscure operas not included in either of the aforementioned works (with one exception as discussed in the introduction to this volume). Many of these operas are contemporary pieces written after Summers and Eaton published their respective guides. I have also included operas in English, French, and Italian, whereas Summers only describes operas in English. Since the publication of Summer's volume, technologies that enable the use of surtitles have become easily ac-

³I use the term "majority-female" to refer to any work where more than 50% of the singing roles are sopranos, mezzo-sopranos, or contraltos. I omitted spoken roles, supernumerary roles, and choruses from my analysis. In cases where a role could be sung by a man or a woman, I counted the role as female.

⁴"Bachelor's, master's, and doctor's degrees conferred by postsecondary institutions, by sex of student and discipline division: 2016-17," Digest of Education Statistics, US Department of Education, accessed August 28, 2019, https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d18/tables/dt18_318.30.asp.

⁵"Bachelor's, master's, and doctor's degrees conferred by postsecondary institutions, by sex of student and discipline division: 2006-07," Digest of Education Statistics, US Department of Education, accessed August 28, 2019, https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d08/tables/dt08_275.asp.

⁶W. Franklin Summers, *Operas in One Act: A Production Guide* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1997).

⁷Quaintance Eaton, *Opera Production II: A Handbook* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1974).

cessible, allowing English speaking audiences to comprehend the text of an opera in a foreign language. A short opera performed with surtitles can open the horizons for novice audience members to enjoying full-length operas in foreign languages, while helping students develop the skills to sing in these languages.

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Introduction

My research of short operas began as I struggled to find suitable repertoire for my own students, most of whom were female. As a stage director, I have worked primarily with students and young professionals. During my doctoral studies, I spent three summers on faculty at the Miami Music Festival, where I directed many one-act operas and scenes programs in addition to teaching classes on acting, movement, and audition skills. I directed operas for Bel Cantanti Opera (Silver Spring, MD), Queen City Opera (Cincinnati, OH), Indiana University's Gilbert and Sullivan Society (Bloomington), Reimagining Opera for Kids (Bloomington), and Great Lakes Light Opera (Cleveland, OH). As an assistant director, I worked at IU Opera and Ballet Theater (Bloomington), the Miami (FL) Music Festival, Halifax (Nova Scotia) Summer Opera Festival, and Arbor Opera Theater (Ann Arbor, MI). I directed scenes for the opera workshops of Patricia Stiles and Sylvia McNair at Indiana University. While pursuing directing opportunities, I met many other stage directors who expressed similar frustrations in trying to find repertoire for predominantly female groups of students. Each of them responded enthusiastically to my proposed idea of writing a production guide of short operas for student performance.

In addition to my work as a stage director, my experience as a singer and voice teacher gives me unique insight into the vocal demands of operatic roles. Many production guides list the required voice types and ranges of opera roles, but this does not provide an educator with enough information to determine whether a role is appropriate for a particular student. In my analysis of each opera included in this production guide, I offer specific, detailed information about the vocal challenges of each role to assist educators in making appropriate casting choices.

For this guide, I have carefully chosen short operas based on (1) high proportion of female roles to male roles; (2) suitability of each opera for student singers as determined by the vocal demands of each role; and (3) relative ease of production based on the resources required.

This document does not and cannot include a comprehensive list of all short operas that meet these specifications. I have not included short operas that are well known and frequently performed, such as Puccini's *Suor Angelica*, nor have I included any works already covered in W. Franklin Summers's book, *Operas in One Act*.¹ I have, however, included information about Offenbach's *La chanson de Fortunio*, which

¹W. Franklin Summers, *Operas in One Act: A Production Guide* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1997).

is also mentioned in the second edition of Quaintance Eaton's, *Opera Production II: A Handbook*², because I have additional details to add regarding vocal challenges and various editions of the score.

I have selected a few of my favorite obscure short operas, which I consider to be of high quality. Each chapter of this guide covers a single opera, and the chapters are ordered from easiest (*An Embarrassing Position*) to hardest (*The Clever Artifice of Harriet and Margaret*) in terms of vocal difficulty. A list of other short operas to peruse for consideration will be provided in Appendix E.

Many of the works included in this document have not yet been published, have been self-published by the composer, or are not easily accessible in most music libraries. This guide will provide information that will assist opera educators in determining whether any of the operas listed will suit the needs of their students before making the effort to obtain a perusal score. My hope is that this will save time for educators seeking short operas for their students. I will also direct the reader to websites where the scores can be ordered.

Each chapter will provide descriptions of a short opera following the same format as indicated below. Some of the categories are self-explanatory, but I have provided brief descriptions of the others. Information most relevant to stage direction and production is listed at the beginning followed by details regarding casting and pedagogical considerations. I have organized each section with the intent of making it easy to skim for the reader's desired information.

Title:

Composer:

Librettist:

Language:

Duration:

Date:

Cast: This section lists each character with his or her voice type and range.

Instrumentation: In this section I will list the instrumentation for the opera as provided in the score without abbreviation.

Style: I provide the reader with a general idea of the dramatic genre and the musical style of the work.

Source of the Libretto: This section lists the source on which the libretto is based and indicates

²Quaintance Eaton, *Opera Production II: A Handbook* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1974).

where the original source can be found for study.

Setting: Location, time, and place of the story.

Plot Synopsis:

Production Notes: This section lists set requirements and any props expressly called for in the libretto and in the stage directions. These are differentiated because stage directions may not have been written by the composer or the librettist and can be ignored at the director's discretion. As necessary, this section may also include information regarding technical requirements, costume changes, sound effects, dance elements, etc.

Premiere: When possible, I list the date and location of the work's premiere as well as the names of the stage director and music director.

Recordings: This section lists available audio and video recordings.

Materials and Performance Rights: Since most of the operas discussed are under copyright, this section provides important information about where to obtain scores and permission to perform the works.

Other Notes: Any other pertinent information regarding the operatic work not before mentioned in other categories will be provided here. This may include information about awards, available translations, etc.

Casting and Pedagogical Considerations: In this section, I list a brief description of each character that may include character traits, relationships to other characters, age, etc.

Following the character description, I indicate the prominence of each role in the work, and whether the character has solos, duets, or ensemble numbers. I categorize and describe the types of solo singing each role requires. When a score calls for a chorus, I also list the function of the chorus, its prominence in the opera, and the characters the chorus members play.

Next, I describe each role's tessitura in detail and include information about the frequency of notes in the high and low extremes of the range.

I then offer pedagogical considerations, noting the challenges of each role, and indicating which vocal skills a student can develop from preparing each role. Note that the pedagogical considerations are not comprehensive, but merely serve as a general guide. I have used my experience as a singer and voice teacher to make general observations of common vocal challenges.

Addendum:

Multiple works by the same composer frequently have stylistic similarities and comparable peda-

gical challenges; thus, I only discuss one work per composer in this production guide. When a composer has multiple works that suit the needs of opera training programs, I mention them briefly in an addendum to that composer's chapter. These works also appear in Appendix E.

When citing musical examples, I will indicate the place in the score by listing the composer, title of the opera, and measure numbers that correspond to the example. When a score does not provide measure numbers, I will instead indicate the edition I'm referencing and provide the page number, system number, and measure number in that system. For example, a snippet found on page 3, system 4, measures 1-2 will be identified as 3/4/1-2.

I will use Scientific Pitch Notation to designate specific pitches. In this system, each C is numbered beginning with the lowest from C1-C8. See Example 0.1 below.

Example 0.1: Scientific pitch notation as used in this thesis

The image displays a musical score for a piano, consisting of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The treble staff contains a series of whole notes, with the first four measures being rests. The notes in the treble staff are labeled with Scientific Pitch Notation: C4 - B4, C5 - B5, C6 - B6, and C7 - C8. The bass staff contains a series of whole notes, with the first four measures being rests. The notes in the bass staff are labeled with Scientific Pitch Notation: A0 - B0, C1 - B1, C2 - B2, and C3 - B3. The notes are arranged in a sequence that demonstrates the range of pitches from A0 to C8.

Chapter 1: An Embarrassing Position

Composer and Librettist

Dan Shore

Language

English

Duration

30 minutes

Date

Composed in 2007. Published in 2009.

Cast - 4 women, 1 man

Willis Parkham – Baritone (C3-F#4, opt. A4)

Eva Delvigné – Soprano (C4-C6)

June Jenkins – Soprano (B3-B♭5)

Ms. Dara – Soprano or mezzo (D4-G5)

Miss Paige – Soprano (C4-G5)

Instrumentation

Flute/piccolo, clarinet in B♭, 2 cornets, trombone, piano, 2 violins, viola, cello, bass, and percussion. A piano/vocal score is also available.

Style

Dan Shore's parlor comedy features memorable melodies and delightful musical humor. His music has a distinct New Orleans flavor, indicative of the setting of the piece.

Source of the Libretto

Dan Shore based his opera on Kate Chopin's short story, *An Embarrassing Position*. Chopin's story is found in the following volumes: *The Complete Works of Kate Chopin*¹, *Kate Chopin and Her Creole Stories*², and *Kate Chopin: Complete Novels and Stories*.³

¹Kate Chopin, *The Complete Works of Kate Chopin* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016).

²Kate Chopin, *Kate Chopin and Her Creole Stories* (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 2006).

³Kate Chopin, *Kate Chopin: Complete Novels and Stories* (New York: Library of America, 2016).

Setting

Willis Parkham's home parlor in New Orleans, summer, 1890s, late at night.⁴

Plot Synopsis

In *An Embarrassing Position*'s score, Shore introduces the opera's plot with his own short synopsis, quoted here in full:

Late at night, after a long poker game, Willis Parkham is chastised by his maid, Ms. Dara. She cautions him to abandon his wild, bachelor ways for the decorum of a married life if he truly wishes to live up to his political ambitions.

The doorbell rings, revealing a surprise visit from the young Eva Delvigné, whom Parkham secretly loves. Her father has sent her a telegram telling her he will not be able to return home that evening, and Eva has decided to place herself under Parkham's protection for the night.

Before he can explain to her the impropriety of her being alone in a single man's home, there is another surprise visitor at the door. Parkham hastily stashes Eva in another room, and in walks June Jenkins, the gossip columnist of the New Orleans Times-Democrat! June, informed that there may have been a political dimension to the poker game, tries to tempt Parkham into giving her an exclusive interview, complete with a cover photo. When June discovers the presence of Eva, Parkham finds himself in quite an embarrassing position. Desperate, he tells June that the woman in question is not actually Miss Eva Delvigné. After whispering a further explanation to her, June runs off, promising to return soon.

Parkham asks Ms. Dara to fetch Father Linden, adding that the situation is urgent. Parkham timidly attempts to comfort Eva and reveal his plan to restore her honor, but he finds it difficult to speak his mind clearly. June reenters with Miss Paige, an apprentice photographer, who clumsily begins setting up her equipment and arranging Parkham and Eva. When Ms. Dara returns with Father Linden, Parkham quickly proposes marriage and Eva joyfully accepts. As the young couple poses for what will now be a wedding photo, we start to wonder if perhaps the presence of the three young ladies isn't such a coincidence after all. . .⁵

⁴Dan Shore, *An Embarrassing Position*, Library of America, 2007, Boston, frontmatter.

⁵Ibid.

Production Notes

The production requires only one set—Mr. Parkham’s home parlor. There should be at least two entrances/exits—one for the front door, and another leading to other parts of Mr. Parkham’s home. In terms of props, the libretto requires a table and chairs, bottles, glasses, cards, poker chips, an umbrella, a telegram, and a camera. The stage directions suggest that the camera is large and accompanied by a tripod and assorted paraphernalia.⁶ The stage directions also indicate that Eva enters wearing a hat and gloves, which are removed and left to be accidentally discovered by June Jenkins.⁷

The vintage bellows camera is the most difficult prop to acquire. On his blog, Michael Woods provides clear, concise instructions on how to make a simple vintage bellows camera prop using materials that are inexpensive and easy to find.⁸ The prop is a stylized version of an 1890s camera, negating the need to use a wooden tripod. Wooden tripods are readily available on Amazon but tend to be expensive. A simple, inexpensive, black tripod should do. Modifications can be made to remove especially modern elements such as painting over a logo, etc.

Premiere

An Embarrassing Position premiered at the New England Conservatory Opera Workshop in Boston, Massachusetts on May 3, 2010, conducted by Daniel Wyneken and directed by Steve Maler.⁹

Recordings

Video recordings are available on YouTube - of particular interest are two performances, one at Opera del West¹⁰ and another at the National Opera Association Conference.¹¹

⁶Shore, *An Embarrassing Position*, p. 51.

⁷When I directed this opera at the Miami Music Festival in 2017, I omitted the hat and gloves, and instead had June discover Eva’s umbrella as evidence of her presence.

⁸Michael Woods, “Easy DIY Prop Bellows Style Cameras, 3 constructed for less than £10,” Michael Woods, Technical Management, Sound Engineering and Design, accessed April 1, 2020, <https://ukmikewoods.wordpress.com/2014/02/06/easy-diy-prop-bellows-style-cameras-3-constructed-for-less-than-10/>.

⁹“World Premiere of An Embarrassing Position,” DANSHOREMUSIC Wordpress, accessed December 1, 2019, <https://danshoremusic.wordpress.com/2010/04/15/world-premiere-of-an-embarrassing-position>.

¹⁰Dan Shore, “An Embarrassing Position,” Opera del West, Natick, MA, accessed June 7, 2019, www.youtube.com/watch?v=U2mppEeEiIg.

¹¹Dan Shore, “An Embarrassing Position,” National Opera Association Conference, New York, NY, accessed June 7, 2019, www.youtube.com/watch?v=V5UYkzD-b3Q.

Materials and Performance Rights

Scores are available for purchase on Dan Shore's website.¹² Contact him directly for information about performance rights.¹³

Other Notes

An Embarrassing Position won the National Opera Association Chamber Opera Competition in 2013.

Casting and Pedagogical Considerations

An Embarrassing Position contains arias, duets, both polyphonic and homophonic ensemble numbers, and conversational singing, in which each character sings alone in turn, expecting a response from another character. Some of the conversational singing is speech-like, almost recitative, where several words in a phrase are sung on the same note, giving greater emphasis to the text, and the final notes in the phrase mimic natural cadence patterns of speaking. Young singers may, at first, have difficulty in singing these types of phrases with appropriate forward drive and text emphasis. Example 1.2 below illustrates some of Mr. Parkham's speech-like singing.

Young singers often struggle to sing acapella without intonation errors, especially in an ensemble number. If one student starts to drift off key, the other students often follow. The presto section of the scene three ensemble, shown in part below in Example 1.1, can be sung acapella, which requires each singer to have a good foundation of harmony and a very solid pitch memory. Dan Shore included optional accompaniment for the acapella *presto* section, should the singers need help staying in tune. This provides students with a good opportunity to practice singing an acapella ensemble number but also gives them the option of having accompaniment, if needed.

¹²“Shop,” Dan Shore Music, accessed August 8, 2019, www.danshoremusic.com/shop.

¹³“Contact,” Dan Shore Music, accessed August 8, 2019, www.danshoremusic.com/contact.

Example 1.1: Shore, *An Embarrassing Position*, Scene 3, mm. 359-374.

Presto possibile ($\text{♩} = 108$)

pp

Eva
Oh, what a luck - y break for a young re - port - er With ta - lent and am - bi - tion. Drop just a hint and

June
Oh, what a luck - y break for a young re - port - er With ta - lent and am - bi - tion. Drop just a hint and

Dara
Oh, what a luck - y break for a young re - port - er With ta - lent and am - bi - tion. Drop just a hint and

Parkham
Oh, what a luck - y break for a young re - port - er With ta - lent and am - bi - tion. Drop just a hint and

Eva
she'll fi - gure out the rest With her wo - man's in - tu - i - tion. Thanks to the hand of fate She's walked in - to

June
she'll fi - gure out the rest With her wo - man's in - tu - i - tion. Thanks to the hand of fate She's walked in - to

Dara
she'll fi - gure out the rest With her wo - man's in - tu - i - tion. Thanks to the hand of fate She's walked in - to

Parkham
she'll fi - gure out the rest With her wo - man's in - tu - i - tion. Thanks to the hand of fate She's walked in - to

Eva
p
Quite an em - bar - rass - ing po - si - tion... How will he ev - er get out of this one With - out soil - ing her name?

June
p
Quite an em - bar - rass - ing po - si - tion... How will he ev - er get out of this one With - out soil - ing her name?.

Dara
p
Quite an em - bar - rass - ing po - si - tion... How will he ev - er get out of this one With - out soil - ing her name?.

Parkham
p
Quite an em - bar - rass - ing po - si - tion... How will he ev - er get out of this one With - out soil - ing her name?

Willis Parkham – Baritone (C3-F#4, opt. A4)

“handsome, aspiring politician; a bachelor; 30s”¹⁴

Willis Parkham has the most prominent role in the opera as he is onstage for almost the entire piece. He participates in all the ensemble numbers, sings in duets with both Eva and June respectively, and has a significant amount of solo singing both in melodic and speech-like styles.

The tessitura for this role is best suited for a high baritone. Most of Parkham’s vocal lines occur between E3 and F4. His speech-like singing sits lower than his ensemble singing, hovering around A3, B3, and C4, as shown in Example 1.2. Example 1.1, highlighted in blue, represents some of Parkham’s ensemble singing, where his vocal line stays mainly in the range of B3 to E♭4. This role is best suited for a graduate student or an advanced undergraduate student due to the high tessitura.

Example 1.2: Shore, *An Embarrassing Position*, Scene 2, mm. 22-30.

p con passione

Parkham Miss E - va, I am ab-so-lute-ly charmed, I am ab-so-lute-ly charmed.

Parkham I sup-pose your fa-ther will be here soon?

Eva Delvigné – Soprano (C4-C6)

“young, pretty, and flirtatious; 20s”¹⁵

Eva Delvigné appears in the first half of scene two and all of scenes three and four, taking part in each ensemble number. She also has a short aria, a duet with Mr. Parkham, and conversational singing, some of which is speech-like.

Eva Delvigné has the highest tessitura of the female roles. Her voice line has two B♭5s, a B5, a C6, and many A5s and G5s. Most of her vocal lines center around the top of the staff. In ensemble numbers, she takes the top line.

Eva’s tessitura is at its highest in the homophonic ensemble numbers. It is challenging to articulate text in the upper part of the soprano range, especially with the fast tempo required in the *presto* section,

¹⁴Shore, *An Embarrassing Position*, Cast of Characters.

¹⁵Ibid.

as illustrated in Example 1.1 above, marked in pink. Because of the high tessitura, this role may be best suited for a graduate student, or a skilled undergraduate who has developed the advanced technique of articulating rapid text in a high range.

Eva's vocal lines also include many large leaps, both ascending and descending. Example 1.3 shows some descending octave leaps that may be particularly challenging for a young, high soprano because they require a quick registration change into chest voice.

Example 1.3: Shore, *An Embarrassing Position*, Scene 2, mm. 50-65.

Andante con moto ♩ = 80

p

Eva "Ma - jor ob - struc - tion on the tracks__ be - low STOP Shall be de -

Eva tained un - til to - mor - row night STOP Am in de - spair at

Eva the thought of you Re - main - ing all a - lone 'til then STOP"

June Jinkins – Soprano (B3-B \flat 5)

*"reporter for the New Orleans Times-Democrat; 30s"*¹⁶

June Jinkins has the most prominent female role in the opera. She has the longest aria and begins one of the ensemble numbers with a solo. She sings in each ensemble number, sings briefly in duet with Mr. Parkham, and has some conversational singing.

June Jinkins' tessitura is lower than Eva's, centering around the middle of the staff. Her range is still quite large, including many high notes in the range of F5-B \flat 5. She sings at the lower end of her range more frequently than Eva. In ensemble singing, June takes the second line from the top.

Like Eva, June has many large leaps in her vocal line, both ascending and descending. Unlike Eva's leaps, June's leaps frequently require her to stay in the lower part of the range longer. Many of the phrases in her aria begin with a measure of notes near the bottom of the staff and then leap to the top of the staff where she remains for the rest of the phrase, only to leap back down for the beginning of the next

¹⁶Shore, *An Embarrassing Position*, Cast of Characters.

phrase, as illustrated in Example 1.4. The voice naturally carries better in the higher range. It may be difficult for a soprano to project in the lower parts of these phrases and to maintain a smooth dynamic level throughout. Preserving the desired tone quality can also be difficult for a young singer when she is required to switch from high to low so frequently. This role is best suited for a graduate student or an advanced undergraduate student due to the large range and frequent leaps required.

Example 1.4: Shore, *An Embarrassing Position*, Scene 3, mm. 101-116.

June *mf a piacere*
 Now don't you try to act like you would-n't enjoy it— It's a sign of prestige and esteem.

June *a piacere*
 A man with such a handsome young face should employ it— As a means of achieving his dream.

June Jenkins' role requires a wide dynamic range. She must be able to transition from *piano* to *forte* back to *pianissimo* within a span of few phrases. Many young singers tend to under-support for *piano* passages and overexert for *forte* passages. With the help of her teacher, a student could use this role to develop flexibility in dynamics.

This role also requires flexibility in tempo. June's vocal lines include many tempo markings such as *accelerando*, *poco ritardando*, *poco meno mosso*, *con moto*, and *freely* just to name a few.¹⁷ Many phrases in her aria are marked *a piacere*, allowing her to decide exactly how she wants to stretch the tempo. This allows a young singer to develop the technique of giving and taking time in her musical phrasing, and in communicating tempo changes with the pianist or conductor who must follow her.

Ms. Dara – Soprano or mezzo (D4-G5)

*"Parkham's very proper maid; 50s"*¹⁸

Ms. Dara is a supporting role. She doesn't stay on stage for long periods of time but enters and exits regularly to interject. She doesn't have an aria but does participate in some of the ensemble numbers. Her solo singing is mainly conversational.

Ms. Dara has the smallest range of the female roles and could easily be sung by a mezzo or a so-

¹⁷Shore, *An Embarrassing Position*, pp. 26-31.

¹⁸Ibid., Cast of Characters.

prano. Her solo music mainly stays in the upper half of the staff, as shown in Example 1.5 below, but she takes the lowest part in ensemble numbers, centering around the lower half of the staff, demonstrated in Example 1.1 above, marked in orange. Though any soprano could sing the role, high sopranos may find the tessitura less comfortable. Casting a mezzo or a soprano with some “weight” or “warmth” to her voice would assist in depicting the intended age of the maid and help to audibly differentiate her character from the other soprano roles.

Ms. Dara’s role features frequent use of the chromatic scale and other chromatic melodies. The accompaniment is very supportive, so even a young singer should be able to learn the music and maintain intonation without great difficulty. Example 1.5 demonstrates some of her chromatic singing.

This role is appropriate for an undergraduate female singer. It provides a good introduction for singing chromatic melodies and gives a young singer experience in singing a role with a full character arc without placing great demands on a developing voice.

Example 1.5: Shore, *An Embarrassing Position*, Scene 1, mm. 57-70.

Dara

I don't want to come here in the morn-ing. And find the bot-tles and glass-es scat-tered 'round like nine-pins,

Piano

Dara

The cards and po-ker chips lay-in'-a-bout loose. And this is what you call a po - li-ti-cal meet-ing?

Piano

Dara

Mis-ter Park-ham, Mis-ter Park-ham, De-co-rum! De-co-rum!

Piano

Molto meno mosso ♩ = 90
a piacere
f
Molto meno mosso ♩ = 90
ff
p

Miss Paige – Soprano (C4-G5)

*“photographer for the paper; late 20s”*¹⁹

Miss Paige only appears in the final scene. Her aria becomes the final ensemble number in which the melody switches back and forth between Miss Paige and Eva.

Miss Paige’s vocal lines mainly stay in her mid-range. In ensemble, she replaces Ms. Dara as the lowest female voice. Miss Paige and Ms. Dara never sing in harmony together. This role could easily be sung by a mezzo or soprano. A high soprano may find the tessitura too low.

¹⁹Shore, *An Embarrassing Position*, Cast of Characters.

The role of Miss Paige has a few lines that she must speak over orchestral accompaniment. Young singers may struggle to project their speaking voices over an orchestra, although the mechanics are largely similar to singing. With some coaching, this role can help a student develop that skill, which, in turn, will prepare her for future roles especially in musical theater, singspiel, and operetta, where spoken text is a prominent component.

Like other roles previously mentioned, Miss Paige’s vocal line frequently contains large leaps, most notably descending octave leaps as shown in Example 1.6. Despite the challenges of the octave leaps and the underscored spoken text, this role would be appropriate for an undergraduate singer.

Example 1.6: Shore, *An Embarrassing Position*, Scene 4, mm. 59-65.

Paige *f*
Goodeve - ning! Goodeve - ning! Gooddeve - ning! Goodeve - ning!

Paige *p*
Don't wor - ry; I've seen him work this thing a do - zen times....
piacere

Additional Pedagogical Considerations

Dan Shore’s *An Embarrassing Position* is well-suited for young singers. The vocal writing provides some challenges but also some beautiful melodies with supportive accompaniment and simple rhythms. It offers students opportunities to practice different styles of solo singing, to sing in both homophonic and polyphonic harmony with one voice per part, and to practice singing in English.

Where students tend to focus on melodic, *legato* styles of singing in their lessons, this opera contrasts *legato* melodic singing, *staccato* singing, speech-like singing, and patter. As students prepare their roles in this opera, they will practice and develop techniques in various types of singing, which will prepare them for future roles.

Young singers can reap great benefits from working on ensemble numbers with one voice per part. It requires them to know their voice parts extremely well, trains their ears to recognize how the different voice parts work together, and prepares them for future operatic roles with ensemble singing. Polyphonic and homophonic ensemble numbers provide students with different challenges. In homophonic pieces, the students focus on maintaining their separate pitches, as their rhythms and texts are usually the same or

very similar. The challenge increases when the piece is unaccompanied. Polyphonic writing is more like a puzzle. The students must develop their aural skills to understand how the independent lines fit together. They figure out how to find their entrances and starting pitches for new phrases from the accompaniment, the other characters' lines, or from remembering pitches from their own previous lines. They discover how their text relates to the other characters' texts. Students don't often have opportunities to work on ensemble numbers in their private lessons and must develop these skills elsewhere. This opera provides several ensembles that will help young students develop skills in ensemble singing.

Singing in English can present a nice challenge for young English-speaking singers who have not yet developed strong skills in French, German, or Italian. Working in their native language helps singers to focus on developing acting skills without the added complication of having to translate. However, sometimes singing in English can be challenging for young singers in terms of diction due to the harsh nature of some English consonants and the heavy use of glottal stops and diphthongs. This is particularly challenging when working on patter. The students must learn how to produce consonants in the most efficient way in order to sing them at rapid pace. Working on an English opera gives English speaking students an excellent opportunity to develop good singing diction in their own language, while preparing to extend that good diction to other opera languages.

Conclusion

Dan Shore's *An Embarrassing Position* is an excellent piece for opera workshops and similar opera training programs because it can be produced relatively quickly with minimal resources, and offers four female roles that are well-suited for student singers.

Addendum - Other Works by Dan Shore

Dan Shore's *The Beautiful Bridegroom* is a one-act pastiche of Mozart's music based on an 18th century play by Ludvig Holberg.²⁰ The 35-minute piece requires a cast of six sopranos, or four sopranos and two mezzos. *The Beautiful Bridegroom* is the 2009 winner of the National Opera Association Chamber Opera Competition and has been performed widely in university and conservatory opera workshops around the United States. See Dan Shore's website for more information.²¹

²⁰Ned Rorem's *Captain Lovelock* is another one-act chamber opera based on the same play. His opera requires three sopranos and two mezzos. W. Franklin Summers, *Operas in One Act: A Production Guide* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1997), 99.

²¹Dan Shore, "The Beautiful Bridegroom," Dan Shore Music, accessed August 8, 2019, www.danshoremusic.com/the-beautiful-bridegroom.

Chapter 2: La chanson de Fortunio

Composer

Jacques Offenbach

Librettists

Ludovic Halévy and Hector Crémieux

Language

Originally in French. German and English editions are also available.¹

Duration

50 minutes

Date

1861

Cast - 7 women, 1 man (optionally 8 women); 1 spoken role²

Fortunio, a lawyer – Spoken role

Laurette, his wife – Soprano (C4-A5)

Valentin, second clerk to Fortunio – Soprano (D4-C6)

Babet, Fortunio's cook – Mezzo (A3-F5)

Friquet,³ a junior clerk – Buffo Tenor (D3-G4 optional G2 -G4)

Guillaume, a clerk – Soprano (E4-A5)

Landry, a clerk – Soprano (E4-G5)

Saturnin, a clerk – Soprano (D4- F#5)

Sylvain, a clerk – Soprano (D4- F#5)

The opera also requires four female supernumeraries to play the girlfriends of Guillaume, Landry, Saturnin, and Sylvain in the final scene of the opera.

¹Battista published an Italian edition in 1875, but the score is difficult to acquire. "La canzone di Fortunio : per canto e pianoforte," WorldCat, accessed October 8, 2019, <https://www.worldcat.org/title/canzone-di-fortunio-operetta-comica-in-un-atto/oclc/882961354>.

²Voice types listed are as indicated in the 1861 German edition. Jacques Offenbach, Hector Crémieux, and Lucovic Halévy, *Fortunio's Lied*, trans. Ferdinand Gumbert (Berlin: Bote & Bock, 1861), 2.

³Friquet may be sung up an octave by a soprano. Jacques Offenbach, Hector Crémieux, and Lucovic Halévy, "La chanson de Fortunio (OEK Critical Edition)," Boosey & Hawkes, accessed November 14, 2019, <https://www.boosey.com/pages/opera/moreDetails?musicID=26446>.

Voice types of some characters vary among available editions of the score. For example, the OEK critical edition lists Friquet as a soprano,⁴ although the 1861 French edition of the score indicates that a comic tenor played the role in the French premiere.⁵ The 1861 German edition lists Friquet as a “tenor-buffo”⁶ and the 1872 English edition lists him as a “tenor or light baritone.”⁷ Contrastingly, Valentin was sung by a woman at the premiere⁸ but the OEK edition classifies Valentin as a buffo tenor.⁹ Both the 1872 English edition¹⁰ and the 1861 German edition¹¹ list Valentin as a soprano. The OEK¹² and the 1861 German editions recognize the remaining clerks as sopranos¹³ while they are listed as mezzos in the 1872 English edition.¹⁴

Recordings of the work also display casting discrepancies. For example, Jube Classic’s 2013 audio recording in German casts Valentin as a soprano, but male singers play all of the other clerks, even though Offenbach wrote them as pants roles. In the 1991 Gaieté Lyrique audio recording in French, all the roles are sung by men except for Laurette and Babet.

It is clear from the casting discrepancies that the roles in *La chanson de Fortunio* are flexible. The roles have moderate ranges and can easily be sung by men or women, and thus can easily accommodate a predominantly female cast. The only character who has not been cast as a woman in any version is Fortunio, which is a speaking role.

In addition to the voice types, the character names also differ among the French, German, and English editions. These are listed in Table 2.1 below.

⁴Offenbach, Crémieux, and Halévy, “La chanson de Fortunio (OEK Critical Edition).”

⁵Jacques Offenbach, Hector Crémieux, and Lucovic Halévy, *Le chanson de Fortunio* (Paris: Heugel, 1861), frontmatter.

⁶Offenbach, Crémieux, and Halévy, *Fortunio’s Lied*, 2.

⁷Jacques Offenbach, Hector Crémieux, and Lucovic Halévy, *The Magic Melody or Fortunio’s Song*, trans. Henry Brougham Farnie (London: Metzler & Co., 1872), 2.

⁸Offenbach, Crémieux, and Halévy, *Le chanson de Fortunio*, frontmatter.

⁹Offenbach, Crémieux, and Halévy, “La chanson de Fortunio (OEK Critical Edition).”

¹⁰Offenbach, Crémieux, and Halévy, *The Magic Melody or Fortunio’s Song*, 2.

¹¹Offenbach, Crémieux, and Halévy, *Fortunio’s Lied*, 2.

¹²Offenbach, Crémieux, and Halévy, “La chanson de Fortunio (OEK Critical Edition).”

¹³Offenbach, Crémieux, and Halévy, *Fortunio’s Lied*, 2.

¹⁴Offenbach, Crémieux, and Halévy, *The Magic Melody or Fortunio’s Song*, 2.

Table 2.1: Offenbach, *La chanson de Fortunio*, Role names in French, German, and English editions

<i>La chanson de Fortunio</i>	<i>Fortunio's Lied</i>	<i>The Magic Melody</i>
Fortunio	Fortunio	Dorick
Laurette	Marie	Grace
Valentin	Valentin	Arnold
Babet	Babett	Betty
Friquet	Paul Friquet	Toby
Guillaume	Eduard	Will
Landry	Max	Ralph
Saturnin	Louis	Ned
Sylvain	Karl	Basil

Instrumentation

2 flutes, 1 oboe, 2 clarinets, 1 bassoon, 2 French horns, 2 trumpets, 1 trombone, 1 timpani, percussion, and strings.¹⁵ Piano/vocal scores are also available.

Style

La chanson de Fortunio is an opéra-comique, a genre of French opera that contains spoken dialogue between musical numbers. The work is divided into eight numbers, consisting of solos, duets, and ensembles.

Source of the Libretto

Offenbach wrote a song entitled, “La chanson de Fortunio” as an incidental musical number for the character of Fortunio, a young clerk in Alfred de Musset’s play, *Le chandelier*.^{16, 17} Since the song was never used for the play, Offenbach’s librettists, Ludovic Halévy and Hector Crémieux, created an original libretto centered around this song as a parodic sequel to Musset’s play.¹⁸

¹⁵Offenbach, Crémieux, and Halévy, “La chanson de Fortunio (OEK Critical Edition).”

¹⁶Andrew Lamb, “Offenbach in One Act,” *The Musical Times* 121, no. 1652 (1980): 615–617, ISSN: 00274666, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/961145>.

¹⁷An English translation of Musset’s play, *Le chandelier* is available in the following volume: Alfred de Musset, *Three Plays of Alfred de Musset: Don’t Fool With Love, The Candlestick, A Door Must be Kept Open*, trans. Declan Donnellan and Peter Meyer (Bath, England: Absolute Classics, 1993).

¹⁸Melissa Cummins, “Use of Parody Techniques in Jacques Offenbach’s Opérettes and Germaine Tailleferre’s ‘Du style galant au style méchant’” (PhD diss., University of Kansas, 2017).

Setting

Fortunio's garden during the reign of Louis XV.¹⁹

Plot Synopsis

Fortunio, a notary, discovers some roses are missing from his garden and some footprints in his flowerbed. Having previously noticed a bouquet of roses on his wife's windowsill, he suspects she has a lover. He remembers how he had seduced the wife of his employer, many years ago with the help of a magic song he wrote. Fortunio is grateful the song has been forgotten, especially since he also suspects that his clerk Valentin is in love with his wife, Laurette.

Shortly after Laurette enters, Fortunio assails her with accusations of infidelity and threatens to build a wall in front of her window to keep her lover out. Totally unaware of what he is talking about, she warns Fortunio not to make her regret marrying him and storms off. He follows in pursuit.

Noticing Fortunio's absence, his clerks Guillaume, Saturnin, Landry, Sylvain, and Valentin enter complaining of hunger. They call for Babet, the cook, who brings them apples, bread, and water. As their meal ends, Guillaume infers that Valentin must be the victim of unrequited love, since he has been acting so melancholy lately.

Just then, Friquet, another of Fortunio's clerks, arrives having just learned about Fortunio's magic song and homewrecking past. The clerks enjoy making fun of the aged, balding Fortunio, who is no longer a picture of youth. Worried that Fortunio will catch them, Landry convinces the clerks to return to their work. Friquet and Valentin remain behind.

Friquet accuses Valentin of keeping a secret, having guessed that Valentin is in love. Suddenly Laurette enters, muttering complaints about her beastly husband, startling Valentin and confirming Friquet's suspicions. Noticing Valentin, she asks him if he is sick, since he looks so pale. As he responds negatively, she accidentally drops her bouquet. In his lovelorn stupor, he quickly picks it up and mistakenly calls the bouquet her "fan." Laurette, confused, quickly corrects him and leaves.

Having witnessed this, Friquet commiserates with Valentin about unrequited love. He then convinces Valentin that work is the best way to forget about his sorrows. As they begin organizing Fortunio's files, they fortuitously discover his forgotten magic love song. Friquet calls for the other clerks to join them in the garden.

¹⁹Offenbach, Crémieux, and Halévy, *Le chanson de Fortunio*, frontmatter.

When the clerks arrive, they each hurriedly copy the love song and rush out to sing it to their intended girlfriends. Valentin determines to confess his adoration to Laurette with the help of Fortunio's magic song. He enlists Friquet's help in creating a ruse to lure Fortunio away from the garden. After Valentin is safely hidden away, Friquet cries for Fortunio's aid to "put out a fire" at the registry. Laurette and Fortunio enter to uncover the source of the commotion. Distrusting his wife, Fortunio locks her and the unseen Valentin inside the gate then makes his way to the registry.

Laurette, surprised as Valentin emerges from his hiding place, comments on his pale complexion and sad countenance. She suspects he must be in love with someone and offers to give him some advice. Trembling, he describes the woman he loves. Refusing to tell her the woman's name, Valentin instead sings Fortunio's song to her.

After realizing the "fire" was a ruse, Fortunio returns only to discover that he had locked Valentin in the garden with his wife. As Fortunio accuses her, he reveals to her surprise that Valentin had been in love with her all along. Fortunio's accusations of Valentin and Laurette are interrupted when the rest of Fortunio's clerks enter with their new girlfriends, singing Fortunio's magic song from his youth, thus exposing his hypocrisy. As the infuriated Fortunio tries to get rid of the clerks, Laurette, unseen by Fortunio, tosses a rose to Valentin. The audience is left guessing what happens next.

Production Notes

The opera only requires one set—Fortunio's garden—with entrances/exits leading to the registry, Laurette's cousin's house, and the interior of Fortunio's home. Stage directions for the 1861 French edition suggest that there is a balcony and an entrance gate.²⁰ At one point in the opera, Fortunio locks Laurette and Valentin in the garden, so the entrance gate is a necessary set piece, although the balcony is optional. The libretto also requires a flower bed with rose bushes.

Required props include a bouquet of roses, a pitcher of water, drinking glasses, a container full of apples and bread, several letters, a folder full of documents, a table, chairs, writing utensils, blank paper, and a cooking pot.

Although the libretto indicates that Fortunio wears a hat, no other costume requirements are provided. The opera, originally set in the 18th century, could easily be set in any other time period. With a modern setting, the acquisition of costumes would be easy and economical.

²⁰Offenbach, Crémieux, and Halévy, *Le chanson de Fortunio*, 9.

Premiere

La chanson de Fortunio premiered at the Théâtre des Bouffes-Parisiens in Paris, France on January 5, 1861.²¹

Recordings

Jube Classic's 2013 audio recording in German is widely available for purchase through many online sellers and music streaming services such as Spotify, Apple Music, and Google Play.²² French audio recordings are also commercially available but difficult to find in the United States.^{23, 24} A video recording in French performed by Sinfonietta Bel Canto is available on YouTube.²⁵

Materials and Performance Rights

La chanson de Fortunio is in the public domain. Free scores in both French and German are available online from the Petrucci Music Library.²⁶ An 1872 English edition called *The Magic Melody, or Fortunio's Song* is available for free on Google Books.²⁷ Orchestra parts and piano/vocal scores for the OEK critical edition are available from Boosey & Hawkes' website.^{28, 29}

Casting and Pedagogical Considerations

Dialogue is one of the most challenging aspects of *La chanson de Fortunio*. Many opera students begin their French training during their undergraduate years. Most have not yet developed proficiency in the language. It is difficult for these students to speak French dialogue with appropriate pronunciation and inflection, and to memorize the dialogue and its meaning, especially without the mnemonic aid of music.

One solution to remediate this challenge is to perform the dialogue in English and sing in French.

²¹"La chanson de Fortunio," Opening Night! Opera and Oratorio Premieres, Stanford University Libraries, accessed November 12, 2019, <http://operadata.stanford.edu/catalog/10122353>.

²²Jacques Offenbach, *Die schöne Helena (Excerpts) and Fortunios Lied*, dir. Paul Burkhard (Jube Classic, 2013), CD.

²³Jacques Offenbach, *Madame L'archiduc/La chanson de Fortunio*, dir. Jean-Claude Hartemann (February 23, 1964; Gaieté Lyrique, 1991), CD.

²⁴Jacques Offenbach, *Lischen et Fritzchen/La chanson de Fortunio*, dir. Alain Pâris (1973; Bourg, 1983), CD.

²⁵Jacques Offenbach, "La chanson de Fortunio," performed by Sinfonietta Bel Canto, accessed November 12, 2019, www.youtube.com/watch?v=GJPW1swazko.

²⁶"La chanson de Fortunio (Jacques Offenbach)," IMSLP Petrucci Music Library, accessed November 14, 2019, [https://imslp.org/wiki/La_chanson_de_Fortunio_\(Offenbach%5C%2C_Jacques\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/La_chanson_de_Fortunio_(Offenbach%5C%2C_Jacques)).

²⁷This edition varies significantly from the original French version. Laurette (Grace) is Fortunio's (Dorick's) ward instead of his wife, perhaps making the piece less scandalous for 1872 audiences. The musical numbers are rearranged, and the libretto is expanded. Jacques Offenbach, *The Magic Melody, or Fortunio's Song. Comic opera in two acts*, Cramer's Opera Comique Cabinet (Cramer, 1872), <https://books.google.com/books?id=20GhT60tIFsC>.

²⁸Offenbach, Crémieux, and Halévy, "La chanson de Fortunio (OEK Critical Edition)."

²⁹"Fortunio's Lied/La chanson de Fortunio," Shop, Boosey & Hawkes, accessed November 14, 2019, <https://www.boosey.com/shop/prod/Offenbach-Jacques-Fortunios-Lied-La-Chanson-de-Fortunio/922039>.

This makes the opera easier for English-speaking audiences, and can reduce the time, resources, and number of staff required to prepare students to perform dialogue in French.³⁰

In addition to the language challenges presented by the dialogue, there are also acting challenges. Classical voice training programs at universities and conservatories frequently do not include acting courses as part of their curriculum.³¹ Many of them include opera workshop courses, but the content varies widely and may not involve working with dialogue. Although acting education is often limited in these training programs, professional opera companies are increasingly programming musicals. For example, in the 2019-2020 season, the Lyric Opera of Chicago will produce Steward and Bramble's *42nd Street*,³² and Michigan Opera Theatre will produce Sondheim's *Sweeney Todd*.³³ In addition to musicals, some *Singspiels* are still a major part of the repertory. Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* was the 2nd most frequently performed opera in the 2018-2019 season worldwide, and Johann Strauss's *Die Fledermaus* was the 12th.³⁴ Skills in performing dialogue transfer directly to performing recitative, an important element in many standard operas. Preparing Offenbach's *La chanson de Fortunio* is one way to help students gain experience in acting with dialogue, thereby preparing them for the additional challenge of singing recitative, and for opera careers that may require singing in operettas and musicals.

La chanson de Fortunio enables students to practice singing in harmony, a critical skill for every opera singer. The tuneful melodies, predictable harmonies, and supportive accompaniment will provide the students with everything they need to maintain their pitches, even when singing in harmony with only one voice per part.

³⁰When I directed *La chanson de Fortunio* at the Miami Music Festival in 2016, the music director translated the dialogue into English and truncated it significantly. Performing the dialogue in this way allowed us to focus on the acting rather than the difficult French diction. Performing this work in German might be done in a similar manner.

³¹An examination of the curricula for vocal performance undergraduate programs at fifteen well known music schools showed that only five schools require courses in acting and movement in addition to opera performance practicums. Carnegie Mellon requires four semesters of acting, movement, and dance, but does not require an opera practicum of any kind. Likewise, the University of Southern California requires undergraduate voice students to take two sections of acting but does not require an opera performance practicum. Juilliard was the only program to require acting courses during all eight semesters of study. The list of undergraduate programs referenced here (and links to their program websites) are provided in Appendix D.

³²"Lyric Opera of Chicago's 2019/20 Season," Lyric Opera of Chicago, accessed November 22, 2019, <https://www.lyricopera.org/seasontickets/2019-20-season>.

³³"Season at a Glance," Michigan Opera Theatre, accessed November 22, 2019, <https://michiganopera.org/season-at-a-glance/#november>.

³⁴I obtained a list of the 50 most-performed operas and operettas from the 2018-2019 season by selecting the following parameters: "2018/2019" for the season, "opera" and "operetta" for the genre, "world" for the country, and "50" for the number of lines in my search on OperaBase. "Statistics," OperaBase, accessed November 22, 2019, <https://www.operabase.com/statistics/en>.

The vocal writing in *La chanson de Fortunio* includes a few technical vocal challenges such as melismas and ornaments. Valentin and Laurette have the most melismatic singing. The vocal lines of Laurette, Valentin, and Friquet often include grace notes and trills. Due to these challenges and their high tessituras as described below, these roles are best suited for graduate students or advanced undergraduate students. Examples 2.1-2.3 illustrate some of the opera's melismas, grace notes, and trills. Because the score does not provide measure numbers,³⁵ each example below will be labeled with the page number, system number, and measure numbers in that system. For example, a passage on page 17, system 3, measures 1-2 would be identified as 17/3/1-2.

³⁵I have chosen to use the 1861 French score since it is freely available from the Petrucci Library (IMSLP), is in the original language, and maintains the voice types of the premiere cast. Offenbach, Crémieux, and Halévy, *Le chanson de Fortunio*.

Example 2.1: Offenbach, *La chanson de Fortunio*, No. 7, 69/1/2—70/3/1.

Laurette
vois trem-bler; Au nom de sa- belle il faut par-ler, Il faut par-ler, il faut par-

Valentin
son trem-bler; Oui je me sens trem- bler trem-bler, Je dois par- ler, Com-ment par-

5 *animez.*
Laurette
ler; Ah! le nom de sa

Valentin
ler; Ah! Mon Dieu qu'elle est

8
Laurette
bel - e Hé - las! le fait trem - bler! Ah!

Valentin
bel - le Je me sens trem- bler! Ah!

11
Laurette
non il faut Ah! par - ler.

Valentin
je me sens Ah! trem - ler.

Guillaume, Landry, Saturnin, and Sylvain serve as the opera's chorus in all of the ensemble numbers, though they each have short solos scattered throughout. Their vocal lines are syllabic and almost free of ornamentation, except for a few grace notes. Likewise, Babet's vocal line is simple, syllabic, and devoid of ornamentation. These roles are appropriate for students of any level.

Fortunio, a lawyer – Spoken role

Fortunio is a spoken role, originally played by a male actor.³⁶ If necessary, this part can be changed to a pants role.

Fortunio has a monologue and some dialogue with Laurette at the beginning of the opera. Laurette sings her opening aria to him. He has some dialogue in a scene with Valentin, Friquet, and Laurette after Valentin's duet with Friquet. He also has dialogue in the finale.

Laurette, Fortunio's wife – Soprano (C4-A5)

Laurette's vocal line generally hovers around the top half of the staff. At low end of her range, she rarely sings below E4. She has two C4s, one D4, and one D#4 in the opera. Laurette regularly sings at the top of her range; her vocal line includes many A5s and G5s.

Laurette has an aria and a duet with Valentin. She appears in the final ensemble number but does not sing.

Producing clear diction is a challenge of this role. A variety of factors influence Laurette's diction, including range, tempo, and the occasionally disjunct quality of her vocal line. Sopranos must often modify their vowels when singing in a high range in order to produce the desired tone quality, which can negatively affect intelligibility of the text. Singing at a brisk tempo requires singers to move their lips and tongues very quickly to produce different sounds. It requires considerable practice to articulate wordy texts rapidly, particularly in a non-native language. Disjunct vocal writing generally does not follow the natural patterns of speech. A singer must articulate disjunct passages with extra care to ensure audience understanding. The passage in Example 2.2 illustrates a line from Laurette's aria that sits relatively high in her range, has a brisk tempo, and begins with some disjunct vocal writing that doesn't follow the natural stresses of the text.

Producing clear diction in her melismas may also present a challenge. One of the challenges of melismatic singing is maintaining a pure vowel. Some young singers inadvertently distort a melisma's vowel by anticipating the tongue or lip shape of the upcoming final consonant. This is especially true when the final consonants are L or R.³⁷ In her aria, Laurette has several melismas ending on an L, such as the

³⁶Offenbach, Crémieux, and Halévy, *Le chanson de Fortunio*, frontmatter.

³⁷Some students may also anticipate the lowered velum position for words ending in nasal consonants, such as M. Laurette's aria also contains melismas that end on an M. However, a lowered velum position is necessary to produce French nasal vowels, so this may be a boon to a student rather than a hinderance, as long as the nasal vowel is consistent throughout the duration of the melisma and not overexaggerated.

one shown in Example 2.2.

Example 2.2: Offenbach, *La chanson de Fortunio*, No. 1, 11/2/1—11/3/3.

Laurette

Maisen vé-ri-té l'on di-raït Qu'a - vec cet-te sot-te que - rel - - - le

Valentin, second clerk to Fortunio – Soprano (D4-C6)

Like Laurette, Valentin’s vocal line hovers around the top half of the staff. When singing in harmony with other characters, Valentin sings the highest part. He most frequently sings between D4 and A5. He has three B5s and one C6. The C6 and two of the B5s occur in his duet with Laurette, as shown in Example 2.1 above.^{38, 39}

Valentin, the protagonist, has the most singing in the opera. He has several arias and two duets. He also participates in most of the ensemble numbers.

Babet, Fortunio’s cook – Mezzo (A3-F5)

In ensemble, Babet sings the lowest part of the female singers.⁴⁰ She most frequently sings between C4 and B4. She has two B3s and two A3s. On the high end, she has one C5, two D5s, one E5, and one F5.

Babet appears in the No. 2 ensemble where she sings short solos in a call and response fashion with the clerks and participates in ensemble singing. She appears on stage again at the end of the opera but is not slated to sing in the final ensemble number.

Friquet, a junior clerk – Buffo Tenor (D3-G4 optional G2 -G4)

Friquet may be cast as a tenor or a soprano. As previously mentioned, Friquet was played by a tenor in the premiere cast,⁴¹ but is listed as a soprano in the OEK critical edition.⁴² When possible, it is

³⁸In the 1991 Gaieté Lyrique recording, Valentin and Laurette switch voice lines briefly to give Laurette the C6 and B5s. This switch occurs on the second beat of measure 9 in Example 2.1 above. This modification allows the female character to sing higher than the pants role, should the director prefer that. Including this modification would change Valentin’s range to D4-B5 and Laurette’s to C4-C6. Offenbach, Crémieux, and Halévy, *Le chanson de Fortunio*, 70.

³⁹Jacques Offenbach, *Madame L’archiduc/La chanson de Fortunio*, dir. Jean-Claude Hartemann (February 23, 1964; Gaieté Lyrique, 1991), CD.

⁴⁰If Friquet is cast as a soprano, Babet has the lowest voice in the opera.

⁴¹Offenbach, Crémieux, and Halévy, *Le chanson de Fortunio*, frontmatter.

⁴²Offenbach, Crémieux, and Halévy, “La chanson de Fortunio (OEK Critical Edition).”

preferable to cast Friquet as a tenor in order to balance the sound of the ensemble numbers. Because his tessitura is so high, his vocal line may overshadow the melody sung by other treble voices in the ensemble numbers if cast as a soprano.⁴³

Friquet spends a lot of time singing in the range of D4-F4. He also has frequent G4s. Most of his low singing takes place in No. 6 where he has several D3s, E \flat 3s,⁴⁴ and a descending scalar passage with an option to sing from C4-G3 or from C3-G2.⁴⁵ This optional passage is the only time his vocal line descends below D3.

Friquet has an aria, a duet with Valentin, and sings in two of the ensemble numbers.

In addition to his challenging high tessitura, Friquet is the only character to have a significant number of large leaps, both ascending and descending. Although Laurette's vocal line is occasionally disjunct, as shown in Example 2.2, her leaps are much smaller than Friquet's. Example 2.3 illustrates some of Friquet's leaps.

Example 2.3: Offenbach, *La chanson de Fortunio*, No. 6, 52/2/2—52/3/2

Guillaume, a clerk – Soprano (E4-A5)

Guillaume only has one E4 and one A5, but otherwise uses the rest of his range with regularity. When singing in harmony, he takes the highest voice part of the chorus clerks.

Landry, a clerk – Soprano (E4-G5)

Landry generally sings from F4-F5. He has one F \sharp 5 and two G5s. He only has two E4s. When the chorus clerks sing in two-part harmony Landry takes the higher part. In four-part harmony, Landry takes the second vocal line.

⁴³A tenor played Friquet in the Miami Music Festival production I directed in 2016.

⁴⁴Offenbach, Crémieux, and Halévy, *Le chanson de Fortunio*, 52-53.

⁴⁵Ibid., 55.

Saturnin, a clerk – Soprano (D4- F#5)

Saturnin mainly sings from E4-E5. All his D4s occur on the same page, in the ensemble following Valentin and Friquet's duet.⁴⁶ A mezzo could sing Saturnin, but the tessitura should also be comfortable for most sopranos. When the chorus clerks sing in two-part harmony, Saturnin takes the lower part. In four-part harmony, Saturnin takes the 3rd vocal line.

Sylvain, a clerk – Soprano (D4- F#5)

Sylvain also mostly sings from E4-E5. He has four F#5s. As with Saturnin, most of his D4s occur on one page.⁴⁷ The role could also be sung by a mezzo. Sylvain sings the lowest part of the chorus clerks.

Conclusion

La chanson de Fortunio is an excellent first French opera for voice students. The relative simplicity of the music should allow students to focus on the French diction, which is a challenge for many undergrads early in their coursework. It also affords students the opportunity to work on dialogue, a skill classical voice education often neglects.

This piece is excellent for opera workshops because it can provide roles for up to seven sopranos and one mezzo. It is even possible to cast *Fortunio* as a woman, if necessary. Though the three principal roles have a few vocal challenges, the other five roles are easy enough for nearly anyone to sing.

Addendum—Another Work by Offenbach for Consideration

Offenbach's *Daphnis et Chloé*, with a libretto by Clairville⁴⁸ and Jules Cordier, is a one-act operetta that includes both singing and spoken dialogue. Chloé is played by a soprano and the god Pan is played by a baritone. Daphnis was originally played by a mezzo⁴⁹ but can be cast as a tenor.⁵⁰ The opera also requires a female chorus of seven bacchantes, followers of Bacchus. The bacchantes occasionally sing short solos during their ensemble numbers.

⁴⁶Offenbach, Crémieux, and Halévy, *Le chanson de Fortunio*, 48.

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸Clairville is the penname of Louis-François Nicolaïe. Patrick O'Connor, "Clairville," Grove Music Online, accessed November 19, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.O007163>.

⁴⁹Robert Ignatius Letelier, *Operetta: A Sourcebook, Volume I* (Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015), 122.

⁵⁰"Daphnis et Chloé (1860)," Boosey & Hawkes, accessed November 19, 2019, <https://www.boosey.com/pages/opera/moreDetails?musicID=26442>.

Chapter 3: Cendrillon (Viardot)

Composer and Librettist

Pauline Viardot

Language

Pauline Viardot's original libretto is in French. Two English editions exist, one edited by Rachel M. Harris¹ and another edited by Harry Dunstan and Kay Krekow of the American Center for Puccini Studies (hereafter referred to as ACPS).² Though a Spanish score has not been published, Fundación Juan March produced the opera in Spanish using a libretto translated by Carmen Torreblanca.^{3, 4}

Duration

This opera's duration is variable due to a "petit concert"⁵ in the Act II ball scene, where Viardot indicates that the singers may insert arias of their choice.⁶ The Opera Rara recording runs for 62 minutes and includes two of Viardot's settings of Chopin's mazurkas for the brief concert.⁷ Without this concert, the music and dialogue run for approximately 55 minutes.

Date

1904

Cast - 5 women, 3 men (optionally 7 women, 1 man); optional chorus

Marie, called Cendrillon (Cinderella) – Soprano (D4-D6)

Le Baron de Pictordu, Cendrillon's father – Baritone (B \flat 2-F4, opt. G2-F4)

Armeline, daughter of Pictordu – Mezzo-soprano (A3-A5)

Maguelonne, daughter of Pictordu – Soprano (C4-B5)

La Fée (the Fairy Godmother) – Soprano (E \flat 4-C6)

Le Prince Charmant – Tenor* (D3-C5)

¹Pauline Viardot, Rachel M. Harris, and Charles Effler, *Cendrillon (Cinderella)*, trans. Rachel M. Harris (Hammond, LA: Scena Music Publishing, 2013).

²Pauline Viardot, Harry N. Dunstan, Jr., and Kay Krekow, *Cendrillon*, trans. Harry N. Dunstan, Jr. (Derwood, MD: American Center for Puccini Studies, 2015).

³"Cendrillon: Pauline Viardot," Teatro Musical de Cámara, Fundación Juan March, accessed January 9, 2020, <https://recursos.march.es/culturales/documentos/conciertos/libretos/cendrillon.pdf>.

⁴A video recording of Fundación Juan March's Spanish production of *Cendrillon* is available on YouTube. Pauline Viardot, "Cendrillon," Fundación Juan March, accessed January 9, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wvJAFawztO4>.

⁵Pauline Viardot, *Cendrillon (liner notes)*, trans. Avril Bardoni (Opera Rara, OPR 212, 2000), 73.

⁶Ibid., 74.

⁷Ibid.

Le Comte Barigoule, the Prince's chamberlain – Tenor* (D3-A \flat 4)

A Lady at the Party – Female voice

Chorus – Varies** (C4-G5)

*Though originally written for tenor, both the Prince and Barigoule can easily be played as pants roles and sung up an octave, which would make the Prince's range D4-C6, ideal for a soprano, and Barigoule's range D4-A \flat 5, suitable for a soprano or mezzo-soprano.⁸

**In stagings of the ACPS edition, the chorus numbers were instead performed by the Prince, Barigoule, Pictordu, Armeline, and Maguelonne, eliminating the need for a chorus. However, if a chorus is desired, it can be all-female. Chorus members can also be assigned solos in the "petit concert."

Instrumentation

Viardot only scored *Cendrillon* for piano and tam-tam. Harris' English edition includes an optional orchestration by Charles Effler which calls for flute, oboe, B \flat clarinet doubling B \flat bass clarinet, bassoon, horn in F, timpani, percussion, harp, and strings.

Style

Viardot's salon opera,⁹ *Cendrillon*, features bel canto singing with a delightful, witty sense of humor. Her approach to the Cinderella story is more lighthearted and playful than many other versions of the tale. The opera contains duets, trios, a sextet, a septet, ensemble numbers, and both accompanied recitative and spoken dialogue.

Source of the Libretto

Viardot's libretto is original with respect to the Cinderella fairy tale. Viardot was intimately familiar with Rossini's *La Cenerentola*, having sung the title role many times in her life.¹⁰ She also certainly would have been familiar with Perrault's version of the tale.¹¹ Though she may also have known Massenet's *Cendrillon*, which premiered five years prior to her own, Viardot's opera bears more resem-

⁸Barigoule was cast as a mezzo-soprano in the ACPS version premiere. Likewise, Le Prince Charmant was played by a soprano in a 2016 performance at Arizona State University. Lauren Rebecca Berman, "Pauline Viardot's *Cendrillon* and its Relevancy for the Developing Opera Singer" (PhD diss., Arizona State University, 2017), 18, accessed January 9, 2020, <https://repository.asu.edu/attachments/186349/content/Berman.asu.0010E.16865.pdf>.

⁹A salon opera is a chamber opera intended to be performed in someone's home.

¹⁰Erica Jeal, "Pauline Viardot: *Cendrillon*," in *Cendrillon (liner notes)* (Opera Rara, OPR 212, 2000), 10–22.

¹¹Many full-text versions of Perrault's "*Cendrillon*" are available online in English. I have cited one here. Charles Perrault, "Cinderella or The Little Glass Slipper," in *The Fairy Tales of Charles Perrault*, trans. J. E. Man- sion and Robert Samber (London: George G. Harrap & Co. Ltd., 1922), 77, accessed January 10, 2019, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/29021/29021-h/29021-h.htm>.

blance to Rossini's. Le Baron de Pictordu's name likely comes from George Sand's children's story, "Le château de Pictordu," which shares themes with the Cinderella tale.^{12, 13, 14}

Setting

Acts I and III are set in a drawing room at Baron Pictordu's residence.¹⁵ Act II takes place in a ballroom at the Prince's palace.¹⁶

Plot Synopsis

Act I

Alone in Pictordu's drawing room, Cendrillon, one of his three daughters, sings to herself the tale of a prince seeking a princess to marry. Her song is interrupted by a beggar knocking at the door seeking charity. After Cendrillon offers him bread and coffee, she goes to her sisters to ask for money to give to the unfortunate man, unaware that he is really the Prince in disguise. Prince Charmant is hoping to find someone who will love him for himself, rather than for his title and position. Because of her generosity, he is sure he has found someone he could love and adore.

Cendrillon returns empty-handed but gives the beggar the last of her few coins and sends him away before her sisters enter. As they chastise Cendrillon for inviting another beggar into the house, the three women are interrupted by another knock at the door. The Prince has returned, this time disguised as a chamberlain, and formally invites them to a ball this very evening at the castle. Following his departure, Maguelonne and Armeline excitedly tell Cendrillon their plans for seducing a nobleman. When they finally leave to get ready for the ball, Cendrillon pauses to reflect on the charming "chamberlain."

Interrupting her thoughts, Pictordu enters and offhandedly dismisses Cendrillon to attend to her sisters. After she leaves, he confesses his secret to the audience; he is not really a baron, but a former grocer. He made his fortune selling bad gingerbread at the fair and spent twenty years in prison as punishment. Now, disguised as nobility, he spends his days in idleness and misses the grocery business.

Pictordu's daughters re-enter dressed for the ball and surprise him with the last-minute invitation. He dashes off to get ready and they follow him. Cendrillon is left alone, wishing that she could see the

¹²La bibliothèque électronique du Québec has published a full version of the original Sand text. George Sand, "Contes d'une grand-mère," La Bibliothèque électronique du Québec, accessed January 9, 2020, <https://beq.ebooksg.ratuits.com/vents/Sand-contes2.pdf>.

¹³George Sand, *The Castle of Pictordu*, trans. Georgina S. Grahame (Edinburgh: J. Gemmell, 1884).

¹⁴George Sand, *The Country Waif; The Castle of Pictordu*, trans. Philippa H. Watson (London: Scholartis Press, 1930).

¹⁵Viardot, *Cendrillon (liner notes)*, 83.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, 67.

“chamberlain” once again, when she hears a voice calling her by her real name, “Marie.” La Fée, her fairy godmother, enters and magically prepares a beautiful, golden carriage complete with horses, footman, and a coachman. La Fée gives Cendrillon slippers and a magic veil that will transform into a beautiful gown as she approaches the castle. Finally, she warns Cendrillon that she must return by midnight before the magic fades.

Act II

Alone in the castle ballroom, the Prince’s head chamberlain, Count Barigoule, delights at the prospect of being a prince for a day. The Prince, still disguised as a chamberlain, is planning to observe the proceedings of the evening incognito. Pictordu and his daughters arrive and are introduced to the “Prince” Barigoule. Shortly after, the unrecognized Cendrillon arrives at the ball and stuns the crowd with her beauty. She and the real Prince see one another and secretly long for each other.

Barigoule starts the evening’s festivities with a brief concert, followed by dancing. After the dance, Barigoule leads the party to the dining room. Cendrillon, lost in thought, is about to follow when the Prince intercepts her and confesses his love. Overjoyed, they promise themselves to each other. The other guests return from dinner, interrupting Cendrillon and the Prince as the clock strikes midnight. Remembering La Fée’s warning, Cendrillon abruptly exits through the raucous crowd, losing one of her slippers on the way out.

Act III

Pictordu, having returned home from the ball, feels uneasy. He remembers seeing “the Prince” (Barigoule) somewhere before but can’t quite place him. Suddenly, he hears a knock at the door and is surprised by the arrival of Barigoule, who had recognized Pictordu as well. Barigoule reveals his real identity to Pictordu, but also reveals Pictordu’s identity as the former grocer who used to sell such terrible gingerbread. As they hear the ladies approach, they exit to continue their conversation.

The ladies’ hearts race with excitement, laughing at the prospect of trying on a shoe to win the Prince’s love. Barigoule re-enters to announce the arrival of the Prince. Armeline and Maguelonne unsuccessfully try to cram their feet into the petite slipper. The Prince is discouraged at not having found the shoe’s proper owner, but Barigoule remembers that a third woman is registered in the Pictordu household. The Prince sends Barigoule to find her. When Cendrillon tries on the slipper, it fits perfectly, and she shows the Prince the matching slipper from her pocket. Overjoyed, the Prince immediately offers her his hand in marriage. Finally, La Fée returns to share in this joyous moment and promises to “watch over

[Cendrillon's] happiness."¹⁷

Production Notes

Acts I and III take place in Pictordu's drawing room. There must be at least two entrances/exits, one leading outside and another leading to the rest of the house. Act II takes place in a ballroom of the Prince's palace. It should have entrances/exits leading outside and to the dining room. Though *Cendrillon* is the only work discussed in this production guide to require two settings, it is important to remember that, as a salon opera, this opera was intended to be performed with minimal resources.

In terms of props, Viardot's libretto indicates the use of chairs, bread, a cup of coffee, coins, a letter of invitation, a pumpkin, a mouse trap with six trapped mice, a watering can, six lizards, a rat,¹⁸ slippers (Cendrillon's shoes for the ball), and a veil.

Most of the characters change some aspect of their costume through the course of the opera. The Prince first appears dressed as a beggar, then quickly returns dressed as a chamberlain. Meanwhile, his chamberlain, Barigoule, is dressed as a prince. Whether Barigoule and the Prince need a change of costume when they reappear as themselves in Act III is left to the director's discretion. Cendrillon, Maguelonne, Armeline, and Pictordu must dress up in some way for Act II, relative to their costumes for Acts I and III. La Fée does not require a costume change. Cutting the chorus would reduce the number of costumes required.¹⁹

The opera includes a ball scene where the characters dance a minuet. In the same vein as the "petit concert," it is possible to substitute another kind of dance here.²⁰

A sound effect is also required for the clock striking midnight.

¹⁷Viardot, *Cendrillon (liner notes)*, 98.

¹⁸The ACPS adaptation downplays the magic elements in the opera, omitting the need for the props in the transformation scene.

¹⁹My husband, Marc Abbott, sang the role of Pictordu in several outreach performances of the ACPS version under the stage direction of Dr. Harry Dunstan. In these productions only Cendrillon had a major costume change. Pictordu's ball costume was hidden under a bathrobe in Act I, and the sisters merely added accessories to their Act I costumes to dress up for the ball. The Prince had a tattered blanket covering his costume when disguised as a beggar. Rather than switching costumes, Barigoule and the Prince merely exchanged a sash that said, "Prince" on it, for ease of costume change and comedic effect.

²⁰In several of the ACPS productions, a Chopin waltz was substituted for the minuet, since most of the cast already knew how to waltz.

Premiere

Cendrillon premiered on April 23, 1904 in the salon of Pauline Viardot's former student,²¹ Mathilde de Nogueiras.²²

Recordings

Opera Rara produced a commercially available audio recording.²³ There are several video recordings available on YouTube, including a production by Ohio State Opera & Lyric Theatre.²⁴

Materials and Performance Rights

Viardot's 1904 French piano/vocal score²⁵ is available online from the Petrucci Music Library.²⁶ However, this score does not include all of the French dialogue. The dialogue was published as a separate booklet²⁷ but is no longer easily accessible. The easiest way to obtain the full French dialogue is through available side-by-side translations. Opera Rara's recording includes a translation from French to English in the liner notes.²⁸ Fundación Juan March's French to Spanish translation is available online.²⁹ There are slight variations between the French texts provided by Opera Rara and Fundación Juan March, but the variations change neither the plot nor the meaning of the text. Rachel M. Harris also provided a truncated side-by-side English translation of Viardot's *Cendrillon* in the appendix of her dissertation, "The music salon of Pauline Viardot: featuring her salon opera *Cendrillon*."³⁰ Because her truncated translation is missing whole blocks of dialogue and entire arias, scenes, and characters, the Opera Rara and Juan March libretti are better sources.

Contact Harry Dunstan directly for performance rights and scores of the ACPS English adapta-

²¹Orlando Figes, *The Europeans* (New York: Metropolitan Book, 2019), 482.

²²Pauline Viardot, *Cendrillon* (Paris: G. Miran, 1904), frontmatter.

²³Pauline Viardot, *Cendrillon*, dir. Nicholas Kok (Opera Rara OPR 212 [CD], 2000).

²⁴Pauline Viardot, "Cendrillon," Ohio State Opera & Lyric Theatre, accessed January 9, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kZZxm-6aUH4>.

²⁵Viardot, *Cendrillon*.

²⁶"Cendrillon, VWV 2005 (Viardot, Pauline)," IMSLP Petrucci Music Library, accessed January 10, 2020, [https://imslp.org/wiki/Cendrillon%5C%2C_VWV_2005_\(Viardot%5C%2C_Pauline\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/Cendrillon%5C%2C_VWV_2005_(Viardot%5C%2C_Pauline)).

²⁷Viardot, *Cendrillon*, frontmatter, 3.

²⁸Viardot, *Cendrillon* (liner notes).

²⁹"Cendrillon: Pauline Viardot."

³⁰Rachel Miller Harris, "The music salon of Pauline Viardot: featuring her salon opera *Cendrillon*" (PhD diss., Louisiana State University, 2005), accessed January 9, 2020, https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool_dissertations/3924.

tion.³¹

Piano/vocal scores of Harris' English version are available for purchase from Scena Music Publishing. They also handle the licensing for Harris' English libretto and part rental for Charles Effler's orchestration.³²

Other Notes

The ACPS English adaptation remains very true to Viardot's original libretto, with the exception of a few minor additions that help the opera appeal to a modern sensibility and fill in some details that are missing from Viardot's original libretto.

The ACPS edition appeals to a modern sensibility by emphasizing that good moral character is more important than magic. This version inserts a short monologue at the beginning of the opera to establish La Fée's relationship to Cendrillon. La Fée is more of a supportive godmother than a magical being. In this monologue, La Fée also sets up the audience to recognize a moral in the story that "sadness will teach you compassion and prepare your heart for a great love."³³

In the transformation scene, La Fée stresses that Cendrillon's good character is what makes her a princess and that "all she needs to do to get to the ball tonight is to fill [her] own shoes."³⁴ However, La Fée fulfills the traditional fairy godmother role by providing Cendrillon with a suitable dress and the slippers that help the Prince find Cendrillon after she leaves abruptly.

Along with the above changes, some ACPS additions fill in details that explain plot points in the opera. Prior to Barigoule's aria at the beginning of Act II, the ACPS version adds a short scene of dialogue where the Prince explains why he and Barigoule trade positions for the day. This is a plot point that may be obvious to the audience but isn't clearly explained in the Viardot libretto. ACPS also adds a few lines of dialogue in the ball scene where Barigoule recognizes Pictordu but can't quite place him. This sets up the duet between Barigoule and Pictordu in Act III.

In contrast, Harris' English version does not include major additions to the score. However, in attempting to preserve the rhyme, Harris' text loses some of the original meaning of Viardot's libretto. In addition, Harris' approach to the translation comes across as more "word-for-word," while the ACPS libretto

³¹"Contact ACPS," American Center for Puccini Studies, Contact Dr. Harry Dunstan via email at pucciniamerica@aol.org or through the ACPS website contact page. Accessed January 10, 2020, <http://www.pucciniamerica.org/contact.html>.

³²"Store," Scena Music Publishing, accessed January 10, 2020, <http://www.scenamusicpub.com/store>.

³³Viardot, Dunstan, Jr., and Krekow, *Cendrillon*, 1a.

³⁴*Ibid.*, 31a.

retains the intended meaning with a more natural, modern vernacular, as shown in Example 3.1. Harris's adaptation also frequently alters Viardot's rhythms to accommodate the English translation, whereas the ACPS edition only very rarely makes rhythmic adjustments.

As with *La chanson de Fortunio*, the score does not provide measure numbers. Places in the score will be indicated by page number, system number, and measure numbers in that system. For example, a passage on page 17, system 3, measures 1-2 would be identified as 17/3/1-2.

Example 3.1: Viardot, *Cendrillon*, Miran: 64/2/2—65/2/2, Scena Pub.: 76/1/1—77/1/2, APCS: 64/2/2—65/2/2.

The image displays a musical score for three editions of a piece from *Cendrillon*. The score is presented in three systems, each with three staves: Viardot (original), Harris (adaptation), and ACPS (another adaptation). The music is in G major and 3/4 time. The first system includes tempo markings: *p Rall.*, *Andante.*, and *p*. The lyrics are in French and English. The second system includes a *rit.* marking. The ACPS edition consistently uses a more natural vernacular for the English translation compared to the Harris edition.

Viardot: *p Rall.* Si je puis metrom-per *Andante.* Si je puis metrom - per *p* Mais re - ve - nons à nos mou -

Harris: *p Rall.* I think not a mis-take *Andante* I thinknot a mis - take. *p Moderato* But let us now get down to

ACPS: *p Rall.* NoI've not been de-ceiv'd *Andante.* I have not been de - ceiv'd *p* But now we must re - turn, my

Viardot: tons re - ve - nons re - ve - nons à nos bons pe - tits mou - tons.

Harris: busi - ness, have a chat have a chat have a lit - tle busi - ness chat. *rit.*

ACPS: friend, to the bus - 'ness at hand, - to the bus - 'ness at hand.

I recommend the ACPS English edition because, in spite of the additions made to the libretto, it is truer to Viardot's original score, maintains her delightful sense of humor, and uses a more natural vernacular. The additions fit well with Viardot's work because they clarify some underdeveloped plot points and help the work appeal to modern sensibilities.

Errors in the IMSLP Score

The French edition of the score³⁵ contains some errors regarding the character labeling of vocal lines, incorrect notes, and some inconsistencies in editorial markings. Corrections for wrong notes and vocal line labeling are listed below. Editorial markings are not critical for performance and will not be addressed here.

- 8/1/4—8/2/3 Maguelonne sings the bottom line.
- 8/2/4—8/3/1 Armelinde sings the top line.
- 8/3/2—8/3/5 Maguelonne sings the bottom line.
- 8/3/5—8/3/5 Armelinde begins on the top line and continues on the second line on page 9.
- 12/1/1—12/4/4 Cendrillon sings the solo on page 12.
- 16/4/3—18/1/2 Armelinde sings this solo.
- 18/1/2—18/3/4 Following Armelinde's "Dis-moi donc," Cendrillon sings the top line, Maguelonne the middle line, and Armelinde the bottom line.
- 19/1/1—20/2/4 Note that Le Baron de Pictordu is sometimes labelled as "Le Baron" and sometimes as "Pictordu."
- 22/1/1—22/3/4 As before, Cendrillon sings the top line, Maguelonne the middle line, and Armelinde the bottom line.
- 34/1/1—40/4/7 This aria is sung by Barigoule, not the Prince.
- 45/1/1—46/2/4 Maguelonne sings the second line from the top and Armelinde sings the third line from the top.
- 82/1/1—83/1/2 Armelinde's line is mislabeled "H" instead of "A."
- 83/1/2—83/1/2 La Fée's notes should be the same as Cendrillon's and the Prince's in this measure.
- 85/1/1—85/1/1 Armelinde's line is again mislabeled "H" instead of "A."
- 86/1/1 La Fée's note is missing a leger line. It should read as B♭5.

³⁵Viardot, *Cendrillon*.

Casting and Pedagogical Considerations

Pauline Viardot (1821-1910) was a well-known professional opera singer, voice teacher, and composer of the 19th century. As a singer, she sustained a 24-year career on the opera stage. Many composers admired her for her voice, and many wrote opera roles and other works for her, including Meyerbeer, Gounod, Saint-Saëns, Brahms, and Liszt, to name a few.³⁶

Pauline and her siblings³⁷ first studied music with their father, Manuel García, a famous Rossini tenor and the founder of vocal pedagogy.³⁸ The Garcia family members were recognized as the pre-eminent vocal teachers of the nineteenth century.³⁹ When Pauline was a child, her father composed vocal canons for her to sing on their journey to America.⁴⁰ García Sr., in a tradition that dates back to Spanish composer, Martín y Soler,⁴¹ frequently wrote pieces for his students, including six operettas and many songs.⁴²

After her retirement from the stage, Pauline Viardot also became recognized as an exceptional voice teacher. Viardot scholar Kay Krekow comments, “Wagner was known to send singers to study with Viardot to learn how to ‘safely’ sing his operas.”⁴³ Continuing in the tradition of her father, Viardot frequently wrote songs and short operettas for her students to perform in a salon setting,⁴⁴ helping them to develop vocal technique and performance skills while giving them an opportunity to perform before small audiences.

Due to her exceptional skills as a professional singer and voice teacher, Viardot was intimately familiar with the techniques her students needed in an opera career and how to help young voices learn those techniques. She also knew her students’ capabilities and how to appropriately challenge them without overburdening their developing voices.

Viardot’s *Cendrillon* is exceptionally well-written for the developing voice. The accompaniment

³⁶Harris, “The music salon of Pauline Viardot: featuring her salon opera *Cendrillon*,” 14-15.

³⁷Pauline’s siblings included the renowned soprano Maria Malibran and the talented vocal pedagogue Manuel García, Jr.

³⁸In private correspondence with Viardot scholar and performer, Kay Krekow, she illuminated many aspects of Viardot’s career as a pedagogue, for both voice students and young composers. Krekow, the Managing Director of the ACPS, is one of the world’s authorities on the life and times of “divas who composed music.” For the past twenty years her scholarship and performance through her “She Is Music” program (Sheismusic.com) has done more than anyone to advance the cause of female singers/composers. Viardot is her specialty. Kay Krekow, email, January 13, 2020.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Berman, “Pauline Viardot’s *Cendrillon* and its Relevancy for the Developing Opera Singer,” 18.

⁴³Krekow, email.

⁴⁴Ibid.

is wholly supportive; key changes and chromatic notes in the vocal lines are always made clear in the accompaniment. The predominantly conjunct vocal writing, with very few large leaps, helps students to preserve a legato line. Throughout the score she includes a handful of more advanced techniques such as short melismas, cadenzas, trills, and grace notes. These techniques form the foundation of bel canto repertoire.

Though the vocal writing in *Cendrillon* is predominantly syllabic, the score also contains a few short melismas, most of which are only one or two measures in length and scalar in nature. Example 3.2 illustrates a dramatic moment in which six principal characters sing a melisma at the same time. The challenge in this example has more to do with the ranges of the melismas, than with the *fioritura*. Except for those written for Pictordu and Barigoule, the remaining melismas are relatively simple and appear infrequently.

Example 3.2: Viardot, *Cendrillon*, 47/2/4—48/1/4.

The musical score for Example 3.2 features six vocal parts, each with a melisma. The lyrics are as follows:

- Cendrillon:** mon â - - me à ja - mais.
- Maguelonne:** u - ne fé - e u - ne fé - e?
- Armelinde:** u - ne fé - e u - ne fé - e?
- Prince:** s mon â - - me à ja - mais.
- Barigoule:** s u - ne fé - e u - ne fé - e?
- Pictordu:** un - ne fé - e u - ne fe - e?

The melismas are indicated by *ff* markings and various musical notations such as accents, slurs, and dynamic markings.

The Act III duet between Barigoule and Pictordu contains the longest and most challenging melisma in the opera. See Example 3.3. Though the melismas in this passage are long, they contain repeated patterns that should help a student to learn them quickly. The biggest challenge for each singer will be sustaining his or her breath through the lengthy passage. Because Pictordu and Barigoule have the greatest

number and the most difficult of the melismas, these roles may best be suited for graduate students or advanced undergraduate students.

Example 3.3: Viardot, *Cendrillon*, 73/2/3—73/3/6.

The musical score for Example 3.3 consists of two systems of vocal parts for Barigoule (soprano) and Pictordu (bass). The music is in 3/8 time and B-flat major. The lyrics are: "Il est aussi profitable d'être en cor cham-bel-lan!". The first system shows the vocal lines with dynamic markings of *f* and *ff*. The second system continues the vocal lines, also with *ff* markings. The lyrics are: "d'être en cor cham-bel-lan!".

Relative to melismatic singing, the opera also contains three cadenzas—one each for Barigoule, Pictordu (Example 3.6), and La Fée (Example 3.7). The cadenzas are labeled *ad lib.*, allowing the singers to make alterations to best show off their voices.⁴⁵ The cadenzas can also be simplified or omitted entirely to suit the abilities of student singers.

Other vocal ornaments in the score include trills and grace notes. Each of the cadenzas mentioned above include a trill. See Examples 3.6 and 3.7. Barigoule's aria also includes several trills. *Cendrillon*, Maguelonne, Armeline, and the chorus sing grace notes. Most of the grace notes are stepwise relative to the notes they precede, however a few of the grace notes require large, quick ascending leaps to the next note, which may be more challenging for some students. Example 3.4 illustrates both types of grace notes offered in *Cendrillon*.

⁴⁵Although La Fée's cadenza is not labeled *ad lib.*, it is well within tradition to make alterations to cadenzas to suit the singer's taste and abilities. In the Opera Rara recording, Sandrine Piau inserts a G6 to show her incredible range. Viardot, *Cendrillon*, Opera Rara, CD.

Example 3.4: Viardot, *Cendrillon*, 15/4/3—16/1/1

Maguelonne

Jese-rai char - man - te, Tou - jours é - lé - gan - te, De ces beaux sei - gneurs Amoitous les coeurs!

As mentioned in Chapter 2, *La chanson de Fortunio*, spoken dialogue is not a focus of voice training programs. Working on spoken dialogue is valuable for student singers because it helps prepare them to sing recitative and to perform in works that contain dialogue such as operettas, *Singspiels* and musical theater. I did not recommend having students perform the dialogue for *La chanson de Fortunio* in French. Because the dialogue scenes are shorter in *Cendrillon* than in *Chanson*, it may be possible for students to use the French dialogue if they have enough diction training. However, as with *Chanson*, it is possible to perform the music in French and the dialogue in English, or to perform the entire work in English according to the students' needs and abilities.

One challenge of this opera is the inclusion of strophic songs. Both *Cendrillon* and *Pictordu* have strophic songs with many verses. *Cendrillon* has two strophic solos in the opera; the first has six verses and the second has two. *Pictordu's* aria has five verses. The first chorus number is also strophic, though the first verse is frequently omitted. Strophic songs are notoriously difficult to memorize due to the musical repetition which inhibits the mnemonic aid of music, making it easy to accidentally sing words from the wrong verse. It is also more difficult to memorize strophic songs in a foreign language.

Aside from the challenge of memorizing strophic songs, it can be difficult for young singers to make the repetitive music sound interesting to an audience. Students must learn to make variations in tempi, dynamics, articulations, and most especially the physical storytelling to communicate the differences between each verse. As students incorporate these changes into their practice of a strophic piece, they will find it easier to memorize.

Cendrillon provides students practice singing harmony with its trios, duets, sextet, and septet. As mentioned in Chapter 1, *An Embarrassing Position*, students focus on solo singing in their voice lessons and must find other ways to develop the skills to sing harmony, especially with one voice per part. The ensemble numbers in *Cendrillon* are very accommodating to student singers because of the harmonic support in the accompaniment. In the trios, Maguelonne, Cendrillon, and Armeline alternate in solo singing, only singing in harmony for a few measures at a time. The sextet has one voice per part, but each character typi-

cally moves in homophony with at least one other character. This makes it very clear to the students whom to listen for and harmonize with. Working on these ensemble numbers will help students develop their aural skills by learning how the voice parts fit together and how to hold their own in an ensemble number.

As discussed in detail below, some of the characters sing particularly high notes such as B5s and C6s. Roles with similar high notes may be best suited for graduate students or advanced undergraduate students, though underclassmen may sing these roles if they are comfortable with the ranges required.^{46, 47}

Directors or conductors may adapt roles to fit a student’s comfortable range by altering or removing high notes. La Fée’s only C6 is located in her cadenza, shown in Example 3.7. This cadenza may be omitted or altered to avoid the use of a C6. Likewise, Cendrillon and the Prince each only have one C6 (C5 if the Prince is sung by a tenor) in the sextet, as shown in Example 3.2. If they are not comfortable with a C6, they may substitute a B♭5, which is found in the accompanying chord, and continue the melisma as written. Compare Example 3.5 to Example 3.2.

Example 3.5: Viardot, *Cendrillon*, 47/2/4—48/1/4, altered to replace C5/C6 in 48/1/1.

The musical score for Example 3.5 consists of three staves. The top staff is for Cendrillon (Soprano), the middle staff is for the Prince (Tenor), and the bottom staff is for the Piano (Pno.). The key signature has two flats (B-flat major), and the time signature is 2/4. The vocal parts are marked with dynamics *f* and *ff*. The piano part includes a *Tremolo* marking in the final measure. The lyrics for both vocal parts are "mon â - me à ja - mais."

Marie, called Cendrillon (Cinderella) – Soprano (D4-D6)

Cendrillon predominantly sings between D4 and G5. At the high end of her range, she also has five A♭5s, four A5s, two B♭5s, one B5, and one C6. Though D4 is her lowest note, it appears relatively frequently in her vocal lines.

⁴⁶ACPS productions have cast high school students in all of the principal roles except for Pictordu and La Fée.

⁴⁷A 2016 production at Arizona State University cast an undergraduate singer in each of the roles. Berman, “Pauline Viardot’s *Cendrillon* and its Relevancy for the Developing Opera Singer,” 21.

Cendrillon typically takes the highest voice line in ensemble singing. She always sings the highest line in trios with Armeline and Maguelonne. In the septet, she doubles La Fée on the highest voice line before splitting into harmony, allowing La Fée to end on the highest part. If a soprano plays the Prince, there are times in their duet when the Prince sings higher and other times when Cendrillon sings higher. Some of this part-crossing also occurs in the sextet, although they sing unison for most of the number. Cendrillon and the Prince also sing unison in the septet.

As the protagonist in this opera, Cendrillon has the most singing and dialogue. She begins the opera with an acapella solo interspersed with spoken text. She sings in three trios with Maguelonne and Armeline, sings a strophic aria, has a duet with the Prince, and sings in both the sextet and septet. She has a comparatively lengthy monologue at the beginning of the opera and has a fair amount of dialogue with other characters throughout the piece.

Cendrillon is the only character to sing acapella in this work. At the beginning of the opera, Cendrillon sings the acapella strophic song, “Il était jadis un prince,” to herself. Young students may find it difficult to stay in tune while singing acapella. Still, the repetitive nature of this song may mitigate this challenge by solidifying the key in the singer’s ear. Since her song goes directly into dialogue rather than music, it will be less obvious to the audience if she drifts off key.

Le Baron de Pictordu, Cendrillon’s father – Baritone (B \flat 2-F4, opt. G2-F4)

Unlike other characters in the opera who only use the highest or lowest notes of their range occasionally, Pictordu frequently uses his whole range. However, he does have some alternate low notes in his duet with Barigoule, as shown in Example 3.6. In this passage, Pictordu is provided with an optional cadenza with alternate endings. Should the singer choose the lower option, this is the only A2 and G2 in Pictordu’s vocal line. The cadenza is also labeled *ad lib.*,⁴⁸ allowing the singer to rewrite the cadenza to best suit his comfort level and show off his skills.

⁴⁸In the Opera Rara recording, professional singer André Cognet sings a cadenza that spans from F \sharp 4 down to D2. Many students will not be able to sing a cadenza with such a large range, but this provides an example of the flexibility allowed in these cadenzas. Viardot, *Cendrillon*, Opera Rara, CD.

Example 3.6: Viardot, *Cendrillon*, 69/3/3—70/1/3.

Pictordu

Il est de son Al - tes - se le pre - mier cham - bel - lan

Pictordu always sings the lowest voice part in ensemble numbers, regardless of whether Barigoule and the Prince are sung by male or female singers.

Pictordu has a strophic aria in Act I with five verses. He also has a duet with Barigoule and participates in both the sextet and the septet. He has two short monologues and some dialogue with other characters.

Armeline – Mezzo-soprano (A3-A5)

Armeline mainly sings between C4 and E5. On the low end, she has one A3, three B \flat 3s, and four B3s. At the high end of her range, she has five F5s, one F \sharp 5, one G5, one A \flat 5, and one A5. In ensemble numbers, she takes the lowest part of the female characters. If Barigoule and the Prince are played by women, Armeline has the lowest voice part, with the exception of Pictordu.

Armeline sings in three trios with Maguelonne and Cendrillon. She also sings in both the sextet and septet. She has a few lines of dialogue at the ball and in the shoe-fitting scene.

Maguelonne – Soprano (C4-B5)

Maguelonne most frequently sings between F4 and G5. She has a few E4s and a number of E \flat 4s, most of which occur when singing in unison with other characters at the end of the sextet. She only has three D4s and one C4. She has four A \flat 5s, four A5s, and one B5 in her vocal line. She sings the middle voice part in the trios with Cendrillon and Armeline. In the sextet, she takes the second highest voice line of the female characters, and the third highest voice line in the septet.

Maguelonne never appears without her sister Armeline. Like Armeline, she sings in three trios, in the sextet, and in the septet. She also has a few lines of dialogue.

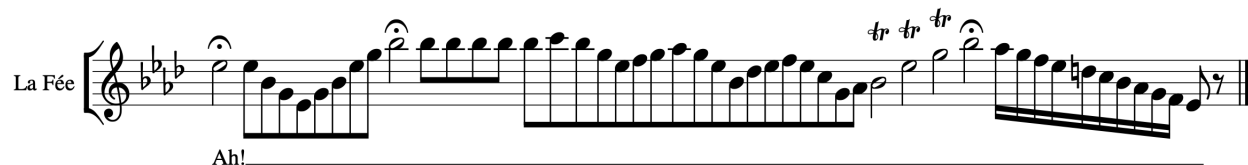
La Fée (the Fairy Godmother) – Soprano (E \flat 4-C6)

La Fée generally sings between G4 and G5. Without La Fée's cadenza, shown in Example 3.7, she only has three B \flat 5s and three A \flat 5s. On the low end, she has one E \flat 4, two E4s, and five F4s. Her cadenza includes two A \flat 5, many B \flat 5s, and one C6. In ensemble singing, La Fée takes the highest vocal line,

though she sometimes shares it with Cendrillon or the Prince, if the Prince is played by a soprano.

La Fée has an aria and a short solo in Act I as well as dialogue with Cendrillon in the transformation scene. She has a short solo before singing in the Act III septet.

Example 3.7: Viardot, *Cendrillon*, 79/5/1.



Le Prince Charmant – Tenor* (D3-C5)

The Prince is the highest voice of the male characters. He most regularly sings between D3 and G4. He has six A \flat 4s, one A4, two B \flat 4s, and one C5. As previously mentioned, this role can be sung by a soprano, making the range D4-C6. When played by a soprano, the Prince's tessitura is similar to Cendrillon's. There is some part-crossing when they sing in duet. In the sextet and the septet, Cendrillon the Prince often sing in unison.

With the exception of Cendrillon, the Prince has the most dialogue in the opera. He has a significant amount of dialogue in Act I and isn't heard singing until the Act II sextet. After encouraging Cendrillon to sing the final number of the "petit concert," he dances the minuet with her. He has a duet with Cendrillon at the end of Act II. In Act III, he has dialogue in the shoe-fitting scene and sings in the septet finale.

Le Comte Barigoule, the Prince's chamberlain – Tenor* (D3-A \flat 4)

Barigoule only has two A \flat 4s, but otherwise uses the rest of his range frequently, although G3-G4 is the most regularly used portion of his range. Barigoule, as a tenor, sings the second lowest line in ensemble singing.

As mentioned previously, Barigoule can be sung as a pants role by a soprano or a mezzo-soprano, adjusting the range up an octave to D4-A \flat 5. The role is ideal for a high mezzo who might play Cherubino in Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro*, though many sopranos would also find the range vocally comfortable.

Barigoule begins Act II with a bit of recitative and a multi-section aria followed by some dialogue in the ball scene. He sings in both the sextet and the septet and also has a duet with Pictordu. He has additional dialogue in the shoe-fitting scene.

With the exception of one line belonging to Pictordu, Barigoule sings all of the recitative in the opera. This occurs at the beginning of Barigoule’s Act II aria and in his duet with Pictordu in Act III. Though recitative can often be challenging for students, Viardot’s accompaniment is extremely supportive. The student playing Barigoule will not feel exposed in the texture and should have no trouble finding his or her pitches. The breath marks and articulation markings, such as the accents, *marcati*, and *tenuti* will help a young singer know how to phrase the recitative appropriately. Example 3.8 illustrates some of Barigoule’s recitative.

Example 3.8: Viardot, *Cendrillon*, 33/3/1—33/4/2.

The image displays a musical score for a recitative piece. It consists of two systems. The first system shows the vocal line for Barigoule and the piano accompaniment. The vocal line is in a treble clef with a key signature of two flats (B-flat major) and a common time signature (C). The lyrics are: "Puisque me voi-là Princ - ce pendant quelques heu - res, Faison bien les hon -". The piano accompaniment is in a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) with a key signature of two flats and a common time signature. It features a tremolo in the right hand and a steady bass line in the left hand. The second system continues the vocal line with the lyrics "neurs de mon pa - lais." and shows the piano accompaniment continuing with a similar texture.

A Lady at the Party – Female voice

The Opera Rara libretto indicates that a Lady at the Party has the spoken line, “Désirez-vous un air de bravoure?” before starting off the “petit concert” with an aria.⁴⁹ Fundación Juan March’s libretto indicates that La Fée has this line and aria.⁵⁰ Both the ACPS⁵¹ and Harris⁵² English adaptations assign this

⁴⁹Viardot, *Cendrillon* (liner notes), 73.

⁵⁰“Cendrillon: Pauline Viardot,” 40.

⁵¹Viardot, Dunstan, Jr., and Krekow, *Cendrillon*, 49a.

⁵²Viardot, Harris, and Effler, *Cendrillon* (*Cinderella*), 61.

line to La Fée. This line, and all of the arias included in the “petit concert,” can be assigned at the director’s discretion.

Chorus – Varies (C4-G5)**

As mentioned previously, a chorus may be omitted, and the chorus numbers reassigned to principal characters, or the chorus can be entirely female.

The opera includes three chorus numbers. They participate in the ball scene where they sing “La belle fille” in unison. They also appear in the shoe-fitting scene where there is a brief unison choral number, “Silence!”⁵³ In that scene the chorus women also sing three-part harmony in “Quelle drôle d’aventure!” The chorus numbers, all written in treble clef, range from C4-G4.

The chorus may also participate in the sextet with sopranos, altos, tenors, and basses singing with Maguelonne, Armeline, Barigoule, and Pictordu, respectively.⁵⁴

Conclusion

Pauline Viardot’s *Cendrillon* is an exceptional opera for educational settings. As a salon opera, it was written to be performed with minimal production requirements. It provides roles for up to seven women, and, with the flexible nature of the “petit concert,” could allow chorus women to have solos as well. This opera is an excellent piece for helping students learn to sing bel canto repertoire. It introduces students to the technical challenges of bel canto in way that is achievable for them. The opera also allows students the opportunity to practice dialogue, an essential skill needed to perform operetta, singspiel, and musical theater.

⁵³The libretto found in the Opera Rara liner notes indicates that Royal Footmen have one spoken line in the shoe-fitting scene in Act III. They also sing the unison chorus number, “Silence!” The score assigns this number to the chorus and does not designate that it is only sung by the chorus. The Royal Footmen can be part of the chorus, or these roles can easily be omitted. Their line and song can be reassigned to Barigoule or to a female chorus, if desired. If the Royal Footman are included and only sing “Silence!,” their range is G4-D5. If they are included in all the chorus numbers, their range is C4-G5. Viardot, *Cendrillon (liner notes)*, 91.

⁵⁴Viardot, Harris, and Effler, *Cendrillon (Cinderella)*, 50.

Chapter 4: Mese Mariano

Composer

Umberto Giordano

Librettist

Salvatore di Giacomo

Language

Italian

Duration

40 minutes

Date

Premiered and first published in 1910.

Cast - 8 women, 1 man (male role optional); child soloist; children's chorus

Carmela – Soprano (B3-B5, optional B3-A5)

La Contessa – Soprano or Mezzo (D4-E5)

Don Fabiano/Il Rettore – Baritone (B2-C4)

La Superiora – Mezzo (C4-E5)

Suor Pazienza – Mezzo (C#4 to E5)

Suor Celeste – Soprano (C4 to G5)

Suor Cristina – Soprano (B3-D5)

Suor Agnese – Soprano or Mezzo (D4 to Bb4)

Suor Maria – Soprano (G4-D5)

Valentina – Soloist from Children's Chorus (G4-C5)

Coro di bambini – Sopranos (D4-E5) and Altos (C#4-D5)

Servant – Supernumerary

Instrumentation

2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, timpani, percussion, harp, and strings.

Onstage, harmonium and bells.¹ A piano/vocal score is also available.

¹Harmonium and bells are played offstage to indicate the location of the church. Placing the harmonium and bells in the orchestra pit would not detract from the storytelling.

Style

Salvatore di Giacomo's libretto focuses on the lives of average Neapolitan people and features their dialect. The story echoes that of Puccini's *Suor Angelica*; and though Umberto Giordano's work precedes Puccini's by eight years, his lush and beautiful music features stylistic similarities.

Source of the Libretto

Di Giacomo adapted the libretto from his own stage play *O Mese Mariano*, which was first derived from his novella, *Senza Vederlo (Without Seeing Him)*. In transforming the stage play into a libretto, he radically changed parts of the story, most notably by giving the nuns more prominent roles, thus making it primarily a work for women.

The original play is available in English translation. Karima N. Moyer translated it for her Master's thesis at the University of Massachusetts in 1991.² Unfortunately, her work is not easily accessible and can only be obtained from the University of Massachusetts through interlibrary loan.

Setting

The opera takes place in the courtyard of a Neapolitan orphanage during the month of May. The libretto does not specify an exact time period.

Plot Synopsis

The opera begins with children playing in the courtyard as they await the arrival of La Contessa, the patron of the orphanage. When she arrives, the children sing for her, then one child recites a sonnet written in her honor. La Contessa gives toys and sweets to the children.

After La Contessa retires to the chapel with La Superiora and Il Rettore and the children are led into the garden by a group of nuns, Carmela enters and asks to see her son Antonino. As she is waiting, she meets Suor Pazienza, who has remained behind to tidy the courtyard, and immediately recognizes her as a friend she has not seen for many years. La Superiora enters, and, too ashamed to tell her story, Carmela enlists Suor Pazienza's help in telling how, as a young woman, she had a child out of wedlock and was abandoned by her lover. She later married another man, but shortly after their wedding he cruelly demanded that she give up her son. She asks La Superiora for permission to see Antonino and exits to wait in the chapel.

Suddenly a group of nuns rush in to tell La Superiora that Carmela's little boy has been found

²Karima N. Moyer and Salvatore di Giacomo, "The Month of Mary: A Neapolitan Dramatic Translation" (master's thesis, University of Massachusetts, 1991).

dead. However, no one dares give the news to the already grieving mother. As Suor Christina and La Superiora lie to Carmela, telling her that she can't see her son during school, the children enter the stage, singing as they take flowers to the church. Suor Christina tells Carmela that her child is among them, but La Superiora restrains Carmela from racing to find her son. Despite her continued pleas to see him, the nuns tell Carmela she must come back another time. Defeated, she begins to exit, but stops at the gate remembering that she had brought a cake to give her son, which has now gone cold. She instructs Suor Cristina to see that her son gets it. Carmela, hearing the children singing as she exits, cries out, "It's him! It's him!"

Production Notes

This piece requires only one set—an orphanage courtyard. There should be entrances/exits for the school, the chapel, the garden, and the porter's lodge or the entrance gate.

The libretto only requires a few props, including flowers, an armchair, a footrest, and a bag in which Carmela carries a small, cloth-wrapped cake. The libretto also requires several gifts for La Contessa to give to the orphans. In her dialogue, she mentions a toy train, sweets, and sugared almonds.³ The stage directions describe other props including a pair of reading glasses, a lorgnette, scissors, a ball of wool, a pinafore for sewing, embroidery, a feather duster, a table, a note, registers, sheets of paper, an inkwell, a crucifix, a vase of flowers, a large two-handled basket, a rolled-up paper tied in a bow, toys, a large box to carry the aforementioned gifts, a school bell with a rope, a tray of cups for hot chocolate, biscuits, and slices of cake. These are not essential to the story and can be omitted at the director's discretion.

Since *Suor Angelica* is so popular, renting or borrowing nun habits may be a possibility. If renting is not an option, nun habits can be easily and economically made because they are so loose-fitting.

Premiere

The work premiered at the Teatro Massimo in Palermo on March 17, 1910, conducted by Leopoldo Mugnone.⁴

³When I was working on this piece at the Miami Music Festival in 2016, I used gift-wrapped boxes in lieu of the toys and sweets.

⁴Danilo Prefumo and Umberto Giordano, *Il Re; Mese Mariano (liner notes)*, trans. Timothy Shaw (Dynamic, 1999).

Recordings

There is one commercially available audio recording by Dynamic, which includes an English translation of the libretto.⁵ To date, there are several video recordings available on YouTube, including performances conducted by Stefano Seghedoni⁶ and Pablo Varela⁷.

Materials and Performance Rights

In the United States, piano/vocal scores may be purchased from Sheet Music Direct.⁸ Note that it takes 4-6 weeks to prepare the scores for shipment. Full scores and orchestra parts can only be obtained by renting them from the Italian publishing agency, Casa Musicale Sonzogno.⁹

Casting and Pedagogical Considerations

The role of Carmela is lengthy and vocally demanding. I recommend casting a graduate student as Carmela, or an exceptionally advanced undergraduate.¹⁰ However, the remainder of the roles are not as demanding and may be sung by undergraduate students. The vocal music is very well supported by the orchestra. Most characters do not have large ranges or uncomfortable tessituras. The vocal lines are fairly stepwise without large leaps, and the syllabic text-setting uses simple rhythms. The music is tonally straightforward and easy to learn.

With the possible exception of Carmela who has long monologues that might be interpreted as arias, none of the characters sing arias or ensemble numbers. Most of the singing is in a conversational style in which each character sings short phrases alone, in turn, expecting a reply from other singers. Even though the lines themselves are not as melodic as an aria, the music must be fully sung, not sung in a half-spoken manner.

Carmela – Soprano (B3-B5, optional B3-A5)

Carmela is the most prominent role in the opera. She doesn't enter until page 30, but once onstage, she sings for most of the remaining time, with only one small break. The majority of her singing is con-

⁵Umberto Giordano and Salvatore di Giacomo, *Il Re; Mese Mariano* (CD), dir. Renato Palumbo (Dynamic, 1999).

⁶Umberto Giordano and Salvatore di Giacomo, "Mese Mariano," Conducted by Stefano Seghedoni, performed by Orchestra Mo-Mus, accessed May 31, 2019, www.youtube.com/watch?v=8spbAFDVcaY.

⁷Umberto Giordano and Salvatore di Giacomo, "Mese Mariano," Conducted by Pablo Varela, performed by Musica Nelle Corti di Capitanata, accessed May 31, 2019, www.youtube.com/watch?v=w08OgjBgyWE.

⁸"Sheet Music Direct," accessed August 28, 2019, <https://www.sheetmusicdirect.com>.

⁹"Contacts," Casa Musicale Sonzogno, accessed November 27, 2019, www.sonzogno.it/en/contacts.

¹⁰A doctoral student played Carmela in the production I directed in 2016 at the Miami Music Festival. However, a very advanced undergraduate student covered the role, and did so exceptionally well.

versational, but from pages 41-57, she sings almost entirely alone. The stamina required for this extended singing is the greatest challenge of this role.

In general, Carmela's tessitura sits in the middle of her range, but she sings higher and louder when experiencing traumatic emotions. The role has only one B5, but Carmela regularly sings F5, G5, and A5. On the lower end, she is rarely required to sing B3, but frequently sings C4s and D4s. There are some passages where her vocal line may sit in her primo passaggio, such as shown in Example 4.1. She must also frequently transition between registers, as illustrated in Example 4.2.

Because the score does not provide measure numbers, each example below will be labeled with the page number, system number, and measure numbers in that system. For example, a passage on page 17, system 3, measures 1-2 would be identified as 17/3/1-2.

Example 4.1: Giordano, *Mese Mariano*, 52/2/1-3

Carmela

la do-men-i-ca, al to - co si sa - reb - be ve - nu - ta a pi - gli - re il pic - ci - no.....

Example 4.2: Giordano, *Mese Mariano*, 50/4/1—51/3/4

Carmela

f Sen - ti - mi!..... Sen - ti - mi!..... *Poco meno* Nien - te! Co - sì a - ve - va det - to, e co - sì vol - le

Carmela

fa - re!... Se l'a - ves - si po - tu - to im - ma - gi - na - re... Non lo spo - sa - vo, no... Mi ri - ma -

Carmela

f rit. ne - vo co - sì... di - sgra - zia - ta co - m'e - ro... *p* Ve ne son tan - te!...

As mentioned in Chapter 6 (*Roman Fever*), some students tend to allow excess tension to influence vocal production when singing emotionally intense passages. This is especially true for passages that are high in range with a loud dynamic level. Carmela must be able to sing *fortissimo* in the upper part of her range with accents and *tenuti*, adeptly conveying Carmela's intense emotions, without allowing tension to

hinder her singing in any way. She has a large dynamic range and must also be able to sing *piano* without losing support.

La Contessa – Soprano or Mezzo (D4-E5)

La Contessa is on stage for about 15 pages of the 79-page opera. She is greeted by the nuns and the children’s chorus and has conversational singing with Don Fabiano and Mother Superior before exiting the stage. Her voice part is appropriate for either a mezzo or a soprano. The tessitura doesn’t sit too low and the range is fairly limited.

Don Fabiano/Il Rettore – Baritone (B2-C4)

The rector, Don Fabiano, appears on stage shortly after La Contessa and exits with her. He has conversational singing with La Contessa and La Superiora. He has a limited range and the tessitura should be comfortable for most baritones. He most frequently sings between the range of F3 and C4, and only rarely sings below D3.

When I directed this piece at the Miami Music Festival in 2016, none of the baritones at the festival were available, so the music director and I split Don Fabiano’s part between Suor Agnese and Suor Maria, both of whom sang his lines an octave higher without any difficulty. Thus, we were able to perform the opera without any male singers at all. This is a possible solution for performance groups in similar circumstances.

Only three lines in the libretto reference Il Rettore. Below are those lines followed by my suggested alterations, which permit a director to omit the sole baritone role.

Example 4.3: Giordano, *Mese Mariano*, 10/3/2—11/1/1

La Superiora

Suor Ce - le - ste! O - v'è il Ret - to - re?

La Superiora

Suor Ce - le - ste! O - v'è la po - e - ta?

Example 4.4: Giordano, *Mese Mariano*, 21/2/3—21/3/1

La Superiora È del ret - to - re...

La Superiora È di que - sta suo - ra...

Example 4.5: Giordano, *Mese Mariano*, 22/1/1—22/1/2

La Contessa ven - ga, Don Fa - bia - no!

La Contessa ven - ga, Suor Ma - ri - a!
(ven - ga, Suor A - gne - se!)

La Superiora – Mezzo (C4-E5)

After Carmela, La Superiora and Suor Pazienza (see below) have the most prominent parts in terms of stage time and the amount of singing required. La Superiora's tessitura hovers around the middle of the staff. She occasionally sings C4 and E5, but generally sings in an octave range from D4 to D5.

Suor Pazienza – Mezzo (C#4 to E5)

Suor Pazienza's vocal line doesn't stay in any one part of the range for very long. Any mezzo should find this role reasonably comfortable with its limited range.

Suor Celeste – Soprano (C4 to G5)

Suor Celeste has only a few more lines than Suor Agnese or Suor Maria. Most of her lines are at the beginning of the opera as she prepares the orphans for La Contessa's arrival. Suor Celeste appears on stage with the rest of the nuns at the end of the opera, but only sings two lines. Her tessitura is the highest of the nuns; she is the only nun who sings a G5 and regularly sings F5s. On the low end, she rarely sings below E4.

Suor Cristina – Soprano or Mezzo (B3-D5)

Suor Cristina has approximately the same amount of lines as Suor Celeste, but hers are only at the end of the opera. She is listed as a soprano on the publisher's website,¹¹ but the role is better suited for a mezzo due to the tessitura required. Although she doesn't have a large range, she often sings between B3 and E4. It may be easier to hear a mezzo in that range, unless a soprano has a very strong command of her chest voice.

Suor Agnese – Soprano or Mezzo (D4 to B \flat 4)

Suor Agnese has very few lines. Playing this kind of role can be difficult for less experienced actors because the text provides so few details to assist in character development. However, this allows the students to work with a director in developing their own ideas regarding the personal details that bring a character to life. It also challenges students to use their bodies, instead of text, to tell a story.

Suor Maria – Soprano (G4-D5)

Suor Maria has the fewest lines but will benefit from the same acting challenges provided to Suor Agnese.

Valentina – Soloist from Children's Chorus (G4-C5)

Valentina's biggest challenge is reciting a sonnet in Italian, underscored by the music. She will need Italian diction training and may need coaching to project her spoken text over the orchestra.

Coro di Bambini – Sopranos (D4-E5) Altos (C \sharp 4-D5)

The children's chorus does not take much time to stage. Of their three songs, only one requires significant blocking. Their first song accompanies a game that necessitates some action. They sing their second song in formation for La Contessa, and their third song in a procession to the church. The children are always shepherded by nuns who will help them get where they need to be on stage.

Though the children's music is appropriately simple, learning and memorizing the Italian text can be a challenge. Their first two songs are very short and repetitive. Their third song has a longer, more challenging text.

Processions can present a challenge, especially if the performance space has a long reverberation time. The children may struggle to stay in tempo with the accompaniment, because what they hear will lag

¹¹"Mese Mariano," Casa Musicale Sonzogno, accessed November 27, 2019, www.sonzogno.it/en/composer?id=972&lang=en&epoca1&opera=993.

behind the beat. This will require some practice, and it will be critical that the children can see a conductor throughout the procession and from offstage.

One of the children's songs contains a short section sung in harmony. Singing in harmony can be challenging for inexperienced children. If possible, it is best to cast an established children's chorus because the children will already be accomplished in singing harmony and possibly in singing works in foreign languages. If casting an established chorus is not possible, having a few more experienced children in the group as "section leaders" will help the other children to stay on their parts.

Servant – Supernumerary

The stage directions indicate a servant in livery entering with La Contessa, carrying a box of gifts for the orphans. Not having a spare actor or a livery costume, I omitted this character in my staging by having a few nuns attend to La Contessa. One of these nuns carried the box of gifts.

Additional Pedagogical Considerations

Mese Mariano is an excellent first Italian opera for student singers. Because the music is not difficult for most of the characters, they are able to focus on the text and its meaning. Most of the roles are reasonably small, ensuring the singers a manageable amount of Italian text to learn and memorize.

When I directed this piece with a mixed cast of graduate and undergraduate students, we took time to rehearse the text in English translation without the music until the singers had a good grasp of what each character was saying and how that affected their own reactions. We blocked the show in English and then rehearsed it in Italian, again without music. Finally, we added the music. Each layer of rehearsal brought greater understanding to the actors and depth to their performances. I found this to be an excellent way of rehearsing operas in foreign languages with student singers when time permits.

The libretto does not provide many context clues for the singers regarding their characters, but this provides an excellent opportunity for student singers to use their imaginations to develop character attributes, physical characteristics, idiosyncrasies, and motivations for the roles they are singing. Developing these skills will prepare them to cultivate details and depth of character for both major and minor roles they will sing in the future.

This opera also provides students opportunities to practice conversational singing, a skill not often focused on in voice lessons. Conversational singing is harder for some students to learn and memorize than arias because the music is not as melodic and because they must memorize other character's lines to know

their own cues. The conversational singing in this opera will help students develop the skills to learn and sing in a conversational style. They will be well-prepared for larger, more demanding roles.

Conclusion

This opera is an excellent choice for programming in opera workshops. It fulfills the requirements described in the introduction to this production guide by providing eight adult female roles with music that is appropriate for student singers while having minimal production requirements.

Chapter 5: Speed Dating Tonight!

Composer and Librettist

Michael Ching

Language

English

Duration

The opera's length varies due to its flexible nature. The premiere production with Janiec Opera lasted 67 minutes. Recordings on YouTube range from 50 to 80 minutes.

Date

2013

Cast - 3 women, 2 men (fixed roles); variable cast for all other roles

Speed Dating Tonight! is a unique opera with a fixed beginning and ending, but a variable middle section comprised of solos, duets, and ensemble numbers for more than sixty “daters”.¹ Each solo is a short vignette of a dater introducing himself or herself to another dater. Most of the solos have alternate texts provided and are available in multiple keys so that they can be sung by any voice type, male or female. Voice types and ranges of the fixed characters are included below. Because the remaining characters are flexible in voice type and range, they have not been listed. The score is provided as a PDF file, rather than a printed score, so that vignettes can easily be rearranged and omitted as desired.

Fixed Roles

Bartender – Baritone (B \flat 2-E4)

Waitress – Mezzo (G3-E \flat 5)

Bus Boy or Girl – Any voice type, can be cut (15 note range)

Kaylee – Soprano / mezzo (A3-G5 or A \flat 3-G5)

Dater #1 – Any voice type, aria available in multiple keys (16 note range)

Dater #22 – Baritone (B2-F4)

Dater #23 – Soprano (D4-A5 or C5-G5)

¹“Our Story—click for contact info.” Speed Dating Tonight!: Comic Opera in One Act, accessed July 11, 2019, <https://www.facebook.com/pg/SpeedDatingTonightOpera/about>.

Flexible Roles

The remaining roles are chosen from a wide variety of characters at the director's discretion. The flexibility in casting makes this opera perfect for opera workshops and similar educational programs, because it can be arranged to fit almost any group of students.

It is not necessary to have an equal number of male and female daters. A director could easily configure the opera to accommodate predominantly female casts. Supernumeraries could be used to play many of the male daters, allowing most of the solos to be sung by women. Male singers could also play multiple roles.

Though most of the vignettes can be sung by men or women, Michael Ching wrote some of the vignettes especially for women. For predominantly female casts, I suggest including solos #8, #9, #10, and #27. I would also include the trio for Daters #44-46 and the duets for Daters #50-51 and Daters #55-56. Michael Ching wrote Dater #8's "Love me, love my cats" for a woman, but he allows for lyrics to be adjusted in obvious places for a man to play Dater #8, if desired. Daters #9, #10, and #27 are female characters. Part two of the opening scene contains a solo for a female dater² assigned at the director's discretion. Michael Ching suggests Daters #3, #5, #14, or #15 as possibilities. The trio for Daters #44-46 was written for three female daters to sing at three different tables opposite their dates. The duet for Daters #55 and #56 could be sung by two women between rounds of the speed dating event. The duet for Daters #50 and #51, for a mezzo and soprano, is "borrowed from the Mercédès/Frasquita portion of the trio from Bizet's *Carmen*."³

Instrumentation

Piano, clarinet, flute, bass, drum set, and vibraphone. Piano/vocal scores are available.

Style

Michael Ching's comic opera contains as much variety in musical style as it does in characters' personalities and backgrounds. The opera begins and ends in a contemporary operatic idiom. The series of dating vignettes include numbers in the styles of modern opera, late romantic opera, jazz, musical theater, folk pop, and pop country. Ching also parodies and references famous classical works such as Bizet's *Carmen*, Mozart's *Magic Flute*, and "Per la Gloria" from Parisotti's *La Griselda*. This wide variety in musical style expertly portrays the many different characters involved and will be sure to delight audiences.

²Michael Ching, *Speed Dating Tonight!*, Michael Ching, 2013, 20, mm.114-172.

³Ibid., 288.

Source of the Libretto

Speed Dating Tonight! is based on a concept by Dean Anthony, Artistic Director of Janiec Opera Company at the Brevard Music Center.

Setting

A bar in an American city in the 21st century.

Plot Synopsis

The opera begins in an American bar as the staff prepares for a speed dating event. As the daters arrive, they express their hopes and trepidations for the night's activity. In the first round, we meet Dater #1—a realtor unsure if she wants to marry her boyfriend. Examples of other daters could include characters such as a shy origami designer, a bassoonist, a crazy cat lady, a pathological liar, a womanizer who runs into his ex-girlfriend at the event, a nosy parent interfering with her child's social life, and an activist looking for a man without a hipster beard. There are many possibilities with over 60 vignettes to choose from. The finale begins with an ensemble number in which the daters share their feelings with the audience about speed dating. The bartender and waitress interview the daters. Dater #22, who has “obsessive screen disorder,”⁴ meets his perfect match and they sing to the tune of the Papageno-Papagena duet from Mozart's *Magic Flute*. Finally, as all the daters are exiting, some in pairs, some alone, the bartender asks the waitress out for coffee. The busboy is left alone to lock up, but not without a solo dance number.

Production Notes

The opera requires only one set—a 21st century American bar. There should be at least two entrances/exits—one leading to the ladies' room and another serving as the entrance to the bar. The set requires a bar counter along with tables and chairs. Necessary props include a bell to indicate the end of each speed dating round, a birthday card, name tags, several cell phones, and sundry beverages.

Some optional vignettes may require specific props, most of which are easy and inexpensive to obtain. For example, Dater #17 has a checklist, Dater #32 has a business card, Daters #59 and 60 each have a bottle of hand sanitizer, and Dater #3 needs a piece of origami. While rummaging through her purse for her cell phone, Dater #27 describes the following items: receipts, three pairs of sunglasses, a party favor from New Year's Eve, feminine hygiene products, a power adapter, a nail file, and a subcompact prop gun. During her aria, she will remove some of the items from her purse including the subcompact prop gun.

⁴Ching, *Speed Dating Tonight!*, 351.

Dater #27's aria also requires a sound effect for her buzzing cell phone.

Some of the optional vignettes require specific costume items. Dater #10 wears a steampunk outfit, Dater #54 wears a bowtie, and the singers in "Bar Bugs" wear masks resembling insect faces. "Bar Bugs" is an ensemble number for four or more singing "insects."⁵

A few of the optional vignettes require special skills. Dater #24 may self-accompany on the piano or a guitar. Dater #4's aria, "Bar Bugs," "Bow Tie Duet," and the epilogue all require short dance numbers.

Gobos of the *Speed Dating Tonight!* logo are available for rental.⁶

Premiere

Speed Dating Tonight! was originally commissioned and produced by Janiec Opera with piano. An orchestration was commissioned and premiered by Microscopic Opera.

Recordings

YouTube has many recordings of this opera. Michael Ching includes links to a piano-accompanied performance by Janiec Opera Company on his blog.⁷ He also includes links to orchestra recordings by Kennesaw State University Opera Theater⁸ and Texas State University Opera Theatre.⁹ Audio recordings of individual vignettes are available on SoundCloud.¹⁰

Materials and Performance Rights

Obtain scores and performance rights directly from Michael Ching by email at MrBillow@gmail.com. A digital perusal score is available on his blog.¹¹

Casting and Pedagogical Considerations

There are many vignettes to choose from; thirty-six arias, an acapella trio, an ensemble number, and eleven duets. Each vignette is approximately ninety seconds.

Speed Dating Tonight! offers selections for students with varying skill levels. Some of the more complex pieces are better suited for graduate students, while many of the pieces can be easily sung by un-

⁵Ching, *Speed Dating Tonight!*, 194.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Michael Ching, "Speed Dating Tonight!," Janiec Opera Company, directed by Dean Anthony, accessed July 12, 2019, www.youtube.com/watch?v=QrU-eM_phUU.

⁸Michael Ching, "Speed Dating Tonight!," Kennesaw State University Opera Theater, directed by Eileen Moremen, accessed July 12, 2019, www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q0nhqsKRG8c.

⁹Michael Ching, "Speed Dating Tonight!," Texas State University Opera Theatre, directed by Samuel Mungo, accessed July 12, 2019, www.youtube.com/watch?v=xBdSQt2LM8c.

¹⁰Michael Ching, "Speed Dating Tonight! demos," SoundCloud, accessed November 6, 2019, <https://soundcloud.com/michael-ching-3/sets/speed-dating-tonight-demos>.

¹¹Michael Ching, "Opera and Beyond," accessed July 12, 2019, <https://operaandbeyond.blogspot.com>.

derclassmen.

The support offered by the accompaniment varies significantly among the vignettes. In some of the arias, such as Dater #12's aria, shown in Examples 5.1 and 5.2, the accompaniment doubles the singer. Although this aria frequently changes meter and uses $\frac{5}{8}$, the meter changes typically follow a predictable pattern and the accompaniment doubles the singer throughout. The support from the accompaniment will help even a beginning student to grasp the rhythmic intricacies of this piece.

Dater #12's aria also contains some melodic challenges. The singer repeats the opening melody (see Example 5.1) several times, but in the final repeat (see Example 5.2) the D# is replaced by a D \flat . Young singers may find the chromatic shift difficult, but the accompaniment will help them to sing the D \flat with confidence.

Example 5.1: Ching, *Speed Dating Tonight!*, Dater #12, "Panic Attack," mm.4-9.

The musical score for Example 5.1 consists of two systems, each with a vocal line for Dater #12 and a piano accompaniment. The tempo is marked as $J = 120$. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The first system covers measures 4-6, and the second system covers measures 7-9. The meter changes from 3/4 to 5/8 to 4/4. The lyrics are: "I've ne-ver been good at meet-ing peo-ple In-tro-verts ne-ver are." and "I've al-ways been the kind of girl/guy who sits With her/his back to the wall."

Example 5.2: Ching, *Speed Dating Tonight!*, Dater #12, “Panic Attack,” mm. 53-58.

Faster ♩ = 128
in a panic

Dater #12

I nev - er should have tried to come here. This was a mis-take.

Piano

mf

Dater #12

I think it's time for me to go now. This was such a mis-take.

Piano

In other vignettes, the accompaniment does not double the singer, but still provides adequate support. In Example 5.3, most of Dater #11’s notes are found in the chords played by the piano, although not necessarily in the singer’s octave. In this piece, the pianist is encouraged to arpeggiate chords frequently and to improvise in a jazz piano style, providing further support for the singer.

Example 5.3: Ching, *Speed Dating Tonight!*, Dater #11, “I’ve always liked this bar,” mm. 1-6.

Slowly ♩ = 64

Dater #11

I've al-ways liked this bar. It's such a

arpeggiate chords frequently, as desired. Pianistic improvisation encouraged in this song.

Piano

Dater #11

friend-ly place. It's a nice mix of re-gu-lars and stran-gers. There'sa

Piano

Singing in duet without accompaniment requires a more advanced singer. In Dater #7’s aria, shown in Example 5.4, the piano does not provide harmonic support for the singer, but rather mimics the melodic line of a bassoon. In this way, the piano doesn’t accompany but performs in duet with the singer.

Example 5.4: Ching, *Speed Dating Tonight!*, Dater #7, “Pat the bassoonist,” mm. 3-6.

The musical score consists of two systems. The first system shows Dater #7's vocal line and piano accompaniment. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 90. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The vocal line starts with a rest, followed by a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, and a quarter note C5. The piano accompaniment features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes and quarter notes. The second system continues the vocal line with the lyrics 'Do you know what a bas - soon is?'. The vocal line has a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, and a quarter note C5. The piano accompaniment continues with a similar rhythmic pattern.

Speed Dating Tonight! also includes some challenging music. For example, Dater #3’s aria is tonally ambiguous and requires him or her to sing a vocal line with sparse and sometimes dissonant accompaniment. In Example 5.5, the singer’s first two notes are a C5 and a B5, which are not included in the accompaniment. In Example 5.6, from the same aria, the singer is accompanied by dissonant chords. In the first measure of the example, Dater #3 sings an F \sharp 4 while the piano sounds an F \sharp 3. In the second measure Dater #3 sings an E \flat 5 accompanied by an E \flat 3. The third measure contains both E \flat s and E \sharp s, and F \sharp s and F \flat s. In the fourth measure, Dater #3 voices an E \flat 4 while the piano sounds an E \flat 3. This aria requires a singer with advanced aural skills in order to find the starting pitches and to sing against dissonant pitches in the accompaniment.

Example 5.5: Ching, *Speed Dating Tonight!*, Dater #3, “Origamist,” mm. 1-4.

Erratic ♩ = 100

accel.

Dater #3

I'm Ca - rev. I'm kind of shy.

accel.

Piano

a tempo

3

Dater #3

I'm kind of shy. I work a - lot.

mp

Piano

Example 5.6: Ching, *Speed Dating Tonight!*, Dater #3, “Origamist,” mm. 24-27.

♩ = 100

Dater #3

Snor-er Is that a word? I think I'm snor-ing you. BORING you!

Piano

In addition to the variability of support offered by the accompaniment, the opera contains many types of vocal writing. Some of the vocal writing is very conjunct, such as that seen in Examples 5.1 and 5.2. Example 5.7 below illustrates some disjunct vocal writing from the opera. Some of the arias are very lyrical in nature, such as “I’ve always liked this bar,” as shown in Example 5.3, while others are more conversational, such as Dater #3’s aria illustrated in Examples 5.5 and 5.6.

Example 5.7: Ching, *Speed Dating Tonight!*, Dater #8, “Love me, love my cats,” mm. 1-5.

Moderato ♩. = 63

*non committal answer
"sure" or a nod*

Dater #8

Do you like cats?

Piano *mp*

Dater #8

I have three of them. They kind of run my life.

a piacere

Bartender – Baritone (B2-E4 or B \flat 2-E4 if including optional aria)

The bartender has some conversational singing in the opening scene, a duet with the waitress midway through the opera, some dialogue in the finale, and an optional aria.

He regularly sings most of the notes in his range. He only has five E4s but sings E \flat 4s and D4s frequently. He has many B2s in the opening scene and in “Order Up,” his duet with the waitress. He has several B \flat 2s in his optional aria, “Chislic.”

Waitress – Mezzo (G3-E \flat 5)

The waitress has conversational singing with the bartender in the opening scene and sings a duet with him midway through the opera. In the finale she has a solo, participates in the polyphonic quintet, and has some short dialogue. She occasionally interrupts other musical numbers to take drink orders.

The waitress uses most of the notes in her range regularly. She only has three G \sharp 3s but has many A3s in the finale. She has a few D \sharp 5s/ E \flat 5s but sings D5s and C5s frequently.

Bus Boy or Girl – Any voice type, can be cut (15 note range)

The Bus Boy or Girl appears in both the opening scene and in the finale as a supernumerary. This role also has an optional aria with a 15-note range that is available in multiple keys. In the epilogue, the character turns on some music and starts to dance as he or she cleans up the bar.

Kaylee – Soprano / mezzo (A3-G5 or A \flat 3-G5)

In the opening scene Kaylee, the dating coordinator, has some conversational singing with the bartender and then a solo to explain the speed dating procedure to the crowd. She has an optional aria, “Coordinator: 12C”, that is typically sung after Dater #12’s aria. In the finale, Kaylee has a short solo to conclude the speed dating event.

Kaylee most frequently sings between D4 and E5. She only has two G5s and two F \sharp 5s. On the low end, she has several A \flat 3s and B3s in her optional aria and several A3s in the opening scene. The aria is available in a higher key, but the opening scene is not.

Dater #1 – Any voice type (16 note range)

Following the opening scene, Dater #1 sings an aria which becomes the first in a series of vignettes. This character, an actor turned realtor, can be sung by either a man or a woman. He or she also sings in the polyphonic quintet in the finale, which has one voice per part. In the perusal score, Dater #1’s aria ranges from D4-F5, if sung by a woman, or D3-F4, if sung by a man. However, the aria is available in both a higher and a lower key.

Dater #22 – Baritone (B2-F4)

Dater #22 has a significant solo in the opening scene. In the finale, he sings in the polyphonic quintet and in a duet with Dater #23. The opening scene and the quintet are only available in one key. Dater #22’s range in the opening scene is B2-F4. He only has one F4 in the opera. The duet in the finale is divided into two parts. In this first part, his range is B2-D4, but this portion is also available up a step. His range in the second part of the duet is C \sharp 3-E4. The second part is also available a step lower. Choosing an alternate key for either portion of the duet would not affect Dater #22’s overall range but would change his tessitura slightly. The second portion of the duet is a parody of the Papageno-Papagena duet from Mozart’s Magic Flute, which sits at the higher end of Dater #22’s range. The first portion of the duet has several B2s in his vocal line, which is bottom of his range.

Dater #23 – Soprano (D4-A5 or D4-G5)

Dater #23 sings in duet with Dater #22 in the finale. She could be assigned an additional aria at the director's discretion. As previously mentioned above, her duet with #22 is divided into two parts. She only has two lines in the first part that range from D4-D5 in the original key although it can be sung up a step. In the second part, her vocal line ranges from D4-A5, but it is available in a lower key, which would top out her range at G5. In the original key, her vocal line sits at the higher end of her range throughout the duet including many F5s and G5s. She only has three A5s, one of which is a long held note.

Flexible Roles

In addition to the fixed roles, the opera requires five assigned soloists in the opening scene and three in the finale. Any available daters may be assigned these solos at the director's discretion.

Since each of the flexible roles only has approximately 90 seconds of solo singing, each character's range and tessitura will not be analyzed in detail. There are a few arias that have nearly a two-octave range, however most arias have a vocal range between 17-21 notes. Dater #11 has the smallest range—just shy of an octave (11 notes).

At the beginning of the perusal score, composer Michael Ching provides brief notes for most of the optional vignettes. He includes information about the musical style, the level of musical complexity, important plot points, and clarifications about the range or character of the singer. He lists musical styles that include “musical theater,” “jazzy,” “lyrical,” “operatic,” “folk pop,” “contemporary,” “pop country,” and “Late Romantic—Straussian.”¹² He points out musically complex pieces and often clarifies the advanced skills required. For example, he indicates that Dater #8 has “lots of leaps,” that #12 can be “rhythmically challenging,” and that “diction [is] a challenge” for #10.¹³ He also denotes songs with alternate lyrics or alternate endings, dance breaks, self-accompaniment by the singer, and pieces that should ideally not be cut.¹⁴

Conclusion

Speed Dating Tonight! has quickly gained popularity, with over 80 productions performed since its premiere in 2013.¹⁵ The flexibility of this piece makes it ideal for opera workshops who can produce it with a variable number of singers of either gender. It accommodates students of differing skill levels

¹²Ching, *Speed Dating Tonight!*, 3-4.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Ching, “Opera and Beyond.”

while providing each singer with a solo. The piece also has polyphonic ensemble numbers that the whole group can participate in. Additional optional duets and ensemble numbers provide variety for the audience's evening of entertainment.

Addendum - Another Work by Michael Ching for Consideration

Michael Ching's new opera, *RSBE*, short for "Remove Shoes Before Entering," is scheduled to premiere at the University of Alabama on February 27th, 2020. As with *Speed Dating Tonight!*, *RSBE*'s structure allows for flexible casting and would easily accommodate a predominantly female cast. A personal score is available for download on Michael Ching's blog¹⁶ and audio samples are available on SoundCloud.^{17, 18, 19}

¹⁶Ching, "Opera and Beyond."

¹⁷Michael Ching, "RSBE 8 Gramma's Lesson," SoundCloud, accessed November 6, 2019, <https://soundcloud.com/michael-ching-3/rsbe-grammas-lesson>.

¹⁸Michael Ching, "4 RSBE I See Me," SoundCloud, accessed November 6, 2019, <https://soundcloud.com/michael-ching-3/rsbe-i-see-me>.

¹⁹Michael Ching, "RSBE 14 Me That Used to Be," SoundCloud, accessed November 6, 2019, <https://soundcloud.com/michael-ching-3/rsbe-14-me-that-used-to-be>.

Chapter 6: Roman Fever

Composer

Robert Ward

Librettist

Roger Brunyate

Language

English

Duration

60 min

Date

1993

Cast - 4 women, 1 man

Alida Slade – Soprano (C4-B♭5, optional C4-A5)

Jenny Slade – Lyric soprano (E♭4-C6)

Grace Ansley – Mezzo (G3-B♭3, optional B♭3-A♭5)

Barbara “Babs” Ansley – Mezzo (B♭3-A♭5, optional A3-A♭5)

Waiter/Cameriere – Baritone (A2-F4)

Instrumentation

Flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, French horn, trumpet, keyboard synthesizer, 6 first violins, 5 second violins, 4 violas, 3 cellos, and 2 basses. One percussionist for timpani, snare drum, glockenspiel, tubular bells, and drum set. Piano/vocal score also available.

Style

In an interview with Albany Records, Robert Ward describes the work as a “tragicomedy,” because, unlike many tragic operas, this tale does not end in death. He says, “The tragic element lies in the thing that in our life we have failed to achieve: relationships, career, the thing that leaves a kind of ache inside throughout our lives.”¹ I would describe the story as a drama, rather than a tragicomedy, because of

¹“Premiere Recording of Ward’s Emotional, Romantic Opera Full of Nostalgia and Charm,” Albany Records, accessed June 7, 2019, www.albanyrecords.com/mm5/merchant.mvc?Screen=PROD&Product_Code=TROY505.

the sparsity of comic moments. The music is in the style of a late Romantic opera with jazz elements, indicative of the opera's 1920s setting. Though the music is tonal, it is also chromatic and changes keys with regularity.

Source of the Libretto

Edith Wharton's short story, *Roman Fever* was first published in 1934 in Liberty magazine. She later included an expanded and revised version in her own collection of short stories entitled *The World Over*, published 1936. The story is easily accessible in other collections of Edith Wharton's short stories such as *Roman Fever and Other Stories*,² *The Selected Short Stories of Edith Wharton*,³ *The New York Stories of Edith Wharton*,⁴ *Short Stories of Edith Wharton 1910-1937*,⁵ *Wharton: Collected Stories 1891-1910*,⁶ and many others. The full text is also available online.⁷

Setting

Capitoline Hill, Rome, hotel restaurant terrace, early spring, 1924, 4:30 pm.⁸

Plot Synopsis

The opera begins with Alida Slade and Grace Ansley, both recent widows in their forties, enjoying the view from a Roman restaurant terrace and reminiscing about the past while awaiting the arrival of their young adult daughters—Jenny Slade and Barbara “Babs” Ansley. Alida and Grace had first met in Rome twenty years prior and had recently reunited by chance on their current, separate travels in Rome.

When the girls arrive, they explain excitedly that the handsome, young, Italian pilots they had met earlier on their trip wanted to take the girls up in their planes. Alida and Grace tell the girls about their time in Rome twenty years prior. Alida mentions “the Roman fever” and, remembering there had been a famous story about it, asks the waiter to recount the tale. The waiter then tells of two sisters who both loved the same man. In a fit of jealousy, the elder sister plots to remove her competition by getting her younger sister ill. She convinces her to go to the Forum at night to get a special flower for their album. The

²Edith Wharton and Cynthia Griffin Wolff, *Roman Fever and Other Stories* (New York: Scribner, 1964).

³Edith Wharton and R. W. B. Lewis, *The Selected Short Stories of Edith Wharton* (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1991).

⁴Edith Wharton and Roxana Robinson, *The New York Stories of Edith Wharton* (New York: New York Review Books, 2007).

⁵Edith Wharton and R. W. B. Lewis, *Short Stories of Edith Wharton, 1910-1937* (New York: Scribner, 1968).

⁶Edith Wharton and Maureen Howard, *Collected Stories* (New York: Library of America, 2001).

⁷“Roman Fever- by Edith Wharton (1862-1937),” ClassicLit.About.com, accessed May 19, 2019, <https://www.newberry.org/sites/default/files/calendar-attachments/Roman%20Fever%20-%20Edith%20Wharton.pdf>.

⁸Robert Ward and Roger Brunyate, *Roman Fever* (Boston: Vireo Press/ECS Publishing, 1993), front matter.

younger sister caught “the Roman fever” in the cold, night air and died.

Alida brings the conversation back to the pilots. After discovering one of the pilots is the Marchese Campolieri—one of the most eligible bachelors in town—she suggests that the girls call to invite them to dinner. Just as they are discussing who should call whom first, the waiter announces a phone call from the Marchese who invites the girls to fly to Genzano for dinner. The girls, elated, rush off to dress up for their dates.

Alida comments that she thinks Barbara is out to catch the Marchese, and that her own daughter, Jenny, doesn’t stand a chance. Uncomfortable with the conversation, Grace begs her leave to go and purchase a shawl for Barbara to wear on her date, since the evenings get so cold. Alida pointedly replies that Grace would know about how cold it gets, since she caught a terrible illness from staying out one night all those years ago, requiring her to go away so suddenly. Without further explanation, Grace leaves to purchase the shawl.

Left alone, Alida hears bells in the distance triggering memories of her spring in Rome when she was engaged to be married, memories that now seem empty as she returns alone and bereft. She swears to make a new life for herself through Jenny.

When Jenny returns, Alida expresses disappointment in Jenny’s outfit and advises her to outshine Barbara in order to win the Marchese’s favor. Jenny explains that she isn’t like her mother and she doesn’t want to be married off at such a young age. As they begin to argue, she also tells her mother emphatically that the Marchese planned the date expressly so he could be alone with Barbara. As Barbara reenters, looking particularly beautiful, Alida accidentally breaks the pearl necklace she had intended for Jenny to wear. Grace reenters to a comical scene of Barbara and Jenny picking up pearls from around the waiter’s feet while he stands immobilized on one leg, trying not to trod on the pearls.

After the commotion dies down, Grace presents Barbara with a beautiful new silk stole, and Barbara, Grace, and Jenny, almost as if in a dream, sing about the hopes they have for Barbara, who is obviously smitten. Alida joins half-way through the quartet, dwelling bitterly on her painful memories of the hopes she once had.

The waiter announces the arrival of the pilots and the girls hastily bid goodbye to their mothers. As Alida and Grace look out over the view, Alida tries to get some answers from Grace about her previous illness. She infers that Grace had gone to the Colosseum late at night to meet a lover. Frustrated at Grace’s noncommittal answer, Alida bursts out that she knows Grace had gone to meet Alida’s fiancé, Delphin,

and that she can still quote the letter that brought Grace there, because Delphin did not write it—Alida did. Grace is horrified and distraught at the revelation; it was the only letter she ever had from Delphin.

Alida surmises that Grace never really cared for Delphin, since she married two months later. She remembers laughing all night thinking of Grace stumbling around the Colosseum after dark waiting for someone who wouldn't come. Alida is shocked as Grace confesses that she had replied to the letter, and Delphin had come.

Following Alida's horrified realization, she resentfully tells Grace that she had Delphin for twenty years and Grace had nothing from him except a letter he did not even write! Quietly, Grace replies, "Nothing? I had Barbara!" and exits, leaving Alida alone to process the blow.

Production Notes

The opera requires only one set—a Roman hotel restaurant terrace. There should be two entrances/exits—one leading to the interior of the restaurant, and one leading to the main part of the hotel.

The text of the opera suggests the need for a table and chairs, a telephone, a "silk" stole and a box to put it in, tea service for four, and a pearl necklace that can be broken in real time resulting in beads scattering everywhere. The stage directions also indicate a purse, money, two calling cards on a silver tray, a balustrade, and a high desk for the waiter.⁹

Both Jenny and Barbara have a costume change, though it is possible that Jenny could return in the same dress. Jenny needs a light coat, long enough to completely cover her dress. The text indicates that Bab's second costume may be a red dress.

The opera requires sound effects for church bells and a telephone.

Premiere

Roman Fever premiered on June 9, 1993 with the Triangle Opera Theater at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina, conducted by Scott Tilley and stage directed by Charles St. Clair.¹⁰

Recordings

The Manhattan School of Music produced a commercially available audio recording.¹¹ South Carolina ETV recorded the production for television, now commercially available on DVD.¹² A video record-

⁹When working on this piece at the Miami Music Festival in 2017, I omitted both the balustrade and the high desk.

¹⁰Ward and Brunyate, *Roman Fever*, frontmatter.

¹¹Robert Ward and Roger Brunyate, *Roman Fever*, dir. David Gilbert (Albany Records (CD), 2002).

¹²Robert Ward and Roger Brunyate, *Roman Fever*, dir. Sidney J. Palmer (ARSIS Audio (DVD), 2002).

ing of Hunter College Opera Theater's production is available on YouTube.¹³

Materials and Performance Rights

The rights to *Roman Fever* are maintained by ECS Publishing. Piano/vocal scores, librettos, and DVDs can be purchased from ECS Publishing.¹⁴ Contact the ECS Publishing Copyrights Department to rent parts and full scores.¹⁵

Other Notes

Robert Ward wrote *Roman Fever* for performance by university groups. In an interview conducted by Albany Records, Ward recounts a conversation with Roger Brunyate, Artistic Director of the opera program at John Hopkins University's Peabody Institute. Ward says, "Earlier, Roger told me he was speaking to all his composer friends about writing operas with predominantly female casts. His idea seemed a good one, since most university and conservatory groups are three-quarters women and one-quarter men, and opera casts are usually the opposite—mostly men, fewer women." He went on to explain that shortly after his conversation with Brunyate, Ward discovered Edith Wharton's *Roman Fever*. He continues, "I thought, My God, what a story, so I contacted Roger to see if he'd like to write the libretto while I worked on the music."¹⁶

Composers Alan Stringer and Philip Hagemann also wrote operas based on Edith Wharton's *Roman Fever*.¹⁷ Oberlin College Library houses a copy of Philip Hagemann's version, composed in 1989. Due to its limited availability, I have not examined the score. Stringer's version is available in the University of New Mexico's digital repository.¹⁸ Stringer's opera is shorter and less vocally challenging than Ward's. However, Stringer all but eliminates the roles of Barbara and Jenny and cuts the role of the waiter entirely. Unlike Ward's adaptation, Stringer's is comprised entirely of conversational singing, with no duets, quartets, or arias. Though it is more challenging vocally, I have chosen Robert Ward's *Roman Fever* because it provides more female roles, more stylistic variety, and tuneful numbers that I think an audience

¹³Robert Ward and Roger Brunyate, "Roman Fever," Directed by Susan Gonzales, performed by Hunter College Opera Theater, accessed May 6, 2019, [www . youtube . com / playlist ? list = PLLOZT - hm8RLGPSH9FWJ9heGu1rnm4U8Bm](http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLLOZT-hm8RLGPSH9FWJ9heGu1rnm4U8Bm).

¹⁴"Roman Fever," ECS Publishing, accessed May 6, 2019, <http://ecspublishing.com/roman-fever-34900.html>.

¹⁵"Frequently Asked Questions," ECS Publishing, accessed May 6, 2019, <http://ecspublishing.com/rental/rentalfaq/%5C#2.8>.

¹⁶"Premiere Recording...(Albany Records)."

¹⁷Margaret Ross Griffel, *Operas in English: A Dictionary* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2012), 420.

¹⁸Alan Stringer and Edith Wharton, "Roman Fever," New Mexico Composers' Archive, University of New Mexico UNM Digital Repository, accessed May 9, 2019, https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/nm_composer_archive/351.

will appreciate.

Casting and Pedagogical Considerations

One of the challenges of *Roman Fever* is the amount of conversational singing it contains. As mentioned in Chapter 1, *An Embarrassing Position*, conversational singing is not often a focus of voice lessons and can be more difficult to learn than arias and ensemble numbers. This opera will help students to develop the skills of singing in a conversational style, a crucial element of many operas in the canon. Robert Ward makes special note in the stage directions that this style of singing should be “conversational, stressing diction rather than bel canto.”¹⁹ This skill is most easily acquired in a student’s native language, and for native English speakers, this opera provides that opportunity. Robert Ward’s text setting of conversational singing feels organic; the rhythms follow the natural flow of the language and the vocal lines are not as high as the melodic singing, making it easier for the singers to produce clear diction.

The chromatic nature of *Roman Fever* provides a nice challenge for student singers. Ward doesn’t use key signatures because his writing changes key so frequently. Though the orchestra almost always supports the singers by providing a tonal framework, occasionally the accompaniment is sparse and requires the singers to have good aural skills and solid pitch memory to stay in tune.

Ward’s writing includes frequent changes in tempo to reflect the action and mood of the text, requiring the singers to be especially watchful of the conductor. In my experience, opera workshops frequently perform in spaces without monitors, requiring singers to use peripheral vision to follow the conductor, rather than looking directly at him or her, to avoid disruption of the acting. This is a challenge for young singers and learning this skill will prepare them well for future roles.

The opera contains two ensemble numbers: a duet and a quartet. Both of these enable the singers to practice singing in harmony. The polyphonic quartet is especially challenging, with each singer on her own independent line. The music, though lush and melodic, is chromatic. Each singer must develop an understanding of how each part fits together and hold her own voice part in spite of competing melodies in her ear.

The duet between Jenny and Barbara requires dancing, which can make breath management difficult. The dance should be choreographed in a way to enable the young singers to have sufficient breath to carry out the challenging melismatic phrases in their duet.

¹⁹Ward and Brunyate, *Roman Fever*, 27.

Alida Slade – Soprano (C4- B♭5, optional C4-A5)

Alida is a well-to-do, recent widow in her 40s. She is described as “dynamic”, and a “born organizer.”²⁰ Casting a soprano with a dramatic quality to her voice will help to convey the intended age difference between Alida and her daughter Jenny, who should have a lighter voice.

Alida has the most prominent role in the opera. She is onstage for the entire piece, with few breaks from singing. In addition to her substantial amount of conversational singing, she has a long, difficult aria, and participates in the quartet. The greatest challenge of this role is the required stamina, since she sings for most of the sixty-minute piece, often in a challenging tessitura.

Alida’s demanding range and tessitura are better suited for a graduate student. Although her tessitura stays mainly in the mid-voice, she also frequently sings quite low for a soprano. Her voice line has many notes in the range of C4-F♯4. However, she also has many G5s, A♭5s, and A5s. She has one B5 with an optional alternate F♯5. She has two B♭5s with no alternate notes provided, and one sustained C6, though she may choose to sing G5 instead.²¹

The composer has a good understanding of how the voice works in different parts of the range and writes vocal lines accordingly. In general, Alida’s tessitura sits higher when her character experiences intense emotions. When she must sing low in her range, she is not required to hold low notes for long periods, nor is she required to sing them loudly; The orchestra plays quietly in those sections so as not to overpower her.

Another challenge of this role is singing while conveying intense anger. Many student singers struggle to convey anger without allowing excess tension into their bodies and their voices. These sections of rage in *Roman Fever* often include singing *forte*, *crescendo*, and *marcato*, with rising passages or passages that sit high in the range, as demonstrated in Example 6.1. These are situations in which a student singer may tend to “push” or allow tension to hinder vocal production. Working on these passages under the guidance of excellent tutors will help a student develop the skills to convey intense emotion efficiently and safely—a critical skill for singing opera.

Jenny Slade – Soprano (E♭4-C6)

Jenny Slade, Alida’s daughter, is described in the stage directions as “extremely pretty, but in a way which is not so much in fashion. A fair-haired girl of nineteen, she has a wholesome air of innocent

²⁰Ward and Brunyate, *Roman Fever*, front matter.

²¹Ibid., 54.

Example 6.1: Ward, *Roman Fever*, mm. 1278-1282.

Alida *molto allarg.* ***ff*** *a little broader than Tempo I*

Oh, I can't hide it an - y long - er! You went and I know why you went.

freshness. She is less flamboyant than Babs, but by no means introverted. She is concerned for other people and sensitive to their needs.”²²

Neither Barbara nor Jenny have as much stage time as Alida and Grace, but both have significant amounts of solo and ensemble singing. Jenny and Barbara have a duet early in the opera, and Jenny has a scene of conversational singing alone with her mother. Both Barbara and Jenny participate in the quartet. Following the quartet, the young girls exit the stage, and don’t return for the remainder of the opera.

Jenny Slade has the highest tessitura in the opera. Her vocal line mainly hovers around the top half of the staff and she sings more notes above the staff than any other character. When singing in ensembles, she takes the highest voice part. As with other characters, her melodic singing tends to be higher in tessitura than her conversational singing. In conversational singing, she occasionally sings as high as G5. In her melodic singing, she has many G5s and several A♭5s, A5s, and B♭5s. She has one C6 in a melismatic passage. On the low end, she never sings below E♭4, but it appears regularly in her vocal line.

A young singer may find Jenny’s *allegro con fuoco* section challenging, as shown in Example 6.2.²³ Not only is it quick, but the intensity of the emotion and the *forte, marcato* singing may cause a young singer to “push.” Although the rhythm in *Roman Fever* is generally straightforward, this section includes a passage in $\frac{7}{8}$ time, which may be unfamiliar to a less experienced singer. This is a short passage that allows a young student to practice the skill of expressing anger and intensity through music without allowing tension to hinder the voice.

²²Ward and Brunyate, *Roman Fever*, 18.

²³Ibid., 61.

Example 6.2: Ward, *Roman Fever*, mm. 944-963.

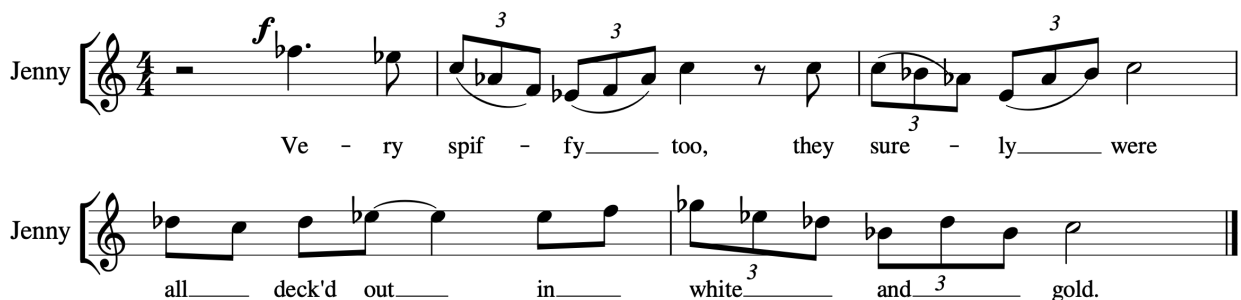
Allegro con fuoco (♩ = 132)



Jenny *mf* The Mar-che-se, *f* the Mar-che - se. Can't you see? He fixed all this for
Babs'sake. It's all for her. His friend and I are on-ly mak-ing up the par - ty.
We are fly - ing in two sep'-rate planes and Gian - fran-co is tak - ing Babs..
molto allarg. He is tak - ing *a tempo* Babs.

Jenny's role also includes fast-paced melismatic singing that may be difficult for a young singer, as shown in Example 6.3.

Example 6.3: Ward, *Roman Fever*, mm. 324-328.



Jenny *f* Ve - ry spif - fy too, they sure - ly were
all deck'd out in white and gold.

Grace Ansley – Mezzo (G3-B \flat 3, optional B \flat 3-A \flat 5)

Like Alida, Grace is also a recently widowed, “well-to-do” woman in her 40s.²⁴ Grace has the “charm” and “quiet confidence of one who comes from an old family.”²⁵ As with Alida, Grace would ideally have a dramatic quality to her voice, helping to convey her intended age, especially compared to the

²⁴Ward and Brunyate, *Roman Fever*, front matter.

²⁵Ibid., synopsis.

voice of the mezzo playing her daughter Barbara.

Grace has the lowest tessitura of the female singers. In her conversational singing, her vocal lines stay mainly in the mid-range, never going above the staff or descending below C4. In the quartet, however, her tessitura is much lower, hovering around the bottom of the staff, where many singers would have a difficult time being heard. This is a role for a true mezzo with a very strong “chest voice.” At the lowest end of her range, she has a couple of passages where she sings G3 and A♭3 but has the option to sing those passages up an octave, which would make the bottom of her range a B♭3. She only sings above the staff one time—an A♭3 at a particularly dramatic moment in the libretto.²⁶

Grace’s music is not as vocally challenging as Alida’s, but she has more music to learn than most of the characters. I recommend that Grace be sung by a graduate student or at least an upperclassman, not because of the required vocal demands, but because she has so much music to learn and much of her music is conversational and chromatic in nature.

Barbara “Babs” Ansley – Mezzo (B♭3-A♭5, optional A3-A♭5)

Grace’s daughter Barbara, sometimes referred to by her nickname, “Babs”, is described in the stage directions as “. . . a striking brunette of twenty-two. Everything about her is dynamic. She is a natural leader: energetic, optimistic and persuasive.”²⁷ She is also “very conscious of being a modern girl—a flapper—and scorns conventional expectations.”²⁸

Though Barbara is the least prominent female role in terms of allotted stage time, she still has significant amounts of singing. She has conversational singing with all of the other characters and participates in a duet with Jenny and in the quartet. Both the duet and the quartet begin as a solo for Barbara.

Barbara’s tessitura is higher than Grace’s and her vocal line requires more agility. This role would suit a mezzo who might sing Cherubino.²⁹ Her vocal line hovers around the top half of the staff in her conversational singing and in her duet. However, her tessitura is lower in the quartet, hovering around the bottom of the staff. Barbara doesn’t sing below C4 (written as B♯3) in her conversational singing or in her duet. However, in the quartet, she has several B♭3s, B3s, and an A3, the last of which may be sung as A4 instead. She has one brief A♭5 in her duet, but otherwise never sings above F5. Ideally her voice would be

²⁶Ward and Brunyate, *Roman Fever*, 83.

²⁷Ibid., front matter.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹In 2017, the Miami Music Festival produced *Le nozze di Figaro* and *Roman Fever* in the same season. The mezzo soprano who covered the role of Cherubino in *Nozze*, also sang the role of Barbara in the production of *Roman Fever*.

lighter than Grace's to indicate their age difference.

Like Jenny, Barbara has quick melismatic singing, as shown in Example 6.4, and also has many large leaps in her vocal line, especially at the beginning of the duet as shown in Example 6.5.

Example 6.4: Ward, *Roman Fever*, mm. 349-350.

Barbara

soar _____ ing _____ like _____ an _____ ea - gle.

The musical score for Barbara in Example 6.4 is written in 4/4 time. It features a melismatic passage with several triplet markings (indicated by a '3' above the notes) and large leaps in the vocal line. The lyrics are: "soar _____ ing _____ like _____ an _____ ea - gle."

Example 6.5: Ward, *Roman Fever*, mm. 272-276.

Barbara

They _____ bowed to us; they kissed our hands, _

Barbara

ve - ry clas - sy, don't _____ you think _____

The musical score for Barbara in Example 6.5 is written in 4/4 time. It features a duet passage with dynamics markings (*f* and *mf*) and a tempo marking (*J* = ca. 144). The lyrics are: "They _____ bowed to us; they kissed our hands, _" and "ve - ry clas - sy, don't _____ you think _____".

Waiter/Cameriere – Baritone (A2-F4)

The waiter's vocal line stays mainly in the middle of the baritone range. He only rarely sings below C3 or above D4, and most frequently sings between E3 and C4.

The waiter has one aria and small amounts of conversational singing and spoken dialogue. He conducts stage business such as serving tea or answering the phone.

One of the challenges of this role is singing and speaking English with an Italian accent. I highly recommend using Paul Meier's book *An Italian Accent* to prepare this role. Meier uses the International Phonetic Alphabet, with which most student singers are familiar, and includes many recorded examples, making it an excellent book for self-study.³⁰

The waiter's aria has a significant number of tempo changes and plenty of dynamic variation. The student must learn to sing with flexibility in tempo and dynamics to match the drama of the storytelling. This role could easily be sung by an undergraduate.

Note that there is a minor inconsistency in the score. This character is sometimes referred to by the abbreviation "W." for waiter and sometimes "C." for cameriere.

³⁰Paul Meier, *An Italian Accent* (Lawrence, KS: Paul Meier Dialect Services, 2007).

Conclusion

Roman Fever is a great opera for student performers. It provides four female roles singers of various abilities, while only requiring one supporting male role. Two of the female roles are better suited to more advanced singers, but the younger female characters may be played by undergraduate students.

Though a challenging piece, this opera benefits singers by helping them to develop skills in learning and performing conversational style singing with frequent key and tempo changes while developing ear training that will help them prepare for similarly challenging roles. It gives them opportunity to practice English diction in a range where the words can be easily understood and helps them to develop skills in following a conductor through difficult transitions while maintaining character.

Chapter 7: The Clever Artifice of Harriet and Margaret

Composer and Librettist

Leanna Kirchoff

Language

English

Duration

50 min

Date

2013

Cast - 4 women

Harriet – Mezzo (B \flat 3-A5)

Hetty – Soprano (B3-C6)

Margaret – Soprano (D \flat 4-C#6)

Maggie – Mezzo (E3-E5, optional F#3-E5)

Instrumentation

The opera is available in three versions: a version for voice and piano; for saxophone doubling flute, cello, percussion, and piano; and for saxophone, string quartet, percussion, and piano.

Style

The Clever Artifice of Harriet and Margaret features the use of split protagonists. Each character is played by two people, one who represents the character's "inner self."¹ Leanna Kirchoff's music is in a modern, chromatic idiom that expertly conveys the emotion of the text. Though the writing is very chromatic, some of the numbers contain tuneful, melodic writing. The opera contains recitative, arioso, duets, and quartets that include both polyphonic and homophonic portions.

Source of the Libretto

The Clever Artifice of Harriet and Margaret is based on Alice Gerstenberg's one-act play, *Overtures*. Gerstenberg's play, written in 1913, is now in the public domain and is widely available in print as

¹Leanna Kirchoff, *The Clever Artifice of Harriet and Margaret*, Leanna Kirchoff, 2013, 1.

well as in online, full-text versions.²

Setting

Harriet Goodrich's opulent living-room.

Plot Synopsis

The opera begins with Harriet Goodrich preparing tea in her opulent living room, awaiting the arrival of her acquaintance, Margaret Caldwell. Harriet stops to examine herself in the mirror, where she sees Hetty, her inner self, played by another actress. Hetty, Harriet's more passionate side, emerges from the mirror and instigates an argument with Harriet. Hetty blames Harriet for their loveless marriage to Charles Goodrich. She wishes Harriet had married painter John Caldwell, who is now married to Margaret Caldwell. Harriet had refused him all those years ago because his financial prospects did not look promising.

Their argument is interrupted by the telephone ringing. Harriet tells the doorman to show Mrs. Margaret Caldwell in. As they await Margaret's arrival, Harriet and Hetty conspire to commission a portrait from John in hopes of rekindling his former love for Harriet.

When Margaret arrives accompanied by her inner self, Maggie, Margaret and Harriet greet each other with feigned politeness, while Hetty and Maggie antagonize each other. Harriet and Margaret exchange pleasantries over tea. While Margaret brags of John's success, Maggie laments that John cannot make a living; they are destitute and hungry. Unaware of Harriet's intentions, Margaret also hopes to convince Harriet to commission a portrait from John to alleviate her financial situation.

As Harriet refills Margaret's teacup, Maggie pushes Margaret, spilling tea on Harriet's dress. Hetty accuses Maggie of spilling the tea on purpose, while Margaret apologizes profusely. Harriet pretends to think nothing of it. After the chaos dies down, Harriet offers Margaret some cake. As they eat, Maggie counsels Margaret on how to flatter Harriet into commissioning a portrait. Meanwhile, Hetty advises Harriet to subtly imply her wealth. Neither Harriet nor Margaret knows that they each want the same thing for different reasons. During this conversation, Harriet tells Margaret how wonderful it would be to see John again, as she hasn't seen him since her last portrait sitting. It becomes apparent that Margaret didn't know John had once painted Harriet. At this revelation, each character slips into a reverie, reflecting on their memories of John, and contemplating the unhappiness of their current marriages.

²Lewis Beach et al., *Washington Square Plays: 1. The Clod, by Lewis Beach. 2. Eugenically Speaking, by Edward Goodman. 3. Overtones, by Alice Gerstenberg. 4. Helena's Husband, by Philip Moeller*, Drama League series of plays (Doubleday, Page, 1917), accessed November 28, 2019, <https://books.google.com/books?id=BaAvAAAAYAAJ>.

As their daydreams end, Maggie reminds Margaret that in spite of her distaste for Harriet, they need money. Margaret tells Harriet she is certain John will agree to paint her portrait again. Harriet offers to introduce Margaret to all her wealthy friends. With the arrangements made, Margaret and Maggie exit.

After Margaret has left, Harriet and Hetty wonder what to wear to the portrait sitting. Hetty asks Harriet, “What about Charles?”³ Harriet determines to tell him the truth.

Production Notes

The opera only requires one set—Harriet Goodrich’s living room. There must be one entrance/exit to the outside. Required props include a telephone or door buzzer, a table, two chairs or a couch and chair, tea service for two including tea cakes, and a full-length mirror frame that a person could step through.

Kirchoff indicates in her stage directions that Harriet wears a “jealous” green dress. She further explains that Hetty and Maggie should dress similarly to Harriet and Margaret, but in darker colors. It should be clear that Hetty and Maggie look like their “outer selves” and are not “ghosts.”⁴

Premiere

The Clever Artifice of Harriet and Margaret premiered at the University of Colorado at Boulder in 2013. The production was directed by Emily Martin-Moberly and conducted by Sara Parkinson.

Recordings

There are no commercially available recordings, nor are there any full recordings on popular sites such as YouTube or SoundCloud. Kirchoff includes links to audio and video clips on her website from The John Duffy Institute⁵ and the Really Spicy Opera Company.⁶ Contact the composer directly for information about a full recording on DVD.⁷

Materials and Performance Rights

Contact Leanna Kirchoff directly to order scores and obtain rights for performance.⁸

³Kirchoff, *The Clever Artifice of Harriet and Margaret*, 108.

⁴Ibid.

⁵“2012 John Duffy Institute Audio Clips,” *The Clever Artifice of Harriet and Margaret: A New Chamber Opera*, accessed November 7, 2019, <http://www.cleverartifice.com/media/john-duffy-institute-audio-clips>.

⁶“Really Spicy Opera Trailers,” *The Clever Artifice of Harriet and Margaret: A New Chamber Opera*, accessed November 7, 2019, <http://www.cleverartifice.com/media/really-spicy-opera-trailers>.

⁷“Contact,” *The Clever Artifice of Harriet and Margaret: A New Chamber Opera*, accessed September 11, 2019, <http://www.cleverartifice.com/contact/contact>.

⁸Ibid.

Other Notes

The Clever Artifice of Harriet and Margaret won the 2016 National Opera Association Chamber Opera Competition.⁹

Casting and Pedagogical Considerations

The Clever Artifice of Harriet and Margaret (hereafter *Artifice*) is very chromatic and, at times, tonally ambiguous. This opera requires singers with substantial ear training to memorize the challenging melodic progressions and is not appropriate for undergraduate students. Even advanced students will likely require ample musical rehearsals and coachings to solidify their voice parts and to coordinate with the other singers and instrumentalists.

The accompaniment in *Artifice* is less supportive than operas mentioned previously in this guide. Though the singer's starting pitches are usually present in the accompaniment, they may not be obvious to a singer without excellent aural skills. A singer may struggle to hear her note if it is placed extremely high or low in the accompaniment, if it is obscured in an inner voice of the accompaniment, or if it doesn't place prominently in the rhythmic structure.

Occasionally, singers may struggle to find their starting pitches when there are competing dissonant notes in the accompaniment. In Example 7.1, the measures leading up to Hetty's phrase, "You were a stupid fool," have F \sharp 4 and F \natural 4 alternating in both the right and left hands of the piano part. As Hetty sings her starting F \natural 4, the piano plays an F \natural 4 in the middle voice of the right hand in the piano while simultaneously playing an F \sharp 4 in the top voice of the left hand of the piano. A student will have to develop strategies and aural skills to help her correctly select the right starting pitch to sing.

⁹"Dominick Argento Chamber Opera Competition," National Opera Association, accessed November 7, 2019, <https://www.noa.org/competitions/chamber.html>.

Example 7.1: Kirchoff, *The Clever Artifice of Harriet and Margaret*, Scene 1, mm. 240-247.

suddenly fast and aggressive ♩ = 126-138 *mf*

ff *p*

Hetty
You were a stu - pid

Hetty
fool to make me re - fuse. John,

Piano

The recitative in *Artifice* fluctuates between *secco* and *accompagnato*. When the recitative is accompanied, the accompaniment is often thinner in texture and occasionally very sparse. It is also less harmonically predictable than the accompaniment found in the lyrical sections of the opera. In these cases, the singer is more exposed in the musical texture, and must be very certain of her pitches in order to stay in tune.

As in other styles of recitative, sometimes the same note is repeated multiple times in a row in a phrase. Some students may find it difficult to articulate appropriate stresses in the text while maintaining a forward drive in the vocal line. Example 7.2 shows a portion of recitative that illustrates these challenges.

Example 7.2: Kirchoff, *The Clever Artifice of Harriet and Margaret* Scene 1, mm. 182-192.

The musical score is arranged in three systems, each with three staves: Hetty (soprano), Harriet (soprano), and Piano (grand staff). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The score includes dynamic markings such as *f*, *mf*, *ff*, and *p*. The lyrics are as follows:

System 1:
 Harriet: *f* How fool-ish of you to re-mem-ber John, just be-cause I met his
 Piano: *f*

System 2:
 Hetty: *mf* That's what I want to talk to you a-bout. She will be here soon,
 Harriet: wife by chance...
 Piano: *ff* *p*

System 3:
 Hetty: soon, ve-ry soon, and I want to ad - vise you what to say to her this af - ter-noon.
 Piano: *3* *6*

For native English-speaking students, practicing the recitative in this opera will help them to develop the skills of using appropriate expression and tone color while physically portraying their character's

emotions and motivations in a familiar language. Practicing recitative in this way will help prepare them to sing recitative in foreign languages.

Artifice occasionally includes odd meters such as $\frac{5}{4}$, $\frac{3}{8}^2$ and $\frac{2+3}{8}$ (see Example 7.1). These time signatures can be challenging for students because they are uncommon in standard vocal literature from the Western canon. In parts of the score, the meters also change frequently, which can make the music more difficult to memorize.

When singing at the top of the staff or higher, a singer must often modify her vowels in order to maintain tone quality, which may compromise diction. Producing clear diction in this part of a singer's range is particularly challenging with a fast tempo, as it requires rapid consonants in addition to modified vowels, as seen in Example 7.3. Both Margaret and Hetty frequently sing in a high range and may have some difficulty in producing clear diction, though this challenge may affect Margaret more frequently than Hetty, since she has a higher tessitura.

Example 7.3: Kirchoff, *The Clever Artifice of Harriet and Margaret*, Scene 2, mm. 346-359.

$\text{♩} = 126$

Margaret 

I get sownrapped up in what I am talk-ing a-bout that I do some-thing stu-pid like

Margaret 

spill-ing tea all o-ver your beau-ti-ful clothes! 2

Like other operas in this production guide, the vocal lines in this opera contain many large leaps, both ascending and descending. Some students may find it difficult to maintain a legato line or to execute the necessary registration changes smoothly, particularly with large descending leaps. This opera is better suited for graduate students, who will have more experience in managing large intervals.

Artifice is divided into two scenes and a coda, with the second scene comprising approximately 60% of the opera. Harriet and Hetty have more stage time than Margaret and Maggie, since Margaret and Maggie only appear in the second scene. However, there are no “supporting roles” or “bit parts” in *Artifice*. Each character has a significant amount of solo and ensemble singing.

Harriet – Mezzo (B \flat 3-A5)

Harriet's vocal lines hover around the bottom half of the staff. She most frequently sings between B3 and B4. When her vocal lines ascend above the staff, alternate lower notes are provided. If she opted to sing every alternative note written in her part, her range would end at F \sharp 5 instead of A5. Harriet very frequently sings at the low end of her range, especially when she has a spoken quality to her singing, as shown in Example 7.4. In ensemble numbers, she sings the second lowest vocal line.

Harriet's vocal lines are more conjunct than Hetty's, reflecting her poised, controlled personality. She only sings above the staff when arguing with Hetty. Once company arrives, she regains her composure, reflected by a lower range in her vocal lines.

Example 7.4: Kirchoff, *The Clever Artifice of Harriet and Margaret*, Scene 1, mm. 284-295.

Harriet *mf* 3
It is not my bus-i-ness to have heart-aches. It is not my
Harriet 3
bus-i-ness to feel an-y-thing. It is not my bus-i-ness. to love

Hetty – Soprano (B3-C6)

Hetty's vocal lines hover around the top half of the staff. On the low end, she has only one B3 and one C4. At the high end of her range, she has two C6s, and only a few B5s and B \flat 5s. Hetty sings the second highest voice line in ensemble numbers.

Although all of the characters are required to sing both ascending and descending large leaps, Hetty has significantly more large leaps in her vocal lines than any other character. Her disjunct vocal lines reflect her passionate, temperamental character. The role of Hetty requires a singer who can successfully manage the registration changes demanded by large leaps in various tempi and with different dynamic levels. Example 7.5 illustrates Hetty's disjunct vocal writing.

Example 7.5: Kirchoff, *The Clever Artifice of Harriet and Margaret*, Scene 1, mm. 211-216.

Hetty

f (in an outburst) *ff*

I hate her. I hate her because she married John, married John, married John!

Margaret – Soprano (D \flat 4-C \sharp 6)

Margaret has the highest tessitura in the opera. Margaret’s voice lines generally hover around the top half of the staff. In ensemble singing, she sings the highest part. She has one C \sharp 6, two C6s, and one B5. She sings B \flat 5s, A5s, and A \flat 5s regularly. She only rarely sings below D \sharp 4.

In one of the quartets, Margaret’s voice line includes the option to improvise rather than sing the notes and rhythms provided. Though it used to be common practice, improvisation is rarely required of singers today. However, some vocal traditions still require singers to create their own, unique cadenzas and ornaments for certain pieces. Improvising in this opera will help students practice writing their own voice parts that show off their vocal strengths, harmonize with the accompaniment, and suit the mood of the piece.

Maggie – Mezzo (E3- E5, optional F \sharp 3-E5)

Maggie has the lowest range and tessitura in the opera. She rarely sings above D5 or below A \flat 3, but A \flat 3s frequently appear in her vocal line. She has one E3, but may sing a G3 instead, which would make F \flat 3 the lowest note in her range. Her vocal lines often hover around the bottom of the staff, although it is difficult to state generalizations about her tessitura because her individual vocal lines often have large ranges and are somewhat disjunct. As with Hetty, her disjunct vocal writing reflects her dramatic personality.

Because Maggie’s range and tessitura are quite low, audiences may find it difficult to hear her lines in parts of the score. The composer mitigates this challenge by ensuring that the accompaniment does not overwhelm Maggie when her vocal lines contain very low notes. However, Maggie frequently sings below the staff in ensemble numbers, and when the sopranos are singing above the staff, they may overshadow Maggie, making it difficult to hear her.

Conclusion

The Clever Artifice of Harriet and Margaret will challenge graduate students to strengthen their aural skills as they prepare and perform this chromatic, and sometimes tonally ambiguous music. They will practice finding their starting pitches in challenging circumstances and will practice staying in tune with thin or sparse accompaniment. English-speaking students will develop skills in performing recitative that will easily transfer when preparing operas in other languages.

Conclusion

Short operas are an important part of opera education, but it is difficult to find suitable repertoire. To my knowledge, this guide is the first short opera production guide written in over twenty years, and the first of its kind that addresses short operas specifically for student singers. I selected each opera based on the criteria outlined in the introduction and reiterated here as follows:

(1) Appropriate gender demographics in casting

Each opera included can accommodate casts comprised of at least 80% women. In order to achieve this, some of the operas require alterations to the original casting.

(2) Vocally appropriate for students

Using my experience as a singer and voice teacher, I have evaluated each opera's suitability for student performance. Each chapter provides detailed information about the vocal challenges of each role. Educators should consider these carefully when selecting and casting these operas.

(3) Limited production requirements

The operas included in this guide do not require extensive resources to be performed. Using my experience from directing several of these works, I have offered suggestions and simple solutions for any perceived production challenges.

My hope is that the valuable information in this guide will help teachers in selecting, casting, and producing short operas for student groups. Yet I can only recommend a few works due to limitations in research methods and the number of appropriate works available.

As I am not sufficiently proficient in French, German, or Italian, I did not include modern works in those languages; thus, I encourage multi-lingual researchers to examine this topic further.

The greatest obstacle in finding suitable repertoire was the extremely limited number of short operas that met my criteria. Of the hundreds of short operas I examined, the seven operas here best fit the needs of student singers. I appeal to composers to recognize the extreme scarcity of short operas appropriate for students and invite them to write new works to fill this great need.

Appendix A: Top 50 Operas by Number of Performance, 2018-2019

Table A.1: Male and female roles for the top 50 most performed operas worldwide, 2018-2019 season

<i>Opera</i>	Male	Female	Total	% Male	% Female
<i>La traviata</i>	9	3	12	75.00%	25.00%
<i>Die Zauberflöte</i>	10	6	16	62.50%	37.50%
<i>La bohème</i>	8	2	10	80.00%	20.00%
<i>Carmen</i>	6	4	10	60.00%	40.00%
<i>Il barbiere di Siviglia</i>	7	2	9	77.78%	22.22%
<i>Madama Butterfly</i>	8	6	14	57.14%	42.86%
<i>Tosca</i>	7	1	8	87.50%	12.50%
<i>Rigoletto</i>	8	5	13	61.54%	38.46%
<i>Don Giovanni</i>	5	3	8	62.50%	37.50%
<i>Le nozze di Figaro</i>	6	5	11	54.55%	45.45%
<i>Turandot</i>	8	2	10	80.00%	20.00%
<i>Hänsel und Gretel</i>	1	6	7	14.29%	85.71%
<i>Aida</i>	5	3	8	62.50%	37.50%
<i>Così fan tutte</i>	3	3	6	50.00%	50.00%
<i>Nabucco</i>	5	3	8	62.50%	37.50%
<i>L'elisir d'amore</i>	3	2	5	60.00%	40.00%
<i>Il trovatore</i>	6	3	9	66.67%	33.33%
<i>Eugene Onegin</i>	6	4	10	60.00%	40.00%
<i>Un ballo in maschera</i>	7	3	10	70.00%	30.00%
<i>Pagliacci</i>	4	1	5	80.00%	20.00%
<i>Lucia di Lammermoor</i>	5	2	7	71.43%	28.57%
<i>Cenerentola</i>	4	3	7	57.14%	42.86%
<i>Der fliegende Holländer</i>	4	2	6	66.67%	33.33%
<i>Cavalleria rusticana</i>	2	3	5	40.00%	60.00%

<i>Otello</i>	7	2	9	77.78%	22.22%
<i>Faust</i>	4	3	7	57.14%	42.86%
<i>Gianni Schicchi</i>	10	5	15	66.67%	33.33%
<i>Fidelio</i>	7	2	9	77.78%	22.22%
<i>Die Entführung aus dem Serail</i>	3	2	5	60.00%	40.00%
<i>Don Pasquale</i>	4	1	5	80.00%	20.00%
<i>Les pêcheurs de perles</i>	3	1	4	75.00%	25.00%
<i>Rusalka</i>	4	7	11	36.36%	63.64%
<i>The Queen of Spades</i>	10	9	19	52.63%	47.37%
<i>Der Freischütz</i>	6	3	9	66.67%	33.33%
<i>Les contes d'Hoffmann</i>	17	8	25	68.00%	32.00%
<i>Iolanta</i>	6	4	10	60.00%	40.00%
<i>Falstaff</i>	6	4	10	60.00%	40.00%
<i>Werther</i>	6	3	9	66.67%	33.33%
<i>Salome</i>	13	4	17	76.47%	23.53%
<i>The Bartered Bride</i>	7	4	11	63.64%	36.36%
<i>Ariadne auf Naxos</i>	10	6	16	62.50%	37.50%
<i>Simon Boccanegra</i>	6	2	8	75.00%	25.00%
<i>L'italiana in Algeri</i>	4	3	7	57.14%	42.86%
<i>Norma</i>	3	3	6	50.00%	50.00%
<i>Macbeth</i>	9	4	13	69.23%	30.77%
<i>Das Rheingold</i>	8	6	14	57.14%	42.86%
<i>Don Carlo</i>	7	4	11	63.64%	36.36%
<i>Idomeneo</i>	6	5	11	54.55%	45.45%
<i>Clemenza di Tito</i>	2	4	6	33.33%	66.67%
<i>Roméo et Juliette</i>	10	3	13	76.92%	23.08%

Table A.2: Total male and female roles for the top 50 operas worldwide, 2018-2019 (See Table A.1)

Number of roles	494
Number of male roles	315
Number of female roles	179
Male roles as percent of total	63.77%
Female roles as percent of total	36.23%

Appendix B: Statistics on Gender Ratios in Select One-Act Operas

Table B.1: Role numbers and gender ratios for male and female singers for a selection of short operas

Composer	Opera	Male	Female	Total	% Male	% Female
Dominick Argento	<i>Miss Havisham's Wedding</i>	0	1	1	0%	100%
	<i>Night</i>					
Dinos Constantinides	<i>Fugue for Two Voices</i>	0	1	1	0%	100%
John Duke	<i>Captain Lovelock</i>	0	5	5	0%	100%
Solomon Epstein	<i>Water Songs</i>	0	1	1	0%	100%
Carlisle Floyd	<i>Flower and Hawk</i>	0	1	1	0%	100%
Sheldon Harnick	<i>Frustration</i>	0	2	2	0%	100%
Lee Hoiby	<i>Bon Appétit</i>	0	1	1	0%	100%
Lee Hoiby	<i>The Italian Lesson</i>	0	1	1	0%	100%
Martin Kalmanoff	<i>The Audition</i>	0	8	8	0%	100%
Martin Kalmanoff	<i>Lizzie Strotter</i>	0	4	4	0%	100%
Martin Kalmanoff	<i>Photograph-1920</i>	0	2	2	0%	100%
Jerome P. Kitzke	<i>A Thousand Names to Come</i>	0	1	1	0%	100%
Vernon Martin	<i>Ladies' Voices</i>	0	4	4	0%	100%
Gerald Frank Muller	<i>Vignettes of Passion</i>	0	3	3	0%	100%
Thomas Pasatieri	<i>Before Breakfast</i>	0	1	1	0%	100%
Robert Xavier Rodriguez	<i>Suor Isabella</i>	0	7	7	0%	100%
Hugo Weisgall	<i>The Stronger</i>	0	1	1	0%	100%
Ernst Toch	<i>Edgar and Emily</i>	0	1	1	0%	100%
Raffaello de Banfield	<i>Lord Byron's Love Letter</i>	1	6	7	14%	86%
Robert Nelson	<i>Tickets, Please</i>	1	6	7	14%	86%
Seymour Barab	<i>A Game of Chance</i>	1	3	4	25%	75%
Harold Blumenfeld	<i>Breakfast Waltzes</i>	1	3	4	25%	75%
Leslie Kondorossy	<i>The Pumpkin</i>	1	3	4	25%	75%

Ralph Vaughan Williams	<i>Riders to the Sea</i>	1	3	4	25%	75%
Jacques Offenbach	<i>The Lantern Marriage</i>	1	3	4	25%	75%
Igor Stravinsky	<i>Mavra</i>	1	3	4	25%	75%
James Legg	<i>The Wife of Bath's Tale</i>	2	5	7	29%	71%
Eugene Armour	<i>We're Back</i>	1	2	3	33%	67%
Seymour Barab	<i>Fortune's Favorites</i>	1	2	3	33%	67%
Marc Bucci	<i>The Dress</i>	1	2	3	33%	67%
Philip Carlsen	<i>Implications of Melissa</i>	1	2	3	33%	67%
Steve Cohen	<i>La Pizza Del Destino</i>	1	2	3	33%	67%
Alva Henderson	<i>The Last Leaf</i>	2	4	6	33%	67%
Stanley Hollingsworth	<i>The Mother</i>	2	4	6	33%	67%
Michael Hurd	<i>The Widow of Ephesus</i>	1	2	3	33%	67%
Leslie Kondorossy	<i>The Fox</i>	1	2	3	33%	67%
Dan Locklari	<i>Good Tidings from the Holy Beast</i>	2	4	6	33%	67%
Daniel Pinkham	<i>The Garden of Artemis</i>	1	2	3	33%	67%
Paul Ramsier	<i>The Man on the Bearskin Rug</i>	1	2	3	33%	67%
Vittorio Rieti	<i>The Pet Shop</i>	1	2	3	33%	67%
Ned Rorem	<i>A Childhood Miracle</i>	2	4	6	33%	67%
Sherwood Shaffer	<i>A Winter's Tale</i>	1	2	3	33%	67%
Robert Starer	<i>The Last Lover</i>	1	2	3	33%	67%
Louise Talma	<i>Have You Heard? Do You Know?</i>	1	2	3	33%	67%
Randall Thompson	<i>Solomon and Balkis</i>	2	4	6	33%	67%
Harold Oliver	<i>The King of the Cats</i>	3	5	8	38%	63%
Noel Sokoloff	<i>The Franklin's Tale</i>	3	5	8	38%	63%
Joyce Barthelson	<i>Lysistrata</i>	4	6	10	40%	60%
Lennox Berkley	<i>Ruth</i>	2	3	5	40%	60%
Marc Bucci	<i>Tale for a Deaf Ear</i>	2	3	5	40%	60%

Nicholas Flagello	<i>The Sisters</i>	2	3	5	40%	60%
Margaret Garwood	<i>The Nightingale and the Rose</i>	2	3	5	40%	60%
Leslie Kondorossy	<i>The Unexpected Visitor</i>	2	3	5	40%	60%
Ned Rorem	<i>Three Sisters Who Are Not Sisters</i>	2	3	5	40%	60%
Thomas Benjamin	<i>The Rehearsal</i>	3	4	7	43%	57%
Lennox Berkley	<i>A Dinner Engagement</i>	3	4	7	43%	57%
Vittorio Giannini	<i>Beauty and the Beast</i>	3	4	7	43%	57%
Martin Kalmanoff	<i>The Bald Prima Donna</i>	3	4	7	43%	57%
Martin Mangold	<i>Bleah!</i>	3	4	7	43%	57%
Lennox Berkley	<i>Castaway</i>	4	5	9	44%	56%
Theron Kirk	<i>The Lib: 393 B.C.</i>	5	6	11	45%	55%
Paul Hindemith	<i>The Long Christmas Dinner</i>	5	6	11	45%	55%
David Ahlstrom	<i>The Fourth Day, Fifth Tale</i>	1	1	2	50%	50%
Dennis Arlan	<i>Meanwhile, Back at Cinderella's</i>	4	4	8	50%	50%
Seymour Barab	<i>Chanticleer</i>	2	2	4	50%	50%
Samuel Barber	<i>A Hand of Bridge</i>	2	2	4	50%	50%
Joyce Barthelson	<i>The King's Breakfast</i>	1	1	2	50%	50%
Arthur Benjamin	<i>The Devil Take Her</i>	7	7	14	50%	50%
Arthur Benjamin	<i>Prima Donna</i>	3	3	6	50%	50%
Herbert Bielawa	<i>A Bird in the Bush</i>	2	2	4	50%	50%
Charles Dibdin	<i>The Brickdust Man</i>	1	1	2	50%	50%
Charles Eakin	<i>The Box</i>	3	3	6	50%	50%
Lehman Engel	<i>Malady of Love</i>	1	1	2	50%	50%
Lehman Engel	<i>The Soldier</i>	2	2	4	50%	50%
Grand Fletcher	<i>The Carrion Crow</i>	5	5	10	50%	50%
Carlisle Floyd	<i>Slow Dusk</i>	2	2	4	50%	50%
Joanne Forman	<i>Polly Baker</i>	3	3	6	50%	50%

Miriam Gideon	<i>Fortunato</i>	5	5	10	50%	50%
Elizabeth Gould	<i>Ray and the Gospel Singer</i>	4	4	8	50%	50%
Donald Grantham	<i>The Boor</i>	2	2	4	50%	50%
John Harbison	<i>A Full Moon in March</i>	2	2	4	50%	50%
Frederick P. Hart	<i>Poison</i>	2	2	4	50%	50%
Alan Hovhaness	<i>The Travellers</i>	3	3	6	50%	50%
Gerald Humel	<i>The Proposal</i>	2	2	4	50%	50%
Tom Johnson	<i>The Four Note Opera</i>	2	2	4	50%	50%
Martin Kalmanoff	<i>Opera Opera</i>	3	3	6	50%	50%
Martin Kalmanoff	<i>A Quiet Game of Cribble</i>	1	1	2	50%	50%
Ernest Kanitz	<i>Royal Auction</i>	4	4	8	50%	50%
Leslie Kondorossy	<i>The Voice</i>	1	1	2	50%	50%
Gail Kubik	<i>Boston Baked Beans</i>	1	1	2	50%	50%
Benjamin Lees	<i>Medea in Corinth</i>	2	2	4	50%	50%
Leonard Lehrman	<i>Karla</i>	3	3	6	50%	50%
Kenneth Lieberson	<i>Still Wings</i>	1	1	2	50%	50%
Norman Lockwood	<i>Requiem for a Rich Young Man</i>	2	2	4	50%	50%
Gian Carlo Menotti	<i>The Telephone</i>	1	1	2	50%	50%
Douglas Moore	<i>Gallantry</i>	2	2	4	50%	50%
Ron Nelson	<i>The Birthday of the Infanta</i>	1	1	2	50%	50%
Elmer Olenick	<i>The Diet</i>	2	2	4	50%	50%
Thomas Pasatieri	<i>La Divinia</i>	2	2	4	50%	50%
Stephen Paul	<i>The Village Singer</i>	5	5	10	50%	50%
Lou Rodgers	<i>The Specialist</i>	2	2	4	50%	50%
Robert Xavier Rodriguez	<i>Le Diable Amoureux</i>	2	2	4	50%	50%
Ned Rorem	<i>Hearing</i>	2	2	4	50%	50%
Gregory Sandow	<i>The Richest Girl in the World</i> <i>Finds Happiness</i>	2	2	4	50%	50%

Peter Schickele	<i>The Stoned Guest</i>	2	2	4	50%	50%
William Schuman	<i>A Question of Taste</i>	3	3	6	50%	50%
Jonathan Sheffer	<i>The Mistake</i>	3	3	6	50%	50%
Elie Siegmeister	<i>The Lady of the Lake</i>	2	2	4	50%	50%
Elie Siegmeister	<i>The Mermaid in Lock No. 7</i>	2	2	4	50%	50%
Elie Siegmeister	<i>Miranda and the Dark Young Man</i>	2	2	4	50%	50%
Russel Smith	<i>The Unicorn in the Garden</i>	2	2	4	50%	50%
Phyllis Tate	<i>Twice in a Blue Moon</i>	1	1	2	50%	50%
Richard Wargo	<i>The Music Shop</i>	2	2	4	50%	50%
Hugo Weisgall	<i>Will You Marry Me?</i>	1	1	2	50%	50%
Peter Westergaard	<i>Mr. and Mrs. Discobolos</i>	1	1	2	50%	50%
Alec Wilder	<i>The Opening</i>	5	5	10	50%	50%
Eugene Zador	<i>Yehu: A Chirtmas Legen</i>	3	3	6	50%	50%
Béla Bartók	<i>Bluebeard's Castle</i>	1	1	2	50%	50%
Georges Bizet	<i>Doctor Miracle</i>	2	2	4	50%	50%
Hans Werner Henze	<i>A Country Doctor</i>	3	3	6	50%	50%
Gian Carlo Menotti	<i>Amelia Goes to the Ball</i>	3	3	6	50%	50%
Giovanni Battista Pergolesi	<i>The Perfect Wife (La serva padrona)</i>	1	1	2	50%	50%
Ernst Toch	<i>The Last Tale</i>	2	2	4	50%	50%
Bernard Rogers	<i>The Veil</i>	5	4	9	56%	44%
Dominick Argento	<i>Postcard from Morocco</i>	4	3	7	57%	43%
Stanworth Beckler	<i>The Outcasts of Poker Flat</i>	4	3	7	57%	43%
John C. Crawford	<i>Don Cristobal and Rosita</i>	4	3	7	57%	43%
Richard Mohaupt	<i>Double Trouble</i>	4	3	7	57%	43%
Thomas Pasatieri	<i>Signor Deluso</i>	4	3	7	57%	43%
Ernst Toch	<i>The Princess and the Pea</i>	4	3	7	57%	43%
Garland Anderson	<i>Zoyazhe</i>	3	2	5	60%	40%

Joyce Barthelson	<i>Chanticleer</i>	3	2	5	60%	40%
Jack Beeson	<i>Dr. Heidegger's Fountain of Youth</i>	3	2	5	60%	40%
Leonard Bernstein	<i>Trouble in Tahiti</i>	3	2	5	60%	40%
Henry Leland Clarke	<i>The Loafer and the Loaf</i>	3	2	5	60%	40%
Gordon Crosse	<i>The Grace of Todd</i>	6	4	10	60%	40%
Sam Dennison	<i>Rappaccini's Daughter</i>	3	2	5	60%	40%
Edward Harper	<i>Fanny Robin</i>	3	2	5	60%	40%
William Latham	<i>Orpheus in Pecan Springs</i>	3	2	5	60%	40%
Paula Alan Levi	<i>Thanksgiving</i>	6	4	10	60%	40%
Martin Mailman	<i>The Hunted</i>	3	2	5	60%	40%
Alec Wilder	<i>Sunday Excursion</i>	3	2	5	60%	40%
Gaetano Donizetti	<i>The Night Bell</i>	3	2	5	60%	40%
Bohuslav Martinů	<i>Comedy on the Bridge</i>	3	2	5	60%	40%
Jacques Offenbach	<i>The Island of Tulipatan</i>	3	2	5	60%	40%
John David Earnest	<i>Howard</i>	5	3	8	63%	38%
Leslie Kondorossy	<i>The Midnight Duel</i>	5	3	8	63%	38%
Gian Carlo Menotti	<i>Help, Help, the Globolinks</i>	5	3	8	63%	38%
Dominick Argento	<i>Christopher Sly</i>	7	4	11	64%	36%
Dominick Argento	<i>The Boor</i>	2	1	3	67%	33%
Thomas Arne	<i>The Cooper</i>	2	1	3	67%	33%
Jan Bach	<i>The Student from Salmanaca</i>	4	2	6	67%	33%
Jan Bach	<i>The System</i>	4	2	6	67%	33%
Robert Baksa	<i>Red Carnations</i>	2	1	3	67%	33%
Leonardo Balada	<i>Hangman, Hangman</i>	4	2	6	67%	33%
Seymour Barab	<i>Not a Spanish Kiss</i>	2	1	3	67%	33%
Jack Beeson	<i>Hello Out There</i>	2	1	3	67%	33%
Richard Rodney Bennet	<i>The Ledge</i>	2	1	3	67%	33%
Heskel Brisman	<i>Whirligig</i>	2	1	3	67%	33%

Geoffrey Bush	<i>If the Cap Fits</i>	2	1	3	67%	33%
Gerald Cockshott	<i>A Faun in the Forest</i>	2	1	3	67%	33%
Allan Davis	<i>The Sailing of the Nancy Belle</i>	2	1	3	67%	33%
Royce Dembo	<i>Audience</i>	2	1	3	67%	33%
Paula Diehl	<i>The Waiting Room</i>	2	1	3	67%	33%
Matt Doran	<i>Fee First</i>	2	1	3	67%	33%
Fredric Enenbach	<i>The Crimson Bird</i>	8	4	12	67%	33%
William Ferris	<i>The Diva</i>	6	3	9	67%	33%
Peggy Glanville-Hicks	<i>The Transposed Heads</i>	2	1	3	67%	33%
Paul Goldstaub	<i>The Marriage Proposal</i>	2	1	3	67%	33%
Alfred Goodman	<i>The Lady and the Maid</i>	2	1	3	67%	33%
Herbert Haufrecht	<i>A Pot of Broth</i>	2	1	3	67%	33%
Lee Hoiby	<i>The Scarf</i>	2	1	3	67%	33%
Gustav Holst	<i>Savitri</i>	2	1	3	67%	33%
Antony Hopkins	<i>Three's Company</i>	2	1	3	67%	33%
Alan Hovhaness	<i>Pilate</i>	2	1	3	67%	33%
Fedor Kabalin	<i>A Fable</i>	2	1	3	67%	33%
Ernest Kanitz	<i>The Lucky Dollar</i>	2	1	3	67%	33%
Ernest Kanitz	<i>Perpetual</i>	2	1	3	67%	33%
Ulysses Kay	<i>The Boor</i>	2	1	3	67%	33%
Meyer Kupferman	<i>In A Garden</i>	2	1	3	67%	33%
Ludwig Lenel	<i>Young Goodman Brown</i>	4	2	6	67%	33%
Henry Mollicone	<i>The Face on the Barroom Floor</i>	2	1	3	67%	33%
Lawrence Moss	<i>The Brute</i>	2	1	3	67%	33%
Robert Nelson	<i>The Demon Lover</i>	4	2	6	67%	33%
Thomas Pasatieri	<i>Padrevia</i>	2	1	3	67%	33%
Thomas Pasatieri	<i>The Women</i>	2	1	3	67%	33%
Ned Rorem	<i>Bertha</i>	4	2	6	67%	33%

Robert Russell	<i>So How Does Your Garden Grow</i>	2	1	3	67%	33%
Elie Siegmeister	<i>Darling Corie</i>	4	2	6	67%	33%
Leo Smith	<i>Magic Water</i>	4	2	6	67%	33%
Julia Smith	<i>The Shepherdess and the Chimneysweep</i>	2	1	3	67%	33%
Bruce Taub	<i>Passion, Poison, and Petrification</i>	2	1	3	67%	33%
Raynor Taylor	<i>Buxom Joan</i>	4	2	6	67%	33%
William Walton	<i>The Bear</i>	2	1	3	67%	33%
Richard Wargo	<i>The Seduction of a Lady</i>	2	1	3	67%	33%
Hugo Weisgall	<i>The Tenor</i>	4	2	6	67%	33%
Gaetano Donizetti	<i>Belty</i>	2	1	3	67%	33%
Gaetano Donizetti	<i>Rita</i>	2	1	3	67%	33%
Jacques Ibert	<i>Angélique</i>	6	3	9	67%	33%
Bohuslav Martinů	<i>What Men Live By</i>	4	2	6	67%	33%
Jacques Offenbach	<i>RSVP, or A Musicale at Mr. Cauliflower's</i>	4	2	6	67%	33%
Antonio Salieri	<i>The Little Harliquinade</i>	2	1	3	67%	33%
John Eaton	<i>The Cry of Clytemnaestra</i>	9	4	13	69%	31%
William Masland	<i>The Happy Hypocrite</i>	5	2	7	71%	29%
Hans Werner Henze	<i>The End of the World</i>	5	2	7	71%	29%
Samuel Adler	<i>The Outcasts of Poker Flat</i>	6	2	8	75%	25%
Geoffrey Burgon	<i>Orpheus</i>	3	1	4	75%	25%
Dennis Busch	<i>The Secret of the Mirror</i>	3	1	4	75%	25%
Linder Chlarson	<i>Montezuma's Death</i>	3	1	4	75%	25%
Gerald Cockshott	<i>Apollo and Persephone</i>	3	1	4	75%	25%
Michael Colgrass	<i>Virgil's Dream</i>	3	1	4	75%	25%
Carlisle Floyd	<i>Markheim</i>	3	1	4	75%	25%

Phillip Gordon	<i>A Tale From Chaucer</i>	3	1	4	75%	25%
Gustav Holst	<i>The Wandering Scholar</i>	3	1	4	75%	25%
Martin Kalmanoff	<i>Videomania</i>	3	1	4	75%	25%
Gian Carlo Menotti	<i>The Old Maid and the Thief</i>	3	1	4	75%	25%
Sam Morgenstern	<i>The Big Black Box</i>	6	2	8	75%	25%
Klaus George Roy	<i>Sterlingman</i>	3	1	4	75%	25%
Elie Siegmeister	<i>Angel Levine</i>	6	2	8	75%	25%
Ashley Veronon	<i>The Barber of New York</i>	6	2	8	75%	25%
Kurt Weill	<i>Down in the Valley</i>	3	1	4	75%	25%
Alec Wilder	<i>The Lowland Sea</i>	3	1	4	75%	25%
Eugene Zador	<i>The Magic Chair</i>	6	2	8	75%	25%
Boris Blacher	<i>The Tide</i>	3	1	4	75%	25%
Richard Strauss	<i>The Donkey's Shadow</i>	6	2	8	75%	25%
Josef Tal	<i>Amnon and Tamar</i>	3	1	4	75%	25%
Adolphe Bruce	<i>The Tell-Tale Heart</i>	4	1	5	80%	20%
Alexander William	<i>The Monkey's Paw</i>	4	1	5	80%	20%
Robert Baksa	<i>Aria da Capo</i>	4	1	5	80%	20%
Seymour Barab	<i>Only a Miracle</i>	4	1	5	80%	20%
John George Bilotta	<i>Aria da Capo</i>	4	1	5	80%	20%
Allan Blank	<i>Aria da Capo</i>	4	1	5	80%	20%
William Brandt	<i>No Neutral Ground</i>	4	1	5	80%	20%
Dennis Busch	<i>A Simple Decision</i>	4	1	5	80%	20%
Norman Dello Joio	<i>The Ruby</i>	4	1	5	80%	20%
George Gershwin	<i>Blue Monday</i>	4	1	5	80%	20%
Gian Carlo Menotti	<i>Amahl and the Night Visitors</i>	4	1	5	80%	20%
Roger Nixon	<i>The Bridge Comes to the Yellow Sky</i>	4	1	5	80%	20%
Clifford Taylor	<i>The Freak Show</i>	8	2	10	80%	20%
Ferruccio Busoni	<i>Harlequin</i>	4	1	5	80%	20%

Paul Hindemith	<i>There and Back</i>	4	1	5	80%	20%
Maurice Ravel	<i>The Spanish Hour</i>	4	1	5	80%	20%
Allan Davis	<i>The Ordeal of Osbert</i>	5	1	6	83%	17%
Alan Rea	<i>The Fête at Coqueville</i>	5	1	6	83%	17%
Ralph Vaughan Williams	<i>The Shepherds of the Delectable Mountains</i>	5	1	6	83%	17%
Jacques Offenbach	<i>Ba-ta-clan</i>	5	1	6	83%	17%
Lucas Foss	<i>The Jumping Frog of Calaveras County</i>	6	1	7	86%	14%
Henry Hadley	<i>Bianca</i>	6	1	7	86%	14%
Ernst Krenek	<i>The Bell Tower</i>	6	1	7	86%	14%
Barry O'Neal	<i>Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde</i>	6	1	7	86%	14%
Marc Blitzstein	<i>Idiots First</i>	7	1	8	88%	13%
Ulysses Kay	<i>The Capitoline Venus</i>	7	1	8	88%	13%
Steve Cohen	<i>The Cop and the Anthem</i>	8	1	9	89%	11%
Douglas Moore	<i>The Devil and Daniel Webster</i>	8	1	9	89%	11%
Richard Owen	<i>The Death of the Virgin</i>	9	1	10	90%	10%
Dominick Argento	<i>A Water Bird Talk</i>	1	0	1	100%	0%
Thomas Booth	<i>Gentlemen in Waiting</i>	4	0	4	100%	0%
Carmine Coppola	<i>Escorial</i>	3	0	3	100%	0%
Gordon Crosse	<i>Purgatory</i>	2	0	2	100%	0%
Currie Russell	<i>The Cask of Amontillado</i>	2	0	2	100%	0%
Solomon Epstein	<i>The Wild Boy</i>	1	0	1	100%	0%
Lucas Foss	<i>Introductions and Goodbyes</i>	1	0	1	100%	0%
Joseph Horowitz	<i>Gentleman's Island</i>	2	0	2	100%	0%
Alan Hovhaness	<i>The Burning House</i>	2	0	2	100%	0%
Martin Kalmanoff	<i>The Harmfulness of Tobacco</i>	1	0	1	100%	0%
David Marvin Levy	<i>Escorial</i>	3	0	3	100%	0%
Peter Maxwell Davies	<i>Eight Songs for a Mad King</i>	1	0	1	100%	0%

Peter Schickele	<i>A Little Nightmare Music</i>	2	0	2	100%	0%
Noel Sokoloff	<i>The Pardoner's Tale</i>	5	0	5	100%	0%
John Vincent	<i>Primeval Void</i>	2	0	2	100%	0%
Hugo Weisgall	<i>Purgatory</i>	2	0	2	100%	0%
Michael White	<i>Diary of Madman</i>	1	0	1	100%	0%
Marcel Mihalovici	<i>Krapp, or the Last Tape</i>	1	0	1	100%	0%
Jacques Offenbach	<i>The Blind Beggars</i>	2	0	2	100%	0%

Table B.2: Totals and general statistics for gender ratios in Table B.1 (roles in select short operas)

Total Male Roles	760
Total Female Roles	544
Total Roles	1304
Male Roles as percent of total	58.28%
Female Roles as percent of total	41.72%
Number of short operas studied	275
Number of female majority short operas	62
Percent of female majority short operas	22.55%
Number of one-acts equally male/female	61

Appendix C: Degrees Earned in Voice and Opera by Gender

Table C.1: Bachelor's degrees awarded to men and women, by academic year (classes of 2003-2016)

Year	Num. degrees	Men	Women	% Women
2015-2016	325	101	224	68.92%
2014-2015	300	100	200	66.67%
2013-2014	352	89	263	74.72%
2012-2013	320	100	220	68.75%
2011-2012	306	96	210	68.63%
2010-2011	340	104	236	69.41%
2009-2010	347	110	237	68.30%
2008-2009	317	93	224	70.66%
2007-2008	273	70	203	74.36%
2006-2007	251	69	182	72.51%
2005-2006	248	72	176	70.97%
2004-2005	263	79	184	69.96%
2003-2004	229	54	175	76.42%
2002-2003	225	70	155	68.89%

Table C.2: Master's degrees awarded to men and women, by academic year (classes of 2003-2016)

Year	Num. degrees	Men	Women	% Women
2015-2016	285	85	200	70.18%
2014-2015	235	77	158	67.23%
2013-2014	231	87	144	62.34%
2012-2013	217	79	138	63.59%
2011-2012	209	64	145	69.38%
2010-2011	259	70	189	72.97%
2009-2010	219	63	156	71.23%
2008-2009	237	75	162	68.35%

2007-2008	203	63	140	68.97%
2006-2007	196	57	139	70.92%
2005-2006	188	51	137	72.87%
2004-2005	177	45	132	74.58%
2003-2004	198	55	143	72.22%
2002-2003	163	51	112	68.71%

Table C.3: Average percentage of degrees awarded to women, by academic year (classes of 2003-2016)

Bachelor's degree in Voice and Opera, % women	70.45%
Master's degree in Voice and Opera, % women	69.44%

Appendix D: Fifteen Undergraduate Voice Program Curricula

The list of curricula presented here was last accessed on November 26th, 2019 and may have changed since this thesis went to press. Please check with the universities, schools, and conservatories for updated course offerings.

Blair School of Music, Vanderbilt University

Blair School of Music. "The B.Mus. Degree Program: Voice Performance 2019-2020." The Blair Student Handbook: A guide for Blair Students and Advisers 2019-2020. <https://blair.vanderbilt.edu/pdfs/BLR-student-handbook-19-20.pdf>

Carnegie Mellon University

Carnegie Mellon University. "BFA Curriculum." Undergraduate Catalog. Access November 26, 2019. <http://coursecatalog.web.cmu.edu/schools-colleges/collegeoffinearts/schoolofmusic/#musiccurriculumtextcontainer>.

Cincinnati Conservatory of Music

Cincinnati Conservatory of Music. "Voice 2019-2020." CCM Baccalaureate. Accessed November 26, 2019. <https://webapps2.uc.edu/ecurriculum/DegreePrograms/Home/MajorMap/2894>.

Curtis Institute of Music

Curtis Institute of Music. "Bachelor of Music." Degrees and Diplomas. Accessed November 26, 2019. <https://www.curtis.edu/academics/degree-programs/bachelor-of-music2/>.

Eastman School of Music, University of Rochester

Eastman School of Music. "Applied Music—Voice." Advising Worksheet: Bachelor of Music Degree. Accessed November 26, 2019. <https://www.esm.rochester.edu/registrar/files/2019/07/Bachelor-of-Music-Voice.pdf>.

Frost School of Music, University of Miami

University of Miami. "Curriculum." B.M. in Vocal Performance. Accessed November 26, 2019. <http://bulletin.miami.edu/undergraduate-academic-programs/music/voice-performance/voice-performance-bm/#curriculumtext>

Jacobs School of Music, Indiana University

Jacobs School of Music. "Bachelor of Music, Voice." Degree Requirements. Accessed November 26, 2019. <https://music.indiana.edu/degrees/undergraduate/requirements/BMVoice.2018-reqs.pdf>.

Peabody Institute, Johns Hopkins University

Peabody Institute. "Voice Requirements for Students Entering Fall 2019." The Bachelor of Music Degree. Accessed November 26, 2019. <https://peabody.jhu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/BM-Voice-2019-20-Grid-1.pdf>.

Juilliard

Juilliard. "Vocal Arts." Bachelor of Music. Accessed November 26, 2019. <https://www.juilliard.edu/music/vocal-arts/vocal-arts-bachelor-music>.

Manhattan School of Music

Manhattan School of Music. "Bachelor of Music/Voice Major." 2019-2020 Course Catalog. Last Updated November 14, 2019. <https://www.msmyc.edu/about/offices-staff/registrar/course-catalog/>.

New England Conservatory

New England Conservatory. "Bachelor of Music: Vocal Performance." 2019-2020 Academic Catalog. Accessed November 26, 2019. <https://necmusic.edu/sites/default/files/documents/2019-2020%20Academic%20Catalog.pdf>

Oberlin Conservatory

Oberlin Conservatory. "Bachelor of Music: Performance (Voice)." Course Catalog 2019, 2020. <http://catalog.oberlin.edu/mime/media/40/47/14+Voice+%28rev+3.2018%29.pdf>

San Francisco Conservatory of Music

San Francisco Conservatory of Music. "Curriculum: Voice Undergraduates." Departments: Voice. Accessed November 26, 2019. <https://sfc.edu/departments/voice/curriculum-voice-undergraduates>.

Thornton School of Music, University of Southern California

USC Thornton School of Music. "Performance (Vocal Arts) (BM)." USC Catalog 2019-2020. Accessed November 26, 2019. <https://music.usc.edu/departments/vocal/bm-vocal-arts/>

University of Michigan

University of Michigan School of Music, Theater, and Dance. "Bachelor of Music in Voice Performance Silent Advisor 2019-2020." Undergraduate Degrees. Accessed November 26, 2019.

<https://smt.d.umich.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/VOICE-PERF-2019-2020.pdf>

Appendix E: Other Short Operas for Consideration

Voice types will be indicated using the following abbreviations:

- **S** — Soprano
- **A** — Alto
- **M** — Mezzo-soprano
- **C** — Contralto
- **T** — Tenor
- **Br** — Baritone
- **Bsb** — Bass-baritone
- **Bs** — Bass
- **N** — Supernumerary
- **R** — Spoken role

For example, an opera with two sopranos, two mezzos and a baritone would be listed as 2S 2M Br. Other roles that don't fit neatly into the above categories will follow the abbreviations as a note (e.g. "+ boy soprano"). An asterisk (*) indicates operas discussed in W. Franklin Summer's *Operas in One Act: A Production Guide*.¹ Note also that when a role can be sung by a higher voice type or a lower voice type, it is listed as the higher voice type. For example, if the role can be sung by a soprano or a mezzo, it is listed as a soprano.

Three Women

Angry Birdsong (Milton Granger) – 3S

Benedicta (Milton Granger) – 3S

Chronicles, or Vignettes of Passion (Gerald Frank Muller)* – 2S M

Headstrong (Wes Fishwick) – 2S M

¹W. Franklin Summers, *Operas in One Act: A Production Guide* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1997).

Hélène (Camille Saint-Saëns) – 2S M T

Pimmalione (Luigi Cherubini) – 2S M +boy soprano

Three Women, One Man

Bagatelle (Jacques Offenbach) – 3S T

Breakfast Waltzes (Harold Blumenfeld)* – S 2M T

Daphnis et Chloé (Jacques Offenbach) – 2S M Br +SA Chorus

The Eternity Man (Jonathan Mills) – S M C Br

The Game of Chance (Seymour Barab)* – 2S M Bsb

Ghosts of Gatsby (Evan Mack) – 2S M Br

The Old Maid and the Thief (Gian Carlo Menotti)* – 2S M Br

Lorenzo's Ashes (Bruce Trinkley) – 2S M T

Mavra (Igor Stravinsky)* – S 2M T

The Pumpkin (Leslie Kondorossy)* – S 2M T

Pierrette et Jacquot (Jacques Offenbach) – 2S M T N

Pigmalion (Georg Benda) – 3S T

Riders to the Sea (Ralph Vaughan Williams)* – 2S M Br +SSAA chorus

Four Women

Brides and Mothers (Sean Pflueger) – 2S 2M

Il parnaso confuso (Christoph Willibald Gluck) – 4S

La corona (Christoph Willibald Gluck) – 4S

Lizzie Strotter (Martin Kalmanoff)* – 3S M +SA chorus

School of Marital Happiness (Alexander Timofeev) – 4S

Zéphire (Jean-Philippe Rameau) – 4S

Four Women, One Man

The Medium (Gian Carlo Menotti) – 2S 2M Br +mute

Nélée et Myrthis (Jean-Philippe Rameau) – 4S Br

Opera.com.edy (Bruce Trinkley) – 2S 2M Br

The Women in the Garden (Vivian Fine) – 2S 2M T

Four Women, Two Men

Eve's Odds (Bruce Trinkley) – 3S M T Br +SSAchoir

Les cadeaux de Noël (Xavier Leroux) – 3S M Br Bs

The Mother (Stanley Hollingsworth)* – 2S 2M T Bsb

Talk Opera (Milton Granger) – 4S M T Br

Five Women

Captain Lovelock (John Duke)* – 3S 2M

Royal Flush (Frank Pesci) – 3S 2M

Five Women, One Man

Lizbeth (Thomas Albert) – 3S 2M Bsb +children's chorus

The Trojan Women (Bruce Trinkley) – 3S 2M Br N(1 child) N(multiple adults)

Five Women, Two Men

The Miraculous Staircase (Richard Chiarappa) – 2S 2M A T Br

Five Women, Two Men

Lord Byron's Love Letter (Raffaello de Banfield)* – 3S 2M T N

The Wife of Bath's Tale (James Legg)* – 2S 3M Br Bsb R +optional SA chorus

Six Women

The Beautiful Bridegroom (Dan Shore) – 4S 2M

Jane's History of England (John Morrison) – 6S

The Proposal (Milton Granger) – 4S 2M

Seven Women

Bluebeard's Waiting Room (Milton Granger) – 5S 2M R

Eight Women

The Audition (Martin Kalmanoff)* – 8S R

Eight Women, Three Men

Tony Caruso's Final Broadcast (Paul Salerni) – 5S 3M T B Bsb R +boy soprano

Nine Women

Baby Shower (Bruce Trinkley) – 6S 3M

Variable Casting

RSBE (Michael Ching) – 15 or more singers of any gender

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