A GRADUATE RECITAL IN VOICE

An Abstract of a Thesis

Submitted

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Music

Samantha Kantak

University of Northern Iowa

May, 2014

This Study by: Samantha Kantak

Entitled: “A Graduate Recital in Voice”

has been approved as meeting the thesis requirement for the
Degree of Master of Music

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Date	Dr. Jean McDonald, Chair, Thesis Committee
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Date	Dr. Korey Barrett, Thesis Committee Member
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Date	Dr. John Hines, Thesis Committee Member
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Date	Dr. Michael J. Licari, Dean, Graduate College

This Recital Performance by: Samantha Kantak

Entitled: “A Graduate Recital in Voice”

Date of Recital: April 7, 2014

has been approved as meeting the recital requirement for the
Degree of Master of Music

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Date	Dr. Jean McDonald, Chair, Recital Committee
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Date	Dr. Korey Barrett, Recital Committee Member
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Date	Dr. John Hines, Recital Committee Member
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Date	Dr. Michael J. Licari, Dean, Graduate College

ABSTRACT

Samantha Kantak, soprano, presented her graduate voice recital at 8:00 p.m. on Monday, April 7, 2014. The performance took place in Davis Hall of the Gallagher-Bluedorn Performing Arts Center on the campus of the University of Northern Iowa. Given in partial fulfillment of the Master of Music degree in Voice Performance, the recital was performed in collaboration with pianist Dr. Korey Barrett. The program consisted of Alcina's Act II aria, "Ah, mio cor!" from Handel's *Alcina*, a set of *mélodies* of Saint-Saëns, Duparc, Bizet, and Delibes followed by La Montaine's *Songs of the Rose of Sharon*, and concluded with a set of Marx lieder.

The recital opened with Alcina's Act II aria, "Ah, mio cor!" from George Frideric Handel's *Alcina*. This *opera seria* in three acts was composed in 1765 and set to an anonymous libretto based on Ludovico Ariosto's *Orlando furioso*, originally inspired by Riccardo Broschi's *L'isola di Alcina.*[1] Categorized as one of Handel's five "magic operas," the opera centers on the sorceress Alcina who lures heroes to her enchanted island, forces them fall in love with her, and transforms them into rocks, trees, or beasts once she is finished with them.[2] Ruggiero is Alcina's current enchanted lover. The opera begins with the arrival of his fiancée, Bradamante, disguised as her brother and accompanied by her guard, Melisso, onto the island. By Act II, Bradamante and Melisso have discovered that Ruggiero is under a spell, and with their magic ring that shields them from sorcery, they show Ruggiero the reality of his situation. Ruggiero, no longer under Alcina's spell, asks for permission to go hunting and attempts to flee the island. Alcina's general, Oronte, informs Alcina of Ruggiero's true intentions at which point she sings "Ah, mio cor!" This standard eighteenth century *da capo* setting presents one pure emotion within each section of the aria. Beginning in the key of C-minor, the *andante larghetto* 'A' section explores Alcina's despair and complete shock as she curses

[1] Anthony Hicks, *Alcina*, from Oxford Music Online, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxy.lib.uni.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/O900075?q=Alcina&search=quick&pos=1&_start=1#firsthit

[2] Donald Jay Grout, Hermine Weigel Williams, *A Short History of Opera,* 4th ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 185.

the gods and lyrically laments her fate. In the contrasting *allegro* 'B' section in the relative key of Eb-major, Alcina furiously exclaims that she is queen and Ruggiero must return to her or die in eternal pain. The return of the 'A' section includes ornaments, which serve to reinforce the intense dichotomy of Alcina's emotions.

The second set on the recital featured works by Saint-Saëns, Duparc, Bizet, and Delibes, which are unified by the theme of exoticism. Western composers, authors, and artists alike have been fascinated with the exotic for centuries, but the Orientalism movement in literature of the 1830s proved to be a particularly inspirational source for the French *melodies* of Bizet, Delibes, and Saint-Saëns.[3] Centering on Eastern regions, common themes found within works of exoticism include languishing women, exotic dances, atmosphere and opium-induced dreams. Because the Western octave is divided into twelve equal semitones whereas the Oriental scale is divided into seventeen unequal intervals, it is nearly impossible to authentically transcribe melodies between the two.[4] Therefore, Western composers instead incorporate dance rhythms, double pedal tones, medieval modes, and unexpected harmonies in their music to represent exoticism. Though inauthentic, these musical allusions succeed in the composer's true intentions of transporting the Western listener to excitingly unfamiliar locations with new sensations and surroundings.[5]

The set begins with "La brise," the first *mélodie* of Camille Saint-Saëns's *Mélodies persanes* from 1870 with poetry by Armand Renaud. Saint-Saëns is recognized for his particular excellence in creating a vivid musical illustration from little inspiration, often resulting in a sort of musical caricature.[6] Renaud's poem describes the alluring, unattainable women of a Persian harem, which Saint-Saëns characterizes in "La brise" through the use of melismatic passages and grace notes in the voice line in addition to the incessantly repeated dotted rhythmic figure of the accompaniment representing the monotonous drum of the seraglio dancers.

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[3] Frits Noske, *French Song from Berlioz to Duparc* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1970), 312.

[4] Ralph P. Locke, *Exoticism*, from Oxford Music Online, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxy.lib.uni.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/45644?q=Exoticism&search=quick&pos=1&_start=1#firsthit

[5] Noske, *French Song from Berlioz to Duparc*, 312-314.

[6] Ibid., 223-224.

The second *mélodie* of the set is Henri Duparc's "La vie antérieure," composed on a sonnet taken from Charles Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du mal*. Duparc (1848 – 1933) was a severe perfectionist who was constantly revising and destroying his compositions in periods of manic depression. Sixteen songs and one duet survived, all of which were composed in a seventeen-year period and have remained cherished within the repertoire. "La vie antérieure" is the last published of Duparc's *mélodies* as it was composed in 1884, the same year that he fell victim to a nervous disease that caused him to stop writing music altogether.[7] In contrast to Saint-Saëns's "La brise," "La vie antérieure" serves as a narrative of an exotic "past life," a vivid memory of an opium-induced dream. Baudelaire's visionary language is matched by Duparc's masterful setting. The "grand, majestic pillars" of the first strophe of the sonnet are depicted by the stately dotted octaves and open fifths of the accompaniment.[8] The second strophe describing "the waves reflecting the images of the sky" is illustrated through the perpetual contrary motion of the arpeggiated accompaniment, becoming more and more agitated until the climax at "c'est la" before fading into a dreamlike state which Duparc specifically notates should be sung "almost half-voiced without nuance, like in a daze."[9] As the melancholic postlude fades into pianissimo, the dream fades just beyond our understanding.

Third in the set is Georges Bizet's "Adieux de l'hôtesse arabe" from 1866, set on four of the eight stanzas of Victor Hugo's poem. Similarly to the Saint-Saëns, "Adieux de l'hôtesse arabe" features a hypnotically unyielding rhythmic motive in the left hand of the piano, which is evocative of a drum and exotic, dancing women. Bizet employs the use of Aeolian, Dorian, and Harmonic Minor modes, augmented seconds, and melismatic vocal passages to create an exotic atmosphere. The final eleven-measure, undulating melisma on "remember" serves as a suitably hypnotic conclusion to the *mélodie*.

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[7] Carol Kimball, *A Guide to Art Song Style and Literature* (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard Corporation, 2006), 173-174.

[8] Graham Johnson and Richard Stokes, *A French Song Companion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 139.

[9] Henri Duparc, *Henri Duparc Complete Songs: High Voice*, ed. by Roger Nichols. (London: Peters Edition Ltd., 2005), pg 111.

Léo Delibes's charming "Les filles de Cadix" from *Trois Mélodies* of 1863 is the fourth and final *mélodie* of the set. On poetry of Alfred de Musset, Delibes uses a combination of bolero rhythm, melody, and harmony to paint the vivid Spanish atmosphere described in the poetry. Staccato arpeggiated eighth note patterns in the left hand of the piano accompaniment partner with a Spanish dance melody harmonized in thirds in the right hand of the piano. Together, these effects are indicative of a strummed Spanish guitar which supplements the playful leaps, grace notes, trills, runs and melismas of the vocal line in creating a lighthearted, flirtatious mood. As a set, the selected *melodies* of Saint-Saëns, Duparc, Bizet, and Delibes provide a varied representation of nineteenth century French Exoticism.

American composer John La Montaine's *Songs of the Rose of Sharon*, a cycle of seven songs for soprano and orchestra composed on biblical texts taken from the entirety of Chapter Two of Song of Solomon. Though composed a decade earlier, the cycle was first performed in 1956 with Leontyne Price and the National Symphony Orchestra and functioned as La Montaine's professional debut as a composer.[10] In an interview with Frank Oteri in 2003, La Montaine revealed that on one momentous day in 1959 he received his stockbroker license, was awarded a Guggenheim fellowship, *and* was awarded a Pulitzer Prize![11] That same year, La Montaine was commissioned to compose orchestral music for the 1961 presidential inauguration making him the very first classical composer to be commissioned specifically for a presidential inauguration. La Montaine finished *From Sea to Shining Sea* in August of 1961 and dedicated it to "President Kennedy," uncertain as to whether or not he would actually be voted president.[12]

La Montaine's setting of *Songs of the Rose of Sharon* presents a supremely sensualized interpretation of the biblical text, sung from the perspective of King Solomon's young lover. La Montaine provides an abundance of very specific markings regarding tempo, mood, dynamics and

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[10] Paul Vitello, "John LaMontaine, Pulitzer-Winning Composer, Dies at 93," *New York Times*, May 14, 2013.

[11] John LaMontaine, interview by Frank Oteri, American Music Center, New York, May 20, 2003, interview transcribed by Randy Nordschow, http://www.newmusicbox.org/assets/53/interview_lamontaine.pdf., 2.

[12] Ibid., 12.

articulation throughout the score. The vocal line and orchestral accompaniment experience both complete equality and autonomy. The cycle includes bold, adventurous harmonic and rhythmic progressions with skewed or rapidly shifting meters and tonal centers, and broad, lyrical vocal lines. Cohesion throughout the score is attained through slightly altered returning motives and the use of a consistent harmonic language.

The first song, "I am the rose of Sharon and the lily of the valleys" is set to the text of Song of Solomon 2:1-3, and illustrates the lovers' first encounter, commencing with a shy, pianissimo F# pedal tone doubled at the octave in the left hand of the accompaniment with a simple, lyrical motive in the right hand. Through each of the seventeen measures of prelude, an eighth-note pulse is maintained as the orchestration repeats the opening motive twice, intensifying in dynamic, texture, and pitch as the lovers become more infatuated with one another until the declamatory entrance of the soprano in measure eighteen. The remainder of the piece continues with lyrical, broad lines, uneven phrase lengths, eighth-note pulsation, and wave-like dynamics until returning to the opening tonality and texture.

"I sat down under his shadow," is on the overtly sensual, indulgent text of Song of Solomon 2:3-5 and begins in the same key of F#-minor that ended the previous song. A throbbing rhythmic motive comprised of thirty-second note turns is the primary thematic material for this piece. At the utterance of "with great delight" in measure eight, there is a climactic, yet dissonant arrival that momentarily slows the rhythmic momentum before the return of the original dance motive accompanied by the suggestive text "and his fruit was sweet to my taste." The following section, which describes "the banqueting house," introduces a new repetitive dance rhythm followed by an even lengthier climax on the text "his banner over me was love." The song concludes with, "for I am sick of love" before the original, rhythmic motive returns to finish the piece.

In contrast, "His left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me," set to that single line of text of Song of Solomon 2:6, embodies a dreamy atmosphere, which begins softly and slowly on a sustained chord, creating an inebriating portrayal of intimacy. The singer, supported by

slow, dense, chromatic chords, tenderly revels in the intimacy of her lover's nearness. A lengthy nineteen-measure postlude, reminiscent of the prelude to the first piece, begins very simply and softly, steadily growing in intensity and complexity, symbolic of the woman dreading the nearing departure of her lover, before fading back to a slower, simpler, thinner texture as the lovers drift to sleep.

"O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rocks," set to the text of Song of Solomon 2:14, is the first to be set out of order. This text outlines the anguish the woman feels once she is separated from her lover. Set in 5/4 time, "O my dove" commences with a metrically and melodically unsettling arpeggiated sextuplet motive repeated four times over a double Eb pedal in the bass. The vocal line is to be sung "bleakly" and "darkly." At the thundering, climactic line, "let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice," both dynamic and tempo increase and the piano echoes the woman's anguish with three measures of chords of similar agonizing dissonance. There is a slight pause before entering into a calmer, more tonal 'B' section at "for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely." Fading back into *pianissimo*, the piano line descends into darkness and the woman returns to her lamenting.

"My beloved is mine, and I am his" is on the text of Song of Solomon 2:16-17, also set out of order. In this quickly flowing song, the most consonant of the cycle, the young woman fondly describes her lover, while still awaiting his return. A brief moment of anguished impatience referencing the sharp dissonances of the previous song occurs on "turn, my beloved" before returning to the original tempo and character.

"The voice of my beloved! Behold, he cometh," set to the text of Song of Solomon 2: 8-10, narrates the long awaited return of her lover. An eight-measure prelude begins the piece very softly and slowly, gradually growing from a single pitch into a chromatically rising melodic line. A profound sense of increasing anxiety is created as the melodic line gains volume, speed, and harmonic texture before finally hearing her lover and entering triumphantly on "the voice of my beloved!" The sustained high-Bb in the voice line on "beloved" marks the highest note of the cycle as

well as the outset of a repetitive short, rhythmic motive in the accompaniment signifying her excited heartbeat. As her lover approaches nearer and nearer her excitement intensifies, signaled by the accompaniment breaking into arpeggiated quintuplets. A *fortissimo,* expansive, sustained chord at "Shewing himself through the lattice" marks his anticipated arrival. An unaccompanied, unhurried "my beloved spake, and said unto me" leads directly into the next and final piece, "Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away!" Set to Song of Solomon 2: 10-13, the text narrates the return of spring and joyous celebration of their love. With thirteen meter changes in a short fifty-six-measure piece and a rhythmic, asymmetrical vocal line, there is no consistent pulse aside from the repeated triplet pattern of the accompaniment. The piano finally broadens in both tempo and range to support the final climax "arise, my love, my fair one, and come away" before returning to the original swift tempo, ending the cycle with a final resounding chord.

Four *lieder* of Austrian composer Joseph Marx comprise the final set of the recital. Similarly to Robert Schumann, Marx's output was composed sectionally throughout his life. Between 1906 and 1912, Marx composed 158 lieder, for which he is most celebrated. His compositional style, which can be classified as Late Romantic Impressionist, is akin to that of Hugo Wolf and Richard Strauss in declamatory style, operatic ranges, broad lyrical vocal lines, unexpected unusually colorful harmonies as well as thick, orchestrally conceived textures.[13] Immensely Romantic in nature, Marx's *lieder* require extreme spontaneity as well as an equal partnership between piano and voice, often containing melodic interplay between the two. While Marx refrained from indicating metronome markings in his compositions, he included an abundance of specific markings regarding dynamics, tempo changes, and mood. The texts that Marx chose to set were carefully chosen and set sensitively. Both a highly intellectual and deeply spiritual man, Marx sought to express transcendental aspects of the soul through music.

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[13] Carol Kimball, *A Guide to Art Song Style and Literature*, 142.

The four Marx *lieder* narrate stages of love from innocent adoration to profound, all-encompassing love. The narrative begins with a young woman innocently reveling in the attention of her new lover in the charming "Und gestern, hat er mir Rosen gebracht" from 1909 on poetry by Thekla Lingen. Marx uses a short, repetitive rhythmic motive resembling a heartbeat throughout the *lied*, taking special care to paint important nuances of the text such as the staccato measures accompanying "so trembles my heart" and the sweeping arpeggiation under "the dream". The narrative continues with "Hat dich die Liebe berührt," composed in 1908 on the text of Paul Heyse. Much slower and steadier than "Und gestern," this expressive *lied* features an elegant vocal line coupled with a dense accompaniment full of rich, unexpected harmonic shifts in order to depict the all-consuming euphoria of new love. Particularly noteworthy is the melodically expansive, triumphant proclamation "the crown of life now radiantly adorns your brow," which serves as the climax of the piece. Third in the narrative is "Selige Nacht" from 1912 on a poem by Otto Erich Hartleben, which tenderly depicts the lovers' sexual ecstasy. The delicate hand-crossing figures of the accompaniment create a symbolically intimate, peaceful atmosphere. A broadening of tempo , dynamic, and melody in both the voice and piano at "a scent of roses to our love bed" acts as a build to a false climax, which is followed by a short four measure relief until the unexpected true climax at "dreams of ecstasy." The final *lied* in the narrative, "Der Ton" from 1909 on poetry by Knut Hamsun, embodies the overwhelming, effusive nature of profound love. With its lush, rapturous, complex accompaniment of arpeggiated, unyielding sixteenth-notes paired with soaring, highly expressive vocal lines, "Der Ton" provided a dramatic ending to both the song set and the recital.

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THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA
SCHOOL OF MUSIC

PRESENTS

Samantha Kantak, Soprano
Dr. Korey Barrett, Piano

Monday, April 7, 2014
8:00 p.m., Davis Hall
Gallagher-Bluedorn Performing Arts Center

From the studio of Dr. Jean McDonald

Program

"*Ah, mio cor!*" from *Alcina* — George Frideric Handel (1685 - 1759)

"La brise" from *Mélodies persanes* — Camille Saint-Saëns (1835 - 1921)

La vie antérieure — Henri Duparc (1848 - 1933)

Adieux de l'hôtesse arabe — Georges Bizet (1838 - 1875)

"Les filles de Cadix" from *Trois Mélodies* — Léo Delibes (1836 - 1891)

– Intermission –

Songs of the Rose of Sharon — John LaMontaine (1920 - 2013)

I. I am the rose of Sharon and the lily of the valleys
II. I sat down under his shadow
III. His left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me
IV. O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock
V. My beloved is mine, and I am his
VI. The voice of my beloved! behold, he cometh
VII. Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away

Und gestern hat er mir Rosen gebracht — Joseph Marx (1882 - 1964)
Hat dich die Liebe berührt
Selige Nacht
Der Ton

This recital is given in partial fulfillment of the Masters of Music degree in Vocal performance