



Western Michigan University
ScholarWorks at WMU

Honors Theses

Lee Honors College

4-26-2022

Candace McMurray Senior Jazz Voice Recital

Candace McMurray
Western Michigan University

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/honors_theses



Part of the Music Education Commons, and the Music Performance Commons

Recommended Citation

McMurray, Candace, "Candace McMurray Senior Jazz Voice Recital" (2022). *Honors Theses*. 3616.
https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/honors_theses/3616

This Honors Thesis-Open Access is brought to you for free and open access by the Lee Honors College at ScholarWorks at WMU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Honors Theses by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at WMU. For more information, please contact wmu-scholarworks@wmich.edu.



Candace McMurray
Reflection - Honors Thesis

I chose to present my honors thesis as a jazz voice recital in order to represent the culmination of my studies during my time at WMU in the school of music. I am a double major in Choral Music Education and Jazz Studies - Voice, so I wanted to create a recital that represented both my abilities as a solo performer and as an ensemble performer. Within my preparation for the recital, I was able to incorporate knowledge I've gained from my music education and vocal ensemble classes to rehearse with the instrumentalists and vocalists who participated. I researched the background of each piece of music as well as arranged and created the sheet music for each individual instrument and vocal part in the recital.

Each song I performed in this recital fulfilled a characteristic I have developed as an artist. Although this recital is primarily jazz, I incorporated a few song arrangements that have jazz qualities but are influenced by other genres like pop, folk, and classical. Becca Steven's song *Venus* is an example of a song that fits the jazz genre but also has influences from pop in the harmonic framework and from folk in the orchestration. Also, my performance of *Rainy Days and Mondays/When She Loved Me* stems from pop and classical genres in the piano playing while serving the jazz style in the song arrangement's form. Other typical jazz standards were also present in my recital and performed with my own interpretation including *I'm Hip*, *What'll I Do*, *Pennies From Heaven*, *Speak Low*, and *Honeysuckle Rose*.

Aside from my intention to pay homage to the jazz idiom, I also chose each individual piece because they had deeper meaning to me personally. For example, I chose to incorporate *When She Loved Me* by Randy Newman in order to pay tribute to my mother and grandmother. I also wanted to program *Breathe Again* because the arrangement itself is emotionally powerful for the listener, and it served as a representation of my love for vocal jazz and ensemble singing. Finally, my very last song, *My Stove's In Good Condition*, served as my homage to the jazz idiom, the blues era, and to the artist who made the song famous, Lil Johnson, who was underrepresented, not very well known, and also an African American woman. I also chose this song as the closer of the entire recital because it has a feel-good energy to it, and it created a "full circle" moment to end the recital with a blues- a 12-bar song form that is rooted in the blues genre which initiated the creation of jazz.

Overall, I am truly happy with the final product of this recital. The performance had a set of contrasting songs that were both intimate and big and bold. I believe the transitions between songs went smoothly and that the audience enjoyed the performance overall. If there was anything I would have done differently, it would have been to rehearse with each duo song one last time before the performance. I received feedback that my choice in orchestration for the duo songs were very well done and allowed for the pace of the performance to follow the audience's attentiveness. These duo songs included voice and guitar on *Speak Low*, voice and bass on *Honeysuckle Rose*, and voice and piano on *Rainy Days and Mondays/When She Loved Me*. I felt that my band enjoyed performing with one another, and I was glad I could feature their musicality in the last song, *My Stove's In Good Condition*. My family and friends were in attendance and were actively participating as audience members which helped me feel celebrated and truly enjoy my performance.