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# Bridget Cappel: Senior Recital, Opera and Art Song

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Bridget Cappel  
Senior Honors Thesis  
School of Music

### Senior Recital Self Evaluation and Abstract

My Senior Honors Thesis was entitled “Bridget Cappel Senior Recital: Opera and Art Song”. I performed works from all different eras of music in various styles with different composers and in four different languages, English, Italian, French, and German. Out of eleven pieces, eight of the arias and art songs were new for the spring 2015 semester. The other works were some of my favorites pulled from previous semesters of study that fit well into the structure of my recital. Overall, I gave a polished, professional performance that showcased my artistic and musical development over my four years in the school of music and also challenged me in many ways with the difficulty of the collection of repertoire as a whole.

I began with an early piece from Vivaldi’s *Gloria* entitled “Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris”. Unfortunately, due to nerves, I made a mistake in the form of the piece which caused me to jump ahead in the text. I recovered, however, and was able to continue the piece without interruption. The difficulty in the piece is the lack of assistance from the piano. The piece is originally performed with strings which flow along quickly and seamlessly. Each entrance for the singer is rather exposed and requires independence. I chose this work because of the low alto tessitura that works well as a warm-up for upcoming pieces, as well as the beautiful line and intertwining of the voice and accompaniment.

I continued with a German set with songs by Brahms, Schubert, and Mendelssohn. Each song comes from the Romantic era where lieder was a popular genre in Europe. I made these pieces into a set because they all center around the theme of love and loss, each with a unique

story. I connect well with these songs and I love the darkness that they bring out in my voice. This made them very easy and enjoyable to perform. I stayed connected to the text throughout and conveyed the story to the audience.

The following selection was an aria from Rossini's *Il barbiere di Siviglia* entitled "Una voce poco fa". This is possibly my most polished and competitive piece of my repertoire. I had worked on it for many months and used it as a competition and graduation school audition pieces. The challenge in this aria comes with the agility that it requires to move accurately through fast passages and the ability to act when repeating the same text multiple times. It required research and attention to detail to master this piece. I chose it for its difficulty, the way it fits in my voice, and because it is rather pleasing to both an unseasoned listener and to opera lovers alike.

After intermission, I performed an English piece called "For You There is No Song" by Leslie Adams, a living composer. I chose the piece because I heard it performed at a faculty recital by a member of the voice faculty and was moved by the music and the text. It has an emotional, heavy theme which I thought was appropriate to balance my repertoire choices. This is one of my favorite songs of my recital because of its beauty and the way it showcases my lower register and chest voice. In my recital, this song went smoothly and I enjoyed performing it for my audience.

The next portion was a set of French mélodies by composer Maurice Ravel called "Cinq mélodies populaires grecques". Of the five movements, I performed only the first, third, and fifth movements of the set. I chose this set of songs because I liked and thematic material of Greek folk culture as well as the modal nature of the melodies in each piece. I had also never sung

Ravel's music and wanted a chance to sample it. The songs are relatively short in nature, but are interesting because of their folk-like charm and the interesting scales which they are built around. During my recital, I had a brief slip up in my text where I sang a later line too early in the third movement. This affected my acting as my attention was diverted to covering my mistake. Overall, my mistake was not blatant and the set worked well vocally and theatrically.

The aria that followed comes from Strauss's *Der Rosenkavalier*, "Wie du warst, wie du bist". The aria is for mezzo-soprano, but it is a pants role, or a woman playing the role of a young man or boy. This aria was not only a challenge because it requires believably playing a member of the opposite sex, but also because Strauss's music has little to no break or transition throughout. It starts with the first beat and the listener is taken on a continuous journey until the last beat. The music is incredibly difficult to learn because the meter changes in each measure, the choral structure is complex, and the accompaniment is so orchestral it requires complete independence by the singer. When performed well, it is a treat to listen to because it sounds so effortless. I love singing this aria because it is so passionate and beautiful. It served me well this semester by bringing out dark colors in my voice and a richer, fuller sound. This was one of my best performances of this piece in my time learning it this semester.

The final selection was a comedic piece by comedy duo Flanders and Swann called "A Word on my Ear". The song is about a tone deaf diva and her climb to fame. It was certainly a crowd pleaser and had my audience laughing throughout. I wanted to end my recital on a high note (no pun intended), and I had been waiting for a chance to learn and perform this piece. It has a more musical theatre feel which allowed me to break out of my classical shell and be a little more flamboyant in my acting. I had a moment when the text slipped my mind which had

never happened in rehearsal, but I quickly recovered. Overall, the entertainment value and humor of the piece was a big seller and made my recital a success.

I concluded my recital with thanks to my family, committee, and friends followed by a reception with the audience in the green room of the recital hall to give personal thanks to everyone that attended. My teacher and committee were proud of me and very congratulatory. I was thankful for everyone who attended and was glad my recital was so successful. It was a great capstone to my career at Western.